



*MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION
OF WORKFORCE BOARDS*

Local Area Reports

Equity Successes and Challenges

January 28th, 2021
Operations Committee

Area of Equity Success: LWDBA 1/Region 1

- Regional event around a localized approach to diversity at work



WHAT IT'S ALL **ABOUT**

Our communities and workplaces are growing increasingly diverse. To remain competitive in business and to fully partake in the vibrancy of our diverse neighborhoods, we ought to have a dialog on essential intercultural skills needed. Creating better integrated and more equitable communities is a win-win for all residents. NWPIC is partnering with UBUNTU Consulting to bring you this highly interactive, inspiring, timely and timeless training.

Area of Equity Challenge: LWDA 1/Region 1

- Identifying applicable strategies and approaches to DEI advancement

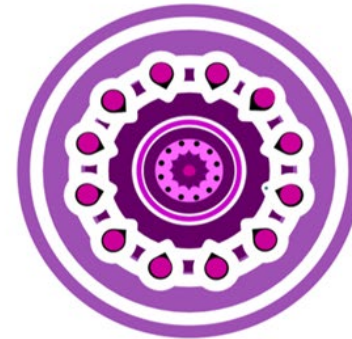
What are Diversity & Inclusion?

Diversity = All the ways we are different and what makes us unique
= **FACT**



□ “Being invited to the party.”

Inclusion = Bringing diverse forces together and harnessing them in a beneficial way = **ACT**



- Incorporates all perspectives and contributions.
- “Asking others to dance.”

Area of Equity Success: WDA 2/Region 1

The Development and Implementation of the Inclusive Workforce Employer Designation

- The I-WE is awarded to employers who:
 - Express a commitment to an inclusive workplace in the stated values, mission or policies
 - Assess how diversity, equity, and inclusion influence their work and culture.
 - Allocate resources to support and sustain an inclusive and equitable workforce

Interest is increasing statewide: WDA 2/Region 1

- The following organizations have received the I-WE designation as of today:

DyCast Specialities
CHI-St. Joseph's Health
West Central Initiative
Essentia Health

Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.
Goldmark Property Mgmt
Delta Dental of MN
Central Lakes College



Challenges: WDA 2/Region 1

- Maintaining momentum during the pandemic
- Difficult to reach out to businesses when in-person visits are not feasible
- Our reliance on Regional Summits to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion (must now be held virtually)
- Pandemic affects ability of employers to conduct outreach to diverse populations
- Hidden bias exists
- There are few resources and organizations that can help with recruitment of underrepresented populations in our area

Area of Equity Success: Region 2

- Ongoing regional engagement on equity/diversity/inclusion
 - All CareerForce staff in Region 2 completed Intercultural Development Inventory assessment and workshop series
 - CareerForce staff in Duluth completed Roots training focused on white privilege
 - Hosted regional workshop for employers as part of Workforce Solutions Series focused on Diversity & Inclusion
 - Launching D&I toolkit for employers focused on recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and retention
 - Working with consultant to conduct assessment and identify next set of priorities to work on with CareerForce staff

Area of Equity Challenge: Region 2

- Widely varying starting points across staff in understanding race/white privilege
- Challenge setting aside time for training/equity focused work
- Varying levels of employer interest/engagement in moving the needle on equity/disparities

Area of Equity Success: WDA 4

- Changes to Duluth Workforce Development hiring practices to increase staff diversity
- Part of collaborative working group with BIPOC leaders focused on improving how the workforce and entrepreneurship support systems in Duluth serve the BIPOC community
- City of Duluth added African Heritage and LGBTQ+ commissions, in addition to Indigenous commission
- Taking steps to increase diversity of Duluth Workforce Development Board
- Leading collaborative work on the digital divide

Area of Equity Challenge: WDA 4

- Long-standing mistrust of City from Indigenous community
- Lack of unity among BIPOC leaders around what focus/priorities should be
- BIPOC leaders lack time/capacity to be at the table for all discussions/decisions
 - BIPOC-led organizations under-staffed/under-funded
- Ongoing challenge turning thoughts/conversations into action
 - BIPOC community feeling frustrated with lack of real change in employment, education, and income

Area of Equity Success: Region 3

- Immigrant Employment Connection Group (IECG)-Tammy
- Cargill – adding a new production line – Tammy
- Region 3 is securing the Inclusive Employer Designation to support local businesses in hiring and retaining diverse populations
- Band of Ojibwe—Listening Sessions (working with the Band)
- Youth with Disability Grants—100% focused on people of color and individuals with disabilities
- Most programs focus on high% of diverse populations
 - Ex: WESA—out of 21 enrollees, 2 women of color and 10 Hispanic are in the program

Area of Equity Challenge: Region 3

- IECG-language barriers, completing applications, getting use to American ways of doing business, etc.
- Filling in the gaps – communication from UI, access to technology, etc.
- Idea - Diversity and Equity Networking Group
- Cargill—connecting with their leadership
- Roadblocks to partnering with diverse populations:
 - Band of Ojibwe-Changes in leadership
 - CLUES-difficulty connecting

Area of Equity Success: Region 5

- Increased diverse representation on boards, committees & staff; established Diversity & Equity Committee
- Provided equity & cultural competency training for boards, committees & staff
- Sponsored employer events on equity and hiring the hidden talent pool.
- Conducted focus groups with diverse communities & engaged community in outreach.
- Documented and evaluated program service levels & outcomes by race/ethnicity and disability.
- Created and marketed Labor Market Infographics in English and Spanish to students & parents and increased attendance at career exploration events/activities
- Developed “on-ramp” opportunity and expanded career pathways trainings in construction, health, manufacturing and transportation industries.
- Increased work-based learning opportunities, especially in coordination with career and technical education courses within high schools.
- Provide Career Academies to high school students in healthcare, IT, and manufacturing industries and target opportunities to diverse populations.



Area of Equity Challenge: Region 5

- Continued efforts to recruit diverse representation on boards, committees & staff, especially with the WIOA requirements.
- Better address digital literacy needs and access to technology with limited resources.
- Continue to evaluate access to services and how welcoming our CareerForce locations/services are to diverse populations.
- How do we continue to assist diverse populations in poverty that obtain employment but are not at family sustaining wages?
- How do we address the employment needs of single parents who now need to stay home with children who are distance learning?



Area of Equity Success: WDA 8

- Addition of an Employment Equity Taskforce – subgroup of the Workforce Development Board
- Equity Logic Series for private business and community partners
- Non-Profit Consortium Commitment to Action towards Racial Justice, Joint Council/Mayoral Proclamation on Anti-Hate
- Exploration of I/WE program and potential expansion in our region
- Showcase Equity Best Practices at WDB
- Bridges to Careers Pathway Programs – training 80% diverse workforce

Area of Equity Challenge: WDA 8

- Taking an inventory of all initiatives already happening in our region around Equity
- Scope – defining what our Workforce Development Board can actually have impact on
- Employment and Equity – Low Racial Diversity but high disparities
- We have initiatives that ARE working – let's celebrate and replicate

Area of Equity Success: WDA 9 (Hennepin-Carver)

- The Hennepin – Carver Workforce Development Board leadership has identified member recruitment and development for the Board itself, with a focus on diversity, as a key strategy moving forward.
- Request for Proposals to provide Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services have established vision, mission and priorities for the programs we are implementing within our area; these RFPs are written with the intent to reduce disparities and increase economic equity for those served. Our most recent youth RFP was designed with input from a panel of diverse youth participants.
- Hennepin County DE&I professionals conducted the Little Things Mean a Lot training to the CareerForce partners of suburban Hennepin & Carver counties. Partners included: Adult Basic Education, MN Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED) Job Service & Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Carver County, Hennepin County, Hired and Avivo.
- The workforce development team has implemented multiple communities of practice for community-based providers within each program area. This has allowed providers to understand best practices, discuss challenges as well as provide a network of support. Our next phase in this implementation process is to create communities of practice across programs in order to better collaborate and enhance opportunities for program participants.
- Over the past few years, we have conducted a review of program data which resulted in a dashboard via PowerBi. This dashboard provides a unique lens into demographic, geographic, activity and outcome data across programs.

Area of Equity Challenge: WDA 9 (Hennepin-Carver)

- Staff regularly conducts analysis of program policies and procedures in order to reduce structural barriers and increase opportunities for individuals served. Changes that require state or federal action are more difficult to influence/implement.
- Finding flexible funding to partner with Community Based Organizations that may not have the knowledge or capacity to provide services under our complex existing programs (Adult/DW/Youth) is difficult.

Area of Equity Success: City of Minneapolis

WDA 10/Region 4

Step Up 2020: One of the core programs aimed at creating greater racial/ethnic equity is our summer youth program - Step Up. Despite Covid interrupting our hundreds of summer worksites, we needed this past summer (more than any summer) to reach as many Minneapolis low-income and BIPOC youth through our summer Step Up programming.

In summer 2020, the Step Up program rapidly adjusted to provide online workforce learning modules, extending the opportunity to learn virtually and earn stipends for completion of these modules to all Minneapolis young people who applied to the program.

Results:

- *Over 1,800 Minneapolis youth completed Step Up's spring work readiness training, with 900 of those youth moving to an online format as Covid precautions began.
- *1,027 Minneapolis youth participated in a five-week, paid, Step Up Online Summer Learning Program, with an opportunity to earn up to \$600 for module completion.
- *466 internships at over 60 companies and organizations – 75 of those were virtual/semi-virtual
- *92% low income
- *89% BIPOC youth
- *15% students with disabilities

Area of Equity Challenge: City of Minneapolis

WDA 10/Region 4

- Each day was a new challenge while working in a Covid economy and social landscape especially with youth as the core audience of this program.
- In an average summer, the Step Up team works with Minneapolis employers to create over 1,600 internships. Due to Covid, nearly 2/3 of all internships were canceled.
- In Minneapolis, we know from our youth that an internship is not simply about work experience, it is also about bringing income into the family. With the loss of internships, youth and families lost income.
 - This is why we added the virtual learning platform with an ability of earning a stipend.
- The digital divide is real and low-income and BIPOC youth and young adults in Minneapolis were disproportionately impacted by access to computers and reliable internet – the basic learning tools required by a virtual online learning environment.

Area of Equity Success: Anoka County WDA #12

- Urban League Twin Cities collaboration established 2014
 - Onsite staffing focused on providing culturally specific services
 - Services are flexible and adjust based on caseload need
 - Current providing remote/virtual services
 - Focused on individualized career counseling on METRIX Learning (Online learning tool for stackable career pathway credentials)
 - <http://www.metrixlearning.com/>
 - Utilize PCSforPeople partnership for digital literacy enhancements

- “Hybrid” Employment and Eligibility Workers
 - Established 2000 – combined Economic Assistance and Employment Counseling
 - Provide integrated services to African American and American Indian DWP & MFIP participants
 - Cultural competency outcomes, promote cultural connectivity and collaborate with ULTC onsite staffing.

Area of Equity Challenge: Anoka County

WDA #12

- Current economic downturn and impact, children in home with secondary educational needs and COVID health impacts
- High unemployment claims and industry impacts
- Lack of access to digital technology and usage
- Local, regional and state disparity and racial impacts and cross-sector partnerships (educational/employment)
- Housing

Area of Equity Success: Dakota-Scott, #14

- Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (IDE) was the spotlight topic for two WDB meetings
- IDE strategies are being added to the plans of work for each WDB committee
- WDB taking a close look at employment programs' enrollments and outcomes by race
- WDB providing "How to be Antiracist" books for all members

Area of Equity Challenge: Dakota-Scott, #14

- Having a more diverse board
- Having correlative data e.g. MFIP
- Knowing strategies and tactics have made a difference

Area of Equity Success: WDA #15, Ramsey County

- Leveraging Trusted Messengers in our community to share about resources. County is partnering with a total of 27 organizations to:
 - Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and resources to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
 - Connect residents to resources and services for which they may qualify.
 - Share health messaging and information on county services and programs through a culturally specific and linguistically appropriate manner.

Partners assess the needs of their target population(s) and identify what topics and messages are a priority for promotion. They will then use a variety of engagement strategies and communications channels to reach the community.

Area of Equity Challenge: WDA 15, Ramsey County

- Ensuring that those with limited digital access and language can use services and access programs.
- Overemphasis on skills attainment for many workers often doesn't take into account multiple systems, including not only workforce, but also education, housing, criminal justice and others, have created an inherent set of disadvantages for people of color. Our residents experience multiple affects that impact work.

Area of Equity Success: WDA #16, Washington County

- Plans developed for serving youth and adults in Landfall and Cimarron. It's a partnership between the local board, Family Means, the city of Landfall, Trio and the MN Extension Service.

Area of Equity Challenge: WDA #16, Washington County

COVID-19 interrupted our plans for working with youth and adults in two communities - Landfall and Cimarron.

Area of Equity Success: WDA #18, Winona County /Region#6

- Adopted inclusion statement for Workforce Development Board and welcoming commitment including:
 - Practice extra effort and intentional strategies to recruit and retain diverse board membership
 - Encourage and support One Stop Operator efforts to engage marginalized populations in programs and services leading to high-demand sustainable wage careers
 - Demonstrate a commitment to inclusion by regularly reviewing and revising policies to ensure they are welcoming and non-discriminatory

Area of Equity Challenge: WDA #18, Winona County/Region#6

- Engaging members of the BIPOC community who are experiencing higher unemployment rates
- Changing company cultures to hire and retain this demographic to solve labor shortages and inequities