



## 2020-2021 Humphrey Policy Fellows

Each year, up to 40 individuals are selected from across the state of Minnesota to participate in the Policy Fellows program at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. The program aims to prepare a new generation of women and men to assume the responsibilities of leadership and to encourage their effective involvement in public affairs and civic life. Policy Fellows come from a variety of professions in the business, nonprofit, and public sectors, from across the political spectrum, and have demonstrated leadership in their careers and communities.



**Biiftuu Ibrahim Adam** is an Oromo American Woman, born in Cedar-Riverside, Minneapolis, MN. She holds a Master's degree in Criminology and a decade of experience working with survivors of sexual, domestic, and gun violence, human trafficking, and incarceration. She has served in nonprofit and government settings. Currently, she serves as the state's first Victim, Family, and Community Relations Coordinator for the MN Dept. of Public Safety-Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. She is a national presenter, researcher, and has trained thousands of individuals across sectors. She has led research on Black victimization, as well as racial disparities in the system from arrests, charging, sentencing, and prison population growth resulting in mass incarceration. She advocates for ending gender-based violence, criminal justice reform, immigration, housing, and eliminating barriers that impact BIPOC communities from thriving. Biiftuu is deeply committed to community and the importance of truly walking alongside folks. Survivors should lead and always be represented.



**Fartun Ahmed** is a public health and policy professional. Fartun has a commitment to building power in low income communities and communities of color through local policy, and values building collective power. Outside of work, Fartun enjoys writing, travel, and spending time with loved ones.



**Jay Arrowsmith DeCoux** is an has spent the last decade investing heavily in his community through building two businesses, coaching/mentoring students, and organizing programs/activities for local non-profits, culminating in his election as Mayor of Grand Marais. Since then he has worked to implement a citywide Climate Action Plan, worked with the State of MN on a number of transportation/access projects, and directed the City Council's ambitious efforts to recodify the City Code. He is hoping that this effort will identify and remove systemic injustices in the Code to make Grand Marais a safer, more equitable place to live.



**David Blomgren** is general counsel for the Minnesota National Guard, where he serves as the agency's primary legal advisor and ethics counselor. Prior to this position, he spent over a decade in the active duty Air Force, serving in a variety of locations and positions, including three deployments overseas. David received his law degree from the University of Illinois, his undergraduate degree from Taylor University and is currently enrolled in Air War College. Outside of work, he enjoys traveling, hiking, and exploring the great outdoors. David lives in Minnetonka with his wife and four daughters.



**Julie Bluhm** is a social worker and the chief executive officer at Guild, an organization working at the intersection of mental health, housing and employment. She is committed to building equitable systems that really work. Julie's passion for system change came out of her realization that our mental health and safety net systems were never built. Rather, they evolved through piece-meal, reactive responses, ultimately making the lives of those seeking help, in their worst times, even more difficult. An avid reader and unexpected introvert, Julie finds comfort through stepping into the ideas and experiences of others to gain wisdom and perspective.



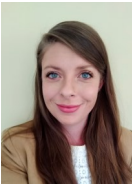
**Dan Collison** is director of downtown partnerships for the Minneapolis Downtown Council, the executive director of the East Town Business Partnership and NūLoop Partners, and lead pastor at First Covenant Church, Minneapolis. Collison is a Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research fellow, has completed a doctoral degree in ministry, a master's degree in divinity, and a bachelor's degree in music performance from the Eastman School of Music. Dan lives in Minneapolis with his spouse Holly and spends most of his days bringing people together across sectors through interdisciplinary work for the explicit purpose of promoting human flourishing and building diverse community.



**Jeremy DeGier** currently serves as an aviation officer in the Minnesota National Guard. He serves as a senior Minnesota Army Aviation leader in Saint Cloud, MN. He performs as the senior vice president of the Army Aviation Association of America North Star Chapter focused on supporting aviation community members. He is concurrently earning a master of arts in leadership and management at Concordia University, Saint Paul, MN. He is an active member of his church. Jeremy and his wife's dual military blended family of seven forever remains a blessing. Jeremy enjoys spending time outdoors with family and friends.



**Hazen Fairbanks** is from Bemidji, MN and is a proud member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. In 2014, Hazen graduated from the University of Minnesota, Morris, and later joined Teach for America, as a 2014 St. Louis corps member. In St. Louis she served as a founding kindergarten teacher at KIPP: Victory Academy. In 2016, Hazen graduated from the University of Missouri, St. Louis with her Master's degree in Elementary Education. That same year, KIPP: Minnesota was founding their first elementary school, KIPP North Star Primary (KNSP), where she relocated to serve as a first-grade teacher and later a third-grade teacher. For the past two years, she has been leading as the Assistant Principal at KNSP. Outside of teaching and learning, Hazen enjoys soaking up sunshine around the Minnesota lakes and trees, practicing yoga and Ojibwe language, and cooking with friends and family!



**Chelsea Georgesen** is a policy specialist at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, focusing on Medicaid long-term care policy. In this role, she provides analysis and research to inform department policies as well as legislative initiatives. Prior to this, she worked for two different state agencies after completing her masters of public health from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. Chelsea has continued to be involved with the public health community through volunteer work with the School of Public Health alumni society, including as an at-large board member and student mentor. She is passionate about health equity and the wellbeing of communities and individuals, and resides in St. Paul, Minnesota.



**Monica Granados** is a Brand Marketing and Communications professional currently leading Brand Marketing Campaigns at Target. In her role, she develops and executes strategic marketing communications programs seeking to build and grow sustainable relationships with College students. Previously to moving to Minneapolis from New York City, Monica helped transformed the Multicultural practice at Edelman, the world's largest public relations firm, by expanding its offering with full service translations, community engagement, strategic partnerships and content creation working with diverse networks to inform and inspire new audiences. Originally from Colombia, she is passionate about the empowerment of young Latinas through multiple national and local mentorship programs.



**Vachel Hudson** attended undergrad at Kentucky State University, earning a degree in mass communications and marketing. He recently graduated with a master's in business administration from St. Mary's University. He currently works for Aeon, a nonprofit housing developer, where his role is to identify residents at risk of losing their home, then intervene, mediate, and facilitate positive changes to prevent eviction. He also supports individuals and families with the greatest barriers by connecting them to resources that help secure housing access and increase stability. Vachel was recognized as a Rising Young Professional by the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce in 2018 and co-leads numerous community-based organizational boards and committees.



**Jack Huerter** is an attorney at Dorsey & Whitney, where his practice focuses on securities litigation, governance disputes, and government investigations. Before joining Dorsey, Jack worked in all three branches of government. As a staffer on Capitol Hill, Jack advised members of Congress in both the Senate and House on agriculture, financial services, trade, and transportation policy. Jack also served on the staff of the Under Secretary for Rural Development during the Obama Administration, where he assisted in administering federal rural economic development programs. At the start of his legal career, Jack served as a law clerk in the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota.



**Mohamed Ibrahim** is a community health care specialist with Mayo Clinic Health System. In this role, he helps patients navigate the overwhelming world of healthcare, facilitate health literacy workshops, and provide culturally-responsive interventions to address Somali health disparities. Mohamed received a medical degree in Somalia and previously worked in trauma and emergency surgery, including overseas service missions with the Intl. Committee of the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders. He is currently studying to practice in the US, to continue his journey of helping underserved communities as a doctor. He serves on a variety of community committees involving educational access and the elimination of health disparities. The heart of Mohamed's leadership is rooted in his role as an Imam at greater Mankato mosques, where he seeks to innovate ways to connect faith and civic engagement with the healthcare system. He loves soccer, reading, and volunteering.



**Kelly Johnson** is a senior manager of sustainability at Target. In this role, she is responsible for the development of social impact strategies and partnerships capable of driving systems change in global supply chains. Kelly currently sits on the steering committee for Nest, an NGO working with artisan businesses around the globe, and is a Big Sister through Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities. She holds a bachelor's degree in theater from Arizona State University and a law degree from William Mitchell College of Law. Kelly enjoys travel, cooking, gardening and listening to live music. She resides in South Minneapolis with her husband.



**Hnede Joshua** is an Account Coordinator at U.S. Bank. Her work engages her love of helping people, problem-solving, and collaboration. She holds a bachelor's degree in Communications from University of Minnesota- Duluth, and a master's degree in Strategic Communications from Concordia College. She spends her time volunteering at Feed My Starving Children and on local campaigns.



**Daniel Katzenberger** is originally from St. Louis, MO, but has lived in Minnesota for more than 20 years. He lives in Eden Prairie with his son, Scout. Dan currently works at Best Buy as a Sustainability Manager, where he is helping to reduce energy costs and carbon footprints. He also owns Green Building Assessment Institute, helping building owners build and operate healthy and sustainable buildings. Serving in his second term on Eden Prairie's Sustainability Commission, he helps the city set and meet sustainability-related policy goals. Dan holds a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Washington University in St. Louis, an AS in Professional Photography from Hennepin Technical College, a Masters in Sustainability and Environmental Management from Harvard, and he is currently working on his MBA at Boston University's Questrom School of Business. Dan also holds a certification in New Enterprises Leadership from MIT and a certification in Financing and Deploying Clean Energy from Yale. In his free time, Dan loves to read and his hobbies include anything outdoors, especially in the fall.



**Jon Kelly** serves as the government affairs liaison for the Minnesota Department of Commerce, representing the department at the legislature. He recently completed a mobility assignment as policy advisor in the Office of Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan during the 2020 Legislative Session. Jon holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration and a Bachelor's in Political Science from the City University of New York. Jon served 8 years in the New York Army National Guard and United States Army Reserve including a tour in Afghanistan in 2008. He lives in St. Paul with his wife Brigid and spirited dog Mulligan.



**Amanda Koonjeharry** is a first generation American Indo-Guyanese. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Family Social Science, a Master of Social Work (MSW), and a Master of Public Policy from the University of Minnesota. Her professional career has been rooted in social and racial justice, and has included work related to ending poverty, ensuring housing stability, reducing shame and stigma surrounding mental illness, and eradicating domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking. Amanda recently worked as the director of Hennepin County's No Wrong Door initiative; to end and prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of youth. Amanda is currently the Public Policy Director at Citizens League and serves on the board of directors for Avenues for Youth and Family Housing Fund. She was named 40 Under 40 by the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal in 2018.



**Josie Lonetti** was born, raised and still resides in Saint Paul. She serves as the associate director of public policy at the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF). In her role, she works on state and national policy issues impacting agriculture and rural communities. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of St. Thomas in business administration. Josie is a member of the Red River Valley Ag Peer Group and a graduate of the Minnesota Excellence in Public Service series. In her free time, Josie considers herself an aspiring ecologist and enjoys fishing and being outdoors with family and friends.



**Ann Marcotte** is an attorney at law practicing criminal law. She has represented indigent persons in cases involving criminal matters, ranging from misdemeanor to serious felony level charges as a Minnesota State Public Defender for the past twenty years. She is in her third term as an Aitkin County Commissioner representing the county as Board Chair of Northern Counties Land use Coordinating Board a joint powers board and holds an elected position as District One Director on the Association of Minnesota Counties Board. She serves on the Northland Counseling Center Board and has aspirations of becoming a Minnesota State Senator.



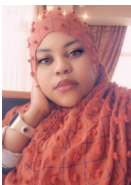
**Becca Martin** currently serves as Director of Government Relations and Economic Development for Cargill where she engages with state and local agencies and elected officials and advises Cargill's businesses and functions on legislative and policy priorities, as well as economic development opportunities in the U.S. She joined Cargill in 2007 as a biofuels logistics and sales specialist, and later joined Cargill's Corporate Affairs function. Prior to Cargill, Becca spent a portion of her career in state government where she served in non-elected positions with the MN State Senate. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Economics and Finance from the University of Minnesota. Becca, husband Cory, and two boys reside in Plymouth, MN. Outside of work, Becca enjoys serving on the board of the Minnesota AgriGrowth Council, spending time with family, and attempting to train her new puppy, Bella.



**Beth McGuire** leads Provider Marketing Communications at UnitedHealthcare, focusing on improving quality, prioritization and engagement with all provider touchpoints across the enterprise. Previously, she led the Engagement Solutions team, providing consulting services for UnitedHealthcare's National Accounts customers. Prior to UnitedHealthcare, Beth held several different roles over her 10-year tenure at Target. Beth graduated Magna Cum Laude from Mount Holyoke College, studied Comparative Politics and Policy at the London School of Economics and has her Masters' degree in Business Communications from the University of St. Thomas. She has served on a range of non-profit boards including the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP), the Ordway Performing Arts Center, the Friends of the Hennepin County Library and the National Board of Directors for Grantmakers in the Arts.



**Josh Ortiz** is the Manager of Community Relations and Youth Engagement for the Minnesota Twins. In his role he oversees community initiatives and strategies around getting more kids in the game. He played a key role in managing community projects of the \$8M Major League Baseball Legacy Giving Program as part of the 2014 All-Star Game. Prior to the Twins he worked at the University of Minnesota Brain Sciences Center. Josh is a first-generation college graduate from Macalester College with bachelor's degrees in neuroscience and psychology. He serves on the board of the Courage Kenny Foundation and the Ramsey County Charter Commission and resides in St. Paul with his family.



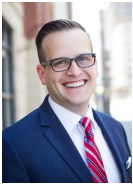
**Habiba Rashid** is from Angola, grew up in South Africa, and is married to a Somali. She is fluent in seven languages (English, Somali, Swahili, Zulu, Sutu, Lingala, Chokway). Habiba is a proud mother of six, Associate Director of Minnesota Council Of Churches, and currently running for Schoolboard in District 77 in Mankato. She is honored and overwhelmed to be selected and given this opportunity to be part of the Policy Fellows program and meet her fellow policy members. Habiba looks forward to continuing to build personal awareness of individual leadership styles and skills to work with others, and engage in motivating others to work towards a common goal.



**April Riordan** is a connector, an innovator, and a futures thinker. A nonprofit leader with nearly 25 years of experience in youth development, housing, community development and social justice, she is currently supporting strategy and operations for Camdentown Minneapolis, a start-up working to build a thriving urban community in North Minneapolis that centers and celebrates Black ownership, Black culture, Black excellence and Black joy. In addition, April works as an independent consultant with a wide-range of mission-driven organizations providing support for strategy, program design and evaluation, and social justice training and facilitation, while also pursuing a Master's in Organizational Leadership from St. Catherine's University. April and her husband, Simon, live in South Minneapolis with their three kids.



**Bobby Rogers** is a visual historian, photographer and art director from Minneapolis, MN. He was named Minnesota Monthly's Top Visual Artists to Watch in 2016, and City Pages named Rogers an Artist of the Year in 2017. After graduating from the Minneapolis College of Art & Design in 2014, Rogers was soon named the official photographer for the Walker Art Center, and subsequently became the first senior art director of African American style at Target Corporation. Rogers has premiered work at various institutions from The Minnesota Museum of American Art to the International Center of Photography. He has lectured at the Minneapolis Institute of Art with his writing on the plight of Black Muslimhood read aloud at the Oxford University Islamic Society. Rogers is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of The Bureau, an interdisciplinary art studio that produces critical dialogue and intellectual ingenuity through robust artistic production.



**Paul Sand** is a senior attorney at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. He provides legal advice primarily on the Affordable Care Act and Minnesota laws relating to the creation, sale, and administration of health insurance. Prior to joining Blue Cross, Paul was a privacy lawyer for the State of Minnesota and a plaintiffs' class-action attorney at a law firm. Paul holds a juris doctor from William Mitchell College of Law (now Mitchell Hamline) and a bachelor of arts from the University of Minnesota. Before becoming a lawyer, Paul was a newspaper reporter. He lives in St. Paul with his wife and son.



**Jessica Seibert** serves as the County Administrator for Aitkin County. Jessica is a member of the Association of Minnesota Counties Research Committee, Minnesota Association of County Administrators Intergovernmental Relations Committee and Executive Committee. She also volunteers for The Journey North Church and Minnesota Compass. Jessica holds an undergraduate Business degree and Masters of Public and Non-Profit Administration from Metropolitan State University. Outside of work, Jessica enjoys kayaking, going on adventures with friends, and spending time with her husband and two adult daughters.



**Samantha Sencer-Mura** grew up in Minneapolis and became passionate about closing the educational opportunity gap after her time as a student in the Minneapolis Public Schools, where she witnessed deep inequities within the system. She earned her B.A. in Critical Theory and Social Justice from Occidental College, and her Master's in School Leadership at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Since 2017, she has been the Executive Director at 826 MSP, a youth writing, tutoring, and publishing center with a mission to empower the next generation of Twin Cities authors.



**Laura Smith** is a senior public affairs manager at ClearWay Minnesota, where she works to advance tobacco prevention through media advocacy. Laura is an experienced communicator and has worked in and around government for elected officials, nonprofit organizations and campaigns. She earned a bachelor's degree in economics and public policy from Trinity University and is passionate about increasing diversity in leadership and fighting for reproductive justice. In her personal time, she serves as co-chair of Planned Parenthood Minnesota Advocate's Born After Roe committee. She also enjoys gardening and spending time with her family and dog.



**Lue Vang** is an accountant at The McKnight Foundation. In this role, he prepares the financial reports, and oversees the investment accounting and taxes for the organization. He is currently a commissioner on the Planning Commission for the City of Saint Paul, a treasurer for both Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC) and Friends of Saint Paul College Foundation board of directors, and a committee member on the Capital Improvement Program Advisory Committee (CIPAC) for Ramsey Country. Lue holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Saint Olaf College. He resides on the eastside of Saint Paul and enjoys spontaneous trips to other countries.



**Shannon Watson** is the Director of Public Affairs for the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, overseeing public policy, lobbying, political campaign engagement, media relations, and strategic communications. Prior to SPACC she worked for U.S. Bank, the Minnesota Senate, and the National Conference of State Legislatures. Shannon spent 20+ years in electoral politics working on local and statewide races on both sides of the aisle, before founding Definitely Someday and Today & Company, which connect new volunteers and candidates to political opportunities. A civic thinker and lover of Twitter, Shannon has a Bachelor's degree in English, Theatre and Psychology from Wichita State University and a Masters in Advocacy and Political Leadership from UMD.



**Audrey Williams** was born and raised on the south side of Chicago, Illinois. Shortly after relocating to the Twin Cities in 2001, she gave birth to her third child, a son, alongside raising two daughters. Her plight as a single mother catapulted her into working with single families and the homeless population. In 2014, she founded TMM Community Resource Services in Northeast Minneapolis, which is still operating today. Obtaining the role as Kinship Worker at Lutheran Social Service in 2017 further solidified her passion of working with families. Audrey is excited about continuing her education at Metropolitan State University in the fall, alongside being a fellow in the Hubert Humphrey Policy Fellows program.



**Jonathan Wong** is the Regional Communications Specialist for Minnesota's civil rights enforcement agency, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. He is passionate about social justice and raising social equity. Outside of his day job, he serves on the advisory board of the Jugaad Leadership Program – a program designed to train, place, and connect emerging leaders of color in Central Minnesota. He also works on statewide and regional initiatives to address systemic racism and other social equity issues through cross-sector collaborations. Jonathan received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Public Administration from St. Cloud State University.

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