

**Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)**  
**Employment Committee Meeting Minutes**  
April 17, 2018

**Members Present**

Nikki Jeffords\*  
Terell Welch\*  
Kevin Foster\*  
Tanner Gers\*  
Jordan Moon\*

**Members Absent**

Bea Shapiro  
Jim Strohacker

**Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers, Council Liaison  
\*Teleconferenced

**Guests Absent**

---

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Nikki Jeffords called the meeting to order at 11:05 am in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made a quorum was present.

**Approval of the March 27, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

Terell Welch motioned to approve the minutes from the March 27, 2018 meeting. Tanner Gers seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Employer/Community Partner Survey Discussion**

Terell Welch stated that Kevin Foster, Tanner Gers and Jim Strohacker had agreed to develop a survey that could be distributed to employers and community partners. Tanner Gers stated he sent three questions to Terell Welch and Kevin Foster and had not received feedback. Kevin Foster stated his schedule had not allowed him to develop questions for the survey although he would review the questions and send his feedback to Tanner Gers.

Nikki Jeffords asked that Tanner Gers share his experience attending an American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) Leadership Conference, which included an employer panel. Tanner Gers stated that he felt the employers were more concerned with public appearance rather than employing

individuals with disabilities. Tanner Gers stated he asked the employers whether they shared their experiences hiring blind and visually impaired individuals with other employers. Mr. Gers stated that when employers shared their experiences with other employers, those employers would likely be less apprehensive about hiring blind and visually impaired individuals. Tanner Gers stated the employers indicated that they do not highlight the disability and focus on inclusion. Nikki Jeffords stated that smaller companies tended to be reluctant to hire blind and visually impaired individuals because they did not have the required resources and would benefit from learning from larger companies. Tanner Gers stated the employers indicated that they did not share information regarding their employees due to Human Resources confidentiality, although many companies would benefit from learning how hiring blind and visually impaired individuals improved their workforce culture. Kevin Foster stated that many large companies were part of the US Business Leadership Network (BLN) and did share their hiring Best Practices. Jordan Moon stated the Employment Committee could take the opportunity to share hiring Best Practices with companies. Kevin Foster inquired regarding the status of the Arizona BLN. Terell Welch stated he contacted the organization and had not received a response. Nikki Jeffords stated she would reach out to the AZ BLN regarding how the Employment Committee could partner with the organization.

Terell Welch stated he participated in an event, Age of Agility, a campaign that focused on life-long training for individuals. Mr. Welch stated he spoke to the founder of the campaign regarding the inclusion of individuals with disabilities. Tanner Gers stated that blind and visually impaired individuals benefited from higher education, which could become problematic if education was not required for certain positions. Jordan Moon inquired how the Employment Committee could partner with the campaign. Terell Welch stated the campaign shared the same vision as the Employment Committee and that both could work together. Nikki Jeffords noted there was a large population of individuals that were 50 years and older that required additional training to remain employed. Nikki Jeffords stated the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ACBVI) was offering new vocational programs for entry level computer technicians such as cyber security and A+ certification. Ms. Jeffords stated that SAAVI Services for the Blind was also offering a culinary arts program, which offered more employment opportunities for blind and visually impaired individuals.

## **E75 Events Discussion**

Nikki Jeffords inquired whether the Employment Committee had sufficient time to plan three events for the year. Terrell Welch suggested the committee meet quarterly in face to face meetings to discuss committee activities. Tanner Gers agreed that the committee members would benefit from meeting in person. Nikki Jeffords inquired whether the committee still wanted to hold an E75 event in Tucson. Terrell Welch stated he reached out to Tucson Electric Power (TEP) several times and had not received a response. Mr. Welch noted that TEP had originally offered to sponsor an event at TEP, although he was unsure whether the company provided sponsorship to the Employment Committee. Nikki Jeffords agreed to contact TEP and inquire whether the company still intended to host an E75 event at TEP.

Jordan Moon suggested the committee hold a job fair at the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE). Nikki Jeffords stated the VRATE Committee was not receptive to the idea of holding a job fair at VRATE. Nikki Jeffords stated that VRATE could potentially offer presentations focused on employment that would attract employers. Tanner Gers stated that more employers would attend if they were offered Continuing Education Units (CEU) or certifications specifically for HR professionals. Nikki Jeffords stated that individuals could obtain CEUs for certain presentations although she was unsure regarding HR certifications. Nikki Jeffords stated one of the original goals of E75 was to create an event that employers wanted to attend. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee could potentially hold a job fair at the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Conference, which would be open to blind and visually impaired individuals.

### **GCBVI Strategic Plan Discussion**

This item was tabled.

### **Agenda and Date for Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Employment Committee will be on May 29, 2018 from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm in the Mission Possible Cafe, at 1516 N. Van Buren, 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**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.