

Memorandum

To: COVID-19 Equity Action Circle (EAC)
From: County Manager Ryan O'Connor & COVID-19 Racial Equity and Community Engagement Response Team (RECERT) Staff
Date: November 18, 2020
Re: Response to the COVID-19 Equity Action Circle Recommendation Report

The intent of this memo is to provide a formal response to the COVID-19 Equity Action Circle (EAC) Recommendations Report. Moving forward it is important that we provide opportunities for the EAC to engage directly with departments so that the priorities and ideas outlined by the EAC can be aligned with the operational efforts and implementation strategies within department. By aligning priorities across community and county departments, we can build short, medium and long-term approaches together that will ensure successful implementation efforts together now and for years to come.

Below is a summary of many of the next steps that we are tentatively suggesting for the EAC, but it is first imperative that RECERT convenes departments across Ramsey County to bring them up to speed on the work of the EAC to date so that they are able to then proactively engage in these important dialogues with community. RECERT is currently working to schedule this meeting with department leaders and will keep the EAC apprised of that process. Following that meeting, RECERT will work with departments to facilitate conversations with the EAC that ensure movement forward on shared priorities.

Family and Youth Committee

Continue to explore the opportunity to pilot the Family Coach model:

- RECERT is piloting a COVID-19 Cultural Community Connector that has some aspects of the Family Coach model. Contracts with community partners/and trusted individuals will occur between November 2020-December 2020.
- Meet with the Service Center leads Maggie Dreon and Melinda Donaway to learn more about the current model, what aligns, and to get an update on the vision for Navigator role. Some questions to consider:
 - What is the status of the Navigator?
 - What does this role cover?
 - What does it not cover?
 - Where do the gaps remain?
 - Where is there opportunity?
- Revisit the opportunity to explore a partnership with Ramsey County Early Childhood efforts if the Preschool Development Grant Early Childhood Grant is funded by MN Department of Human Service.
- Touch base with Ling Becker, Director Workforce Solutions about the MFIPP Partners of Equity initiative to see if there is alignment and/or opportunity to potentially partner.
- Work with Service Delivery Governance Team to determine if the Family Coach recommendations need to be in 2022-2023 budget, and if there is an opportunity for a contractual relationship with community partners/agencies in the future. Sustainability of this model is important and understanding how this model will work with the County to reduce barriers to services for Ramsey County residents will be an important next step into 2021 and beyond.

Specific Departments Connections:

- Information and Public Records Service Team - Service Delivery
- Health and Wellness Service Team – Early Childhood Initiative
- Economic Growth and Community Investment Service Team - Workforce Solutions Department

EAC, Community, RECERT and RHEA Representatives:

- **Co-chairs**
Alfreda Flowers, Abigail Gadea
 - **Community Members**
Richard Terrell, Deina Zaghoul, Mariah Smith, Chang Vang, Shelly Fountain, Abigail Gadea
 - **EAC Members**
Mary K Boyd, Alfreda Flowers
 - **RECERT Staff**
Kenneth Pelto, Kamala Jaglall
 - **RHEA Representative(s)**
Prince Corbett & Mee Cheng
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Health Care Committee

- Meet with John Siqveland, Allison Winters, and the Communications team/leadership about:
 - Information flow and opportunities for recommendations 1, 2 and 3.
 - Developing a “debunking COVID myths” communication campaign.
 - More opportunities for the Communications to learn and listen from this committee.
- Meet with Deputy County Manager (DCM) Kathy Hedin, Chris Burns, Meghan Koral, and the Public Health team about the possibility of a Public Health resource hub for recommendation 5.
- Meet with RECERT Co-leads about the learning and progress of the Trusted Messenger Initiatives, the COVID-19 Cultural Community Connector role, and upcoming community conversations to learn more about the perceptions and concerns from this committee.
- Work with RECERT team and communications to refine recommendations.
- Share testing recommendation with Public Health ICS, DCM Hedin and Dr. Ogawa.
- Other topics to be explored with this committee could be the racial equity impacts of vaccinations and mask distribution.

Specific Departments Connections:

- Information and Public Records Service Team – Communications Department
- Health and Wellness Service Team - Public Health Department
 - Outreach and Communications Teams
 - ICS Leads

EAC, Community, RECERT and RHEA Representatives:

- **Co-chairs**
Rodolfo Batres- Javiera Monardez Popelka – Beatriz Martinez
- **Community Members**
Beatriz Martinez, Carolina Gentry, Neri Diaz, Shaquona Jackson, Tonya Draughn, Anna Granas
- **EAC Members**
Rodolfo Batres, Javiera Monardez Popelka
- **RECERT Representatives**
Kaosong Yang, Kee Vang

- **RHEA Representative(s)**
Sara Hollie & Prince Corbett
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Housing Committee

- Meet with Tina Curry to determine which recommendations the department can move on, which ones need modifications, and what we can do in 2021.
- Landlord Assistance Program has been launched by FAS to distribute up to \$8 million by December 2020 to prevent evictions due to COVID-19. The recommendations of this committee were shared and influence the design of the program.
- Meet with the “Spend the Money” team to get updates, as needed. Dr. Suzanne Madison and Thomas Berry are currently the representatives on this team.
- Meet with the Service Center leads Maggie Dreon and Melinda Donaway learn about the connections with the Navigators and FAS staff roles per the recommendation.
- Meet with the Max Holdhusen, Interim Housing Manager and Planning Chief of Housing Stability of Incident Management and Keith Lattimore, Operations Chief of Housing Stability of Incident Management.

Specific Departments Connections:

- Health and Wellness Service Team – Financial Assistance Services
- Information and Public Records Service Team - Service Delivery
- Economic Growth and Community Investment - Office of Housing Stability

EAC, Community, RECERT and RHEA Representatives:

- **Co-chairs**
Suzanne Madison and Thomas Jezierski
- **Community Members**
Thomas Jezierski, Maiyia Vang, Gaonou Vang, Johnny Yang, Gaby Olvera, Metric Giles
- **EAC Members**
Richard McLemore, II, Suzanne Madison, Snowden Herr, Marika Reese
- **RECERT Representatives**
Sara Hollie, Derek Thomas, Kamala Jaglall
- **RHEA Representative(s)**
Sara Hollie & Prince Corbett

Policy and Practices Committee

- Meet the following Subject Matter Experts and/or Ramsey County Leadership:
 - Lidiya Girma, Executive Assistant, and the RHEAs about the current framework and progress Community Engagement and accountability at Ramsey County.
 - Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions Director and WFS CARES team to share how they were able to diversify their contracts, what’s been done, and what’s been learned that addresses recommendation 3.
 - Elizabeth Tolzmann, Policy and Planning Director to learn about the September 22, 2020 Board Workshop on contract equity opportunities that will lend to a conversation and understanding of the changes, challenges and opportunities with procurement.
 - Jennifer Schuster-Jaeger, Health and Wellness Administration Department and team about community involvement and input on Clients Service Solicitations.

- For the Countywide IT recommendation Ryan is thinking more about this one and will get back to the committee.

Specific Departments Connections:

- Economic Growth and Community Investment Service Team - Workforce Solutions Department
- Strategic Team - Policy and Planning
- Strategic Team - Finance Department / Procurement
- Health and Wellness Service Team - Health and Wellness Administration Department

EAC, Community, RECERT and RHEA Representatives:

- **Chair**
Laura Dorn
- **EAC Members**
Dawn Blanchard, Hillary Lor, Laura Dorn
- **Community Members**
Janet Washington, Aisha AbdullahiA, Abby Sunde, Xong Yange
- **RECERT Representatives**
Nina Harris, Sarah Myott, Allison Winters, Mee Cheng
- **RHEA Representative(s)**
Mee Cheng & Prince Corbett

Workforce Committee

- Meet with Ann Feamann, HR Deputy Director and Maria Sarabia, DIOD Manager to learn about gaps of getting people with varying abilities hired and discussing the learnings from the State of MN Connect 700 (Completed on 10/29/20).
- Meet with IPR-DCM Karen Francois about the work with “Better Futures” and how that is going.
- Talk to EGCI-DCM Johanna Berg and Ted Schoenecker, Public Works Director about the Public Works training program. Considering looking at public labor positions for TARP in Public Works.
- The Public Sector Pathways Coordinator will be hired soon to work on internship and fellow program. Meet with this person once they are hired.

Specific Departments Connections:

- Strategic Team - Human Resources Department /DIOD
- Economic Growth and Community Investment Service Team - Public Works Department

EAC, Community, RECERT and RHEA Representatives:

- **Co-chairs**
Dr. Mohamed Alfash, Dr. Tamara Mattison
- **EAC Members**
Dr. Tamara Mattison, Thomas Berry John Thompson, Dr. Mohamed Alfash
- **Community Members**
Donte Curtis, Chue Xiong, Alicia Thoj
- **RECERT Representatives**
Prince Corbett, Maria Sarabia
- **RHEA Representative(s)**
Prince Corbett & Mee Cheng

Equity Action Circle – Overarching Request

- Work with RHEAs to begin discussions about Participatory Budgeting (EAC/RECERT Co-Leads). Meet with Alex Kotze, Finance Director and the new Budget Director, Susan Earle, to learn about the budgeting process.

Specific Departments Connections:

- Strategic Team - Finance Department / Procurement / Controllers

RHEA Representatives:

- **All EAC and RECERT** – Possible Sub-Committee (to be determined)
- **RHEA Representative(s)**
Mee Cheng, Sara Hollie, & Prince Corbett