

# Mayor's Commission on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County  
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## MCAAE Meeting Summary January 16, 2026

Members: Chair - Pamela Williams, Vice Chair - Tiffany Toms, Dr. Benjamin Abe, Calvin Lassiter, Claudette Thomas, Deborah Hughes, Paul Mitchel, Debroah O'Neal

Members Absent: Hiwot Zewdie,

ADS Staff: Eldad Mekuria, Emily Zinter, Dinah Stephens, Michael Adusah, Patrick Olson, and Stevie Elliott

Guests: Ray C. Williams, Brukab Sisay, Cindy Herndon, Cole Kiser, Sharron Hargraves

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### 1. Presentation – Black Farmers Collective, by Raymond C. Williams.

The Council engaged in a discussion regarding agricultural support, community access to space, and education.

- Operations: BFC holds seasonal open houses on Saturdays in Yesler. They are currently seeking new members for their Board of Directors.
- Challenges: The collective relies heavily on SDOT permits and is seeking networking contacts to help streamline support.
- MCAAE Collaboration: Members to consider an opportunity to sponsor a plot to provide culturally appropriate foods. BFC specifically requested MCAAE input on crops relevant to the African diaspora.
  - Action Items: Members discussed touring the Yesler and Axe farms and assisting with food distribution.

### 2. Council Business

- Introductions: Pamela Williams began the meeting with a round of introductions, welcoming the Black Farmers Collective and guests Cole and Sharron.
- December Minutes: The December minutes were motioned for approval by Tiffanie, seconded by Dr. Abe, and officially approved.
- AgeWise Articles: The Council is seeking regular article contributions from members and the broader African American Elders community.
- Mayoral Engagement: Aging and Disability Services (ADS) is drafting a request for Mayor Kate Wilson to attend the February or March meeting to discuss initiatives and strengthen the relationship with the Mayor's office.
- Field Trips & Tours: Calvin emphasized the need for community site visits.
  - Action: Eldad will coordinate a list of locations and scheduling options for members to choose from to increase Council presence in the community.

### 3. ADS Director's Report

Dinah Steven's reported on behalf of Mary Mitchell.

- African American Elders Program (AAEP) transition and service suite.
  - Transition: AAEP is moving from Catholic Community Services (CCS) to Tubman Center for

Health & Freedom (TCHF). A Project Manager hire is expected by mid-February; a Council member is invited to join the hiring panel.

- Service Suite: Includes nurse check-ins, case management, PEARLS, and Medicaid transformation waivers.
- Oversight: ADS is defining the MCAAE's role in program oversight and advocacy to ensure service quality.

#### 4. Other Announcements

- Legislative Session: Michael Adusah reported that the 60-day session began on Monday. While no major bills are currently surfacing, the focus remains on Health Homes.
- Strategy Shift: The Council will focus on thanking legislators who supported funding and will prioritize meetings with legislators in their home districts while out of session.

5. Meeting Adjourned: The meeting was motioned to adjourn by Debroah Hughes and seconded by Dr. Abe. The motion passed.

Next MCAAE meeting is February 20, 2026