



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

## **Meeting Minutes**

September 21, 2021 | Noon EST

363 W. Big Beaver Road, Ste. 300, Troy, MI 48084

### **ATTENDANCE:**

#### Commissioners Present:

Manal Saab- Chair  
John Daoud- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair  
Lina Hourani-Harajli- Treasurer  
Suzanne Sukkar- Secretary  
Dave Abdallah

Adel Mozip  
Susan Dabaja  
Nabeleh Ghareeb  
Martin Manna  
Nadine Kalasho

Officials and Staff: Assistant AG Tonya Jeter, Civil Rights Office; Interim Director of Appointments Danielle McCann; Zach Hayward, Appointments Specialist; Emily, Intern; Director of New American Integration, Karen Phillippi; Alexander Sahouri (CMEAA Administrator)

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Saab at 12:08 PM ET declaring quorum of the Commission. Chair Saab thanked Arab American and Chaldean Council and Commissioner Daoud for hosting CMEAA. Afterwards, Commissioner Daoud introduced ACC COO, Odie Fakhouri, who welcomed the Commission.

Chair Saab declared she would entertain a motion to adopt the agenda:

### **II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**On Motion made by Commissioner Abdallah and seconded by Commissioner Mozip, the Commission approved the meeting agenda of September 21<sup>st</sup> as presented. *Motion carries unanimously***

Chair Saab welcomed Commissioner Ghareeb for the first time in person, followed by welcoming the new Interim Director of Appointments, Danielle McCann, and her staff. Chair Saab then welcomed Assistant AG Tonya Jeter for the first time in person,

Afterwards, Chair Saab recognized Secretary Sukkar to introduce the June meeting minutes for approval:

### **III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

**On Motion made by Secretary Sukkar and seconded by Commissioner Manna, the Commission approved the meeting minutes of June 2<sup>nd</sup> as presented. *Motion carries unanimously.***

Chair Saab recognizes Treasurer Hourani-Harajli for the Treasurer's Report:

### **IV. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Hourani-Harajli presented the FY21 August Budget to Actual. She informed the Commission that nothing was out of the ordinary and that she has been working with Alexander to make sure that the expenditures matched what our expectations are. She added that we are on track to spend the entirety of our budget by the September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, noting that the largest line items are the Contractual, Grants, and LEO Cost allocations.

Chair Saab followed by noting that since the Commission now has an Administrator who can put in an average of 30 hours a week, the Commission will be looking to work more through our Administrator and other State resources and less through collaborative grants moving forward.

**On Motion made by Commissioner Ghareeb and Seconded by Commissioner Mozip, the Commission approved the Treasurer's report as presented for FY21 August Budget to Actual. *Motion carries unanimously.***

Chair Saab recognized Interim Director McCann for the State Update:

### **V. STATE UPDATE**

Interim Director McCann updated the Commission on the Governor signing the School Aid Budget that eliminates the funding gap between schools without raising taxes raising the baseline funding per child to \$8,700. Interim Director McCann continued by highlighting the FY2022 budget that was agreed upon earlier this week:

Governor Whitmer and the Michigan Legislature came together to deliver a bipartisan budget that puts Michiganders first.

The bipartisan FY2022 budget builds on the kitchen-table fundamental issues that matter most to Michiganders. A few highlights:

- The budget fully funds three effective programs—Michigan Reconnect, Futures for Frontliners, and Going Pro—that help workers get the skills they need to earn a good-paying, in-demand job.
- It includes funds to repair crumbling bridges across Michigan, including the iconic Miller Road Bridge next to the Ford factory in Dearborn.
- The budget makes 105,000 more kids eligible for low or no-cost childcare.

- It also contains dollars to replace lead services lines in Benton Harbor, repair aging dams, make buildings more energy efficient, and clean up our drinking water, Great Lakes, and contaminated sites.
- Finally, the budget puts \$500 million into Michigan's rainy-day fund, which is the largest one-time deposit in state history. This fiscally responsible investment ensures that Michigan is prepared for any future crises—public health or otherwise.

**ECONOMY:** Michigan's families deserve an economy that works for them, where every community can succeed.

- Expands low- or no-cost childcare to 105,000 more kids, helping thousands of working parents go back to work knowing that their kids are safe and cared for.
- Increases rates for childcare providers and boosts slots available for infants and toddlers, ensuring more Michiganders have the early supports they need to succeed.
- Puts \$500 million, the largest one-time deposit ever, into the rainy-day fund.
- Ensures small businesses can take advantage of more federal tax benefits, empowering them to grow and prosper.
- Delivers a one-time, \$1,000 bonus to childcare staff who served on the frontlines during the pandemic and kept our economy going.
- Provides a permanent \$2 per hour raise for direct care workers who take care of our most vulnerable in nursing homes and beyond.
- Funds state police to hire more officers, enhance training, and purchase equipment to keep communities safe and reduce crime.

**INFRASTRUCTURE:** Every Michigander deserves safe, smooth roads to drive on as they drop their kids off at school, go to work, or run errands.

- Invests \$196 million to repair or replace nearly 100 bridges in serious or critical condition.
- Backs grants to improve childcare facilities, giving every kid a safe, high-quality environment to continue to learn and grow.
- Delivers resources for dam repairs, storm water management, contaminant cleanup, and drinking water emergencies.
- Creates a pilot program to bring down utility bills for families by improving home weatherization and energy efficiency.

**HEALTHCARE:** Every Michigander deserves access to safe, affordable, and accessible healthcare in their community.

- Provides alternatives to nursing home care for 1,000 more seniors, allowing them to stay in their homes.
- Covers the cost of treatment for sickle cell disease for all Michiganders, helping those struck by this inherited disease get the care they deserve.
- Invests in new, innovative mental health services to help those who need it most.
- Hires healthcare navigators to tackle racial health disparities and increase coverage.
- Grows the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies in-home visitation program for infants born with substance exposure.

**EDUCATION & SKILLS:** Every Michigander deserves a path to a good-paying, high-skill, and in-demand job.

- Fully funds Michigan Reconnect and Futures for Frontliners, putting thousands of Michiganders on a tuition-free path to higher education or skills training.
- Expands Going Pro to help businesses upscale their workers and get them the skills they need to succeed.
- Bolsters apprenticeships and youth development programs to empower more Michiganders to pursue their potential.

**CLEAN WATER & ENVIRONMENT:** We must protect our natural resources and ensure that every parent can give their kid a glass of drinking water knowing that its safe.

- Sends additional funds to replace 100% of lead service lines in Benton Harbor and establishes an emergency fund to deal with any future drinking water crises.
- Delivers resources to tackle PFAS in drinking water supply.
- Expands the Green Revolving Fund to reduce the state's carbon footprint and save taxpayer dollars.
- Invests resources to reduce pollution in the Great Lakes.

The Governor looks forward to further collaboration with the legislature to spend the billions in federal dollars Michigan has received from the American Rescue Plan and the billions more the state is expected to get from the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

Commissioner Ghareeb was recognized and asked some clarification questions about the Futures for Frontliners Program

Commissioner Daoud was recognized and commended the State for funding replacement of the lead pipes in Benton Harbor.

Commissioner Mozip was recognized and applauded the State and the Governor for increasing education funding and putting the safety of children and educators first but wanted to note that the budget falls short on fixing education infrastructure particularly in schools with old buildings. Additionally, he noted his excitement that the Miller Road Bridge will be repaired, and that the State should pressure corporations that use these infrastructures to contribute to these projects. Commissioner Mozip further applauded the State for their Future for Frontliners program, noting that it caused the enrollment at Henry Ford College to increase this Fall semester. Finally, Commissioner Mozip asked about how woman led business owners could apply for new grants being offered by the State and asked Alexander to follow up with Interim Director McCann to get that information to the Commission.

Chair Saab thanked Interim Director McCann and recognized Director Phillippi for a LEO/Office of Global Michigan Update:

## **VI. LEO/OGM UPDATE**

Director Phillippi expanded on the Reconnect and Frontliner programs, noting that there were informational materials in Arabic for both programs. Regarding the woman's business grant

program, the Office of Global Michigan is working with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to hold stakeholder meetings with ethnic chambers of commerce, non-profit service providers, and the State Ethnic Commissions. Once the dates for those meetings are set the information will be sent to the Commissioners through the Administrator.

Director Phillippi then updated the Commission on the Office of Global Michigan's efforts involving Afghan resettlement. Currently it's unclear how many Afghans will be arriving in the United States but what we do know is that a vast majority of those who will be arriving here will be doing so under humanitarian parole and not the refugee resettlement program, meaning they are eligible for very few benefits. Humanitarian parolees only qualify for emergency Medicare, pregnant persons and parents of young children will be eligible for the State's Mom program, SNAP, and WIC, and they are eligible for relocation assistance in the form of case management for 90 days.

The initial estimate of Afghan arrivals to Michigan is 1,300 but we expect that number to increase. There will be about 320 in Wayne and Oakland County, about 300 in Washtenaw County, about 300 in Ingham County, and about 300 in Kent and Ottawa County. Educational demographics and English skills are unknown with those assessments being made when they arrive. Director Phillippi is asking the Commissioners for assistance identifying organizations who can distribute Halal meals to Afghan arrivals as they do not qualify for food assistance.

Commissioner Abdallah was recognized and asked why the Afghan arrivals aren't being treated as refugees, particularly considering those individuals who worked with US forces, and Director Phillippi explained that because of the rapid nature of the exit out of Afghanistan and arrival in the United States of these individuals, they necessarily don't have the time to go through the process of obtaining refugee status. Commissioner Abdallah followed up asking if the Federal Government was only relying on non-profit service providers and the States in benefiting Afghan arrivals and Director Phillippi confirmed that as of now that's all the support there is for these individuals.

Treasurer Hourani-Harajli was recognized and asked if we had an age breakdown of the arrivals followed by Director Phillippi stating that we will know two to three weeks before they are to arrive most of the information about those arriving.

Secretary Sukkar was recognized and asked if the hospitality industry would get involved; Director Phillippi noted that they are working with the Michigan Community Service Commission, and the State Emergency Operations Center to tap into their connections in providing housing. Additionally, Director Phillippi informed the Commission that they will have a stand-alone site from the Michigan Community Service Commission to get volunteers and donations after Secretary Sukkar asked about how they could spread the word about supporting the Afghan arrivals.

Commissioner Ghareeb was recognized and asked how it is determined who is resettled where and Director Phillippi responded saying that the state has no say in it and that the states resettlement agencies work with national resettlement agencies who choose who goes where. And a follow up from Commissioner Ghareeb is who is advocating for Afghan going to school

children to school with Director Phillippi assuring that they are working on the Department of Education on that.

Commissioner Dabaja was recognized and asked what support will be offered to the counties and individual communities to welcome Afghan arrivals with Director Phillippi responding by clarifying that it's the resettlement agencies in Michigan working with the counties.

Commissioner Kalasho was recognized and asked if we expect these individuals to apply for asylum and Director Phillippi confirmed that yes that is what we expect. Commissioner Kalasho followed up asking about people who are currently in the United States on Student Visa for instance who can't go back to Afghanistan and what are we doing for them to which Director Phillippi responded saying she would report back on that question. Chair Saab noted how this is the same situation many Lebanese students here on visa are experiencing now to which Director Phillippi noted that the Federal Government would have to grant Temporary Protected Status in these cases.

Commissioner Mozip was recognized and recommended that we reach out to the Michigan Muslim Community Council which acts as an umbrella organization for Muslim organizations and Mosques

Chair Saab recognized the Administrator for his report:

## **VII. CMEAA ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

Attached is the Administrator's Report. In the interest of time Chair Saab opened the floor for the Commissioners to ask the Administrator any questions they had after reading the report ahead of time. There were no questions only expressions satisfaction with the job of the Administrator. Particularly Commissioner Abdallah noted how Alexander is proactive instead of reactive in his administrative role.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Bylaws**

**On Motion made by Commissioner Mozip and Seconded by Commissioner Ghareeb, the Commission adopted the amended bylaws to take effect immediately upon approval.**

*Motion carries unanimously*

### **B. UMS**

On Motion made by Commissioner Mozip and Seconded by Commissioner Dabaja, the Commission approved an expenditure of \$10,000 to UMS to be distributed in October to support Spring 2022 MEA programming. *Motion carries unanimously*

**C. EHRA**

Commissioner Mozip introduced Dr. Natalie Sampson who reported to the Commission on how its funds were used in its Summer 2021 programing. Attached is a hard copy of that report.

On Motion made by Commissioner Mozip and Seconded by Commissioner Dabaja, the Commission approved an expenditure of \$10,000 to EHRA to be distributed in October to support its Summer 2022 internship program as presented. *Motion carries unanimously*

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**


Chair Saab informed the Commission that she will be stepping down as Chair but will still serve the rest of her term on the Commission until April 2022.

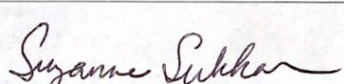
**X. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

X   
Suzanne Sukkar  
Secretary

X   
Manal B. Saab  
Chair

*Suzanne Sukkar*

**Ethnic Commissions- Commission of Middle Eastern Affairs (36660)**  
**FY21 August Budget to Actual**

Available Funds:		
	Carry In	-
	New	125,000
	<b>Admin - Total</b>	<b>125,000</b>

% of Year Elapsed		92%
<b>Projections Based On:</b>		
	12 Mth	Payroll
Remaining	1	2
Completed	11	24

		FY21 Spending Plan			Actual Expenditures YTD Thru			Balance/Projections		
					8/31/2021					
Categories	FY20 ACT YTD	Plan	Adj	Adjusted Plan	Expenses	Encumbrances	Total Expenses	Current Balance	Projected Balance/Lapse	% of Budget
Salaries & Benefits	-						-	0	0	0%
Office Operations	21	395		395			-	395	362	0%
Travel	-	388		388			-	388	356	0%
Training	-	-		-			-	0	0	0%
Advertising	-	-		-			-	0	0	0%
Contractual, Professional Fees & Dues	29,279	30,000	25,918	55,918	30,244	20,674	50,918	5,001	341	91%
Information Technology	1,130	750	850	1,600	1,182		1,182	418	285	74%
Telecommunications	728	750	550	1,300	1,000		1,000	300	192	77%
Grants	50,000	76,700	(26,700)	50,000	50,000		50,000	0	(4,167)	100%
LEO Cost Allocation	16,320	16,017	(618)	15,399	11,026		11,026	4,373	3,090	72%
<b>Budgeted Expenditures:</b>	<b>97,478</b>	<b>125,000</b>		<b>125,000</b>	<b>93,451</b>	<b>20,674</b>	<b>114,125</b>	<b>10,875</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>91%</b>

Remaining Available Funds	-
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**ETHNIC COMMISSIONS (PA 56 of 2019)**  
**Commission for Middle Eastern American Affairs (36660)**  
*FY21 July Spend Plan*

	<b>Appropriation</b>	<b>YTD Expenditures &amp; Encumbrances</b>	<b>Projected Full Year</b>
Communications	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,000	\$ <b>1,300</b>
Contractual	\$ 55,918	\$ 50,918	\$ 55,918
- Maan Abou Khzam		\$ 5,917	\$ 5,917
- Hussein Dabajeh		\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
- Alexander Sahouri		\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000
Total Contractual	\$ -	\$ 50,918	\$ <b>55,918</b>
Travel	\$ 388	\$ -	\$ <b>388</b>
Supplies & Materials	\$ 395	\$ -	\$ 395
Conference			\$ 300
Food			\$ 95
Total Supp & Mat	\$ -	\$ -	\$ <b>395</b>
Grants	\$ 50,000	\$ -	
- University Musical Society		\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
- EHRA		\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
- AAFL		\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Total Grants		\$ 50,000	\$ <b>50,000</b>
Advertising	\$ -	\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Cost Allocations	\$ 15,399	\$ 11,026	\$ <b>15,399</b>
IT Costs Allocations	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,182	\$ <b>1,600</b>
Total Projected Budget	\$ 125,000	\$ 114,125	\$ <b>125,000</b>
Actual Appropriated Amount	\$ 125,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 125,000
Difference	\$ -	\$ 10,875	\$ -

Department: 186 - Labor and Economic Opportunity

Unit: 2923

Doc Code	Document ID	Version Number	Vendor Number	Vendor Name	Record Date	Commodity Line Number	Commodity Code	Commodity Code Description	Open Amount	Commodity Line Amount	Accounting Line Number	Accounting Line Amount	Payment Request ID	Payment Request Line Number	Scheduled Payment Date	Payment Request Line Amount
PO	210000005411	3	VS0196785	Alexander Sahouri	8/5/2021	1	91806	Administrative Consulting	\$ 20,673.96	\$ 45,000.00	1	\$ 45,000.00	PRM,186,2100000 79640	1	7/19/2021	\$ 2,251.80
Grand Total									\$ 20,673.96	\$ 45,000.00		\$ 45,000.00				\$ 2,251.80



6112 - Internal Purchased Services									SUM:	\$1,181.87
6120 - External Purchased Services	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0104748	Maan Abou Khzam	2	PRM,186,210000011022	11/17/2020	PO,186,210000001264		\$1,345.50
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0104748	Maan Abou Khzam	4	PRM,186,210000028815	11/1/2020 - 12/31/2020	PO,186,210000001264		\$2,767.50
	6032 - LEO Exec Alloc	6032 - LEO Exec Alloc		NOT ENTERED	5	JV1,186,210000010857				\$60.01
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0104748	Maan Abou Khzam	6	PRM,186,210000045409	3/5/21	PO,186,210000001264		\$1,804.50
	6032 - LEO Exec Alloc	6032 - LEO Exec Alloc		NOT ENTERED	7	JV1,186,210000013877			FY21 LEO Q2 CSSM ALLOCATION	\$309.47
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0196785	Alexander Sahouri	8	PRM,186,210000059870	4/30/2021	PO,186,210000005411		\$3,889.02
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0196785	Alexander Sahouri	8	PRM,186,210000064546	5/2/2021	PO,186,210000005411		\$3,419.82
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0196785	Alexander Sahouri	9	PRM,186,210000067765	5/17/21	PO,186,210000005411		\$3,597.84
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0196785	Alexander Sahouri	9	PRM,186,210000073440	6/1/2021	PO,186,210000005411		\$4,194.72
	6032 - LEO Exec Alloc	6032 - LEO Exec Alloc		NOT ENTERED	10	JV1,186,210000016792			FY21 LEO Q3 CSSM ALLOCATION	\$467.08
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0196785	Alexander Sahouri	10	PRM,186,210000076969	7/5/2021	PO,186,210000005411		\$1,360.62
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0196785	Alexander Sahouri	10	PRM,186,210000079640	7/7/2021	PO,186,210000005411		\$2,251.80
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0196785	Alexander Sahouri	11	PRM,186,210000085015	7/19/2021	PO,186,210000005411		\$2,736.72
	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	7020 - Other Purchases Services 1099 Report	VS0196785	Alexander Sahouri	11	PRM,186,210000088446	8/3/2021	PO,186,210000005411		\$2,875.50
	6120 - External Purchased Services								SUM:	\$31,080.10
7000 - Payments to Individuals and Private Groups	7090 - Grant Payments to Individual/Group - Vendor (Non-1099 Rep)	7090 - Grant Payments to Individual/Group - Vendor (Non-1099 Rep)	CV0020267	UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY	9	GPR1,186,210000007548	GFR10000000000040971	GG,186,210000002499		\$10,000.00
	7090 - Grant Payments to Individual/Group - Vendor (Non-1099 Rep)	7090 - Grant Payments to Individual/Group - Vendor (Non-1099 Rep)	CV0041667	REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN	9	GPR1,186,210000007866	GFR10000000000040973	GG,186,210000002502		\$10,000.00
	7090 - Grant Payments to Individual/Group - Vendor (Non-1099 Rep)	7090 - Grant Payments to Individual/Group - Vendor (Non-1099 Rep)	VS0200750	Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services	9	GPR1,186,210000007636	GFR10000000000040972	GG,186,210000002501		\$30,000.00
	7000 - Payments to Individuals and Private Groups								SUM:	\$50,000.00
Sum: \$83,261.91										



## Administrator's Report

**Alexander Sahouri**

*CMEAA Administrator*

[SahouriA1@michigan.gov](mailto:SahouriA1@michigan.gov)

(810) 265-9557

Good afternoon Commissioners,

It has been a difficult summer for the MEA community as they continue to recover from the flooding in the Dearborn area, the triggered war trauma in the Iraqi and Syrian communities, along with vaccine hesitancy; it's times like these that make this Commission imperative. We are grateful for your continued service on the Commission.

After reaching out to some of you, we were able to distribute water, ice, food, and other essentials to people in need after the flooding in the Dearborn area. This was one of the more rewarding experiences of the job for me so far and I want to thank you all for the opportunity to serve my community. We also assisted the American Druze Society Cultural Center with applying for relief to repair the structural damage due to flooding.

With the help of Commissioners Ghareeb and Dabaja, the Commission held this past June and July a domestic violence webinar and suicide webinar, reaching over a dozen MEA Michiganders seeking mental health guidance. The final mental health webinar (which is rather necessary now given the traumas being triggered recently) is the victims of crime/violence webinar. This webinar is on hold as the Commission has begun building an email list and the webinar will be held once the email list is sufficient in reaching our communities.

The Commission will build our email list by tableting at community events. Last week, the Commission reserved a table at the Dearborn Area Chamber of Commerce where we began our effort to expand our footprint in the community. We were able to get over a dozen emails that afternoon, but if we table at some larger events, we will be more successful.

In our advisory role with UMS, the Commission was represented at the last brainstorm check-in meeting. Upcoming events include:

JAM3A – September 23-26, 2021 – a FREE, virtual music and arts festival presented by the Arab American National Museum celebrating Arab talent, art, and community.

Tarek Yamani and Spektral Quartet – October 27, 2021, Virtual – Yamani, born and raised in Beirut, is a Lebanese American award-winning composer and pianist who taught himself jazz at the age of 19. Since the release of his debut album *Ashur*, in 2012, he has been reinventing classical Arab music within the framework of Black American music in a genre often dubbed “Afro-Tarab.” He has composed the works on this program for the Spektral Quartet, a Grammy-nominated string quartet based in Chicago that actively creates musical conversations between traditional repertoire and new works.

Ali Chahrour: *Night* – February 12, 2022, Power Center 121 Fletcher Street Ann Arbor, MI 48109 – “Night” is a dance concert whose approach and esthetics draw their inspiration from the dense archive of love and romance in classical Arabic poetry and from contemporary stories of lovers and their cruel separation. This work references stories from the cultural memory of the Levant and Mesopotamia among others, about the fate of lovers who challenged social and religious systems, and whose bodies were punished and sentenced to suffer the distance of separation as well as the hope of impossible reunions.

National Arab Orchestra – March 19, 2022, [Hill Auditorium](#) 825 North University Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Sahra – April 9, 2022, Spot Lite Detroit 2905 Beaufait St, Detroit, MI 48207 – UMS’s Arab World focus closes with Sahra, which is Arabic for “soiree” or “evening.” This event — held at a new performance and gallery space in Detroit— brings together three wildly different performances.

As a reminder, the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission is currently meeting to redraw our voting districts for State House, State Senate, and Federal Congressional districts. The MICRC have released their first draft maps; it would be a good use of the Commissions time to review these maps in a committee setting.

As we continue our collaboration with the Protect Michigan Commission, the MEA working group has been working on how to combat vaccine hesitancy with “myth buster” videos highlighting how the COVID-19 vaccine doesn’t make you magnetic or cause infertility. Moreover, Arabic Language radio interviews are ongoing to further encourage those who are hesitant to get the vaccine. The PMC is set to work through December.

Working with the other ethnic commission administrators, at the request of former Executive Director of Global Michigan Fayrouz Saad, we coordinated a FY23 budget request, requesting that the State more than double the budget for that year. Both ethnic commissions HLCOM and MAPAAC have new administrators, and I am thrilled to be working with them from here on out.

The Commission also partnered with LEO to set up a LEO Leadership Town Hall highlighting the Ethnic Commissions. Commissioner Ahmed represented CMEAA in a Town Hall presentation to the LEO staff. It served as a networking tool to promote and expand our resources. For example, the Commission connected the Michigan Rehabilitation Services-Macomb Office with the Chaldean Community Foundation. Thank Commissioner Ahmed for representing CMEAA on such short notice.

Lastly, CMEAA is in the process of establishing itself permanently within the State of Michigan Statute Law. If successful, we will no longer be vulnerable to the Governor's Executive Order. Attached herewith is a copy of the statute that formed HLCOM, our Spanish-speaking counterparts, who currently enjoy the security of being formed via statute. Because CMEAA was formed by executive order, any future Governor could dissolve CMEAA at the stroke of a pen.

I recently moved to Detroit and am thrilled to be joining the majority of MEA Michiganders in South-East-Michigan. This brings me closer to most of you and your organizations and I look forward to reaching out more frequently in person in the advancement of CMEAA.

Sincerely,

Alexander

**SPANISH-SPEAKING AFFAIRS (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 164 of 1975**

**18.302 Hispanic/Latino commission of Michigan; establishment; appointment, qualifications, and terms of members; election of officers; vacancy; meetings; compensation; quorum.**

Sec. 2. (1) A Hispanic/Latino commission of Michigan is established within the department of energy, labor, and economic growth. The commission shall consist of 15 members appointed by the governor by and with the advice and consent of the senate. The commission shall elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and other officers from its members as it deems advisable.

(2) Members of the commission shall be broadly representative of all fields of interest to Hispanic/Latino people and shall be appointed from urban, suburban, and rural geographical areas representative of the Hispanic/Latino people throughout this state.

(3) The term of each member shall be 3 years. Of the members first appointed, 5 shall serve for 3-year terms, 5 shall serve for 2-year terms, and 5 shall serve for a 1-year term. A vacancy shall be filled by the governor in the same manner as the original appointment for the balance of the unexpired term.

(4) The commission shall meet not less than 6 times during each calendar year. Each member of the commission shall receive per diem compensation as appropriated in the annual budget. Per diem compensation shall be paid only for a full day's commission work at which a quorum is present. A member shall receive reimbursement for actual and necessary traveling expenses incurred in the performance of official business. Reimbursement shall be made in the manner provided by law for state employees.

(5) A majority of the members of the commission constitutes a quorum. A majority of the members of the commission is required for final action by the commission. A vacancy in the commission shall not impair the right of the remaining members to exercise the powers of the commission.

**History:** 1975, Act 164, Imd. Eff. July 15, 1975;—Am. 2004, Act 94, Imd. Eff. May 7, 2004;—Am. 2010, Act 146, Imd. Eff. Aug. 23, 2010.

**Compiler's note:** For transfer of authority, powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the commission on Spanish-speaking affairs and office of Spanish-speaking affairs to the director of the department of career development by type I transfer, see E.R.O. No. 2000-3, compiled at MCL 18.311 of the Michigan compiled laws.

For transfer of authority, powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the interagency council on Spanish-speaking affairs to the director of the department of career development by type III transfer, see E.R.O. No. 2000-3, compiled at MCL 18.311 of the Michigan compiled laws.

For restoration of the interagency council on Spanish-speaking affairs, see E.R.O. No. 2003-1, compiled at MCL 445.2011.

For transfer of powers and duties of Hispanic Latino commission and office of Hispanic Latino affairs from department of licensing and regulatory affairs to department of civil rights, see E.R.O. No. 2011-4, compiled at MCL 445.2030.

For transfer of Hispanic/Latino commission of Michigan and office of Hispanic/Latino affairs from department of civil rights to department of licensing and regulatory affairs, see E.R.O. No. 2016-1, compiled at MCL 445.1993.

For the transfer of the Hispanic/Latino commission of Michigan from the department of licensing and regulatory affairs to the department of labor and economic opportunity and the abolishment of the office of Hispanic/Latino affairs and the position of its director, see E.R.O. No. 2019-3, compiled at MCL 125.1998.

# COMMISSION ON MIDDLE EASTERN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I

#### Name

The name of this organization shall be the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs, hereafter referred to as the Commission.

### ARTICLE II

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Commission shall be to carry out the duties as set forth in Executive Order 2015 – 6

### ARTICLE III

#### Membership

3.1 [The Commission will be composed of up to 15 members.](#) The Commission may recommend that the Governor remove a member if:

- a. a member engages in activities, which represent a conflict of interest with the Commission work; and/or
- b. a member is absent for 3 meetings in a one-year period unless the absence is due to extenuating circumstances as approved by the Executive Committee; and/or
- c. a member acts in an unprofessional or unethical manner with respect to the mission, the purpose, or the goals of the Commission.

Members appointed by the Governor are subject to disapproval by the Michigan Senate as provided under Section 6 of Article V of the Michigan Constitution of 1963. The recommendation to the Governor for removal of a member requires 2/3 vote of the full Commission.

3.2 The Commission Chair and/or the Governor may appoint ex officio members to the Commission.

## ARTICLE IV

### Officers

- 4.1 The elected officers of the Commission shall be a First Vice Chairperson, a ~~Second Vice Chairperson~~, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Trustee. The Chairperson is designated by the Governor.
- 4.2 The Chairperson serves at the will of the Governor in that capacity. The term of the other officers shall be two years.
- 4.3 The elected officers shall be elected, by majority at least 2/3 vote of the full Commission at the applicable November – December meeting, for two calendar years, ~~by vote of the Commissioners at its applicable November-December meeting~~.
- 4.4 Duties of officers, collectively the Executive Committee:
- a. **Chairperson.** The Chairperson shall preside at all Commission meetings; serve as ex-officio member of all committees; appoint the chairpersons and the members of all standing and ad-hoc committees; and, designate individual Commissioners or groups of Commissioners to represent the Commission. The Chairperson shall vote only to break ties.
  - b. **First Vice Chairperson.** The First Vice Chairperson shall preside at any Commission meeting in the absence of the Chairperson and shall have all the powers of the Chairperson at such meetings. The First Vice Chairperson shall preside at any meeting of the Executive Committee in the absence of the Chairperson.
  - c. **Second Vice Chairperson.** The Second Vice Chairperson shall preside at any Commission meeting in the absence of the Chairperson and First Vice Chairperson and shall have all the powers of the Chairperson at such meetings. The Second Vice Chairperson shall preside at any meeting of the Executive Committee in the absence of the Chairperson and the First Vice Chairperson.
  - d. **Secretary.** The Secretary shall preside at any Commission meeting in the absence of the Chairperson, the First Vice Chairperson and the Second Vice Chairperson, and shall have all the powers of the Chairperson at such meetings. The Secretary shall sign the minutes of meetings after approval by the Commission.
  - e. **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall have custody of the Commission's funds and securities and shall keep full and accurate account of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Commission. The Treasurer shall deposit all money and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Commission in such depositories as may be selected by the

Commissioners. The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Commission as may be ordered by the Commissioners.

- f. **Trustee.** The Trustee shall perform all duties as may be designated by the Chairperson.

4.5 Vacancies in any office shall be filled by election, by majority at least 2/3 vote of the full Commission, ~~by the full Commission~~ to complete the unexpired term.

4.6 Officers may be removed from office, on a 2/3 vote of the full Commission, for (a) engaging in any activity constituting a conflict of interest ~~according to the Attorney General's opinion~~; or, (b) failure to carry out the duties imposed by these bylaws.

## ARTICLE V

### Commission Meetings

- 5.1 Notices of meetings shall state the time, date, and place, and shall be made public at least three days~~six months~~ prior to the meeting. A schedule of each years' meetings shall be posted in the Office of Middle Eastern American Affairs. Creation upon approval by statute contingent upon appropriations. The Commission shall adhere to the provisions of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, Act 267 of the Public Act of 1976.
- 5.2 The Commission shall meet not less than four (4) times per year, at times and places predetermined by vote.
- 5.3 Special meetings of the Commission may be called by:
- a. The Chairperson, or upon written request of eight (8) members of the Commission to the Chair. All members of the Commission shall receive 3 business days' notice in advance of special meetings, and such notice shall designate the purpose of the meeting.
- b. Emergency meetings may be called by the Chairperson.
- 5.4 Regular meetings may be held in various parts of the state as approved by the Commission.

## ARTICLE VI

### The Committee Structure

- 6.1 General Information:

The Chair of the Commission appoints the chairperson and the members of each

committee based on the appropriateness in terms of expertise, experience, and availability to serve by individual members of the Commission to specific committees. Vacancies are filled as needed throughout the year.

## 6.2 Committees

The Commission may create Standing Committees by majority vote of the Commission at a scheduled Commission meeting.

6.2.1 Executive Committee. This Committee shall be composed of the Chairperson, First Vice Chairperson, Second Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and a Trustee. The duties of this Committee shall be:

- a. To act on behalf of the Commission in between regular meetings, and these actions will be subject to ratification by the full Commission at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- b. To conduct an initial review of the Commission budget, present the proposed budget to the full Commission, receive approval for proposed budget by the full Commission, and forward budget recommendation to the Department and the Governor.
- c. To set, monitor and evaluate the annual goals and objectives for review and approval by the full Commission.

## 6.3 Standing Committees

The Standing Committees and their chairpersons and membership are appointed by the Chairperson of the Commission.

# ARTICLE VII

## **General Provisions**

- 7.1 The staff of the Office of Middle Eastern American Affairs shall implement the policies and programs of the Commission; shall prepare the necessary resource materials; shall conduct the appropriate research, and handle such other business as requested by the Chairperson.
- 7.2 Agendas for the Commission meetings and for the Executive Committee meetings shall be prepared by the staff of the Office of Middle Eastern American Affairs with the advice and consent of the Chairperson and postmarked or e-mailed at least 10 calendar days prior to the Commission meeting. The Commission is subject to the Open Meetings Act, and agendas and documents are subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

- 7.3 Minutes of Commission meetings shall be prepared by the staff of the Office of Middle Eastern American Affairs and shall be provided to the Commission members within 30 calendar days following the meeting.
- 7.4 The Commission may retain a position of ~~Administrator~~Coordinator as a civil service position or on a contractual basis.
- 7.5 The Chairperson shall have the authority, at the Chairperson's discretion, to spend up to \$15,000.00 per quarter, which spending shall be for the benefit and/or related to the Commission.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Quorum. Voting Procedures**

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting members appointed and serving. A quorum is required before voting shall occur. A majority vote of those members present and voting is needed for official action. The presiding officer of the Commission and any of its committees shall vote in accordance with parliamentary procedure (Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition).

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Rules of Order**

Except as otherwise provided by these bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) shall govern the conduct of business of the Commission, the meetings of the Executive Committee, and all committees.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Amendments to Bylaws**

These Bylaws may be amended by a majority of the voting members of the Commission after the Commission members have been given at least one regular meeting in advance to consider the proposed amendments in written form.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Correspondence. Publicity. Expenses. Legislation**

11.1 Correspondence. Commission letterhead shall be used only for authorized business.

11.2 Publicity

- a. No Commissioner may represent the Commission or make public statements on behalf of the Commission unless duly authorized by the Chairperson and/or the Communication Director of the Department of ~~Licensing and Regulatory Affairs~~Labor and Economic Opportunity.
- b. Releases to the press and other mass media are issued in the name of the Commission by the Chairperson of the Commission or the Communication Director of the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity ~~Licensing and Regulatory Affairs~~ with the approval of the Chairperson of the Commission.

### 11.3 Expenses

11.3.1 Travel Expenses. The travel expenses of the Commission incurred in the performance of approved official duties shall be paid pursuant to the latest standardized travel regulations of the State of Michigan, as budget allows.

11.3.2 Per Diem. Per diem compensation of the members of the Commission shall be as provided by the Legislature in the annual appropriation. There shall be no per diem compensation unless funds are available, budgeted or allocated.

### 11.4 Legislation

11.4.1 The Commission shall make policy statements with regard to issues of concern to Middle Eastern Americans, and shall take positions on specific pieces of legislation in line with these policy statements, consistent with Executive Order 2015-6. Legislative activity shall have a designated lead agency for each piece of legislation not assigned to the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity~~Licensing and Regulatory Affairs~~.

11.4.2 The Chair and the Commission shall communicate Commission positions on legislation in accordance with Executive Order 2015-6.

11.5 Records. It shall be the responsibility of the Office of Middle Eastern American Affairs to preserve essential records, which shall be maintained within the Office of Middle Eastern American Affairs. Until such time that the Office of Middle Eastern American Affairs is created, it shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson to preserve essential records.

11.5.1 The Commission shall adhere to the provisions of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act 1976, No 442, Eff. April 13, 1997.

These Bylaws shall be effective upon adoption by the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_



Burton Memorial Tower | University of Michigan  
881 North University Avenue | Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1011

May 17, 2021

Dear members of the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs:

Thank you very much for the support you have provided to UMS (University Musical Society) for our programs that celebrate Arab/Middle Eastern American artists. We are delighted to share our plans with you for our 2021/2022 Arab World series, which will include both live, in-person performances as well as distinctive digital experiences, all featuring renowned artists from the Middle East and the Arab diaspora. We worked in close collaboration and partnership with Middle Eastern-focused organizations and leading community members on our 2021/2022 series plans, which include:

- \* **Tarek Yamani, 10/27/21:** UMS will host the world premiere of a new work for string quartet by Lebanese American pianist and composer Tarek Yamani that was commissioned by UMS and the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation, with additional support from the Arab American National Museum.
- \* **Night by Ali Chahrour, 2/12/22:** A dance-theater work by contemporary Lebanese, Beirut-based choreographer and theater maker Ali Chahrour, *Night* was inspired by Arabic stories, legends, and poems about the fate of lovers who challenged social and religious systems, only to be punished with separation. The work will be performed in Arabic with English supertitles.
- \* **National Arab Orchestra (NAO) with guest artist Abeer Nehme, 3/19/22:** The NAO's debut performance with UMS, originally scheduled for March 2021, was converted to a digital presentation this past March. We are delighted to be presenting the NAO live in March 2022, with Lebanese singer Abeer Nehme, in repertoire ranging from liturgical to traditional Middle Eastern and contemporary music.
- \* **Sahra: An Evening of Performance, 4/9/22:** UMS is producing this event in collaboration with Spot Lite, a new art gallery and performance venue in Detroit owned by Roula David (1xRUN, Murals in the Market). Detroit-based artists **Tawil & Khoury** will perform *Zombie Frequencies of the Palestinian Diaspora*; Detroit-based DJ **Tammy Lakkis** will offer an electronic musical production; and Moroccan musician ensemble **Kabareh Cheikhats** will pay tribute to Morocco's most famous female traditional folk singers.

UMS is also supporting our partners at the Arab American National Museum and their presentation of **JAM3A – A Virtual Music Festival**, in late September 2021. A music and arts festival celebrating Arab talent, community, and identity, *JAM3A* was originally slated to be in-person but has now moved to a digital format. UMS will be a financial supporter of the festival. In addition, UMS will reconvene its 15-member **UMS Arab American Advisory Council**, formed in 2019 to help guide UMS's plans with Arab- and Middle-Eastern-focused performing arts, both virtually and in person in the coming months.

It is our hope that our programs will help to promote more inter-cultural understanding across Michigan and a greater appreciation of diverse cultural expressions while also showcasing the incredible artistry that exists among Arab- and Middle Eastern-American artists. We respectfully request a grant of \$20,000 from the Commission to support the programs listed above. Thank you very much for your consideration of our request, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Matthew VanBesien  
President

## Environmental Health Research-to-Action

Report to the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs (CMEAA)

September 21, 2021

**BACKGROUND:** Environmental Health Research to Action (EHRA, pronounced ‘era’) is a community-based research project intended to address cumulative environmental exposures and related health inequities in Dearborn and nearby communities. Guided by a Steering Committee, EHRA has successfully hosted three summer youth academies (2018, 2019, and 2021) focused on air pollution, environmental justice, community science, and policy advocacy. Learn more here: <https://ehra.umd.umich.edu/>. For each academy, fellows have been asked to complete pre- and post-surveys.

**OUTCOMES OF THE 2021 EHRA ACADEMY:** With support from CMEAA and Community Action to Promote Healthy Environments (CAPHE), we held the 2021 EHRA academy virtually in July 2021 with 14 youth fellows. Each fellow received a \$1,000 stipend for completing the academy requirements.

The 2021 youth fellows were all 16-18-years of age and represented six different high schools in Metro Detroit, including Edsel Ford (5), Melvindale (3), Dearborn (2), Cesar Chavez Academy (2), Fordson (1), and Hamtramck (1). Among the fellows, ten identified as Middle Eastern or North African, two identified as Asian or Asian American, and four identified as Hispanic or Latinx. Two of the 14 fellows had parents or guardians who had college degrees, and six had had parents or guardians who had not completed high school. All fellows reported plans to go to college with interest in majors including aerospace engineering, environmental law, medical school, public health, computer science, nursing, neuroscience, political science, and psychology.

In addition to the eight sessions with speakers, icebreakers, and activities (summarized here: <https://ehra.umd.umich.edu/ehra-academy>) youth fellows were placed in teams of 2-3 and worked with the academy team to conduct mini-research projects, including:

- *The People’s Voice*, which entailed photographic and survey data collection to understand residents’ perceptions of air pollution
- *Flooding in Dearborn*, which entailed a survey of residents about their experiences and health concerns with flood events in their home and neighborhood
- *Air Pollution in Dearborn*, which entailed a comparative analysis of air pollution using handheld monitors in South, East, and West Dearborn
- *Pollution in the Rouge River*, which entailed historic analysis and photo documentation of environmental threats in the Rouge River watershed
- *Air pollution Awareness in Dearborn and Detroit, MI*, which entailed surveys and semi-structured interviews with residents about their knowledge and concerns related to air pollution

Through surveys, we assessed fellows’ change in knowledge on several topics, as well as their likelihood of participating in various advocacy activities in the next five years. Fellows reported increased knowledge across all 12 categories, as shown in Table 1. After the academy, notably more fellows said they are likely to attend a meeting with others from their community to talk about how to make policy changes, give a public presentation on a topic that concerns them, talk convincingly to a friend or family member about a policy issue, advocate for a policy as part of a course project, and be part of a policy board or committee.

Qualitatively, students engaged in various sessions to share their perspectives and stories, as depicted in Figure 1 from a session with Raquel Garcia of Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision about ‘Telling your Story.’ In their post-survey, when asked “How do you envision you will apply what you learned during the academy to your life or career?” some responses included:

- *I envision myself talking to peers around me...really talking to them about how many issues we as a community need to heal our environment.*
- *I can advocate and help implement policies for environmental issues.*
- *I gained the right resources in order to advocate for change. For example, I learned EJ screen mapping can help me prove my point in advocating for a change.*
- *I might use what I learned when creating a business, to keep in mind what I am changing.*
- *I will use the skills I learned about how to communicate in plain language to help resident in my community understand how their lives are being affected by the pollutants in their air and waters.*
- *I just want to thank EHRA for giving me the opportunity to learn more about air pollution and reminding me that I can also make a change because age is not an obstacle.*

The academy culminated with a final session in which youth teams presented on their experiences, research projects, and lessons learned after keynote remarks from Regina Strong, Michigan’s Environmental Justice Public Advocate: <https://bit.ly/ehra2021closing>. Five teams presented to steering committee members, community leaders, friends, family, and their peers virtually.

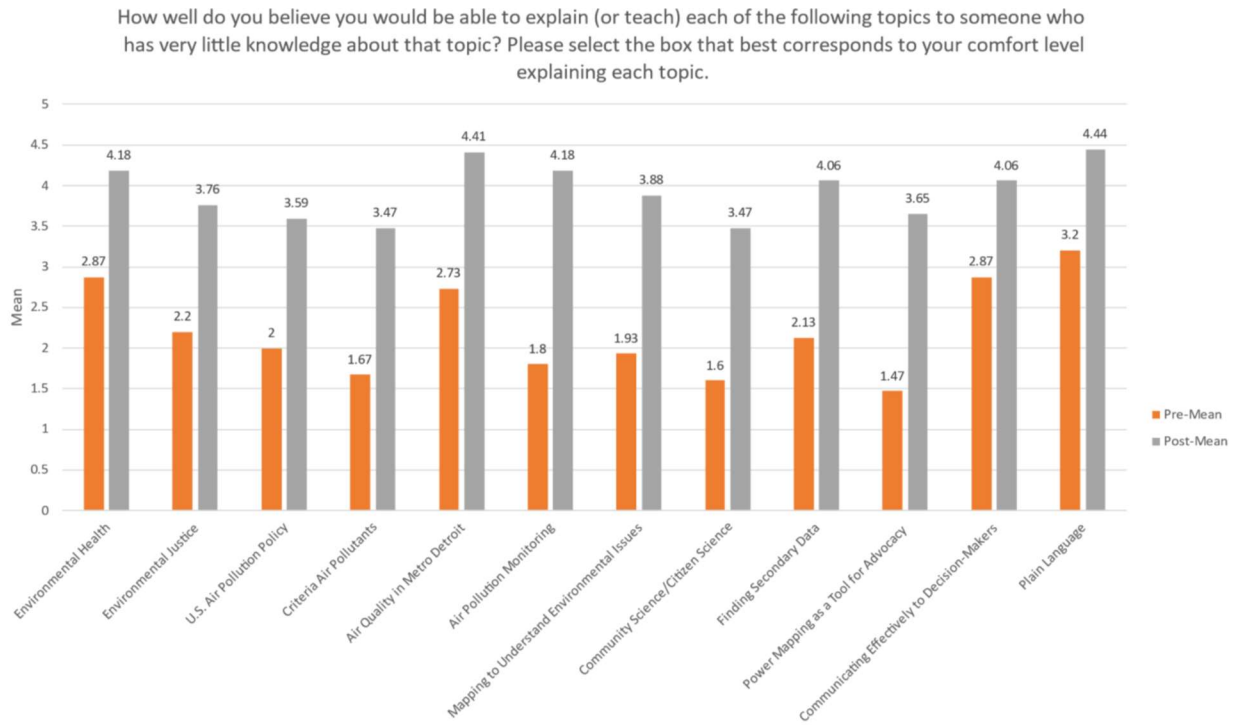
Other positive outcomes of the academy were leadership roles for Amani Abuelenain and Zeina Reda (2018 EHRA alum) who helped to coordinate and run the academy sessions. Amani Abuelenain was supported through the University of Michigan-Dearborn Summer Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program. She developed information about Flow2 Monitors (Figure 2) and supported fellows in learning how to collect air quality data.

The EHRA Academy was covered by Planet Detroit and the Dearborn Press and Guide media outlets as well, available here: <https://planetdetroit.org/2021/08/meet-the-students-learning-about-air-quality-in-dearborn/>.

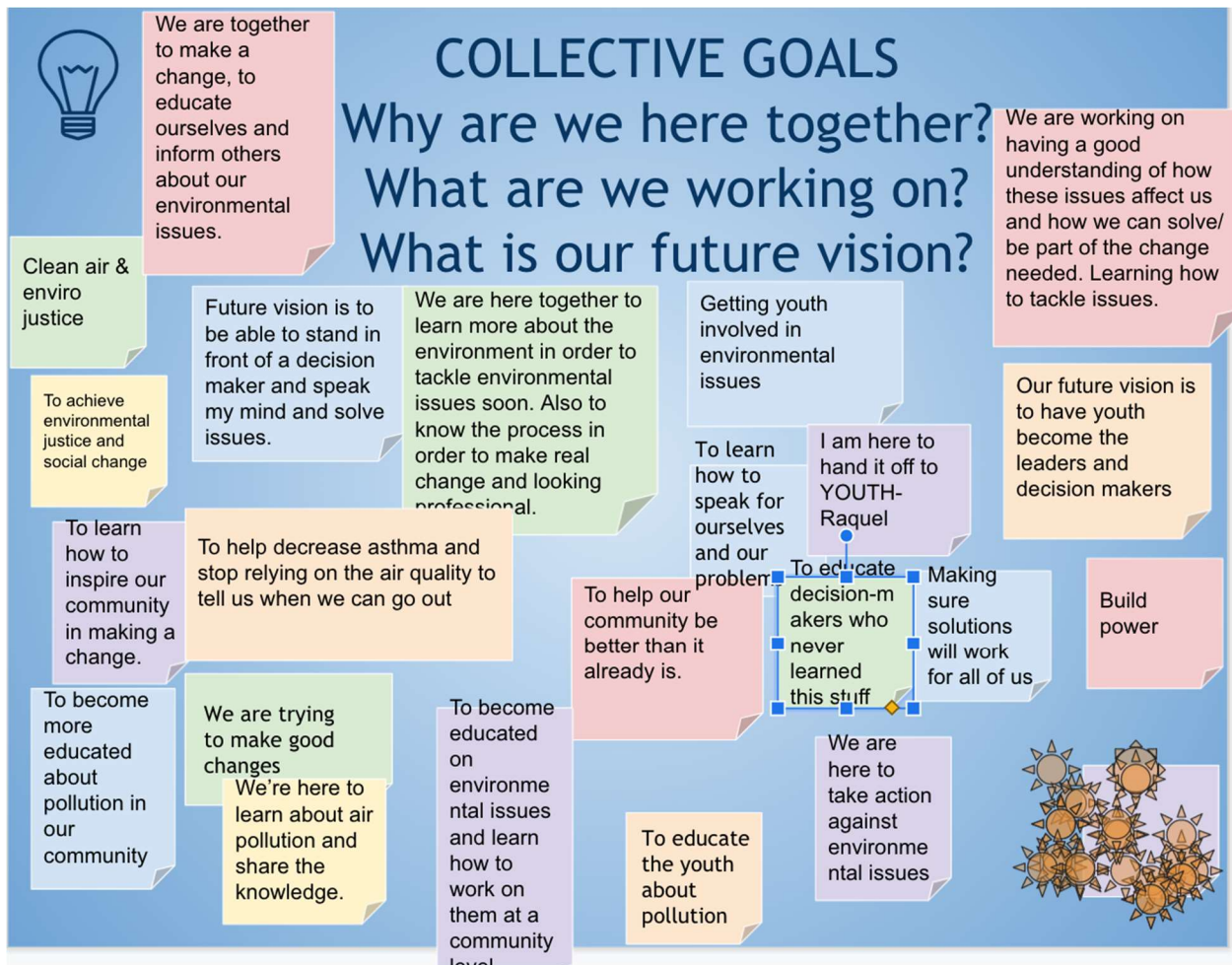
**NEXT STEPS:** With support from CMEAA (\$10,000) and CAPHE (\$10,000), EHRA will be able to run the 2022 academy as well with stipends for 20 youth. We will most likely run the academy virtually (or hybrid) in 2022, as this would allow for youth from additional communities beyond Dearborn and nearby to engage. We do distribute loaner handheld air monitors so will need to plan transportation for that process.

EHRA fellows are interested in additional training, advocacy, and research opportunities, and additional funding will be sought to support such programming. EHRA welcomes additional partnerships with CMEAA and welcomes commissioners to engage with EHRA fellows if appropriate.

Note: We had already sought nominations for the 2021 academy before CMEAA funds were secured and transferred. (We were planning on running a small academy with CAPHE funds.) However, if 2022 CMEAA funds are confirmed, we are eager to work with Commissioner Manna earlier in 2022 to ensure nomination materials are shared with the Chaldean community as well.



**Table 1. Change in knowledge before and after the academy related to select topics (n=14)**



**Figure 1. Responses posted during a session on Telling Your Story**



**Figure 2. Infographic about air sensors and the Flow 2 monitor**