

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 15, 2022, 3-4 PM

Present:

Mohamed Mourssi-Alfash
Michelle Belitz
Shym Cook
Becky Degendorfer
Karin McCabe
Yolanda McIntosh
Aalayha Robb
Mary Russell
Tanya Velishek
Tracy Wilson

Absent:

Lauren Hunter-EA
Ramona Wilson

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Becky Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Acting Chair Becker called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. Cook read the land acknowledgement aloud. Introductions were made to welcome new member Aalayha Robb of Knutson Construction.

Approve May Minutes

Motion (Wilson/Degendorfer/) to approve the May 10, 2022, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by vote.

Human Library Discussion

McCabe requested this to be on the agenda and provided a link to an article in which many different communities in New York have come together and joined forces to help create safe spaces for individuals to learn about diversity. The discussion was tabled indefinitely after hearing all the other projects the committee and WIB have initiated. This idea will be explored at a later time.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates

Future Inclusive Workplace Cohort – Reflections and New Steps: The Committee members who were at the in-person recognition event shared their thought/reflections. Overall, there was a lot of excitement and the hope to continue with another cohort. Future recommendations for a cohort were to have templates as to what other organizations have done and have a survey at the beginning vs the end or both. Questions from the cohort were about a level 2 that the participants from this cohort could go through and if companies can participate again but send different people. Additional items for consideration: cohort design; non-profit vs. businesses; virtual vs. in person; shorter time frame. The committee discussed plans for future cohorts as there is funding available. Some ideas included partnering with others to focus the marketing campaign on small businesses; a February start date; changes to the application process. Becker stated to let her and Milbrandt know if anyone is interested in being part of the work group.

Untapped Talent Event: Becker requested a “pause” on the initial plans of being a series of virtual events. The initial planning teams discussed a shift to one large in-person event. This was followed by a discussion to recalibrate efforts and approach to be more strategic and impactful, making it more meaningful to the community. The idea is to co-design a bigger event in early 2023 with Real Time Talent to allow a deeper dive into disaggregating the data.

Committee Chair

Becker reiterated the need for a Chair for this committee and asked everyone to consider stepping up. Anyone willing to be the Chair (even if through the end of the year) should let her or Milbrandt know.

Director's Updates

Becker provided the following:

American Rescue Plan Act: The City of Saint Paul approved funding of \$15.3 million and provided a recap of initiatives being taken and the various stages they are at. The most notable is the Driver's License Academy with the focus being on those 18-24 years of age on career pathways that require a drivers license as a work credential. There are various options of supportive resources for knowledge test, behind-the-wheel training, and road test. Becker also shared the Gateway-Target Occupation Model. There is a request for proposal (RFP) going out the end of the month. Becker is seeking assistance to review the RFP.

Fair Opportunities - We Are All Criminals & Welcome Home Events: Executive Director Emily Baxter of We are All Criminals will give a presentation from 3-4:30pm on August 18 at the Ramsey County Plato Building. This event is targeted to Ramsey County employers and other partners supporting inclusive workplaces. "We Are All Criminals" is dedicated to challenging society's perceptions of what it means to be a "criminal". It is a catalyst for conversations about crime, privilege, punishment and second chances. Anyone interested in attending should register on Eventbrite.

The Welcome Home Party is a free event scheduled for September 10 from 11am-3pm at Ujamaa Place. It is a celebration of those coming home after incarceration and a time for them to connect with Fair Chance Employers. Those interested in helping can let Becker or Milbrandt know.

Inclusive Employer Champions (IEC): A process has been started to solicit and execute grant contract agreements with chambers and other business organizations. IECs will act as liaisons between their member businesses, the county's Workforce Solutions programs and the broader county workforce ecosystem, enhancing the work of the WIB. More information will be shared at the next meeting.

Job Fairs: A Roseville Library Job Fair is being held August 11 and Midway Area Job Fair on August 17. Also, October is Manufacturing Month. More info will be forthcoming.

Other

No other topics were discussed.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:53pm.

Next Meeting: September 19, 2022, 3-4pm