

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Employment Committee Meeting Minutes
August 8, 2017

Members Present

Nikki Jeffords*
Tanner Gers*
Jordan Moon*
Terell Welch*

Members Absent

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers, Admin. Assist.
*Teleconferenced

Guest Present

Jim Strohacker*
Kevin Boster*

Call to Order and Introductions

Nikki Jeffords called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made a quorum was present.

Approval of July 27, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Nikki Jeffords motioned to approve the minutes from the July 27, 2017 meeting. Tanner Gers seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Nikki Jeffords stated the Employment Committee had been dedicated to the E75 Diversity Builder Award Event, which was a worthwhile event, although the committee should consider other activities related to employment as well. Ms. Jeffords stated that Kirk Adams, American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) President would be the keynote speaker at the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE) and he was interested in holding a breakfast or luncheon prior to VRATE with the Business Leadership Network and inviting the leaders in blindness. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee should offer support to that event. Terell Welch inquired whether the Employment Committee had been invited to attend the event with Kirk Adams. Nikki Jeffords stated she had received the final information regarding the event, although the committee members would be invited to attend.

Nikki Jeffords explained to the guests attending the meeting that the Employment Committee developed the E75 Diversity Builder Award Event as a way to recognize employers that hired blind and visually impaired individuals and as a way to raise awareness of the historically high unemployment rate of blind and visually impaired individuals, which was 75%. She noted the E75 Event's tagline was: Eliminate, Empower, and Employ, which sought to eliminate barriers to hiring blind and visually impaired individuals, offer support to those individuals and encourage employers to hire blind and visually impaired individuals. Jordan Moon stated at the previous event, the committee included short videos of the job ready clients that were played at the event. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee could include Mythbusters or debunking myths to hiring blind and visually impaired individuals.

E75 Checklist Discussion

Tanner Gers stated his understanding that the committee wanted to invite businesses that had hired blind and visually impaired individuals, businesses that wanted to hire blind and visually impaired individuals but were unsure how to accommodate the employees, and employers that were not aware of the jobs and duties that blind and visually impaired individuals could accomplish. Jim Strohacker inquired whether the committee had statistics on the number of blind and visually impaired individuals seeking employment in Arizona. Nikki Jeffords stated she did not have that information, although the committee could access the number of blind and visually impaired individuals in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Terrell Welch stated his office had about 50 clients that were ready for employment. Jordan Moon stated there were additional blind and visually impaired individuals that were seeking employment but were not receiving VR services.

Tanner Gers suggested the committee develop a database of blind and visually impaired individuals looking for employment that could be used by organizations such as SAAVI Services for the Blind, Foundation for Blind Children (FBC), and the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ACBVI). Mr. Gers stated the database could serve as a tool for individuals seeking employment and employers wanting to hire blind and visually impaired individuals. Nikki Jeffords inquired regarding the privacy of the database. Tanner Gers stated the database would not be available to the general public, and would only be accessible by job seekers and employers. Jordan Moon stated the database could be a way for job seekers and employers to network.

E75 Website Discussion

Nikki Jeffords stated the committee hoped to develop an E75 website, which would include an Award Category Nomination form and the Sponsorship form. Ms. Jeffords noted the previous Assistive Technology (AT) Committee Chair had agreed to develop the website, although he recently accepted another position and was no longer a member of the GCBVI.

E75 Marketing Discussion

Nikki Jeffords stated the committee had discussed the benefits to having corporations sponsor the Employment Committee and the E75 Event. Jordan Moon stated the Committee would benefit from having a hotel sponsor the event, which would offer the space to hold the event. Tanner Gers inquired whether any committee members had relationships with large corporations, such as Wells Fargo. Nikki Jeffords stated she knew an individual that had recently been hired by Wells Fargo. Terell Welch stated the E75 Event could include about three success stories of blind and visually impaired individuals that had been hired.

Terell Welch stated the Employment Committee had been selected to present at the Arizona Summit on Volunteerism and Civic Engagement, and would need to confirm by August 20, 2017 and provide a Power Point presentation by September 15, 2017. Nikki Jeffords stated the Committee could develop a presentation that included mythbusters or debunking myths of hiring blind and visually impaired individuals. Ms. Jeffords stated if the Committee could record the presentation, the presentation could serve as an E75 Diversity module or training for employers interested in receiving an E75 Diversity certification.

Jim Strohacker inquired regarding the efforts the committee had taken to invite large corporations to attend the E75 Diversity Event. Nikki Jeffords stated the Committee wanted to invite more corporations, but experienced challenges in getting businesses and employers to attend the event. Nikki Jeffords stated at the previous event, the keynote speaker was a visually impaired individual that spoke about his experiences, although the Committee might want to invite a keynote speaker that would offer a different message. Jim Strohacker stated the committee would benefit from identifying an individual that graduated from a local college or university and was employed and could provide information regarding the business he or she was employed at. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee would benefit from having a seasoned or experienced individual as the keynote speaker at the E75 event.

Jim Strohacker stated the committee would benefit from having media coverage of the event, which would bring more awareness to the event. Nikki Jeffords stated the Department of Economic Security (DES) Public Information Officer attended the previous event and had developed press releases about the event.

Nikki Jeffords inquired whether the Save the Date invitations had been distributed yet. Terell Welch stated he received the suggestion that the committee direct individuals to a website with the links to all of the event information. Mr. Welch noted the committee did not have a website yet. Nikki Jeffords stated she would follow up with the Jeff Bishop, the former AT Committee Chair regarding whether he would still be able to develop the E75 website. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee continue to use Event Brite as the registration website for the event. Nikki Jeffords inquired regarding the information included in the newsletter that would be sent to Terell Welch's network of employers. Terell Welch stated he intended to include the information in the Save the Date invitation. Nikki Jeffords inquired whether the Save the Date invitations offered information that would attract employers to read the newsletter. Mr. Welch stated he would forward the Save the Date invitations to Nikki Jeffords and Jordan Moon to revise and to catch the attention of employers. Jordan Moon inquired whether the committee still intended to distribute E75 business cards. Terell Welch stated his supervisor indicated that the committee was placing too much emphasis on the marketing materials instead of identifying methods to inviting more employers to attend the event. Nikki Jeffords stated Dan Martinez had developed the E75 business card template and committee members could print business cards.

E75 Program Discussion

This item was tabled.

E75 Newsletter Discussion

This item was tabled.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Employment Committee would be on August 14, 2017 from 2:00-3:00 pm in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ.

Agenda items are as follows:

- Strategies to Invite Employers
- E75 Website Discussion

- E75 Marketing Discussion
- E75 Program Development Discussion

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Tanner Gers 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 2:06 p.m.