

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County

Partnership & Equity Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 14, 2020, 3:00 – 4:30pm

CareerForce Saint Paul, Room 103

540 Fairview Ave. N., Saint Paul, MN 55104

Present:

Michelle Belitz
Kristin Guild
Cindy Larson
Ramona Wilson

Absent:

Elena Gaarder-EA
Tracy Wilson

Staff/Guests:

Ling Becker, Ramsey County

Call to Order

Chair Ramona Wilson called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

Introductions

Wilson welcomed everyone to the first meeting of this committee. All those in attendance introduced themselves.

Conflict of Interest Statement

Wilson reviewed the statement and asked all members to return their signed forms.

Committee Mission Statement

Wilson shared the current mission statement which is “to improve opportunities for people of color, indigenous, and those with barriers to employment in Ramsey County by leading transformational efforts to end systemic inequities”.

Partnership Updates

Becker reported that three new members will be added to the WIB soon, leaving two business vacancies. The Executive Committee is being very deliberate in considering diversity and inclusion when recruiting to fill these positions.

Becker shared information about the JP Morgan Chase Grant proposal that Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Ramsey County and Hennepin County are applying for collaboratively. The grant builds on the success of the MSP Tech Hire model. Emphasis will be on assessments, outreach and expanding scholarships for low income people of color.

Belitz stated that 50 applications for the upcoming EMS Academy are currently being reviewed. Interviews will be held January 22 to fill 20 slots. All the applicants are low income adults. Pathways to Prosperity grant funds will cover the cost of 14 weeks of training, a stipend, and support services. Saint Paul Fire and Alina are just some of the organizations interested in hiring people with this training. ABE services could be integrated into the training in the future.

Strategic Planning Review, Committee Work Plan & Dashboard

Becker explained that the work done by the WIB and the other committees has resulted in a one-year work plan rather than a traditional strategic plan. The benefit of this is that Ramsey County is undergoing an inclusive economic development plan focusing on housing, transportation, workforce and job growth. The WIB has been asked to serve as the workforce working group for this effort. Becker feels the work on this broader plan will help the WIB generate its 2020-2021 strategic plan. The WIB’s draft work plan

was reviewed. Becker noted that this committee is leading two of the WIB's strategic outcomes and supporting a third; 1) drive outcomes for job seekers and businesses through partnerships (lead), 2) lead transformative efforts to end systematic inequities (lead), and 3) continuously improve and evaluate outcomes and results (support). The efforts in the committee's work plan should align to these outcomes. Becker pre-populated the committee's draft work plan based on the WIB planning session discussion but encouraged the committee to give input. Ideas generated during the discussion:

- *Conduct analysis of what is being done around inclusive hiring by employers. Complete environmental scan*
 - Establishing a baseline is important
 - This could be a large project – instead of identifying all the efforts, identify ten organizations that are already working in this space. From that, an inclusive dashboard can be developed to show specifically what each organization is doing
 - Check to see if organizations such as Wilder or RealTime Talent already have this information
 - The timeline for completing the organizational scan is Q2
- *Employer Focus Groups/Outreach*
 - This could be a combination of focus groups and surveys of large and small companies. Questions that could be asked include if/how hiring practices have changed, where they are posting jobs, if they are providing training, onboarding practices, etc. If not, what are the barriers to doing them?
 - Select businesses of similar size but different industries to encourage openness at focus groups
 - Significant time will be dedicated to working on this at the next committee meeting. Belitz will bring a list of sample questions
- *Provide training and technical assistance to employers*
 - Consider bringing the organizations doing inclusive work together for a panel discussion at a WIB meeting and for other businesses interested in expanding this work
 - This will be built out of the employer outreach work
 - Target timeline is Q3-Q4
- *Develop equity checklist for employers*
 - Develop a list with resources and information on changing hiring practices – Ramona and Kristen will work on this
 - Create a list of creative places to post job vacancies
 - Rather than a full toolkit, create a one-pager as a first step
 - Target timeline is Q4
- *Other ideas*
 - Consider doing a shared project with the Communications & Outreach Committee centered around storytelling, giving an award, or designating a month to highlight employers excelling in this work
 - Highlight best practices in the WIB's newsletter
 - Challenge each WIB member to submit at least one inclusive hiring practice – this will be worked on at the next committee meeting
 - Do some committee level setting, grounded in data, about workforce disparities. Belitz will look for a couple of reports or ask DEED, MN Compass or Wilder to attend the next meeting to share system disparity statistics. A brief “disparity fact” could be built into every committee agenda. Becker will add ‘understand disparity data’ to the work plan. Consider having the WIB release an annual disparity report in the future
 - Call out people with disabilities and/or veterans in the committee's goals

Other

There was agreement that CareerForce Saint Paul is a good central location for committee meetings.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, Wilson adjourned the meeting at 3:58 pm.

Next meeting: Monday, March 2, 3:00-4:30pm – CareerForce Saint Paul, Room 103