

**Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County**

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes  
Monday, November 14, 2022, 3-4 PM

**Present:**

Mohamed Mourssi-Alfash  
Shym Cook  
Becky Degendorfer  
Karin McCabe  
Yolanda McIntosh  
Mary Russell  
Tanya Velishek

**Absent:**

Lauren Hunter  
Aalayha Robb-EA  
Ramona Wilson  
Tracy Wilson-EA

**Staff/Guests:**

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

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**Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement**

In the absence of a chair, Milbrandt called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. She indicated that if anyone is interested in being Chair, to let her know. Russell read the land acknowledgement aloud.

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**Approve October Minutes**

**Motion (Degendorfer/McCabe) to approve the October 17, 2022, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by chat vote.**

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**2023 Committee Meeting Schedule**

Milbrandt shared the proposed 2023 meeting schedule. Meetings will continue virtually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, shifting to odd-numbered months only, except for the January meeting due to Martin Luther King Day. The every-other month schedule falls in line with the meeting schedules of the other WIB committees. Milbrandt will look at shifting the January meeting after learning that the Associated General Contractors' Minnesota Construction Summit is scheduled for January 17-18.

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**Immigrant and Refugee Job and Resource Fair**

Cook provided an overview of the Job and Resource Fair held on November 3 at CareerForce Saint Paul. It was a successful, first in-person event since COVID. There were 16 registered employers who had open positions available. The goal of the event was to help immigrant and refugee job seekers make solid connections with employers and resources. She also shared some upcoming plans for early 2023. DEED plans to do more events at various locations in the metro area and hopes to partner with others for in-person assistance.

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**Committee Work Plan/Project Updates**

*Inclusive Workplaces Cohort:* Milbrandt provided an update on the plans for the next cohort, indicating that work has been underway with the Center for Economic Inclusion (CEI) to refresh the session topics to be more focused on people, based on the feedback from this committee. An information session is set for December 6, a cohort participant orientation is scheduled for February 9 and then the cohort will meet monthly beginning March through December 2023. Additional information on the cohort can be found on the Ramsey County Means Business webpage, which is now live. There was some feedback on the size of employers included and the time that the cohorts meet. Milbrandt stated that the cohort information has been shared with the five business organizations that are working as the Inclusive Employer Champions to promote the cohort to businesses. She encouraged committee members to also share the opportunity with businesses and organizations that might be interested. Degendorfer, Russell and Wilson have volunteered to review the applications. If other committee members are interested in being part of the application review, let Milbrandt know.

*Untapped Talent Event:* Milbrandt provided an update on this event and the planning with RealTime Talent to shift to a larger, broader event next year rather than a series of virtual events. Rather than focus on the population themselves, it would be more of a theme focus. Becker noted that a focus on the American Indian population will be done through qualitative stories so as not to lose them in the numbers. If any member is interested in helping with this, let Becker/Milbrandt know.

*Action Plan Strategies Status Update:* Becker provided an update on this committee's action plan strategies. Next year's focus will also include supporting small business entrepreneurship.

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### **Director's Updates**

*Fair Opportunities 2023:* Becker provided an update on the opportunity to focus on and support the formerly incarcerated population which continues to be left on the sidelines. She committed to having more connection opportunities around this effort and a resource sharing site for job seekers and employers. It was suggested that another potential resource would be the Redemption Project, a DEED program that has just been funded to provide some work from state and federal justice impacted individuals. Another population that needs more focus is the housing unstable, which is a challenging population to support. Becker indicated that it might be good to have a presentation in early 2023 focusing on these areas.

*Digital Inclusion Leadership Summit:* Becker provided a digital equity update. DEED has an Office of Broadband Development which is going to be extremely powerful in terms of resources. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) includes several elements that focus on digital equity, one being the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Act. IIJA will bring about \$650M to Minnesota through the Office of Broadband. The State is working on a plan to formulate their strategies and how to disperse the money. Ramsey County is ahead of the state by having a local plan started for the funds.

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### **Other**

Becker shared that Art from the Inside is hosting an exhibit, which gives a visual voice to incarcerated artists. A special event for policy makers, change makers, educators and those who want to learn more about how to create change is being held at the Creators Space in St. Paul on November 30, 5-8pm.

Dr. Mohamed asked about sharing information from the WIB Committee to the other committees he is on. Becker will connect with Prince to share about what this committee is.

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### **Adjourn**

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:59pm.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 3-4pm