

MINNESOTA GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES MEANINGFUL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AS MEANS TO CREATE A MORE INCLUSIVE STRONGER DEMOCRACY

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I. Introduction

The State of Minnesota has sought to be a leader on civil rights and providing equal opportunities for all.² Minnesota was the first state within the United States to form a statewide agency to combat discrimination when it created the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (the Department) in 1967.³ While civil rights progress in Minnesota has not always been linear, Minnesota is generally regarded as a leader among states within the United States on civil rights issues.⁴ In 2012, the voters in Minnesota defeated constitutional amendments denying same-sex couples the right to marry and requiring photo identification to vote.⁵ In 2013, Minnesota joined a handful of jurisdictions prohibiting private employers from inquiring into the criminal history of job applicants prior to extending the job applicant an interview.⁶ In 2014, Minnesota

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² In 1967, Minnesota Governor Harold LeVander in his inauguration speech called upon Minnesotans to lead on civil rights and creating equal opportunities for all. Governor LeVander stated, “We need people who have an understanding and compassion for men. We need people who want to follow the commandment ‘Love one Another.’ Because our most critical problems are really people problems, we are going to have to try to understand people. How do we encourage society to accept the former convict? How do we motivate underprivileged children? How do we create true harmony among races? . . . I am asking Minnesota to take the opportunity to initiate and implement programs that will set the pace for meeting our present and future problems. In a word, I am asking Minnesota to lead. If we in Minnesota can’t create racial harmony, we should ask no state to do it.” Governor Harold LeVander, Inaugural Address to the 65th Session of the Minnesota Legislature, January 4, 1967.

³ Governor LeVander in his 1969 state of state speech to the Minnesota Legislature commended Minnesota for its work in establishing the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. Governor LeVander noted, “It is an issue which intimately affects every man and directly tests our principles. It is the question of human rights. Two years ago we recognized the vital importance of this concern and you created the nation’s first Department of Human Rights. You passed a fair housing law. The Department formed almost 50 local human rights councils and handled over 450 cases of discrimination.” Governor Harold LeVander, Inaugural Address to the 66th Session of the Minnesota Legislature, January 8, 1969.

⁴ At the 1948 Democratic convention, Minneapolis Mayor Hubert Humphrey, who would subsequently be elected to the United States Senate and attain the office of Vice-President of the United States, delivered a landmark address calling upon his political party “to get out of the shadow of states’ rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights.” See, “Into the bright sunshine - Hubert Humphrey’s civil-rights agenda,” MinnPost, Iric Nathanson, May 23, 2011.

⁵ See, *Minnesota voters beat same-sex marriage, photo ID measures*, MPRNEWS, Patrick Condon, Associated Press, November 7, 2012 and *Minnesota residents vote down photo ID requirement*, ROCHESTER POST BULLETIN, November 7, 2012. Minnesota was the only state in the United States in 2012 to defeat a ballot initiative restricting enfranchisement rights. The Department of Human Rights conducted several town hall meetings throughout Minnesota discussing both constitutional amendments in the months leading up to the November vote.

⁶ See, Minn. Stat. 364.021 and Minn. Stat. 364.06. See also, Avery, B. and Hernandez, P., *Ban the Box: U.S. Cities, Counties, and States Adopt Fair Hiring Policies*. NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT LAW PROJECT TOOLKIT, April 20, 2018.

passed the Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) to become one of the first states in the nation to take action to ensure that its large business contracting partners provide equal pay to women⁷ and to require all employers in Minnesota to allow pregnant employees the ability to obtain lifting, sitting and bathroom accommodations without having to submit a note from their treating medical professional.⁸

Another step taken by the State of Minnesota to lead on civil rights issues and ensure that all people are provided with equal opportunities was the creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Council. On January 20, 2015, Governor Mark Dayton signed Executive Order 15-02 (Executive Order) which formally established the creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Council.⁹ The Executive Order constituted a fundamental change for Minnesota Government in approaching and pursuing the creation of state government employment and business contracting opportunities with historically disenfranchised communities beyond regulatory compliance with Minn. Stat. 16A and 43A.¹⁰

The most significant fundamental change for Minnesota Government within the Executive Order however was the establishment for the first time of a coordinated effort by state government to ensure that all Minnesotans could participate in the development of public policy through meaningful civic engagement with administrative agencies.¹¹ The effort to create a statewide framework for authentic civic engagement was an ambitious effort by Minnesota officials as the academic literature on civic engagement suggest that such efforts had been exclusively confined to cities and counties.¹²

The purpose of this paper is to provide information about the steps taken by the public, administrative agency officials, and the Department to make the vision of civic engagement among administrative agencies set forth within the Executive Order a reality. The author hopes that government officials will take the ideas and lessons learned through the effort undertaken in Minnesota to improve upon future civic engagement efforts within all levels of government and encourage other states to implement statewide civic engagement.¹³ This paper will discuss the formation of the civic engagement steering committee, the civic engagement work plan created by the steering committee, the governance structure created to implement and sustain civic engagement, and the efforts undertaken by the State of Minnesota to implement the civic engagement work plan. In an effort to provide context for how civic engagement came to be

⁷ Minn. Stat. §363A.44-45. See also, "Equal Pay Certificate of Compliance Report, 2016-2018" Minnesota Department of Human Rights, April 10, 2018.

⁸ Minn. Stat. §181.9414.

⁹ Executive Order 15-02 provides, in part, that Minnesota should lead "in its commitment to equal employment opportunities, equal contracting opportunities and full participation in civic life for all Minnesotans." The Executive Order was subsequently amended by Executive Order 16-01.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.* Executive Order 15-02 provides, in part, that all in Minnesota should "have the opportunity to fully participate in the development of policy within our vibrant democracy."

¹² See, Christopher Hoene, Christopher Kingsley, and Matthew Leighninger, *Bright Spots in Community Engagement*, NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES, April 2013.

¹³ The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals within the Minnesota Department of Human Rights for their work in moving civic engagement forward in Minnesota - Nick Kor, Civic Engagement Director; Mai Thor, Civic Engagement Coordinator; and Rowzat Shipchandler, Deputy Commissioner of Human Rights.

embedded within the Executive Order and the role of the Department in this effort it is helpful to begin with a discussion the current civic engagement and participation landscape and the events that led to the creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Council.

II. Public Engagement and Participation in Public Policy Landscape

Public engagement is a broad term that encompasses a wide variety of indirect and direct activities by which people's concerns, needs, interests, and values are incorporated into decisions and actions on public matters and interests.¹⁴ Direct participation occurs when people are personally involved and actively engaged in providing input, making decisions, and solving problems whereas indirect participation occurs when people select someone to act on their behalf as an agent.¹⁵ Direct participation generally falls into one of three categories — conventional, thin, and thick.¹⁶

Conventional participation is the form of participation which most people are familiar. In conventional participation, citizens are often asked to sit in a room and watch decision-makers sit behind a table and go through a pre-set agenda that defines the topics for discussions for the meeting.¹⁷ Once the agenda has been exhausted, there is typically a limited public comment period in which citizens have a few minutes at an open microphone to address the decision-makers.¹⁸

Thin participation refers to a variety of fast, easy, and convenient approaches that allow individuals to receive information, submit ideas, indicate preferences, or provide feedback in a fast or convenient way.¹⁹ As thin participation usually has short time commitments that involve a discrete amount of information, it generally occurs by telephone, online or during an isolated face-to-face meeting.²⁰

Thick participation refers to processes in which large numbers of people work together in small groups to discuss, learn, decide and act together.²¹ Common elements of thick participation include proactive member recruitment, small-group facilitations, sequenced discussion, framing of issues and decision making of action planning.²² While thick participation often occurs when members meet face-to-face, a growing number of online platforms for thick participation have emerged such as Engagement HQ, MetroQuest and Zilino.²³ Thick participation is

¹⁴ Amsler, L., and Nabatchi, T. *Public Engagement and Decision-Making: Moving Minnesota Forward to Dialogue and Deliberation*, 42 MITCHELL HAMLINE LAW REVIEW 1629, 1656 (2016).

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.* at 1657.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.* at 1658.

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

the most meaningful and powerful; unfortunately thick participation is also the least common as it is the most intensive and time consuming.²⁴

There is no definition of public participation at the federal level despite over two hundred mandates for public participation within the United States Code.²⁵ All too often, public participation has been reduced at the federal level to limited written public comment during the rulemaking process or three minutes in front of a microphone at the end of a public meeting.²⁶

Minnesota statutes, similar to federal law, generally contain very little detail about public participation except with regard to notice and comment during the rulemaking process.²⁷ Several administrative agencies are however specifically instructed under Minnesota law to “use technology where appropriate to increase agency productivity, improve customer service, increase public access to information about government, and increase public participation in the business of government.”²⁸

III. Creation of Diversity and Inclusion Council Executive Order

In April of 2011, Governor Dayton convened a meeting in North Minneapolis to hear about pressing issues within the African-American community.²⁹ At the time of the meeting, the extent of disparities in the unemployment rate between African-Americans and Caucasians was among the starkest among metropolitan areas in the United States.³⁰ In 2011, the unemployment rate for African-Americans in Minnesota was 23.5%.³¹

The community members asked Governor Dayton to address the unemployment disparities in the African-American community by creating more employment and business opportunities between the State of Minnesota and the African-American community.³² Community members also asked Governor Dayton for the opportunity to be in ongoing dialog with him and the members of his cabinet so that the African-American community could be involved in the development of policies created by administrative agencies that directly impacted their

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.* at 1636.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.* at 1646.

²⁸ See, Minn. Stat. §16A.055, Subd. 6 and §16B.04 (administration), §17.03 (agriculture), §45.02 (commerce), §241.01 (corrections), §116J.011 (economic development and planning), §120A.03 (education), §144.05 (health), §363A.06 (human rights), §245.03 (human services), §175.001 (labor and industry), §190.09 (military affairs), §84.027 (natural resources), §116.03 (pollution control), §299A.01 (public safety), §270C.03 (revenue), §174.02 (transportation), and §196.05 (veterans affairs).

²⁹ April 8, 2011 Letter from Governor Mark Dayton to community leaders in response to the March 30, 2011, Twin Cities Economic Development Summit.

³⁰ See, Dr. Algernon Austin, *Uneven Pain - Unemployment by metropolitan area and race*, ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE, June 8, 2010.

³¹ See, Christopher Magan, *Minnesota job gains lead to lowest unemployment rate for blacks on record*, PIONEER PRESS, January 18, 2018.

³² Dayton Letter, *supra* note 29.

lives.³³ Academics would define the relationship sought by the African-American community as “collaborative governance.”³⁴

Subsequent to the meeting, Governor Dayton asked the Commissioner of the Department of Administration to examine the state’s contracting practices and to provide recommendations on how to increase opportunities with small disadvantaged businesses³⁵ and for the Commissioner of Human Rights to examine and provide recommendations on the hiring and retention practices of the administrative agencies that comprised his cabinet.³⁶

In determining best practices among Minnesota employers in the area of hiring and retention, the Department met with several individuals leading diversity and inclusion efforts in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. Some of the consistent messages received from these leaders were: (1) the importance for senior leadership to demonstrate support for the diversity and inclusion effort; (2) the importance for the diversity and inclusion effort to be understood throughout the organization; (3) metrics of success be broadly and clearly communicated; and (4) individuals responsible for implementing the civic engagement effort felt supported by senior management.

Several diversity and inclusion leaders also felt it was critical to establish a customer centric culture within their organization. These inclusion leaders often expressed this effort as building “brand allegiance” with their customers consistent with their vision of diversity and inclusion. These diversity and inclusion leaders believed that a customer centric culture leads to their customers wanting to (1) work for them, (2) contract with them as a business vendor, or (3) help them grow their business as an advocate.

In reflecting upon all of the comments, we heard from diversity and inclusion leaders, we believed that a customer centric culture where we commit to “brand allegiance” seemed to be the most consistent approach for building a strong vibrant democratic government built upon authentic civic engagement. Government officials should work to ensure that all of its citizens have the opportunity to fully participate in the manner they wish to participate within the democracy.³⁷ Governmental units that work toward building a more inclusive public policy process in which government employees actively collaborate with citizens are likely to reap the benefits of a diverse workforce, a diverse vendor base and stronger democracy.

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Amsler and Nabatchi, *supra* note 14 at 1631 (Identifying collaborative governance as “[a] governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus - oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets.”)

³⁵ Dayton Letter, *supra* note 29.

³⁶ *Id.* at 13 (“Governor Dayton has asked the Commissioner of the Department of Human Rights Kevin Lindsey to conduct an evaluation of diversity across agencies and assess best practices in an effort to improve diversity.”) See generally, MDHR REPORT - BEST INCLUSIVE HIRING PRACTICES prepared by the Department finding employment practices within the state was analogous to civic engagement practices in that: (1) good work was occurring but not widely known; (2) efforts were under-resourced; and (3) better infrastructure and consistent training would improve outcomes.

³⁷ See, Garcia, H., *A New American’s Perspective: Improving Public Engagement by Rededicating Our Society to Democratic Ideals*, 42 MITCHELL HAMLINE LAW REVIEW 1474 (2016)(Noting that a new form of public engagement with historically disenfranchised groups based upon democratic ideals is necessary to eradicate social and economic disparities and create a prosperous future for America).

Micah Hines, General Counsel for Governor Dayton, was charged with the responsibility of drafting the Executive Order reflective of the intent of the Governor.³⁸ The Department shared its thoughts with the General Counsel. The new Executive Order, drafted by the General Counsel with the assistance of the Commissioner of Human Rights, was entitled Diversity and Inclusion.

The Executive Order provides that the Commissioner of Human Rights would chair the committee responsible for implementing civic engagement efforts.³⁹ The formal charge given to the Department from the Diversity and Inclusion Council was to ensure that all Minnesotans have equitable opportunities to participate fully in the development of policy within our democracy.⁴⁰ Consistent with the Executive Order framework, the Department began to work toward (1) understanding the extent of current civic engagement efforts within administrative agencies; (2) gathering information about best practices in civic engagement from the community, practitioners and academics; and (3) instilling a culture within all administrative agencies to commit to continually seeking to improve their community engagement efforts with all Minnesotans.⁴¹ The charge given to the Commissioner of Human Rights was consistent with the primary duties identified for the Commissioner under the Act and its legislative scheme.⁴²

In addition to intentionally directing civic engagement efforts, the Diversity and Inclusion Executive Order also dramatically differed from prior Executive Orders issued by Minnesota Governors in that: (1) all administrative agencies within the Governor's cabinet were charged with the responsibility to fulfill the Executive Order;⁴³ (2) the language went beyond merely ensuring that statutes were properly implemented but instead required the establishment of metrics and the development of a long range plan that set forth best practices;⁴⁴ and (3) the Governor would chair the Diversity and Inclusion Council.⁴⁵

³⁸ Governor Dayton initially signed Executive Order 11-08 in April of 2011. The Executive Order was entitled *Affirmative Action* and was the continuation of an Executive Order 91-14 signed by Governor Arne Carlson. The sole purpose of Executive Order 11-08 was to establish a committee to ensure that the affirmative action rules set forth within Minnesota Chapter 43A related to the hiring practices of administrative agencies were faithfully implemented. The Lieutenant Governor chaired the committee and the following administrative agencies served as members of the committee: Administration, Department of Employer Relations, Department of Employment and Economic Development and Department of Human Rights.

³⁹ Executive Order 15-02 *supra* note 9.

⁴⁰ See, "Governor Dayton's Diversity and Inclusion Council," July 1, 2015 Report to Governor Dayton.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² See, Minn. Stat. §363A.06, Subd. 7 which provides that the Department may "obtain upon request and utilize the services of all state governmental departments and agencies" and Minn. Stat. §363A.06, Subd. 10 which provides that the Department should use "education, conference, conciliation, and persuasion to eliminate unfair discriminatory practices." The two provisions read together suggest that the Department should work to facilitate conversations between the public and administrative agencies to eradicate discriminatory practices. See also, *supra* 28.

⁴³ Executive Order 15-02 provides in part, "The Council should involve all of the Commissioners that comprise the Governor's Cabinet in their work, as their visible strong leadership is critical to improving diversity in recruiting, retaining, and promoting state employees, in state contracting, and civic engagement in the State of Minnesota."

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Id.*

IV. Civic Engagement Foundation

The Department initially focused on four primary tasks in building the civic engagement foundation. The first task for the Department was to conduct more in-depth research on best practices within the area of civic engagement.⁴⁶ The Governor was particularly interested in finding out if there were any other states that had launched similar statewide civic engagement initiatives.

The Department did not uncover any other states that had launched a similar statewide initiative on civic engagement. However, the Department did uncover that there were several civic engagement initiatives that had been launched or were being launched by cities to engage citizens in their public policy work.

A. Survey Research

A report that was reflective of the Department's research into civic engagement was *Bright Spots in Community Engagement, Case Studies of U.S. Communities Creating Greater Civic Engagement from the Bottom Up*, which was authored by the National League of Cities and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.⁴⁷ The *Bright Spots* report highlighted the civic engagement work of 14 cities in the United States.⁴⁸

The report noted that when civic engagement is done well, civic engagement has the ability to change policy and reconcile community divisions.⁴⁹ The report further noted that there is a relationship between community engagement and vitality as "engagement generates opportunity by creating networks of individuals, organizations, and institutions committed to development and sustainability."⁵⁰

The report noted that the definition of civic engagement was not uniform among the 14 cities.⁵¹ While not uniform, the report noted that the identified civic engagement initiatives within the 14 cities contained the following three common elements:⁵²

- 1) A significant number of people were given a chance to shape government priorities;
- 2) Government leaders sought to tap into the energy and creativity of citizens to spur economic development; and
- 3) Effort sought to improve access to government data with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life for all in the community.

The *Bright Spots* report however noted that while cities were experiencing success, there were also several challenges in the area of civic engagement.⁵³ The *Bright Spots* report noted three primary challenges for government:⁵⁴

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ BRIGHT SPOTS REPORT, *supra* note 12.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Id.*

- 1) **How to achieve scale** – Most of the efforts undertaken within cities were confined within a few departments. Accordingly, how does government build upon and replicate their micro-level efforts to reshape all of their departments and systems?
- 2) **How to reconcile deep community divisions within “hard-to-reach” communities** – A perennial question asked within all of the efforts was how does government address issues surrounding race, ethnicity, and class to ensure real inclusion for all? “There appears to be a need for increased sophistication in understanding how . . . to broaden and deepen community engagement” among historically disenfranchised communities.
- 3) **How sustainability is achieved** – How do initiatives survive when changes in political leadership occur? How will initiatives be adopted and adapted so that learning and innovation can evolve over time?

B. Community Stakeholder Meetings

The second task for the Department was to meet with community stakeholders from historically disenfranchised communities in order to build trust;⁵⁵ to begin to identify current civic engagement efforts within communities; and to identify best practices for civic engagement challenges from the perspective of communities working with agencies in the formulation and development of policy.

All the community members the Department spoke with were enthusiastic about the State’s effort to focus on civic engagement. Many community members were also eager to share and provide insight on best practices as well as committing to partnering with the Department as the work of civic engagement proceeded.⁵⁶

A number of ideas were generated from the community stakeholder conversations. The themes recurring most often from the community stakeholder conversations were:⁵⁷

- Agencies should not be fearful of utilizing civic engagement to tackle complex issues, i.e. dealing with age demographic shifts. Complex issues can be a positive catalyst for promoting systemic change in approaching impending problems.
- Agencies should be focused on creating long-term institutional relationships as opposed to being seen by individuals and community organizations as only wanting to create a one-time transactional relationship. Real civic engagement is a cultural shift that will go beyond compliance with administrative rules. One community representative used the analogy of the medical care one receives from their regular treating physician to the medical care that they receive when they periodically visit an urgent care clinic every four to five years.
- Civic engagement thrives when it is clear through financial and human capital that the leadership within the agency is committed to supporting civic engagement. Community stakeholders encouraged an examination of how civic engagement is communicated

⁵⁵ The Department focused its initial conversations regarding restoring trust with leaders of community organizations to begin to frame the larger conversation with community. The expectation of the Department was that the initial conversations would serve to be the beginning of a subsequent larger dialog with the community.

⁵⁶ See, 2015 REPORT, *supra* note 40 at 51-52.

⁵⁷ *Id.*

within organizations, what resources are provided for civic engagement and how they seek to induce an internal mindset change regarding civic engagement.

- Agencies should ensure civic engagement occurs early enough in the process to be of value to stakeholders and should clearly define their role and purpose in the effort to ensure that stakeholders have ownership in the process. Too often civic engagement is seen by community stakeholders solely to “rubber stamp” a decision that has already been made.
- Agencies that facilitate well-run community meetings and are transparent in the publication of their data are perceived by the public as good civic engagement partners. Community stakeholders encouraged agencies to examine how much training is provided to agency staff on how to convene meetings and examine how accessible agency data is to the public.
- Agencies that have good civic engagement are able to distill information to a practical level for all of its audiences. Several community stakeholders commented that too much engagement occurs “at the 40,000-foot level” in which they felt ill-equipped to provide meaningful input. Additionally, several community members noted that too often they are unable to respond because the agency has not provided them with sufficient background information.
- Agencies should pay particular attention to what may be perceived as small technical details that have a big impact on turnout such as childcare, food, parking, and the location of the meeting. Agencies should work to lessen the financial burden and time constraints for disenfranchised communities to be engaged.
- Metrics that go beyond mere attendance in a meeting are important for agencies to understand, measure, and track on a consistent basis going forward. While no clear consensus emerged from the conversation as to the best model for metrics, community stakeholders believe solely relying on quantitative metrics is insufficient and that qualitative data about how participants felt about the process, their desire to participate again, the transparency of data, and the willingness to engage with people who have different points of view were also important.

C. Administrative Agency Survey

The third task undertaken by the Department was to conduct a survey of the existing civic engagement efforts of administrative agencies to develop a civic engagement baseline.⁵⁸ The survey was comprised of nine questions and the expectation of the Department in creating the survey was that staff would follow up with the administrative agencies on specific issues raised within the survey responses.⁵⁹ In an effort to obtain candid responses, the Department informed the administrative agencies that their information would be compiled and reported in an aggregate format.

⁵⁸ *Id.* at 53-55.

⁵⁹ *Id.*

Below are the nine survey questions that were given to the administrative agencies and the aggregate responses that were drafted and submitted by the Department to Governor Dayton:⁶⁰

1. Does your agency engage in civic engagement efforts with the public during the development of agency policy?

All agencies are engaged in civic engagement efforts with the public during the development of agency policy. The majority of the agencies that responded to this question limited their response to civic engagement efforts that were part of a specific administrative rule making process or a formal multi-year planning process. The committee anticipated asking additional questions to determine the level and prevalence of other forms of civic engagement by administrative agencies.

2. Does your agency internally communicate the importance of civic engagement in the development of agency policy?

A little less than half of the agencies that responded to this question failed to identify how leadership communicated the importance of civic engagement in the development of agency policy. As to the agencies that responded that they did internally communicate the importance of civic engagement in the development of agency policy, all referenced that they felt civic engagement was an important value within their mission statement.

3. What type of training do you provide to staff concerning civic engagement?

The amount of training provided to staff concerning civic engagement varied widely among the administrative agencies. Some agencies provided no training to staff on civic engagement. Some agencies provided training to staff on civic engagement in the form of how to convene and conduct public meetings. A few agencies were providing staff with training on civic engagement beyond how to convene and conduct public meetings.

4. How does the agency facilitate public meetings to maximize civic engagement?

Agencies identified a wide variety of means to facilitate and maximize civic engagement. Most agencies relied on receiving information from the public through agency sponsored events such as conferences, formal presentations, open houses, and formal agency comment requests for information. However, several agencies identified attending community events and having direct conversations with interested stakeholders. The World Café⁶¹ model was cited most often as a means to facilitate community conversations; however, several other meeting models were identified by agencies. Additionally,

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ World Café is a methodology for hosting large group dialogue. <http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>

several web-based platforms such as MetroQuest⁶² and CitiZing⁶³ were identified by agencies as examples of facilitating public meetings in cyberspace.

5. How does your agency publish data to promote civic engagement?

The most common manner in which agencies publish their data to promote their civic engagement efforts was through the use of their website, monthly newsletters, news releases, and annual reports to the Legislature. Several of the larger agencies have developed targeted civic engagement strategies for key identified projects. A few agencies, mostly large agencies, publish civic engagement materials in multiple languages.

6. What metrics does your agency use to determine the success of your civic engagement efforts?

Most agencies responded to this question by referencing the number of people who attended meetings, the number of meetings subsequently attended by people who attended the first meeting, the number of hits to the agency website requesting information, and the number of people who requested project updates. A few agencies identified that they had retained outside consultants to evaluate their civic engagement efforts.

7. If you have councils, boards, or task forces that assist in the development of agency public policy, what steps does your agency undertake to ensure that your councils, boards, and task forces reflect the diversity of Minnesota?

Most agencies track the diversity of the councils, boards and task forces that assist in the development of agency public policy and most agencies wanted assistance from the committee to ensure they have diverse representation.

8. What type of training concerning civic engagement would your agency like to receive during the next biennium beginning July 1, 2015?

The most common form of training or guidance concerning civic engagement identified by administrative agencies concerned: (a) the development of civic engagement metrics, (b) how to convene meetings/communicate with diverse audiences, and (c) how to integrate employee training and development regarding cross-cultural communication and how to avoid unintended bias.

9. Is there information about civic engagement which you have not provided but that you believe should be shared with the Governor?

A few agencies explicitly stated that they believe that this is important work and would like all Minnesotans to engage in our civic engagement opportunities. A few other agencies offered that they were willing to assist other agencies in sharing best practices in civic engagement.

⁶² An online public engagement platform for urban and transportation planning. <https://metroquest.com/>

⁶³ A networking platform for collaboration on public problems. <https://www.citizing-consulting.com/en/home/>

In following up with administrative agencies after the survey, the Department asked agency officials additional questions to obtain a better understanding of their requests for assistance from the civic engagement committee. The refined requests for assistance from the civic engagement committee were:⁶⁴

- Provide training on how to develop metrics to successfully measure civic engagement;⁶⁵
- Provide information on innovative and successful models for civic engagement;
- Provide information on best practices for conducting civic engagement; and
- Provide training on how to successfully run and conduct public meetings.

D. Administrative Agency Work Group

The final task for the Department was to meet with administrative agency officials to determine best practices within civic engagement that were occurring within administrative agencies.⁶⁶ The Department met with several commissioners and individuals leading interagency task force efforts to ascertain best practices within state government, identify leading practitioners within state government, and identify existing resources within state government that could support the development of civic engagement best practices.⁶⁷ The Department referred to this group as the Administrative Agency Work Group.

The Department reached out to the Commissioners of the Department of Education, Department of Health, the Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Department of Administration, and the Chair of the Metropolitan Council to participate as members of the Administrative Agency Work Group.⁶⁸ The administrative agencies were selected because of their prior work in civic engagement or because of their interest in developing their organization's capacity in civic engagement.⁶⁹

The Department also reached out to the leaders of the following interagency task force efforts or sub-cabinet initiatives: Olmstead Implementation,⁷⁰ Reducing Recidivism,⁷¹ Workforce Alignment,⁷² and Ending Homelessness⁷³ to serve on the agency work group. The leaders of the interagency groups were asked to participate because the Department perceived conducting

⁶⁴ See, *Governor Dayton's Diversity and Inclusion Council*, January 1, 2016 REPORT TO GOVERNOR DAYTON, page 32.

⁶⁵ *Id.* Metrics, by a significant margin, was the issue most often cited by the administrative agencies for the civic engagement committee to provide assistance.

⁶⁶ *Id.* at 31.

⁶⁷ See, 2016 Diversity & Inclusion Report, *supra* note 60 at 30-32.

⁶⁸ *Id.* at 30.

⁶⁹ *Id.* at 30.

⁷⁰ On January 28, 2013, Governor Mark Dayton issued Executive Order 13-01 which established an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement a comprehensive Minnesota Olmstead Plan. On January 28, 2015, Governor Dayton issued Executive Order 15-03 which further defined the role and nature of the Olmstead Subcabinet.

⁷¹ The Minnesota Statewide Initiative to Reduce Recidivism (MNSIRR) is a collaborative initiative between state and county systems, community service providers, and other stakeholders to reduce the recidivism rate statewide which is led by the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC).

⁷² Pursuant to an initiative of the National Governors Association Policy Academy, the Department of Employment and Economic Development sought to coordinate the efforts of state agencies to ensure that all Minnesotans – students and adult learners - are given the necessary skills to compete and succeed in the global economy.

⁷³ The Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness is comprised of 11 State agencies, the Met Council and the Governor's Office and is accountable for leading the State's efforts to achieve Housing Stability for all Minnesotans.

successful civic engagement within interagency task forces to present different challenges given the different skill sets, philosophy, and civic engagement goals of the agencies that comprise the task forces.⁷⁴

The Department asked the Administrative Agency Work Group to share their insights on best practices in civic engagement as well as identified challenges in implementing civic engagement.⁷⁵ The Administrative Agency Work Group was also asked to share their thoughts and ideas on how to successfully achieve the goals of the Executive Order.⁷⁶

The biggest challenge identified among the administrative agency work group was ensuring how leadership communicated its commitment to civic engagement.⁷⁷ The group identified ten goals for leadership to consider in fostering a culture of civic engagement within an administrative agency:⁷⁸

- 1) Leadership should clearly express its support for civic engagement to play a role in the development of agency policy;
- 2) Leadership should clearly define its expectations for civic engagement in the development of policy within the agency;
- 3) Leadership should provide adequate resources for civic engagement in the development of policy within the agency;
- 4) Leadership should provide staff with adequate training to successfully implement civic engagement in the development of agency policy;
- 5) Leadership should determine its current civic engagement baseline in order to measure future progress or determine lack of progress;
- 6) Leadership should measure and track success of civic engagement in the development of policy within the agency;
- 7) Leadership should encourage staff to engage with diverse communities in non-agency related activities;
- 8) Leadership should provide the public with clear expectations at the beginning of the civic engagement process;
- 9) Leadership should ensure that civic engagement events comply with the law and are welcoming to the public; and
- 10) Leadership should develop a formal communication strategy to inform the public as to how its input was used by the agency.

The Administrative Agency Work Group believed that it was extremely beneficial to have a clear statement as to why civic engagement is important to the administrative agency in order to provide direction to all within the agency.⁷⁹ The two most common overarching principles expressed by committee members for an administrative agency to successfully implementing

⁷⁴ See, 2016 REPORT, *supra* note 64 at 30.

⁷⁵ *Id.* at 30-31.

⁷⁶ *Id.* at 30-31.

⁷⁷ *Id.* at 32-33.

⁷⁸ *Id.* at 32-33.

⁷⁹ *Id.* at 31.

civic engagement were to: (1) build and sustain our democracy and (2) increase program efficacy.⁸⁰

Under the rubric of democracy building, government is built upon the premise that government exists to fulfill the public good for its citizens.⁸¹ In order to fulfill the public good, administrative agencies must be in active dialog with citizens to understand their needs and desires.⁸²

The legitimacy of our democratic institutions to lead the public derives from the belief that the public has had a fair and meaningful role in the decisions that government makes which impacts their lives.⁸³ Administrative agencies can serve a valuable role in ensuring the vibrancy of our democracy by facilitating civic engagement with the public to ensure that all individuals have a fair and meaningful role in the decisions that government makes which impact their lives.⁸⁴

Individuals and their communities are also strengthened through the process of civic engagement. The capacity building potential of individuals and communities to reach their goals and realize their aspirations within our democracy are dramatically increased when administrative agencies are intentional in their civic engagement efforts.⁸⁵

Some agency leaders suggested that government has an affirmative obligation to engage in civic engagement with disenfranchised groups even if the obligation is not explicitly stated within statute.⁸⁶ A nation risks the freedom of its citizens when it fails to adequately educate its citizens about their rights to petition government and inform them of the issues that impact their lives.⁸⁷

Several administrative agencies considered civic engagement important because civic engagement improved their program efficacy.⁸⁸ The three most common rationales offered by administrative agencies that civic engagement improves program efficacy were:⁸⁹

- Increases the likelihood of the successful implementation of policy — assists agencies in building trust within communities so that resistance to change is minimized or eliminated such that policy initiatives can be more successfully implemented;
- Increases understanding of the complexity and depth of problems – associated with the delivery of program services; and

⁸⁰ *Id.*

⁸¹ *Id.* at 31-32.

⁸² *Id.*

⁸³ *Id.*

⁸⁴ *Id.*

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ *Id.*

⁸⁷ *Id.* See also, Garcia, *supra* note 37 at 1487. (Citing several quotes of Thomas Jefferson such as “[i]f a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be,” for the proposition that Jefferson warned us that “democracy and freedom from abuse of power prevails only if citizens are educated on the issues that affect them”; and citing Franklin Roosevelt “Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”)

⁸⁸ See, 2016 REPORT, *supra* note 64 at 32.

⁸⁹ *Id.*

- Identifies solutions to problems – solutions often exist within historically disenfranchised communities and among those impacted by the problem sought to be addressed by the agency.⁹⁰

The agency leaders acknowledged that as a practical matter some individuals within an administrative agency might question the position that active civic engagement participation improves program efficacy as it necessitates ascribing to a narrative that while the agency has expertise, the agency does not have all of the answers. Agency leaders noted that it was therefore very important to intentionally to combat the false narrative of the omnipotent administrative agency official. Several agency leaders discussed the value of leading by example in sharing instances in which their knowledge grew by actively listening to the public.

E. Secretary of State Meeting

The Department met with the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State (SoS) in response to the desire of the public,⁹¹ advocacy organizations,⁹² and administrative agencies in an effort to diversify membership on state boards, state councils and state commissions (collectively “state boards”).

The SoS acts as a clearing house of information for the public regarding state boards, but SoS has no oversight over state boards and no role in appointing members on state boards. Some state boards have their members appointed by the Governor alone, some state boards have their membership appointed by the Governor and legislature, and others are appointed by executive branch agencies.

There is no uniformity among state boards. The number of people serving on state boards varies significantly from less than ten to more than 20 people. Some state boards require their members live within certain geographic areas in Minnesota, while other states have no geographic restriction. While many state boards provide a per diem for attending meetings, some offer no compensation. In a few instances, state boards provide a salary or stipend for individuals to serve.

In the conversation with the Secretary of State, several themes emerged concerning challenges associated with diversifying state boards. The first challenge identified was the difficulty of determining the current baseline of diversity on state boards.⁹³ No uniform process existed for collecting and publishing information on the existing diversity on state boards.⁹⁴ While many believed that there were significant disparities on state boards, the depth and extent of

⁹⁰ *Id.* See also, Garcia, *supra* note 37 at 1500 (Noting the civic engagement paradigm shift of the World Bank that has occurred in which the World Bank now “emphasize(s) the philosophy of collaboration instead of patronizing charity”).

⁹¹ See, 2016 REPORT, *supra* note 64 at 32-33.

⁹² Advocacy organizations such as African-American Leadership Forum (AALF), Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) and LatinoLEAD, Nexus Community Partners, and Voices for Racial Justice had at various time reached out to members of the Dayton Administration to encourage efforts to diversify state boards.

⁹³ See, 2016 REPORT, *supra* note 64 at 32-33.

⁹⁴ *Id.*

disparities was unknown. Additionally, no process existed for collecting and publishing information on individuals who applied to state boards.⁹⁵

The second challenge was the lack of awareness among diverse applicants concerning the role and impact of state boards.⁹⁶ The third challenge identified was the lack of awareness among diverse applicants of open positions and the process to apply to serve on state boards.⁹⁷ As two of the challenges concerned education and awareness, the Department and the Secretary of State began brainstorming as to how best to improve the dissemination of information to diverse communities about the impact of state boards and how to apply to state boards.

V. Steering Committee to Create Work Plan

In the fall of 2015, the Department engaged in a deliberate outreach effort to create a diverse steering committee comprised of people that was reflective of the communities that have been historically disenfranchised.⁹⁸ The Department, in formulating the steering committee, sought to include Native Americans, people who identify as belonging to various racial and ethnic communities, people who identify as from the LGBTQ community, and people who identify as individuals with disabilities.⁹⁹ In selecting members to serve on the steering committee, the Department was mindful that individuals living outside of the metropolitan area sometimes felt excluded from the political process; the Department, therefore sought to ensure that there would be individuals from every region within Minnesota to ensure geographic diversity on the committee.¹⁰⁰

Deputy Commissioner Shipchandler led the Department's steering committee grassroots recruitment effort. In seeking to ensure a diverse pool of candidates to choose from to serve on the steering committee, the Department reached out to each of the 11 federally recognized Tribal communities in Minnesota.¹⁰¹ The Department reached out to legacy organizations seeking to increase opportunities for racial and ethnic community groups such as the African-American Leadership Forum (AALF), the Coalition of Asian-American Leaders (CAAL), and LatinoLEAD.¹⁰² The Department also reached out to executive branch agencies that seek to facilitate ensuring economic, social, legal, and political equality for historically disenfranchised groups such as Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans,¹⁰³ Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs,¹⁰⁴ Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage,¹⁰⁵ Minnesota Indian Affairs Council,¹⁰⁶

⁹⁵ *Id.*

⁹⁶ *Id.*

⁹⁷ *Id.*

⁹⁸ *Id.* at 28-29.

⁹⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ *Id.*

¹⁰² *Id.*

¹⁰³ Minn. Stat. §15.0145, Subd. 6(a).

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

¹⁰⁵ *Id.*

¹⁰⁶ Minn. Stat. §3.922, Subd. 6.

Minnesota State Council on Disability,¹⁰⁷ Commission on Deaf, Deafblind & Hard of Hearing in Minnesota,¹⁰⁸ and the Office of the Economic Status of Women.¹⁰⁹

The Department's recruitment effort yielded more than 60 candidates.¹¹⁰ The Department, consistent with its goals for a diverse steering committee to hear the voice of communities within Minnesota, selected 35 steering committee members.¹¹¹ The Executive Directors of the Council on Asian–Pacific Minnesotans, Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Minnesota State Council on Disability and the Office of the Economic Status of Women were placed on the steering committee as ex-officio members.¹¹²

The Department convened the first steering committee meeting on December 8, 2015.¹¹³ The Department provided committee members with the results of the preliminary survey identifying the civic engagement efforts of administrative agencies that had been provided to the Governor.¹¹⁴

The Department also brought to the initial meeting some preliminary ideas for the steering committee to consider in the development of the civic engagement work plan. The Department arranged the ideas into the following four categories: (1) increasing meaningful engagement from diverse communities in agency policy making, (2) developing civic engagement infrastructure within administrative agencies, (3) working toward ensuring interagency efforts reflect communities served, and (4) diversifying membership of boards and commissions that impact administrative agency policy decisions.¹¹⁵

Some of the ideas presented to the steering committee for increasing meaningful engagement from diverse communities in agency policy making included the following suggestions:

- Provide listening sessions with the community to identify historical conditions that have created distrust and identify practical solutions for the healing and reconciliation needed to rebuild trust;¹¹⁶
- Identify best practices for meetings that consider location and time of the event; provision of childcare, food and parking; clarity of the role of the public in the process; and timing of public communication with sufficient notice to the public;¹¹⁷
- Build ongoing relationships with communities so that they are always part of the process in developing policy, including the possibility of co-creating policy;¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁷ Minn. Stat. §256.482, Subd. 5.

¹⁰⁸ Minn. Stat. §256C.28, Subd. 3a.

¹⁰⁹ Minn. Stat. §3.303, Subd. 7. The Office of the Economic Status of Women was financially sunset by the Legislature in 2016.

¹¹⁰ See, 2016 REPORT, *supra* note 64 at 41.

¹¹¹ *Id.*

¹¹² *Id.*

¹¹³ *Id.* at 34.

¹¹⁴ *Id.*

¹¹⁵ *Id.* at 35.

¹¹⁶ *Id.*

¹¹⁷ *Id.*

¹¹⁸ *Id.*

- Recommend practical and creative resources for administrative agencies to use to ensure meetings are held in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Minnesota Human Rights Act;¹¹⁹
- Identify metrics that will be used to create a baseline of current practices and a plan for continuous improvement over time;¹²⁰ and
- Ensure that communities have meaningful input into agency policy making and that all communities are viewed by administrative agencies as resources.¹²¹

In framing the ideas for developing civic engagement infrastructure within administrative agencies, the steering committee was informed that communities want to be viewed as a source for ideas, transformation, and leadership.¹²² Administrative agencies must acknowledge that communities should have meaningful impact into agency policy making decisions.¹²³ Finally, agencies must be committed to developing and creating the skills, resources, and internal agency culture necessary to engage with diverse cultural communities.¹²⁴

Some of the ideas presented to the steering committee for developing civic engagement infrastructure within administrative agencies included the following suggestions:

- Identify specific ways in which agencies can ensure communities have meaningful and purposeful impact into agency policymaking decisions;¹²⁵
- Provide recommendations on how to achieve cultural and behavioral shifts that agencies need to make to better engage communities;¹²⁶
- Make recommendations on how to build infrastructure within agencies such as:¹²⁷
 - Changing agency culture to promote civic engagement and promote culturally adaptable practices;
 - Communicate the importance of civic engagement throughout the administrative agency;
 - Providing training to agency staff;
 - Identifying external and internal resources to develop competency; and
 - Identify metrics that can be used to determine existing baseline of civic engagement efforts and improve existing civic engagement practices.

The Department also suggested to the steering committee that it examine the civic engagement practices of interagency efforts.¹²⁸ The primary suggestion provided by the Department was to meet with representatives from the Olmstead Sub-Cabinet, the Reducing Recidivism group,

¹¹⁹ *Id.*

¹²⁰ *Id.*

¹²¹ *Id.*

¹²² *Id.*

¹²³ *Id.*

¹²⁴ *Id.*

¹²⁵ *Id.*

¹²⁶ *Id.*

¹²⁷ *Id.* at 36.

¹²⁸ *Id.*

and the Ending Homelessness Initiative to evaluate the civic engagement strategies of each initiative and identify best practices.¹²⁹

The final suggestion provided by the Department for the steering committee was to identify strategies to diversify the membership of state boards and commissions that impact administrative policy decisions.¹³⁰ The specific suggestions provided by the Department included:

- Assist the Secretary of State's office to implement better tracking of the composition and applicant pool of state boards;¹³¹
- Establish metrics, baselines and goals for increasing diversity;¹³²
- Promote the importance of diverse state boards to the Governor's office; and¹³³
- Educate and raise the diversity of boards and commissions within diverse communities¹³⁴

VI. Creation of Work Plan

The steering committee subsequently created four subcommittees to develop the civic engagement work plan.¹³⁵ In keeping with the principle of collaborative decision making between the public and administrative agencies, the steering committee had each subcommittee co-chaired by at least one member from the public and one administrative agency member.¹³⁶

A. Defining Meaningful Engagement

The topic that generated the most discussion was the topic of how the public and government should define what constitutes meaningful engagement. The steering committee believed that it was critically important to stress that meaningful engagement means that relationships and conversations are reciprocal, authentic and happen with the intent of making an impact.¹³⁷ Additionally, engagement should be educative for all involved and take into account that diversity, equity, and inclusion are positive values that strengthen our democratic society. The steering committee ultimately defined meaningful engagement "as the intentional effort of government to facilitate meaningful dialog with all members of the public in its work and in the development of policy."¹³⁸

¹²⁹ *Id.*

¹³⁰ *Id.*

¹³¹ *Id.*

¹³² *Id.*

¹³³ *Id.*

¹³⁴ *Id.*

¹³⁵ *Id.* at 34.

¹³⁶ *Id.*

¹³⁷ See, Garcia, *supra* note 37 at 1478 ("There are several significant characteristics in the dysfunctional communication which became so entrenched in Minnesota. One of the most noteworthy is that government and others who are intent on helping minority communities do not listen to minority representatives as equals. I have heard minority and American Indian leaders often express frustration about being invited to participate in plans designed by the majority to bolster cultural awareness or inclusivity but are not invited to participate in the actual design of those plans.")

¹³⁸ 2016 REPORT, *supra* note 64.

The reasons articulated by the steering committee for pursuing civic engagement echoed prior community conversations and discussions with administrative agencies. The rationale for civic engagement set forth by the steering committee in the work plan provides as follows:

- Meaningful engagement strengthens our democracy as it reaffirms the consent of the governed. Meaningful engagement also increases the efficiency of government as the ideas of all innovative and creative people are considered and the level of trust in society increases in the identified solutions sought to be implemented by government; and
- Building a genuine relationship with communities is integral to implementing meaningful engagement. People are experts in knowing their long-term needs and how to maximize their interactions within the places they live, learn, and work. Collective problem solving takes advantages of the insights of everyone involved.

The final work plan that was developed by the steering committee is set forth below in its entirety.¹³⁹

B. The Work Plan

1. Laying the Foundation for Meaningful Engagement

Background

Communities of color, American Indian communities, LGBTQ communities and disability communities have previously been underrepresented in policy making. The failure to include these communities in the development of policy is detrimental to the long-term interests of the State of Minnesota. Effective meaningful engagement with all citizens in our state is essential to the functioning of Minnesota government. For engagement to happen, there has to be an intentional period of building trust with these communities. Trust must first be established with underrepresented communities before meaningful engagement can occur.

Goals and Strategies

Build trust through community engagement conversations:

- Hold a series of authentic community engagement conversations around the state that identify practical solutions for healing and community needs for reconciliation to build trust. The conversations should reflect the principles of meaningful engagement, be convened by trusted community organizations, be held in locations that facilitate power sharing and mutual understanding, have clear expectations and ground rules, and include clear statements on what and how information will be used.
- Measure the success of these conversations including whether people feel heard and the quality of the conversation.

¹³⁹ *Id.*

Build trust through all interactions with community

- Embody the principles of meaningful engagement in all interactions.
- Agencies will be present and connected to communities to build long-term relationships by regularly participating in community conversations, events and activities even when there is no short-term or present benefit for the agency.

2. Build Infrastructure

Background

Agencies currently conduct meaningful engagement efforts, however there is room to deepen the engagement and further affect policy. Historical conditions have created distrust and because of that, some communities are wary of the actions and motives of government. Leadership commitment is key to effectively engaging and addressing the many policies that create unnecessary barriers.

There are many government policies, from data practices¹⁴⁰ that may make the names of people who come to meetings public to restrictions [for] purchasing food, which make it difficult to do effective meaningful engagement. In addition, unquestioned agency practices may pose additional barriers. There are a variety of meaningful engagement methods and protocols used around the state, but many of them do not specifically consider communities that have been traditionally marginalized in the political process. Measurement is needed in order to create accountability for change and refine policy and practices.

Goals and Strategies

Communities should be viewed as a valuable source for ideas, transformation and leadership by administrative agencies

- Use information gleaned from ongoing relationships and consider purchasing the services of members of impacted communities as consultants.
- Agencies will analyze and document the impact of policy or services on priority communities and routinely ask if the policy is more effective for those impacted.

Agency leadership, culture, policy, and practice support meaningful engagement.

- Senior leaders will support meaningful engagement in a variety of ways, such as incorporating meaningful engagement into the agency mission, regularly communicating support of meaningful engagement, and providing adequate staff and financial resources to support meaningful engagement.
- Meaningful engagement is incorporated into inter and intra agency training, work plans and performance management.

¹⁴⁰ “Data Practices” refers to Minnesota Government Data Practices, Minn. Stat. §13 which specifies how government data are collected, created, stored, used and released.

- Assess and create plans to address formal and informal barriers to meaningful engagement such as data practices, purchasing food, lack of per diems and agency culture.
- Create and strengthen networks of people who are doing meaningful engagement across state government to enhance mutual learning.
- Agencies maintain dynamic lists of community organizations to be used to ensure that diverse perspectives are included in community engagement.
- Agencies coordinate among and within agencies so that the state is not always approaching the same people for input.

Agencies should devote adequate resources to facilitate meaningful engagement with the community.

- Agencies should expand their definition of cultural communities to include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability status.
- Ensure public meetings are inclusive by incorporating sufficient notice (ideally at least 14 days in advance), being held at times and locations that promote community participation and accessibility for people with disabilities, providing materials in different formats and consider needs such as childcare.
- Agencies use culturally adaptable practices such as providing for language access, developing new channels to cultivate relationships, using facilitators from cultural communities, and using culturally tailored materials and methods. Agencies will also work to provide materials that use plain language.
- Community organizations and individuals are compensated and/or reimbursed for their planning and implementing outreach efforts. Agencies provide, as feasible, per diem or mileage reimbursement, food at meetings and assess such policies that create barriers to meaningful engagement.
- Agencies develop and use creative means of soliciting input from community members and go to them.

Agencies measure the effectiveness of meaningful engagement.

- Agencies acknowledge that there are both quantitative and qualitative measures that should be analyzed. Along with monitoring who is at the meetings, agencies should assess whether or not people feel their time and opinions were valued and if those who are part of agency engagement efforts would participate in another agency engagement effort. Agencies should create an agency scorecard to assess meaningful engagement across the agency.

3. Diversify Boards and Commissions

Background

The State of Minnesota has more than 220 boards, agencies, councils and task forces (collectively Boards) whose members are appointed by the Governor, commissioners of executive branch administrative agencies and members of the Legislature. The Boards

have a variety of powers such as licensing and registering members of various professions, providing advice on public policy, and overseeing grant, loan, or compensation programs.

The majority of the above appointments are managed through an open appointments process that is coordinated by the Secretary of State's (SoS) office. In the SoS office's annual report on Board membership, the report indicates that nearly one third of Boards did not provide Board demographic data to the SoS office.

Applicants are currently required to provide their name, address and felony conviction information, data such as gender, national origin, race; whether they identify as a person with a disability is optional. Applicants are not asked to identify their sexual orientation. No demographic information is collected by the SoS office after someone is appointed.

In comparing the aggregate data from the SoS office Open Appointments Annual Compilation of Statistical Report of Multi-Member Agencies report with United States Census American Community Survey data for communities of color and individuals with disabilities in Minnesota, the Committee found that there were disparities for communities of color and individuals with disabilities. The Committee found that disparities for communities of color were particularly pronounced for individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino or who identify as Asian or Pacific Islander.

Goals and Strategies

Boards should be reflective of the demographics of people of color, American Indian Communities, individuals with disabilities and individuals who identify as LGBTQ in the State of Minnesota.

- Encourage the adoption of goals that every Board is reflective of people of color, American Indian Communities, individuals with disabilities, and individuals who identify as LGBTQ in Minnesota; Boards that have more than 10 members should be encouraged to disaggregate their goals for people of color and American Indian Communities.
- Encourage Boards to develop and implement retention strategies such as: (1) creating a more inclusive onboarding process for members; (2) creating recognition strategies for Board members; and (3) identifying and removing barriers to Board meeting attendance.
- Eliminate statutory requirement for applicants to provide criminal history information except where absence of criminal conviction is a statutory requirement to participate on the Board.

Appointing Authorities and Boards should expand recruiting and outreach efforts to communities of color, American Indian Communities, individuals with disabilities and individuals who identify as LGBTQ in the State of Minnesota.

- Appointing Authorities and Boards should create a recruiting and outreach plan that is inclusive of communities of color, American Indian Communities, in-

dividuals with disabilities and individuals who identify as LGBTQ by: (1) collaborating with state ethnic councils, the Olmstead Implementation Office and legacy community organizations, (2) distributing informational materials on opportunities to serve on Boards to targeted audiences, and (3) developing materials that celebrate recruiting successes achieved by Boards.

- Create venues in which staff and members of the Board can share best practices regarding recruiting and outreach.

Improve data collection efforts concerning Board applicants.

- Encourage Board applicants to provide more demographic information by: (1) asking for demographic information after appointment to the Board has been made, (2) adding a statement on the application explaining the importance of collecting demographic information to increase diverse board representation, and (3) adding additional categories for individuals to identify, for example, as multi-racial or as LGBTQ.
- Compile and publish applicant pool data to assess the diversity of the Board applicant pool.

4. Interagency Strategy

Background

The State of Minnesota is committed to addressing disparities in education, housing, employment, wealth creation, and criminal justice. Addressing disparities is often complex as it requires working across disciplines and jurisdictions as solutions to disparities are often multifaceted and require systemic institutional change. Working to address disparities within historically disenfranchised communities is challenging because the communities often have a deep lack of trust in government. Working with a variety of agencies and units of government is also challenging because of the differing approaches to meaningful engagement.

The State of Minnesota has created interagency taskforces with local units of government and the public to develop solutions to addressing society's most pressing disparities. Because of the complexities of working with multiple stakeholders and the lack of trust that exists between historically disenfranchised communities and government, the committee has identified several goals and strategies to enhance meaningful engagement in addressing disparities.

Goals and Strategies

Interagency efforts should play an active role in leveling the playing field of information with disenfranchised communities about policy, systems and process.

- Efforts should consider creating informational documents for the public that explain the jurisdiction and scope of government stakeholders in the process.

- Efforts should create a common glossary of terms to increase public awareness and understanding.
- Efforts should inform the public as to what data exists and where there are gaps in data.
- Efforts should provide staff resources for the public to be informed throughout the policy development process.

Interagency efforts should be intentional in building trust with community at all stages. Trust is built through clear and transparent communication.

- Efforts should be clear with the public as to the scope and intended purpose of the initiative.
- Efforts should contain explicit statements about: (1) how input will ultimately be incorporated in shaping policy, (2) how community can provide input into the process, and (3) when community can participate in the process.
- The purpose of public testimony and how the interagency effort intends to use public testimony should be clear.
- Efforts should be intentional in welcoming community members into policy discussions; for example, interagency efforts should consider hosting meetings within community organization meeting space.

Interagency efforts should be proactive, thoughtful, and strategic in determining the role of senior agency leadership in meaningful engagement efforts.

- Prior to launching any interagency efforts, senior leadership of administrative agencies and local units of government should discuss challenges to successful engagement and reach consensus on how to maximize effective management.
- Senior leadership should visibly demonstrate commitment to collaboration by participation in community listening sessions and outreach activities.
- As involvement of front-line staff in the process of meaningful engagement may occasionally be misinterpreted as a lack of sincerity to engage with community, senior leadership may wish to consider: (1) setting up a process for subsequent contact with senior leadership, (2) clearly state the reporting responsibility to senior leadership at a meaningful engagement forum, and 3) explain how information at meaningful engagement forum will be used in the implementation of policy.

The Department bound the work plan and electronically published the civic engagement work plan on its website. The civic engagement work plan was discussed and formally presented to Governor Dayton at the August 2016 Diversity & Inclusion Council meeting.

While finalizing the civic engagement plan, the Department submitted several requests for program funding from Foundations. The Department was fortunate to obtain a funding grant from the Bush Foundation to assist the Department in hiring a Civic Engagement Director and to assist the Department in hosting events with the public to facilitate the civic engagement work plan.¹⁴¹ Prior to finalizing the civic engagement work plan, the Department had already

¹⁴¹ The Department is grateful for the support from the Bush Foundation.

begun to interview candidates for the newly created Civic Engagement Director position. The Department created the Civic Engagement Director position to help facilitate the implementation of the civic engagement work plan. Several committee members were involved in the hiring process, which included recruiting candidates and having members sit on the interview panel. The new Civic Engagement Director was hired by the Department in September of 2016.

C. Governance Structure

The steering committee had several discussions about the governance structure that could best assist administrative agencies in implementing the civic engagement work plan. The steering committee suggested that three committees be created to assist the Department in strategically implementing the civic engagement work plan. The three committees were: (1) steering, (2) implementation, and (3) practitioners.

The duties of the new steering committee would be to provide accountability to the public and strategic guidance to administrative agencies as they work toward implementing the civic engagement plan. The proposed composition of the steering committee would be community members and executive branch employees. Individuals who developed the work plan believed that the steering committee would be critical to building and sustaining trust with historically disenfranchised communities. Everyone who served on the committee that originally developed the work plan were encouraged to apply to serve on the steering committee.

The steering committee believed that it was important to create an implementation committee that could help drive culture change within their administrative agency as well as within the state-wide enterprise. The implementation committee would be comprised of administrative agency officials who had the positional authority to champion ideas, policies and protocols suggested and developed by the public, and support civic practitioners with resources within administrative agencies.

Finally, the steering committee believed that it was important to create a practitioners' group that would be comprised of state civic engagement staff within each of the administrative agencies. At the time of the initiation of the civic engagement effort, no civic engagement practitioner group existed. The suggestion was to create a practitioners' group and for the practitioners' groups to evolve into a professional development network around civic engagement that would provide peer support and support the coordination of civic engagement efforts within the statewide enterprise.

VII. Implementation of Work Plan

In approaching the implementation of the work plan, the Department was mindful of the need to simultaneously juggle several tasks with internal and external stakeholders in order to sustain momentum of the civic engagement effort. The Department understood that it was important to:

- Continue building trust with disenfranchised communities;
- Coordinate training of civic engagement practitioners within administrative agencies;

- Develop tools for measuring short-term and long-term success of civic engagement efforts;
- Collaborate with the Governor's office and advocacy groups and organizations to diversify state boards; and
- Educate the public, administrative agencies and Governor's office on civic engagement effort accomplishments.

As a result, the Department initiated the following efforts.

A. Information Campaign

In an effort to introduce the new Civic Engagement Director and unveil the new civic engagement work plan, the Department launched an information campaign comprised of formal presentations to agency officials and informal presentations to advocacy organizations.

After the civic engagement plan was presented to the Governor at the August 2016 Diversity & Inclusion Council meeting the Governor requested the Commissioner of Human Rights present the civic engagement plan to all the administrative agencies at the following Cabinet meeting.

In addition to presenting at the Cabinet meeting, the Department also held a formal "kick-off" meeting for administrative agencies in the fall of 2016. While all administrative agency officials were welcome, the Department targeted its outreach efforts to the administrative agencies that had not formally participated in the work that led to the development of the civic engagement work plan. This strategy was undertaken to broaden the baseline understanding of the civic engagement work plan. As the State of Minnesota is a large and diverse organization employing more than 50,000 employees, the Department understood that it was important to be intentional to share information about the civic engagement effort and not to assume that there was awareness of the work. The "kickoff" meeting was well attended and there was significant enthusiasm for the effort to work more collaboratively with the public.

Shortly after the kickoff meeting, the Department secured an invitation to speak at the monthly Deputy Commissioners meeting. The Deputy Commissioners are primarily responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agency and are critically important to the successful implementation of new policy or program initiatives. The Department presented the civic engagement work plan in the winter of 2016 at the Deputy Commissioners meeting to ensure senior leadership staff within all the administrative agencies were aware of the plan and how to contact Human Rights with questions or to request assistance going forward.

Appreciating the level of historical distrust within communities, the Department also had similar meetings with community organizations and the state ethnic councils to provide them with an update on the hiring of the new Civic Engagement Director and civic engagement work plan. The meetings served as a reminder of the historical level of distrust of government. While reserving some level of skepticism, attendees at these community meetings were excited about the prospect of administrative agencies being intentional in expanding their outreach efforts to all communities.

B. Civic Engagement Training Series

The Civic Engagement Director and Civic Engagement Coordinator met with several civic engagement practitioners to develop the Civic Engagement Training Series. Most of the trainings were foundational to ensure that attendees understood the fundamentals of civic engagement, acquired basic civic engagement skills, and understood the principles and values of civic engagement as set forth in the civic engagement plan. The Civic Engagement Training Series was held in the spring of 2017 and 2018. Training topics included:

- Breaking Out of the Permission Zone
- Building Trust
- Conflict Resolution
- Core Skills in Community Engagement
- Designing Civic Engagement Events
- Evaluation in Community Engagement
- Facilitation Skills
- Foundations of Community Engagement for Practitioners
- Foundations of Community Engagement for Managers and Supervisors
- Foundations of Community Engagement for Agency Leaders
- Maintaining Buy-in and Accountability
- Self-Care for Engagement Practitioners
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Powerful Questions in Engagement
- World Café

More than 350 people participated in the training series to gain practical skills and knowledge to improve their civic engagement efforts in their own work and within their agency. Training evaluations showed that 85 percent of participants were satisfied with the training and 80 percent of participants reported having a deeper understanding of civic engagement because of the training they attended. The training series helped raise visibility of the Diversity and Inclusion Council's Civic Engagement work, served as a model for administrative agencies to replicate when providing civic engagement training to their staff, and further contributed to creating a culture and an environment of constant learning and connection with the civic engagement initiative. The training series also provided more space for practitioners to continue to build relationships with their peers, find places for collaboration, and de-silo their work within their administrative agency.

C. Practitioners' Group

The Practitioners' Group has become the civic engagement network home for civic engagement practitioners within the state to develop leadership skills, find peer support, brainstorm new ideas to navigate challenges, and work together to address systemic barriers to authentic civic engagement. The Practitioners' Group has been meeting monthly since its first convening by the Civic Engagement Director in January 2017.

Since its formation, the Practitioners' Group has met to discuss a variety of topics such as:

- Foundations of Community Engagement
- Co-creation of best practices
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Food Policy
- Creating Accessible Documents
- Digital Engagement
- Civic Engagement Assessments
- Fostering Connections Between Government and Community
- Civic Engagement World Café
- Transition Plan and Leadership for Practitioners Group
- 2020 Minnesota Census
- Engagement Through an Equity Lens: Navigating intersectionality Within Marginalized Communities

In addition, the Practitioners' Group formed two working groups to make recommendations regarding the state's special expense policy (for food) and crafted a civic engagement best practices document as a resource guide for all civic engagement practitioners.

Appreciating the critical role civic engagement practitioners play in shaping the civic engagement culture of their administrative agency, the Practitioners' Group is critically important to the long-term sustainability of meaningful civic engagement within Minnesota state government.

D. Civic Engagement Newsletter

The Civic Engagement Director and Civic Engagement Coordinator created the Civic Engagement Newsletter to periodically send out information to individuals interested in keeping current with the civic engagement efforts within the state. The newsletter highlights important civic engagement news such as upcoming events, job postings, and opportunities to network. The newsletter helps spread the message of the civic engagement effort across and outside of state government. The newsletter has been especially helpful for civic engagement practitioners within small administrative agencies to identify and leverage civic engagement resources. In less than two years, the quarterly newsletter had grown to nearly 2,000 subscribers.

E. Civic Engagement Agency Assessment Tool

In July 2017, Governor Dayton asked all cabinet level agencies to provide an update to his office on their respective Diversity & Inclusion efforts. In light of the Governor's request, the Department developed a tool to assist administrative agencies in assessing their engagement efforts, identifying successes and challenges, and ensuring there is an understanding of what needs to be done to improve engagement within the agency. The Assessment Tool was created based upon goals from the Civic Engagement Plan and input from the Civic Engagement Implementation Committee.

The Assessment Tool was designed to help agencies think more strategically about their civic engagement efforts by providing ideas and strategies that agencies can take to systemically improve their civic engagement efforts as well as timeframes in which to accomplish their goals.

The Assessment Tool sets forth three goals for administrative agencies to assess in evaluating their civic engagement efforts. Within each goal, there are identified objectives and recommended actions that can be undertaken by the administrative agency. The Assessment Tool also provides an opportunity for administrative agencies to identify what actions they intend to take, the targeted date for completion of the task, and the individual responsible for completing the task.

Agencies are also asked within the Assessment Tool to specify what specific action they undertook in completing the recommended action. Agencies are then asked to assess their efforts in accomplishing the following goals based on the scale 1-Excellent; 2-Adequate; 3-Inadequate; or NA, Not applicable:

- 1) Senior leadership is committed to a vibrant democracy by ensuring that all people living in Minnesota understand the work of the agency;
- 2) Senior leadership is committed to a vibrant democracy by ensuring that all people living in Minnesota have the opportunity to participate in the development of policy; and
- 3) The Agency is committed to continuous improvement by developing, measuring, and evaluating civic engagement metrics.

Under the first goal within the Assessment Tool, there are three objectives. The first objective is “senior leadership conveys importance of civic engagement to individuals within and external to the agency.” Under the first objective, the Assessment Tool identifies the following recommended actions:

- Incorporate civic engagement within mission, vision and value statement of the agency;
- Develop and implement a civic engagement framework document;
- Create a civic engagement advisory committee that includes members of the public;
- Make inclusion of people of color, American Indian communities, LGBTQ communities and people with disabilities a priority for all boards, commissions, and advisory committees; and
- Commissioner and senior leaders regularly provide a statement emphasizing the importance of civic engagement.

The second objective is for “managers and supervisors to value civic engagement for all people living in Minnesota.” Under the second objective, the Assessment Tool identifies the following recommended actions:

- Incorporate civic engagement within work plans and performance measures of employees;
- Ensure that civic engagement is reflected within position descriptions of employees;
- Ensure that civic engagement staff are supported and well resourced;
- Ensure that people in the agency complete agency-wide civic engagement training; and
- Recognize and reward the civic engagement efforts of people working the agency.

The third and final objective under the first goal provides that “information about the operations of the agency is communicated in a transparent manner to allow the public to understand the work of the agency.” Under this objective, the Assessment Tool provides the following recommendations:

- Commissioner and senior agency officials regularly meet with the public to discuss the work of the agency;
- Commissioner and senior agency officials regularly meet with communities of color, American Indian communities, LGBTQ communities and people with disabilities to build trust;
- Web page and online presence provides a clear and transparent explanation of the work of the agency; and
- Written materials published by the agency provide a clear and transparent explanation of the work of the agency.

The second goal of the Assessment Tool has two objectives. The first objective provides that, “public meetings and events are conducted in a manner that is inclusive for all to participate.” There are three recommended actions set forth in the Assessment Tool for the first objective:

- Agency has adopted a public meeting checklist that ensures participation for those individuals who are poor, who are individuals with a disability, communities of color, American Indian communities, and LGBTQ communities,
- Agency has developed metric tools to evaluate the active participation level of the public in its civic engagement initiative, and
- Agency allows members of the public to co-develop agendas and co-convene meetings and events.

The second objective provides that, “information about the operations for the agency is communicated in a transparent manner to allow the public to participate in the development process of public policy.” There are four recommended actions set forth in the Assessment Tool for the second objective:

- Public understands how their input to public policy process will be used by the agency;
- Public is given sufficient time to understand the information provided by the agency;
- Meetings are posted with sufficient time to allow the public to adequately participate in the public policy development process; and
- Agency provides adequate information to allow the public to ask questions.

The final goal within the Assessment Tool has one objective which provides that the “agency has developed internal processes to evaluate their civic engagement efforts.” The recommended actions for this objective within the Assessment Tool are:

- Agency measures and evaluates the inclusive nature of its public meetings;
- Agency measures and evaluates how well the public understands the work of the agency; and
- Agency measures and evaluates how well the public feels that it was involved in the development of public policy.

All of the administrative agencies utilized the Assessment Tool. As a result of the administrative agencies using the Assessment Tool, there is a better understanding of where the enterprise is as a whole with civic engagement. Key learnings from the collected results:

- 1) Many agencies are implementing efforts that are leading the way in civic engagement and more needs to be done to share that knowledge.
- 2) More needs to be done to institutionalize civic engagement practice throughout individual agencies.
- 3) Evaluating and measuring civic engagement continues to be an area of need.

F. Metrics Evaluation Project

As discussed above, more than 20 of the 24 cabinet agencies in the survey administered in 2015 asked for help with measuring their civic engagement work. In response to this need, the Department issued a Request for Proposals for the purpose of entering into a contract with a vendor that would assist the State in developing tools and best practices on how agencies can evaluate their civic engagement efforts. In January 2017, the Department entered into a contract with the Improve Group to lead the project. The duties of the Improve Group include:

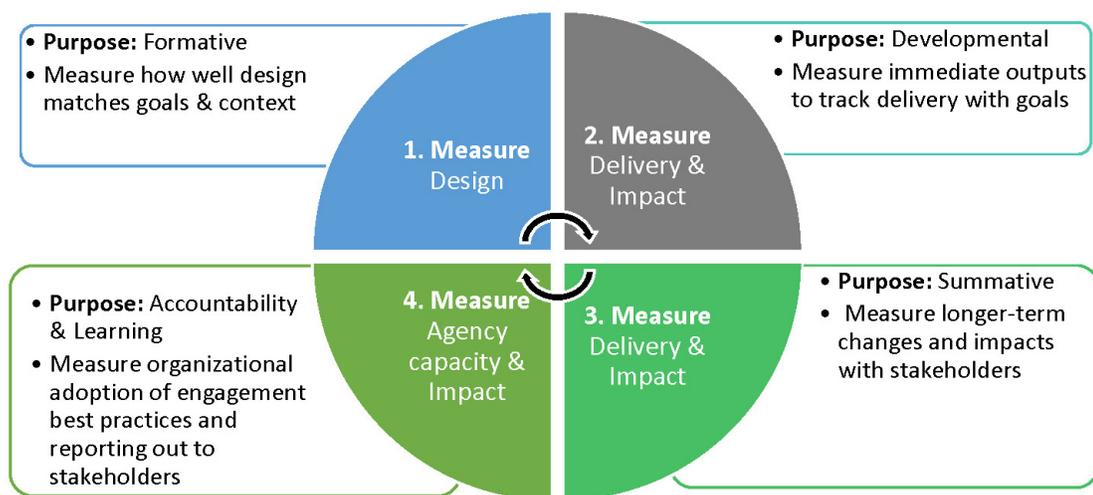
- Research existing civic engagement evaluation measurements and metrics used by a sample of executive branch agencies, other government entities, nonprofits, and businesses, around the state, country or even internationally.
- Based on the research, develop a menu of evaluation measures and metrics that agencies can use to measure their civic engagement efforts. Create written materials for administrative agencies use.
- Pilot measures with three agencies: Environmental Quality Board (EQB), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and the Olmstead Implementation Office (OIO).
- Develop case summaries of these efforts so that those inside and outside the State of Minnesota can learn about the initiative's efforts.

The Improve Group convened an advisory committee to provide leadership and facilitate their work with administrative agencies. They conducted research on civic engagement evaluation tools and worked with the identified pilot projects to develop and test their evaluation framework. The administrative agency projects that were chosen to participate in the pilot are:

- EQB Public Meetings and Strategic Planning Process
 - This pilot will be useful for state boards and commissions, agencies that convene public meetings, and those who conduct environmental review proceedings.
- MnDOT Rethinking I-94 Project
 - This pilot will be useful for state agencies that are engaged with large public infrastructure projects which require coordination between technical experts, contractors, and engagement staff, as well as any other projects that directly impact physical locations where people congregate and live.

- OIO Community Engagement Workgroup
 - The pilot will be useful for state agencies that convene advisory groups, large inter-agency initiatives, and seek to evaluate service delivery programs.

The Improve Group working in collaboration with Department staff, pilot project staff, and the advisory committee, developed a working civic engagement framework. The Improve Group and the Department believe that the Evaluation Framework has the potential to be transformative in that the framework allows for the evaluation of civic engagement by administrative agencies in a cyclical and continuous lens that includes multiple types of evaluation.¹⁴² The working framework will be further refined through tests with the pilot projects.



The Improve Group concluded its work in December of 2018. The Department and the Improve Group shared the findings of their work at the December 2018 Human Rights Symposium.

G. Diversifying Boards and Commissions

In January of 2018, the Department partnered with the Governor’s Office, the OIO, and Nexus Community Partners¹⁴³ to develop and host a training for creating welcoming board environments. The training was meant to provide current board members and their staff with tools to create more welcoming and hospitable environments for new board members in order to improve the retention of diverse state board members. This is as important, if not more important, than activities solely focused on recruiting diverse board members. Diverse state board members are often helpful in recruiting future diverse board members, as their networks are often more diverse than the existing applicant candidate pool utilized by the state board.

The training session appeared to tap into the needs of state board members in that it brought together over 70 people serving on state boards to talk about recruiting, retention, and creating

¹⁴² Amsler and Nabatchi, *supra* note 14 at 1659 (Suggesting that governmental units maximize their civic engagement efforts when they are able to successfully combine the best features of their thin and thick participation efforts.)

¹⁴³ Nexus Community Partners is a non-profit organization that seeks to “build more engaged and powerful communities of color by supporting community-building initiatives that expand community wealth and foster social and human capital.”

a welcoming environment. The response from board member attendees was incredibly enthusiastic and the Department worked with the Governor's Office to convene a subsequent meeting and event for state boards.

H. Civic Engagement Summit

On June 6, 2018, the State of Minnesota held its first ever Civic Engagement Summit. The Summit brought together over 170 participants from community and all levels of government to further build relationships, develop civic engagement skills, and work together to form a more cohesive civic engagement network in Minnesota.

During the Morning Plenary titled, "Conversations with Minnesota's Government Leaders," government leaders including, Secretary of State Steve Simon, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, Governor Dayton's Chief of Staff Joanna Dornfeld, and city officials from Rochester, Duluth and Worthington held small table conversations with Summit attendees in an effort to build trust, listen authentically, and continue to bridge the divide that exists between government and communities.

The Summit was the first event of its kind to bring together civic engagement practitioners from across the state and across sectors. Participants appreciated the speakers, the opportunity to develop relationships with new peers, to connect with their government leaders in ways they have never done before, and to build upon their civic engagement skills. The Summit also provided space to take government work out of silos and encourage collaboration to build a more connected civic engagement network across the state. Summit evaluations showed that 70 percent of attendees rated their overall experience as 'very good' or 'excellent'.

VIII. Conclusion

Minnesota has taken several strides forward in strengthening its democracy and improving the efficacy of government through the actions it has undertaken under Diversity and Inclusion Executive Order 15-02. The work to realize the civic engagement vision of the Executive Order was accelerated by the intentional effort to build trust with the public in developing the civic engagement work plan. While portions of the civic engagement work plan remain to be fully implemented, much has been accomplished by the public members who serve on the civic engagement steering committee, administrative agency leaders and the numerous civic engagement practitioners within the state responsible for the daily implementation of civic engagement.

In looking to the future of civic engagement, the administrative agencies within Minnesota government are poised to continue to make progress in implementing civic engagement. The efforts of the civic engagement practitioners have already changed the state's food policy consistent with the policy recommendation within the civic engagement plan. Many agencies have enhanced their civic engagement infrastructure and the report concerning metrics to be published by the Improve Group discussed above will lead to the further refinement of civic engagement best practices.

Minnesota's civic engagement efforts within the Dayton Administration is the latest chapter in Minnesota's history to lead on civil rights and provide equal opportunities for all.

