

WHEDA: Announces executive leadership change, Assistant Deputy Director Thao to lead Hmong American partnership

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MADISON - The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) today announced that May yer (“mine-za”) Thao will leave her position as WHEDA Assistant Deputy Director effective September 24, 2021. During her time at WHEDA, Thao has led WHEDA’s equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts throughout all aspects of the organization. She has accepted a new leadership role as President and CEO for the Hmong American Partnership (HAP) in Minnesota.

“With high-energy and passion, May yer has led our culture initiative, supplier diversity efforts, and outreach. Her commitment to serve people within the communities where they work and live give her tremendous wisdom and insight for her new leadership role,” said WHEDA CEO Joaquín Altoro. “Her generous spirit and dedication to expand WHEDA’s reach have made an impact not only at WHEDA, but also in the communities we serve. Her leadership will be felt long after she has moved on and will serve as a foundation in expanding housing and economic opportunities for all Wisconsinites.”

A healthy culture is significantly important to the success of an organization. WHEDA’s long-term strategy to invest in its internal culture through the lens of equity, diversity and inclusion is critical to driving change and innovation as it strives to support the external ecosystem of its communities, stakeholders, and partners.

“It has truly been my honor to have served WHEDA’s mission, employees and housing partners,” said May yer Thao. “I will continue to champion the organization’s great work and I look forward to witnessing WHEDA’s legacy to cultivate greater housing and economic opportunity.”

Thao added that she is proud of WHEDA’s recent successes to expand its supplier diversity program ten-fold, increase support for emerging developers, as well as its new outreach efforts in communities of color. The more WHEDA invests in nurturing an inclusive, engaged, growth-minded, innovative, and collaborative workplace culture, its impact will flourish and help sustain the communities it serves.

In her previous role as Executive Director of the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce, Thao gained statewide recognition for her efforts to help Hmong, Asian American, and other diverse community members launch and scale up businesses statewide. She leveraged her extensive chamber experience and strategic diversity and inclusion work to help WHEDA expand its reach and support in rural areas and underserved communities.

“My time at WHEDA has been rewarding and fulfilling. This valuable experience will be carried with me as I transition to President and CEO for the Hmong American Partnership. There remains a wealth of opportunities to overcome disparities in underserved communities and I remain committed to this work that aligns so closely with WHEDA and HAP,” Thao said.

HAP is the largest Hmong-founded, Hmong-led non-profit in the United States whose mission is to empower and support newly arrived and low-income Hmong and other immigrant and refugee families to overcome socio-economic obstacles and inequities to gain safety, well-being, and prosperity.

ABOUT WHEDA

For over 48 years, WHEDA has worked to provide low-cost financing for housing and small business development in Wisconsin. Since 1972, WHEDA has financed more than 78,000 affordable rental units, helped more than 135,000 families purchase a home, and provided more than 29,000 small business and agricultural loan guarantees. WHEDA is a self-supporting public corporation that receives no tax dollars for its operations. For more information on WHEDA programs call 800-334-6873.