

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 19, 2021, 3-4 PM

Present:

Mohamed Alfash
Michelle Belitz
Bob Blake
Becky Degendorfer
Kristin Guild
Lauren Hunter
Karin McCabe
Yolanda McIntosh
Elisa Rasmussen
Tanya Velishek
Ramona Wilson
Tracy Wilson

Absent:

Don Mullin

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Becky Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Chair Elisa Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 3:01pm. McIntosh read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Opening Discussion

Time was made available for members to reflect and share their feelings about the events of the last few weeks, particularly on the death of Daunte Wright and the Derek Chauvin trial.

Approve March Minutes

Motion (Guild/Degendorfer) to approve the March 15, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Breaking Ice Debrief & Future Trainings Discussion

Rasmussen asking members to provide feedback on the training event so she can share it with Pillsbury House. Many thought the “I Am” segment and the facilitated discussion were the most impactful. Some were unaware that the training would not feature all new content. The committee will discuss the possibility of hosting additional trainings at an upcoming meeting.

Opportunities

Fair Chance Employer. Becker presented a potential tool the WIB could offer to businesses to help them understand criminal background information better and make more informed hiring decisions. Fair Chance Employer was created by a retired HR professional who works closely with law enforcement. Becker will inquire whether the tool is supported by the EEOC and law enforcement. After brief discussion, there was agreement that this tool should be considered further.

Suburban Outreach. Becker explained that the City of Shoreview, which has a less diverse business base, is interested in doing business outreach on workforce inclusion. She proposed the committee provide leadership for suburban outreach which could include hosting a series of meetings with suburban employers. Until the toolkit and cohort are developed, cities could be connected to the Government Alliance and Racial Equity (GARE) and other community organizations hosting these types of conversations.

Center for Economic Inclusion Partnership

Mini Assessment: An update will be shared when more information is provided by the Center for Economic Inclusion (CEI).

Inclusive Employer Cohort: Becker shared a proposal from CEI for the WIB to sponsor a cohort of 20 businesses (two people per company) to participate in ten sessions over the next year. The sessions would include facilitated discussions, experiential learning, guest speakers and shared accountability at a cost of \$25,364. The cost will be covered by the existing contracted funding with CEI. Several suggestions/ideas were discussed:

- offer a stipend for businesses to participate
- identify a couple committee members to chair and champion this initiative
- need to determine how the businesses will be selected. What criteria will be used (industry, company size, etc.)
- cast a wide net and run two cohorts if there is enough interest

There was support for moving forward with the cohort proposal. It was decided that the committee will split out into work teams; one to work on the toolkit and the other to focus on the cohort. Within the cohort group, one or two members will usher the cohort through the year and a couple people will work on the application and selection criteria. Everyone should send their work team preference to Rasmussen. A funding request will be submitted to the Executive Committee to cover the cost of adding additional businesses to the cohort in case more than 20 apply. Members of this committee and the WIB's Partnership & Outreach Committee will help share out this opportunity.

Communications Content on Promising Practices: Becker stated that CEI will provide monthly articles on inclusive hiring best practices. The articles will be included in the WIB's newsletter and shared on the Ramsey County Means Business site. This month's topic is on the Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan.

American Rescue Plan

No discussion.

Other

Becker shared unemployment statistics. Although it appears the economy is recovering, estimates show that it is not an equitable recovery.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Next Meeting: May 17, 2021, 3-4pm.