

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 20, 2023, 3-4 PM

Present:

Mohamed Mourssi-Alfash
Shym Cook
Becky Degendorfer
Karen Gerdin
Lauren Hunter
Yolanda McIntosh
Aalayha Robb
Mary Russell
Tracy Wilson

Absent:

Tanya Velishek-EA
Ramona Wilson

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Michelle Belitz, Workforce Solutions
Karyn Berg, Workforce Solutions
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Rebecca Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
John O'Phelan, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Becker called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. Cook read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Approve November Minutes

Motion (Cook/Russell) to approve the January 23, 2023, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates

Fair Opportunities Panel Debrief and Upcoming Events: Becker provided a follow up on the WIB small group discussions around the barriers for those who have been impacted by the justice system and to uplift some of the themes. She provided an update on the support of the advisory group in bringing awareness and resources to highlight the critical need of fair opportunities. Milbrandt will send information on the upcoming Art from the Inside networking event in April. Another event is planned to provide technical assistance and support to employers to be more inclusive workplaces. A possibility is to start a small cohort as a request for proposal with Center for Economic Inclusion is developed. The goal of this small cohort is to look in depth at what employers are currently doing for their applications, background checks, etc. After discussion, a few second-chance employers that could be showcased at upcoming events are All Inc. and Taylor Corporation.

Inclusive Workplaces Cohort Session: Russell stated that learning from the first cohort has made the start of the second cohort much more focused. She provided an update on the intro session held early February and provided the key takeaways from the March 9 full session. Becker had interest in using these key points as a foundation to the Inclusive Hiring Toolkit project that will be discussed later in the meeting. Milbrandt shared the highlights from the post cohort session survey, stating a survey will be sent to the cohort members after each session and the results brought back to this committee for review. Becker shared that if this committee wants to fund future cohorts, a new and broader Request for Proposal will need to be released. Committee members should think about this with further discussion at the May committee meeting. A small team to form the scope and then another group to review the proposals after the release of the solicitations will be needed.

Untapped Talent Advisory Group: Becker gave an update on the Untapped event. The goal is to host a convening and share disaggregated data and then let the community give their perspective.

Inclusive Hiring Toolkit: Becker shared that rather than starting from scratch, she received permission from the Duluth workforce area to use their content/layout to draft our toolkit. She shared a preliminary draft of the content and commented on some of the sections. The draft will be sent to members of this and the Partnership & Outreach Committee. Becker asked that comments be sent to Milbrandt within the next couple weeks. She will also connect with external stakeholders to get their input on the disability aspect.

Director's Updates

ARPA Update: Becker showcased the Young Adult Career Academy. One individual shared his positive experience being part of the October–January cohort. Another cohort (March – June 2023) began with 18 individuals working in several city and county departments. After the rotation through the departments, participants are provided with an extended internship. Another project, which will launch in April, is the Power Within Us for Ramsey County young adults who are 16-24 years old and on probation. There will be resource sessions to offer immediate connections to employment, education and training opportunities.

Other

Becker shared the highlights of Women in Construction week and thanked McIntosh and other WIB members for participating.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:48pm.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 15, 2023, 12n-1:00p at CareerForce – 540 Fairview Avenue, Suite 103, St. Paul