



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

October 19, 2011

The Honorable Christopher B. Coleman
Mayor, City of Saint Paul
390 City Hall
15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Dear Mr. Mayor:

On behalf of the Saint Paul Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Commission (HREEOC), I am pleased to present you with our departmental review and recommendation referencing the Director's leadership with regard to the re-appointment of Director Luz María Frías. Director Frías began her work as Director on February 23, 2009. She has presided over the Department during a time of great change and unique economic challenges.

Pursuant to Section 183.19 subdivision 8 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, in conjunction with the Director's three year term, the Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Commission shall conduct an extensive assessment of the Department and Director's performance. In addition, prior to 120 days before the expiration of the Director's term, the Commission shall be required to recommend to the Mayor whether the Director should be re-appointed.

The review of the Department was driven by a multi-pronged approach including: (1) Review of departmental documents cited in appendix A; (2) A survey of 85 community leaders with regular contact with the Department; and (3) Discussions with the Director. The results of this review are divided into four areas which mirror the goals of the Department in its work plan. These focus areas are:

- 1) Has the HREEO Department improved the efficiency, quality and accountability of the City of Saint Paul's procurement process?
- 2) Has the HREEO Department simplified the contract compliance responsibilities for contractors?
- 3) Has the HREEO Department improved the responsiveness to human rights complaints?
- 4) Has the HREEO Department improved the availability of economic opportunities for low-income residents and business owners?

1. HAS THE HREEO DEPARTMENT IMPROVED THE EFFICIENCY, QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE CITY OF SAINT PAUL'S PROCUREMENT PROCESS?

The results of the community survey show great promise regarding the accountability of the City of Saint Paul's procurement process. Particularly, 72% of the respondents are satisfied that the HREEO Department has improved the efficiency, quality and accountability of the City of Saint Paul's procurement process. Twenty-one percent (21%) of the survey respondents believe that improvement is needed by HREEO in improving the efficiency, quality and accountability of the City of Saint Paul's procurement process, and 7% of the respondents are unsatisfied with the HREEO Department in improving the efficiency, quality and accountability of the City of Saint Paul's procurement process. These responses demonstrate that the City is moving in a positive direction regarding its procurement process.

2. HAS THE HREEO DEPARTMENT SIMPLIFIED THE CONTRACT COMPLIANCE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONTRACTORS?

The results of the community survey show great promise regarding the City's contract compliance. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the survey respondents are satisfied that the HREEO Department has simplified the contract compliance responsibilities for contractors. Twenty-five percent (25%) of survey respondents believe that improvement is needed by the HREEO Department in simplifying the contract compliance responsibilities for contractors.

Narratives provided by the majority of the unsatisfied respondents centered on a request by the disability community to create a 1% disability goal for workforce and a 1% disability goal for businesses owned by people with disabilities. This matter was debated extensively by the Commission and researched by the Department. During the debate, Commission members expressed their support for the goal. The Department provided concerns focused around practical matters such as reporting and tracking. The Commission directed the Department to contact the disability community and inform them that they would take no action regarding the disability goal. In addition, the Commission did ask that the Department continue to work with the disability community. Commission members expressed a variety of viewpoints during this discussion. The Department explained its position in a clear manner.

3. HAS THE HREEO DEPARTMENT IMPROVED THE RESPONSIVENESS TO HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINTS?

As you may be aware, one of the major concerns of the community during the formation of the HREEO Department was that the traditional civil rights function of the Department would be marginalized. It is the conclusion of the Commission that under the leadership of Director Frías, the Human Rights Division has been strengthened. The Department has focused on hiring and training effective investigators as well as providing the community with useful information to file complaints. The Department has revamped the website to include useful information for the community and has continued to be aggressive in its outreach. This effort has led to a department that has been effective, efficient and more accountable.

It is noteworthy that the Saint Paul Human Rights Division's investigation time period of 248 days is the shortest investigation time period in the State of Minnesota for 2010. In addition, the Saint Paul Human Rights Division reported a record total of \$175,783.02 in settlements on behalf of charging parties in 2010. The results of the community survey mirrors the great work of the Department.

Ninety-two percent (92%) of the survey respondents are satisfied that the HREEO Department has improved the responsiveness to human rights complaints.

4. HAS THE HREEO DEPARTMENT IMPROVED THE AVAILABILITY OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS?

The HREEO Department has done a remarkable job of improving the availability of economic opportunities for low-income residents and business owners. The Department has spearheaded the creation of a nationally recognized EMS Academy, Commercial Driver's License (CDL) program, and Job Connect. In addition, the continued improvement of the Section 3, Vendor Outreach Program, and Minority Business Development and Retention program has improved the availability of economic opportunities for low-income residents and business owners. These results are further bolstered by the community survey, in which 70% of the survey respondents agreed that the HREEO Department has improved the availability of economic opportunities for low-income residents and business owners.

5. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE HREEO DEPARTMENT

During the first three years of its existence HREEO has had a number of highlights that are of significance.

U.S. Census

The HREEO Department managed the 2010 U.S. Census, in which the City of Saint Paul attained a 77% participation rate outpacing the national average of 72% and the 2000 Census participation rate of 74%. It is noteworthy, that the HREEO Department received an award from the U.S. Census Bureau for its leadership in making the 2010 Census successful.

Section 3

Perhaps one of the greatest areas of success for the HREEO Department is its Section 3 compliance. In May 2009, the City of Saint Paul entered into a Voluntary Compliance Agreement with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This agreement outlined a number of deficiencies with the City's Section 3 compliance. Over the past two years, the Section 3 program has become a success. The Department has added staff to enhance its Section 3 efforts and has engaged the community to create a program that is simplified. The results have culminated in the largest database of certified Section 3 businesses and the largest database of Section 3 residents in the State of Minnesota. Another result is that the City is meeting, and in many cases, exceeding its Section 3 goals.

CERT Collaborative

Another highlight of the Department is its online certification system (CERT). This program, a regional collaborative effort, is utilized to track small business enterprises (SBE), minority-owned business enterprises (MBE), and women-owned business enterprises (WBE). An online application process using B2GNow was developed and has received universal acclaim for its usability and functionality.

EMS Academy

Through a partnership with the Saint Paul Fire, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, Saint Paul Police, Saint Paul Human Resources, and Inver Hills Community College, the HREEO Department developed and advanced a nationally recognized EMS Academy. The Academy has provided a number of low-income youth the opportunity to enter a career as an EMT and possibly as a firefighter. HREEO has continued to secure the funding to ensure that this model will continue into the future.

Outreach

The HREEO Department revamped its website to include more information for the community. As part of the website make over, and in conjunction with its LEP initiative, the website added Google Translate, a free online translation tool that instantly translates over 50 languages. This initiative makes the website more accessible and useful.

In addition to its work with the website, the HREEO Department under the leadership of Director Frías provided extensive outreach to the community.

6. RECOMMENDATION

As noted above, according to Section 183.19 subdivision 8 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, the HREEO Commission is charged with making a recommendation to the Mayor whether the Director should be re-appointed. It is the recommendation of the Saint Paul HREEO Commission that Director Luz María Frías be re-appointed by the Mayor and City Council. Director Frías has been a dynamic leader of the HREEO Department during a time of great change and great challenges. Particularly, the Department has provided innovative work in a tough budgetary condition. As part of the departmental review the Commission did receive concerns regarding high staff turnover. However, the Commission is satisfied that Director Frías has provided it with ample information regarding staff addition and departures.

Director Frías has been innovative, accessible, and accountable. Her capability, dedication, and creativity has enabled the HREEO Department to further its mission and achieve its goals of increasing economic opportunity for all. Under the leadership of Luz María Frías, the HREEO Department has been more accountable, provided better communication, and used its resources in a smart manner. The HREEO Commission has full confidence that Luz María Frías is the right person to lead the HREEO Department into the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

JaPaul J. Harris
Chair, Saint Paul Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Commission