

STUDENT STORIES

Abdirahman Muse

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz recently appointed Abdi Muse to serve as a member of the Metropolitan Council, the policy-making board that guides the strategic growth of the Minneapolis-St. Paul region and provides essential services, including the bus and rail systems, the regional park system, utilities, planning and affordable housing. A former student in CLP's



Minneapolis program, Muse is Executive Director of Awood Center in Minneapolis, a community organization focused on advocating for and educating Minnesota's growing East African communities about their labor rights.

Born in Somalia, Abdi came to the United States with his family in 2004 when he was 22 years old. Family connections brought him to Minnesota. Mayor Betsy Hodges' 2013 campaign pledge to address the racial inequities in Minneapolis resonated strongly. "I knocked countless doors for her," Abdi says.

"I'd like to see the Somali community involved in local politics at the neighborhood level, where you can make an impact. If you're not at the table as an immigrant community, your issues will be left out."

Abdi's pathway illustrates the wide range of experiences and opportunities CLP's programs foster, and the extensive options that are available to change agents who are driven to make a difference.

Before entering Minneapolis Community and Technical College (now known as Minneapolis College), Muse was an organizer for the Service Employees International Union, focused on improving employment conditions for workers in the home care and health care facility field and immigrant workers in St. Cloud, Nashville and Seattle.

Abdi completed the Community Development program at MCTC including an internship in which he led a successful banking campaign to make it easier for Somalis to send money home to their families. His learning from the program and his relationships with faculty and students in the CLP program continue to influence him in his career and vision.

Muse then was appointed a Senior Policy Aide to Minneapolis Mayor Hodges, serving as a liaison with area labor unions and representing the influence of the growing Somali American community in local policymaking. The majority of Somali Americans in the United States—an estimated 60,000—live in Minnesota.

“No one should live in poverty in the richest nation on earth,” Abdi says, explaining his passion for social and economic justice.

“I’ve worked outside the system as an advocate and I’ve worked on the inside with policymakers to help make sure government works for the people. That’s where my passion lies. I have worked all my professional life for inclusive economic development and worker rights. So the policy areas I would like to focus on at the Metro Council are housing affordability and inclusion, specifically regional planning for inclusive housing, and inclusive economic development and engagement.”