

## **SAINT PAUL & MINNESOTA FOUNDATION WELCOMES CHENIQUA JOHNSON AND GINA SUAREZ REYES AS RELATIONSHIP MANAGERS, COMMUNITY IMPACT**

*New positions create pathway for future leadership in philanthropy  
dedicated to strengthening communities*

**St. Paul** – Nov. 4, 2020 –The [Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation](#) (the Foundation) today announced that Cheniqua Johnson and Gina Suarez Reyes will join the organization’s Community Impact team as relationship managers on Nov. 16. The two were selected to fill positions forming the inaugural learning cohort at the Foundation, created expressly to groom future leaders in philanthropy.

“We reimagined roles on our grantmaking team to give candidates who are new to philanthropy and eager for hands-on learning a chance to develop skills for future leadership roles,” said Pahoua Yang Hoffman, senior vice president of Community Impact. “Our goal is to provide opportunities for Johnson and Suarez Reyes to gain valuable experience working at the Foundation and with Minnesota nonprofits to develop and invest in community-strengthening programs. These three-to-six-year term positions are one way the Foundation is ensuring continual access to decision-making roles, contributing to increased community representation in our sector.”

Johnson brings a community engagement and public service background gained through local, state and national experiences to her new role. “Growing up in Worthington, I am familiar with the challenges small, close-knit communities face in Greater Minnesota, so I am looking forward to the Foundation’s statewide grantmaking work that will give me a chance to create opportunities for all community members, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, race, or educational background,” said Johnson. She has served as a legislative assistant in Washington, D.C. for the United States House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation, Illinois Sen. Richard Durbin and former Minnesota Rep. Keith Ellison. In 2018, Johnson was the youngest DFL-endorsed woman and one of the first women of color to run for state office in her district in Southwest Minnesota. Johnson has a bachelor of science degree in Family Social Science from the University of Minnesota.

A Page Education Foundation Scholar, Suarez Reyes will be graduating from the University of Minnesota this fall, majoring in Global Studies. “I’m excited to bring my multicultural competency as a first-generation immigrant, community outreach intern, peer tutor for TRIO, and a Girls Inc. youth counselor with the YWCA Minneapolis to promote a culture of listening to and learning from community,” said Suarez Reyes. She is a graduate of Minneapolis Community and Technical College with an associate degree of Applied Sciences in Business Management. Suarez Reyes was named a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

“We are delighted to welcome Cheniqua and Gina to the Community Impact team and we look forward to the energy and insights they will bring to our organization,” said Hoffman. “We are committed to providing them foundation-wide opportunities – from grant review and administration to community partnership development – as they prepare for promising futures in philanthropy.”

### **About the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation**

The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation believes in the best of Minnesota and the power of its communities. With roots in Saint Paul and partners across the state, it is Minnesota’s largest community foundation and the partner of choice for thousands of donors, nonprofits and community organizations. The Foundation aspires to create an equitable, just and vibrant Minnesota where all communities and people thrive by inspiring generosity, advocating for equity, and investing in community-led solutions. Visit: [spmcf.org](http://spmcf.org)