



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 3, 2024
4:00 P.M.

Via Zoom Only: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89027889162>
Or Call 669-900-6833, Meeting ID: 890 2788 9162

AGENDA

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Estimated Time</u>	<u>Item</u>
Call to Order, Introductions		
Executive Committee Minutes <i>February and March 2024</i>	2 minutes	Approval
Finance Report	5 minutes	Approval
Health Insurance Benefits for Part-Time Employees	10 minutes	Recommendation
Draft MCEDD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan	10 minutes	Recommendation
Staff Updates	5 minutes	Information
Other New Business; Committee Members Updates		
Executive Director Evaluation <i>Executive Session per ORS 192.660(i)</i> (Performance evaluations of public officers and employees)	10 minutes	Evaluation
<i>Regular Session Reconvened</i>		
Executive Director Action	5 minutes	Decision

Adjourn

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires any special materials, services, or assistance, please contact the MCEDD office at 541-296-2266 (TTY 711) at least 48 hours before the meeting.

MCEDD is an equal opportunity lender, employer and provider.

**MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2024
4:00 PM
ZOOM TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE

Attending: Tom Lannen, Ken Bailey, Scott Clements, Joe Dabulskis, Eric Proffitt, Lori Zoller, Steve Kramer

Staff: Jessica Metta (Executive Director), Carrie Pipinich (Deputy Director), Jill Brandt (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: Commissioner Pat Shannon, Les Ruark

CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Judge Joe Dabulskis called the meeting to order at 4:07pm. A quorum was present. A round of introductions took place.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Judge Joe asked for any questions, comments or edits on the December 6, 2023, minutes as presented. *There were none.*

Ken Bailey motioned to approve the December 2023 Executive Committee meeting minutes as presented. Eric Proffitt seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Jessica pointed out the LGIP account for the USDA IRP funds need to be moved into an FDIC- insured account per USDA requirements. These dollars will be moved out of their current LGIP account, and the account will be closed. Jessica commended Dana for catching this requirement. The supplemental budget that was discussed at the previous meeting has now been put on hold, and the plan is to wait to budget for the proposed new junior position under the Infrastructure Grants Manager position until July 1 so that it can be written into the new budget. If a supplemental budget is needed, it will be done at the same time as the regular budget preparation.

Jessica informed the Board that Dana Woods submitted her resignation effective at the end of this month. Dana's position is posted on MCEDD's website, Indeed, and on LinkedIn. Jessica has contacted Summer Sears, the CPA who helped during the last Finance Manager transition. Summer indicated that she was likely available to help during this transition. Jessica has scheduled a meeting with Summer next week. There are many details to think of, and Jessica said the position may take time to fill.

Discussion: Eric asked if Summer had experience with Caselle. Jessica explained that Summer actually had more experience with Caselle than with Quickbooks. Ken agreed that this strategy was the proper way to go to so that MCEDD does not feel forced to rush into the new hire. Eric asked if Summer's fees for services would be a be wash (direct substitute cost) in place of paying salary to the filled position. Jessica will verify but noted that Summer will not be working full time for MCEDD. Joe asked if any action was needed from this group. Jessica asked the Board to think about any potential candidates and send them her way.

Joe Dabulskis motioned to authorize contracting Summer Sears for interim financial services. Ken Bailey seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Joe Dabulskis motioned to approve the financial report as presented. Scott Clements seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

GRANT REQUESTS

Jessica asked for approval to apply for and receive the grant funding outlined in the packet memo. She gave a summary of the transportation grant applications that are currently in progress and will be submitted in a couple of weeks. Carrie summarized the economic development grants applications in progress. The Oregon Community Foundation grant will support continuing Lindsay's work with the Hood River County Energy Council. The Regional Innovation Hub Implementation grant will build on the work accomplished under the planning grant that MCEDD received last year. The Growth Accelerator Fund Competition from the SBA will continue to build on the work begun under the ICAP launch grant.

Ken Bailey motioned to approve the applications for grants in process, and to accept awards from any grants applications that have already been submitted. Eric Proffitt seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

GORGE REGIONAL TRANSIT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION CONTRACT AWARD

Jessica summarized the activity on the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy (GRTS) project to date. Phase 1 and 2 have been completed to bring the regional transit system to its current level. In December, Kathy Fitzpatrick issued an RFP for a consultant to continue moving forward with implementation. Grants have been secured from both ODOT and WSDOT to fund the next proposed work items including six workshops for the Translink partner transportation agencies, planning and execution of a transportation summit event, and building communication with each of the five counties' policy makers specifically around regional transit. Emily K. Reed has been recommended for the contract out of the four proposals that were submitted. The RFP and Emily's proposal were both included in the meeting packet. Board approval is required to contract this work for the amount of \$90,000.

Scott Clements motioned to approve the consulting contract award to Emily K. Reed as recommended by staff. Joe Dabulskis seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

Steve Kramer joined the meeting at 4:39pm.

PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES

Jessica explained the background behind the changes that were highlighted in yellow in the draft Personnel Policies handbook in the meeting packet. The first change was discussed and clarified at December's Executive Committee meeting with 7.5 holiday hours allotted to each employee as paid holiday time. Staff who work a longer day than 7.5 hours can either use PTO or flex their time to cover longer hours off on a holiday when they would regularly work a longer shift.

The second policy change arose out of the winter weather closures in January that caused The Link to shut down service and send drivers home. Drivers and dispatchers were told to use their PTO to cover the lost time and there were some objections. Jessica consulted with other transit authorities (CAT in

Hood River and CET in Bend) for comparable policies. CAT's policy is to pay the full shift to any drivers who are working when the decision to shut down service is made, but if transportation is closed and drivers and dispatchers do not come in at all, then PTO must be used to cover the wages for the day lost. The policy wording has been changed to read that MCEDD will cover driver and dispatcher full shifts when employees are at work on shift and are sent home early due to inclement weather.

Discussion: Eric Proffitt agreed with these proposed changes. He explained the State's Inclement weather policy that pays staff for closures due to a declared weather emergency. Ken Bailey commended Jessica for addressing these policies to ensure that staff are not shorted on their pay because of inclement weather.

Jessica clarified that moving forward, when staff are told not to come in, they have the option to use PTO. MCEDD's policy allows PTO to be used immediately when hired. If a new hire does not have enough PTO, other staff can donate their PTO to the person in need. If MCEDD sends staff home early, the rest of the day will be covered. If staff does not come in due to weather closure, PTO must be used for the day.

Ken Bailey motioned to recommend the Board approve the policy changes as presented. Lori Zoller seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

PART-TIME BENEFITS EXPLORATION

Jessica introduced this topic as an exploration to gauge the Board's interest in providing health insurance benefits for part-time employees. She explained that The Link has had trouble filling part-time positions and she believes offering benefits could help. Currently MCEDD covers 100% of the benefit cost for full-time employees, and employees who work less than 30 hours are not covered at all. There are three current part-time employees that could opt in if MCEDD covered employee benefits 100%, for the cost of \$30,000 per year. Jessica added that with the salary level of drivers, spouse and family enrollment costs are prohibitive. Once the cost of spouse or family was deducted, there would be little paycheck left. Jessica asked for interest in offering this and if so, what portion of the cost for employees that MCEDD would cover.

Discussion: Eric Proffitt asked what CAT and other transportation entities cover. Jessica will research this. She noted that local special district NWPUD does cover part-timers' insurance costs. Eric added that the state prorates for part-time employees at 50-75%. and that this is a big attraction for employees. With unemployment so low at 3% in the area, this will give a significant part-time hiring advantage. Steve Kramer supported coverage at 50-75% and also more research with other transportation partners. He asked for a revisit on the topic when there is additional information to consider. Ken Bailey agreed that offering family coverage was not worth the effort because the cost is too high for part-time salary. Eric asked if the part-time status was chosen or only offered. Jessica explained that our part-timers either have other employment or are retired and only work part time. Joe Dabulskis asked if these benefits would kick in after six months or on day one. Jessica replied that full-timers receive benefits on day one, so part-timers would get the same benefit as full timers. Eric agreed that anything less than this was a detraction. He noted that with the current low unemployment, hiring is taking staff from other employers, not hiring unemployed individuals. This incentive is important to keep the part-time positions filled. Jessica agreed to bring more details to a future meeting.

DISTRICT BOUNDARY MODIFICATION UPDATE

Jessica gave an update on the pieces still needed for this process from the EDA's list of additional requirements. MCEDD's 2024 CEDS update is on track to include Gilliam County. The letters of support from each county have sparked some additional conversations, and Jessica asked the Board for reaffirmation that MCEDD's counties all support this addition. She allayed the concern expressed about MCEDD's staffing capacity, stating that MCEDD can handle the additional territory without detracting from the services currently provided within the district. One change will be the one additional Board member. Jessica opened the floor for discussion.

Discussion: Eric asked if Gilliam County's dues will provide appropriate revenue needed for MCEDD's services. The expanded structure under consideration for the infrastructure grants management will provide the expanded capacity to serve Gilliam County, but MCEDD is not adding another staff person specifically to oversee Gilliam County. MCEDD will receive dues revenue and will service contracts with Gilliam County the same as all other counties in the district.

Joe said that Sherman County has the letter of support on the next meeting agenda. While most of the Commissioners do not interact with MCEDD directly, all are happy with the services and want to ensure that this addition will not have a negative effect.

Scott was confused that the addition was not a done deal once the Board approved the resolution. Jessica explained that the addition has not been approved by EDA yet. Scott asked for clarification on today's discussion- if any action was needed. Steve explained that MCEDD has asked for letters of support from all the counties. Questions have been raised and answered. He added that Wasco County has already approved its letter of support.

Ken added that this process requires full approval of both MCEDD's Board and the EDA. The Board has approved it, but if the EDA's added requirements are not met, it won't happen.

Tom Lannen said that this topic has not yet been brought before the Skamania County Board. He appreciated today's discussion because this information will help him to respond to questions and concerns that will come up when the topic comes up on the county's agenda next week.

Pat Shannon reported that Gilliam County was still eager to make this move and offered support as needed. Jessica noted that MCEDD has hired Gilliam County's planning director for the Senior Project Manager position, as an illustration of how Gilliam is entwined with MCEDD.

STAFF UPDATES:

Deputy Director Carrie Pipinich gave updates on Economic Development activities and support in the district. All three Oregon counties are currently working on hazard mitigation updates. Broadband activity is on hold for the next disbursement of federal funding. The State's challenge processes are coming up. Jason continues to support the Washington Broadband efforts and Carrie has assisted QLife with their application for state funding in Wasco and Sherman Counties. Industry cluster/ entrepreneurship/ innovation grants (Rural Opportunity Initiative and Washington Microenterprise Association) will support a whole series of events in the upcoming months including pub talks, Pitchfest and Innovators Drinks events. Energy work is ongoing. The Hood River Energy Council focused on EV infrastructure planning for transportation throughout Hood River County, the solar + storage project for

Mt. Hood Town Hall, and the upgrade to the City of Cascade Locks Administration Building. Brownfields project is still awaiting the agreement from the EPA so is not begun accepting applications yet, but the systems for review and approval of applications are ready and in place.

Executive Director Jessica Metta announced that Les Perkins was appointed to the Oregon State Public Utility Commission. Hood River County will appoint a new commissioner to their Board and to the MCEDD position. She added that Les will be sorely missed, but that we will still benefit from his participation at the state level. MCEDD's strategic planning sessions with Alison Hart are scheduled. The office's HVAC system died in the storm. Repair work has been contracted with a firm based in Kennewick. The parts are still under warranty so the major cost for the repair is labor estimated at \$7850. The technician is scheduled to start on Monday. Staff have continued to work in the building with individual space heaters.

Discussion: Tom asked if there was any insurance coverage. Jessica replied the HVAC company has to determine why the system failed to see if the repair qualifies to be covered. If not, MCEDD has a building contingency fund in the budget that will be used.

MCEDD's Attainable Housing RLF has a deadline coming up on Feb 19th to revolve the funds. The application has been approved by the LAB meeting and the funds are on track to be disbursed by the deadline. Jessica reminded the Committee that her annual evaluation will be on the agenda for the March Executive Committee meeting, with prep done in February.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS/ COMMITTEE MEMBERS UPDATES

None.

ADJOURN

Joe Dabulskis adjourned the meeting at 4:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Brandt, Administrative Assistant

**MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024
4:00 PM
ZOOM TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE

Attending: Scott Clements, Joe Dabulskis, Leana Kinley

Staff: Jessica Metta (Executive Director), Carrie Pipinich (Deputy Director), Jill Brandt (Administrative Assistant)

Guest: Commissioner Shannon

CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Leana Kinley called the meeting to order at 4:05pm. *Quorum was not met.*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Meeting Leana Kinley asked for any questions, comments or edits on the February 7, 2024, minutes as presented. There were none, but there was no quorum for an official approval of the minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Jessica focused her comments on the progress for hiring for the Finance Manager position. She explained that Dana has offered to stay very part-time (5 hours per week) on a contract basis with the Budget as her focus. There was no quorum to approve the financial report.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Jessica gave an overview of the proposed candidates. Tiffany Prince is seeking reappointment for the At-Large position. Of the Board members from Oregon who were asked, Judge Joe Dabulskis volunteered to sit on the committee. Jessica will participate as the Budget Officer in the absence of a Finance and Operations Manager. Jessica added that these recommendations will be added to the March Full Board meeting for approval. She asked for any questions. *There were none.*

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

Jessica noted that the proposed changes on the draft in the meeting packet were the result of the feedback from the previous discussion on this topic. The guidelines will apply equally to all MCEDD employees. The document was shared with other transit authorities at Tom Lannen's request, and CAT has also adopted these guidelines with additional input from their legal counsel. MCEDD has added the recommended legal edits to make this a stronger document. Since there was no quorum today, this item will be brought to the Full Board meeting to adopt without an Executive Committee recommendation. She asked for any comments or questions.

Discussion: Scott commended draft as extremely comprehensive, and Leana agreed. Jessica explained that the wording "at the discretion of" was removed so that all are treated fairly. She added that this can be revisited in future if needed.

GRANT APPROVAL

Carrie explained that Lindsay McClure has been looking for additional resources needed to implement the Hood River County Energy Plan and found this \$20,000 grant from the Roundhouse Foundation that will support the development of the next phase of the workplan. Jessica noted that the application asked that it had been approved by leadership. She felt comfortable signing the application and seeking Board approval to accept the grant should it be awarded. The Board members present agreed to this action.

STAFF UPDATES:

Jessica Metta informed the group that the paperwork to reinstate Four Rivers Corporation has been completed with Paul Lindberg's assistance and has been mailed out to the IRS. It will take some months to process.

The Klickitat EDA will be applying to WA Commerce for grant-writing funds that will be subcontracted out to MCEDD. The window for this work is very short, until June 30th, but there will be an opportunity to apply for another round of this funding in the next fiscal year. Proposed projects for these grants will be the City of White Salmon's childcare/youth center, the White Salmon pool, the Port of Klickitat's barge dock improvements, and the KVH Hospital expansion. \$7000 is the projected funding needed to complete this scope of work in the time frame allotted. Klickitat County's Executive Committee will vote to submit this request to Commerce in their meeting today, and Commerce will be making these awards very quickly.

Jessica will be making a presentation in person to the Gorge Commission on behalf of the OIB at their April 9th meeting. She added that MCEDD Board members are welcome to join if there is interest.

Carrie Pipinich informed the board that Michelle Colby started last week as the Infrastructure Grants Manager, and that MCEDD has finally received the cooperative agreement from the EPA. Staff are working through the final admin pieces now before opening up the project for applications.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS/ COMMITTEE MEMBERS UPDATES

Leanna asked for any updates or new business from the Board. *There were none.*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION

Pursuant to *ORS 192.660(i)* for the performance evaluations of public officers and employees, Leana Kinley called the meeting into an Executive Session at 4:20 p.m. to consider the annual evaluation of Jessica Metta.

Regular session reconvened at 4:34 p.m.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTION

No action was taken. Jessica agreed to write up a draft of her goals for the next year.

ADJOURN

Leana Kinley adjourned the meeting at 4:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Brandt, Administrative Assistant

We will welcome Heidi Junger as MCEDD's new Finance Manager at the April Executive Committee meeting. We will send financial reports prior to the meeting but they are not ready yet. Thank you!

Memorandum

To: MCEDD Executive Committee

From: Jessica Metta, MCEDD Executive Director

Date: March 20, 2024

Re: Health Insurance Benefits for Part-Time Employees

Request

Provide feedback on providing health insurance benefits to part-time employees to assist with preparation of the FY25 budget.

Overview

At the February Executive Committee meeting, we discussed a potential change in policy to provide health insurance benefits for employees working between 20 and 30 hours per week. The Committee seemed willing to consider making a change that would cover employees on a pro-rated basis but not dependents, but requested information on what other entities provide. Those details are summarized below. Staff is requesting direction as we build out the FY25 budget. Any changes would need to be approved by the Full Board as part of the Personnel Policy.

Partner Research

1. Columbia Area Transit only covers benefits for employees working 30 hours or more per week. They fully cover the employee but not dependents.
2. The City of The Dalles covers benefits for employees working over 20 hours per week on a pro-rated basis. Employees working 40 hours per week are fully covered. Employees working 20 or fewer hours per week are ineligible.
3. Wasco County covers 100% of the employee's benefit for employees that work over 21.75 hours per week. Coverage for dependents is offered at the same rate whether someone works 21.75 hours or 40 hours: County pays 75% of medical/vision and a flat rate of around \$47 for dental.

Background Information Shared in February

Currently we are fully staffed with part-time Bus Drivers, but these positions can be difficult to fill due to the lack of health insurance benefits (medical, dental, vision). I became aware that other special districts sometimes provide health insurance benefits for part-time employees (sometimes fully and sometimes prorated) and wanted to have Executive Committee feedback on considering this change. Staff is only considering benefits for employees working at least 20 hours per week.

Current Practice

The District covers 100% of the employee-only costs for full-time employees (working 30-37.5 hours per week) and 50% of the difference in premiums for any spouse/ child/ family coverage.

Options

For part-time employees working between 20 and 29.9 hours, the District covers (options: 100%, 75%, 50%) of the employee-only costs and (options: 50%, 25%, 0%) of the difference in premiums for any spouse/ child/ family coverage.

Financial Implications

Current Health Insurance Rates (medical/dental/vision) are as follows:

- Employee: \$831.29 / month
- Employee + Child: \$1526.67 / month
- Employee + Children: \$2069.23 / month
- Employee + Spouse: \$1744.89 / month
- Employee + Family: \$2386.70 / month

We have five part-time drivers at present. One is full-time when combined with some dispatch work and one works less than 20 hours per week, leaving three potential current positions impacted.

Three part-time positions with employee-only benefits covered fully = \$29,926.44 per year.

Given the salary level of our Bus Drivers, it seems unlikely that an employee would enroll their spouse/ child/ family even if the District covered 50% of the difference in premiums as we do for full-time employees.

Memorandum

To: MCEDD Executive Committee

From: Jessica Metta, MCEDD Executive Director

Date: March 20, 2024

Re: Draft Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan for MCEDD

Request

Overview

MCEDD's work in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) began in earnest in June 2020 in response to national tensions at the time. The Board adopted a DEI statement and staff have held monthly meetings to discuss DEI topics and look into our practices and policies. This work is important to staff as we are motivated to complete the work of the organization in a way that promotes equitable outcomes for the diversity of all businesses and residents in the region.

In Fall 2022, we issued an RFP for a consultant to help develop a DEI Plan for the organization and selected Mariann Hyland of Hyland Solutions. Through July 2023, a DEI team of two Board Members (Jason Hartmann when he was a Board member and Buck Jones) and three staff (myself, Carrie Pipinich and Jesus Mendoza) worked with the consultants to develop a draft framework. Once their contract expired, staff continued to work to flesh out the framework presented now as a draft DEI plan. While most activities are items staff would work on as we have time, some items are specific to the Board.

Staff requests that the Executive Committee members provide feedback on the draft plan. If the Committee feels it is ready for Board adoption, the Committee could recommend the Board approve the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan for MCEDD.



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan

Adopted XX, 2024

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

MCEDD's mission is to promote the creation of family-wage jobs, the diversification of the economic base, and the growth, development and retention of business and industry within the five-county district. MCEDD recognizes that to meet its mission effectively these outcomes need to be equitable across the communities in the region and that barriers to economic opportunity have an impact on the overall economy. This DEI Action Plan supports MCEDD in fully realizing its mission advancing the achievement of equitable outcomes in the delivery of services to diverse customers and constituents.

PROCESS

MCEDD secured a DEI capacity building grant in 2022 to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion. The process entailed retaining consultants to assist with developing a DEI Task Force to engage in the development of internal and external goals and strategies to advance MCEDD's mission. The following individuals volunteered to serve on the DEI Task Force and develop MCEDD's DEI Action Plan:

Jason Hartmann, MCEDD Board of Directors

Buck Jones, MCEDD Board of Directors

Jesus Mendoza, Transportation Operations Manager, MCEDD

Jessica Metta, Executive Director, MCEDD

Carrie Pipinich, Deputy of Economic Development, MCEDD

The DEI Task Force's aspiration is for this plan to serve as starting point to fully realize MCEDD's mission and foster a shared commitment for continuous growth and improvement to promote equitable outcomes for diversity of all businesses and residents in the region.

DEI COMMITMENT

MCEDD is committed to carrying out its mission in a way that promotes equitable outcomes for the diversity of all businesses and residents in the region.

Diversity: While race and gender are historical markers of diversity, we believe that diversity includes categories such as age, disability, nationality, intellectual perspective, socioeconomic background, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity. We also believe that diversity among our staff and various Boards and committees strengthens our work through a variety of perspectives.

Equity: We believe that equity is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on the categories above are dismantled and no longer predict socioeconomic, education, and health outcomes.

Inclusion empowers the voice of all members of a community.

MCEDD will approach our organization's mission through this culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion for the benefit of all residents, businesses, MCEDD employees, Board and committee members.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES - INTERNAL

GOAL #1 INCREASE STAFF DIVERSITY TO REFLECT THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

STRATEGIES

- Establish baseline data addressing staff demographics.
- Assess recruitment, hiring, and personnel policies and practices to identify opportunities to recruit, hire, and retain staff from underrepresented demographic groups.
- Develop and implement a DEI training program for staff to address implicit bias and increase cultural agility.

GOAL #2 INCREASE BOARD DIVERSITY TO REFLECT THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

STRATEGIES

- Establish baseline data addressing Board demographics.
- Assess current practices and processes used to fill Board positions and anticipated vacancies within the next three years.
- Develop and implement a Board outreach and recruitment plan to cultivate a pool of diverse potential candidates for anticipated Board vacancies within the next three years.
- Establish and implement a Board DEI training plan to foster an inclusive Board culture.

GOAL #3 INCREASE AWARENESS AND ESTABLISH A COMMON LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION AROUND DIVERSITY AND CULTURE

STRATEGIES

- Develop a communication plan to share MCEDD's DEI Commitment and DEI action plan with internal and external stakeholders.
- Review and update MCEDD's website, internal, and external written communications to reinforce a common language of communication around diversity and culture.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES - EXTERNAL

GOAL #4 ENHANCE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SERVICES TO ENSURE THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE DIVERSE COMMUNITY THAT WE SERVE.

STRATEGIES

- Establish baseline data addressing the number of programs serving/involving diverse communities in a targeted way.
- Establish baseline data addressing the number and amount of loans made to diverse businesses (owned by women/ BIPOC/ Veterans/ LGBTQ+/ those with disabilities) over the past five years.

- Increase the number and amount of loans to diverse businesses that are identified as underrepresented among the loan recipients over the past five years.
- Engage staff in developing strategies to enhance outreach and targeted program offerings to diverse communities, including identifying materials for translation to languages other than English.

DETAILED WORK PLAN

Note on Timelines: Near roughly means in the next six months, Medium in the next year, Long in the next two years.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES (INTERNAL)

GOAL #1 INCREASE STAFF DIVERSITY TO REFLECT THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

STRATEGY 1.1

Establish baseline data addressing staff demographics.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Set baseline data for the community demographics (age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, veteran status, LGBTQ)	Age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, veteran status, LGBTQ	Jessica	Near
Track staff demographics	Improvement by 5% per year	Jessica	Near

STRATEGY 1.2

Assess recruitment, hiring, and personnel policies and practices to identify opportunities to recruit, hire, and retain staff from underrepresented demographic groups.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Develop recruitment plan that will reach demographic subsets underrepresented among staff	Applicant pool that matches the community	Jessica	Medium
Review hiring practices for opportunities to remove barriers	Staff demographic diversity increases	Jessica	Medium
Review personnel policy for opportunities to remove barriers	Retention of staff with demographic diversity	Jessica	Medium

STRATEGY 1.3

Develop and implement a DEI training program for staff to address implicit bias and increase cultural agility.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Identify free or low-cost DEI trainings	All staff take training(s) once per year	Jessica	Near
Consider which workplace practices have the opportunity to be more inclusive	Retention of staff with demographic diversity	Jessica	Medium
Continue monthly DEI staff meetings, consider adding Link staff	Retention of staff with demographic diversity	Jessica	Near

GOAL #2 INCREASE BOARD DIVERSITY TO REFLECT THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

STRATEGY 2.1

Establish baseline data addressing Board demographics.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Track Board demographics	Age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, veteran status, LGBTQ	Jessica	Near
Define diversity goals	Clear goals	Jessica	Near

STRATEGY 2.2

Assess current practices and processes used to fill Board positions and anticipated vacancies within the next three years.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Review process for Board recruitment with DEI Task Force	Plan with feedback from team	Jessica	Near

STRATEGY 2.3

Develop and implement a Board outreach and recruitment plan to cultivate a pool of diverse potential candidates for anticipated Board vacancies within the next three years. This work will look different in our Public versus Private Sector Board Member positions, with more opportunities to effect change with the Private Sector seats.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Create updated process with step for DEI Task Force review	Board recruitment plan has been updated	Jessica	Near

Send to Board for review/ confirmation	Board recruitment plan has been socialized with the Board	Jessica	Medium
Enact plan as new openings occur	Applicant pool matches the community	Jessica	Ongoing

STRATEGY 2.4

Establish and implement a Board DEI training plan to foster an inclusive Board culture.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Research options, budget, consultants for Board training plans	Proposal for DEI Task Force presented to Exec. Committee, approved by Board	Jessica	Medium
DEI training taken by Board	All Board members take training once	Jessica	Long, ongoing as new members join

GOAL #3 INCREASE AWARENESS AND ESTABLISH A COMMON LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION AROUND DIVERSITY AND CULTURE

STRATEGY 3.1

Develop a communication plan to share MCEDD's DEI commitment and DEI action plan with internal and external stakeholders.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Identify staff, Board members, and others who will contribute to drafting communication plan	# of individuals committed	Jessica	Near
Draft diversity and inclusion communication best	Document readability/	Jessica	Medium

practices document for internal use, including information about language preferences	accessibility		
Draft communication plan, and invite staff, Board members to review and provide feedback	Feedback received	Jessica	Medium
Identify communication channels through which plan will be shared	List of internal and external communication opportunities	Jessica	Medium
Share DEI commitment and action plan	Number of individuals and organizations engaged	Jessica	Long
Evaluate communication plan		Jessica	Long

STRATEGY 3.2

Review and update MCEDD’s website, internal, and external written communications to reinforce a common language of communication around diversity and culture.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Circulate diversity and inclusion best practices, developed above, internally		Jessica	Medium
Review MCEDD website, page by page, during DEI staff meetings	# of pages reviewed Staff engagement during review process New website pages follow best practices	Jessica, Jill	Medium
Include social media posts and MCEDD newsletter articles with diverse themes and photos of diverse people		Jill	Ongoing

GOALS AND STRATEGIES (EXTERNAL)

GOAL #4 ENHANCE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SERVICES TO ENSURE THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE DIVERSE COMMUNITY THAT WE SERVE.

STRATEGY 4.1

Establish baseline data addressing the number of programs serving/involving diverse communities in a targeted way.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Develop a list of The Link's current programs that target diverse populations.	Use the target measures reflected in the grant applications and/or contracts. Use target measures from the Transit Development Plan.	Jesus, Kathy, Sara	Near
List the baselines that are already measured for state/federal reporting.	Pull from Ecolane reports. Also use the Remix information.	Jesus, Kathy	Coordinated Plan update 2024
Review tools has The Link already established for diverse populations (ADA, Language, Fare programs, Outreach programs.) Consider making Cultural sensitivity training a priority; research RTAP or other resources.	Review	Jesus, Kathy	Near
Maintain an updated list of goals for new programs or projects for The Link.	Use Target Measures from grant applications and	Jesus, Kathy, Sara	Update every grant cycle.

	contracts.		
Use the Remix Title VI tool to demonstrate the improvements made for Title VI communities with the expansion of the fixed route services. Study the Remix Title VI report and set realistic future target measures.		Jesus and Kathy	Medium
Develop narrative describing how the fixed routes serve targeted populations. Use Remix to identify which pops are being served and how many families/individuals.		Jesus, Kathy	Near
Explore the unused options in Ecolane to collect demographic information. Ecolane options now report on demographics for dial a ride. Age, gender, mobility devices. Currently does not report on language, ethnicity, LGBTQ identification, but there are options that are not being used currently. Explore the benefits/ challenges of adding some of the Ecolane options.		Jesus	Long

STRATEGY 4.2

Establish baseline data addressing the number and amount of loans made to diverse businesses (owned by women/ BIPOC/ Veterans/ LGBTQ+/ those with disabilities) over the past five years.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Update the Master spreadsheets for both MCEDD and OIB with business owner demographic details for all open loans.	Spreadsheets updated and maintained. Statistics reviewed annually for trends.	Ami, Jill, Tanya	Near, ongoing
Collect data on applications denied or withdrawn.	Spreadsheet created. Statistics	Ami, Jill, Tanya	Near, ongoing

	reviewed annually for trends.		
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STRATEGY 4.3

Increase the number and amount of loans to diverse businesses that are identified as underrepresented among the loan recipients over the past five years.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Review loan applications denied or withdrawn for trends among diverse populations.	Annual review	Jessica, Ami	Medium
Identify diverse populations that are underrepresented among loan recipients. Conduct research to identify barriers to those populations from using the loan program. Develop and implement tools to overcome those barriers.	Barriers identified. Tools developed and implemented	Jessica, Ami	Long

STRATEGY 4.4

Engage staff in developing strategies to enhance outreach and targeted program offerings to diverse communities, including identifying materials for translation to languages other than English.

Action Items	Target Measures	Lead	Timeline
Staff involved in Title VI plan update		Jessica	Long

**MCEDD Executive Committee
Members: Please see the
separate confidential packet
for Executive Director Jessica
Metta's Annual Evaluation.**