

## Minnesota Multifaith Network (MnMN) Case Statement

Faith-based and interfaith communities have great untapped potential to enhance the common good-- the quality of community life and relationships -- what some call the **Beloved Community**.

**The mission of Minnesota Multifaith is to be the statewide network supporting faith and interfaith leaders who work for a more just and loving world.**

**The vision of this network** is that faith-based and interfaith communities will fully mobilize their potential to help the broader community address critical issues affecting our common life, particularly Intolerance across groups, disparities of opportunity, and degradation of the environment.

Faith-based and interfaith communities bring unique motivation and experience. Many excellent faith-based and interfaith groups and efforts are already at work and contributing greatly. Still there are great gaps; lack of cross-group connection, cooperation and mobilization; much work in isolation; insufficient engagement with and untapped support from the wider public; and failure to achieve what might be done with greater attention to strengthening relationships, sharing resources, working collaboratively, and cooperating on leadership development. Using newly evolving theory and methodology of networks approaches, MnMN seeks to develop the infrastructure of relationship building, trust-building, communication, collaboration, mutual support, and learning to enable much stronger collective impact as faith and interfaith groups work to build respect and compassion rather than intolerance, just social systems and equity of opportunity rather than disparities, and sustainability rather than degradation of the environment.

MnMN will fulfill this vision and mission through these **strategic goals**:

- Strengthen and broaden relationships among faith and multi-faith leaders and organizations to build the pre-conditions necessary for collaboration and mutual support
- Build intentional networks and encourage emergent thinking to help faith and interfaith leaders and organizations find common cause and achieve shared goals.
- Develop and mobilize leadership to increase the effectiveness and the impact of multi-faith work in Minnesota.

### **Actions in support of the goals:**

1. To **expand and strengthen relationships** among leaders and organizations, MnMN will:
  - a. Make introductions among individual leaders, initiate conversations and expand connections
  - b. Map groups and individuals (leaders, practitioners and friends) to see where new, intentional networks could be developed and to measure the growth of network density over time.
  - c. Convene groups for connection, relationship, alignment and cooperation
2. To **share resources** within and beyond this network, MnMN will:
  - a. Publish news, information and stories of interfaith work and leaders
  - b. Provide the interfaith community, the public, schools, press, businesses, and government ready access to people and information relevant to the network's mission and goals (directory of organizations, speakers, events, projects, opportunities, resources).

3. To **facilitate collaboration and greater impact**, MnMN will:
  - a. Convene leaders with common or overlapping interests
  - b. Support leaders and/or groups that align to collaborate on specific projects
  - c. Provide a small grants program to support activation of cooperative projects
  - d. Support and share learning from experience about best practices
  - e. Support and encourage use of helpful evaluation to determine the impact of various multi-faith efforts.
4. To **develop leadership** for multi-faith work, MnMN will:
  - a. Convene and support affinity groups (communities of practice) for mutually beneficial learning from experience and practice
  - b. Provide specific training in best practices for practitioners, leaders and volunteers in response to their expressed needs
  - c. Provide training and support for volunteers and others about the nature and extent of multi-faith work and impact

**Values:**

**Multi-faith:** People of many different beliefs and traditions can draw upon shared values of compassion, justice and work together for greater impact for the common good

**Relationship-driven:** Intentional relationship building (networking) is a core strategy to build trust.

**Diversity/inclusion:** An ongoing intentional effort to incorporate marginalized people and their voices is necessary.

**Anti-racist:** Active resistance to white dominance in composition and functioning is necessary to achieve effectiveness and must be an ever present aspect of the work.

**Collaboration:** Greater impact and better results can be achieved when we work cooperatively

**Generative approach:** A networked approach requires a continually flexible, learning, changing style of operation with the power of self-organizing, and non-hierarchical, circular structures.

**Social Justice:** Greater overall impact can be achieved when we recognize the interconnectedness and interdependence of various social injustices and human needs.

**Collaborative learning and accountability:** Continually assessing and learning about the social impact of efforts within and across the network is critical to deepening trust, knowledge and effective practices.

**Public-facing:** The network will work to intentionally engage with the wider public making accessible resources, information and training and encouraging the public, individuals and groups, to become active participants in the network