

HENNEPIN COUNTY
MINNESOTA

Engagement Services Division 2021 Year in Review

Here. For our
community.



March 2022



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About Engagement Services Division

The strategy of the Engagement Services Division is to create and strengthen long-term, sustainable relationships built on trust. This strategy aligns with and supports the county's mission, vision, core values and disparity work.

Our philosophy

Hennepin County is committed to thoughtful, strategic engagement both internally and externally that is genuine, sustainable and done with heart and intention.

Our approach

We do this work by engaging with humility, listening intentionally and problem solving in relationship with others. We are committed to listening, responding and engaging.

Engagement Services team (left to right):
Hue "Danny" Lee, Joan Vanhala, Samuel King, Jean Heyer, Pashie Vang and Kelsey Dawson Walton



Introduction

In 2021, we found ourselves in the second year of the pandemic. Many of the programs and initiatives implemented by the Engagement Services Division in 2020 continued and grew. For a brief time, after vaccines and boosters became available, it seemed like we were turning a corner and able to meet with community members in person. But then new COVID variants emerged and we went back to connecting remotely. Community members were also negatively impacted by a rise in violence and an increase in opioid use by young people.

Internally, Engagement Services was busy continuing to develop its infrastructure by strengthening relationships across departments and promoting increased internal coordination. Under the leadership of Kelsey Dawson Walton and Jamie Zwilling, and with the strong support of County Administrator David Hough, we are building a solid foundation for engagement.

In November of 2021, the board of commissioners approved funds from the American Rescue Plan Act in the amount of \$1.67 million annually for the next three years for engagement. This funding provides the opportunity for us to sustain and advance our work and demonstrates Hennepin County's commitment to our residents.

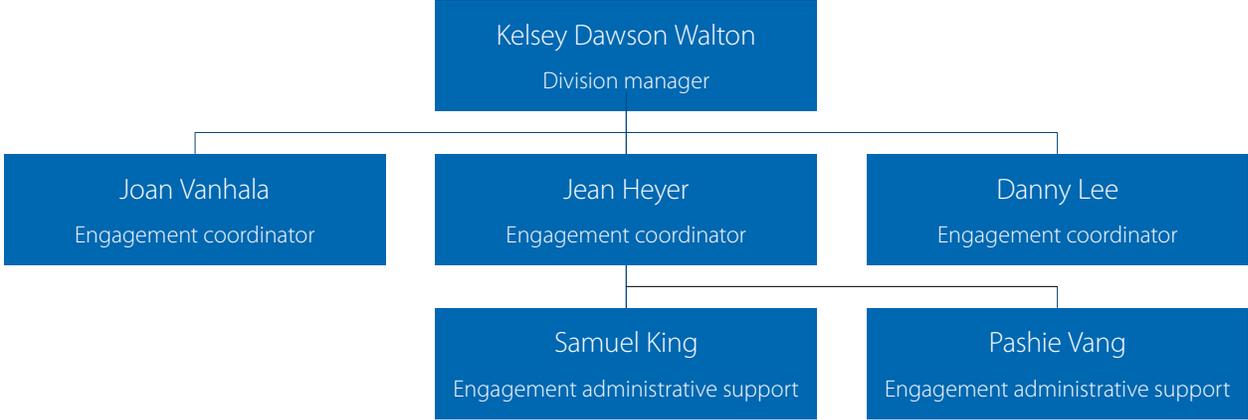
Priority populations

Our work is centered around the following priority populations:

- African American
- African immigrant
- Hmong/Asian Pacific Islander
- Latino/Latinx
- Native American
- People with disabilities
- People experiencing homelessness
- LGBTQ+
- Age-friendly
- Youth
- Rural



Engagement Services team



Engagement team support for lines of business

Lines of business	Team member
County Administration	Jean Heyer
Disparity Reduction	Kelsey Dawson Walton
Health & Human Services	Hue “Danny” Lee
Law, Safety & Justice	Kelsey Dawson Walton
Operations	Jean Heyer
Public Works	Joan Vanhala

2021 Engagement Projects

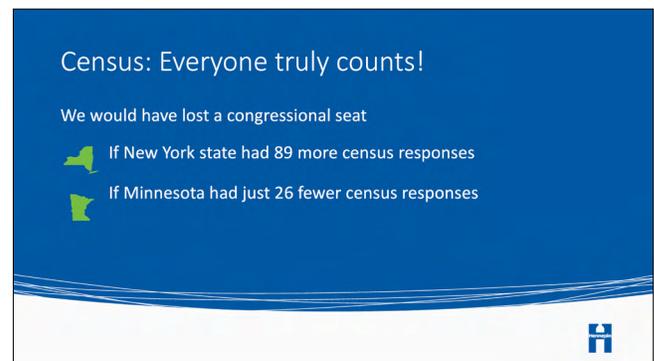
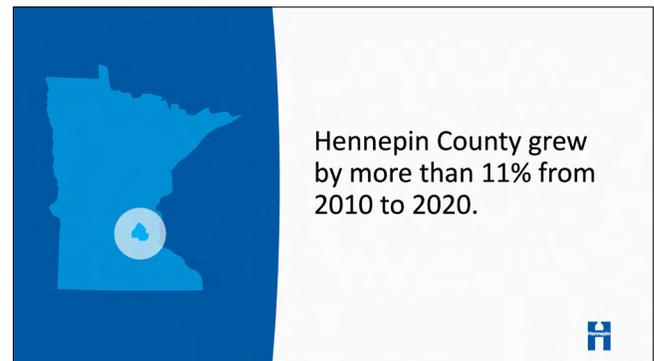
- The census and redistricting
- Trusted Messengers
- 2021 Trusted Messengers
- COVID community connectors
- Mask distribution
- Healing Circles
- Hennepin engagement van
- Metro Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension
- Cultivate Bottineau

The Census and Redistricting: Everyone truly counts!

Thanks to Minnesota’s high census self-response rate of 75.1% (well above the national average of 67%), we kept all eight of our seats in Congress. This means our state’s voice in Congress — and in presidential elections with our electoral votes — will not be diminished. Census data showed that Minnesota would have lost one of these seats if we had just 26 fewer census responses or if New York had 89 more!

We also learned that the population of Hennepin County grew by 11% from 2010 to 2020. The increase means Hennepin County will receive additional federal funding for education, health care, housing and other vital services.

Another success of our census work is the partnerships Hennepin County developed with multijurisdictional agencies (city, county, state and school districts) and community organizations to share resources and information. These partnerships have flourished and a multidirectional group continues meet monthly to discuss redistricting and other engagement efforts.



Trusted Messengers program

The Trusted Messenger program, a unique partnership built on two-way communication, launched in September 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the program grew to include 35 contracts with organizations and individuals that community members know and trust. We continue to work in partnership to expand the county's capacity to listen and respond to the many disparities created and exacerbated by the pandemic through diverse cultural and geographic representation.

The Trusted Messengers help ensure that individuals and families are engaged and have accurate and timely information. They also identify needs in the community and direct people to access resources and services. They played an integral part in the success of the county's COVID-19 education and awareness "Take Care" campaign by creating culturally appropriate messaging, translations, participating in interviews, helping creating videos and brochures, etc. In addition, they served in advisory, guidance, and consultant roles in focused conversations with more than 10 internal departments at Hennepin County, who are involved in various efforts:

- 911/mental health calls
- Food rescue plan
- Housing stability
- Natural resource strategic plan
- Vaccination clinic locations in the community
- Immigrant & refugee needs in Hennepin County
- Gun violence prevention
- Hennepin County Attorney's Office virtual series on domestic abuse/sexual assault and fraud/identity theft scams
- Other related urgent community issues

"As a result of our work and partnerships, thousands of Hennepin County residents are healthier, safer, and have access to the services they need."

Nagwa Ahmed
Briva Health

"Community members tell us how grateful and nice and compassionate the staff of the county were to them regardless of the office they went to get the help to."

Carmen Bibiano
Mujeres Latinas Unidas MN

"I appreciate that Hennepin County started the Trusted Messenger where they involved our own provider services. . . I will live to remember Hennepin County and especially Minnesota East African Community Organization (MEACO) for the rest of my life."

Community member

"Danny Lee and Engagement Services have been vital partners throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have benefitted substantially from the relationships they've built through the Trusted Messenger organizations. Having a regular and direct connection to the groups has informed our COVID response and helped us to share lifesaving information with communities most impacted."

Allison Thrash
Communications Manager
Hennepin County Public Health

2021 Trusted Messengers

A Mother's Love
Abdirizak Bihie
African Career, Education and Resource Inc. (ACER)
African Community Senior Services
Briva Health
Business Revolution VH — Outdoor Latino
CAPI — USA
Center for Hmong Arts Talent (CHAT)
Centro Tyrone Guzman
CLUES
Communities Organizing Latinx Power and Action (COPAL)
Division of Indian Work (DIW)
Hmong 18 Council, Inc.
Hmong American Partnership (HAP)
Hmong Early Childhood Coalition (HECC)
Hmong Medical Association, Inc.
Islamic Association of North America (IANA)
Islamic Civic Society of America (ICSA)
Johnnie Robinson
Lao Assistance Center of MN
MIGIZI Communications, Inc.
Minnesota East African Community Organization (MEACO)
Mujeres Latinas Unidas
Native American Community Clinic (NACC)
Navigate MN
OutFront Minnesota Community Services
Reviving Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE)
SEIU — Local 26
SEWA — AIFW
Siengkane Lao MN
Somali Community Resettlement Services (SCRS)
The Organization of Liberians in Minnesota (OLM)
Tou Ger Xiong
Wellshare International
YouthLink

COVID community connectors

The COVID community connectors program is focused on vaccine messaging to help community members get information and find critical resources to deal with health care and mental health concerns.

Since March 2021, the county has partnered with more than 20 community cultural organizations (including a mosque, charter schools, community centers, a Thai temple and other faith communities) and **held more than 100 events to vaccinate residents who might not otherwise have access to COVID-19 vaccines.** These organizations participated in vaccine event planning and promotion. Often they hosted events in their location and would provide call center support for people who speak languages other than English.



Hue "Danny" Lee and Jean Heyer at a vaccine clinic for youth at Yinghua Academy

Mask distribution

Since April 2020, the Engagement Services Division has distributed more than 900,000 masks to over 140 community organizations.

	2020	2021
January	–	55,200
February	–	70,150
March	–	82,250
April	5,000	94,120
May	5,000	116,840
June	10,000	65,800
July	10,000	Distribution paused
August	10,000	19,500
September	10,000	26,900
October	45,000	75,200
November	45,000	52,300
December	70,000	38,810
TOTAL	210,000	697,070

Grand total: 907,070

April 2020 – December 2021

"Thank you for the continual partnership in keeping our communities safe by providing facial masks for our youth and adults."

Deseria Galloway
Wellspring Second Chance Center

"I want to take this opportunity to thank you personally and your team for the great job you are doing in the fight against COVID."

Ahmed Abdullahi
African Immigrants Community Services

Healing Circles

In 2021, in support of Hennepin County's declaration of racism as a public health crisis, Engagement Services hosted nine virtual Healing Circles to address the hurt and trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, recent police murders and subsequent trials. We cannot overstate the impact these events have had on all of us, particularly our Black and Indigenous communities, and other communities of color.

These small-groups Healing Circles were led by individual community healers who used their lived experience, expertise and training to create a welcoming environment for the approximately 50 participants who attended them.

Among the priority populations for which we held Healing Circles:

- African American males 18+
- African Americans of all ages
- American Indian
- Young adults, 18 to 24 years old
- Asian descent
- African Immigrant
- Allies
- Latino/Latinx, held in Spanish

"We need more healing spaces like this, especially for Black men. The yoga stood out to me because we usually talk about things that are causing us problems, but we don't necessarily connect how that can transcend into our body, and be projected out onto others. I'm excited for the next one."

Participant of the African American males 18+ healing circle

"Thank you for creating the space. We need need a lot of medicine. I felt supported by Pashie and all of the staff. I am glad we did the work... We shared a lot and created a beautiful connection so thanks for doing it in Spanish."

Susana De Leon, Healer for Latino/Latinx Healing circle

See healing circle dates and healer names in Appendix A on page 23.

Hennepin engagement van

Engagement Services launched two mobile engagement vans for direct outreach to Hennepin County residents in 2020. These vans provide a mobile engagement office to meet out in the community, to build relationships and engage with residents with our “listen, engage and respond” approach. Staff educate residents about Hennepin County programs and services along with collecting their viewpoints to inform current county work.

Hennepin County engagement staff from across all divisions are invited to reserve a van for engaging in their various programs. Van engagement focuses on disparity reduction for priority populations with a racial and cultural lens.

In 2021, Engagement Services staff participated in 22 events and collaborated with the following Hennepin County divisions:

- Blue Line LRT extension project
- Public Health
- Elections
- Office of Multicultural Services
- Environment & Energy
- Active Living
- Midtown Community Works

We partnered with these communities to provide engagement at their events:

- New Millennium Academy (Hmong)
- City of Brooklyn Park — Affording housing apartment complexes (primarily African Immigrant and Latino)
- ACER (African immigrant)
- Mwangetinee (Kenyan)
- Ebenezer Church (Liberian)
- Wat Promwachirayan Temple (Asian)
- Jordan Community Council (primarily African American/North Mpls residents)
- West Broadway Coalition (primarily African American/North Mpls residents)
- Project Sweetie Pie (primarily African American/ North Mpls residents)
- St. Alphonsus Church (Latino)
- CLUES (Latino)
- City of Richfield (primarily Latino)
- More of Liberia (African Immigrant)
- Prairie Seeds Academy (Hmong)
- Monarch Festival (South Minneapolis)
- Shiloh Baptist Church (North Minneapolis, African American)
- CAPI — USA (Asian Pacific Islander and other immigrant communities)
- Little Earth of United Tribes (American Indian)

Engagement staff
Joan Vanhala and
Pashie Vang at a
vaccine clinic event
at Ebenezer Church
in Brooklyn Park



Metro Blue Line light rail transit extension



The Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County are working together as project partners to extend the existing Blue Line light rail line to connect communities in North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park to a regional network of public transportation.

In August 2020, project partners announced the need to find an improved route location that does not use approximately 8 miles of freight railroad property, as initially planned. The goal was to identify and advance an improved community-supported route by the end of 2021 while maintaining as much of the previous alignment as possible.

With this new direction, Hennepin County Engagement Services worked to support robust and inclusive community engagement around route selection. We have contracted with 13 community and cultural organizations along the Blue Line extension corridor to:

- Engage their networks with cultural communities, youth and young adults, neighborhood organizations, and small businesses.



- Implement strategies and tactics such as:
 - Amplify BLRT project information through community channels
 - Virtual listening sessions
 - Pop-ups at community events and businesses
 - Focus groups
 - One-on-ones with key stakeholders
 - Creative engagement through art
 - In-person surveys

In addition, Engagement Services staff helped to develop the engagement principles of the Metro Blue Line Extension project which are:

- Meaningfully engage with stakeholders
 - Honor and build on previous robust community engagement
 - Tailor engagement practices to meet the needs of individual communities in the corridor
- Engage, inform and consult with diverse communities to co-create project solutions that reduce disparities
 - Ensure corridor communities of all races, ethnicities, incomes and abilities are engaged so all community corridor cities share in growth opportunities — with an emphasis on low income and cultural communities
 - Use community goals, priorities and criteria for growth to inform decision making
 - Adjust strategies and approach as needed to ensure corridor communities are fully represented in engagement efforts

“Joan Vanhala from the Engagement Services Division has been a great help as part of the Blue Line Extension project team. Public engagement was a critical element of project activities in 2021. Joan was able to successfully manage a cohort of 15+ community organizations, providing assistance to Hennepin County and Met Council. Joan always brings a positive and professional approach in her interactions with the project and the team. We are lucky to have her in this role.”

Dan Soler
Senior Project Manager, Public Works

Cultivate Bottineau

Cultivate Bottineau is a collaborative effort to activate spaces, build connections, celebrate diversity, and promote opportunity through local artist-led creative placemaking projects in the Bottineau Corridor where the planned Bottineau Light Rail Transit (BLRT) line will run.

In late 2021, this project was revitalized so that meaningful work can be done in 2022. Artists that participated in Cultivate Bottineau in the past were gathered for a virtual meeting on November 18 to provide feedback on their experiences, as well as share what work/projects would energize them in the next year. With this feedback, as well as recommendations from Bottineau Corridor cities (Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis), a work plan will be scoped in early 2022 for the continuation of arts and placemaking in the Bottineau corridor to align with station area planning work for the Blue Line Extension Project.

"Sam King from Engagement Services teamed up with us to scope and implement a plan for integrating placemaking, arts and culture into the Metro BLRT project. With Sam's support and passion for the arts, we built and strengthened relationships with Bottineau Corridor cities, which will help activate public space, advance community engagement and promote economic opportunity through local artist-led projects during design, construction, and operation."

Crystal Myslajek
Principal Planning Analyst
Housing & Economic Development



Springboard for the Arts staff, Cultivate Bottineau artists, and Hennepin County staff stand in front of a mural celebrating the corridor's rich cultural diversity.

Foundations of our work

The Engagement Services Division is committed to strengthening internal engagement by working in partnership across all lines of business in the county. We do this by creating opportunities to coordinate our work, build capacity and continually improve our engagement skills. We also work to form meaningful relationships with community members and organizations by geographically connecting with priority populations (identified by race, ethnicity and culture).

-
- Internal coordination
 - Community engagement
 - Professional development
 - Leveraging feedback
-

Hue “Danny” Lee, Commissioner Marion Greene and Marla Khan-Schwartz at the Wat Temple in St Louis Park for the SongKran Festival and vaccine clinic.



Internal coordination

Engagement liaisons

We have identified community engagement liaisons from across Hennepin County who meet on a regular basis to discuss engagement projects and initiatives on which the county is working. This group is focused on making certain the resources and services we provide are meeting the needs of our priority populations. As we continue to do this work, we are growing our competency as it relates to community members from different races, cultures and geographic areas of the county.

Engagement huddle

The Engagement huddle was created in the second quarter of 2020, shortly after the outbreak of COVID-19. Staff who engage with community needed a place to share information and resources related to the pandemic on a regular basis. This group of approximately 20 staff members from across the county continues to meet weekly. COVID-19 remains an ongoing topic, but the conversation has shifted to testing and vaccines, as well as other county services and projects (e.g., the Climate Action Plan and Housing Stability's point-in-time count for people experiencing homelessness).

"I was lucky to meet the Community Engagement Services staff when COVID-19 started. The huddle provided framework and structure that we needed to brainstorm solutions to problems that our community faced during crisis. What began as a COVID-19 crisis team of community engagement practitioners evolved into a cohort of countywide professionals who collaborate to make Hennepin County less siloed and more efficient. Because of the collaborative forum, the Community Engagement Services staff created, many of us, regardless of divisions, can work together to create new systems within Hennepin County that reduce disparities and close gaps in services."

Sandra Filardo
Senior Attorney
Hennepin County Attorney's Office

Internal multijurisdictional teams

Our work has led us to partner with many different jurisdictions in order to share high-level information on community on their community engagement plans in response to the ongoing pandemic and other projects. The group has general agreement on the need to focus this engagement work on immigrant and communities of color (especially those who speak languages other than English), people with disabilities, people who are unsheltered and other groups impacted by systemic racism.

Consulting to county lines of business/departments/divisions

The Engagement Services team advised staff, created engagement plans and performed stakeholder analysis for the following projects — among many others — in 2021:

IT strategy 2.1 Better understand residents' digital needs

"Jean Heyer and Pashie Vang provided valued leadership as co-leads of our IT Strategy 2.1 work to "better understand residents' digital needs." They confidently convened this cross-departmental group to tackle four distinct activities that stretched members to understand community and organizational needs in the digital space. I appreciate their ability to keep the group focused on meeting the strategic planning process requirements and to identify community priorities. This work couldn't have made the progress it has without Engagement Services' partnership. Together we're improving the county's approach to digital service delivery."

Megan Seeds
Chief Digital Officer
Hennepin County Digital Experience
Operations IT strategy 2.1 Sponsor

Zero waste

"Joan Vanhala works hand to hand with Environment and Energy to help our team understand and apply environmental justice principles to our work. She consults, encourages, and enhances our work to engage community to map a zero-waste future."

Angie Timmons
Hennepin County Environment and Energy

Digital equity

"Communications and Engagement Services are supporting OBDI in planning outreach around different connectivity solutions to bridge the digital divide. The feedback Jean shares from the Trusted Messengers and other partners, as well as her perspective in centering community is very valuable to our work."

Ashley Schweitzer
Hennepin County Office of Broadband and Digital Inclusion

Housing Stability — 2400 Stevens Women's Shelter

The Housing Stability Area needed help as we waded into the choppy waters of getting a new homeless shelter approved and the inevitable feelings that would provoke among some neighbors. Kelsey Dawson Walton, Jean Heyer and team were thought partners as we honed our messaging and were out with us in person as we flyered and door knocked the surrounding blocks. In the end, the neighborhood group backed the shelter, the City Council approved it and in 2022 a vital new program will be available to people experiencing homelessness.

David Hewitt
Director, Housing Stability

Warrant forgiveness/housing readiness criminal assistance

"Joan Vanhala was part of the initial development of the community engagement plan that included key stakeholders in the discussion about the pilot Warrant Forgiveness project for people experiencing homelessness that became the Housing Readiness Criminal Assistance project with DOOCR and the County Attorney's Office. Joan has been a guiding light on this and other projects we've partnered on. She meets my enthusiasm with appreciation and consistence. She works for the community and always bring the people we serve to the forefront of our engagement work.

Holly Irke
Probation Officer, Hennepin County DOCCR

Community of practice

Launched in 2016, the Community Engagement Community of Practice is an employee group with more than 350 members who are interested in advancing engagement and establishing best practices.

The move to remote work has increased meeting attendance. In 2021, we averaged 75 to 100 staff members for each of the following sessions:

May

- Update from Engagement Services Division about structure and projects we've been working on

July

- Presentation by Holly Irke, Neighborhood Probation, and Sandra Filardo, County Attorney's Office, about community engagement in their respective areas and how they are developing a pilot program with the Hennepin County District Court to resolve active warrants and open cases for unsheltered neighbors
- Land and water acknowledgement presentation by Allison Waukau

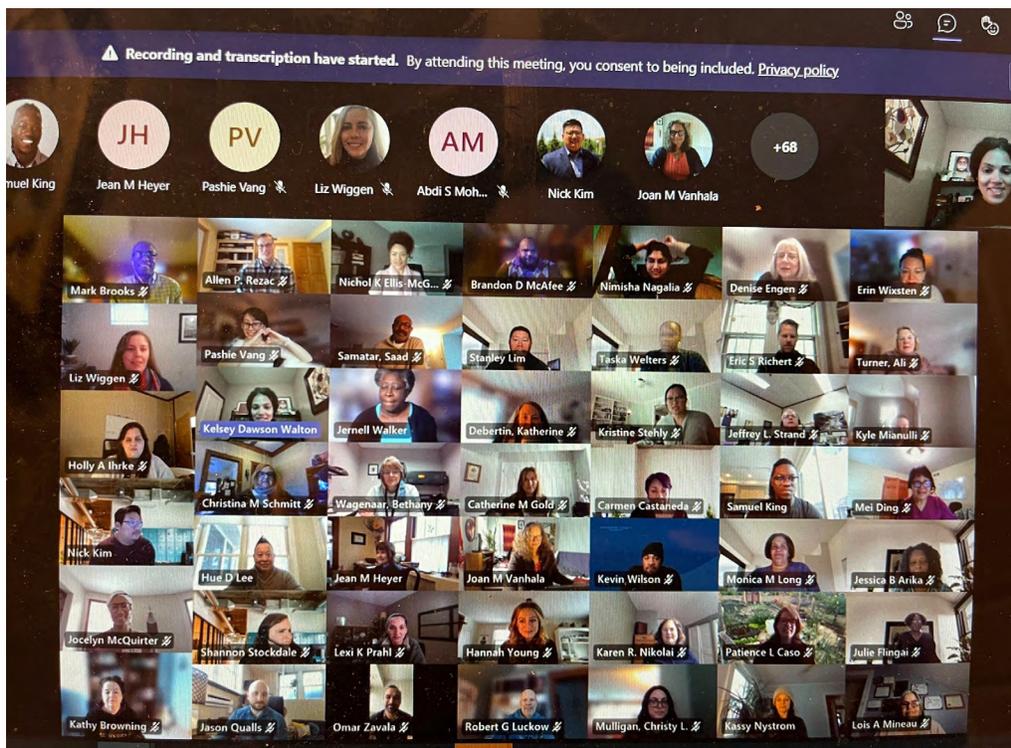
September

- Engagement spotlight on public health with Veronica Schultz, Kassie Nystrom and Hannah Young
- Closing the feedback loop: Blue Line LRT Extension anti-displacement initiative with Cathy Gold and Joan Vanhala

December

- Intergovernmental Relations presentation: Who we are and what we are planning for the 2022 legislative session
- Interactive session from the Engagement Service team about how the division is growing, plus getting feedback from the group about trainings and presentations for the new year

This year, we also created a Teams site for the Community Engagement Community of Practice to promote internal coordination, collaboration, and share information, trainings, presentations, resources and events.



Community Engagement Community of Practice
December 2021

Community engagement

External multijurisdictional partners

While working on the census in 2020, the Engagement Services team met weekly with staff from the City of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Ramsey County to share information and resources. This collaborative effort was valuable in building trusting relationships with each government entity. When the census concluded in October of that year, this group of multijurisdictional staff continued to meet monthly — and expanded by inviting staff from Brooklyn Park to join. We are looking at ways to collaborate on staff and community events in 2022.

“Our engagement group has been together for over two years now. After the census ended, we could’ve stopped meeting. But we enjoyed working together so much and realized we could continue coordinating all our community engagement efforts. We’ve invited more jurisdictions and colleagues to the group. The welcoming, collaborative environment has allowed everyone to feel comfortable sharing critical information and resources. This work ultimately benefits our residents. We need strong partnership across government entities in order to eliminate racial disparities in our region.”

Clare Verbeten
Equity & Inclusion Program Manager, City of Saint Paul

Translations

In 2021, Engagement Services handled more than 300 requests for translations in at least eight languages. We also provided community COVID-19 resource pages on Hennepin.us in Spanish, Hmong, Somali and Oromo.

We initiated a new translation corp program — an extension of the work currently done by Navigation and Information Services (OMS), Engagement Services and other county departments/services areas. This program is focused on operationalizing the translation process for all Hennepin County departments to help ensure that information distributed to our communities is relevant, understandable, culturally competent and at an appropriate reading level.

“Engagement Services has helped Public Health produce hundreds of translations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. These translations have made our website, social media and print presence accessible to more people in the community. I appreciate Danny Lee and the staff’s creativity, responsiveness, and genuine care for residents. We look forward to continuing this valuable partnership.”

Lori Imsdahl, Communications Specialist
Hennepin County Public Health

Community engagement roster program

The community engagement roster program allows individuals and organizations with expertise in specialty areas of community outreach and engagement to establish a professional services principal agreement with Hennepin County. See Appendix B on page 24.

Key features of this program include:

- Creating a county roster of prequalified community and cultural organizations, individuals and/or consultants that all county departments can tap into for community engagement expertise
- Improving the contracting process for the community and staff through a streamlined, standard online application process
- Centralizing management through the Purchasing and Contract Services Department and establishing guidance protocols through the Communication and Engagement Services Department
- Improving access for small community organizations and small businesses, including Black, Indigenous, people of color and women-owned businesses
- Implementing a robust training plan countywide for staff and externally for community organizations and individuals
- Allowing new consultants/vendors to be added to the roster on a continuous basis
- Establishing a competitive and expedited process of soliciting and hiring well-qualified consultants

BIPOC media

The importance of sharing information with Black, Indigenous and other communities of color through diverse media outlets remains an ongoing priority. We also recognize that we may not be adequately staffed in this area and must build it up to maintain an ongoing presence with publications like the Minnesota Spokesman Recorder, Insight News, The Circle and North News, as well as broadcasts like La Raza, Radio El Rey, KMOJ, KFAI, KRSM (Native American), Hmong Radio and TV, Black Media (BME), KALY (Somali) and KDRTV.

Social media influencers

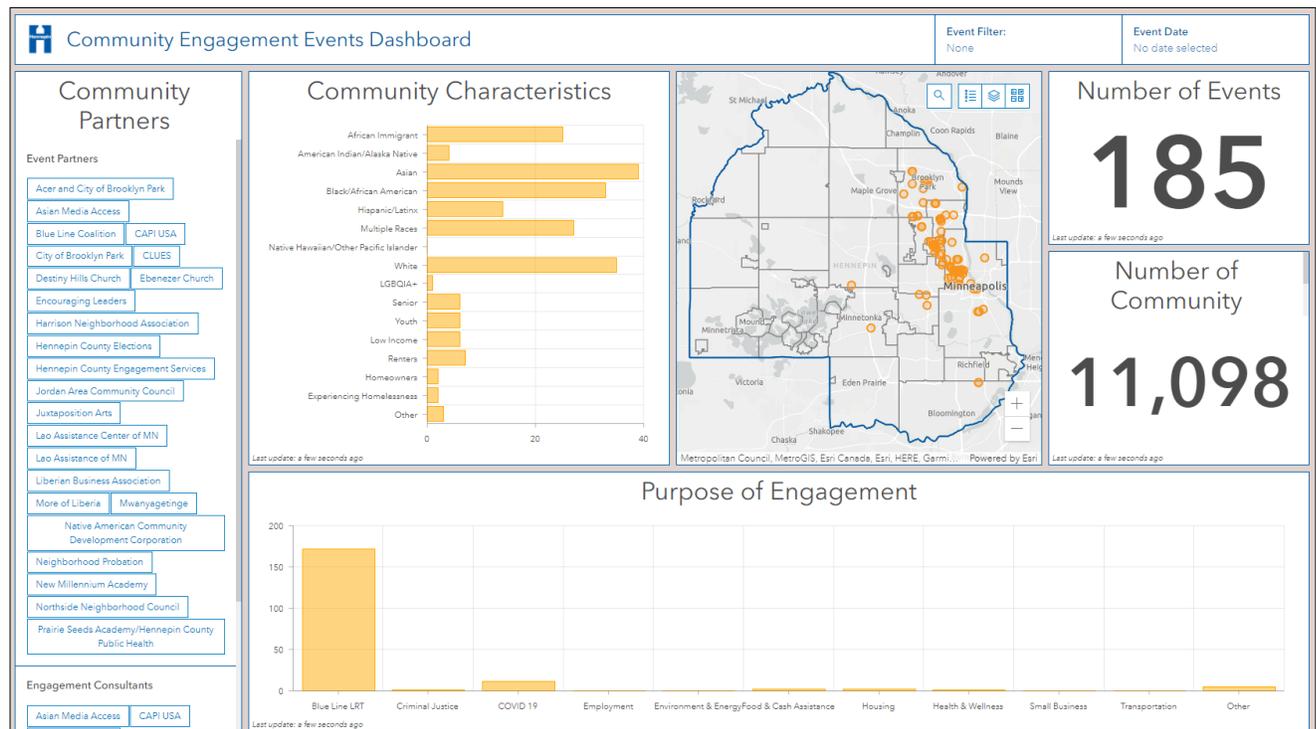
We continue to share information and resources with more than 250 community members, organizations, Trusted Messengers, neighborhood associations and elected officials through our social media influencers list. We have focused efforts on getting folks vaccinated and boosted, including getting messages out about incentives. Other topics our social media influencers have shared included housing, voting, access to food and remembrance for George Floyd.

Tracking outcomes: Survey 123

Engagement Services utilizes a tracking dashboard called Survey 123 that organizes, aggregates and maps engagement efforts throughout the county. This tool allows us to see in realtime how many community events we have conducted, the number of residents engaged, community demographics, and community organizations with whom we have partnered. This information populates an interactive GIS map that allows searching and layering information based on the demographics being sought.

We were involved in 185 Metro Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension events in 2021.

We also participated in 22 events with the Hennepin on the Go van.



Professional development

Community engagement leadership program

The second cohort of the community engagement leadership program, designed for engagement leaders at all levels from across the county, kicked off on October 8. This year's program has 26 participants and will run through June 2022.

Participants have the opportunity to work with and connect with other employees to gain a deeper understanding of the communities Hennepin County serves. This experience-based training program is focused on:

- Building capacity among Hennepin County leaders at all levels to work on engagement efforts and become trusted ambassadors for the county
- Establishing a long-term approach to engagement that supports the county's mission, vision, core values and countywide priorities
- Strengthening relationships with Hennepin County communities by engaging with humility, listening intentionally and problem-solving together
- Identifying tools and resources to advance engagement at Hennepin County with the goal of improving outcomes, coordinating approaches and identifying trends

Due to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the group meets virtually. See Appendix C on page 25 for list of 2021–22 cohort members.

"The Community Engagement Leadership Program speaks to my purpose, vision, beliefs, and values of becoming a solid leader. The program helps me better define leadership as a process of influencing and advancing change. The monthly meetings, group discussion and training aligns my career journey to equity, inclusion, diversity and transformational change for healthier communities."

Kevin Wilson
Education Support Services and Community
Engagement Leadership Program

IAP2 and engagement guidance worksheet

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) model of engagement was first introduced to staff in 2020. We continue to promote this tool for engagement so that countywide staff are deciding at the beginning of a project how community will be included — from being informed, consulted, involved, collaborating or being empowered. See s on page 26.

We created an engagement guidance sheet in 2021 to help staff identify their engagement needs when requesting a consultation or support for a new initiative or project. This has been beneficial for all staff, whether they are new to engagement work or just need to better define the scope of an engagement project or engagement work.

Training: Art-Train

In December 2021, Engagement Services was able to fund more than 20 Hennepin County employees across many lines of business to take a training called "Art-Train," hosted by Springboard for the Arts.

The purpose of this training was for government agencies to "learn customizable models and best practices to design and implement local artist-centered programs that address community challenges through ethical, culturally competent and responsive public engagement with more equitable, authentic, culturally relevant results."

Leveraging feedback

Gathering and sharing information plays an important role in our engagement approach. It is one of the ways we strengthen our relationships with community. An example of this is our work with 35 Trusted Messenger organizations/individuals in 2021 to get feedback on COVID vaccine sites and testing locations.

In another example, a robust feedback loop for the Blue Line Extension light rail project has been instrumental in elevating community-identified issues, concerns, and opportunities.

Key outcomes include:

- Directly connecting with more than 5,000 residents and small businesses in the corridor to document key issues, priorities and identified opportunities
- Hosting and participating in more than 85 engagement events, meetings and listening sessions to educate community on route options and potential station areas

- Identifying a community priority issue of preventing displacement to ensure that residents and small businesses can stay and prosper from the LRT investment. The project responded by establishing an anti-displacement workgroup facilitated by Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. This group will represent community, government, nonprofits, small businesses and philanthropy. Working with community and partner stakeholders, they will evaluate the potential for current and future displacement related to planning, construction and operation of the Blue Line light rail in North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park. The workgroup will develop and recommend actionable policy recommendations and strategies to ensure the Blue Line Extension Project minimizes displacement in the communities it is intended to benefit, while maximizing opportunities for communities to build wealth in place and realize new potential for inclusive prosperity and vitality.



Hennepin County staff from the Library, Neighborhood Probation, and Engagement Services at Little Earth for National Night Out

2021 and beyond

Lessons learned

Engagement Services continues to center our work around community. We have learned that to be successful with this approach, we must continually build both internal partnerships and external collaboration. In 2021, we improved the infrastructure of our division by strengthening the coordination of projects amongst our team and other staff with whom we partner. We are also working to operationalize engagement across the county by developing standards and broadening connections across lines of business. As this report shows, we have many successes from the past year. One of the challenges we face is acknowledging the gap between the work the Engagement Services team is able to do and finding solutions to meet the demand that continues to grow because engagement is integral to the services we provide community.

Ongoing work for 2022

In 2022, we will continue to strengthen infrastructure for engagement and build capacity. We will also continue to focus on our priority populations. In addition, we intend to expand our work to include more geography. We will be looking for ways to provide more support for each commissioner district and engage cities at the edges of Hennepin County.

Redistricting

We intend to host learning sessions for community members and Hennepin County cities and school districts

Mask Distribution

Due to the continuation of COVID-19, we will continue to distribute masks at least through June. We have now switched to disposable and KN95 masks. We hope to be able to provide COVID-19 self-tests on a regular basis as well.

Healing Circles

We intend to offer up to four panel discussions on different cultural ways of healing and up to 10 Healing Circles/wellness sessions for priority populations.

Hennepin On the Go Van

By summer, we will be increasing our capacity to serve our residents by adding a third van that will include solar power for a computer, printer, and flat-screen TV for presentations, videos and family-friendly activities.

Trusted Messengers

As this program enters its third year, we will include small group meetings for community organizations and members to learn more about each other and work together collaboratively.

Community Engagement Roster Program

Implementation will roll out by the end of the first quarter

New projects for 2022

- Engagement Services will offer up to four staff trainings during the year (two in partnership with other departments and two with external trainers) on topics such as hosting a community meeting, cultural competency and stakeholder/ journey mapping.
- We will work with multijurisdictional partners from other local government entities to co-host events for staff and community.
- In coordination with the second cohort the Community Engagement Leadership Program, we will develop work groups to:
 - Explore ways to incorporate arts through engagement into more Hennepin County projects
 - Develop countywide engagement standards for community member compensation, transportation, etc.
 - Conduct research and make recommendations for Land and Water Acknowledgments
 - Produce a plan to operationalize translations countywide
- Develop a countywide calendar for internal and external events
- Build relationships with ERGs to share engagement resources
- Work with Intergovernmental Relations to increase community involvement in the legislative agenda.
- Assign engagement staff to be liaisons to each line of business

Vicky Soukaseum, Policy Aide for Commissioner Jeffrey Lunde, and Pashie Vang, Engagement Services, at one of the 22 events Hennepin County attended in 2021. Next year, we will have three vans available for community events.



Appendix A

Healing Circles

We intentionally promoted the Healing Circles specifically to the priority populations via the healers and their networks as well as targeted portions of our community connectors (social media influencers) list.

We see the Healing Circles as an ongoing need to support the health and wellbeing of our community. We should not offer them only when we find ourselves in the midst of another crisis. We intend to offer them on a regular basis as one way to address the trauma experienced by community members and acknowledge the disparities that systemic racism causes.

We will be continuing the Healing Circles in 2022 and host wellness panels to share mental health information and other resources.

African American Males 18+

Tuesday, August 31, 7 p.m. to 8:45 pm
Led by TC from Mind Body Spirit Wholistic Fitness

African American (any age)

Thursday, September 2, 6 p.m. to 7:45pm
Led by Joi Hudson from LoveYouBye Yoga
Sound bowl meditation by Angelique Carson

American Indian

Thursday, September 9, noon to 2 p.m.
Led by Renee Butters
Thursday, September 23, noon to 1:30 p.m.
Led by Nancy Bordeaux

Young adults (18–24-year-olds)

Saturday, September 18, noon to 1 p.m.
Led by Porscha Brown
co-facilitator Daeona Griffin

Asian descent

Tuesday, September 28, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Led by Xay Yang and Seng Xiong from Transforming Generations

African immigrant

Tuesday, September 28, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Led by Antonia Apolinario-Wilcoxon

Allies

Thursday, September 30, noon to 1:30 p.m.
Led by Kirsten Johnson of Courageous Change Collective

Latino/Latinx (Held in Spanish)

Thursday, November 4, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Led by Susana DeLeon and firekeeper Josefina Catalan



Appendix B

Types of community engagement roster agreements

The community engagement roster agreements would provide departments across the county to establish professional services to supplement staff resources or obtain specialized community engagement expertise in the following areas:

Community assessment research

Research for a specific project such as demographics, language groups, cultural groups, key stakeholders and other information qualitatively and quantitatively

Engagement training

Administer training sessions on engagement skills, including cultural diversity and inclusion

Engagement planning

Create plans for specific projects that include strategic approaches and outcomes for authentic engagement

Execute engagement plans

Lead and manage a community engagement plan

Engagement report on activities and outcomes

Documenting community engagement outcomes and activities

Event planning and implementation

Create and implement community events that successfully engage communities of focus and achieve the identified outcomes

Culturally focused engagement

Provide better access to county resources and services based on the lived expertise of community members

Geographically specific

Proactively connecting and coordinating engagement resources by county geography

Facilitation

Facilitate virtual and in-person meetings, listening sessions, open houses, focus groups, large group community meetings and other engagement sessions

Mediation

Manage the interaction between community and county and facilitate open communication that navigates through tension and conflict

Community storytelling

Documenting community voice through social media, video and print

Appendix C

Community engagement leadership program 2021-22 cohort

Kelly Wolf	Education Support Services	Disparity Reduction
Kevin Wilson	Education Support Services	Disparity Reduction
Mary Knickerbocker	Purchasing and Contract Services	Disparity Reduction
Amenti Terfa	Navigation & Information Services/ Office of Multicultural Services	HHS
Brian D. Olson	Economic Supports	HHS
Colleen Dufek	Workforce Development	HHS
Gilbert Domally	Human Services (Internal Services)	HHS
Ifrah Jama	Human Services	HHS
Kela Williams	Human Services	HHS
Kou Moua	HSPH	HHS
Kue Yang Thao	Hennepin Health, Network Engagement and Provider Relations	HHS
Lorline Tanner-Green	Economic Supports	HHS
Michael Thomas	NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center	HHS
Nabia Abdi	Housing Stability	HHS
Philip Zeon	Child Protection	HHS
Shelly Belgarde	Navigation & Information Services	HHS
Sherrie Simpson	NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center	HHS
Ali Turner	Library	Operations
Samantha Lindquist	Communication and Engagement Services	Operations
Suad Maow	Assessor's Office	Operations
Sam King	Engagement Services	Operations
Carrie Yeager	DOCCR — Juvenile Probation	Public Safety
Holly Irke	DOCCR — Probation	Public Safety
Luis Moncada	CCR	Public Safety
Sarah Haglund	County Attorney's Office	Public Safety
Kelly Agosto	Transportation Project Delivery	Public Works

IAP2 Spectrum of public participation



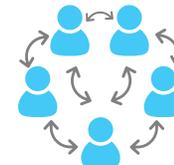
Inform



Consult



Involve



Collaborate



Empower

Engagement goal	To provide the public with unbiased and objective information to help them understand the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To get public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the decision-making process so that the public's concerns and goals are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making process, including developing alternative solutions and finding the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen and acknowledge your concerns and goals, and let you know how public input influenced our decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you so that your concerns and goals are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and let you know how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together to formulate solutions and include your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example engagement methods	Fact sheets Web sites Social media Newsletters Tabling at events Open houses	Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public meetings	Workshops Deliberative polling World cafe	Citizen advisory committees Consensus building Participatory decision-making	Citizen juries Ballots (voting) Delegated decisions

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