

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Workforce Recovery Workshop
June 24, 2020, 7:30-8:30am
Zoom Video Conference

Committee Members Present

Butch Howard
Karin McCabe
Jim McDonough
Sean Mullan
Paul Nikstad
Mary Russell
Chris Tolbert
Ramona Wilson

Members Absent

Chad Kulas

Staff/Guests Present

Ling Becker, Ramsey County

Call to Order

Chair Karin McCabe called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

Funding Request – WIB Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training

The Partnership & Equity Committee submitted a proposal to use \$1,650 of WIB strategic priority funds on a 90-minute deeper level equity training at the August 6 WIB meeting. Wilson reported that Ellie Krug, a local trainer, would facilitate a discussion on white fragility and structural racism. WIB committee members will also be invited to attend. After the training, if the WIB feels it would be beneficial for others to have access to the training, stipends or scholarships could be offered to small businesses to cover a portion of the cost of similar trainings. McCabe suggested extending the time after the training for WIB members to talk. Becker will set up Zoom breakout rooms. Russell and McCabe volunteered to be room hosts.

Motion (McDonough/Howard) to approve the Partnership and Equity Committee’s funding request for \$1,650 for diversity, equity and inclusion training at the August 6 WIB meeting. Motion carried unanimously via roll call.

Becker shared information on an optional 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge recommended by Gaye Massey. It will be shared with the WIB after the 4th of July as a lead up to the training session. Check-in sessions for WIB members could be scheduled during and after the 21 days to talk about their experiences and reactions.

Director Update

COVID-19 Service Updates:

- Staff and clients have adapted to virtual work and service delivery but it isn’t ideal for making meaning connections with participants. Some clients don’t have the needed technology.
- An online youth rally is taking place on June 26 to allow youth to share information about what they need and how they can use their talents to support what they need.
- All human services waivers will be extended for 60 days past the end of the state’s peacetime emergency order and some have been made permanent. McDonough stated that COVID provided an opportunity to try new things and some have really improved how we serve residents.
- \$15M in CARES funding is going out to the community through workforce service contracts. Six RFPs have been released so far. Becker anticipates executing 60-70 contracts. The funds are also being used to increase employment resource access through a community Career Labs model, Tech Paks and assisting organizations create virtual trainings. There will be seven Career Lab locations at Saint Paul and suburban libraries. The model allows the bulk of the services to be

available online but will also provide in-person assistance. The county is partnering with Tech Dump on the Tech Paks. The Paks contain a refurbished laptop, hotspot and access to a digital literacy navigator. The navigator will help with training and refer recipients to other workforce trainings and programs. Eligibility and how to distribute the approximately 500 Paks are still being determined. A lottery system will likely be used initially.

New Job Board: Becker announced that a new county job board will be launched in July in partnership with business associations and cities in Ramsey County who have agreed to use this as their job board. Some features include an interactive map, the ability to search for jobs by transit method, employment opportunities, and training offerings. Proximity to childcare could be part of phase two. County staff will maintain the job seeker and employer sides of the site. The WIB can use the site as a tool for telling stories and showcasing businesses doing great work.

Unemployment Disparity Data: Unemployment claims continue to rise. Hospitality, healthcare, professional services, retail and manufacturing industries are the most impacted. In Ramsey County, the largest unemployment disparities are around age, education and race.

MJSP WIOA DW Additional Allocation: A state Dislocated Worker allocation is being awarded. The exact amount is unknown, but Becker anticipates it will be around \$300,000.

Civil Unrest Response: Becker shared information about the county's response to the civil unrest. The Healing Street program is working with community members to encourage peaceful forms of expression and to connect residents to basic needs. Relief for small businesses is being led by the chambers. Next steps include several phases: recovery, reimagining and rebuilding for all. Gentrification is part of the recovery plans.

Assessment of Business Needs

This topic will be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 am.

Next meetings:

Executive Committee Meeting – Wednesday, July 22, 7:30-9:00am

Executive Committee Workforce Recovery Taskforce –Wednesday, August 26, 7:30-8:30