

**Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County**

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 3 PM – 4 PM

**Present:**

Mohamed Alfash  
Bob Blake  
Becky Degendorfer  
Kristin Guild  
Karin McCabe  
Yolanda McIntosh  
Elisa Rasmussen  
Ramona Wilson

**Absent:**

Michelle Belitz  
Lauren Hunter  
Don Mullin  
Tanya Velishek  
Tracy Wilson

**Staff/Guests:**

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions  
Yolanda Burckhardt, U of M Student  
Andrea Ferstan, Center for Economic Inclusion  
Madeline Geitz, U of M Student  
De'Vonna Pittman, Center for Economic Inclusion  
Mike Richardson, U of M Professor  
Tony Tolliver, Center for Economic Inclusion  
Emma Wu, U of M Student

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**Call to Order**

Chair Elisa Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

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**Approve January Minutes**

**Motion (Degendorfer/Guild) to approve the January 11, 2021 meeting minutes as presented.**

**Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

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**Land Acknowledgement**

McIntosh read the land acknowledgement statement.

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**Board Equity Training Event**

Rasmussen provided an update on the Breaking Ice training proposal. The artistic director recommended creating a content team up to eight people to establish the goals for the event. A request for \$3,500 has been submitted to the Executive Committee. Rasmussen will ask if the session can be recorded. The invite will be limited to WIB and committee members.

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**Resilient Communities Project – Maximizing St. Paul Employment Assets**

Guild introduced Richardson and three U of M students who returned to present their assessment of the characteristics of St. Paul workers and share some of the barriers people are experiencing when job searching. The students provided qualitative analysis findings, using an eight-person sample size, regarding user perception of workforce programs, impact of COVID on workforce programs and job process, and characterizing experiences, themes, and barriers to employment. Their recommendations included:

- expanding partnerships to reduce overlap between services and reach more job seekers
- reconsider how workforce programs are publicized and work within industry groups
- client-facing staff should be heavily involved in future policy initiatives
- engage in additional research and engagement with BIPOC residents
- consider doing a broader quantitative research project on job seekers (who, why they're looking for work and what resources they are turning to)

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**2021 Initiatives: Center for Economic Inclusion (CEI) Partnership**

Pittman, Tolliver, and Ferstan introduced themselves. Becker explained that CEI will be supporting the WIB's strategic action planning later this year, after the County Board approves the Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan. CEI will also work with this committee on its goals to support small to mid-sized employers around equity hiring. Becker briefly reviewed the original goals and opportunities

outlined by the committee. Ferstan shared some economic inclusion data and highlighted three existing partnerships with Ramsey County. Tolliver presented three recommendations on a multi-faceted systematic approach for the committee to consider:

1. Design and market a co-branded abridge version of CEI's Racial Equity Dividends Assessment for employers
2. Convene quarterly sessions with a cohort of employers who have completed the assessment to share best practices and tools
3. Create communications the county can use to promote employers' promising practices through newsletters, websites, and social media

Becker expressed a desire to develop a toolkit using some of CEI's existing tools and developing some additional tools that are unique to Ramsey County. This would be in addition to the assessment and employer cohort model. The assessment will be discussed further at the next meeting. Becker will send out the slide decks and additional information from CEI. She encouraged the committee members to reach out to her or Elisa with feedback before the March meeting.

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### **Other**

Becker shared information on an Equity and Justice Community Conversations event on February 17. Features speakers are Tawanna Black from CEI and WIB member, Gaye Massey from the YWCA.

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### **Adjourn**

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.

Next Meeting: March 15, 2021, 3-4 PM.