



To: Dwelling Place Standing Committee Chairpersons and Staff Department Heads
From: Dennis Sturtevant, Chief Executive Officer
Re: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Implementation Planning
Date: September 28, 2020

On August 5, 2020, the Dwelling Place Board adopted the attached Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan for our organization. A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEI Committee) was created, including board members and staff. This committee was charged with the responsibility for drafting the plan that was ultimately adopted. The DEI plan is expected to help inform future policy decisions within the organization related to board recruitment and governance, staff recruitment and retention and programming decisions for affordable housing, support services and community building and engagement.

The plan includes 3 goals with accompanying objectives. The plan is intentionally designed with an understanding that it will be reviewed and amended annually or more frequently as circumstances within the organization and in the community change.

As a next step in this ongoing process, the DEI Committee is charged with creating an Implementation or Work Plan which will become an Appendix to the DEI Plan. The work plan will outline specific deliverables (tasks) and dates for completion with Board, Committee, Department and Staff assignments for each task.

On behalf of the Board and the DEI Committee, I am asking you, as a Chairperson for a Standing Committee or as the head of a specific Department, to facilitate one of more conversations in your respective groups about potential activities that could be accomplished within your purview to assist Dwelling Place in achieving the approved goals and objectives as part of an Implementation or Work Plan.

To assist you in leading this facilitated conversation, I am offering some potential generative questions that may stimulate some robust conversation. Please be certain to give this effort the time it truly merits as an integral focus for the future of Dwelling Place. It may be necessary to host conversations on this topic over the course of several meetings to fully engage your committee members and staff. You may also

101 Sheldon Blvd. SE, Suite 2 · Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503 · Ph (616) 454-0928 · Fax (616) 454-5249 · TDD: 800 649-3777 · www.dwellingplacegr.org



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wish to bring in some outside expertise from persons with lived experience or organizations that have expertise in a particular area of concern for your committee/department.

Please review the attached instructions and generative questions that may help you as a facilitator to gather feedback to share with the DEI Committee. If you would like some form of assistance from DEI Committee members in facilitating this conversation, please let Alex Valentine know.

In the meantime, thank you for your assistance in this very important effort. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions on how we might improve this process.

Sample Generative Questions

Facilitating a Discussion on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Committees and Departments

Instructions:

1. Please ensure that all participants have advance notice and access to the Board approved DEI Plan and that they understand the purpose for the conversation so they can prepare accordingly.
2. Choose someone to take meeting notes that can be shared with Alex Valentine who will compile the notes from all committees and departments to share with the DEI Committee.
3. To ensure full participation from everyone in the meeting, please use a nominal group technique to solicit responses to questions where each person is called on to share their opinion or response to each of the posed questions. Each participant has the option to pass in response to the questions being asked but they should be asked.
4. Please give your best effort to suggest time lines and recommended assignments for any responses you offer.

PRIMARY QUESTIONS

After reviewing the Goals and Objectives in the approved DEI Plan:

1. What specific activities is your Committee or Department **presently** engaged in that should be incorporated into the DEI Implementation/Work Plan?
2. What **new** activities could your Committee or Department engage in that could be incorporated into the DEI Implementation/Work Plan?
3. What suggestions, if any, would your Committee or Department suggest to **change or add to the objectives** in the recently approved plan and what is your rationale for these suggestions?
4. If you are suggesting any additions to objectives within the plan, **how would your Committee or Department lead to implement or otherwise support** the addition of any proposed objectives?

ANCILLARY QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE FURTHER DISCUSSION IF NEEDED

1. What other question, if answered, could make the most difference for your committee/department to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion for Dwelling Place?
2. What do we know so far/still need to learn about this issue to make better decisions about future direction for our committee/department?
3. What dilemmas/opportunities does your committee/department in this work?

4. What assumptions do we need to test or challenge here in thinking about the work of this Committee/Department to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion?
5. What does your committee/department see as our intention here? What's the deeper purpose (the big "why") that is really worthy of our best efforts?
6. What is missing from this picture so far? What is it we are not seeing? What do we need more clarity about?
7. What could happen that would enable you/us to feel fully engaged and energized in your committee/department about this issue?
8. What needs this committee's/department's immediate attention going forward?
9. If our success was completely guaranteed as a committee/department, what bold steps might we choose?
10. How can we support each other within this committee/department in taking next steps? What unique contributions can we each make?

EXAMPLES OF WORK PRESENTLY UNDERWAY

1. In the Real Estate Development Department, procurement policies are being reviewed to determine how we might increase the number and percentage of minority and female owned businesses involved in construction in both smaller and larger construction projects.
2. Within the Affordable Housing Department (Property Management) rental screening policies are being reviewed to mitigate the impact of disparate impact (racial disparities) that are created with our use of criminal history screening as extensive research has shown that racial minorities are more likely than whites to be stopped, arrested and convicted for the similar behaviors.
3. In Human Resources, Dwelling Place will no longer be mandating credit screening for all positions. Universal credit screening for employment has been identified as a practice where disparate impact can create unnecessary barriers in access to employment. Credit screening will instead be limited to positions where having a good credit is relevant to the responsibilities outlined in the position description such as where an employee routinely has responsibilities for handling rent payments or in accounting.