

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Employment Committee Meeting Minutes
September 5, 2017

Members Present

Nikki Jeffords*
Jordan Moon*
Terell Welch*
Jim Strohacker*

Members Absent

Tanner Gers
Kevin Foster

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers, Admin. Assist.
*Teleconferenced

Guests Present

Call to Order and Introductions

Nikki Jeffords called the meeting to order at 1:12 pm in the Council Staff Office, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made a quorum was present.

Approval of August 29, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Jim Strohacker motioned to approve the minutes from the August 14, 2017 meeting. Jordan Moon seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Strategies for Inviting Employers

Nikki Jeffords stated the Employment Committee was in the same place as the previous year, and did not have any employers committed to attending the E75 Award Event. Ms. Jeffords stated the committee needed to market the event and get CEOs or HR professionals to attend the event.

Terell Welch stated he forwarded the Disability Quality Index Report, which included the best employers and noted that 25 companies were located in Phoenix. Mr. Welch suggested the committee members divide up the employers and each contact of the employers on the list. Nikki Jeffords stated she contacted employers off of the Top Ten Employers in Arizona list the previous year and noted the difficulty in reaching a HR professional in those companies. Terell Welch stated he had some contacts in the companies and would forward those contacts to the committee members.

Nikki Jeffords inquired whether Terell Welch would distribute the Save the Date invites and include his phone number in case individuals needed additional information about the event. Nikki Jeffords stated Terell Welch could build relationships with those employers and gauge employer interest in attending the event. Ms. Jeffords noted the committee would benefit from having 50-75 employers attend the event. Terell Welch stated he would distribute the Save the Date invitations with his contact information. Mr. Welch stated he would also send his employer contacts to the committee members.

Jordan Moon suggested committee members attend conferences or events and represent the GCBVI. Nikki Jeffords inquired whether Jordan Moon received interest from attendees at the National Federation of the Blind of Arizona conference. Jordan Moon stated the majority of attendees were already aware of the GCBVI. Nikki Jeffords stated she would inquire whether Dick Monaco, Arizona Industries for the Blind (AIB), would be willing to allow her to speak at one of the AIB Board meetings. She noted the AIB Board members were business professionals and could offer additional contacts. Terell Welch suggested the committee contact the agencies, FBC, SAAVI, Arizona Center for the Visually Impaired (ACBVI), and AIB regarding the opportunity to speak at their meetings. Nikki Jeffords requested that committee members obtain CEOs and hiring managers' contact information and forward to Lindsey Powers to be included in the invitation list. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee was interested in inviting influential employers to attend the event. Jordan Moon noted that small businesses hired blind and visually impaired individuals also. Terell Welch stated the committee should invite managers that would report back to hiring managers as well.

E75 Website Discussion

Jim Strohacker stated the committee could begin development of the E75 website once the funds had been allocated. Lindsey Powers stated she inquired with Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Finance regarding the allocation of E75 funds towards the website and had not received a response yet.

E75 Marketing Discussion

Terell Welch inquired whether the committee should show the video recording of the AZ Summit on Volunteerism and Civic Engagement presentation. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee could potentially show a portion of the video if the video turned out well. Nikki Jeffords stated that she and Terell Welch developed a presentation for the event, which would include True/False questions for employees and questions for the employers.

Nikki Jeffords stated Jillian Seamans, Department of Economic Security (DES) Public Information Officer, had agreed to ask the questions at the event.

Terell Welch stated the questions for the employees were:

- Name, position, experience, background and education
- How did you select this career?
- What accommodations do you use to perform your job?
- How has this job changed your life?
- What advice would you give to a manager reluctant to hire an individual with vision loss?

The questions to employers were:

- Name, position, experience, background and education
- Please share any concerns or apprehensions towards hiring blind individuals?
- What skills and attributes does this individual bring to your company?
- Has this individual changed the dynamic within your work environment?
- Would you hire an individual with a disability?

Jim Strohacker suggested the committee use a different term than “disability” in the last question. Jordan Moon noted the Employment Committee focused on hiring blind and visually impaired individuals. Terell Welch stated that companies were trying to hire a more diverse workforce and could brag about hiring individuals with disabilities. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee could change the term to individuals with vision loss. Jordan Moon suggested the term be changed to blind and visually impaired individuals in order to include all populations.

Jordan Moon noted the committee marketed largely to internal blindness agencies at the previous E75 Award Event. Nikki Jeffords agreed and stated her hope that the committee fill the seats with employers instead of GCBVI council members. Terell Welch suggested the Employment Committee request support from the GCBVI council members in reaching out to employers. Nikki Jeffords stated she announced her request at the previous GCBVI Full Council meeting and she agreed to make another announcement at the upcoming Full Council meeting. Jordan Moon agreed to follow up with the GCBVI council members after the GCBVI Full Council meeting in September. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee reach out to employers and hiring managers until the end of November and attempt to get 25 employers to attend the event. Ms. Jeffords stated if the committee had not identified 25 employers that would attend; the committee should consider

not holding the event. Jordan Moon agreed and noted that the committee's focus could be applied towards more effective activities.

E75 Program Development Discussion

Nikki Jeffords stated the Employment Committee had voted to ask Marc Ashton, Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) to be the emcee for the event due to the recent article in the Phoenix Business Journal recognizing Mr. Ashton as one of Arizona top admired leaders. Jordan Moon stated his agreement that Marc Ashton would be a great emcee. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee still intended to highlight other speakers, such as Amy Porterfield, SAAVI Services for the Blind. Nikki Jeffords stated she spoke to Marc Ashton, who attended the two previous events, and offered his feedback regarding the events. Ms. Jeffords noted that Marc Ashton recommended the committee identify the goal of the event, whether the goal was to recognize employers or highlight the job ready candidates. Nikki Jeffords stated that Marc Ashton indicated that the two previous E75 Award Events had been somewhat disjointed. Nikki Jeffords stated that Marc Ashton suggested the committee identify the audience for the event and market the event towards that population, such as HR professionals or CEOs. She noted that Marc Ashton also suggested the event be 60 minutes or no longer than 90 minutes to respect everyone's time. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee invite a CEO, such as the CEO from Tucson Electric Power to discuss the hiring of a blind or visually impaired individual, a successfully employed blind or visually impaired individual, and someone that can speak about how to support employers in hiring blind and visually impaired individuals. Nikki Jeffords stated the awards were nice to recognize employers, although the committee should consider offering CEUs to the employers or offer the employers something for attending the event. Nikki Jeffords stated she agreed that the events had been somewhat convoluted and stated the committee had not developed a concise event program in previous years. Jordan Moon agreed that the committee should market the event to a specific audience and offer attendees something for attending. Jim Strohacker stated the committee was on target to develop an event that would be worthwhile for individuals to attend.

Nikki Jeffords suggested that job ready candidates be invited to speak at the event if those individuals could offer polished speeches at the event. Ms. Jeffords stated Marc Ashton suggested the committee invite the employers to come back for a Reverse Job Fair, where the job ready candidates could be highlighted. Jordan Moon agreed although he noted that the event should include some job ready candidates. Nikki Jeffords summarized that she recommended the committee hold an hour luncheon, invite Tucson Electric Power, a successfully employed blind or visually impaired individual,

such as Kevin Foster, and an individual that could speak about the agencies and resources available when hiring a blind and visually impaired individual. Jordan Moon suggested someone such as Amy Porterfield speak at the event about hiring a blind or visually impaired individual and dispel the myths. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee would invite a successfully employed individual and suggested Kevin Foster be invited to speak. Jordan Moon suggested the committee continue to represent blind and visually impaired individuals that were employed and not as CEOs or managers. Nikki Jeffords stated her agreement and noted the committee needed to entice employers to attend the E75 Award Event and then invite those employers to attend other events, such as a Reverse Job Fair.

Jim Strohacker inquired whether the speakers at previous events spoke during the lunch portion of the event. Nikki Jeffords stated that attendees chose their meals prior to the event, and the lunches were placed on the tables for the attendees through assigned seating. Ms. Jeffords stated the pre-ordered food minimized the need for servers at the event. Jim Strohacker inquired regarding the budget allocated to food for the event. Lindsey Powers stated she would check the budget allocated to the food. **(STAFF NOTE: The food budget for previous events was \$12.50 per person for 100 individuals for a total of about \$1350.00).** Jordan Moon stated the committee could consider offering more elaborate lunches if the budget permitted. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee had originally decided to offer boxed lunches due to the budget and also to aid in the serving of the meals. She noted that it was relatively easy for the Phoenix Rescue Mission staff to put the meals on the tables prior to the event.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Employment Committee would be on September 11, 2017 from 2:00-3:00 pm in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Agenda items are as follows:

- Strategies to Invite Employers
- 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

Jordan Moon moved to adjourn the meeting; Terell Welch seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting stood adjourned at 2:00 p.m.