

em

# POWHER

ment 2020



ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION  
COUNCIL FOR MINNESOTANS  
OF AFRICAN HERITAGE

ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

To Our African Heritage Community,

The pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, stay-at-home orders, social distancing, the riots, looting and so many other issues disrupted and impacted our community. On the surface, 2020 has been a year of despair for our African Heritage community. We have continuously been on the front lines of this battlefield, standing strong while masking our hurt on the inside. This pandemic did nothing but increase and widen the gaps of the many disparities that already exist within our community, from educational attainment to economic development.

Despite the many trials and misfortunes, this past year has also been a year of empowerment. Not only were we able to be intentional and make some changes for the good, we celebrated our 40-year anniversary. Since the existence of the Council, we have been instrumental in moving the needle and assisting our community with pertinent resources to support their efforts. We have been actively involved with legislative endeavors around issues that impact us from housing bills to police reform bills. We helped pass several bills over the years.

This past year, we hired our first female executive director and are excited for what she'll bring to the Council. As we look ahead, I expect only greater progress as we continue to address and create opportunities to concentrate on the issues within our community. In the words of the late Rep. John Lewis, "If you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have a moral obligation to do something about it."

Thanks to the leadership of all the executive directors and Council members as we continue our moral obligation to empower our community.

Thank you for allowing me to serve,



Nerita Hughes, Ed.D., Chair  
Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the newly appointed executive director, I am excited to offer this report of the Council's 2020 work and upcoming areas of focus. I would like to thank Chair Dr. Nerita Hughes and the Council board for its guidance during my onboarding and a year we won't likely forget.

What a year. The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) started the year with its clear purpose of advising the governor and legislative body on issues affecting the African Heritage community. However, everything changed when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and when George Floyd was murdered. The team had to pivot. Despite all the changes and uncertainty, the Council still had a good year. We hosted a successful Day on the Hill, conducted a national poll on key issues affecting the African Heritage community, hosted several community discussions and advocated for various legislation.

What's next? The Council will continue our important work:

- Advising the governor and legislative body;
- Supporting the efforts of African Heritage legislators to address the issues facing its constituents; and
- Focusing on public safety and policing, education, healthcare disparities, strong families and economic development.

Although the Council is strong, several areas were identified that need to be addressed over the next few years. The Council and staff will focus on maximizing effectiveness and clarity around the Council and staff roles. We will work on creating a clear vision for community engagement with an emphasis on enhancing relationships and collaboration between the African immigrant and African American communities. And, as always, we'll continue our passionate purpose of empowering the African Heritage community through legislative policy.



Linda Sloan, Executive Director  
Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage



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A report to the legislature as requested by Minn. Stat. § 15.0145, Subd. 8

MINNESOTA STATUTE 15.0145 ETHNIC COUNCILS  
Subd. 8. Reports. A council must report on the measurable outcomes achieved in the council's current strategic plan to meet its statutory duties, along with the specific objectives and outcome measures proposed for the following year. The Council must submit the report by January 15th each year to the Chairs of the committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate with primary jurisdiction over state government operations. Each report must cover the calendar year, before the report is submitted. The specific objectives and outcome measures for the following current year must focus on three or four achievable objectives, action steps and measurable outcomes for which the Council will be held accountable. The strategic plan may include other items that support the statutory purposes of the Council, but it should not distract from the primary statutory proposals presented. The biennial budget of each council must be submitted to the Legislative Coordinating Commission by February 1st in each odd-numbered year.



# emPOWERing

equitable action

## OUR MISSION

The Minnesota Legislature empowered the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) to ensure people of African Heritage fully and effectively participate in and equitably benefit from the political, social and economic resources, policies and procedures of the State of Minnesota. Generally, the Council is charged with the responsibility of:

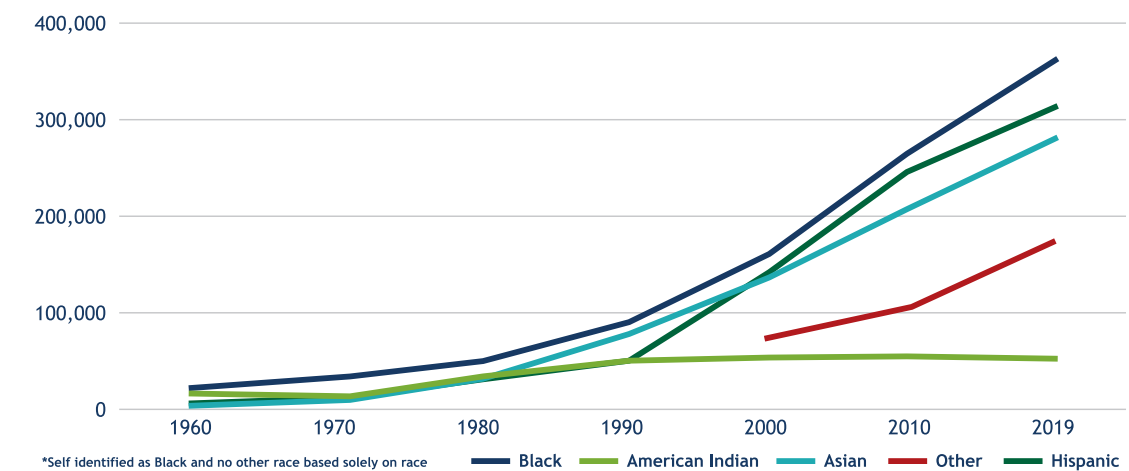
- Advising the governor and the legislature on issues confronting people of African Heritage;
- Advising the governor and the legislature on statutes, rules and revisions to programs to ensure people of African Heritage have access to benefits and services provided to people in Minnesota;
- Serving as a liaison to the federal government, local governments and private organizations on matters relating to people of African Heritage in Minnesota;

- Implementing programs designed to solve problems experienced by people of African Heritage when authorized by statute, rule or order; and
- Publicizing the accomplishments of people of African Heritage and their contributions to the state.

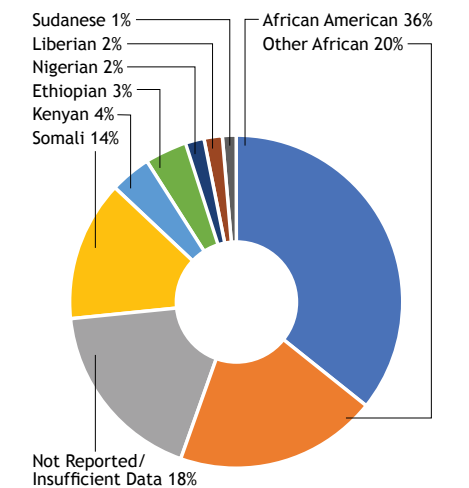
## LANDSCAPE OF THE AFRICAN HERITAGE COMMUNITY

The State Demographer reports that approximately 454,116 members of the African Heritage community live in Minnesota. The African Heritage community comprises approximately 8% of Minnesota's total population. It's the second-largest population group in the state. Minnesotans of African Heritage live primarily in the Twin Cities area. Minneapolis, Saint Paul and their surrounding suburbs are home to the largest populations of Minnesotans of African Heritage.

## POPULATIONS OF COLOR NOW TOTAL MORE THAN 1.19 MILLION IN MN, 21.1% OF THE POPULATION



Source: 1960-2010 - Census Count, 2019 American Community Survey Data



Data includes any Black alone or in combination with any other race based on ancestry.





## 2020 IS A YEAR WE WON'T FORGET

A global pandemic. Social and economic lockdowns. Acts we should never, ever have had to witness. We won't forget what happened in 2020—and we shouldn't. Collectively, we weep for all who were traumatized and died in 2020. Support people braving the front lines. And fight even harder knowing that, on top of all this, the African Heritage community has disproportionately suffered from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these tremendous challenges, the Council has made impressive progress in pursuit of healthier, safer, more prosperous outcomes for Minnesotans of African Heritage.

## EMPOWERMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY RESEARCH

In late August, the Council partnered with the Othering & Belonging Institute and Prosperity Now in a research initiative. The Lake Research Group conducted a nationwide and a Minnesota-specific poll, surveying the sentiments around a wide variety of reforms to policing, public safety and economic policy. Key takeaways around policing and economic policies and programs will help to guide our future strategic efforts.

## EMPOWERMENT THROUGH COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Our annual African Heritage Day on the Hill rallied over 300 Minnesotans of African Heritage at the Capitol and activated community members to engage in the legislative process. After the regular session concluded, CMAH invited legislators to our Legislative Session Debrief in July to review the initiatives and bills passed into law, as well as those needing to be brought back in 2021. The Council

hosted summer Community Roundtables focused on several issues, including these four key areas: public safety, public health, economic development and education. The Fall Policy Summit built on the insights learned from the summer to focus more specifically on policy priorities of chief importance for Minnesotans of African Heritage in preparation for the 2021 legislative session.

## EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LEGISLATIVE ACTION

We advised on several policy changes reflecting the needs of Minnesotans of African Heritage. We also leveraged our proximity to the governor and legislature to advocate for early actions on the George Floyd investigation, including the appointment of Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison as the lead prosecutor in the George Floyd murder.

We also issued a statement of support for several police reform bills and are grateful that the legislature used a special session to pass police reform:

- Establishing a new community relations advisory council to consult with the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board;
- Prohibiting the use of chokeholds and other restraint methods;
- De-escalation training for peace officers when responding to people with autism or in a mental health crisis;
- Outlawing warrior training;
- Creating a special independent Bureau of Criminal Apprehension unit for investigating fatal police encounters; and
- Additional required reporting around use-of-force incidents.



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remote reach

## 2020 OUTREACH REPORT

COVID-19 didn't stop us from consistently reaching out to the people we are so proud to serve. Outreach in 2020 was particularly poignant with the pandemic having a disproportionate effect on the African Heritage community. Among Minnesotans of African Heritage, 64% have filed for unemployment benefits over the course of the pandemic—the highest rates among Black workers in state history.

Below are some of the Council's outreach efforts during this unprecedented year.

## HR 1 LETTER OF SUPPORT

The Council issued a statement supporting Rep. Ruth Richardson's resolution to declare racism a public health crisis and affirm that the Minnesota House will be an active participant in the dismantling of racism across the state.

## TRACKING COMMUNITY-LED RESPONSES

We tracked African Heritage community partners throughout April as they proposed various policy solutions to mitigate the devastating effects of COVID-19 on African Heritage communities. These efforts were compiled and organized by issue area and a co-created policy one-pager accompanied the CMAH Chair letter to state leadership.

## CONSTITUENT PHONE BANK

The Council conducted 120 constituent calls during the pandemic to check in while also collecting pertinent information for the agency. Thirty-two conversations took place, which constituted a 27% response rate. Community members appreciated CMAH's outreach and sharing of resources for COVID-19 relief from various state departments.

## GREATER MINNESOTA OUTREACH

The Council held consistent statewide meetings with Greater Minnesota community leaders. We documented conversations with community and state partners for future reference. We also supported community members in Nobles County as they navigated the concentrated spread of COVID-19 and its effects on the meatpacking industry.

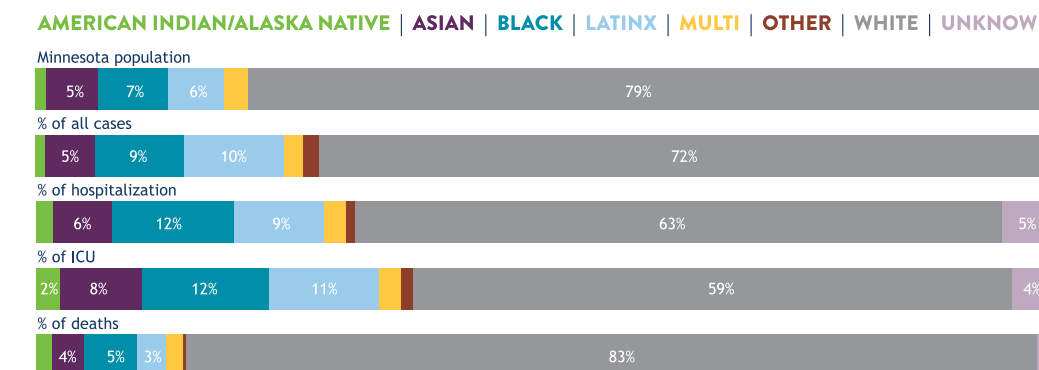
## OUTREACH WITH GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

We partnered with the governor's office to support outreach to African Heritage stylists and owners of hair and nail salons, barber shops, tattoo parlors, spas and other personal care services.

## CONVENING AFRICAN HERITAGE STAKEHOLDERS

Our coordinated outreach with community partners helped craft CMAH's agenda at the state level. At the height of the pandemic and the George Floyd uprising, the Council facilitated a number of web conference calls with Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan. During these calls, we addressed disparate outcomes faced by Minnesotans of African Heritage.

## SUMMARY OF COVID+ CASES, HOSPITALIZATION, ICU, AND DEATH BY RACE/ETHNICITY WITH STATE OF MN COMPARISON



Source: Minnesota COVID-19 Response (Coronavirus)/COVID-19 Updates and Information/Data by Race and Ethnicity-State of Minnesota



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stronger policies

## 2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

At the start of the regular legislative session, the Council released its 2020 Legislative Priorities document. This included 33 legislative bills focused on issues of child & family services, education, civil & human rights and justice reforms. The following is a list of key bills we supported that were led by a community partner and/or chiefly authored by African Heritage legislators:

- HF 342/SF 730: Minnesota African American Family Preservation Act
- HF 3103: CROWN Act—prohibits hair discrimination by race
- HF 2361/SF 2272: Funding appropriated for Minnesota Safe Streets
- HF 1717/SF 2974: Elimination of life without parole for juveniles
- HF 2514/SF 2403: Duluth-Iron Range African Heritage Hub study funding provided and money appropriated

We also supported the passing of a \$1.9 billion bonding bill in a special session. Thirty million of this bonding bill will fund capital projects for BIPOC communities.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing a statewide peacetime emergency on March 13, 2020, the legislature shifted its priorities to passing legislation for immediate relief for Minnesotans in the pandemic. Because of this, most existing bills introduced at the beginning of the regular session were not considered for potential passage.

## 2020 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

The Council testified or submitted letters of support to:

- Support Ombudsman for Corrections' recommendations for addressing the specific challenges COVID-19 poses in our corrections systems;
- Support HF 1717, working to eliminate life without release for juveniles. It's not right that African Heritage youth are more than five times as likely to be detained or committed compared to white youth;
- Support HF 3003, the High Rise Sprinkler Bill, ensuring safe and stable housing that's not dependent on economic status; and
- Support HF 3103, The CROWN Act, encouraging African Heritage women to embrace their natural hair styles in the workplace without fear of retribution or discrimination.







In October, the Council hosted an online voter engagement workshop with Secretary of State Steve Simon, Voter Outreach Director Nasser Mussa and Voter Outreach Specialist Michael Wall. The purpose was to build confidence in the voting process with a focus on how to vote by mail from home, vote safely in person and become an election judge.



### MINNESOTA HOUSE

Five legislators of African Heritage retained their seats in the Minnesota House and four new seats were added. We now have a total of nine African Heritage legislators in the House.

#### Returning Legislators

- Rep. Rena Moran, District 65A
- Rep. Mohamud Noor, District 60B
- Rep. Ruth Richardson, District 52B
- Rep. Hodan Hassan, District 62A
- Rep. Lisa Demuth, District 13A

#### Incoming New Legislators

- Rep. Esther Agbaje, District 59B
- Rep. Cedrick Frazier, District 45A
- Rep. Athena Hollins, District 66B
- Rep. John Thompson, District 67A

### MINNESOTA SENATE

We welcome Sen. Omar Fateh (District 62), who is joining Sen. Bobby Joe Champion (District 59) in the upcoming term. We also wish Sen. Jeff Hayden (District 62), well as he is leaving the Senate after being in his role since 2011. The Council and African Heritage communities are grateful for his service.

### NATIONAL

We congratulate Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris for her historic victory. We're thrilled as she becomes the first female Black and Asian vice president in the history of the United States of America.

## 2020 financial report

### FISCAL YEAR 2020/21 BUDGET

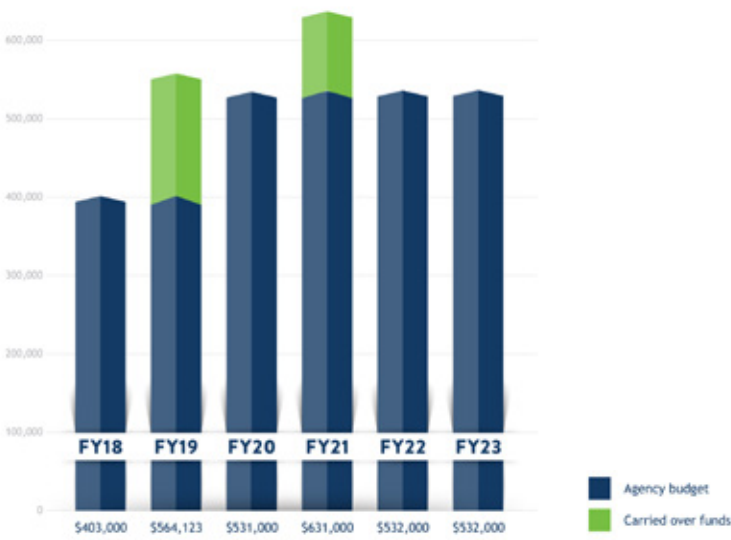
In fiscal year 2020 (FY20), the Council operated the year with a budget of \$531,000. It carried forward \$99,000 of staff savings into fiscal year 2021 (FY21). The Council's appropriation for FY21 was \$532,000, which brought the FY21 budget to \$631,000. This savings will be spent in operations and to further the work of the Council. Since FY21 is the end of the biennium, no savings will be rolled over into the fiscal year 2022/2023 (FY22/23) budget. The Council will go into FY22/23 with its original appropriation of \$532,000 unless additional funding to support an increase in staff is approved.

### FISCAL YEAR 2021 STAFFING OUTLOOK

The Council started the year with three full-time employees (FTE). In April, the Outreach Coordinator position was filled. Unfortunately, the Council experienced some turnover during the summer with the departure of its executive director and legislative and policy director. We would like to thank them for their service to the Council and to the community.

In October, the Legislative Coordinating Commission appointed Linda Sloan as the new executive director for the Council. The search for a new legislative and policy director is still ongoing. Filling that position will bring the staffing level to four FTEs. A change item request was submitted for an increase in staff to support legislative policy primarily for the African immigrant community.

### AGENCY BUDGET



### AGENCY STAFFING



FY22/23 Biennium 4 FTEs



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strong destinies

In 2021, the Council will continue advocating for our core policy priorities from previous years, in addition to major policy solutions to address the worsened disparities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the criminal justice system. We will deepen partnerships with our community stakeholders and will continue to develop partnerships in Greater Minnesota by building relationships with constituents working on local issues. These efforts will be connected through the statewide call, a tool to mobilize members in Duluth, Mankato, Rochester and St. Cloud.

The Council's monthly program includes executive and full Council meetings, the statewide call for partners outside of the Twin Cities, and legislative trainings. A summary of the monthly program:

- Week 1** - Executive Council meeting (the agenda for the full Council meeting is set). The meeting is open to the public and in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
- Week 2** - Full Council meeting (address Council business, welcome guest speakers from state leadership, hear testimony from the public). The meeting is open to the public and in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
- Week 3** - Legislative trainings and statewide call (monthly check-in with partners in Greater Minnesota).
- Week 4** - Staff prep Council members for the next phase of work.

The following 2021 timeline of activity forecasts the program structure of the Council.

| DATE               | EVENT                                   | DESCRIPTION  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| JANUARY 12         | Council Meeting                         | The Council presents its Annual Report and timeline of activity for the year.  |
| JANUARY 15         | Annual Report Due                       | The Annual Report is due to governing committees and the legislative library.  |
| JANUARY 18         | The Governor's 35th MLK Day Celebration | The Council, the Governor's MLK Day Council, and the Department of Human Rights co-host this event.                            |
| JANUARY 5 – MAY 17 | Legislative Session                     | The Council engages lawmakers on issues that affect the Council's constituents.  |
| FEBRUARY 24        | African Heritage Day on the Hill        | This event elevates the leadership of Minnesotans of African Heritage at the Capitol.  |
| MARCH              | Spring Break                            | The Council holds in-district meetings.  |
| MAY 17             | Session Ends                            | The Council starts prepping for the session debrief and statewide summer outreach efforts.                                     |
| JUNE               | Council Retreat                         | The Council holds training and strategic planning sessions for its leadership and staff.                                       |
| JUNE               | Session Debrief                         | The Council holds a community event with the United Black Legislative Caucus, offering an analysis of the legislative session. |
| JULY 1             | Begin FY22                              | Staff close out FY21 and finalize FY22 financials.   |
| JULY–SEPTEMBER     | Summer Statewide Outreach Program       | The Council works with constituents to host roundtable discussions on issues affecting constituents.                           |
| NOVEMBER           | Fall Policy Summit                      | The Council hosts a policy summit focused on community-derived solutions to issues facing constituents.                        |



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collaborative energy



## COMMITTEES

In addition to advising legislative leaders in the enactment of legislation, the Council collaborated with executive branch agencies to provide input on bringing racial equity to state services and administrative policies and practices. In 2020, the Council served as a liaison to the following executive branch bodies:

### COVID-19 Community Resiliency & Recovery Workgroup

Office of Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155

### Distance Learning Advisory Workgroup

Minnesota Department of Education  
1500 MN-36, Roseville, MN 55113

### Cultural and Ethnic Community Leadership Council

Minnesota Department of Human Services  
444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155  
<https://mn.gov/dhs/>

### Civic Engagement Committee

Minnesota Department of Human Rights  
Freeman Building  
625 Robert Street North, St. Paul, MN 55155  
<https://mn.gov/mdhr/>

### Governor's Council on the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

Governor's Office  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155  
<https://mn.gov/governor/>

### Violent Crime Coordinated Committee

Minnesota Department of Public Safety  
445 Minnesota Street, St. Paul, MN 55101  
<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/Pages/violent-crimes-coordinating-council.aspx>

### Governor's Workforce Development Board Racial Equity Committee

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development  
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, St. Paul, MN 55101  
<https://mn.gov/deed/>

### Minnesota Internal Control Round Table

Minnesota Management and Budget  
658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155  
<https://mn.gov/mmb/internalcontrol/>

### Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Taskforce on Law Enforcement Education Reform  
30 East 7th Street, St Paul, MN 55101  
<https://www.minnstate.edu/>

### Ombudsman Committee

Minnesota Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities  
121 7th Place East  
Suite 420 Metro Square Building, St. Paul, MN 55101  
<https://mn.gov/omhdd/>







#### Governor Appointees

**Nerita Hughes, Ed.D.,** *Chair*  
Term ends 01/03/2022

**Wayne Doe,** *Vice Chair*  
Term ends 01/02/2023

**Twauna Mullins,** *Secretary*  
Term ends 01/02/2023

**Alfreda Daniels,** *Treasurer*  
Term ends 01/01/2024

**Carl Crawford,** *Member*  
Term ends 01/02/2023

**Jude Nnadi,** *Member*  
Term ends 01/02/2023

**Andre Dukes,** *Member*  
Term ends 01/02/2023

**Quinton Bonds,** *Member*  
Term ends 01/01/2024

**Hollies Winston,** *Member*  
Term ends 01/01/2024

**Biftu Bussa,** *Member*  
Term ends 01/04/2021

**Debra Leigh,** *Member*  
Term ends 01/04/2021

**Mustafa Jumale,** *Member*  
Term ended 01/06/2020

**Fatima Lawson, Ph.D.,** *Member*  
Term ended 01/06/2020

**Atty. Amran Farah,** *Member*  
Term ended 01/06/2020

#### Legislative Members on the Council

**Rep. Mohamud Noor (DFL)**  
(House of Representatives)

**Sen. Jeff Hayden (DFL)**  
(Minnesota State Senate)

#### CMAH Staff

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**Vacant,** *Legislative and Policy Director*







COUNCIL FOR MINNESOTANS  
OF AFRICAN HERITAGE