Each year, up to 40 individuals are selected from across the state of Minnesota to participate in the Policy Fellows program at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs. The program aims to prepare a new generation of women and men to assume the responsibilities of leadership and to encourage their effective involvement in public affairs and civic life. Policy Fellows come from a variety of professions in the business, nonprofit, and public sectors, from across the political spectrum, and have demonstrated leadership in their careers and communities. Information below is current as of October 2016.

**Chris Berger** is director of communications at GHR Foundation, where he is responsible for communications strategies that advance program priorities in the areas of global development, health, and education, and enhance the impact of GHR and its partners. Previously, as principal of Berger Brands and director of global social impact at Weber Shandwick, Chris represented clients including American Refugee Committee, Cargill, Public Radio International, Wallin Education Partners, NEED Magazine and radio show *This American Life*. Chris is a board member of Global Minnesota. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Macalester College and recently completed the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce’s Leadership Minnesota program.

**Jake Blumberg** was named executive director of GiveMN in 2015, and brings a background that spans leadership roles in nonprofits, politics, and higher education. Jake has helped lead record-breaking and history-making fundraising efforts — including leadership roles at Project 515 and Minnesotans United, the largest grassroots campaign in Minnesota history that helped to win the freedom to marry for same sex couples. He earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism and political science from Colorado State University, and a master’s degree in political management from The George Washington University. Jake lives in Minneapolis with his wife Christina, a PhD candidate at the University of Minnesota.

**Asma Bulale** has a master’s degree in public health from University of Washington and has worked with various public health organizations including the Washington State Department of Health and King County Public Health in Seattle, Washington. As a public health practitioner, Asma has utilized quantitative techniques to assess organizational performance. Asma is currently working as grant manager for the Minnesota Department of Health, Center for Health Equity. Previously, she was with the Somali American Parent Association (SAPA) as the community engagement specialist. Asma has been working for the last two years to create more opportunities for dialogue about mental health in the East African communities.

**Brandie Burris-Gallagher** is a policy director with Ed Allies, an education advocacy nonprofit which seeks to improve academic outcomes for traditionally underserved communities in our state. Brandie started her career in education as a second grade teacher and education entrepreneur in Louisiana. After her time in the classroom, Brandie pivoted to work on education policy implementation at the Louisiana Department of Education, where she worked to turn around schools in New Orleans. Brandie is a graduate of the College of William and Mary, majoring in public policy analysis.

**Marin Byrne** is an associate director on the development team at the Northside Achievement Zone. NAZ is a collaboration of 43 organizations and schools partnering with more than 1,000 families and 2,300 children in North Minneapolis. NAZ takes a two-generation approach to end multigenerational poverty using education as a lever. Marin’s work focuses on building effective partnerships with foundations, corporations, and government entities to ensure that resources being invested in North Minneapolis create the maximum possible benefit for families. Marin holds a bachelor’s degree in geology from Carleton College and a master’s degree in natural resources science and management from the University of Minnesota.

**Jesse Carlson** is the Commander, 133rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and an evaluator navigator in the Minnesota Air National Guard. He is responsible for ensuring effective operation of aircraft to execute the unit’s federal and state taskings. As a navigator, he is responsible for precise navigation and airdrop of critical supplies and humanitarian aid. Jesse received a bachelor of science in management from the United States Air Force Academy and a master’s of business administration from the University of North Dakota. He resides in Belle Plaine with his wife and children. In his free time, he enjoys golfing and playing hockey.

**Andrew Chelseth** is the director of government relations at Stinson Leonard Street LLP. In his current role at Stinson, Andrew provides strategic counsel and action plans to a wide variety of clients on matters before the legislative and executive branches of state government. Specializing in health care, environmental, and energy issues, he received a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Minnesota. Andrew lives in St. Paul with his wife and enjoys golfing while hoping the Minnesota Twins will someday improve.

**Amy Cohn** is a nutrition communications manager for the Bell Institute of Health and Nutrition at General Mills. In her position, Amy leads the team coordinating health influencer communications for some of General Mills’ largest brands including Cheerios, Yoplait, Nature Valley and Fiber One. Amy delivers nutritional science, consumer trends, and new product marketing to health influencers such as dietitians, fitness professionals, and physicians. Prior to joining General Mills in 2007, Amy worked as a nutrition and culinary services director and as a clinical registered dietitian in healthcare. Amy is a registered dietitian and holds a bachelor’s degree in fine arts from DePaul University and a post-baccalaureate degree in nutrition from Dominican University.

**Captain Troy Davidson** is the program manager of the Minnesota National Guard Substance Abuse Program, where he oversees a diverse team of military personnel, civilian contractors, and licensed alcohol & drug counselors who serve the approximately 13,000 members of the MN Army and Air National Guard. He manages the implementation of various programs to include risk reduction, prevention, assessment, brief intervention, referral, and access to treatment. Captain Davidson holds a masters of arts in diplomacy and international conflict management from Norwich University, as well as a master of arts in national security studies from American Military University.
**Jill Davies** works on the food social responsibility team at Target, where she manages the integration of food wellness standards into Target’s merchandising and marketing decisions, animal welfare efforts, and leading cross-functional teams to integrate socially responsible decisions throughout the grocery business. In her prior roles, she developed Target’s international supply chain environmental sustainability program and consulted on internal strategic and geopolitical risk. Jill received her master of science in foreign service from Georgetown University, and served in the Peace Corps in both Mozambique and Uzbekistan. She received her bachelor’s degree in political science and women’s studies at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

**Tiffany Doherty-Schooler** is a public defender in McLeod and Sibley counties, providing criminal defense to adult and juvenile clients, in addition to her private law practice serving clients in rural Minnesota. She received her bachelor’s degrees in anthropology from Hamline University and after serving in AmeriCorps, she returned to Hamline’s School of Law for her juris doctor. She and her spouse are raising their four children in a multi-generational home in Hutchinson and are active in community and youth based organizations.

**Brian Edstrom** is the director of securities at the Minnesota Department of Commerce. In this role, Brian oversees registration, examination, and investigation activities involving securities offerings and professionals active in Minnesota. Before joining the Minnesota Department of Commerce in April 2014, Brian spent nearly four years working with the U.S. Department of Justice’s consumer protection branch and disability rights section in Washington, D.C. Brian holds a juris doctorate from the University of Wisconsin Law School and a bachelor’s degree in English from Colorado College. Brian currently lives in Minneapolis and enjoys running, travelling, and getting outside with his family.

**Daniel Gumnit** is the CEO of People Serving People Charities and People Serving People, Inc. He oversees the organizations’ philanthropic, programmatic, and policy activities. He is leading the creation of a Center of Excellence for Family Resilience that combines education and parental engagement direct services to homeless and at-risk children and their families, with research and training to improve the field of trauma-informed education and service. He has a bachelor’s degree in Latin American studies from the University of Minnesota, and a master’s degree in business administration from the University of St. Thomas. Daniel and his wife reside in Lauderdale, MN, and his children study science in Madison and Montreal.

**Alice Hill** serves as executive director of Stevens Square Foundation (SSF) and senior philanthropic advisor to Private Philanthropy Services. Alice has worked with a wide spectrum of foundations, both domestic and international, on strategy development, program and grants management, governance, capacity building, and evaluation. She has served in leadership positions at a number of organizations, including the Eurasia Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Alice holds a bachelor’s degree in political science and Slavic languages and literature from Indiana University and a master’s degree in international relations and economics from the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University.

**Stephanie Hogenson** is the research and policy director at Children’s Defense Fund-Minnesota (CDF-MN) where she directs Minnesota KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation that seeks to provide child well-being data to enrich discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for children. Stephanie also helps plan and promote CDF-MN’s policy agenda with a focus on family economic security, child care, and health care. Prior to CDF-MN she was a College Possible AmeriCorps member and worked in residential housing for people with disabilities. She graduated from the University of St. Thomas with degrees in social work and print journalism.

**Aya Johnson** is a community innovation associate at the Bush Foundation. In this role, she reviews, interviews, and selects grant applicants, in addition to leading the Community Innovation team on supporting grantees. A graduate of the George Washington University, Aya spent much of her career working in Congress on immigration and other policy issues. She is a passionate advocate for ending domestic and sexual violence. She serves on the board of Women’s Advocates and is a chapter leader of the Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy Minnesota. In her free time, Aya loves to cook, travel and spend time with her loved ones.

**Jillian Klein** is the director of public and federal aid policy at Capella Education Company, a leader in developing high-quality, professionally aligned online learning solutions for adults. In her current role, Jillian is responsible for shaping and implementing the federal government affairs and public policy strategy for the organization, in addition to helping the company maintain regulatory compliance. She holds a master’s degree from Luther Seminary in Saint Paul and a bachelor’s degree from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Jillian is involved in church and community activities, and enjoys traveling, running and spending time with her husband and two young daughters.

**Nelly Korman** is a board member for Bloomington Public Schools, and teaches AP Spanish Language and Culture in Saint Louis Park High School. Nelly holds a bachelor’s degree in foreign and second languages teaching from Universidad del Valle, a World Languages K-12 second licensure from Hamline University, and she is finishing her master’s degree in educational leadership at Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota. Nelly is currently working with other educators developing anti-racism curriculum for public schools in Minnesota. Originally from Cali, Colombia, Nelly is a lifelong learner who enjoys reading, nature, sky watching, traveling, and spending time with her husband and children.

**Rick Lassow** directs actuarial risk adjustment and health reform activities at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota. He led implementation of the premium stabilization programs of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and consults on the financial impact of policy and proposals related to Minnesota’s state health care programs, MNsure, and the ACA reformed market. Rick holds mathematics degrees from St. Olaf College and the University of Nebraska. He enjoys tennis and volunteers his time with InnerCity Tennis, developing and unleashing the potential of youth on and off the court.
Sara Lopez has been a policy aide for City of Minneapolis Council Vice-President Elizabeth Glidden since 2015. Sara facilitates citywide public policy initiatives and provides support in the day-to-day activities of the Ward 8 Office. With a background in community organizing and economic development, Sara builds relationships with residents, organizations and businesses through project management and direct constituent service. She holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Carleton College and is bilingual in Spanish and English.

Alexis Ludwig-Vogen is the director of corporate responsibility and sustainability for Best Buy Co., Inc., a multinational retailer of technology and entertainment products and services. In this role, Alexis oversees the company’s environmental strategy and programs, including advancing sustainable products, reducing carbon footprint, and complying with environmental laws and regulations. Prior to Best Buy, Alexis was a manager at Accenture in business process and technology consulting. She received her bachelor’s degree in sociology from the University of California at Berkeley. Currently, Alexis serves on the board of the Minnesota Land Trust and resides in Mendota Heights with her husband and three daughters.

Joané McAfee most recently served as a policy advisor to Governor Dayton on issues related to criminal justice, public safety, human rights, and more. During the 2016 campaign season, she was the political director for Hillary Clinton in Minnesota. Previously, she worked for Senator Bobby Joe Champion as his legislative assistant. She started Power Moves, a group bringing together women of color, and graduated from the Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute. Joane is a Minneapolis Global Shaper, making her part of a network of hubs developed and led by young people who are committed to making a contribution to their communities.

Jim Miklausch has been the principal of Shakopee East Junior High for the past three years. He was previously the principal of Richardson Elementary in North St. Paul which became a turnaround school during his tenure. Jim spent 13 years as a classroom teacher before moving into administration. He was involved in lobbying for All Day Every Day Kindergarten during the 2012 legislative session and remains active in issues surrounding educational equity. He holds a bachelor’s degree in sales and marketing and a master’s degree in education from the University of St. Thomas. His K-12 administrative license is from the University of Minnesota.

Abdimalik Mohamed is currently the community outreach specialist at the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Minnesota. He previously worked as director of communications for Ka Joog, a nonprofit providing community-based, culturally specific programs and services to Somali youth and their families, and led a 4H STEM program in partnership with the University of Minnesota. Abdimalik previously served as the chairman of the Somali American Taskforce to lead Building Community Resilience, which includes a call for expanded youth programming, mentoring opportunities, higher education scholarships, new job opportunities and training, and increased engagement between religious leaders and Somali youth.

Jim Nikolai is vice president of state government relations at U.S. Bancorp. In his role, Jim engages public officials across multiple states on public policy matters impacting the financial services industry. Jim serves on the boards of St. Stephen’s Human Services, the Citizens League and the Minnesota Political Science Association and is an advisory board member for the University of St. Thomas’ graduate public policy program. He has a bachelor’s degree in political science and a master’s degree in public policy from the University of St. Thomas. Jim lives in West Saint Paul with his wife, Jamie, and their sons, Andrew and Sam.

Garrett Peterson has served as the intergovernmental liaison for the Midwest region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since 2011. He is responsible for the region’s congressional relations and coordinates the region’s communications with Native American tribes. He has previous experience lobbying and working for the Minnesota State Legislature. He was hired by the Fish and Wildlife Service as a Presidential Management Fellow after completing his master’s degree at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. He is passionate about pedestrian-friendly urban design and development, and he lives in Minneapolis with his wife, toddler son, and a terrier.

Joe Raasch is the director of the Minnesota Office of Continuous Improvement, a division of Minnesota’s Department of Administration. He leads and supports a team that works to solve problems that change lives by making government services more efficient and effective for all Minnesotans. Joe previously worked in both the public and private sectors in strategic planning, operations, and organizational development. He graduated from Metropolitan State University with majors in finance and communications, and earned his master’s in business administration from the University of Saint Thomas. Joe lives with his wife and daughter in Apple Valley, where he doesn’t get to watch nearly enough Bayern Munich ‘fußball’.

Marcos Ramirez is an international lawyer, dual trained in both civil and common law jurisdictions, and a legal industry expert. He currently works as a peer monitor consultant at Thomson Reuters. He advises law firm leaders on strategic and economic issues. He has previously represented Latin American corporations in foreign investments and international negotiations. He holds a juris doctor, a master in law and a master in business administration degree. He is admitted to Minnesota Bar, Venezuela Bar, and New York State Bar as a legal consultant. During his free time, he enjoys reading, playing tennis, traveling, rock climbing, and flying.

Julie Robey is a strategic marketing leader at Cargill, a global provider of food, agriculture, financial and industrial products. In earlier roles at Cargill, she focused on product line management, marketing, strategy, and mergers and acquisitions. Julie previously worked at Procter & Gamble in corporate finance in Cincinnati, New Orleans and Costa Rica. She received her master’s degree from the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Virginia and her bachelor’s degree in Spanish and foreign affairs from the University of Virginia. Julie grew up in Pennsylvania, was a Rotary exchange student in Spain, and now calls Minnesota her home with her husband and two children.
Abdullahi Sheikh is a senior program coordinator with Pillsbury United Communities at Brian Coyle Community Center. He oversees a community health program aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of residents of the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, a home for new East African immigrants and one of the most densely populated, underserved neighborhoods in the Twin Cities. Abdullahi has experience in public health both in the U.S. and overseas. He is affiliated with the Minnesota Public Health Association (MPHA), African World AIDS Day Committee, and volunteers with Minnesota Tenants Rights Association and Dugsi Academy School. Abdullahi holds a master’s degree from the University of Wales, Swansea.

Damon Shoholm is the director of the James P. Shannon Leadership Institute of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, which provides established leaders the opportunity to gain clarity around values, purpose, and those things that matter most to them. Additionally, Damon manages Wilder’s Neighborhood Leadership Programs and the newly launched Community Equity Pipeline program, an immersive 10-month leadership program that brings together community and nonprofit indigenous leaders and leaders of color to have a powerful and influential voice in the legislative process at the state Capitol. Damon holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Metropolitan State University, and a master’s degree in applied leadership from Augsburg College.

Malaiika Smith is an accountant with The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based family foundation that seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations. She holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of Saint Thomas and master’s degrees in nonprofit management and business administration from Hamline University. Malaiika is a passionate advocate for women and girls’ self-sustainability/empowerment. She is an active member of the Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy, serves on the finance committee of Headwaters Foundation, and is involved with local church and community activities. Malaiika resides in Bloomington, enjoys travelling, sports, and spending time with friends and family.

Jamez Staples is President and CEO of mission-driven startup company, Renewable Energy Partners (REP), a solar installation and development company in Minneapolis. REP trains and hires people from concentrated areas of poverty to work in the emerging solar industry. Jamez has been identified locally, regionally and nationally for this work. Jamez also co-chairs the Energy Vision Advisory Committee for the City of Minneapolis and sits on the Metropolitan Council Transportation Advisory Board. When not working to support his start up, Jamez enjoys international travel, camping, fishing, skiing, and snowboarding.

Bryan Strawser is the CEO at Bryghtpath LLC, a global strategic advisory firm specializing in global risk, business continuity, crisis management, crisis communications, and public affairs. Previously, Bryan spent 21 years at Target Corporation. In addition to his role at Bryghtpath, Bryan is the chairman of the Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus & Political Action Committee, a non-partisan non-profit organization focused on gun rights issues in Minnesota. Bryan holds a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice administration and serving as an intern with Representative Martin Sabo. Jennifer has an accounting degree from the University of Minnesota and a master’s in business administration from the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management. He is a graduate of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative program at Harvard University’s JFK School of Government.

Forrest Tahdooahnippah is an attorney with Dorsey & Whitney LLP’s intellectual property litigation group. Forrest works with a variety of intellectual property with an emphasis on patent litigation. He also has a robust practice in the area of federal Indian law, providing business advice to tribal and non-tribal entities. Forrest received a bachelor’s of arts, with honors, in public policy from Stanford University and juris doctor, magna cum laude, from the University of Minnesota Law School. His hobbies include gardening with his daughter and practicing Brazilian jiu-jitsu with his son.

Jennifer Tong is a portfolio manager and project lead at Cargill, where she manages global projects with an emphasis on data, processes, technology, and analysis. She is active in racial justice groups at her church and volunteers with Partners in Food Solutions, which provides expertise to small agricultural businesses in Africa. Past experiences include living and working in Japan, and serving as an intern with Representative Martin Sabo. Jennifer has an accounting degree from the University of Minnesota and a master’s in business administration from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. She lives in St. Paul with her husband and two sons.

Rose Tuiyott-Lewis is a compliance coordinator at Education Minnesota. She works closely with local union treasurers throughout the state to ensure that locals are in compliance with state and federal laws. She conducts financial and fiduciary training for local leaders and trains local audit committee members to help them maintain integrity in financial reporting. She received her bachelor’s degree in economics from Egerton University in Kenya and her master’s degree in management from St. Mary’s University. Prior to relocating to Minnesota, she worked in various management positions in retail and corporate banking at Kenya Commercial Bank. Rose is a passionate advocate for education, girls, and women, and enjoys reading and volunteering.

Ajeet Yadav is the director of environmental health and safety at Central Lakes College, Minnesota State. He has a bachelor’s degree in environmental science and master of business administration from Southwest Minnesota State University. In his current position he works with campus communities to create a culture of a safe, healthy learning and working environment for all. He has taught a U.S. Department of Labor-funded course supporting the mission to create a skilled manufacturing workforce. For eight years he served on the Marshall, Minnesota Board of Human Rights Commission. Ajeet enjoys spending time with his family and attending community events.

Kelly Zimmerman is a senior manager on Target’s responsible sourcing team. Her role is to develop strategies and partnerships across Target’s owned-brand supply chain that have a direct and measurable impact on the well-being of workers and their families. She previously supported monitoring labor rights issues in Target’s apparel supply chain and oversaw Target’s participation in the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety. She is a graduate of the University of Minnesota where she studied human resource development and marketing, and is an active volunteer with the Center for Victims of Torture.