The African American Adoption Agency (AAAA) has received a $53,350 grant from the Community Action and Field of Interest Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation. This grant will support “A Community Caring for its Children” program.

“A Community Caring for its Children” was created in response to the disproportionate representation of African American children in out-of-home placement, and is designed to provide support for at-risk families to reduce the number of children removed from their homes. AAAA believes that while there is a place for system involvement - e.g. egregious cases of abuse and neglect in which it is appropriate and necessary to remove children from the home - an increasing over-reliance on government systems (i.e. the child welfare system) to address even minor neglect has resulted in a myriad of unintended consequences.

Minor neglect cases are often a result of extreme financial or other hardships, and are sometimes the first step in a long march towards the permanent out-of-home placement of children. “A Community Caring for its Children” is focused on pre-empting that first step by engaging the community in identifying and providing direct support to families at-risk for child maltreatment. This program builds awareness of legal co-parenting options available to extended families and communities to help children remain safe within the context of their communities and families. The objective is to reduce disparities by recognizing the strength of the community and utilizing it as part of the solution.

Marquita Stephens, Executive Director of AAAA says, “We are excited for the opportunity to have greater reach within the community for the safety and well being of our children. This is all made possible through the kind response of the Community Action and Field of Interest Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation. We are deeply appreciative for their support.”

Established in 1915, The Minneapolis Foundation is one of the nations’ oldest and largest community foundations. It manages more than $600 million in assets, administers more than 1,000 charitable funds created by individuals, families, and businesses, and distributes more than $35 million in grants each year. The Foundation also works with others to improve the quality of life in the region and serves as a catalyst for dialogue and action on critical issues, such as through the Minnesota Meeting public affairs program. For more information, visit www.MinneapolisFoundation.org