



CMEAA
COMMISSION ON MIDDLE EASTERN
AMERICAN AFFAIRS
M I C H I G A N

Meeting Minutes

September 6, 2023 | Noon EST
500 Woodward Ave, Detroit, MI 48226
Dickinson-Wright Office, Floor 40

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners Present:

Suzanne Sukkar, Chair
Nadine Kalasho Khalil, First Vice Chair
John Daoud
Lina Hourani-Harajli, Treasurer
Dr. Najib Hourani

Zane Hatahet
Dave Abdallah
Nabeleh Ghareeb (left at 1:30)
Dr. Adhid Miri
Alexandra Nassar

Officials and Staff: Assistant AG, Civil Rights Office, Tonya Jeter; Executive Director, Office of Global Michigan, Poppy Sias-Hernandez (arrived at 12:25); OGM Community Outreach Specialist, Carmen Bordea; Civil Rights Specialist, Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Charles Schoder; Virtual attendance by Ethnic Commissions Manager Mika Mcaskill and OGM DEI Manager Ava Alexander

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Sukkar at 12:10 PM ET, roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared.

Chair Sukkar then requested that there be a motion for Commissioner Daoud to be an Interim Secretary. Commissioner Dave Abdallah so moved, seconded by Commissioner Ghareeb.

On Motion made by Commissioner Dave Abdallah and seconded by Commissioner Nabeleh Ghareeb, the Commission approved Commissioner John Daoud serving as interim-Secretary for the purpose of the September 2023 CMEAA meeting. *Motion carries unanimously*

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On Motion made by Treasurer Lina Hourani-Harajli and seconded by Commissioner Dave Abdallah the Commission approved the meeting agenda of September 6th, 2023 as presented. *Motion carries unanimously*

Chair Sukkar recognized interim-Secretary Daoud to introduce the June meeting minutes for approval:

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Interim-Secretary gave time to the Commissioners to review the minutes and then requested a motion to approve the December 7th meeting minutes as presented.

On Motion made by Commissioner Alexandra Nassar, and seconded by Commissioner Nabeleh Ghareeb the Commission approved the June 7th meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carries unanimously.

Chair Sukkar recognized Treasurer Hourani-Harajli to introduce the Treasurers report:

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Hourani-Harajli reported to the commission that there was \$77,080 left in our budget and that everything is being spent according to the spending plan.

Commissioner Ghareeb asked about the information technology line being overallocated; Treasurer Harajli said that we would be watchful and would have a better planned allocation in the next year.

Commissioner Ghareeb put forward a motion to accept the Treasurers report.

On Motion made by Commissioner Nabeleh Ghareeb and Commissioner John Daoud the Commission approved the Treasurer's report presented as the FY23 January Budget to Actual. Motion carries unanimously.

Chair Sukkar recognized Alexander Sahouri for the Administrators report as Executive Director Hernandez had not arrived yet.

V. Administrator's Report

Attached is a copy of the Administrator's Report

There was some clarification discussion on a DEI focus group OGM wishes CMEAA to contribute.

Commissioner Ghareeb commented on Alexander's new look (his mustache and long hair)

Chair Sukkar asked if the commissioners are invited to the events that Alexander noted being held by the other Ethnic Commissions. Alexander answered that yes and that he would assist any commissioners in registration.

VI. Chaldean Community Foundation Proposal

Attached is a copy of Chaldean Community Foundation (CCF) proposal presented to the commission.

Dr. Miri presented the information and was questioned by his fellow commissioners regarding the proposal. Commissioner Abdallah asked if CCF was a similar organization to ACCESS. Dr. Miri answered that yes, CCF and ACCESS provide similar services but due to Geography, the clientele is different, with over 85% of clients being Chaldean/Syriac/Assyrian, with 15% coming from all walks of life. Dr. Miri elaborated that one of the greatest needs lately are mental health related, particularly for the newest arrivals to the Southeast Michigan region.

Commissioner Ghareeb asked if CMEAA would be funding the programs presented completely or if that other sources of funding would also be leveraged by CCF. Dr. Miri answered that CMEAA would not be the only funding source

Commissioner Hatahet asked what the proposed funding proposal would compare to CCF's total budget as a percentage; Dr. Miri responded that he didn't have the exact numbers on hand but that this information could be found in the CCF annual report.

Vice Chair Kalasho Khalil asked if the funds would be used generally or if there are programs of priority for CCF. Dr. Miri explained that there are priorities but sometimes these priorities change. He Explained that CCF works with many companies to learn what are there needs for employment and CCF works to develop worker skills and match those needs through their programming.

Chair Sukkar then pointed out the Career Services Program that meant to increase college readiness and how that impacts Governor Whitmer's "Sixty by 30" initiative.

Alexander then asked if the funding would be focused on supporting their adult education programs with Dr. Miri confirming.

VII. National Arab Orchestra Proposal

Attached is a copy of the National Arab Orchestra (NAO) proposal presented by the commission.

Chair Sukkar opened the comments and questions noting how important it is for over 600 non-Arab students across Michigan learning Arabic music, including the lyrics.

Commissioner Abdallah also commented how he has seen NAO several times and that each time he was blown away.

Commissioner Hatahet noted that he has never seen an advertisement for NAO. Osama from NAO explained that advertisements are expensive and that the art they support is very expensive. He also noted that NAO has over 400k subscribers on YouTube and that no other orchestra in the

world has that many subscribers. Commissioner Hatahet recommended that NAO earmark a portion of funding provided by CMEAA for advertisement.

Vice Chair Kalasho Khalil expressed the desire to connect with NAO to connect them with the Chaldean community also. Dr. Miri also expressed this desire and expanded on the need for mechanisms that get people familiar with NAO

Commissioner Nassar then noted how there were many Flint area students performed alongside the NAO the last time NAO performed in Flint. Commissioner Nassar and NAO invited all the commissioners to the NAO concert September 14th. The NAO concert at the Detroit Opera House is set for November 18th.

VIII. Arab American Leadership Fund Proposal

Attached is the Arab American Leadership Fund (AALF) proposal as presented to the commission.

The goal this year is to place 10-15 students for internships in Washington DC and Lansing.

Treasurer Hourani Harajli added that AALF is housed in ACCESS but is a separate fund and that she would abstain from the vote.

Commissioner Ghareeb expressed support for the proposal.

Vice Chair Kalasho Khalil then offered her assistance in connecting students with her networks in Lansing and DC

Commissioner Hatahet asked if Chaldeans can participate in the program and followed up asking if a name change has been considered. Rima Meroueh, who represented AALF said she would take that issue to the advisory board.

Dr. Hourani then asked how AALF raises it's funds, with Rima answering that it's mainly individual donors and the Center for Arab American Philanthropy who helps connect them to the donors.

Chair Sukkar asked if AALF already has the placements for 10-15 students available and Rima answered that there are more than 10-15 placements available.

Commissioner Abdallah asked for clarification if AALF is affiliated with ACCESS, with Treasurer Hourani-Harajli explaining that the Fund is only housed within ACCESS and that AALF has full control of how the funds are spent. Commissioner Abdallah followed up asking if \$5,000 was necessary for every student. Rima responded that not every student is in need of the housing assistance or they receive different forms of housing assistance.

IX. Alma College Proposal

Attached is the Alma College Proposal as presented to the commission

Commissioner Hatahet asked how many students were taking the Arabic classes, Commissioner Ghareeb who gave the presentation answered that it was in the 20's.

Dr. Hourani suggested that CMEAA perhaps develop an endowment to support scholarships for Arab Americans and Chaldeans to go to colleges and universities.

Chair Sukkar suggested that there should be a resource page for the programs/scholarships that are currently available on the CMEAA website.

X. Arab American and Chaldean Council Proposal

Attached is the Arab-American and Chaldean Council proposal as presented to the commission.

In the interest of time, Chair Sukkar opened up the floor for debate on the spending proposals.

She asked the commissioners to consider the following: \$25,070 for NAO and \$13,000 for each other proposal.

Treasurer Hourani-Harajli, who announced she would abstain from the vote on AALF asked CMEAA Counsel Tonya Jeter if she had to abstain, given that the spending would all be considered under one motion. Both Tonya and Executive Director of OGM Poppy Hernandez clarified that in no instance do any of these proposals personally enrich any of the commissioners so there is no conflict of interest.

On motion made by Commissioner John Daoud Harajli and seconded by Treasurer Lina Hourani-Harajli. Jaleelah Ahmed, CMEAA approved funding the National Arab Orchestra proposal as presented for \$25,070; the Chaldean Community foundation proposal as presented for \$13,000; the Arab American And Chaldean Council proposal as presented for \$13,000; the Arab American Leadership Fund proposal as presented for \$13,000; and the Alma College proposal as presented for \$13,000.

Motion carries unanimously

X. OGM Surplus Spending

Executive Director Poppy Hernandez explained that there is a surplus in the OGM budget and that OGM is looking for CMEAA to make a formal recommendation on which organizations offering refugee resettlement/immigrant integration services should receive a total of \$30,000. Chair Sukkar notes that the six organizations that CMEAA is looking to recommend are ACCESS, ACC, CCF, the Arab American Heritage Council, and Zaman International (\$6,000 each)

Dr. Miri asked if the funding would be tied to how many clients these organizations serve. Director Hernandez explained that although that's the traditional way to allocate funds to refugee/integration services, since this is a smaller amount of funding being typically awarded, it is just meant to help close capacity gaps in these organizations.

Commissioner Hatahet asked how OGM and CMEAA choose what organizations that are being considered. Director Hernandez answered that these are the organizations that OGM and CMEAA already have a partnership with and that we wanted these funds to specifically target Middle Eastern newcomers.

On motion made by Commissioner Dave Abdallah and Seconded by Commissioner Alexandra Nassar, CMEAA formally recommends OGM distribute \$6,000 to each of the following organizations: ACCESS, Arab American and Chaldean Council, Chaldean Community Foundation, the Arab American Heritage Council, and Zaman International
Motion carries unanimously

XI. OGM Update

Attached is the OGM update as presented to the commission.

Chair Sukkar requested a motion to adjourn:

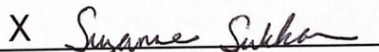
On Motion made by Treasurer Lina Hourani-Harajli and seconded by Commissioner John Daoud, the Commission Adjourned. Motion carries unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 1:59



Amal M. Berry
Secretary

Nabeleh
Ghabeeb

X 

Suzanne K. Sukkar
Chair

Cost Category Details
Appropriation 36660

Appn	Fund	Cost Category	Expenditures	Encumbrances	Actual	Budget	Remaining	% Actual
36660	1000	Salaries & Benefits			-		-	0%
		Office Operations	360		360	1,000	640	36%
		Travel			-	1,000	1,000	0%
		Training			-		-	0%
		Advertising			-		-	0%
		Contractual, Professional Fees & Dues	69,472	13,448	82,920	82,920	-	100%
		Information Technology	4,966	-	4,966	5,000	34	99%
		Telecommunications	937		937	1,000	63	94%
		Buildings			-		-	0%
		Grants			-	77,080	77,080	0%
		Attorney General			-		-	0%
		DTMB Indirect			-		-	0%
		LEO Executive Allocation			-	4,705	4,705	0%
Total			75,735	13,448	89,184	172,705	83,522	52%

FY 2024 (Oct 1, 2023 - Sept 30, 2024)

Original Spending Plan

COMISSION ON MIDDLE EASTERN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

Appropriation

Fund

Accounting Template

**36660 - COMMISSION
ON MIDDLE EASTERN
AFFAIRS**

1000 - GENERAL FUND

1862923T001

Salaries & Benefits	-	-
Office Operations	1,000	1,000
Travel	1,000	1,000
Training	-	-
Advertising	-	-
Contractual, Professional Fees & Dues	85,000	85,000
Information Technology	1,264	1,264
Telecommunications		-
Buildings	-	-
Grants	75,000	75,000
LEO Executive	4,705	4,705
Total Budgeted	167,969	167,969

Spending Authority

Remaining Authority

210,000

210,000

42,031

42,031

Revenue

-

September 2023 OGM Updates

Ethnic & Advocacy-Focused Commissions Updates

- *Community Engagement*
 - 9/15/23 Ballet Neplanta at the Wharton Center in East Lansing
 - 9/15/23 Annual Leaders' Recognition Dinner (MAPAAC)
 - 9/22/23 Hispanic Heritage Event to honor 2023 scholarship recipients and leaders from across the State
 - FOCUS GROUP ATTENDEES TO CONFIRM!
- *Legislative Advocacy*
 - 10/10/23 HLCOM is working with the Caucus to host an event in Detroit w/legislators
 - We want to work on updating the FY24 Legislative Priorities for each commission with you!
 - Annual Convening of ALL COMMISSIONS --- date?
- *Operations*
 - HLCOM just had their strategic planning retreat and we are pleased to be able to move forward with the updated SIG model with all commissions
 - Now that Mika is on board, we're working on a "Commissions Playbook" that will help align our work and clarify roles
 - EOG & Stakeholder (MI Departments) Engagement – planning in progress!

Refugee Services Updates

Equity & Inclusion Updates

- Moving forward with a consultant to work with us to implement a statewide language access plan *we are in the final stages of solidifying the contract!
- Moving forward with hiring needs- we will share postings when those become available, we hope you share with your networks.
- Legal services needs for employers and workforce development partnerships engagement conversations are taking place.

FY24 Budget Re-Cap (LOTS OF WINS!)

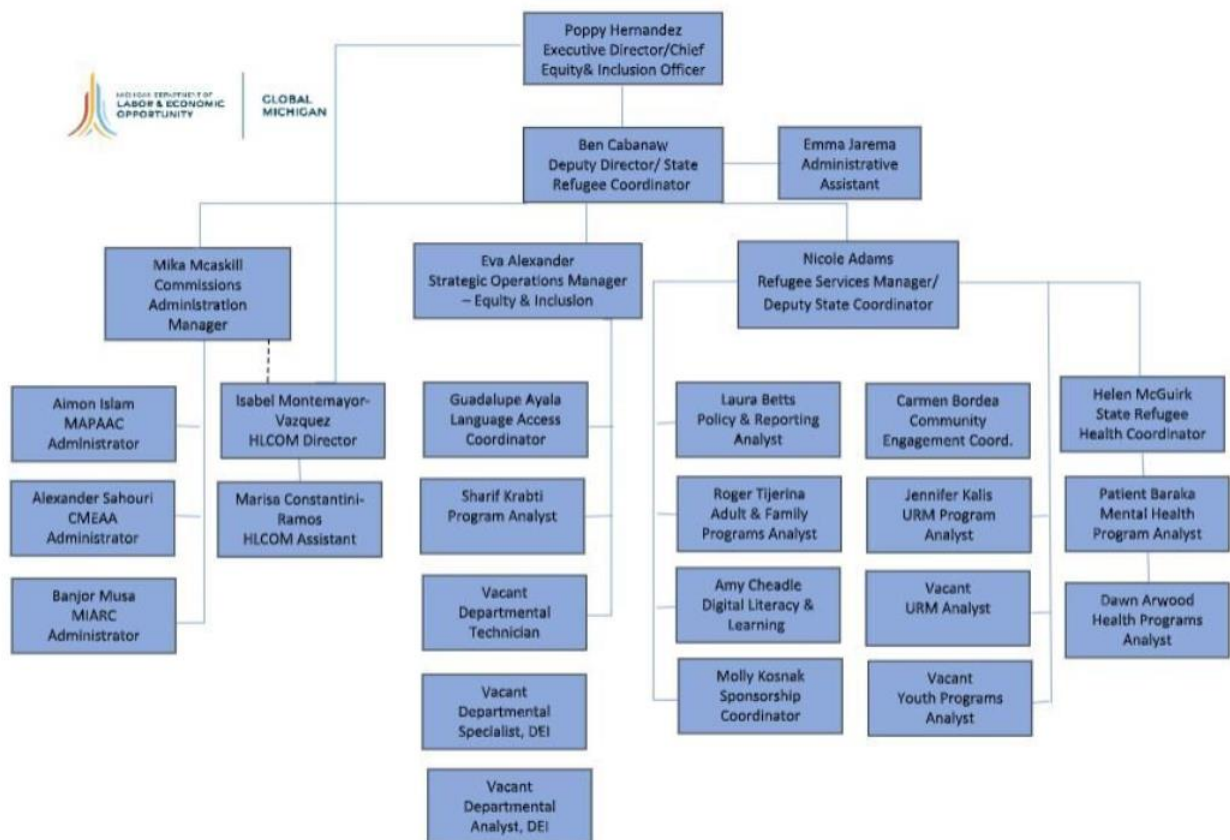
FY24 ETHNIC POPULATION BUDGET TIES

- Office of Global Michigan increased budget / \$2.3M and +3 FTE
- Refugee Assistance increased budget /\$7M
- New Michigander Fund one-time allocation \$3M
- Global Detroit \$5M
- Refugee and Immigrant Community Center \$500k
- Yemeni Foundation \$500k

- Arab American Museum \$500k
- African American Museum \$500k
- West Michigan Hispanic Center \$5M
- SER Metro \$500k
- Michigan Minority Supplier Council \$2.5M
- Burma Center Battle Creek \$750k
- Midtown Cultural Planning \$12M
- **Global Michigan Talent Initiative \$5M**
- (Minority) Grants and Contracts for Behavioral Health Services \$1,145,200 and 3 FTE (provides services to immigrant children and families from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and other Middle Eastern countries, and Ukraine).
- Grants for Minority-Owned Businesses \$10M
- Grants for Minority-Owned Food and Agriculture Ventures \$2.9M
- Law Enforcement Charge to Recruit Trooper School Candidates and New Employees (Black, Jewish, Native American, LGBTQ+, Indian/Hindu, Hispanic, Arab/Muslim, and Asian and Pacific Islander).

OGM Staffing Updates

- NEW! Guadalupe Ayala, Statewide Language Access Coordinator
- NEW! Mika Mcaskill, Commissions Administrative Manager
- NEW! Banjor Musa, Michigan Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Council Administrator





Administrator's Report

Alexander Sahouri

CMEAA Administrator

SahouriA1@michigan.gov

Good afternoon,

This past quarter we have seen several new connections and developmental opportunities that are sure to strengthen CMEAA. The first major update to give is that back in July, CMEAA participated in a meeting with the Executive Office of the Governor the other Ethnic Commissions where we received updates on what the Governor's executive team is working on. The topic of the meeting mostly revolved around the FY24 budget. This quarterly meeting will give CMEAA a new channel to communicate with the EOG our priorities and concerns. Commissioners who attend the meeting will rotate. Thank you to Commissioners Nabeleh Ghareeb, Nadine Kalasho, and Suzanne Sukkar for attending.

On to the developmental aspect of this update, the Ethnic Commission staff, and soon yourselves, are going through an intensive cultural counseling training. Essey Workie from Multicultural Consulting is leading focus groups with each of the OGM commissions to better understand what diversity, equity, and inclusion related topics or needs resonate with our communities. Please take a second and carve out time on your calendar to attend the Zoom session on Wednesday, October 12 from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. We need at least 10 people there, and you are welcome to invite someone from your community who isn't a commissioner.

Lastly, looking back to connections we made, CMEAA also had an opportunity to listen about the new Unemployment Insurance Agency and give feedback. Thank you to Commissioners Jaleelah Ahmed and Zane Hatahet for attending that meeting. Another connection was made after a USDA community engagement specialist reached out to CMEAA to help identify Arab farmers and Halal food processors. We already connected them with former OGM director Fayrouz Saad to connect them to Halal food processors, but if you know any Arab farmers or farming communities, please let me know.

Once again, thank you all for your continued service.

Sincerely,

Alexander



National ARAB ORCHESTRA

MICHAEL IBRAHIM, *Music Director*

44648 Mound Road
Sterling Heights, Michigan 48314
www.nationalaraborchestra.org
info@nationalaraborchestra.org
440.289.8321

May 24 2023

CMEAA Commission on Middle East American Affairs

Dear Alexander Sahouri,

I trust this letter finds you well. On behalf of the National Arab Orchestra (NAO), I am writing to request your support in the form of a grant of \$13,000.

The NAO is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and integrating Arab culture by creating memorable musical experiences through education and performance with an emphasis on the musical traditions of the Arab World. This is a very exciting year for us as we enter our 15th season.

The NAO has made significant progress in achieving our mission since our last grant was awarded by CMEAA in 2018. Additional funding from CMEAA will enable us to expand our programs and reach more communities in Michigan.

Over the past year, the NAO has accomplished the following:

- Successfully rebounded from the restrictions of COVID
- Reignited our outreach programs to schools and community organizations, reaching more than 100 students and thousands of community members in Michigan. We will continue to build this outreach across all music classes in the state of Michigan, connecting with thousands of students organically bringing diverse groups of students to work together, thus building bridges through music. .
- We performed to sold-out performances featuring Arab music and culture, including collaborations with the University Musical Society, the Detroit Institute of Art, the Flint Institute of Music, The Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and the Kennedy Center.

Despite these successes, we recognize that there is still much work to be done in building bridges to create a greater understanding and appreciation of Arab culture in Michigan. With your continued support, we can expand our programs and reach more communities through education across the state.

- We will use the grant of \$50,000 to fund our educational programs, community outreach initiatives, and student performances. See the attached budget for details of how the funds will be used.

We are grateful for your past support and hope you will consider our request for additional funding. Your support will have a lasting impact on the lives of students and community members across Michigan. Thank you for considering our request, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,
Sherri Richards,
Executive Director

-The National Arab Orchestra, Building Bridges Through Music-

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH MUSIC

Brought
to you by



National ARAB
ORCHESTRA

MICHAEL IBRAHIM, *Music Director*

Art With A Purpose

The Building Bridges Through Music (“BBTM”) program teaches students about the beauty and richness of the Arab culture while providing opportunities for cultural understanding and enrichment. With an initial grant from the Knight Foundation, the National Arab Orchestra (NAO) started Building Bridges Through Music (BBTM) in 2013 with several goals. One was to impact thousands of students by working with music teachers in their weekly music classes. More than 25 performances, with 2,000 students performing with the NAO, have been strategically developed and carried out. The program has been shared in 4 states, including Michigan, Florida, Texas, Massachusetts, and Ohio.



Students from the Fordson High School and Edsel Ford High School choirs in Dearborn, Michigan perform with the National Arab Orchestra at a concert on March 4, 2023.

We went from 12 students to educating thousands, and the NAO is sharing our successes to inspire you to donate to this educational cause and get involved in our inclusive program. BBTM is building heritage pride, connecting generations within the Arab community, and organically creating learning opportunities from other cultures through music. Here’s a **LINK** that showcases our diverse students in action.

“I feel blessed to say that we have started to see the fruits of this program. I feel even more blessed to say that a continued collaboration will bring even more amazing results.”

**– Matt Laura
Fordson High School**

Here are a few additional videos that detail the BBTM program and highlight concerts with the students performing.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INj4QjGUNvA&t=3s>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWvi5zyhCks>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLBgkQZcvn0>

Building Bridges Through Music Impact:

Because music is our universal language, we unite diverse students to foster awareness, love, and inclusion through music's united messaging.

- ◆ We highlight Arab heritage and culture as a learning and collaborative tool for community connection and understanding.
- ◆ We amplify collaborations and partnerships with both business and performing arts communities.
- ◆ We elevate culture while uniting 22 Arab countries for peace and love through music.
- ◆ We shape Arab identity from our ancestors' messages of unity by building self-esteem, confidence, and care for one another.
- ◆ We foster an inspired and engaged volunteer community.
- ◆ We provide education, transforming our students and filling a need for donors who care about education, music, and our children.



A group of students recently attended and volunteered at an NAO concert in Houston in March of 2023.

The BBTM infrastructure is expanding. Our Building Bridges through Music Program is building cultural bridges for thousands of middle and high school students in communities nationwide where the NAO has a presence. The youth participate in our six-week curriculum to empower and impact Arab and Non-Arab students. Arab students deepen their connection to their heritage, bridging generational differences by embracing the music their parents already know and love. Non-Arabic students are exposed to Arab culture, most often for the first time. They receive the opportunity to explore, understand and value the beauty of its rich culture and music. Collaborating with music departments in public schools, which culminates by performing on stage with the NAO, provides an often-transformative experience that enables students from diverse school districts at the same time to see music as a shared language, regardless of cultural background.

"Listening to Arab music opened up yet another genre of music I never thought I would enjoy. It was a really cool and exciting new experience that took me outside of my comfort zone."

**– Nathan W.
Edsel Ford High School**

As we progress, BBTM is one of the NAO's significant initiatives for deepening and connecting communities. Right now, funds are needed for: teachers from the NAO to go into the classrooms, travel for students to events, and community outreach. We're excited for you to join BBTM. We have teachers in the schools standing by to get involved. The National Arab Orchestra (NAO) has been electrifying global audiences since 2009. Our innovative and engaging approach to performances reaches millions in organic social media while bridging cultural differences globally, creating opportunities for dialogue and cultural introspection. The NAO reaches nearly 35 million people annually in its social/digital footprint. <https://araborchestra.org/>

To find out, get involved, donate, and get more information about this extraordinary program, contact our Executive Director, Sherri Richards: Sherri@ArabOrchestra.org, (440) 289-8321.

Building Bridges Through Music

1870 High Schools in Michigan - 1701 public - 169 Private - Not all schools have a music program

This includes Community Events & Outreach. At least 200 students would perform with the NAO this next year.

Goal is to connect with 80% of the schools within 3 years Community Outreach ongoing

Action/Activity	Budget	Comments
Create Database of Schools & Music Teachers	\$2,000	start with Schools DataBase software - merge with list provided by music teachers
Create Marketing Handout to describe program and tell the BBTM story	\$1,000	design the collateral
Print 2000 Brochures	\$1,500	print costs
Create mailing to teachers - Email & USPS	\$2,000	time & postage
Converting the curriculum in Michael's head/notes into a repeatable curriculam	\$4,000	
Contribution to Operating expenses to fully develop and implement the program	\$36,000	12 months @3K for impletentation, implementation and execution
Transporation costs to/from schools, and for students to come to concerts and community events	\$3,500	
	\$50,000	



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CHALDEAN NEWS

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CMEAA Innovative Programs Grant Outline

Chaldean Community Foundation

Among its mission, the Chaldean Community Foundation provides individuals with necessary medical, mental health, and social services to assist with American acculturation. Core programs of the Chaldean Community Foundation include NEW AMERICAN SUSTAINABILITY ACCULTURATION & TRAINING.

Funding request to support and implement programing at the Chaldean Community Foundation in Sterling Heights, Michigan (CCF), help new Americans acculturate by providing access to resources and advocacy services.

Funding Request: \$30,000

The Chaldean Community Foundation (CCF) will administer the grant. CCF will be responsible for analysis and preparation of a written report of the results for CMEAA.

Scope and Purpose:

To serve, assist clients needs in social services, and positively impact economic growth in Southeast Michigan. Expand Existing Services and Programs in order to conduct and accomplish the following:

- Educational development
- Training programs.
- Social Services.
- Work force development
- Entrepreneur training
- Economic engagement opportunities in the centers of concentration.

Projects details:

The purpose of these programs is to develop measures of economic impact from our clients. Business and programs instruments will be developed by CCF to support resettlement and employment opportunities in broad categories.

- **Acculturation** - Help New Americans acculturate by providing access to resources and advocacy services.
- **Immigration** — helps individuals apply for lawful permanent resident status and to become naturalized citizens.
- **U.S. Naturalization Courses** — instruction and preparation for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) naturalization interview.
- **Career Services and Development** — provides resume building, job search, training, placement, and FAFSA completion.
- **Cultural Competency Training** - Provides education and information to community, health, and government organizations on and about the Chaldean community.
- **GED classes** - Offered by CCF to help the process of applying for college, breaking down the steps and helping an individual to feel confident and familiar with how college works.
- **ESL** - English Second Language (ESL) classes are an ongoing program offered through Chaldean Community Foundation (CCF).
- **Educational attainment** - Communication and marketing of College Readiness programs are available in English and Arabic. Arabic, English speakers are available including a handful of other languages are spoken by our staff to break down any language barriers.



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- **Expanding Existing Career Services Program: Increase College Readiness**

How to help the process of applying for college, breaking down the steps and helping an individual to feel confident and familiar with how college works.

This program is designed to take the participant through the full experience of applying for college, becoming familiar with frequently used college terms, familiarity with college resources and programs. Assistance with completing FAFSAs Workshops.

- **Job Training Classes** - including health care, computer software, office and administrative skills, customer service are areas of training available beginning Fall 2023.

- **Additional Career Services and Development Support** - CCF has a long-developed relationship with Michigan Works and the State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) program. CCF has a solid relationship with community health systems including Henry Ford Health System and through SAE will be offering apprenticeship opportunities including Nursing Assistants, Medical Assistants and Patient Registrations Representatives, Certified Nursing Assistant.

Programs measurement:

- Satisfaction surveys through participants
- Surveys through partnerships
- Number of applications completed
- Number of referrals to CCF's program
- Continuing growth of program after six months
- Construction of clients Survey questionnaires
- Services data compilation and Data analysis
- Final report writing and Presentation of results to CCF and CMEAA.

We hope to serve more Chaldean clients and local immigrant needs as we continue to support the local communities. **Committed Partners Include:** *Macomb College, Warren Consolidated Schools, Michigan Works, CCF Career Services, Utica Community Schools, and Macomb Intermediate School District.*

Martin Manna



Arab American Leadership Fund Impact Report

The Arab American Leadership Program (AALP) is funded through the Arab American Leadership Fund (AALF) at the Center for Arab American Philanthropy (CAAP). This program helps students better understand the federal government, the legislative process, and how to shape policy in their future professions. Ultimately, we hope to strengthen the political power of the Arab American community by increasing the number of Middle Eastern/Arab Americans working in the public service sector.

The AALP has placed thirteen students in political internships in Washington D.C., Michigan, and California. Each student has received a stipend to support living expenses and transportation costs. They also receive preparation and support during the interview and placement process, professional development, networking opportunities with Middle Eastern/Arab Americans in the field, and personalized technical assistance throughout the program. Six of the thirteen students have been from Michigan and represent universities such as Wayne State and the University of Michigan. These students have been able to make connections with Middle Eastern/Arab American professionals in the state and report feeling less isolated in their internships and more connected to the broader community. In addition, they felt much more educated on the political process and importance of civic engagement through participation in this program.

The program placed five students in 2022 and eight in 2023, with a goal of ten students for 2024. The programmatic costs per student amount to \$5,000 and includes the facilitation of a summer internship placement, a stipend for living costs, additional financial assistance towards housing and transportation, professional support and leadership development, and networking opportunities. Additional funds for our goal of ten students for 2024 are being raised to ensure that we increase the impact of our political standing.

We will distribute program materials and registration information and ask for help from CMEAA to ensure the information is shared widely and thoroughly.

The Michigan Commission on Middle Eastern Affairs Grant Report (2022-2023).

Overview: The Arabic Program at Alma College

The WLC department at Alma College has the mission of creating new models of language learning that produce college graduates with novice high-level proficiency in Arabic and other languages. The Arabic program is a new initiative that sets high expectations for participating students of all majors and provides the opportunity for these students to reach proficiency in Arabic. Regardless of their disciplines, students make this language an integral part of their undergraduate academic pursuits regardless of their disciplines. This program includes rigorous language learning, cultural immersion, and the opportunity to study abroad.

The Arabic program offered by Alma College includes 14 weeks of language instruction and structured cultural enrichment experiences designed to promote rapid language gains and cultural competency. This language program is an initiative to expand and allow our students who wish to study and master Arabic. It will be essential in preparing students for the 21st century's globalized workforce and increasing national competitiveness.

Grant report

The curriculum development piece emphasized extracellular activities as part of experiential learning. We hoped to make this part an essential section of the program's curriculum development. Thanks to the grant (\$7500) we got from the Michigan Commission on Middle Eastern Affairs, my students had a unique experience in their Arabic Class. The goal was not just to expose them to the Arabic language and culture but to get them involved in the process of learning about the Arab world in general and the Arab American culture regionally speaking. The class was divided in groups and each group has a task; in the end each group presented their task, gave feedbacks. By the end of the semester students were asked to write a report and reflect on their experience with the Arabic language and culture with which most of them are unfamiliar. The report highlighted the Alma-Dearborn connection event on the 29th of March, the visit to the Arab American Museum on the 11th of February, and their experience in the

Arabic class overall. It was such a joy to read their work, they were able to describe and reflect on their experience.

The grant helped initiate building the course by funding the cultural component to the curriculum. This gave the students the experiential learning of the Arabic culture, and substantial knowledge of sociopolitical and cultural context.

Overall, the grant from the Michigan Commission on Middle Eastern Affairs helped fund:

1. The trip to Dearborn where we visited the Arab American Museum, ate some delicious middle eastern food and visited a few cultural sites. Students had the opportunity to attend a workshop with the great artiste Helen Zughaib. The Communications team from the Arab American National Museum sent me a video that a news crew did! You can find our interviews here: <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/arab-american-national-museum-menelusuri-jejak-imigran-arab-di-amerika-/7056067.html>
2. The Alma-Dearborn Alma-Dearborn Connection Initiative that took place on March 29th. Part of the event was sponsored as well by and the contribution of the Center for College and Community Engagement at Alma College. The great thing about this event is that students get to help organize it. They created the brochures, booked the catering company, reached out and invited the guest speaker, and worked with staff from the Arab American museum. They also introduced the guests and monitored the whole event. We had attendance from students, faculty, staff as well as members of the Alma community. The President of Alma College Jeff Abernathy attended the event and met with the guest speaker Jumana Judeh and Dave Serio from Museum prior the event. The guest Speaker visited the Arabic Class and had an open discussion with the students about her experience as a young refugee and as Arab American women in Michigan. It was such an amazing opportunity for my students.
3. This grant helped create and introduce the diversity and richness of the Arab culture to our students and the Alma Community and we hope to continue seeking more funds with the support of Alma college to ensure the continuation of this promising initiative.

4. Curriculum development: My work was focused on making sure that the Arabic program is more than a language program. The hours I put to develop the beginning course were work around providing learning opportunities to establish cultural connections and awareness through community engagement, which itself a great way to offer our students cultural competency, and a safety initiative for Arab-American students who choose to attend Alma College. Thanks to this opportunity, I'm now offering an upper-level class in Arabic (still working on it this summer).

I have created a portfolio of the activities funded by. I am also waiting to receive the surveys that my students completed right after the Helen Zughuib shoe workshop at the Museum. I'll share it with you once I receive it.

And Finally, Dalron Gray, is one of my students who fell in love with Arabic and is now working with me this summer to continue promoting the program. I'm adding his report below where he talks about what next for the program but also reflect on his own experience as an Arabic student.

Please let me know if you have any questions and feel free to reach me at 7138182029 or by email at canningk@alme.edu

Arabic Report

Dalron Gray

6/10/23

Plans for this year

With the stunning power of this grant, we are now able to hold 2 events for the Alma-Dearborn connection initiative. Dr. Canning and I have already been diligently working to build the structure and committees for these upcoming community gathering strategies. We have had

meetings with representatives of the Alma township which cohesively built relationships and destroyed barriers between the “town and gown”. We are currently developing the plans and budget for these events to make them as successful as possible. With the sheer amount of outreach that we have created, we expect to see exponential growth in comparison to an already successful event last year.

Furthermore, we are collaborating with admissions to hold recruitment dinners in the Dearborn area to provide a welcoming atmosphere to prospective students in the community. This plan of action includes an informative brochure about Arabic culture on our campus, individuals that will represent the culture for us, and invites to come tour Alma with the help of our admissions representatives. We strongly believe that this grant will give a return on investment back to the college with a growing number of students and an enhanced experience to community members. The resources we have will be mobilized to empower our initiative and prove that Alma College truly cares about all ethnicities and will not stop at any obstacle to welcome students from across the world.

Museum Experience made possible by the grant

A year ago, I would have never considered deeply yearning to learn a new language. Over the past few months, this precedent idea has been completely altered. The trip to the Arabic museum was one of the days in your life where you are able to disassociate from all of your stress. While listening to Dave and Sarra I was completely captivated by their love for the culture. They were able to describe, in detail, the importance of Arab history. I found myself dumbfounded at times when there was knowledge bestowed on me that I had never heard of. For example, I did not know that Arab culture provided the new world with algebra and many astrological theories. This was so interesting to me as I have never been able to give any facts about the culture before this.

Additionally, the food was astounding. The dishes were served with such taste that I could distinguish as a flavor I had never eaten before. This was a masterpiece of a culinary experience as it tasted so fantastic. You could tell there was an immense amount of effort put into the cooking. Baba Gaknoush was my favorite new dish that I had never tried before. I was not prepared to be mind blown by the quality of such large dishes served to the table. Yes, these dishes were served in a community style where we could all serve each other the food, building a

kind atmosphere around the table. Also, it is always a bonus when you can tell that the service truly cares about you.

Lastly, our artist that spoke on stage with her pronounced stories played my heart like a guitar. I felt so intrinsically attached to her story when she left the stage. Her storytelling was influential and left me in an enhanced state of enlightenment towards arabic culture.

Alma-Dearborn connection initiative

The Alma-Dearborn connection initiative was another faucet that authentically filtered the Arabic culture through my soul. I was in awe when dancing around the opera house being bombarded by clasped hands and smiling faces. Everyone was so open to learn about the culture which made the event so much more memorable. One of the most notable moments of this day was creating the mosaic using the resources provided by the Arab American Museum. I created a pattern around a representation of a blue eye. One of the workers from the museum explained to me that the blue eye represents a protection mechanism that will promote good luck. This was an amazing moment for me as I believe I was able to capture a symbolic meaning from the culture. Before this class, I had no understanding of what the Arabic culture was. I will admit that I am from a very small town in northern Michigan where misconceptions about every culture run rampant. Due to all of this experiential learning, I was instilled with a love and passion for being an advocate of the Arabic culture. I understand that I have barely scratched the surface and there is a lifelong commitment to this identity. I plan to move forward with learning the language and using it to promote a connection between my culture and others.

Not only did I learn a great amount about the arabic culture; I was able to learn the philosophy of being malleable to all cultures in the world. People love their origins and traditions which is a beautiful thing to encounter. I understand the depths of where people hold their culture in their hearts and this will benefit me in all relationships I will have. In the world, there are millions of small normalities and traditions that the people hold so dear. My small town acted as a vice which held me back from experiencing such wonderful ways to live and worship life. I have always been a person who loves to try new food and this understanding has helped me appreciate that. The depth of art and expression that comes with cultural food is amazing to me. I greatly

enjoyed trying the baba ganoush, shawarma, and all other cuisines. Being a person that will listen, accommodate, and promote these cultures will be a great way to build my network and learn about the world.

My next experience I was to pursue in my Arabic journey is taking the next class in Arabic. I believe that with the help of my peers, I was able to build a very solid structure in the language of Arabic. I am moving forward and staying diligent with my efforts of learning the language. Without the help of the grant, these experiences would not have been possible. The trajectory of my education was directly impacted by this grant which I am beyond grateful for.

Once I am able to speak fluently in Arabic, my profound dream is to travel to an Arabic speaking country and learn the culture from the source. I will be able to live, breath and eat the ways of life if I am able to visit one of these countries. I will aspire to learn this language so that one day I will be confident in approaching an Arabic speaker to strike a conversation. This would not be possible without the help of my classmates, my TA's, and my beloved professor. I could not be more grateful for this opportunity as this is one of the main reasons I chose to attend a liberal arts college. My choice has come full circle in reaping the benefits of a liberal arts education which will pay forward into my future career and relationships. In conclusion, I hope to act as an ambassador of this culture to help spread the kinship and tenacity of such a beautiful way of moving past our glass ceiling.

The Alma College Arabic Program

Purpose

The Arabic language program at Alma College first began in January and April 2022. The successful experiment included 14 weeks of rigorous language instruction and structured cultural enrichment experiences designed to promote rapid language gains and improve cultural competency. Since then, The Arabic program has been thriving thanks to the support of the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs and Alma College.

This proposal seeks to expand the program's impact in Michigan by leveraging and utilizing local resources from the Arab community in the State of Michigan, where Alma students can connect with, learn, and develop their Arabic language skills further and appreciate the richness of the Arab cultures. This approach serves Alma College's mission of preparing students to appreciate and celebrate our similarities and differences. The Arab program was created to allow more engagement opportunities and capacity-building initiatives that contribute to a welcoming campus environment.

Through additional support, we hope to continue building the program by more consistently immersing students in Arabic culture—first regionally and then globally—a strategic, experiential approach to learning that will help students develop skills to master the language and also gain a deeper understanding of the sociopolitical and cultural context in which Arabic is spoken and practiced. The implementation of the Arabic program at Alma College in the World Languages and Cultures (WLC) department will:

- Involve a deliberate, inclusive approach that will introduce students to cultural competency opportunities without compromising the safe environment Michigan's Arab-American students deserve should they choose to attend Alma in increasing numbers.
- Enable new opportunities to collaborate and work with colleagues from different departments i.e., religious studies, political science, history, etc., to serve Alma's unique vision of adopting an interdisciplinary approach.
- Present us with an exciting opportunity to increase our investment in regional cultural exchange and innovate our language-studies curriculum, thereby producing graduates who are more career-ready and prepared to collaborate with their global peers
- Foster authentic connections and awareness amongst its students through community engagement.
- Students in the program will learn to communicate with respect and a cultural understanding of Arabic, a crucial element of global competence. The latter will be demonstrated by investigating the world, recognizing and weighing perspectives, communicating effectively in Arabic in various speaking situations, explaining comprehension of Arabic in various listening problems and written materials, demonstrating a clear understanding of the Arabic culture, and taking action.

Activities

Core curriculum development (\$5,000)

- Offering additional courses to expand the program currently under development
- These courses will become part of the general education under the “Cultures and Identity” theme
- We aim to create Arabic studies minor under the World Languages and Cultures Department

Experiential learning activities (\$5,000)

- Visiting the Arab American Museum
- Attending and hosting guest speakers
- Service learning
- Alternative breaks opportunities

Cultural events (\$5,000)

- Hosting a cultural event to celebrate the National Arab American Heritage Month.
- Attending one or two events with the Arabic students (level 1 and level 2) to help increase their cultural knowledge of Arab identity and culture and to connect with the Arab American community in the state of Michigan.



ACC Marketplace Proposal

In December 2011, ACC established its partnership with Forgotten Harvest and kicked off its fresh food program which distributed food to those in need from its Youth Center in Detroit.

As a result of the growing need, in November 2017, ACC was able to expand its program through the support of funding from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families Office of Community Services. This funding allowed ACC to renovate a dilapidated 3,000 sq. ft. building to create the ACC Marketplace, located at 110 W. 7 Mile Road in Detroit. The building has enabled ACC to increase its food distribution operations.

Today, ACC's Marketplace Program has grown to be one of Forgotten Harvest's largest distribution sites. Currently, every Thursday ACC provides over 60,000 pounds of fresh food to hundreds of families and individuals utilizing a drive-thru model.

ACC's Marketplace, prior to covid, implemented a table top client choice model. During covid we quickly maneuvered to a drive-up model to keep our staff and community members safe. With that being said, it's time to go back to the client choice model! We currently provide food once a week, through our partnership with Forgotten Harvest.

With the assistance of these funds and partnerships, we hope to begin the following:

- Increase food access to a daily operation: ACC's 7 mile campus is a one stop shop with 5 buildings that provide Behavioral Health, WIC, Youth services, refugee health programs and other specialized services. Not all of our clients are available on Thursday morning. Expanding our services and operations would greatly increase access to food for hundreds of families. Funding would assist in purchases equipment for the inside of the building to support this mission.
- Building Renovations: ACC is in the process of rebranding and changing our name to reflect who we are now and our mission to Provide core human needs to all people. ACC is investing in new signage and creating a Marketplace that is open and welcoming to all and ensures dignity for our clients. As part of the renovations ACC will opening part of the building to create a more efficient entrance as well as adding over hangs to ensure those walking up to our event have shelter should they have to wait.
- Expand partnerships: During the Afghan crisis ACC partnered with Forgotten Harvest and SE MI Resettlement Agencies to be the distribution site for refugee emergency food distribution for those staying in hotels. Again, due to the current housing market refugees are again being temporarily housed in local hotels. The need for food for newly arrived refugees is an ongoing need as many do not have a car. The increased operations and building renovations will allow us to also increase our refugee outreach.
- Vehicle: part of the funds will be used to support the cost of a vehicle. This vehicle will assist us in delivery food to homes and multiple families by delivering to schools. Many working poor parents are



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www.myacc.org

still in need of food support. This creates easier access to food for these working families who aren't able to make it to our Marketplace during business hours. In addition to school ACC has partnership with local senior homes who would also benefit from direct deliveries from ACC.

Our overall goal is to have a major impact in SE MI in regards to food security for all people! These improvements would make a huge impact in making that goal a reality.



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