



2016 Annual Report

“Together, towards a more equitable state”

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*-St. Paul Pioneer Press
historic photo illustration*

Introduction

When the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage's predecessor, the Council on Black Minnesotans, was created in 1980, Minnesota's black population was only about one percent of the state's total population. Now that population has risen to about six percent - and it's still growing. This new and growing influx of black residents in Minnesota is a very diverse population, comprised not only of United States -born African Americans, but also new immigrants who come from a large and growing number of African nations. The largest number of these new Minnesotans are most notably from Somalia, Ethiopia (including the Oromo region) and Liberia.

The Council's newly adopted name is meant to reflect and honor this diversity, while also providing a better understanding of the Council's goal, which is to provide Minnesotans of African heritage, no matter where their journeys began or how different their cultural histories and frames of reference are, with every possible benefit that is provided by the establishment and the nurturing of lasting bonds. *We face a shared fight against racial discrimination and racially-based disparities in law enforcement, education, employment, housing and health that require united effort.*

From the beginning, our primary mission was to advise the Governor and the State Legislature "on statutes or rules necessary to ensure that all Black people have access to benefits and services that are provided to people in Minnesota." To this end, the Council organizes community forums several times a year that allow this a diverse group of African heritage Minnesotans a voice and an opportunity to discuss a variety of issues of concern to the community. These forums, and the discussions that are generated at them, assure that the Council provides the best representation to all of Minnesota's black voices and it ensures that all of these diverse groups are heard. This allows the Council to speak truth to power.

"Together, towards a more equitable state"

Message from the Acting Chair

Nasser Mussa



First of all, I want to thank outgoing Chair, **Doris Baylor**, who left the Council at the end of 2016 because of increasing personal and professional obligations. Doris served the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage with excellence and helped bring in a new era for our agency.

Additionally, at the end of 2015, the council welcomed **Dr. Louis Porter II** as executive director. Dr. Porter has brought a new energy and perspective to the Council.

This was truly apparent in 2016 as we began operating under a new state statute that calls for us to focus on policy change as we advise both the executive and legislative branches of Minnesota government.

Throughout 2016, it was our goal to listen – both formally and informally – to our constituents, Minnesotans of African heritage, as they shared what mattered to them.

Those concerns create the foundation of our work.

For the first time, the council worked with other organizations to form the United Black Legislative Agenda. Collaboration continues to be a part of our strategy as we work with other groups across the state as well as with the other ethnic councils. Especially in times such as these, collaboration and a unified approach are necessary.

I joined the CMAH board secretary, **Olivia Jefferson** and **Dr. Porter** in the fall to attend the Facing Race conference in Atlanta. It was exciting to gather with other leaders from across the nation who are engaged in racial justice work.

Our goal is to apply the knowledge, resources and connections made at that conference as we move the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage forward.

Later in the year, board members buckled down for a retreat and strategic planning sessions to plan for the future. Much has changed at the Council, but one thing remains the same: We exist to improve the lives of people of African heritage who call Minnesota home.

COUNCIL FOR MINNESOTANS OF AFRICAN HERITAGE

2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doris Baylor, Chair

Nasser Mussa, Vice Chair/Acting Chair

Olivia Jefferson, Secretary

Suzanne Madison, Ph. D., Treasurer

Rep. Rena Moran (DFL), Legislative Rep. to the Executive Committee

Sadiq Abdirahman

Atty. Amran Farah

Nerita Hughes

Mustafa Jumale

Fatima Tanni Lawson, Ph. D.

Benjamin Mchie

Sen. Kari Dziedzic (DFL)

Sen. Dan D. Hall (R)

Message from the Executive Director

Louis Porter II, Ed. D.



At the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage 2016 has been an exciting year of transformation as we have moved forward with a new executive director; several new board members; a new enabling statute that guides our work; and a new name. All of those transitions make this a state agency that is both established and emerging at the same time. And, most of all, we're making it work.

Our accomplishments in 2016 include:

- Helping to convene and lead 20 organizations that serve Black people in Minnesota through a process that helped get the first United Black Legislative Agenda (UBLA) adopted
- Working through the UBLA to gain legislative approval for \$35 million in job training and economic development funding for the African heritage community; another \$2 million for Somali youth job training; strengthening penalties for hate crimes; and convincing lawmakers to vote against allowing private prisons in the state
- Holding two major public listening sessions: one on police-community relations; and the other on an array of topics pertinent to the African heritage community

- Continuing public engagement, research and information-gathering across Minnesota that explores the possibility of creating up to five African heritage cultural arts centers throughout the state
- Collaborating with the Center for School Change and other organizations to sponsor a conference informing parents and students about the benefits of dual (college and high school) credit programs as well as working to inform leaders about the importance of those programs
- Doing some of the groundwork that could establish a program that is aimed at youth education about the little-known public health challenge of Sulphur allergies that are prevalent in people of African heritage
- Taking part in ongoing training through the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota as well as presenting during the 32nd Annual Minnesota Policy Conference
- Lobbying to bring back a focused curriculum in schools that teaches peaceful problem solving and negotiation to young people
- Serving on the Governor’s Workforce Development Equity Panel
- Promoting the work of the Council at a variety of community events across the state
- Successfully nominating one of our own, **Benjamin Mchie**, a retiring CMAH board member, for the Martin Luther King Lifetime Achievement Award
- Adopting, embracing and living the motto, “Together, towards a more equitable state”

2016 Staff



TiNeka McAdoo, Administrative Assistant
Kolloh Nimley, Community Program Specialist
Louis Porter II, Ed. D., Executive Director

Key Demographic Findings

- In Minnesota, people of Color (those who identify as a race other than White alone; and/or those who are Hispanic) make up 19 percent of the total population. Non-Hispanic White Minnesotans represent the remaining 81 percent of the statewide population.
- All race groups have grown recently in Minnesota. However, between 2010 and 2015, the state has added four times as many people of Color as those residents who identify as non-Hispanic White residents. Populations of Color are distributed unevenly across the state; residents who identify themselves in these groups are more likely to live in metro areas than rural areas.
- Between 2010 and 2015, the fastest growing racial group in Minnesota was the Asian population, which grew by 22 percent and added nearly 48,000 people. **The second fastest growing population in the state were residents who identified themselves as Black - this population grew by 16 percent (adding 45,000 people.** The Hispanic population (which grew by 13 percent and added 32,000 people), reported the next fastest growing population. (Asian and Black race groups are that race "alone" and non-Hispanic).

(All data from 2015 Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.)

Year in Review Highlights



Consultant Roderic Southall and Dr. Porter talked with residents in Duluth about a possible cultural arts center for Minnesotans of African heritage. Duluth Community Meeting – Listening Session: April 16, 2016



During the session, residents also discuss other topics, including priorities for the legislative session. Duluth Community Meeting – Listening Session: April 16, 2016



Participants expressed a desire to continue the conversation with the Council. Duluth Community Meeting – Listening Session: April 16, 2016



Administrative Assistant TiNeka McAdoo works in the storage unit as part of a project to gather and archive the council's historic documents and artifacts.



Board and staff gather on the grounds of YMCA Camp St. Croix during the annual retreat.



Consultant Lisa Tabor works with board members during the council's annual retreat.



Board Chair Doris Baylor and Board Member Sen. Dan Hall at the Minneapolis Urban League's Family Day



This is one of two pieces of art donated to the Council by Board Member Sadiq Abdirahman. The art now graces our conference area.



Metro Transit Police Lt. Anthony Hines of the National Black Police Association Minnesota Chapter, talks with community members during a council forum on police – community relations.



Facilitator Vivian Jenkins-Nelsen explains the ground rules before a discussion at the Heritage Park YMCA.



A resident takes notes during a general forum at the St. Paul Midway YMCA.



Former Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles-Belton encouraged attendees to be more involved in government during her opening remarks at the winter forum.

Photo Credits: Henry Banks, TiNeka McAdoo, David Grant and Louis Porter II

CMAH in the News

One of our goals was to increase public awareness about the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage and the work we do. The three articles copied here, from The Minneapolis Spokesman-Recorder, MinnPost and The St. Paul Pioneer Press are examples of some of the coverage the Council received in 2016.

Former Council on Black Minnesotans has new name, new director

January 13, 2016 by James L. Stroud Jr [Leave a Comment](#)



Dr. Louis

Porter, II

In November of 2015, just before the Thanksgiving holiday, Dr. Louis Porter II began working as the new executive director of the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH), formerly known as the Council on Black Minnesotans. Porter, who is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, has worked and lived in the Twin Cities area for over 30 years.

He earned his bachelor's degree in journalism from Boston University, his Masters in Liberal Arts Studies in writing from Hamline University, and he has a doctorate in education and organizational development from the University of St. Thomas.

Porter has a varied background of experience that he brings to CMAH. Since 1999, he has been the president of LPII Communications and Development, a highly sought-after communications, diversity research, and organizational development consulting practice offering advice to clients like Mayo Clinic, the Department of Homeland Security, the State of Minnesota, and several colleges and universities, just to name a few.

Porter has also worked as a news reporter for the *Pioneer Press* and as a professor at various Minnesota colleges and universities, including the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management.

The Minnesota legislature created the Council on Black Minnesotans in 1980 with the intent of ensuring that Black Minnesotans equitably benefited from the state's political, social and economic resources, policies and procedures, along with other Minnesotans. The purpose of the Council has always been to advise the governor and the legislature on issues confronting the state's Black people.

The CMAH serves as a liaison to the federal government, local government, and private organizations on matters relating to Black people in Minnesota. In addition, the CMAH is charged with implementing programs designed to solve problems of Black people authorized by State statutes, rules and orders.

Historically, the executive director position for the CMAH was selected by the governor, but Porter is the first executive director selected under the new Minnesota statute adopted in spring of 2015 and made effective in July. The Legislative Coordinating Commission, along with the Minnesota House and Senate, passed a bill that required several changes for the state's three ethnic councils.

Now the executive director serves at the pleasure of the Legislative Coordinating Commission, a group of 12 legislative leaders (six from the Senate and six from the House) that provides overall coordination of the state legislature's activities. There are currently no persons of color on the Commission.

The other two councils are the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans and the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs. After the bill was passed in May 2015, the previous executive directors for all councils were informed that the new changes meant that they had to reapply for their current positions at that time.

MSR spoke with Porter about his appointment and his future plans for the CMAH. "I've only been here over a month," he said, "but I have not loved a job this much in a long time. I'm very excited about the challenge and the necessary work ahead as well," said an enthusiastic Porter.

Asked why the CMAH had a name change, Porter said that it was done before he was hired, and Representative Rena Moran could better speak to that because she was an advocate for the name change. Porter said that the name change will send the message to diverse groups of Africans from the different countries migrating to Minnesota from the continent of Africa that CMAH represents them, too.

“One of the things that I feel strongly about for as long as I can remember is that I would like to do what I can through CMAH to get rid of the lines between African and African Americans. Those divisions are counterproductive and not wise.

“What I would like to do is work on bringing more unity among African Americans and African immigrants,” said Porter. “So saying African Heritage says that here is something that we all have in common.”

Porter was asked about his strategic plan for the CMAH. His plan is to first get as many different groups together at the table as possible and then move forward on everything from police-community relations and economic disparity issues to new legislative ideas that make a significant, positive impact together.

Currently he is working with one other staff member, but he says there will be more people hired in his office. In the long term, he will be hiring people for satellite offices in Rochester, St. Cloud and Duluth.

This year the CMAH will work with a budget of about \$400,000. Porter is scheduled to meet with his board of directors on Tuesday, January 12 to get approval for some items that he would like to present before the legislature regarding increasing the annual budget.

“I think that the police self-insurance and the threat of them being placed in the general prison population when convicted of a crime, could work to a degree,” says Porter, when asked about reducing excessive force cases between the police and the African American community. “In my personal and professional time, I want to do more research around that subject. In my preliminary research, what seems to be effective in turning other cities around is when there is a true emphasis on bringing police and community together.

“Getting cops walking, talking to people as people and vice versa,” continued Porter. “Gaining that trust, so that when something happens in the community, people feel better about talking with the police. That seems to be the one thing that has worked in other cities where there is a lot of tension between police and the community.”

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage can be reached at 651-757-1751.

What black Minnesotans who've been here for generations have in common with African immigrants

By [Ibrahim Hirsi](#) | 04/14/16



MinnPost photo by Ibrahim Hirsi

For Louis Porter II, witnessing black leaders — who have rarely seen eye to eye on anything — unite under one umbrella was as important as the goal of securing funding for their communities.

When Louis Porter II isn't advising the governor and the legislature on issues confronting black Minnesotans, his mind is set on one task: uniting all Minnesotans of African descent.

As executive director of the [Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage](#) (CMAH), Porter's first step to that goal is to find ways he can create a consistent collaboration between organizations and agencies serving African and African-American communities — a move he believes would lead both communities to more positive economic and social outcomes.

That's why he helped establish [the United Black Legislative Agenda \(UBLA\)](#), a coalition of more than 20 organizations that joined forces in response to the widening racial, economic and education disparities among black Minnesotans.

During the group's launch at the State Capitol last week, UBLA leaders urged lawmakers to pass legislation in the coming weeks that will help address the economic disparities and eliminate racial bias in the criminal justice system.

For Porter, witnessing black leaders — who have rarely seen eye to eye on anything — unite under one umbrella was as important as the goal of securing funding for their communities.

"I was very proud to be a part of that effort," said Porter, who was hired last November to lead the CMAH. "And I really feel that the unified effort is going to give us strength because each of the organizations brings a different strength set to the table."

What the Council does

The Minnesota Legislature created the council more than 30 years ago to serve as a liaison between members of the black community and the state government — while also connecting black residents to social service and economic resources.

With the legislative session underway, the council is working closely with UBLA leaders to help pass several bills that would ban private prisons, reform criminal justice and address economic disparities.

The council advises the governor and the legislature on issues facing black communities and works with the executive department and legislators on implementing government projects.

"Our focus is really to provide access to the legislative process, to empower people of African descent through the legislative process," Porter noted. "That includes lobbying ... and bringing people together and getting as much public input on the issues as possible."



State Rep. Rena Moran

He added: “We do that through surveys, through public forums, through reaching out to the community. So, we want to make certain that our legislators [have] as much information ... as possible when they go forth to make decisions.”

Rep. Rena Moran, who’s serving on the council’s board, added that the CMAH also exists to inform and educate communities of African heritage about the state’s political process.

“It plays a really vital role in educating our community ... about how state government impacts them locally,” Moran said. “There are people who don’t always know how to navigate the system, who don’t always trust the system. So, the council helps those people see themselves as part of the solution.”

What’s in a name change

When it was first formed, the CMAH was known as the Council on Black Minnesotans — until last spring when a new state law changed it to the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage.

The name change was partly meant to reflect on the tens of thousands of new immigrants from Africa in the state. According to a 2014 report by the council, 316,000 blacks live in Minnesota, with 24 percent being foreign-born blacks.

Most of these immigrants began streaming into Minnesota about 25 years ago as a result of conflicts that sporadically erupted in Africa in the early 1990s. Many of the immigrants come from Somalia, Ethiopia and Liberia.

Today, Porter and his council are working to bring together these very different black communities — and to represent their common challenges at the legislature.



Gary Cunningham

Those challenges include obtaining employment, buying homes and owning and maintaining businesses. In one study after another — including the [Met Council report](#) released on Tuesday — researchers have found that black communities are faring much worse than whites on economic, educational and other measures.

“This leads you to believe that there’s something going on in the system ... that skin color actually matters with regards to that,” said Met Council Member Gary Cunningham during a phone conference on Tuesday. “Race is a factor ... that creates differential outcomes for persons of color, particularly for African-Americans.”

Whatever the case, leaders of the council say they’re optimistic about the future of Minnesotans of African descent. Through the council, they hope to make a difference in those disparities.

Moran noted: “The council is taking a leadership role in bridging that gap and bringing the African and African-American community’s different organizations together.”

Community differences

When Porter was working on organizing UBLA’s first event last week, he said it wasn’t easy to bring together the leaders who included representatives of more than 20 African and African-American organizations.

“It took a lot of meeting and a lot of talking and a lot of work to come together because obviously people have differences of opinions and things to work through,” said Porter, a Louisiana native who moved to

the Twin Cities 30 years ago to work for the Pioneer Press as a reporter. “One of the things that we had to work through were some different ways of viewing things.”



Suzanne Madison

The lack of integration of black immigrants and African-Americans is fueled by the language and cultural differences between the two groups, noted Suzanne Madison, who serves the council as treasurer.

“Our histories are different,” Madison said. “Immigrants came here because they saw an opportunity, they wanted to come. African-Americans didn’t have that option. So, the history of slavery and being brought here is something that has influenced and affected our communities and our families from 200 years ago.”



Hamsa Warfa

The disconnect between the two groups was pronounced in a recent Somali community assessment by [TAYO Consulting Group](#), a Minneapolis-based firm that provides counseling in human development and poverty solutions.

Hamse Warfa, founder and head of the firm, said the assessment asked, in part, Somalis in Minneapolis about whom they associate with most outside their community. The majority of them said they “never or hardly every” associate with African-Americans, he said.

In fact the assessment found that Somalis interact more with whites than with African-Americans: It found that 56 percent of Somalis associate with other African-born blacks, 21 percent with whites and only 6 percent said they associate with African-Americans. The rest said they associate more with blacks born in other countries and people with other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Optimism to unite

As both communities evolve, though, leaders say they see the groups are starting to realize the importance of finding a common ground to unite and work together.

“When we talk about the common history and the shared culture,” Porter noted, “we realize that we truly have so much more in common than what separates us.”

Madison added that’s the reason the council is working to bring together the black communities — and reaching out to other councils of color who also share similar social and economic struggles with blacks.

Those councils that provide similar services to other communities of color include the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

“These heightened tensions that we have now — the Islamophobia, the contentious issues of immigration, the shootings of blacks by officers — are creating almost kind of a wake-up to tackle those challenges,” Warfa said.

Porter, Smith: Bipartisan action on disparities...

Porter, Smith: Bipartisan action on disparities would uphold proud Minnesota legacy

By [Louis Porter II and Dane Smith](#) |

PUBLISHED: May 19, 2016 at 12:01 am | UPDATED: May 19, 2016 at 7:56 am

A half-century ago, every one of Minnesota's 10 members of Congress — Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, rural and urban — voted for the landmark Voting Rights Act.

Although the national civil rights movement then was mostly led by African-Americans themselves and liberal Democrats, including our own Hubert Humphrey, northern-state Republican support was crucial. Minnesota's Republican Party chairman, for instance, actually traveled to Selma, Ala., in 1965, and returned urging support of voting rights laws. Last year, Minnesota Congressman Tom Emmer was one of the few national Republican leaders to return to Selma to commemorate the 50th anniversary of that historic march for freedom.

Throughout its history, Minnesota has distinguished itself as a state where common cause prevails around the principles of racial equality and human rights. And we couldn't agree more with the powerful Pioneer Press editorial on May 8 ("An intersection on which to build consensus") that described a strong, emerging consensus between racial justice advocates and business leaders in Minnesota around the competitive value of racial equity in our workforce and our society.

The Minnesota Legislature again faces a historic opportunity to uphold this tradition and begin addressing our vast economic disparities between whites and blacks and other communities of color. And we think a ground-breaking United Black Legislative Agenda (UBLA), unveiled last month, can comprise a foundation for action.

The UBLA is the work of a network of more than 20 diverse black organizations, including the African American Leadership Forum, Black Lives Matter, the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, the Minneapolis Urban League, Neighborhoods Organizing for Change, the Somali Community of Minnesota and Voices of East African Women. Although sharing many of the same challenges involving racial injustice, this group had to get past differences in religion, age and world views. In the end, consensus was built; group resolve and determination soon followed.

In brief, the United Black Legislative Agenda urges support for both policy and funding legislation that would:

I Provide more economic opportunities for black businesses and employment training, through the Working Families Agenda package and Gov. Mark Dayton's expansion of funding for Minnesota Youth at Work and Pathways to Prosperity programs.

I Create changes in the police and court systems, such as banning private prisons, discontinuing the use of grand juries for police-involved deaths, Voting Rights Restoration, adjustments to sentencing guidelines, and stronger punishments for hate crimes.

I Set up a much-needed job training program for Somali youth.

Before all this can happen, the Minnesota Senate and House must put aside partisan politics as usual and seize the moment to uphold our state's reputation.

The \$900 million projected state budget surplus provides a perfect opportunity for state lawmakers to begin correcting our economic racial divide. Gov. Dayton has proposed investing about \$100 million to create business, employment and educational opportunities for people of color and Native Americans in Minnesota. It's a tiny portion of the state's \$42 billion biennial budget, but a start, a real effort. The DFL Senate majority's racial disparity package is close to the governor's total. The Republican House majority, however, has so far not agreed to any of the measures advanced by Dayton or the UBLA. A great opportunity for bipartisan agreement on equity is slipping away.

It is possible, very possible, to do all of this and still address the issues being championed by the House. UBLA leaders are suggesting a compromise that supports UBLA initiatives, as well as strategic and targeted investments in rural Minnesota for transportation and infrastructure investment.

We think most Minnesotans are deeply offended at reports about the data showing an economic gap here that often is termed "worse than Mississippi." Last month, the Metropolitan Council released a report showing that the Twin Cities metropolitan area had the largest gaps in the nation between black and white non-Latino residents in levels of education, employment, poverty rates and home ownership.

This is far more grave than a temporary public relations problem. It represents a clear and present threat to our economic competitiveness. And partisan disagreement over whether and how to address it runs counter to the best traditions of the North Star State.

We think Al Quie, a conservative Republican former governor, and before that a member of Congress who voted for the Voting Rights Act in 1965, may have said it best. At last year's celebration of that anniversary, Quie said: "There are many reasons for governance. But the main reason is justice."

Louis Porter II is the executive director of the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage. Dane Smith is the president of Growth & Justice, a nonpartisan public policy group that seeks more equitable economic growth in Minnesota



2017 Legislative Agenda

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, a state agency established 37 years ago, is committed to improving the lives of African heritage people by communicating their concerns and ideas to legislators while connecting a growing community to the legislative process.

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage undertook a serious decision-making process based on surveys, research and direct public input to determine the 2017 CMAH Legislative Agenda. Board members and staff have decided to focus on the areas of education/child development and employment. CMAH will do this through advising the Governor and Legislature, supporting legislation that leads to positive change in those areas and helping community members of African heritage to make their individual and collective voices heard on the issues.

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage priorities are:

Early Childhood Education

Increase funding and technical assistance support for early childhood and elementary school initiatives that are currently closing gaps and trending positive for Black people.

Strategies include:

- *Universal Pre-K*
- *Targeted Early Childhood Scholarships*
- *Support investments in early childhood program improvement and expansion*
- *Prioritize investment in quality early childhood education for at-risk children as a way to close the achievement gap*
- *Provide developmental resources to children and their families*

BACKGROUND:

Improving early childhood education is critical for the state's African heritage children. Risks for disparate outcomes disproportionately affect young children, low-income children, and minority children. Poverty brings risks for children of all races; however, racial/ethnic status is an independent risk factor, according to the National Center for Children in Poverty.

K-12 Education/After School Programs

Provide (or increase) funding and technical assistance support for initiatives that promise to close gaps in high school graduation rates for Black people.

Strategies include:

- *Year-around schools*
- *Statewide community schools*
- *Measures to increase diversity and cultural competence among the state's teachers*
- *Make closing achievement gaps a statewide priority*

Expand/Enhance after-school programming for Black children and youth.

Strategies include:

- *A focus on math and reading*

BACKGROUND:

It has been reported that only 62 percent of black students in Minnesota finish high school on time. According to 2014 figures, the most recent for which there are national comparisons, the graduation rate for black students in Minnesota is third worst in the United States. Black students in Mississippi and Alabama had significantly higher rates of graduating on time.

Higher Education

Provide (or increase) funding and technical assistance support for initiatives that promise to close gaps in post-secondary education for Black people.

Strategies include:

- *Postsecondary Enrollment Option*
- *College in the Schools*
- *Other dual enrollment programs*

BACKGROUND:

Four-year graduation rates at Minnesota state colleges and universities average 23 percent and six-year graduation rates average 48 percent. Completion rates at most two-year public colleges are very low and, in some cases, declining. Moreover, Black students continue to lag behind White students in graduation rates, as reported by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

Employment

Expand/Enhance pathways to prosperity to help Black people succeed in well-paying careers by integrating basic skills education and career-specific training, particularly in fields where new skills are in high demand.

Strategies include:

- *Preparation for careers in science, technology, engineering and math*
- *Increase public sector hiring and business to reflect the state's growing diversity*
- *Support African American entrepreneurs and provide technical assistance and resources*

BACKGROUND:

Black, Hispanic and Native American families all make less today than they did in the 1970s and Black families are hardest hit, now earning median annual incomes of about \$33,900, compared with about \$81,500 for white families. Thirty percent of the state's Black families are poor. Those numbers have grown, in some cases significantly, according to the *Pioneer Press*.

“Together, towards a more equitable state”

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