

Minnesota Evaluation Association: 2019 Annual Report

Prepared by Nicole MartinRogers, MPP, PhD
President of the MNEA Board, 2019



The January 2019 MNEA board meeting

Overview

Thank you to all of the Minnesota Evaluation Association (MNEA) members, and especially board members and other volunteers, who made 2019 a great year indeed! We have a lot to celebrate, including hosting the 2019 American Evaluation Conference in Minneapolis in November, lots of great professional development and networking events, organizational growth and development, and a more involved and engaged (and bigger) membership!

This report summarizes the year by highlighting our successes and challenges (learnings!) and reflecting on what this means for the future of MNEA. It has been an honor (and a blast!) to be the MNEA President and a member of this board, which is made up of a group of very talented, intelligent, and committed individuals. I will always value this opportunity to serve the Minnesota evaluation community!

The mission of Minnesota Evaluation Association (MNEA) is to promote and improve the theory, practice, understanding, and use of evaluation and its contribution to the community. The purpose of this organization is to:

- 1. Promote evaluation as an integral component of human services, education, health, criminal justice, and other fields.*
- 2. Promote the understanding, use and benefit of evaluation results in organizational planning and program improvement.*
- 3. Provide a regional, interdisciplinary forum for professional development, networking and exchange of ideas related to evaluation and local evaluation issues.*
- 4. Promote dialogue among evaluation stakeholders (evaluators, funders, consumers) about the benefits of evaluation research.*
- 5. Promote diversity and equity as essential for excellence in evaluation principles and practice*

2019 Board Members

Nicole MartinRogers,
President

Melissa Chapman Haynes,
Past President

Maira Rosas-Lee, *President Elect*

Kate Diamond, *Secretary*

Veronica Deenanath,
Treasurer

Erica Orton,
Program Co-Chair

Claire Dunlap,
Program Co-Chair

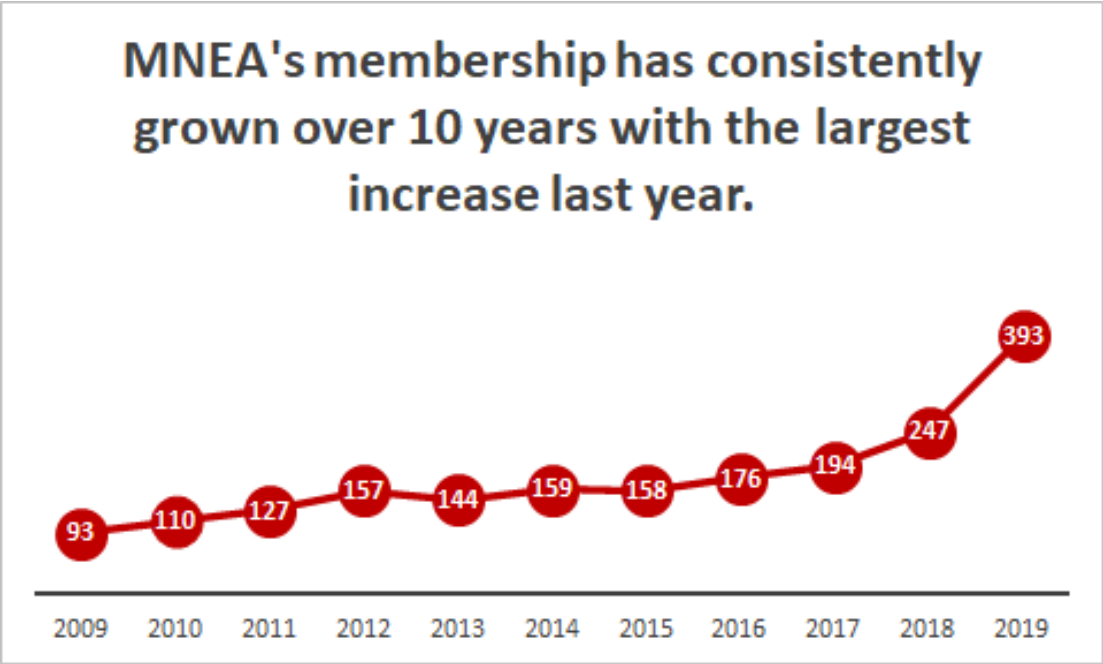
Sarah Lindeman,
Communications Chair

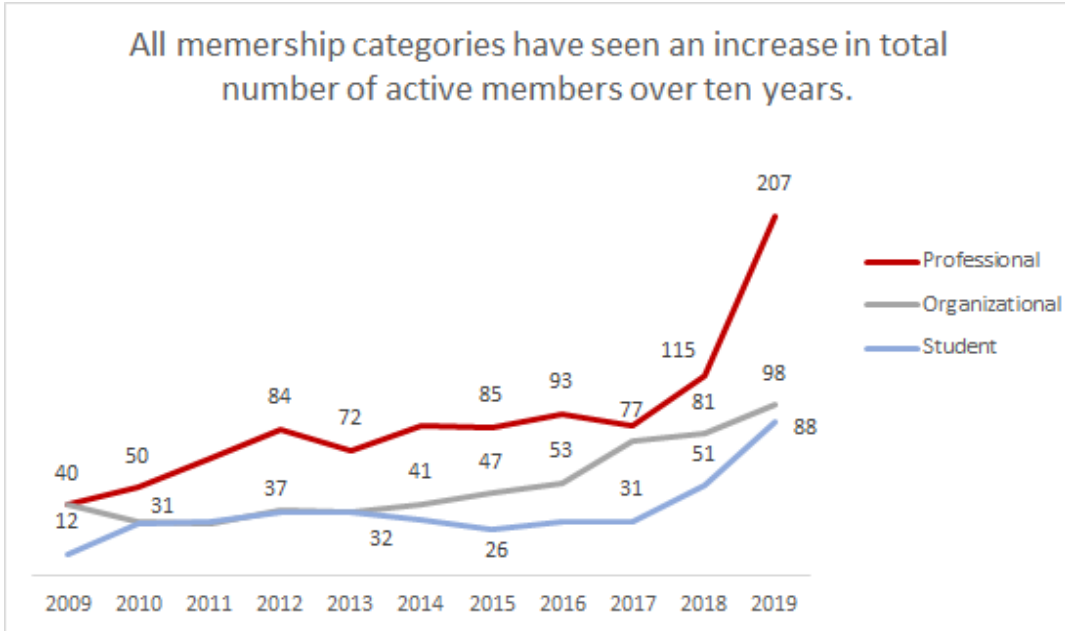
Razeena Shrestha,
Membership Chair

Hanna Ruth,
James Clinton, and Lixin
Zhang,
Student Representatives

Membership

As you can see in the table below, the MNEA membership has grown steadily and substantially over the past decade. We attribute this to several factors including that evaluation is a growing field in general and Minnesota has several graduate programs that emphasize evaluation training. In addition, MNEA has had a committed board including many well-connected individuals across sectors (government, foundations, nonprofit, and for-profit). We have also increased our programming, including professional development and networking opportunities, and partnerships to host events with organizations like Twin Cities Research Group. Finally, the significant increase in membership in 2019 could be due in part to the fact that the American Evaluation Association conference was in Minnesota and MNEA had a strong presence there, plus we gave out 39 scholarships to the conference that included an MNEA membership, thanks to a generous grant from the Bush Foundation!





In 2019, we sought input from our members in a variety of ways. We conducted feedback surveys after each of our events to gain input on that event as well as ideas for other programming of interest to members. We conducted a new board member election and member vote on our updated by-laws. Finally, we sought input from members who came to the annual meeting in December about topics and venues of interest for future programming. We used all of this feedback as we planned events in 2020 and beyond.



Photo caption: MNEA members at the December annual meeting

Programming

In 2019, MNEA’s program co-chairs worked with the rest of the board to further refine and implement tools that were developed in 2018 including a program planning process and tracking tool that allows all MNEA board members to actively participate in brainstorming, planning, and carrying out programs and events for our members. As noted above, we used our members’ feedback to determine what topics, formats, and locations are most appealing for events. We have been focusing on a range of evaluator competencies, and trying to address a variety of competencies in our programs. Finally, we have recently become more interested and focused on providing programming in formats and locations that make it more accessible for our members outside of the Twin Cities area. This table shows the list of programs in 2019. See the Appendix for a list of all of our volunteers who helped provide all of these great programs!

Date	Title	Number of registrants
1/16/2019	Meet the Local Evaluation Organizations, part 2!	65
1/30/2019	Nonprofit Evaluation Exemplars- Event is canceled as a result of severe cold weather	60
2/19/2019	AEA 2019 in Minneapolis! How to Submit an AEA Presentation Proposal	37
5/7/2019	Trauma-Informed Evaluation: A Lens to Improve Evaluation Practice	69
5/27/2019	Project management negotiation skills...and re-negotiation skills	59
6/13/2019	Demographics World Café Discussion	37
7/9/2019	Webinar: Trauma-Informed Evaluation: A Lens to Improve Evaluation Practice	61
7/25/2019	Evaluators' pro action café + happy hour	45
8/6/2019	Demographics World Café Discussion	33
9/24/2019	Trauma-Informed Evaluation Half-Day Workshop	15
11/3/2019	Book launch celebration for Michael Quinn Patton	-
11/13/2019	Diversifying the Field of Evaluation Panel and Scholarship Brunch	76
11/20/2019	TCRG + MNEA Event: Best Practices in Data Visualization	57 in-person 165 online
12/3/2019	2019 AEA Debrief with MNEA	11
12/12/2019	Annual Meeting & Networking Happy Hour	57

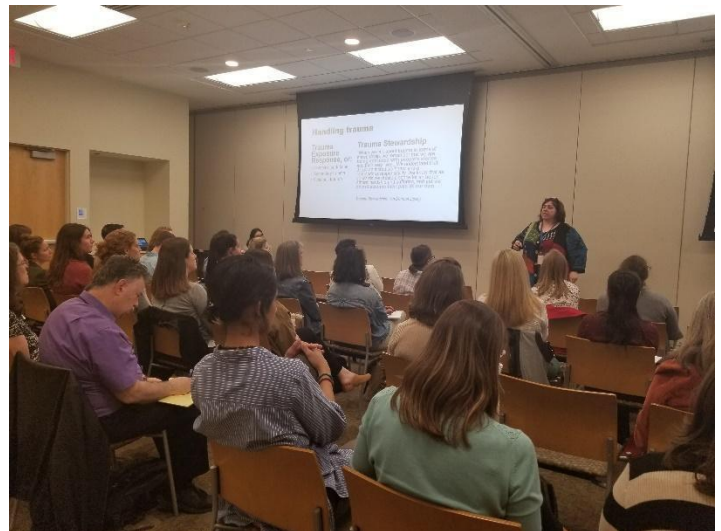


Photos captions:

Top: Panelists speak to a group at a “Meet- the Local Evaluators” session at American Swedish Institute

Middle: Participants discuss demographic survey questions at an action café session at TPT

Bottom: Presenters share about trauma-informed evaluation at Wilder Center



AEA2019

MNEA served as the Local Arrangements Work Group (LAWG) for the 2019 American Evaluation Association conference, which was held at the Minneapolis Convention Center in November 2019. As a part of the LAWG duties, we convened over 100 volunteers from the MNEA community to support the various LAWG duties including providing a local welcome desk with fun activities and information about things to do and see locally, including a local guide and a guide specific to learning about and experiencing Minnesota's vibrant Indigenous communities. We also offered an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement in the form of a poster at the welcome desk and a presentation by Thorne and Wakinyan LaPointe at the opening plenary session for the conference. We provided hats and mittens for out-of-town visitors to the conference to borrow, in case they weren't prepared for Minnesota weather! We also sponsored a quiet space for conference attendees. See the list of volunteers from the AEA conference planning groups at the end of this report.



Photo caption: Conference attendees visit the MNEA welcome station at the 2019 AEA conference

MNEA applied for and received a \$35,300 grant (event sponsorship) from the Bush Foundation that allowed us to offer scholarships to the conference for people from our region. We focused on individuals who may be underrepresented at the AEA conference, including people of color, people with disabilities, people who live outside of the Twin Cities metro area, and first-time conference attendees. We gave a total of 39 scholarships, which included the conference registration fee, an annual membership to AEA and MNEA, conference expenses (hotel, child care, etc.), and a MNEA sweatshirt. On the first day of the conference, we hosted a brunch for scholarship recipients and others in the MNEA community to congratulate and welcome the scholarship winners. This was a tremendous opportunity for us to provide these scholarships and to get to know so many more evaluators in Minnesota. See the end of this report for a list of all of the scholarship recipients.

Finally, our outgoing board president, Melissa Chapman Haynes, served as one of the planners with AEA President Tessie Catsambas for the conference's presidential strand.



Photo captions: (top left) Scholarship recipients who were asked to speak on a panel during the scholarship recipient brunch; (top right) MNEA board members Erica Orton and Veronica Deenanath, who coordinated the scholarship process, with Nicole MartinRogers; (bottom left) Melissa Chapman Haynes, MNEA outgoing president, speaking at the 2019 AEA opening plenary; (bottom right) Thorne LaPointe with Melissa Chapman Haynes and Nicole MartinRogers



Other Local Affiliate Activities

In addition to all of the activities associated with the 2019 AEA conference, we also continued to participate in the ongoing work of the AEA local affiliates, including monthly conference calls to engage with and learn from the other AEA local affiliate organizations. In 2019, Melissa Chapman-Haynes and Maira Rosas-Lee from MNEA presented on the local affiliate call in June about scholarships to attend the AEA Conference in Minneapolis. In September, MNEA (Melissa) provided details for AEA-LAC-specific events such as the pre-conference meeting, affiliate dinner, LAC session at AEA, and the LAC breakfast events.

Communications



In 2019, MNEA enhanced our brand and increased the frequency of our communications. The logo and website received a complete refresh, which included establishing a new image, new brand colors and updating every page on our website! MNEA thanks Jenny Bohlke, Graphic Designer from Wilder Research, for helping us identify colors and improving the logo.

MNEA’s website now provides easy access to event registrations and an improved “For Members” page that highlights: job postings, member discounts to regional events and conferences, and current MNEA event materials, including recordings of MNEA’s webinars. The website was expanded to include regular blog posts about current evaluation events and regional happenings, board members’ bios, information on evaluation conferences worldwide, and additional resources for evaluators.

MNEA’s strength comes from our dedicated members, volunteers, guest speakers, and partnering organizations. In 2019, MNEA started to publicly recognize individuals and organizations who make MNEA such a vibrant organization through our website and social media platforms. MNEA especially thanks members for your contributions, especially during the AEA 2019 conference. At the conference, the MNEA brand shined with warm welcoming areas, activities and signs in many different languages, local guides of the Twin Cities, a nice breakfast event for first time AEA conference attendees, and free hats and gloves for our out-of-town guests. Thank you to everyone who contributed to its success.



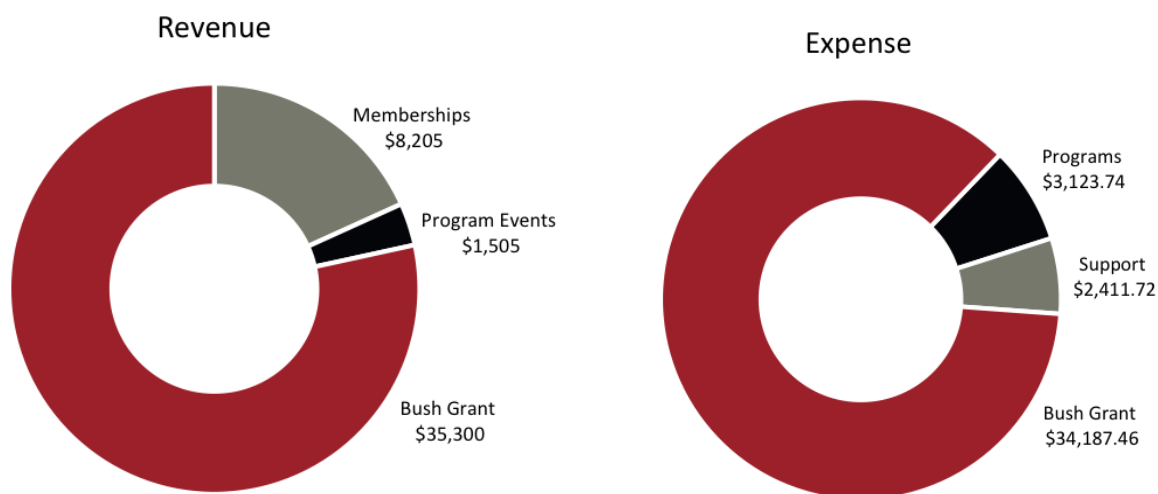
This past year, MNEA has also increased our presence on social media by joining Twitter (@mnevaluation). Our reach is growing from less than 100 impressions of MNEA’s monthly tweets to 2,000+ impressions. MNEA also continues to post current events and local happenings on LinkedIn

(<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3994194/>), seeing a significant growth of members to the Linked In group this year. Please make sure to follow us and **share** with the MNEA community!

Going forward, MNEA is committed to sustaining our expanded communication efforts to our members, and we encourage all of our members to share information with the broader community through MNEA's communication platforms. If you read an interesting article, blog post or publish one, please share it with MNEA. We would like to highlight how you are contributing to the evaluation community.

Finances

MNEA started the 2019 fiscal year with \$11,232.54 and closed December 2019 with \$16,519.62. This includes the \$35,300.00 grant we received from Bush Foundation, of which we spent it all except \$1,112.54 on scholarships, MNEA and AEA memberships, and scholarship related events and materials. MNEA primarily receives revenue through memberships, and a small amount through charging for non-members to attend our programming events. Our major expenses include member-related business expenses (e.g., Wild Apricot), and programming-related expenses such as food and beverage, or honorariums for speakers.



Organizational Development

Although we spent most of 2019 focused on the American Evaluation Association conference and our regular programming, we did make some time to focus on organizational development. Specifically, in November 2019 we completed new board member elections and updated our by-laws.

We elected a new president, Claire Dunlap; a new treasurer, Hue Schlieu; a new membership chair, Alicia Ranney; and a new program co-chair, Kassira Absar. We also identified a new student representative for 2020, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro. We said good-bye to our outgoing president, Melissa Chapman Haynes; our outgoing treasurer Veronica Deenanath; our outgoing membership chair Razeena Shrestha; and our 2018-19 student representative Hanna Ruth.

Our by-laws were updated and our membership voted to approve the changes. The changes mostly reflect more clarity about the roles of the different board positions. The new by-laws are posted on our website.

Advice for Future MNEA Leadership

In closing, I will be forever grateful for my time on the MNEA board. I appreciated the chance to engage with the Minnesota evaluation community, especially during such an exciting year with the AEA conference coming to town! Mostly, I have very much valued the opportunities to learn from and enjoy time with the MNEA board, which is a very committed, smart, and eager group of volunteers!

Going forward, I have a few recommendations for the MNEA board and Minnesota evaluation community to consider:

- I recommend the MNEA board pursue some type of board training or development, not to address any observed weaknesses, but rather to continue to grow and strengthen the organization.
- MNEA should continue to find ways to engage evaluators from our region who are not in the Twin Cities area, though more virtual events as well as varying the location of in-person sessions.
- MNEA and its members should continue to find ways to offer higher-level skill development opportunities for more experienced evaluators to dig into advanced topics in more depth. This could include brining in speakers from outside Minnesota.
- The MNEA board should pursue some kind of membership drive to reach other potential new members of the Minnesota evaluation community. In addition, we should consider some type of fundraising and/or service activities to do as a group. (It is clear from our turnout at AEA that we do have a large group of interested volunteers!)
- Finally, I wouldn't be a good evaluator if I didn't suggest some type of member survey or other method to evaluate how MNEA is doing around the end of 2020, and to use the data to inform futures plans for 2021 and beyond.

Keep up the great work and engagement, Minnesota Evaluators! So long, for now!



Photo caption: Sheila Brommel and Cheryl Kessler, MNEA volunteers at AEA

Thank you to all of our volunteers!



**AEA Conference Welcome Area
Volunteers**

Sarah Lindeman

Alicia Ranney

Charmagne Campbell-Patton

Cheryl Kessler

Elizabeth Hutchinson Kruger

Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro

Francie Streich

Jessie Parker Carlson

Joanne Moze

Julie Warner

Lauren Bloem

Liana Schreiber

Libby Smith

Meredith Kruger Kos

Sheila Brommel

Somongkol Teng

Renee Kidney

Imee Cambronero

Anna Granas

Kristin Eide Boman

Antony Maikuri

Rebecca Mino

Jennifer Ridgeway

Cindy Reich

Dawn Pauls

Graciela O'Gorman Smith

Mark Anderson

James Clinton

Ava Yang-Lewis

Michelle Decker Gerrard

Cynthia Matthias

Nicole MartinRogers

Kate Diamond

Heather Zook

Rena Youngs

Kirsten Saylor

Marguerit DeSpain

**Diversity, Inclusion and
Welcome Subcommittee**

Alicia Ranney

Charmagne Campbell-Patton

Cheryl Kessler

Claire Dunlap

Elizabeth Hutchinson Kruger

Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro

Francie Streich

Jessie Parker Carlson

Joanne Moze

Julie Warner

Lauren Bloem

Liana Schreiber

Libby Smith

Meredith Kruger Kos

Sarah Lindeman

Sheila Brommel

Somongkol Teng

Alyssa Scott

Andrea Imhoff

Dana DeMaster

Jack Fojut

Jackie F. Aman

Leah G. Moses

Maria Moeller

Maura Shramko

Mary Karlsson

Megan Goeke

Meghan Rosenkranz

Razeena Shrestha

Rebecca Stabler

Amy Kerr

Lovel Trahan

Vidhya Shanker

Jennifer K. Bohlke

Lixin Zhang

CeAnn Klug

University Students Local Area Working Group Subcommittee

Kate Diamond

Hanna Ruth

Libby Smith

Katie Fritz Fogel

Andrea Imhoff

Mary Karlsson

Chelsea Matson

AEA365 Blog Subcommittee

Melissa Chapman

Wakinyan LaPointe

Katie Fritz Fogel

Selam Tilahun

Claire Dunlap

Lauren Bloem

Cheryl Meld

Stella SiWan Zimmerman

Tia Bastian

Jean A King

Michael Q Patton

Sandra Ayoo

Maira Rosas-Lee

Veronica Deenanath

Erica Orton

A.Rafael Johnson

Carolina De La Rosa Mateo

Audrey Hanson

Lindsay Anderson

Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro

Nicole Bowman

Annie Nguyen

Glenda Eoyang

Nicole MartinRogers

Lija Greenseid

John LaVelle

Caryn Mohr

International Subcommittee

Julie Warner

Carolina DeLa Rosa

Razeena Shrestha

Lauren Bloem

Sandra Ayoo

Dawn Pauls

Jackie F. Aman

Diana Yefanova

Leah G. Moses

Alyssa Scott

Sharon Pfeifer

MNEA Scholarship Funder

Bush Foundation

MNEA Scholarship Planning Board Members

Erica Orton

Veronica Deenanath

Razeena Shrestha

Hanna Ruth

Maira Rosas-Lee

Melissa Chapman

Kate Diamond

Claire Dunlap

Nicole MartinRogers

MNEA Scholarship Brunch Planning Subcommittee

Erica Orton

Veronica Deenanath

Amy Kerr

Mary Karlsson

Gilmore, Kathy

Evelyn Christian Ronning

MNEA Scholarship Application Review Subcommittee

Erica Orton

Veronica Deenanath

Joanne Moze

Amy Kerr

Becky Stewart

Alice Anderson

Katharine Wood

Julie McLeod

Tehout Selameab

Sharon Pfeifer

Alicia Ranney

Kristin Eide Boman

Sheila Brommel

Evelyn Christian Ronning

AEA Conference Scholarship Recipients

Adriana Arce Martinez
Sean Bedard-Parker
Daniela Cardoza
Elizabeth Cates
Yer Chang
Paidamoyo Chikate
Patricia Da Rosa
Ana Isabel Gabilondo-Scholz
Elisabetta Giomo-James
Rodolfo Gutierrez
Ia Hailey
Choua Her
Juan Pablo Higuera
Ashan Jayasuriya
Hacer Karamese
Ryan Machtmes
Antony Maikuri
Zoe Masterpole
Jared McEntaffer
Jamie Messerli
Mariah Norwood
Obafemi Ogunleye
Maria Paschke
Christine Pulver
Idalis Riley
Meghan Rosenkranz
Chelsea Rowles
Callie Schleusner
Maran Subramain
Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro

KaYing Vang
Sacheen Whitetail Cross
Lulit Woldeselassie
Molita Yazzie
Yue Zhang
MNEA Speakers/Facilitators
Stella SiWan Zimmerman
Sarah Cohn
Al Onkka
Carlo Cuesta
Amanuel Medhanie
Jordon Baker
Charmagne Campbell-Patton
Michael Q. Patton
Maira Rosas-Lee
Nicole MartinRogers
Melissa Chapman Haynes
Erica Orton
Claire Dunlap
Blair Harrison
Jill Lipski Cain
Cheryl Holm-Hansen
Katharine Wood
Kara Wentworth
Ana Isabel Gabilondo Scholz
Sarah Lindeman
Veronica Deenanath
Kirsten Rewey
Angie Ficek
Emily Kalnicky
Sheila Nezhad
Renee Raduenz

Christen Pentek
Liana Schreiber
Susan Lange
Communication Volunteers
Jennifer Bohlke- Logo/Brochure
Ellen Wolter

In-kind Support
Wilder Research
MN Department of Education
Professional Data Analyst (PDA)
Minnesota Office of Higher Ed
Youthprise
Bush Foundation
The Improve Group
Twin Cities Research Group
Twin Cities Public Television (TPT)
MN Council of Nonprofits



Photo caption: Kristin Eide Boman and Rebecca Mino, MNEA members, at the MNEA selfie station at AEA