

Executive Summary for Legislative Testimony

Started in 1992, the Hmong Cultural Center is one of the oldest Hmong organizations in Minnesota. The Hmong Cultural Center Museum and Library currently includes the following exhibits: *Hmong Minnesota: Yesterday and Today*, a 16 panel exhibit on local Hmong culture and history; *The Hmong Folk Arts Experience*, an interactive exhibit teaching about major Hmong folk art forms and music instruments through 6 display panels, object displays and ipad stations as well as a comprehensive research library which includes the largest collection of Hmong-related books, PhD dissertations and academic research in the United States. Our *Hmong Folk Arts Experience* exhibit has just been awarded a 2019 Minnesota History Award by the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums. Our museum and library are open to the public daily on University Avenue in St. Paul and serve the 80,000 Hmong in Minnesota as well as members of the broader community seeking to learn more about their Hmong neighbors.

The funding we are requesting for the Hmong Cultural Center Museum and Library will support the following activities over the next two years:

- The expansion of existing museum exhibits to include panels and object displays on the history of Hmong businesses and Hmong organizations in St. Paul and Minnesota, and Hmong cultural ceremonies for weddings and funerals
- Support for the production of new outreach brochures and exhibit programs as well as increased staffing for group tours of the museum and library
- The planning and development of educational curriculums tied to Minnesota State K-12 Standards intended for school groups visiting our Museum Exhibits
- The planning and development of a traveling exhibit that can be loaned to other community institutions including museums and libraries around the state for display

To sum up, if this project is funded, Saint Paul and Minnesota residents will have greater opportunities to learn about Hmong history in Minnesota, Hmong achievements in the state and Hmong culture more generally. The proposed project builds strongly on Hmong Cultural Center's heritage over the past 27 years teaching the public about Hmong culture and history. It is also strongly related to a key goal of the Legacy fund: "Arts, history and cultural heritage programs will engage our diverse communities from every corner of the state in celebrating the richness of our differences while building greater understanding and connection to the values that bind us together."