



CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD - DEIA+ TASK FORCE

Joint Subcommittee of the Labor Committee & Justice and Social Services Committee
County of Champaign, Urbana, Illinois

MINUTES – Approved as Amended on December 10, 2024

DATE: Monday, September 23, 2024
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Shields-Carter Meeting Room
Brookens Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana, IL 61802

Committee Members:

Present	Absent
Benjamin Beaupre	Akua Forkua-Sekyere
Jason Benda	Cecelia Phillips
Barb Bressner	
John Farney	
Jacqueline Kalipeni	
Donald Owen	
Kathleen Robbins	
Jilmala Rogers	
Heather Rumble	
Irene Weathersby	

Others Present:

Michelle Jett (Director of Administration), Samantha Carter (County Board Chair),
and Megan Robison (Recording Secretary)

Agenda Items

I. Call to Order

Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

A verbal roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

III. Approval of Agenda/Addendum

MOTION by Ms. Weathersby to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Benda. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

A. August 20, 2024

MOTION by Mr. Benda to approve the minutes of August 20, 2024; seconded by Ms. Kalipeni. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

V. Public Participation

Jennilee Benda, Champaign County resident, spoke about electronic accessibility with the County website, job boards and electronic documents. She requested they consider web accessibility when creating the request for proposals and gave some examples.

VI. Communications

Mr. Benda thanked the clerk for her work, presented the Task Force with a scenario to consider and stated that he wants a consultant that will look at the physical environment along with procurement and hiring practices. It is the job of the consultant to recognize all of the problems and the Task Force should not be making recommendations within the RFP.

VII. New Business

A. Sample RFP's from other entities

Ms. Jett disbursed hardcopies of resources previously requested along with the Economic Policy that the Board created in 2004. She struggled to locate RFP's from other entities within Illinois but found a few that seemed applicable.

Mr. Benda mentioned the RFP from the City of Federal Way. The RFP mentions exactly how the document was disseminated and the timeline. They received 40 submissions, and it is taking much longer than anticipated to select a consultant. He hopes that Champaign County has that same type of success with their RFP.

Ms. Robbins found the RFP from Maine to be very comprehensive and wonders if this is the aim for the Task Force. Ms. Jett explained that they do need to decide exactly what they are aiming for or what they want to receive back from the consultants.

B. Employment data

The County only asks gender, race and age for the EEO reporting (federal requirements). Ms. Jett thinks this might be something they want to list in the RFP to determine exactly what the County should be collecting.

Mr. Owen asked if the racial demographic has drastically changed over the years. Ms. Jett doesn't believe so, but she will go back and look through previous data. Mr. Owen also asked Ms. Jett to add the recommendations from the Racial Justice Task Force to their shared folder.

Mr. Benda mentioned the EEO reporting on applicants and those statistics. He wonders why some positions get larger amounts of one gender. He mentioned the Federal Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability Form (CC-305). This form is not required by the County and the County does not collect enough data to get a good picture of diversity.

Mr. Benda also mentioned some discrepancies with reports and job posting closing dates. He hopes a consultant will see those issues with the hiring process. She also hopes that a consultant will do their due diligence to find this type of information. RFP applicants can ask questions before applying, the County just has to share the answers with all applicants to ensure it is open and fair to everyone.

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Ms. Jett let everyone know that the HR Department, by statute, cannot control the hiring process in the office of elected officials. They can put together trainings, but we cannot force the Departments to follow these “best practices”. The County is in the process of moving to new software for the hiring process that should make everything a little easier on department heads and for reporting purposes.

Ms. Rumble mentioned that some positions have gender requirements, and we need to remember that when looking at the data.

Ms. Kalipeni stated there seems to be a culture to hire “white” people and that needs to be addressed so that minorities feel comfortable applying. Ms. Jett had some suggestions of data she would like to see and maybe a data analysis needs to be the first step.

Ms. Carter has asked many times why we are not doing business with minority contractors. She has been told they are not applying. The data shows there is a problem and there are many layers to it.

Mr. Owen shared race statistics for the people who live in Champaign County. He believes we need more people that look like the people that we serve in order to better serve the community. This is very hard when you cannot force the elected officials to follow any sort of DEI policy when hiring employees.

Mr. Benda recognizes that racial disparity is an issue, but this Task Force needs to address the other demographics, as well.

Ms. Weathersby suggested bringing the decision makers (department heads) to the table because they are the only ones that can make the change.

Ms. Rogers wants to make sure they include information about disabilities. Ms. Bressner would also like to see the data about disabilities and likes the voluntary form. Ms. Jett is going to speak with the State’s Attorney to see if they can incorporate this form into our onboarding practices.

Ms. Jett believes the Task Force is going in two different directions: data and overall accessibility. She is going to draft two separate RFP’s for everyone to review and add feedback.

C. Bidding process for minority applicants

Ms. Jett believes we need to bring in experts to share their policies, so the County is not reinventing the wheel. Task Force Members mentioned different options for presenters and will be reaching out to those people for the next meeting.

D. Next Steps

At the next meeting, they would like to hear from presenters about minority vendors and they will continue to draft the two separate RFP’s.

VIII. Other Business

A. Date of next meeting

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They are looking at dates in the last week of October. They will check with potential presenters to see what dates work for them.

IX. Chair's Report

None

X. Adjournment

Chair Rogers adjourned the meeting at 7:41 p.m.