

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Employment Committee Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2018

Members Present

Terell Welch*
Kevin Foster*
Tanner Gers*
Jim Strohacker*

Members Absent

Nikki Jeffords
Bea Shapiro
Jordan Moon

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers, Council Liaison
*Teleconferenced

Guests Absent

Call to Order and Introductions

Terell Welch called the meeting to order at 10:34 am in the DERS Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made a quorum was present.

Approval of the February 27, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Terell Welch motioned to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2018 meeting. Jordan Moon seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

E75 Event Discussion

Jim Strohacker stated that the E75 Diversity Builder Award event in January was a great event and individuals that attended appeared to be enthusiastic. Mr. Strohacker stated his understanding that the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ACBVI) representatives felt somewhat left out compared to the other organizations attending the event. Terell Welch stated he included ACBVI when he recognized each organization and asked each to stand. Jim Strohacker agreed and noted that he personally invited ACBVI staff to attend the event. Kevin Foster stated the Employment Committee would benefit from good relationships with all the community organizations. Terell Welch stated he was participating in a team with job readiness or job placement staff at ACBVI, Foundation for Blind Children (FBC), and SAAVI Services for the Blind. Mr. Welch stated the team was able to communicate openly and understand how to better utilize ONET.

Kevin Foster inquired whether the Employment Committee had formally requested representation from each comprehensive services provider. Terell Welch stated the committee currently had representation from each service provider except for ACBVI and he would reach out to the organization. Kevin Foster agreed that all organizations should work together to accomplish the same goals.

Kevin Foster stated that the E75 event in January was planned well and he was pleased with the employers that attended the event. Mr. Foster suggested the committee perform outreach to employers, service providers, and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to fill the gaps in employment of blind and visually impaired individuals. Terell Welch stated his agreement that the committee could follow up with the individuals and organizations that attended the event and request comments or feedback. Jim Strohacker stated that Marc Ashton, FBC CEO, agreed to share his thoughts regarding the event with Mr. Strohacker and he would share that information with the committee members. Terell Welch stated the committee could send out thank you letters to the attendees and include a survey requesting follow up information. Kevin Foster suggested the committee members develop a survey through Survey Monkey. Tanner Gers stated he had a Survey Monkey account, although he did not receive any responses to the prior surveys. Terell Welch stated his understanding that the E75 Award Category surveys were not sent out due to time restrictions. Kevin Foster suggested the committee distribute a brief survey to individuals that attended the event. Terell Welch inquired whether any committee members would be willing to develop a survey that would be distributed to event attendees. Tanner Gers and Kevin Foster agreed to work on developing survey questions.

Tanner Gers stated the E75 event went well, although the committee received some negative comments at the end of the event. Mr. Gers suggested the committee be more strategic when requesting feedback from attendees at future events. Kevin Foster stated he was not expecting that response at the event, although he was glad to have received that insight from other organizations. Tanner Gers stated the committee should also consider playing videos during a time other than during lunch so that attendees could hear the video. Tanner Gers noted the video included great testimonials from employed blind and visually impaired individuals and the employers that hired them. Kevin Foster agreed and noted that surveys would offer data to the committee to better understand the employers' needs and the support that employers required. Kevin Foster stated the information would allow the committee to have a measurable focus on what the committee was trying to accomplish. Terell Welch agreed that the committee would benefit from feedback from individuals that attended the

event. Jim Strohacker stated he would follow up with the attendees for feedback after individuals had the opportunity to complete the surveys. Terell Welch stated his agreement with committee members that the video was not well heard at the E75 event and inquired regarding a better time to play videos. Kevin Foster suggested any videos be played at the beginning of events, and noted the video gave context regarding the purpose and goal of the event.

Terell Welch stated he had contacted Tucson Electric Power (TEP) several times regarding future E75 events sponsored by TEP and had not received a response. Mr. Welch stated he did not want to lose TEP as a resource, but he did not want to bother the company either. Tanner Gers stated he would be willing to reach out to Marji Morris with TEP and inquire whether the company intended to sponsor an E75 event. Terell Welch stated the committee could consider planning an E75 event during the summer with TEP as well as an event surrounding the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE). Tanner Gers suggested the committee consider two types of employers: employers that were interested in hiring blind and visually impaired individuals and employers that were aware of the opportunities but were unsure where to start. Tanner Gers stated the committee could potentially develop two tracks and provide information regarding how to recruit, interview, and train blind and visually impaired individuals. Jim Strohacker suggested the committee discuss the talent pool of individuals that had disabilities rather than highlight the disabilities up front, which could scare employers. Kevin Foster stated the committee would benefit from obtaining information from employers, service providers and RSA, which would allow the committee to develop an appropriate message to the different groups. Terell Welch stated the committee could then discuss the employer's concerns and identify the information that could be presented at future events such as VRATE. Jim Strohacker agreed and noted the surveys would also allow the committee to remain in contact with the employers. Terell Welch stated that the committee would review the survey questions at the next Employment Committee meeting.

GCBVI Strategic Plan Discussion

This item was tabled.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Employment Committee will be on April 10, 2018 from 10:30 am to 11:30 am in the RSA Conference Room, at 1789 W. Jefferson Street, Phoenix, AZ. Agenda items are as follows: Agenda items are as follows:

- Employer/Community Partner Survey Discussion
- E75 Events Discussion
- GCBVI Strategic Plan Discussion

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Tanner Gers motioned to adjourn the meeting. Terell Welch seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.