



Conversation with Southeast Asian community members



April 20, 2024

On April 20, 2024, Office of Community Safety staff cofacilitated an event at the Lao Center of Minnesota for community members who identify as Southeast Asian. The conversation involved 15 individuals including elders and other respected members of the community. Participants primarily identified as Lao and Hmong.

After a presentation about the concept of community safety centers, participants engaged in a conversation about what services are important in a community safety center. The group primarily discussed services for the South Minneapolis Community Safety Center.

Participants shared their experiences and concerns around safety.

The following themes emerged around social services:

- Drug addiction and harm reduction services
 - Accessible through a different entrance than other services
- Economic development
- Education
 - Classes about drunk driving
 - Training for police about cultures in the community
 - Citizenship classes
 - Preventing hate crimes against Asian community members
- Domestic abuse

The following themes emerged around other resources or building uses:

- Art
 - Weekly or monthly rotation of cultural displays
 - This could help community learn more about different cultures
- Community room
 - Space to gather and have fellowship (play cards, badminton, ping pong)
 - A third space for people to spend time together but not have to spend money
 - Rotate with other cultural groups who want to use the space
 - Easy to reserve the space
- Cultural specialists
 - People want access to a person who speaks their language
 - Can help residents understand English documents
 - Connect people who need support to culturally specific community resources
- Space for cultural or religious practices
 - For people who don't have another place to worship
 - For individuals or a group
 - Space for grieving when not practical to do so in a home
- Gardening
 - Including a greenhouse in winter
- Move services from downtown or other areas
 - Child support payments
 - Pay tickets
 - Court
 - Buy vehicle registration tabs
 - Renew Green Cards
 - Passports
 - Rental license issues including reporting landlords

Other topics of note:

- Some people need transportation assistance to access services at the center.
- Police need training about different cultures.