

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Employment Committee Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2017

Members Present

Tom Hicks*
Kryslen Holt*
Jordan Moon*
Dan Martinez*
Nikki Jeffords*
Terell Welch*

Members Absent

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers, Admin. Assist.
*Teleconferenced

Guests Present

Tanner Gers*

Call to Order and Introductions

Tom Hicks called the meeting to order at 11:02 am in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made a quorum was present.

Approval of February 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Nikki Jeffords motioned to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2017 minutes. Dan Martinez seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

E75 Newsletter Discussion

Tom Hicks thanked Dan Martinez for developing a draft E75 Newsletter. Mr. Hicks inquired whether the committee would distribute the newsletter to employers or post the newsletter on the E75 Linked In page. Dan Martinez stated the committee had not decided on how to disseminate the newsletter and noted the committee would need to identify the audience and frequency of the newsletter. Tom Hicks suggested the newsletter include topics such as blindness etiquette and resources for employers to contact. Dan Martinez stated the newsletter could include updates on Assistive Technology (AT) as well. Nikki Jeffords stated the newsletter could be a useful tool for cultivating relationships with employers. Tom Hicks stated the committee could partner with other organizations and attend job fairs. Terell Welch stated Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) collaborated with Tucson

Electric Power and the city of Phoenix in holding job fairs, which were well received. Mr. Welch stated the Reverse Job Fair was also well attended and led to another hire of a job ready candidate.

Nikki Jeffords motioned that the committee develop an E75 Newsletter Workgroup to create an E75 newsletter. Kryslen Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. Dan Martinez, Jordan Moon, Kryslen Holt, and Nikki Jeffords agreed to serve on the workgroup.

Nikki Jeffords suggested the workgroup develop an email list of the employers to send the newsletter via email rather than in print. Tom Hicks stated the committee could include the E75 Newsletter on the E75 Linked In page as well as send to employers directly. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee members develop relationships with employers throughout the year to increase awareness of the E75 Diversity Builder Award Event.

E75 Timeline Checklist Review

Tom Hicks stated the E75 Timeline Checklist was a rough draft of the overall timeline in preparing for the event. Mr. Hicks noted the committee could include a theme for each year's event and include that theme in the event program. Tom Hicks suggested the committee develop the award program early in the planning process. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee develop a nomination process for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors or the community to nominate the recipients of the E75 Diversity Builder awards. Tom Hicks stated the committee should keep track of the employers that have received awards in past events. Dan Martinez stated the committee needed to identify the employers that would be recognized early in the planning process. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee could develop a nomination form and determine a deadline for the community to nominate an employer for the E75 Diversity Builder Award. Terell Welch suggested the committee send out Save the Date invitations to employers prior to the actual event invitation.

Tom Hicks inquired whether the E75 event could be part of the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE) or blindness consumer groups' conferences. Dan Martinez stated the committee should consider the audience of VRATE, which were mostly consumers. Mr. Martinez stated the committee would need a different mechanism for nominating employers. Terell Welch stated several job fairs allowed community organizations to attend and reserve a table at the events. Tom Hicks stated the committee could consider asking the community for nominations for a Consumer Nominated E75 Diversity Builder Award, as well as other categories. Tom Hicks stated the event would be more recognized if more employers received

awards at the event. Dan Martinez stated the committee would need to develop award categories, such as individuals that support and provide services, such as Terell Welch. Nikki Jeffords stated she would develop a draft of an Award Nomination form to be distributed to the community. Terell Welch stated the committee should identify the employers to invite seven months prior to the event.

Dan Martinez suggested the committee establish a date for the next E75 Diversity Builder Award Event and reserve the Foundation for Blind Children (FBC). Tom Hicks noted the FBC was extremely helpful in setting up the tables and chairs, providing audio/visual support, and cleaning up the event. Jordan Moon suggested the committee hold the award event at a neutral location, such as a Conference Room at the Burton Barr Library. Tom Hicks noted the costs associated with holding the event at certain venues. Dan Martinez noted the committee should obtain the funding for the event early in order to plan for the event effectively. Nikki Jeffords inquired whether Tom Hicks would contact Kristen Mackey, RSA Administrator, for RSA support. Dan Martinez stated he would contact Ms. Mackey requesting RSA's support in holding the next E75 Diversity Builder Award Event. Kryslen Holt suggested the committee hold the event in a more professional venue. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee could potentially hold the event in the Ability 360 Conference Room. Dan Martinez stated the Arizona Council of the Blind (AzCB) held events at the Ability 360, and noted the conference room was appropriate for small events and could be somewhat crowded. Tom Hicks inquired whether the E75 event could be held in the conference rooms where the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) White Cane Day was held. Dan Martinez noted there could be a negative connotation if the event was held in the basement of the VA. Tom Hicks stated the committee could consider different venues for future award events, although the committee should consider holding the next event at the FBC.

Tom Hicks motioned for the committee to hold the 2018 E75 Diversity Builder Award Event at the FBC. Dan Martinez seconded the motion. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee inquire regarding the costs for reserving the Ability 360 conference room before finalizing the location. Kryslen Holt and Jordan Moon agreed to inquire regarding the costs of Ability 360. The motion was withdrawn.

Tom Hicks inquired whether the committee intended to continue holding the event at the end of January. Terell Welch stated the consistency in holding the event at the same time each year was convenient for the community. Tom Hicks stated the last Friday in January was January 26, 2018.

Nikki Jeffords stated she invited Tanner Gers to attend the Employment Committee meeting and noted Mr. Gers was interested in participating on the committee as well as the council. Tanner Gers stated he was passionate about employment and noted that he gained confidence when he became employed. Tanner Gers stated the E75 Diversity Builder Award Event had the potential to become a national event, and he would be pleased to contribute to the committee and the event. Tanner Gers stated he was the Executive Director for My Blind Spot, a non-profit that assisted large corporations in ensuring that their websites were more accessible. He stated he also worked with Linkages, a staff start up extension of an HR company. Tanner Gers stated the collaboration developed an accessible job board that could be embedded in websites, which was a very accessible job board. Tom Hicks stated he would be pleased to appoint Tanner Gers as a member of the committee, although as the committee grew larger, the committee would need more members to attend meetings in order to make quorum. Tanner Gers stated his understanding and noted that he would be committed to attending meetings and participating on the committee. Tom Hicks stated that Tanner Gers was appointed as a member of the Employment Committee.

E75 Employer Invites

This item was tabled.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Employment Committee would be on March 8, 2017 from 11:00-12:00 pm in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Agenda items are as follows:

- E75 Checklist/Timeline Review
- E75 Award Categories
- E75 Location/Theme Discussion
- E75 Newsletter Discussion

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

A call was made to the public with no responses forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

Kryslen Holt moved to adjourn the meeting; Jordan Moon seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting stood adjourned at 11:53 a.m.