



Programs Supporting Minnesotans Who Are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color

Project Description

June 2022

BACKGROUND

Minnesotans who identify as American Indian, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian or Pacific Islanders, or other people of color comprise an increasing share of the state’s overall population. In Minnesota, there are disparities between demographic groups in employment, homeownership, rates of health insurance coverage, and other areas. The Legislature, and at times state agencies, have created and funded various programs that may help reduce some of these disparities or otherwise support targeted communities.

The Legislative Audit Commission directed OLA to evaluate programs that support Minnesotans who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color and that are administered by four particular state agencies: the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA), and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

EVALUATION ISSUES

1. Within DEED, DHS, MHFA, and MPCA, what programs have an explicit focus on supporting Minnesotans who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color, and how much funding has been allocated to these programs?
2. Which organizations received funding from programs intended to support these communities?
3. Have resources been used as intended?

DISCUSSION

For this evaluation, OLA will create an inventory of programs (including grant, loan, and direct-service programs) administered through the four agencies named above that support Minnesotans who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color. In creating our inventory, we will focus on state-funded programs that explicitly target these individuals, either as a result of the authorizing statutes or appropriation laws, or because the agency has used its authority to target the program. Our inventory will *not* include programs intended to support all Minnesotans, even if people who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color benefit from the programs at disproportionate rates.

For inventoried programs that awarded grant funding, we will present data on the organizations that have received those grants over the past ten years. We will also interview staff and review documents at each agency to learn about agency-wide policies and practices to engage and support diverse communities.

We will select two case-study programs for deeper review, one each from DEED and DHS. For each selected program, we will evaluate the program administration with respect to supporting diverse communities. This may include the agencies’ efforts to: provide program outreach and education to the targeted communities, make application materials accessible, and provide culturally appropriate technical support. For each program, we plan to conduct a file review to analyze the agencies award decisions and oversight activities. We will also interview a sample of program applicants and award recipients.

This evaluation is scheduled to be completed in early 2023. For additional information, contact Sarah Delacueva, evaluation manager, at 651-296-1226 or sarah.delacueva@state.mn.us.