



# Conversation with East African community members – Somali



On April 23, 2024, Office of Community Safety staff cofacilitated an event at the Masjid Al Hikmah for community members who identify as East African. The conversation took place primarily in Somali and included 21 individuals.

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. Based on comments, the following social service themes emerged as important to this community:

- Youth
  - Homework help that is high quality
  - Work experience for teens
  - Mentorship program
  - Gangs are a problem
  - Restorative services and making a future for people with a criminal record
  - Art, events, drug awareness
- Addiction
  - Addiction resources that are culturally relevant such as rehab
  - Support for parents of teenagers using drugs
  - Culturally relevant is important.
  - Employees who are integrated in the community and deeply connected, not just any Somali
- Affordable Housing
  - For large families.
  - Help with unresponsive landlords
  - Help with Section 8 vouchers and locating homes with the voucher
  - Senior housing for East African community
- Mental Health
  - Family counseling
- Economic Support
  - Financial assistance for housing

The following other resources or building uses was discussed:

- Appeal Hearings/business license hearings
  - Businesses who feel they are being targeted by government agencies need help with keeping up with policies, regulations, and compliance issues
- Community meeting space
  - A space where everyone can come to celebrate together
  - Different cultures can come together
  - Helps with community cohesion and reduces crime

Other topics of note:

- Resources are needed to support mothers, elders, and people with disabilities
- Culturally competent services with people who speak Somali and are part of the community
- Support for business owners (licensing, discrimination, etc.)

- Heavy ticketing occurs near Karmel Mall
- Each cultural community can be given a space