

Twelve Leaders Selected for Star of the North Fellows Program

Now in its third year, the program provides candidates with firsthand experience working in public service

ST. PAUL – With a focus on expanding the state’s workforce and attracting young talent to public service, the State of Minnesota’s Star of the North Fellows program has announced the 2016 fellowship recipients. Now in its third year, the fellows will get hands on experience working in a variety of public policy areas.

“Governor Dayton and Lt. Governor Smith are committed to building a 21st century workforce that is reflective of all of the communities the state serves,” said Chief of Staff Jaime Tincher. “These twelve individuals chosen for the 2016 Star of the North fellowships are ambitious, driven, and committed to public service. We are excited about the contributions they will bring to state government and to public service that benefits all Minnesotans in years for come.”

The 2016 Star of the North Fellows are:

- Alison Canty – Department of Administration, Materials Management Division
- Nicholas Chang – Office of Administrative Hearings
- Jonathan Estes – Department of Transportation, Office of Aeronautics
- Crystal Fairchild – Department of Revenue, Office of Equity and Inclusion
- Geneva Martin – Department of Administration, Office of Continuous Improvement
- Amrita Jain – Department of Human Services, Office of Economic Opportunity
- Megan Johnson – Department of Transportation, Office of Financial Management
- Melody Johnson – Department of Administration/Minnesota Management and Budget/Department of Transportation
- Dara Johnson-Ayodele – Department of Human Services, Purchasing and Service Delivery
- Hal Spott – Department of Administration, Fleet and Surplus
- Selam Wako – Department of Human Services, Healthcare Administration, Medical Director
- Neal Younghans – Department of Transportation, Office of Financial Management

“As the largest employer in Minnesota it is crucial that we ensure that the state government embodies the rich diversity of Minnesota,” said Minnesota Management and Budget Deputy Commissioner Edwin Hudson. “The fellowship program provides participants with the opportunity to dig in and make a real impact on state government.”

To be considered for a fellowship, applicants must demonstrate an interest in a career in public service and have, or be in process of obtaining, an advanced degree. Fellows are placed at an agency that best fits their education for 12-month, salaried positions.

“I am excited to be a part of the fellowship. This program will give me the opportunity to develop real skills and build a network with state leaders,” said 2016 Star of the North Fellow Selam Wako.

In addition to helping fellows gain public service experience, the Star of the North Fellow program is also a critical piece in the state’s effort to increase diversity and address an aging workforce. The Dayton-Smith Administration has set a goal of having people of color comprise 20% of state workers by 2019. Since launching the program, over 60% of the fellows have found permanent positions within Minnesota state government.



State of Minnesota representatives and the 2016 Star of the North Fellows



Jaime Tincher, Chief of Staff in the Office of Governor Mark Dayton and Lieutenant Governor, hosted a meet and greet with the 2016 Star of the North Fellows.