

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 23, 2023, 3-4 PM

Present:

Mohamed Mourssi-Alfash
Shym Cook
Becky Degendorfer
Lauren Hunter
Yolanda McIntosh
Mary Russell
Tanya Velishek

Absent:

Aalayha Robb
Ramona Wilson
Tracy Wilson

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Michelle Belitz, Workforce Solutions
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Becker called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm. Belitz read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Approve November Minutes

Motion (Degendorfer/Velishek) to approve the November 14, 2022, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement

Becker reminded everyone that WIB and committee members are asked to read and sign the Acknowledgement each year and shared the full policy with the committee. She asked that committee members send the signed form back to Milbrandt if they had not yet done so.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates

Inclusive Workplaces Cohort: Becker provided an update, thanking Russell, Velishek and Degendorfer for reviewing the applications. Of the 15 applicants, the second cohort will include 12 employers who will participate with CEI. A welcome orientation is scheduled for February 9, with the launch of the first cohort session in March. The cohort sessions will focus on the five stages of the hiring cycle. Becker also shared that in the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards' legislative platform, they have asked for more funding for employer DEI initiatives to the workforce boards. With more money, different models could be done.

Untapped Talent Advisory Group: Becker provided an update on the opportunity to uplift data and the importance of data de-aggregation for all partners. More to come as we move slowly through this. Focus will continue to be on career and tech education, adult training and postsecondary education and talent, workforce and employment.

Fair Opportunities Efforts: Becker provided an update on the targeted population initiatives for 2023. The focus are the criminal justice and housing unstable populations. If committee members have any interest in either of the topics to be a liaison to some of the work, let Becker know.

Director's Updates

WFS Demographics: Becker shared demographics, the types of programs in the department, and who is being served by the programs. Belitz provided historical insight. Nothing has changed in the last several years. The biggest change in the last 2-3 years has been a decrease in the cash assistance programs. This all is at a high level being presented to the County Board.

ARPA Update: Becker provided an update on a special project called Power Within Us in partnership with the Ramsey County Judicial System and Department of Corrections. The program will serve young people ages 16-24 who are on probation in Ramsey County to provide resources to employment,

education and training opportunities. The program will be launched in March, with the pilot program through June.

Native American Economic Mobility Hub: Becker shared information on this project for American Indians in Greater Saint Paul. The goal is to treat families as families in building and maintaining family financial stability and intergenerational wealth through support in health, work and income, and career training and education.

Community Events: Becker shared information on an event out of Mahtomedi entitled Many Faces-Many Stories: Accessibility Series. This series welcomes practices for the blind and visually impaired. She also shared a very inexpensive on-line DEI class in White Bear Lake.

In-Person Committee Meeting: Becker shared that some committees are interested in holding a once a year in-person luncheon to connect with each other. She thought this committee might be interested in doing something similar at one of the already scheduled meetings, just shifting meeting time around lunch. Further details will be sent after Becker and Milbrandt discuss.

Other

Hunter shared her new position with United Health Group, leading a new effort around DEI partnerships, locally and nationally.

McIntosh shared information on the recent Construction Summit, hosting their first DEI awards ceremony. She also shared the upcoming Minnesota Real Estate Construction Summit in Edina on January 25.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55pm.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 20, 2023, 3-4pm