

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
Mailing Address: PO Box 34215, Seattle WA 98124-4215
Office Address: Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Ave, 51st Floor
(206)684-0706 * TTY (206)684-0274 * FAX (206)684-0689
Website: www.seattle.gov/MCAAE

June 17, 2022

Members Present – Dr. Benjamin Abe, Charlotte Antoine, Pamela Williams, Paula Williams, Paul Mitchell, Claudette Thomas

Members Absent – Sheila Mary, Dr. Brenda Jackson

Guests – Margaret Boddie, Edna Daigre

HSD/ADS Staff – Mary Mitchell, ADS Interim Director, Dinah Stephens, Karen Winston

I. Foundation for MCAAE Priorities: A look at Local Data on African Americans Age 60+

Njuguna Gishuru and Shiho Fuyuki, from the Peoples Economy Lab are working with the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods on a new effort to build generational wealth to support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in Seattle. The Peoples Economy Lab is a nonprofit consulting organization that works to advance the transition to a restorative economy in Washington State by supporting the development of new economic systems that center and empower BIPOC. The Peoples Economy Lab builds networks of leaders and advances projects that reshape our local economy towards one that is just, sustainable, and regenerative. They give life to system change strategies that shift money, resources, and power to BIPOC communities, starting with Seattle.

The Peoples Economy Lab will be conducting research and analysis on the experiences of Seattle's BIPOC with generational wealth and the racial wealth gap. They are currently seeking input from community-based organizations representing BIPOC. The information collected will be used to form strategies and models to embrace to address the racial wealth gap and historic inequities in the economies that have affected Seattle communities. Their goal is to center and amplify BIPOC voices and interests in a report to the City officials recommending specific municipal generational wealth building models and government policy changes to address racial wealth gaps and historic underinvestment in these communities.

What is community participatory research?

Community participatory research is a collective research process through which organizations and communities partner to gather information. This includes six goals:

1. Define how and to what degree your community experiences the racial wealth (RW) gap today.
2. Call out the economic injustices perpetrated upon your community that have contributed to the RW gap and that should be redressed.
3. Call out the government's role in precipitating these economic injustices and their negative impacts on your community's wealth.

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4. Identify the areas and drivers of generational wealth where disadvantages and opportunities are most significant for your community.
5. Lift up your community's deeply rooted histories, cultural practices, and values as central pillars for strategies to close the RWG.
6. Determine how your community members need to be engaged in order to adequately address their realities, needs, and challenges.

The goals will be achieved by working with community partners to:

- **build generational wealth (GW) profiles** for the Black community in Seattle,
- **create neighborhood case** studies about the Central District as the historical home of the Black community and the state of the communities that remain there,
- **build family GW journey maps** of Black people and of our community to see how we got to where we are today,
- **create individual GW profiles** to not only look at the whole community and also individuals to identify the state of generational wealth and connecting it to their families, and
- **build individual GW empathy & experience maps** to explore issues around home ownership, savings, investments, community context/environment for building wealth.

Following the community participatory research process, the outcomes will be used to build a framework for evaluating strategies and models to build GW. Those will be presented to community for feedback and adjustments before finalizing. Once the framework is completed, GW building models will be evaluated using the framework to identify suitable models. When the best suitable models are identified they will be presented in a report to the city officials so that they can embrace and, hopefully, fund those models for Seattle.

Question – How are you planning to implement plans for GW building?

Response – This effort is part of the Equitable Communities Initiative that Mayor Durkan endorsed that included \$30 million to advance economic justice in our communities. The City Council mandated that a plan be created to determine how investments will be allocated, and the Peoples Economy Lab has been hired to engage and work with communities to determine how these investments in GW building should be made.

Question – How can we address housing in our communities?

Response – Housing is fundamental to GW building and this will be an important area that we will explore with community members.

Question – What are we doing to educate people about finances, especially when our community has been taken advantage of with so many Pay Day Loans stores everywhere?

Response – Feedback will be used to examine strategies to address financial literacy and homeownership.

Question – It seems like an impossible dream for Blacks to build GW, especially in Seattle, with the cost of housing being so high.

Response – We will have to consider the realities of living in Seattle and determine/recommend what the best strategies are for homeownership that the City should focus on.

Comment – We need more job training and quality education for young people. There used to be trade schools and apprenticeship opportunities for young people in the CD that no longer exist.

Comment – Africantown is working to restore Black homeownership. They may be an organization for Peoples Economy Lab to connect with. Education is also key, and our community needs to learn *how to transfer knowledge and wealth*, including estate planning and avoiding probate, and how to maintain housing (and/or family businesses) for the next generation.

In summary, MCAAE comments focused on improving education, financial literacy, and business and workforce development. The goal is to present a final report on GW building to City officials by the end of 2022. If anyone would like to provide more input about GW building through contact Njuguna Gishuru. This initiative has also convened a GW Roundtable. If anyone is interested in participating or know someone who may be interested, email Njuguna Gishuru at njuguna@peopleseconomylab.org.

II. ADS Updates

- ADS is waiting for the contract from the State regarding the new funding allocated as a result of the 2022 legislative session. We are examining staff increases and partnerships with agencies to reduce client caseloads. The goal is to get to a caseloads to 1:75 for all Title XIX case managers.
- The Case Manager Program director, Theresa Tanoury, has accepted a new position outside of City government. Her last day will be July 6, and ADS is working on a smooth transition.

III. Seattle Age Friendly Updates

Age Friendly Seattle manager, Dinah Stephens, provided the following updates.

- Business Outreach Stage 1 – In March the AFS team began door-to-door outreach in neighborhoods around Seattle. Prioritized neighborhoods included the: Chinatown/International District, Bitter Lake, and Othello/Holly Park. They connected with over 150 businesses ranging from big box stores (e.g., Best Buy) to small mom/pop stores and coffee shops. The goal was to encourage businesses to join the discount program - the Gold and/or Flash Cards - for older adults. Community organizations were also visited to encourage the distribution of the Gold and Flash Cards to clients they serve. The program was well received, even though many businesses were not able to participate. Gold Cards were also mailed to MCAAE members. (Thanks Dinah!)
- The next Civic Coffee is scheduled for Thursday, June 23. Since it is both Pride Month and Alzheimer's and Brain Health Awareness Month, panelists will address on the intersectionality and how different communities are impacted by dementia.

- Age Friendly Seattle is also working with the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department to help re-launch the Sound Steps Program in neighborhoods in south Seattle. Dinah will provide more information before the walks begin in the fall.
- Dr. Abe asked the Age Friendly Team to advocate for stabilizing property tax increases for older adult homeowners upon their retirement. Michael recommended scheduling a presentation from the WA. Department of Revenue to provide an overview of existing tax benefit programs that work in partnership with the King County Property Tax Assessors Office.

Digital Equity Learning Network – No updates.

IV. Announcements

- Congratulations to Margaret Boddie, AAEP Program Manager, for receiving the 2022 Inspire Positive Aging Award – Health & Wellness category! Well deserved! MCAAE members will honor Margaret at the August meeting upon her retirement.
- Paul announced the 2022 ROOTS (Relatives of Oldtimers in Seattle) Celebration, scheduled for Sunday, September 4, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Jimi Hendrix Park located at the NW African American Museum. He invited the Age Friendly team to have a resource table at the event. Michael offered to assist with identifying other organizations who may also want a resource table.
- Paula announced that she is initiating a project to provide Thanksgiving meals to low-income families. She is looking for organizations to collaborate with to reach elders and families in need. She would like assistance with identifying eligible households, sponsors, and a place(s) to distribute food.

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m. The next meeting will be on **Friday, July 15, 2022.**