

Blue Ribbon Commission
Reducing Racial Employment Disparities

in the Ramsey County Metropolitan Area, including
Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Scott, Washington

Everybody In

- A Report to Reduce Racial Employment Disparities in the Ramsey County Metropolitan Area



Presentation Prepared by GrayHall LLP
Independent Contractor for Blue Ribbon Commission

September 2011



Appointment

The Workforce Investment Board (WIB), with the support of the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County, convened the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Racial Employment Disparities to serve from February through August 2011.

BRC Charge and Timeline

Support and align regional economic development efforts and identify and recommend strategies to reduce racial employment disparities in the Ramsey County metropolitan area over the next five years: 2011/12 – 2015/16

20 Member Commission

Butch Howard, Co-Chair
*HMSHost, Minneapolis-Saint Paul
International Airport*

Sheila Wright, Ph.D., Co-Chair
*Former Director Minnesota Office of
Higher Education*

Elizabeth Walker Anderson
HealthEast Care System

Atum Azzahir
The Cultural Wellness Center

Keith A. Baker
*Minnesota Department of
Transportation*

Timothy Caskey
*Saint Paul Public Schools Human
Resources*

Andrea Ferstan
Greater Twin Cities United Way

Louis Henry
McDonald's Franchisee

Clarence Hightower
*Community Action Partnership of
Ramsey and Washington Counties*

Douglas Hubbard
*Custom Desk and Hardwood
Visuals*

Ramon Leon
*Latino Economic Development
Center*

Cyndi Leshner
Former CEO of Xcel Energy

Janet Ludden
Employer Solutions, Inc.

Kevin Martineau
American Indian Family Center

Repa Mekha
Nexus Community Partners

Paul Nelson
Shaw-Lundquist Associates, Inc.

Tran Nhon
Upward Consulting Group

Carolyn Roby
Wells Fargo Foundation Minnesota

Mary Russell
HealthPartners

Carrie Jo Short
The Saint Paul Foundation

Key Points: Commission's Introductory Message

- These recommendations call on employers to exercise strong leadership in addressing racial employment disparities.
- A primary goal will be establishing and maintaining an audit and reporting system to allow for effective measurement of employment equity over time, with specific focus on the employment disparities that are identified for specific racial, ethnic and cultural communities in the region (especially African Americans and American Indians).
- Thanks to the policymakers, community organizations, and business leaders who have already taken active steps to address some of the issues raised in this report. However, a lack of further action will jeopardize the stability and economic vitality of our region, which is an unacceptable outcome.
- Undertake a long-term, multi-level effort that will result in more equitable employment in the Ramsey County metropolitan area.
- The BRC encourages the region's stakeholders to move quickly and take swift action to implement the recommendations wherever they can.

Analysis

Based on:

- Reviewing research on racial employment disparities
- Hearing a wide range of input from content experts
- Sharing experience/expertise among our Commission members
- Considering best practices that will assist in eliminating racial employment disparities



Key Issues

- Racial employment disparities pose a challenge to regional economic development efforts.
- There is a great need for collaboration across all employment sectors.
- Racial employment disparities are not limited to Minnesota, but are a national problem.
- Defined as: Unequal outcomes for various racial, ethnic, or cultural groups that are produced by selection procedures used in hiring and promotion or in access to training, education, and/or economic opportunities.
- Racial employment disparities not only compromise a region's economic vitality, but also negatively impact families and communities.
- Racial employment disparities are also linked to:
 - ✓ Public policy
 - ✓ Supplier diversity (Process through which equal opportunities are provided to all businesses to compete)
 - ✓ Compliance in public contracting
 - ✓ Regional collaboration in service delivery
 - ✓ Educational outcomes and the achievement gap,
 - ✓ Need for youth employment,
 - ✓ Barriers in business ownership
 - ✓ Business customer bases,
 - ✓ Unemployment rates
 - ✓ Limited public awareness

BRC's Ultimate Goal

Eliminate racial employment disparities in the Ramsey County metropolitan area by 20% each year, from 2011/12 through 2015/16 (specifically African American and American Indian unemployment)

Two-pronged approach:

- (1) The need for change in policy and
- (2) The need for change in existing systems

Policy, Outreach, and Collaboration



Issue Area 1

- According to reviews of other cities addressing racial employment disparities, the work of city, county, and state governments directly impacts how well such disparities are addressed. Communities that create public awareness, advance employment-related public policies, encourage collaboration and alignment, measure progress on reducing racial employment disparities, and hold appropriate systems accountable are more successful in addressing disparity issues.
- The Blue Ribbon Commission's deliberations indicated that all of these efforts are underway in the Ramsey County metropolitan area but seem to lack the combined cohesion required to significantly impact racial employment disparities.

Strategies/Timeline: 2011/12 – 2013/14

1. Raise public awareness among employers and the greater community about racial employment disparities (i.e., the severe consequences of not bringing more members of racial, ethnic and cultural communities into the workforce).
2. Create a broad-based regional collaboration of employers, including business, government, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions and service providers to concentrate efforts on decreasing racial employment disparities.
3. Implement specific, targeted policy changes that directly support racial employment equity

Education and Work Preparedness

Issue Area 2

- The BRC believes, exposing youth to a range of career preparation options, including: (1) colleges that grant the bachelor's degree in liberal arts or science or both; (2) business, trade, or technical programs that prepare students for employment in specific fields such as computer programming, electronics, auto repair, and health occupations; (3) apprenticeship training, a formal way of learning a skill or trade by working in a full-time paid position with someone who works at that particular job; and (4) working full time, perhaps for a business that offers on-the-job training to new employees—is needed to prepare them for the workforce.
- Blue Ribbon Commission members noted the lack of career preparation for students in kindergarten to grade 12 as a factor that contributes to employment disparities. Members were especially concerned about the lack of career preparation in middle schools.
- Other factors linked to racial employment disparities raised by commission members included the need to better train workforce development participants for the business world, the important role of technical schools in preparing future workers for areas of employment, and public and private contract compliance.

Strategies/Timeline: 2011/12 - 2015/16

4.Strengthen the transparency of workforce development outcomes related to racial employment disparities.

5.Promote opportunities that increase postsecondary attainment and training for job readiness (e.g., degree, certificate, trade certification, stackable credentials, on-the-job training, youth employment/internships) that will help eliminate racial employment disparities.

Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Businesses



Issue Area 3

- The Blue Ribbon Commission deliberations, data analysis, and content experts highlighted the importance of small businesses in an economy struggling to recover.
- In Minnesota, businesses owned by members of racial, ethnic, and cultural communities are not faring as well as the Blue Ribbon Commission would like.

Strategies/Timeline: 2011/12 - 2015/16

6. Foster business and entrepreneurial opportunities that result in job creation and identify practices to help enlarge the customer base for businesses owned by members of racial, ethnic and cultural communities.

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Two-pronged approach:

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Most Needed Actions

- Need for a unified, concerted effort that brings many entities together to address various racial employment disparity issues.
- A more effective approach to connecting racial, ethnic and cultural communities to a broad base of employment networks and opportunities is essential.
- All employers need to be more aware of the impact of their hiring decisions and be proactive in applying hiring practices that do not further exacerbate racial employment disparities.
- There is limited public awareness about racial employment disparities and their impact on racial, ethnic and cultural communities and on the economy as a whole.
- The City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County and the state's compliance processes are not consistently successful in monitoring how racial, ethnic, and cultural communities are affected.



BRC
Expectations
and
Guidelines

Implementation

- Strong regional leadership
- Acting quickly, decisively, and collaboratively
- Align individual initiatives with the overall regional strategy of decreasing the unemployment rates for racial, ethnic and cultural communities (especially African Americans and American Indians) by 20% each year: 2011/12 through 2015/16

Asking the Workforce Investment Board, the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County to:

- Establish an implementation group that will be accountable for the execution and evaluation of the Blue Ribbon Commission's strategies and actions.
- Specifically:
 - ✓ Develop an implementation plan
 - ✓ Develop an evaluation plan and
 - ✓ Annually convene the Blue Ribbon Commission and other stakeholders and prepare and present a report summarizing progress in achieving employment equity.



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