

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 15, 2021, 3-4 PM

Present:

Mohamed Alfash
Michelle Belitz
Bob Blake
Lauren Hunter
Karin McCabe
Yolanda McIntosh
Elisa Rasmussen
Tanya Velishek
Ramona Wilson

Absent:

Becky Degendorfer--EA
Kristin Guild-EA
Don Mullin
Tracy Wilson

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Tamara Mattison, Salvation Army
Becky Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Chair Elisa Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM. McIntosh read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Opening Discussion - *Why did you join the Equity Committee?*

Rasmussen, McCabe, Alfash, Belitz, and Blake shared their background and why they selected this committee.

Approve February Minutes

Motion (Blake/McIntosh) to approve the February 16, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

WIB Equity Training Event Update

Rasmussen explained that the content team met with Breaking Ice for final preparation before the April 1 training with the full WIB. She will check to see if the session can be recorded. A discussion about additional equity trainings throughout the year will be added to a future agenda.

Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan Update

Becker stated that the final Plan will be presented to the Ramsey County Board next week. The Plan centers around cultivating economic prosperity and investing in neighborhoods with concentrated financial poverty. It also spotlights enhancing access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses. Key strategies of the Plan:

- sustain and accelerate workforce recovery programs
- develop pathways to entrepreneurship and BIPOC business ownership
- attract and grow high-wage industry and innovation; technology, advanced manufacturing and life sciences
- strengthen business retention and expansion infrastructure to support communities

Center for Economic Inclusion Partnership Follow Up

Becker shared information about the work of CEI and their recommendations for how the WIB can support employers in inclusive hiring practices. The recommendations included:

- design and market a co-branded mini version of CEI's Racial Equity Dividends Assessment
- convene quarterly sessions with a cohort of employers who have completed the assessment to share best practices and tools

- Create content that the county can use to promote best practices through newsletters and social media

Discussion about the assessment and cohort concept included:

- The committee would decide who will be selected for the cohort
- The WIB could start engaging with the businesses that take the assessment
- The assessment results could identify gaps and inform where to make future investments
- Assessment results could provide the data to show progress over time
- Opens the opportunity to offer businesses other tools (concierge services, digital equity scale, partner matrix, etc.)
- The committee can help inform the assessment questions
- Provide the tools to all businesses, not just those that take the assessment. Especially small businesses who want to learn more

Becker would like a small group of committee members to work with her on the assessment and cohort framework before the next committee meeting. A request for volunteers will be sent.

Other

MDE Report: Becker shared a Minnesota Department of Education report highlighting the TechPak initiative, calling it the model for scaling a digital equity initiative statewide.

American Recovery Program Funding: Becker will share more about how the county will use its anticipated \$108M in federal relief funding once the County Board releases its priorities.

COVID Impact Event: The WIB is sponsoring an event on the local impacts of the pandemic on various populations. It will be held via Zoom Webinar on March 24 at noon.

Worksite Cooperation Workgroup: McIntosh is hosting an event on Wednesday, March 17 from 9-11am on recruiting and retaining people of color and women in the workforce.

Articles: McCabe shared two links in the chat: [Citibank article](#) and to [Culture of Care](#).

Adjourn

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

Next Meeting: April 19, 2021, 3-4pm.