



Cumberland County

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Committee

September 18, 2020 8:30am – 12:30 p.m. at Cumberland County DSS Meeting Room

DEI Advisory Committee Notes DRAFT

Attendance

Vicki Evans, General Manager/Co-Convener

Brenda Jackson, General Manager/Co Convener

Cheribeth Thomas, Public Information Office

Members Present:

Al Florez, Alissa Brashear, Alvin Chestnut, Anila Ashraf, Annie Thomas, April Kelly, Cynthia McKinley, Denise Schunk, Garry Crumpler, Hardin Brown, Ivonne Mendez, Jared White, Jennifer Green, Vincent Evans, Kelly Moore, Mia Kaleiwahea-Perry, Nora Armstrong, Ricky Hair Sara Reyes, Timothy Middleton, and Tye Vaught

Members Absent:

Telise Chavis

Continuation of the Meet & Greet

- Co-Conveners welcomed the members back.
- Committee members went around the room and introduced themselves stating their name and department.
- Committee members who were absent from the initial meeting introduced themselves and provided the members with the reason why they wanted to join the committee.

General Discussion

- Co-Conveners informed members that in their packets they have received a revised committee roster, a handout with links to multiple strategic plan examples and a copy of the revised meeting structure and ground rules document based on the committee's recommendations given at the meeting on September 11, 2020.

Strategic Plan Review

- The handout with links to multiple Strategic plan examples from counties, cities, universities and private companies were provided prior to the meeting via email. Members were asked to review the various strategic plans as homework for upcoming meeting discussions.
Meeting Structure & Ground Rules Discussion

Meeting Structure & Ground Rules

- meeting structure and ground rules document based on the committee's recommendations given at the meeting on September 11, 2020. Members were asked to review the document and let us know if they had any additional recommended edits.
- A recommendation was made about the meeting structure to clarify the "social distancing and mask are required" statement. A suggestion was made to add a reference to the county policy. Co-Conveners will revise to strengthen language around face coverings to be in line with the county policy.
- Co-Conveners discussed the importance of attendance, participation and time commitment encouraging a good faith effort to attend meetings.
- The following areas were discussed:
 - How members should handle public record or media requests. Co-Conveners will revise the meeting structure to address the procedure/process on how to handle release of information. Co-Conveners made clear members should not be involved or responding to media and/or public records request and those matters should be directed to the Co-Conveners who will ensure they are handled through the proper county channels.
 - How members should add topics to the meeting agenda to include a deadline for submissions of agenda topics. Co-Conveners discussed during the last 15 minutes at the end of every meeting next steps are reviewed and during this time members can recommend agenda topics. When subcommittees are formed to help with the strategic planning process, the team lead(s) will be able to submit agenda topics as agreed upon by their committee(s). At some point in the process, the co-conveners anticipate prior meetings with committee chairs will be held prior to an DEI Advisory Committee meeting to help set agendas. Without establishing the standing monthly date for future DEI meetings, it was decided a deadline for submissions of agenda topics could not be set at this time.
 - Should members make efforts to learn outside of the committee. Discussion were had to explain that it takes a mixture of research, self-education and asking question for those to learn but to try and do these things prior to meetings to be prepared for discussions. Members clarified that one should feel open to ask informed questions. Co-Conveners will revise ground rule #8 and add and be empowered to learn outside of this setting.
 - Should all members be required to contribute to the conversation? Co-conveners shared that it is up to them to make sure everyone is participating. Co-Conveners will revise ground rule #8 be okay with being called upon to speak.
- Members agreed on the revisions through consensus and the updated version would be shared with the committee at their next meeting. Co-Conveners informed the group that the meeting structure and ground rule document is a living document and can be updated if needed as we go through the strategic planning process.

DEI Charter – Definitions

- Co-Conveners focused the committee attention to the charter for the DEI Advisory Committee. Members were given instruction to divide into groups to review the definitions for diversity, equity and inclusion. They needed to appoint a facilitator for the discussion, a scribe to document their discussion and someone to report out. The groups would then report out on their interpretation of the definitions.
- After break, committee members divided into groups to review and discuss their interpretations of the definitions. The groups then came together for all to share the interpretations about the definitions with the whole committee. The committee's common interpretations were:
 - Diversity: recognizing, acknowledging, respecting and accepting the differences; it is a combination of human differences.*
 - Equity: resources being available for all and recognizing that equity does not equal equality.*
 - Inclusion: ensuring that all voices are heard, understanding the value and worth of others. Inclusiveness does not mean endorsement.*
- Discussions and examples of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion were shared and questions about how we as an organization will handle issues where there is a difference of opinion were asked. The importance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training for our staff and managers was also discussed.

DEI Charter – Mission, Vision & Purpose

- After reviewing the definitions of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Co-Conveners diverted the attention to the Vision, Mission and Purpose and asked if it satisfies the values of being public servants. The Committee engaged in conversation about the Vision, Mission and Purpose and agreed on them.
- Members further discuss the importance of knowing how to handle situations that don't promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and how we have to decide what is universally acceptable or unacceptable and the process of how we address and equip our employees to handle the situations maintaining professionalism and respect all while ensuring the employee still feels respected and valued. Being emotionally intelligent on how to react when situations arise.

Next Meeting

- Homework was assigned for committee members to review the responsibilities that are listed in the charter, to review the example strategic plans and to review their calendars in order to be able to set the monthly meeting dates.
- Co-Conveners reviewed the next steps for the next DEI meeting are to review the committee responsibilities, to review the example strategic plan and to set a standing monthly meeting date and whether the meetings would be virtual. Members were encouraged to bring their calendars to the next meeting in preparation for this discussion. Co-Conveners stressed importance that initial meetings continue in-person so everyone can get to know each other prior to going to virtual meetings.

Adjourned

- Committee member reminded of the next meeting date, time and location.
- Meeting was adjourned.