



10/16/2021

Organization Summary



By Kulan Center | 2021 E Hennepin Ave Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN

Brief Summary:

Founded in 2019, Kulan center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in the Twin Cities. *“The mission of Kulan Center is to foster open, supportive, and welcoming environment for at-risk youth through peer support, coaching, and mentoring. Kulan Center aims to connect immigrant and refugee populations who have limited access to primary care and/or job opportunities to available resources and information. We will also leverage community resources to educate and empower immigrant families and at-risk youth by investing in their future to grow, thrive, and achieve their highest potential”.*

Our vision is to build a multi-purpose center focused on innovative solutions to address social determinants of health and community development needs.

Accomplishments

Our programs include **COVID 19 community education program**. In this program, we educate the community about the health benefits of taking the COVID vaccinations, connecting to testing sites and health resources. Also, our organization continues to engage and empower members of communities disproportionately impacted by the spread of the virus by providing resources and accurate and reliable information.

Recently, Kulan Center has completed **community survey** on COVID-19 in collaboration with the City of Minneapolis’ health department. The purpose of this survey was to develop an understanding of the perspectives and barriers to vaccinations within the Somali community, specifically Somali parents. Therefore, we hope the data collected from this survey would better serve in all aspects of healthcare. The grant we received was from the National Association of County and City Health Officials, which helped Minneapolis Health Department to increase uptake of COVID-19 vaccination and other vaccines by enabling the agency to provide its partners with strategies and tips for effectively working with Somali residents.

Kulan Center was recognized by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** as one of **trusted partners** for increasing taking COVID vaccination and the organization’s survey work was published on the CDC website.

Kulan Center has the combined qualification, expertise, and experience to leverage community resources and implement critical work. The collaboration of our staff with both clinical

and nonclinical background helped better convey the core of our message on enhancing vaccine uptake. The organization's executive team assembled a multidisciplinary team comprised of Registered Nurse (RN), policy specialist, religious pundits, and community navigator/activists. We conducted several outreach and education sessions in the form of community engagement events and a panel discussion aired live on YouTube and Facebook. The outreach attracted significant followers and seemed to have swayed their previously held views about the vaccine considering comments posted and the number of times viewers shared the events and recorded discussion on their profile pages.

“Yusuf got the vaccine in early January of 2021. In simple terms, Yusuf explained in his native language how the mRNA vaccine instructs our cells to generate proteins that would boost the body’s immune system. Once fully vaccinated, a person has nearly zero chance of being hospitalized.”

The organization's Registered Nurse, **Yusuf Farah**, was eloquent in easily dispelling some of the myths widely circulated on social media. His message reinforced the safety and benefits of the vaccine as recommended by the CDC and Minnesota Department of Health and other reputable sources. As a public health worker at the University of Minnesota, Yusuf got the vaccine in early January of 2021. In simple terms, Yusuf explained in his native language how the mRNA vaccine instructs our cells to generate proteins that would boost the body's immune system. Once fully vaccinated, a person has nearly zero chance of being hospitalized, though one may get infected. Thus, prevention is always better than cure.

Future Trends

The Twin Cities metro area and the State of Minnesota in general is facing a shrinking labor force due to baby boomers' retirement and COVID-19. A recent report from University of Minnesota "Immigration and Minnesota Workforce", found that immigrants are positioned to fill gaps in the workforce. The majority of the African immigrant communities settling in Minnesota fled from East African countries: Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. However, African immigrant communities face multiple barriers to employment including culture differences, housing, and languages. Moreover, there exists a dearth of high-demand skills that prevent members of the African immigrant community from entering the workforce.

Kulan Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that mainly serves the African immigrant communities in the Twin Cities. Most of our target population are new to the country, but we serve all communities regardless of color, gender, and ethnicity. Kulan Center aims to connect African Americans, immigrants, and people of color who have limited access to primary care and/or job opportunities to available resources and information. We will also leverage community resources to educate and empower immigrant families and at-risk youth by investing in their future to grow, thrive, and achieve their highest potential.

The Services at Kulan Center:

Our services are not only limited to training and connecting youth and immigrant participants to community resources; but they also include employment services program that will be based on participants to make career choices. The jobs training program will focus on participant's interests, motivators, competencies, and their preferences. This is an essential first step to lay an important foundation for career planning and job search success. Therefore, our services will help participants develop and demonstrate the skills necessary for employment and lifelong success. Following are the core values that underpin effective program outcomes:

1. Eliminating barriers plays an important role in economic disparity reduction. Thus, participants that are hard to employ such as individuals with mental/illness, physical health, immigrants, or participants dealing with domestic abuse will receive targeted training and be referred to additional resources to overcome on barriers. These program include the steppingstone program, family violence advocates and mental health resources.
2. Kulan Center is committed to transparency. Thus, we document program activities, progresses made, and challenges faced by our participants. Our staff will set up realistic and person-centered goals and objectives with the participants and will be reviewed in a timely manner. This helps our employees to learn from core values that define our organization in working for the participants.

Community Collaboration:

3. Our organization is committed to working communities from different backgrounds. Kulan Center was established to provide the following:
 - a) Job training and resources to minority communities, youth at risk and immigrant communities.
 - b) Work collaboratively through one-to-one and through groups of people affiliated and to address issues affecting the well-being of the community.
 - c) Community engagement including key individuals and leaders that can bring about structural change by actively listening and appreciating community concerns.
 - d) Economic development programs that are based on the unmet needs and aspirations of at-risk youth to reach their highest potential. Thus, Kulan Center focuses on high-demand job training skills and working with limited English proficiency (LEP) participants and will hire bilingual case managers.
 - e) Emphasize cultural competency trainings that enable human service workers to understand individual and family needs, values, beliefs, and attitudes that contribute to more culturally competent interventions, services, individual choice and supports.

Additionally, Kulan Center will engage in Partnership with state and federal entities, businesses, community, and faith-based organizations. Encouraging such efforts will be significant in creating pathways to sustainable developments and systematic reduction of poverty rates. These efforts will increase economic stability, reduce dependency on the government, improve child and family outcomes, and support economic development for the entire community.

Target Population

1. Low-income families
2. Immigrant communities
3. Individuals with mental health/multiple barriers
4. Minority communities
5. At-risk youth

Kulan Center gives huge priority to those dealing with difficulties, disadvantaged communities, individuals with disabilities/mental health and immigrants. Most of the families and individuals that we work with are refugees from East Africa who have escaped persecution and life-threatening danger in their home country. Demographic information includes males and females between the ages of 14-80. We also work with youth at risk age 15-19. Most of the people impacted by substance use disorders are young people or teenagers. Most of these teenagers are school dropouts that do not have strong parental support. There is also a language and cultural barrier that contribute to this issue/impact getting access to treatment or an education about opioids.

Kulan Center Executive Committee

For questions, please send your input and questions to

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