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# Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program

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## **Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program 2024 Report to the Legislature**

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## Executive summary

This legislative report provides an update on the implementation of the Emmett Louis Till Victim Recovery Program. The Minnesota Legislature established the Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program in the Laws of Minnesota 2023, chapter 70, article 4, section 104. The first of its kind new competitive grant program was established to address the health and wellness needs of victims of trauma and the families and heirs of victims of trauma. A total of \$500,000 is available for this one-time grant program.

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, the Governor's Office, and the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation collaborated with MDH to design the competitive request for proposals (RFP). The RFP was released in March 2024. The Emmett Till Legacy Foundation additionally participated in the competitive review process. The final funding decisions for this grant program was done by MDH.

**Over one hundred community organizations submitted proposals** to provide health and wellness services, including supports to address physical, mental, cultural, and spiritual or faith-based needs, remembrance activities, cultural awareness services, and other services to promote healing for victims, families, and heirs, **requesting 13 times the allocated available funding. Clearly, this grant addresses an urgent need in Minnesota.**

Through a competitive review process, six grantees were selected. Two individual organizations received \$50,000 each: Creative Kuponya; Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church. Four collaborative applicants received \$100,000 each: Agape Oasis with Neighborhood Health Source; Phyllis Wheatley Community Center with Zion Baptist Church; Rainfall Therapy and Consulting with MJ Consultants; Shiloh Temple International Ministries with Epiphany Family Services.

In the first quarter of implementation, Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program **grantees provided individual and collective healing opportunities for 295 Minnesotans affected by trauma.**

- Wellness Retreats, Community Healing Circles, Healing Faith Services, and weekly Grief and/or Trauma groups were facilitated, serving 218 people through culturally specific collective healing opportunities. Community events were designed as low-barrier ways to engage victims, families, and heirs of trauma.
- 77 people received free individual therapy services, with access to additional holistic resources such as financial, employment, healthcare, housing and legal support and safety planning.

Through the first quarter of implementation, lessons learned have been identified including:

- Need to build in more time and resources for administrative processes and program roll out, including compensation for impacted community members to co-design processes.
- Ensure early and ongoing partnership with Minnesota's State Ethnic Councils.
- Clarify expectations for how grantees and MDH interact with impacted family organizations. While this grant was not designed to fund impacted family organizations directly, more work needs to be done to ensure these groups have opportunities to access the healing and therapeutic services funded by this grant.
- Resources for mental health capacity building for culturally specific and community-embedded organizations continues to be an unmet need.

Continued funding and resources are needed to help sustain healing and restoration efforts beyond the one year of implementation and meet the demonstrated needs and interests of community to effect positive change and healthy-lifestyle development. Future legislative reports will include summative information about this crucial work.

## About the Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program

The Minnesota Legislature established the Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program in the Laws of Minnesota 2023, chapter 70, article 4, section 104. The new competitive grant program was established to address the health and wellness needs of victims of trauma and the families and heirs of victims of trauma. A total of \$500,000 is available for this one-time grant program. The grant program is named for Emmett Louis Till, a 14-year-old Black boy who was kidnapped, lynched, and brutally murdered in a racially motivated hate crime in 1955. The program was established to support victims of trauma as defined below, including all individuals who have experienced discrimination or oppression based on race, ethnicity, or national origin. To learn more about the history and legacy of Emmett Louis Till, you can read the [Emmett Till Story](https://emmettilllegacyfoundation.com/emmetts-story/) (<https://emmettilllegacyfoundation.com/emmetts-story/>) on the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation website.

The grant serves:

- Victims/survivors who experienced trauma, including historical trauma, resulting from events such as assault or another violent physical act, intimidation, false accusations, wrongful conviction, a hate crime, the violent death of a family member, or experiences of discrimination or oppression based on the victim's race, ethnicity, or national origin; and
- The families and heirs of victims/survivors described above, who experienced trauma, including historical trauma, because of their proximity or connection to the victim.

## Efforts to support healing from harm caused by racialized discrimination and violence is needed in Minnesota

Though Emmett Louis Till was not from Minnesota, the type of violence that he faced, and the type of trauma that the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation seeks to address, has deep roots in Minnesota that continue to present day.

**In 1862, Mankato, MN became the site of the largest mass execution in United States history.** After 303 Dakota men were tried for their participation in the US-Dakota War in legal proceedings of questionable fairness, military personnel executed 38 Dakota men in front of thousands of spectators. At least two of the men had been hanged by mistake, according to the Minnesota Historical Society. This display of racialized violence, along with the violent campaigns of forced exile and the mass internment at Fort Snelling that followed, deeply affected the ability of the Dakota people to live safely and cultivate thriving communities in Minnesota. Contemporary Dakota people, many of whom have returned to Minnesota despite legal exile and have established strong communities throughout the state, hold and honor the memory of these men, as well as two

additional Dakota chiefs who were executed shortly afterwards, through purposeful acts of remembrance like the Dakota Riders' 330-mile commemorative ride from Flandreau, SD to Mankato.

Lynchings, public executions often involving extreme brutality, such as torture, mutilation, decapitation, and desecration, were used by white mobs to terrorize Black Americans and indigenous people throughout the nation, including in Minnesota. **There were at least 219 lynchings known to have occurred in northern states between 1889 and 1918, likely an undercount due to lack of documentation<sup>1</sup>; twenty of these incidents occurred in Minnesota<sup>2</sup>.** The [Minnesota Historical Society \(https://www.mnhs.org/duluthlynchings\)](https://www.mnhs.org/duluthlynchings) has curated extensive research on the story of three Black men who were lynched in Duluth in 1920. In the decade following this event, the Black population of Duluth decreased by 16% despite high rates of overall growth in the city, as African Americans fled.

**Communities subjected to historical trauma often experience disproportionate harm from the same systems that are meant to protect them from violence.** An MDH investigation found that from 2016-2021, American Indian/Alaska Native Minnesotans were 5.7 times as likely as white Minnesotans to die of injuries associated with law enforcement and civilian encounters<sup>3</sup>. The same study found that Black, African, and African American Minnesotans were 4.5 times as likely to die in these scenarios than their white counterparts.

**Minnesota communities have continued to be forced to bear witness to public executions, streamed over social media and shared through mainstream news outlets. From 2013 to 2023, law enforcement encounters have resulted in the deaths of 135 people in Minnesota<sup>4</sup>,** including young adults such as Fong Lee, Dolal Idd, Daunte Wright, and Amir Locke, all who were under the age of 24 at the time of their death. While charges have been brought against officers in some cases, including in the deaths of Philando Castille, Ricky Cobb II, Justine Damond, and George Floyd, few result in legal justice. Regardless of the legal outcome, families and communities are left to process and identify their next steps (how to, where to, what to do) and “carry-on” with significant grief and collective trauma and harm. **Each of these modern-day lynchings have repercussions beyond the victim and the victim's loved ones. These harms and losses create ripple effects that compromise feelings of safety and belonging across the community.**

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<sup>1</sup> National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (1969). *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States 1889-1918* (New York: Negro University Press, [1919 ed.]), 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ziebarth, M. (1996). “Judge Lynch in Minnesota,” *Minnesota History* 55, no. 2: 72.

<sup>3</sup> Cole, C., Townsend, B., Mani, A., Roesler, J., & Lynfield, R. (2022). *Establishing a Baseline Measure for Evaluating Upstream, Primary Prevention Efforts: Quantifying Fatal Events Associated with Law Enforcement Service Calls and Encounters in Minnesota – 2016-2021.* <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/documents/leaf2021.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Mapping Police Violence. (2024). <https://mappingpoliceviolence.us>

**The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension documented over 600 reported bias-motivated offenses, also known as hate crimes, taking place from 2021 to 2023<sup>5</sup>.** Of these, 58% were motivated by bias related to race, ethnicity, or ancestry. Due to a combination of barriers to reporting, it is understood that most hate crime statistics in the US are significant undercounts.<sup>6</sup> **The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) and the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (CAPM) have likewise identified discrimination as key issues facing their constituents.** MCLA's 2024 Community Priorities Analysis named discrimination as a significant barrier, with 35% of survey respondents reporting addressing discrimination as a top priority.<sup>7</sup> In the last legislative cycle, CAPM has supported multiple proposals to address discrimination, including proposals to provide resources to address discriminatory and hateful behavior in schools in response to a rise in anti-Asian discrimination and violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>8</sup>

Communities that have experienced historical trauma or have been historically excluded from safety and the resources necessary to thrive past trauma experience elevated rates of interpersonal violence. The Minnesota Violent Death Reporting System found that from 2015-2021, the crude rate of homicides per 100,000 population was 17.5 for Black or African American Minnesotans and 14.1 for American Indian/Alaska Native Minnesotans, compared to 1.2 for white Minnesotans.<sup>9</sup> While the majority of these homicides occur to male victims, women and gender expansive people from marginalized racial and ethnic groups are known to experience unique, intersectional forms of gendered and racialized violence. These **patterns of gendered and racialized violence and their roots in structural inequities and historical oppression are described in legislative reports prepared by the State of Minnesota's task forces on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives<sup>10</sup> and Missing and Murdered African American Women<sup>11</sup>.**

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<sup>5</sup> Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. (2024). Minnesota Crime Data Explorer: Bias Related Crimes. <https://cde.state.mn.us/BiasMotivatedCrimes/BiasMotivatedCrimes>

<sup>6</sup> Sill, K. & Paul Haskins, P. (2023). Using Research to Improve Hate Crime Reporting and Identification. <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/using-research-improve-hate-crime-reporting-and-identification>

<sup>7</sup> Minnesota Council of Latino Affairs. (2024). 2024 Community Priorities Analysis. [Community Listening Sessions Report 2024 \(https://mn.gov/mcla/assets/Community%20Listening%20Sessions%20Report%202024\\_tcm1099-653321.pdf\)](https://mn.gov/mcla/assets/Community%20Listening%20Sessions%20Report%202024_tcm1099-653321.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans. (2024). Where we are headed: 2023 Annual Report. [2023 Annual Report \(https://mn.gov/capm/assets/2023\\_Annual\\_Report\\_tcm1051-608579.pdf\)](https://mn.gov/capm/assets/2023_Annual_Report_tcm1051-608579.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Minnesota Department of Health. (2024). Minnesota Violent Death Reporting System (MNVDRS) Dashboard. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/mnvdrs.html>

<sup>10</sup> Wilder Research. (2023). Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives: Policy, Best and Emerging Practices, and Current Issues in Minnesota. <https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/assets.dps.mn.gov/s3fs-public/migrated-files/divisions/ojp/mmir/Documents/mmir-office-wilder-report-2023.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Research in Action. (2022). Missing and Murdered African American Women Taskforce Final Report. <https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/assets.dps.mn.gov/s3fs-public/MMAW%20Task%20Force%20final%20report.pdf>

When any individual instance of violence or discrimination occurs in Minnesota today, it occurs in the context of historical trauma and structural inequities. It affects not only an individual person but their families, communities, and their feelings of safety, belonging, trust, mental/social and behavioral wellness, and community responsiveness. Services and supports meant to address these incidents must therefore also promote healing beyond the individual level, promoting healing of families, communities, and the systems that surround them. Communities that have experienced victimization carry the cultural knowledge and wisdom for healing that has sustained their communities and nations for generations. **Healing approaches need to be led by the communities most affected. The role of government in this paradigm is to build relationships and support community-led efforts with time and resources to do this therapeutic healing work.** The role of government in this paradigm is to build relationships, support community-led efforts and re-engagement activities that promote positive change within harmed communities with time and resources to do this healing work.

## Grant implementation underway

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) began work to start this new competitive grant program by designating staff, identifying, and meeting with community partners, and creating a timeline for implementation. The Injury and Violence Prevention Section in the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Division has been selected to implement the Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program. The Injury and Violence Prevention Section has content expertise in violence prevention and experience implementing community-engaged competitive grant programs. Although there was no administrative funding provided by the MN Legislature to MDH, the Injury and Violence Prevention Section has dedicated staff time to facilitate a community engagement process, oversee the competitive request for proposals, manage outgoing grants, and evaluate the program. As specified in the legislative language, MDH’s Commissioner is directed to consult with victims, families, and heirs in awarding competitive grants under this program. The Injury and Violence Prevention Section consulted with MDH’s Center for Health Equity, the Governor’s Office, the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH), and the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation to design the competitive request for proposals (RFP). The RFP was released in March 2024. In addition to the initial consultation, the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation participated in the competitive review process, providing input into the final funding decisions for this grant program.

## Timeline for implementation

The Minnesota Department of Health created the following timeline for implementing the Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program. Based on this timeline, the current legislative report only includes data from the first quarter of grantee implementation.

Activity	Date
Post Request for Proposals (RFP)	March 1, 2024
Applications Due	April 1, 2024
Competitive Review of Applications	April 2024
Notice of Award	May 2024
Grant Awards Start	July 2024
First Quarter Grantee Report (Reporting period July 1-September 30th)	October 15, 2024



## Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program Legislative Report

Activity	Date
Second Legislative Report	January 15, 2025
Second Quarter Grantee Report (Reporting period October 1- December 31st)	February 15, 2025
Third Quarter Grantee Report (Reporting period January 1- March 31st)	April 15, 2025
Fourth Quarter Grantee Report (Reporting period April 1- June 30th)	June 15, 2025
Grant Awards End	June 30, 2025

### Summary of applicants

Sixty-one organizations submitted a proposal for funding by the submission deadline, totaling a request for \$3,723,802. An additional 45 proposals were submitted after the due date and were not reviewed; assuming the unreviewed proposals requested comparable funding amounts on average to the reviewed submissions, community organizations overall proposed healing projects worth over \$6,470,800 in response to the Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program RFP-far beyond the \$500,000 available. Ninety percent of proposals submitted within the deadline were received from organizations primarily located within the Twin Cities seven county metro area, however applications were also received from organizations located in Beltrami, Carlton, St. Louis, Stearns, and Wright counties. Members of the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation reviewed all proposals submitted by the submission deadline alongside reviewers from MDH, the Governor’s Office, and CMAH.

### Summary of awardees

Six proposals were awarded funding.

Two individual organizational applicants received \$50,000 each:

- Creative Kuponya
- Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church

Four collaborative applicants received \$100,000 each:

- Agape Oasis in collaboration with Neighborhood Health Source
- Phyllis Wheatley Community Center in collaboration with Zion Baptist Church
- Rainfall Therapy and Consulting, PLLC, in collaboration with MJ Consultants, LLC
- Shiloh Temple International Ministries in collaboration with Epiphany Family Services

Grantees were funded to provide the following services:

1. Health and wellness services, which may include services and support to address physical health, mental health, cultural needs, and spiritual or faith-based needs
2. Remembrance and legacy preservation activities
3. Cultural awareness services
4. Community resources and services to promote healing for victims, families, and heirs

## Project synopses

### **Creative Kuponya**

Creative Kuponya began in 2017 with a mission to Decolonize Mental Health. Creative Kuponya developed a BIPOC Therapy Fund in 2020 following the loss of their offices in the fires of the civil unrest in Minneapolis. With the money that was contributed, they started a fund for Black and Brown humans in Minnesota that seek healing within a space that is SAFE due to cultural matches and lack of the medical model's forced diagnosis. Currently, Creative Kuponya has roughly 25 Black humans and families that are seeking services and are on their waitlist because they do not want to use insurance due to forced diagnosis. This funding will allow Creative Kuponya to offer no cost mental health therapy care through their Oppressive Trauma Informed, Somatic and Creative lens.

### **Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church**

Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church is a faith community committed to emotional wellbeing, social change, and spiritual transformation located in the McKinley neighborhood of Minneapolis. Fellowship recently held a dedication ceremony for its new Youth Development Center, a space designed to meet the wellness needs of young people living in a world of challenges. A key feature of the Center is the therapy suite, where mental health services are delivered. Community health workers are available a few days a week to meet with participants one-on-one, deliver care for common illnesses, administer vaccines, and make referrals to full medical care or other community resources. The Center also has a large multi-purpose space for socialization, media activities, community meetings, family gatherings, and more. This project will serve up to 100 participants ages six to 24, who have been impacted by emotional and physical trauma, violence, lack of resources, and systemic racism. Services include outpatient therapy and counseling, health services, and opportunities for social-emotional learning including gameplay, creative arts, media communications, and socialization.

### **Agape Oasis in collaboration with Neighborhood Health Source**

Agape Oasis (Oasis of Love Crisis Intervention Center) provides comprehensive trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy, and community resources. This project (Resilient Futures) includes grief care, trauma support, mentoring, community engagement, and internship opportunities. They offer individual and group counseling sessions led by trained counselors specializing in grief care and generational trauma. Oasis facilitates the connection of youth to positive mentors who support conflict-resolution skills, and model constructive ways to handle challenges. The Resilient Futures Project feature monthly family-centered events with activities that welcome families to foster a sense of belonging and connectedness. Events include workshops on civic engagement, leadership development, and conflict resolution to empower youth to become agents of change in their communities. Lastly, Oasis partners with Neighborhood Healthsource (NHS) to develop 25 internships. Oasis trains youth violence prevention ambassadors to become community health educators through paid internships, assisting with the design and implementation of community events. Agape Oasis was acknowledged by Governor Walz, with a State of Minnesota Proclamation awarded on Youth Violence Prevention Day, April 27, 2024 and during October for Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. These proclamations were made in conjunction with their state recognized annual events held within the Twin Cities.

### **Phyllis Wheatley Community Center in collaboration with Zion Baptist Church**

Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, founding in 1924, is the oldest, longest-running African American agency in the Twin Cities. Phyllis Wheatley Community Center uses grant funds to sustain and strengthen their HOPE (Helping Our People Evolve) Restorative Programs and Quality Parenting Academy. These programs provide support to help participants heal from trauma, cope with stress, and establish healthy behaviors and relationships. This grant support helps serve an additional 30-40 new people dealing with trauma-related issues in their community through the partnership with Zion Baptist Church in our HOPE for Women, HOPE for Youth, and Quality Parenting Academy program with helps families involved with Child Protective Services.

### **Rainfall Therapy and Consulting, PLLC, in collaboration with MJ Consultants, LLC**

Rainfall Therapy and Consulting in collaboration with MJ Consultants are creating, organizing, and facilitating Community Healing Circles, a Healing and Wellness Fair, Wellness Retreats, and Grief/Trauma Therapy Groups. The Healing and Wellness Fair create a nurturing environment where participants can engage in open conversations about mental health and access various healing practices to normalize conversations about mental health. Community Healing Circles provide a safe and supportive space for participants to share, heal, and connect through the principles of cultural wisdom. These groups are held monthly with an interactive format with at least one licensed therapist and community healer present. Wellness Retreats are offered in either a day long or half day format and include individual and team exercises, alongside our horse/equine partners, to practice mindfulness, breathwork, connection to nature, food, yoga and reiki.

### **Shiloh Temple International Ministries in collaboration with Epiphany Family Services**

In collaboration with Epiphany Family Services, Shiloh Temple International Ministries (STIM) hosts health and wellness services as a low barrier entry and connection to mental health healing counseling. STIM facilitates healing and remembrance church services for the community. Culturally specific organizations in the community are invited to participate and showcase various praise dance teams, choirs, soloists, drummers, and other talent. People with lived experience of traumatic loss are invited to share their testimonies about their experiences of grief and their healing journeys. The service culminates with a Call to Action by inviting everyone in need of grief counseling to put their names and contact information on a sign-up sheet for follow up by Epiphany Family Services staff. These individuals are then offered grief counseling services in a support group or individual format.

## **Preliminary impacts from the first quarter of implementation**

In the first quarter of program implementation, July 1- September 30, **295 people were provided with services to promote healing or participated in cultural awareness activities.**

- Four Trauma and Wellness Retreats, seven Community Healing Circles, one Healing Service, and three weekly Grief and/or Trauma groups were facilitated, serving 218 people through culturally-specific collective healing opportunities.
- 77 people received free individual therapy services, including access to additional holistic resources such as financial literacy, healthcare access, rent support and eviction prevention, basic necessities, safety planning, legal support, and employment resources.

**Grantee Spotlight: Rainfall Therapy Wellness Retreat, as written by Rainfall Therapy**

Our retreats are held on the summer land of the Anishinaabe, where historically ricing in the lakes occurred and plant medicines continue to grow on the lands. The intimate retreat setting served approximately 12 people for each group. Our focus was to provide a safe space for those wanting to find relief, renewal, rejuvenation, and release as they began or continued their trauma healing journey. Using somatic based body work, new skills, and techniques were offered as we integrated new ways to reconnect with self, others, animals, and the surrounding nature. Participating with our equine/horse partners in grounded work as well as integrating painting art, we processed internal safety, intuition, self-compassion, and connection. Education was offered in regards to understanding the nervous system, tracking body sensations, and regulation.

Our first retreat was offered to the adolescent and young adults at Rezek House. Rezek House is a transitional living program located in the Frogtown neighborhood of St. Paul for youth experiencing homelessness. Many of these youth were resistant to the idea of healing with nature and animals because it was unfamiliar. As the day progressed and safety was formed, everyone was able to rest and reconnect.

We had a group from another local shelter program cancel with only four days' notice. Since we already had the date saved and planned for, we decided to open up the event to anyone who self-identified as having experienced trauma. The retreat filled within two days. The participants were able to find rest from the daily grind of societal pressure, attend to self, and focus on restoration.

The third and fourth retreats were full day retreats, offering a focus for restoration and reconnection. We found that the full day retreat offered a more intensive time for reflection, connection, and restoration. It allowed for the integration of the mind, body, and soul to find safety and begin to heal.

The retreats were a huge success with full participation from the community. We met capacity and even had a waiting list. Participants have asked if these retreats can continue to be offered on a regular and consistent basis. This was a firm acknowledgement of the healing journey that began for many on their retreat day.

Participants wrote the following and gave permission to share:

*"I want to express my deepest appreciation for allowing me to be part of the healing retreat. It's been such a long time since I've felt so much peace in my mind, body, and spirit here in Minnesota. The connection I felt—to my inner child, my present self, and my elder self—continues to nurture my soul even now, seven days later. The laughter, the stories, the land, the food, the horses, the faith, and the kinship were a form of medicine that can only be felt and never bought. I am so deeply grateful for that." – Retreat participant*

*"Thank you for the experience. Journeying to the retreat site opened up the healing process for me in nature. I am grateful for the space with the horses who showed me how to immediately release energy so it does not get stuck in the body. I learned about solid mental health practices. I was nourished with food I could eat. I got to sit with others who made me feel at home. The tool kit travels with me almost daily and I am still unpacking my experiences. The ability to cry freely felt supportive and healthy. I look forward to working with the [organization] to continue my healing." – Retreat participant*

*“From the moment I found out about this kind of therapy I was hesitant, not because I don’t believe in therapy but because I didn’t understand. Staff did such an amazing job with explaining what to expect as well as allowing me to go at my own pace while being in the moment. One thing I took away from this amazing experience is that no matter where you are, ‘notice’ the things around you and to truly live in the moment, pour back into self and be your authentic self.” – Retreat participant*

## Lessons learned from implementation: the necessity of community partners

Through the first quarter of implementation, the following lessons learned have been identified:

- **Build in more time and resources for administrative processes and program roll out for new grant programs, including compensation for impacted community members to co-design processes.** The one-year timeframe has created a process of implementation that felt rushed for community partners and state agencies, compressing processes that would have benefitted from more time for thoughtful design and rollout. Emmett Till Legacy Foundation members supported the design, grantee selection, and implementation of this project without financial compensation for their significant time and effort. This collaboration was critical; future iterations must include mechanisms to compensate for the labor of impacted family organizations in program design, proposal review, and implementation.
- **Ensure early and ongoing partnership with Minnesota’s State Ethnic Councils.** The Minnesota State Ethnic Councils were created by the MN Legislature to represent and advocate for Minnesota’s communities of color; in addition to the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH), there is the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (CAPM), the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA), and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC). Early consultation with CMAH to design the RFP and review process was critical in connecting MDH staff with the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation and ensuring that the RFP was written in such a way as to be responsive to community interests. The councils play key roles in connecting communities, the MN Legislature, and Tribal leadership in the case of MIAC. Future legislative funding could require consultation with all ethnic councils; in the absence of a legislative mandate, MDH should make consultation with the councils’ policy and/or standard practices for projects that impact their constituents.
- **Disseminate coordinated statewide information about grant opportunities and decisions through community-accessible communication channels; ensure communication about grant efforts reach impacted families.** Based on the high submission of proposals, there is demonstrated community interest in this type of funding source. While a press release went out, partners reported that applicant organizations and general community members requested more accessible information about when funding sources are released, how to get involved in review processes, and information about selected grantees across state agencies. Additionally, there was concern that families currently dealing with the impacts of losing a loved one to a hate crime or violent death were not made aware of the services provided by this grant. Communication about grantees funded through this program should be geared towards directly reaching impacted families.
- **Continue listening and being responsive to community feedback; continue providing avenues for grantees to connect with each other.** Community partners reported that MDH staff genuinely listened to feedback

from community partners about the RFP design, engaged with feedback, and shifted plans accordingly to be responsive to community. Additionally, community partners appreciated the community of practice approach to grant management, providing grantees an opportunity to share and build collaboration across grantees.

- **Clarify expectations for how grantees and MDH interact with impacted family organizations.** There are multiple survivor-led advocacy groups or foundations in Minnesota, created by family members who have lost someone to violent deaths including people who have died due to a police encounter. These groups host anniversary events, offer support to other families dealing with grief and navigating justice systems, and do other activities to continue the community legacies of their loved ones, all while in the midst of their own healing processes. **While this grant was not designed to fund organizations like this directly, more work needs to be done to ensure these groups have opportunities to access the healing and therapeutic services funded by this grant.** Likewise, MDH should be directly partnering with more of these organizations for their input in program design, grantee selection, and implementation, including financial compensation for their time and effort as mentioned above.
- **Resources for mental health capacity building for culturally specific and community-embedded organizations continues to be an unmet need.** Due to the short, one-year funding period, projects and grantees that had capacity to immediately begin providing therapy and healing services were prioritized. However, many culturally specific and community-embedded organizations expressed an interest in building their capacity to provide therapeutic services. Community-embedded organizations are well positioned to provide low-barrier access to healing services for communities experiencing the greatest impacts of violence, however they need funds for training staff in advanced therapeutic modalities. Organizations with established expertise in providing culturally competent, community-based mental health services could be supported to provide technical assistance to future grantees as well as provide coordinated outreach to impacted families. The Emmett Till Legacy Foundation emphasized that “licensed trauma informed therapist and those in communities that have experienced victimization carry the cultural knowledge, training and wisdom for healing that has sustained their communities and nations for generations. More diverse and culturally specific healing approaches along with therapy need to be led by the communities most affected. The role of government in this paradigm is to build relationships and support community-led, trauma informed, culturally integrated efforts with time and resources to do this healing work.”

## Next Steps

- **Continue implementation through the duration of the grant year, documenting program successes and lessons learned.** Exit interviews will be conducted with each grantee to document program outcomes and gather feedback for future funding iterations.
- **Identify ways to sustain, continue, and expand the Emmett Louis Till Victim Recovery Grants beyond this initial year of implementation.** This is the first-time funding like this has been designated by the state to promote healing for victims, their families, and heirs. There is clear need for this work to continue and expand to additional communities across Minnesota.
- Increase funding to be responsive to the demonstrated community interest and to expand the scope to additional eligible communities. Many great projects did not receive funding in this first round.