

PROJECT TEAM BIOGRAPHY

The following project team biography lists staff members who have contributed to CPRG implementation grant development and who will support implementation of the Minnesota Climate-Smart Food Systems work through program development, supervision, hiring, training, and advising on equity and environmental justice. This biography includes an interagency CPRG project team that will coordinate implementation of the grant as a whole, and collaborate with teams within MPCA and other agencies to implement the measures.

Staff with asterisks (*) have resumes included as attachments to the application.

CPRG PROJECT TEAM

***Dr. Kate Knuth, Climate Director, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)**

Kate manages the Climate Section at MPCA. She puts to work relationships and expertise developed in her previous roles as a state legislator, Minneapolis mayoral candidate, leadership program director at the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment, Chief Resilience Officer for the City of Minneapolis, and strategy and policy consultant with climate advocates, including the 100% Campaign and Just Transition Fund Coalition in Minneapolis. As a scholar and writer, Kate studies and writes about transformative systems change and the intersections of climate and democracy.

***Amanda Jarrett Smith, Climate Unit Supervisor, MPCA**

Amanda leads and supports staff working on climate mitigation and adaptation. Current programs she oversees in the Climate Unit include the Climate Pollution Reduction Planning Grant, a \$100M state-funded climate resiliency planning and implementation grant program, and a \$5M Local Climate Action grant program. She has ten years of experience working on climate mitigation and air pollution policy as well as program development and implementation. Past projects have included leading teams in the development of Minnesota's Climate Action Framework, the Clean Cars Minnesota rulemaking, MPCA's Volkswagen Settlement Beneficiary Mitigation Plan and grant program, and Minnesota's work under the Clean Power Plan. Amanda serves as an advisor to MPCA and interagency leadership, collaborating in implementation of the Framework, interagency coordination, and supporting the Climate Change Subcabinet and the Governor's Advisory Council on Climate Change.

***Faith Krogstad, Climate and Energy Policy Coordinator, MPCA**

Faith leads climate mitigation policy work and supports the agency and the Climate Change Subcabinet in developing and implementing climate policies, programs, and rulemaking, responding to federal regulation and funding opportunities, and integrating climate mitigation into the broader work of the agency. She was one of the key architects of Minnesota's Climate Action Framework and is the project lead for the state's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. Faith has years of experience leading interdisciplinary and interagency teams developing and implementing complex environmental plans and programs at the Environmental Quality Board, Department of Natural Resources, the City of Saint Paul, and community organizations. Past projects include a study on feasibility of solar development on closed landfills, the 2020 State Water Plan, the Minnesota Emerald Ash Borer Report, annual state pollinator reports, and coordinating the Governor's Advisory on Pollinator Protection. Faith has a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology from Macalester College and a Master of Arts in Education degree from the University of Minnesota.

***Eva Holupchinski, Climate Policy Planner, MPCA**

Eva has over 10 years of experience coordinating programs, projects, outreach, and research related to climate adaptation and mitigation, and environmental science and protection. Eva obtained a M.S. in Environmental Sciences from the University of Puerto Rico.

***Carl Stenoien, Research Scientist, MPCA**

Carl obtained his PhD in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior from the University of Minnesota and has expertise in greenhouse gas accounting.

Helen Waqui, Director of Tribal Affairs, MPCA

Helen is responsible for working with Minnesota's eleven sovereign Tribal Nations and ensuring meaningful consultation through implementation of Minnesota Statute 10.65. Helen works to build and support government-to-government relations, effective communication, and staff education and training to enhance agency understanding in working with Tribal Nations. Helen has a Bachelor of Science degree in environmental economics and policy from the University of California, Berkeley's College of Natural Resources. Helen is an enrolled member of Jemez Pueblo (Walatowa) in New Mexico and is a descendent of Acoma Pueblo (Haakú), also in New Mexico.

Brenna Pemberton, CPRG Tribal-State Coordinator, University of Minnesota-Duluth

Brenna works with the CPRG project team as a point of contact to coordinate with the eleven sovereign Tribal Nations within Minnesota to engage and facilitate information between the state and Tribal Nations on CPRG activities. She works to identify and incorporate Tribal priorities and perspectives into state climate planning documents from meaningful engagement with these Tribal Nations. Brenna is an enrolled member of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa and works at the Red Lake Department of Natural Resources as an assistant biologist. She earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in aquatic biology from Bemidji State University and is a current graduate student in the Masters of Tribal Resource and Environmental Stewardship program at the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

Breanna Ellison, Equity and Environmental Justice Manager, MPCA

Breanna (she/they) and her staff work to integrate equity and environmental justice into work across the agency through staff training, development, internal and external relationship building, meaningful community engagement and supporting policy creation and change. Breanna has a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Secondary Education and a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Minnesota Duluth.

Crystal Myslajek, Climate and Health Analyst, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)

Crystal supports the state's interagency climate action planning. She has an undergraduate degree in Geography from the University of Minnesota, and a Master of Public Policy degree from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and brings a wealth of experience in Health Impact Assessment, health equity, evaluation, research, and community engagement from her past work for Hennepin County. Her key role on the CPRG team is leading the LIDAC benefits analysis.

Lucas Simmons, Health Equity Strategist

Lucas started in 2023 as a health equity strategist for the Environmental Health and Health Equity divisions of MDH. Lucas is a graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College, where he majored in biology, Latin American studies, and Spanish, with his lens focused on health disparities. Prior to joining MDH, he worked in clinical research at the University of Minnesota where he engaged daily with Minnesota families, adults, and pediatric populations with research focused on cardiometabolic health and childhood obesity.

David Bael, Economic Policy Analyst, MPCA

David has served at MPCA for over 11 years. He provides economic and financial analysis to all MPCA programs, whether they involve air, water, solid waste, or materials management. His primary area of focus involves modeling and estimating the health and economic impacts of air pollution and climate change. David has undergraduate degrees in Biology and Management Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a master's degree in public policy from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and a nearly completed PhD in Applied Economics from the University of Minnesota.

Anne Claflin, Research Scientist, MPCA

Anne has 17 years of experience working on state greenhouse gas emission inventory accounting and climate change mitigation policy analysis at the MPCA. Anne earned a Master of Science degree in science, technology, and environmental policy from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, with a focus on climate and energy policy.

Oriane Casale, Assistant Director of the Labor Market Information Office, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

Oriane has a B.A. from the New School for Social Research in New York and an M.A. in public affairs from the University of Minnesota.

Molly Ingram, Labor Market Information Senior Research Specialist – Workforce Planning, DEED

Molly is an economist who has worked on projects supported by the World Bank, USDA, Cornell University, among others that cover a wide range of topics including evaluation of a job creation pilot program, identifying international economy-wide trends in food production and consumption, and analyzing the long-term economic impacts of transportation infrastructure.

PEATLAND RESTORATION***Meredith Cornett, Peatland Resilience Project Planner, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**

Meredith previously worked as Climate Change Director at The Nature Conservancy and is an adjunct member of the graduate faculty at the University of Minnesota's Conservation Sciences Program. Meredith is skilled at convening stakeholders, facilitating development of evaluation tools and managing large projects.

Jennie Skancke, Wetland Program Leader, DNR

Jennie has led or been actively involved in collaborative wetland projects that span agencies and organizations, including an EPA wetland program development grant to collect data and develop use thresholds for wetlands.

Bradley Harrington, Tribal Liaison, DNR

Bradley is a member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and acts as liaison between MN DNR and tribal nations to foster collaboration and respect.

Felicia Barnes, Accounting Officer, DNR

Felicia has administered numerous federal and state grants and facilitated development of contracts.

Minnesota Regional Ecologists, DNR

The regional ecologists at DNR all have extensive background inventorying and assessing Minnesota native plant communities. They come with extensive plant identification experience and a deep understanding of Minnesota ecosystems.

Michele Walker, Hydrogeologist, DNR

Michele and other hydrogeologists at MN DNR have an extensive understanding of the geology and hydrology of MN peatlands. They routinely perform in-depth analyses of groundwater and surface water systems for regulatory or restoration purposes.

Dan Shaw, Senior Ecologist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

Dan has over 30 years in the conservation field, including 16 with BWSR. Much of Dan's work focuses on wetland restoration, including many peatland projects. Dan's work is also focused on climate mitigation and adaptation and forming conservation partnerships. He is co-author of the Minnesota Wetland Restoration Guide.

Suzanne Rhees, Special Projects Coordinator, BWSR

Suzanne leads many of the agency's climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, including development of programs and policies for climate-smart agriculture, soil health, drinking water protection, and peatland restoration. She has a M.A. in regional planning and over 30 years of public and private sector project management experience.

Melissa King, Tribal Liaison, BWSR

Melissa works to cultivate meaningful relationships with Tribal Nations and Tribal organizations. Melissa provides guidance and leadership to the agency to ensure that BWSR's work is guided by principles of respect for tribal sovereignty and self-government and brings awareness of and ensures tribal values and concerns are considered into agency initiatives and policymaking. Melissa is a member of the Odaawaa-Zaaga'iganiing, Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, and has background and expertise in conservation, water resource and drinking water protection, and GIS and cartography.

Thomas Wenzel, Senior Water Resources Engineer, BWSR

Through Tom's design and leadership during his 35-plus years with BWSR, over 80,000 acres of drained wetlands and shallow lakes in Minnesota have been restored, including thousands of acres of peatlands. Tom is co-author of the Minnesota Wetland Restoration Guide.

Aaron Spence, GIS Specialist, BWSR

Aaron provides a wide range of GIS services for BWSR programs, including GIS analysis and data creation, database development and administration, server and software support and management, and web map development. Aaron worked with BWSR staff and partners to develop the Potentially Restorable Peatlands Mapping tool: [Potentially Restorable Peatlands \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com).

CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program and Soil Health Financial Assistance Program***Brad Jordahl Redlin, Manager of the MAWQCP and Soil Health Financial Assistance Program, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)**

Brad will oversee staff and operations of Minnesota Department of Agriculture contributions to CPRG projects including the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) and the Soil Health Financial Assistance (SHFA) Program. He oversaw the creation of the MAWQCP established by MOU with the USDA, EPA and State of Minnesota in 2012, and the creation of the SHFA program in 2022. Previously he worked as a policy professional developing and implementing conservation provisions in several federal farm bills as national director of agricultural programs and communications director for multiple NGO's and serving as inaugural chair of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, based in Washington, D.C.

Danielle Isaacson, Operations Coordinator, MDA

Danielle will oversee the day-to-day implementation of the CPRG-funded projects including the MAWQCP practice incentive payments and reporting, and additional funding for the Soil Health Financial Assistance Program. She has a degree in Environmental Studies and has 10 years of experience in state government coordinating agricultural and community sustainability programs.

Shannon Kesner, Tribal Liaison, MDA

Shannon is a member and life-long resident of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. She holds an A.A. from the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, and a B.A. in Biology (plant science focus) and a Master's in Tribal Natural Resources and Environmental Stewardship (MTRES) from the University of Minnesota Duluth. She worked as the Wetland Specialist for Fond du Lac in the Environmental Department for 9 years.

Lillian Otieno, Director of the Emerging Farmers Office, MDA

Lillian will oversee the staff and operations of the Emerging Farmers Office, providing support in connecting and communicating CPRG program funding opportunities with emerging farmers around the state. Lillian has a background in food safety regulation, training and compliance at retail, manufacturing, and farm operations, and, years of experience in diplomatic public and community engagement strategies.

Emily Toner, Emerging Farmers Office Grants Specialist, MDA

Emily will provide support to the CPRG funded projects through outreach and communication with emerging farmers around the state, along with advising program and grant staff on best practices and policies to maximize potential benefits for emerging farmers. Emily has a background in soil science and community programming to support small scale, diversified agriculture and 9 years of experience including agriculture extension and community development.

William Fitzgerald, Field Operations and Training Coordinator, MDA

William will provide technical support for the MAWQCP practice incentive payments and reporting. He has degrees in Biology and GIS Technology and graduate study in Environmental Health and has worked in the private lands conservation field in various capacities for over 20 years.

Clarissa Levi, Agronomy and Conservation Programs Coordinator, MDA

Clarissa will provide technical support for the MAWQCP practice incentive payments and reporting. She has a B.S. in Environmental Studies and an M.S. in Agronomy. She grew up working on the family dairy and cash grain farm and has over 17 years of experience in agronomy.

Will Bomier, Metro Area Certification Specialist, Certification Assessment & Research Coordinator, MDA

Will will provide technical support for the MAWQCP practice incentive payments and reporting, as well as outreach to producers about the CPRG projects and technical assistance for on-farm practice implementation. He has a degree in Environmental Science and Ecology and over 20 years of experience helping producers implement conservation practices from the farm to the state-wide level.

Glen Kajewski, NW Area Certification Specialist, East Polk Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Glen will provide outreach to producers about the CPRG projects and technical assistance for on-farm practice implementation. Glen worked for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for 38 years, 12 as a Soil Conservationist and District Conservationist in MN and 26 years as Area Conservationist and Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations supervising staff in 12 counties in NW MN.

Jim Lahn, North Central Area Certification Specialist, East Otter Tail SWCD

Jim will provide outreach to producers about the CPRG projects and technical assistance for on-farm practice implementation. Jim is a Certified Crop Advisor and has over 40 years of experience in natural resource conservation and agronomy, working with SWCDs, NRCS and the MDA.

Ryan Clark, Northeast Area Certification Specialist, Carlton SWCD

Ryan will provide outreach to producers about the CPRG projects and technical assistance for on-farm practice implementation. Ryan has a B.S. in Environmental Science and has been working in the field for 12 years. He is a Certified Conservation Planner and has job approval authority for the majority of ecological practices relating to soil health and water quality.

Grant Pearson, West Central Area Certification Specialist, Stearns SWCD

Grant will provide outreach to producers about the CPRG projects and technical assistance for on-farm practice implementation. Grant has over 38 years of experience in agriculture. He has a degree in agronomy and has worked with the University of Minnesota Extension, as an independent crop consultant, SWCD Nutrient Management Specialist, and USDA-NRCS Regional Water Quality Specialist.

Herman Bartsch, South Central Area Certification Specialist, Cottonwood SWCD

Herman will provide outreach to producers about the CPRG projects and technical assistance for on-farm practice implementation. Herman has a bachelor's degree in Soil and Land Management. He is a Certified Conservation Planner and has been working with farmers on conservation planning for 15 years in Minnesota through positions with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, South Central Technical Service Area, and Cottonwood SWCD.

Danielle Evers, Southwest Area Certification Specialist, Pipestone SWCD

Danielle will provide outreach to producers about the CPRG projects and technical assistance for on-farm practice implementation. Danielle has a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science and is a Certified Crop Advisor. She holds Job Approval Authority in ecological activities with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and has worked with over 400 farmers to assess their operations risk to water quality.

Greg Klinger, Southeast Area Certification Specialist, Olmsted SWCD

Greg will provide outreach to producers about the CPRG projects and technical assistance for on-farm practice implementation. Greg has over a decade of experience in the field working with producers as a technical expert in Nutrient Management, water quality and science communication. He has a master's degree in Soil Science and Agronomy.

Continuous Living Cover Crop (CLC) Market Development Grant**Jen Schaust, Outreach Coordinator, MDA**

Jen will oversee the day-to-day implementation, grant payments, and reporting for the CLC Market Development Grant program. Jen has worked as the Outreach Coordinator for the Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division at the MDA for 7 years and has over 15 years of experience in environmental outreach, education, and program management.

Jeffrey Berg, Water Policy Specialist, MDA

Jeff will provide technical support for CPRG project implementation. He has a MS in Environmental Science and has over 35 years of experience in conservation implementation, research, and policy.

INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION

***Bruce Braaten, Environmental Engineer, MPCA**

Bruce has over 25 years of experience with industrial air permitting and calculating potential emissions. Bruce obtained his J.D. from Hamline Mitchell and M.S. and B.S. in civil engineering from the University of Minnesota.

***Eva Holupchinski, Climate Policy Planner, MPCA**

Eva has over 10 years of experience coordinating programs, projects, outreach, and research related to climate adaptation/mitigation, and environmental science/protection. Eva obtained a M.S. in Environmental Sciences from the University of Puerto Rico.

***Carl Stenoien, Research Scientist, MPCA**

Carl with expertise in greenhouse gas accounting. Carl obtained his PhD in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior from the University of Minnesota.

***Tim Farnan, Planning and Assistance Unit Supervisor, MPCA**

Tim has over 20 years' experience working in waste prevention, recycling and composting. Tim and staff in his unit also have extensive experience distributing and administering grant funds. Tim's work involves management of wood waste and promoting alternatives to open burning, including biochar. Timothy obtained his B.A. in Urban Studies and Public Policy from Boston University.

***Troy Johnson, Small Business Environmental Assistance Program Coordinator, MPCA**

For the past 25 years, Troy and a team of assistance professionals have helped thousands of businesses meet or exceed environmental requirements. Troy has years of experience with grant administration including data management. Troy obtained his B.A. in Biology at the University of Minnesota, Morris.

CLIMATE-FRIENDLY REFRIGERANTS

***Kevin McDonald, Small Business and Community Assistance Unit Supervisor, MPCA**

Kevin began his state government career in 1987. During his tenure, he has initiated, advocated for and led a variety of innovative sustainable development, pollution prevention and climate programs. An innovator, Kevin is responsible for the nationally recognized Minnesota GreenCorps, an AmeriCorps program. He is credited with passage of the Minnesota Toxic Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, creation of the Minnesota Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program (RETAP), the Get the Lead Out program to promote the manufacture, sale, and use of environmentally friendly tackle, as well as a suite of award-winning waste reduction campaigns. As an experienced international environmental expert, Kevin served as the International Coordinator for the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable in Washington, managing an institutional capacity building and environmental technology transfer initiative in the rapidly industrializing Asia Pacific region. He has consulted for the Asian Development Bank, the Thai Pollution Control Department, as well as several international development firms.

***Troy Johnson, Small Business Environmental Assistance Coordinator, MPCA**

Troy coordinates MPCA's Small Business Environmental Assistance Program. For the past 25 years Troy and a team of assistance professionals have helped thousands of businesses meet or exceed environmental requirements. Troy has years of experiences with grant administration including data management. Troy obtained his B.A. in Biology at the University of Minnesota, Morris.

***Jennifer Theodore, Environmental Specialist, MPCA**

Jennifer provides technical assistance and develops resources to aid small business compliance with environmental rules, including air and water quality, solid and hazardous wastes. She was subject matter expert for three RFPs for refrigeration projects and built connections to create best management practices guide for refrigerants. Her CPRG role is to develop the first RFP for ultra-low refrigerant RFPs, train incoming staff on the existing refrigeration outreach program, and to collaborate on grant development, management, and creating technical resources. She has a M.S. in Natural Resources Science and Management from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Samantha Connolly, Environmental Specialist, MPCA

Samantha is a member of the Small Business Environmental Assistance team and has participated in several grant programs as an evaluation team member and grant project manager. She works to enhance climate resiliency for small businesses and has integrated refrigeration outreach into broader climate-related initiatives and technical assistance. Sam has a B.S. in Biology from the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse.

Carlee Kjeldahl, Small Business Financial Assistance Coordinator, MPCA

Carlee manages the development and execution of Request for Proposals and the Small Business Environmental Improvement Loan program. Her CPRG job duties include reviewing both grant and loan applications, marketing both the grant and the loan programs and monitoring budgets and contracts. Carlee has a B.S. in Environmental, Policy, Institutions and Behavior at Rutgers University.

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT ELECTRIFICATION

***Eric David, Small Business Ombudsman, MPCA**

Eric offers grants for projects to help reduce emissions from older diesel equipment, coordinates grant programs, and administers federal, state, and private funding opportunities. These programs catalyze Eric's personal belief that business and the environment can work together to create a robust economy, while conserving our resources and reducing pollution.

***Megan Lennon, Energy and Environment Section Supervisor, MDA**

Megan leads the Energy and Environment Section, and her portfolio includes bioeconomy and advanced biofuel programs, agricultural and economic development policymaking, and climate-smart initiatives to decarbonize the agricultural sector. Over the past 16 years, she has worked at the nexus of working lands, sustainability, and climate in Minnesota's executive and legislative branches. Megan builds strategic relationships with agribusiness, NGOs, and academic institutions to ensure the health of our environment and the strength of Minnesota's agricultural economy. Megan has a B.S. in Environmental Science and a M.S. in Soil Science from the University of Minnesota.

Brian Timerson, Air Pollution Prevention Supervisor, MPCA

Brian supervises the Air Pollution Prevention Unit focusing on voluntary air pollution reduction programs. Many of the projects focuses on the replacement of high polluting older diesel mobile sources of equipment with low emission vehicles such as trucks, school buses and off-road construction equipment. Efforts also include the enhancement of the state electric vehicle charging infrastructure and collaborating with private and public partners in reducing the non-regulated, highly disbursed sources of neighborhood air pollution through voluntary projects. Brian has a B.S. in Electronic Engineering Technology and has been with the agency for over 30 years.

Tyler Ellis, Neighborhood Air Pollution Control Lead, MPCA

Tyler works in administering grants aimed at reducing neighborhood sources of air pollution in the state, and also serves as the environmental justice liaison with the VW project. Before joining the MPCA, he received his M.S. in Sustainability Science from Columbia University and worked for 8 years in an arsenic geochemistry research lab studying trace metal contamination around the world.

PREVENTION OF WASTED FOOD AND ORGANICS MANAGEMENT

***Tim Farnan, Planning & Assistance Unit Supervisor, MPCA**

Tim supervises the MPCA's Planning and Assistance Unit, which focuses on planning for solid waste, waste prevention, recycling, composting and household hazardous waste. Tim and the staff in his unit help develop policy aimed at prevention and recovery, provides assistance to local governments and industry, and works closely with regulatory staff. Tim also served on the board of directors for the Minnesota Composting Council from 2013-2022. Tim has been with the MPCA for 17 years. He has a bachelor's degree from Boston University in Urban Studies and Public Policy.

Gwen Jenkins, Recycling and Organics Program Administrator, MPCA

Gwen is a recycling and organics program administrator in MPCA's Resource Management and Assistance Division who is responsible for programming, policy, outreach, education, market development, technical assistance, and grant management work related to organics and recycling, including co-leading the MPCA's Organics Management grant program. Her role with the Prevention of Wasted Food and Organics Management measure will be to provide subject-matter expertise and guidance in the development of the grant programs, train incoming staff in grant program management, provide technical assistance to grantees, and assist with grants management throughout the 5-year grant term. She has a B.A. in Environmental Studies and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree.

Tabitha Birdwell, Sustainable Materials Management Specialist, MPCA

Tabitha guides the agency's program and policy work for preventing wasted food and organics material management. She co-leads the MPCA's reoccurring Prevention of Wasted Food and Food Rescue grant program and the MPCA's one-time Organics Management grant program. She has a B.A. in Modern Languages and a M.A. in International Environmental Policy. Her role with the Prevention of Wasted Food and Organics Management measure will be to provide subject-matter guidance in the development of the funding programs, train incoming staff in grant program management at the agency and provide technical assistance on wasted food and organics management to awardees and assist with grants management.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES

***Cherylee Sherry, Office of Statewide Health Improvement Initiatives (OSHII) Thriving Communities Supervisor, MDH**

Cherylee has worked at MDH for 15 years and brings over 42 years of program development experience in community health and health care to MDH. She leads the Thriving Communities team for the OSHII. This team of 10 provides statewide, regional and local technical assistance efforts in healthy eating/food systems and breastfeeding, active living/active transportation, commercial tobacco-free living and well-being/social connectedness in childcare, schools, health care, workplace and community settings. She is the project manager for numerous grants and works closely with the OSHII finance and grants management staff and the OSHII American Indian team. She builds key partnerships, collaborates to identify emerging issues, and assesses needs and facilitates statewide planning and technical assistance to build state and community capacity to implement and evaluate policy, system, and environmental change efforts. Prior to joining MDH, she was the executive director of a community health clinic in Minnesota that provided clinical, health education and home health care services. Cherylee has her Master of Public Health degree from New York University and is a master's-level Certified Health Education Specialist. She also has been trained as a Climate for Health Ambassador and has presented at various professional public health association events.

Sadie Gannett, OSHII Food Systems Coordinator, MDH

Sadie has worked as the MDH Food Systems Coordinator for over 4 years. In her role, she executes department-wide and statewide planning and implementation efforts to improve equitable access to healthy foods through sustainable local, regional, and statewide food systems. Prior to MDH, she worked as a City Planner for two years and has experience conducting Food Systems Policy and Planning analysis. She has a Master of Public Health degree and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree. Prior to graduate school, she worked for over a decade for a community-based organization providing direct service to low-income households in Hennepin County.

Sarah Brokenleg, OSHII Lead American Indian Community Specialist, MDH

Sarah provides program development, grant management and technical support for the Tribal Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP), Tribal Tobacco, and Commercial Tobacco Free Communities Grant Programs supporting Minnesota-based Tribal Nations and urban American Indian organizations. She specializes in public health-based administration, advocacy and policy with a focus on tribal and state entities. She advocates for tribal self-determination and tribal sovereignty within western ideological systems, cultural competency in government, public health and community-based participatory research and program development. Sarah has a Master of Social Work degree.

Jacob Walker-Swaney, OSHII American Indian Community Initiatives Unit Supervisor, MDH

Jacob has worked for MDH for 5 years. Alongside two staff members, Jacob provides leadership to develop and support health prevention work that acknowledges and uplifts Tribal Nation's sovereignty and culture. This work aims to reduce chronic disease conditions and adverse health behaviors by promoting healthy behaviors through each Tribal Partner's own lens and culture. Jacob's research focused on the health relevance of traditional indigenous food crops and utilized an interdisciplinary approach to understand the current public health challenges faced by indigenous communities in North America. Additionally, his work highlighted the distal, intermediate, and proximate determinants of indigenous health that created the current health challenges. Jacob has a Master of Public Health and doctorate degrees from North Dakota State University.

Liana R.N. Schreiber, OSHII Evaluator and Healthy Eating Community Evaluator, MDH

In this role, Liana helps collect and analyze the collection of statewide data around policy, systems, and environmental changes to create healthier communities, provides support to local public health agencies to develop evaluations, and co-led the evaluation of food service guidelines projects for a CDC grant. Liana also played a lead role the Shared Measurement Action Team for the Minnesota Food Charter. Liana brings about 10 years of experience in research and evaluation, in a variety of settings such as clinical, academic, and community settings. Liana graduated with a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Minnesota through the coordinated master's program, through which she was also able to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist.

Diane Lauren, OSHII Finance and Grants Manager, MDH

Diane has worked for MDH for over 25 years. In her role she provides fiscal management, program planning, and management support services to the OSHII so that federal and state program funds are appropriately and effectively utilized in accordance with federal and state requirements.