

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 17, 2021, 3-4 PM

Present:

Mohamed Alfash
Michelle Belitz
Kristin Guild
Lauren Hunter
Karin McCabe
Yolanda McIntosh
Elisa Rasmussen
Tanya Velishek
Tracy Wilson

Absent:

Becky Degendorfer-EA
Bob Blake-EA
Don Mullin
Ramona Wilson

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions
Becky Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Chair Elisa Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 3:01pm. T. Wilson read the land acknowledgement aloud.

Approve April Minutes

Motion (McCabe/T. Wilson) to approve the April 19, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Inclusive Employer Cohort

Becker shared CEI's proposal for an inclusive employer cohort of 20 local businesses (two decision makers per company) to participate in ten sessions over the next year. The sessions include facilitated discussions, experiential learning, guest speakers and shared accountability. Julie Thiel, who is on the Partnership & Outreach Committee, recommended requiring a capstone project from each business in the cohort. This will be discussed further with CEI.

Application/Criteria: Rasmussen, McCabe, Degendorfer, Becker, and Milbrandt met last week to discuss the participant application and selection criteria. Becker shared the ideas generated during the meeting with CEI. It was determined that priority will be given to employers with 100 employees or less. The businesses will need to commit to attending all sessions and be large enough to have at least one representative at all sessions. The Partnership & Outreach Committee will develop a communication plan and come up with a strong name.

Timeline & Syllabus: Becker went over the proposed syllabus created by CEI. Committee members suggested setting goals for the sessions that should map to the syllabus:

- A self-assessment
- Diverse workforce attraction
- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Onboarding
- Retention
- How to build an equitable workplace
- Policies and procedures
- Organizational assessment – could leverage the Associated General Contractors resource (not construction limited but there is a fee)
- Change management function (addressing pockets of resistance)

Becker will send a chart with the suggested outcomes to the committee so they can review and respond with additional ideas. Becker and Milbrandt will work with CEI to map the outcomes to the syllabus. A list of potential session dates was reviewed, which start in September and run through August 2022. Becker is hoping to get two WIB members to serve as liaisons to the cohort. They would attend the sessions and provide ongoing reports to the committee and full WIB.

Mini Assessment: The assessment can be used with the cohort, but it can also be available to all interested businesses as part of the toolkit. This will be discussed more at the next meeting.

Funding Request: Becker explained that the cost for CEI to run the cohort is \$25,364. She proposed that the fee be split between WFS' existing contracted funding with CEI and WIB strategic priorities funds.

Motion (Guild/T. Wilson) to recommend to the Executive Committee, approval to spend \$13,000 from the WIB's Strategic Priorities budget on the Inclusive Employer Cohort as presented in the funding request. Motion carried via roll call.

Employer Toolkit

Some specific components of the toolkit still need to be determined. Becker plans to reintroduce the committee to the Ramsey County Means Business site at an upcoming meeting because several new elements are being added. McIntosh suggested adding Culture of Care (buildculture.org) and tools for HR staff.

Fair Chance Employer: Becker stated that a meeting with the owner of Fair Chance Employer has been scheduled in order to get a better idea of how the tool could be used.

Director Updates

American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding: Becker explained that the County Board is looking strategically at how to allocate the ARP funds, which can be spent through 2026 if obligated by the end of 2024. There are five tier principals for this funding, ranging from meeting immediate needs (tier 1) to transformational systems change (tier5). The County's goal is to invest a significant amount in tier five.

Other Equity Focuses: Becker suggested partnering with groups focused on other equity issues (LGBTQ, veterans, etc.) to cross promote opportunities and share information. She suggested having a ten-minute spotlight each month to learn more about these organizations.

Other

No other items were discussed.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 4:02 PM.

Next Meeting: June 21, 2021, 3-4pm.