

**Allegheny County Department of Equity and Inclusion
MWDBE Advisory Committee Meeting
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
Wednesday, June 19, 2024
1:00 PM**

Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

Blayre Britton – CDI Printing
Brian Burley - Qualified Human Staffing and Recruiting
Cameil Williams - Key Players Consultancy
Cynthia Oliver - Small Business Development Center, Duquesne University
Guillermo Velazquez - Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation
Holly Douglas - Cosmos Technologies
Roxanne Sewell - The LJS Group
Melanie Boyer - Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Foundation
Victoria Snyder - Riverside Center for Innovation
Kevin Jenkins - Manchester Bidwell Corporation
Kanak Iyer - Asian American Chamber of Commerce

Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Tim Stevens - B-PEP
Alberto Benzaquen - Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Barata Bey - African American Chamber of Commerce of Western PA
Brian Oglesby - Eastern Minority Supplier Development Council

Advisory Committee County Liaison Members Present:

Loren Ganoë – Office of Administration, Department of Human Services
Sydney Rabinovitz – Economic Development Business Development Division

Advisory Committee County Liaison Members Absent:

Kelly Stockman – Purchasing & Supplies
Kavin Halaja – Facilities Management
Jason Molinero – Public Works

Also Present:

Lisa Edmonds – Equity and Inclusion
Damian Wiles – Equity and Inclusion

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I. Open Meeting

Lisa Edmonds opened the meeting.

II. Introductions

Introductions of committee members and liaisons.

a. Members

- i. Due to confusion surrounding multiple meeting notices, several members joined the incorrect meeting.
 1. After several attempts to join the meeting, Tim Stevens and Kanak Iyer contacted the office to advise they were having issues joining.
 2. Kanak Iyer was eventually able to join the meeting, but not Tim Stevens.

b. Liaisons

III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (May 15, 2024)

Lisa Edmonds noted that since some affiliations given during the meeting were in error, all affiliations listed under section IV. New Appointees would be removed from the minutes. The committee was asked if there were any additions or other corrections needed. Members present at the May 15, 2024, meeting voted to approve the minutes.

IV. Ordinance Review and Discussion

Several committee members stated they did not recall receiving the email sent outlining the county ordinance regarding the MWDBE Committee. The information will be resent to committee members and this item will be moved to the next meeting.

V. Desired Topics for Next Meetings

As noted above, review and discussion of the ordinance will be addressed during the next meeting. Lisa Edmonds advised that the ordinance covers committee duties and the scope of work done within those duties is determined by the committee.

Ms. Edmonds stated she would review the contract compliance process with the committee at some point and that the committee could recommend changes to the County Executive if desired. She noted that one of the committee's past recommendations regarding the process was to involve the Department of Equity and Inclusion in the initial planning of County projects to ensure awareness of opportunities for minority and women businesses.

Guillermo Velasquez noted concerns over the gap in certified Hispanic business owners due to identification requirements. Ms. Edmonds advised that DBE certification requires owners to be US Citizens or Lawfully Admitted Permanent Residents. Discussion ensued regarding various certifications available as well as possible recommendations for new programs. Mr. Velasquez suggested language-access and language-access navigation should be considered for the process of certification.

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Ms. Edmonds discussed the MWDBE Governmental Committee and advised the reference guide for certifications would be sent to committee members to review the various certifications available to businesses in the area.

Kanak Iyer noted diversity of the Asian American community and agreed that the committee members need to have a more comprehensive understanding of how businesses obtain certification. She asked for information to be shared at the next meeting that would be helpful to business owners, i.e. what are best practices, what has worked, what are some pitfalls to avoid?

Cynthia Oliver mentioned an LGBT BE certification recognized by the City of Pittsburgh for their procurement process, as well as by a majority of the corporations in the area, and how that could be a goal for the County in addition to MBEs and WBEs.

Blayre Britton noted the absence of a chairperson and asked if that is something to add to the next agenda. Lisa Edmonds advised that in the past the committee has selected a chairperson.

VI. Miscellaneous

Lisa Edmonds made note to the committee members that correspondence with DEI should be done through the email address DEIAdmin@AlleghenyCounty.us.

Melanie Boyer noted that a shared drive folder could be beneficial for the committee to have access to certification and compliance resources. She also noted having a free certification similar to the federal DBE certification would be helpful for local businesses who are not interested in doing highway or transportation work. Discussion ensued regarding various certifications available for business owners in the Allegheny County area.

Ms. Edmonds advised that topics discussed and scheduling of the meetings is at their discretion as committee members.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.