

Somali American Leadership Table

Governance Structure, Purpose, and Strategic Framework

Serving the Somali American Community in Minnesota

Updated: 2025

Vision Statement

We envision a Minnesota where the Somali American community is safe, united, respected, and powerful—able to protect its families, shape its own narrative, influence public policy, and lead with dignity across every sector of society.

Mission Statement

The Somali American Leadership Taskforce/Table **builds resources, sets strategy, and creates the connections required to protect our community, elevate Somali leadership in Minnesota, and advance our collective power.**

I. Introduction

The Somali American Leadership Taskforce/Table is the central governing and coordinating body responsible for protecting, empowering, and advancing the Somali American community in Minnesota.

It exists to respond to crises, strengthen community leadership, align institutions, and build long-term political and social power.

Its purpose is simple and clear:

To build resources, bring strategic direction, and create the connections needed to defend our community and move collective power forward.

II. Core Functions of the Taskforce/Table

The Somali American Leadership Taskforce/Table serves the Somali American community in Minnesota by performing three foundational responsibilities:

1. Build & Secure Resources

The Taskforce/Table ensures our Minnesota community has the financial, legal, organizational, and volunteer capacity necessary to respond effectively and grow long-term power.

This includes:

- Funding and emergency resources
- Legal and safety infrastructure
- Volunteer networks
- Communication and mobilization systems
- Partnerships with local institutions
- Media, narrative, and political tools

This work ensures the community is resourced, prepared, and supported.

2. Provide Strategic Direction

The Taskforce/Table sets strategy for:

- Crisis response
- Safety and legal protection
- Media and public narrative
- Community engagement and coalition building
- Political advocacy

- Training, data collection, and research
- Fundraising and resource mobilization
- Internal community coordination

This provides unity and clarity across all 8 strategy areas in Minnesota.

3. Create Connection & Alignment

The Taskforce/Table builds the relational and institutional connections needed to strengthen the Somali American community in Minnesota.

This includes:

- Coordinating mosques and community centers
- Connecting youth, parents, elders, and professionals
- Building alliances with African American, Latino, Muslim, and immigrant groups
- Partnering with Minnesota elected officials, legal partners, and civic organizations

These connections create unity, protection, and long-term influence.

III. Structure of the Taskforce/Table

The Somali American Leadership Taskforce/Table has three interconnected levels:

A. The Executive Workgroup (Weekly Meeting)

This is the operational and strategic core of the Taskforce/Table.

It includes:

- 2 Co-Chairs
- 8 Strategy Leads

Total: 10 core leaders

Responsibilities

- Weekly decision-making
- Executing strategies
- Coordinating rapid response
- Mobilizing Minnesota community resources
- Preparing updates for the Full Taskforce/Table

This group moves the work forward on a weekly basis.

B. The Full Taskforce/Table (Bi-Weekly Meeting)

The broader governing body that aligns the interests of Somali American community in Minnesota.

Membership Includes

- The Executive Workgroup
- 8 strategy leads
- Community Representatives from institutions and professional networks

Responsibilities

- Provide strategic direction
- Align community institutions
- Approve and resource priority work

- Ensure transparency and coordination across Minnesota

This body forms the central governance structure.

C. Role & Function of Professional Network Representatives and Institutions

Professional network representatives and institutional partners provide essential support to the Somali American Leadership Taskforce/Table. Their core functions include:

1. Providing resources (financial, operational, legal, educational, technological)
2. Providing professional advice and specialized expertise
3. Bringing institutional connections and statewide networks
4. Helping implement strategies across all 8 strategic areas

These partners ensure the Taskforce/Table is informed, equipped, and supported at the highest level.

D. The Advisor Circle (Monthly Meeting)

Senior leaders and experts who guide long-term strategy.

Includes

- Community elders
- Imams and religious leaders
- Legal and policy experts
- Academics and institutional advisors
- Trusted statewide and national allies

Responsibilities

- Strategic guidance
- Risk and opportunity assessment
- Strengthening statewide relationships
- Wisdom for long-term community stability

IV. The 8 Core Strategies

Each strategy supports the protection, leadership, and power of the Somali American community in Minnesota.

1. Rapid Response & Operations Strategy

Immediate action during community crises, including raids, harassment, or emergency needs.

2. Community Protection & Legal Strategy

Legal defense, safety coordination, and protection from profiling or civil rights violations in Minnesota.

3. Narrative, Media, & Amplification Strategy

Shaping public perception and elevating Somali American voices statewide.

4. Community Engagement & Alliance Building Strategy

Strengthening internal unity and building Minnesota-wide, multiracial alliances.

5. Training, Data, & Research Strategy

Building community skills and producing data to support advocacy and strategic decisions.

6. Political & Advocacy Strategy

Influencing policy at city, county, and state levels in Minnesota.

7. Fundraising & Resource Mobilization Strategy

Ensuring all operations are financially and materially sustainable.

8. Community In-Reach & Coordination Strategy

Organizing internally across the Somali American community in Minnesota for unity and resilience.

V. Meeting Structure Summary

| Meeting Type | Frequency | Participants | Purpose |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Executive Workgroup | Weekly | Co-Chairs + Strategy Leads | Strategy execution |
| Full Taskforce/Table | Bi-Weekly | Workgroup + community reps + partners | Governance & alignment |
| Advisor Circle | Monthly | Imams , scholars and Senior advisors | |

