

## Washtenaw Equity Partnership Meeting #2 – Minutes

October 27, 2021

Members in attendance:

1. Alize Asberry Payne
2. Gregory Dill
3. Morgan Foreman
4. Rachelle Wilson
5. Brad Schmidt
6. Delphia Simpson
7. MaryAnn Sarosi
8. Lisa Gentz
9. Carol Kuhnke
10. Peri Stone-Palmquist
11. Dan McNeil
12. Judy Gardner
13. Natalie Holbrook
14. LaWanda Hollister
15. Belinda Dulin
16. Deborah Labelle
17. Desirae Simmons
18. Nicholette Hoard
19. Melvin Parson
20. Eli Savit

Chairs in attendance:

1. Alma Smith
2. Sue Shink

Vera staff in attendance:

1. Amy Cross
2. Tara Dhanraj
3. Liz Swavola
4. Sandhya Kajeepeta

- Co-Chairs Alma and Sue opened up meeting
- Review of Working Group Role and Agreements
  - Dates proposed for the next meetings for the rest of 2021
    - Meeting #3 (Evening): Thursday, November 18, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
    - Meeting #4 (Afternoon): Tuesday, December 14, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
  - Voted on co-chairs, they are non-voting members
  - Agreed that we would not have delegates

- Not yet created a schedule for 2022 meetings
  - In order for quorum to be reached, we need a majority at the meeting
- Review of guiding principles for Working Group
  - Point raised about explicit role of economic justice
- Voting process
  - Review of Fist to Five
  - This is like a pre-vote, do we want to bring it to a vote discussion
  - Can give you a sense of the health of the yes. Gives a sense of different dynamics and positionality of folks in the group who are at 1s and 2s. Also great way to determine when you don't need further discussion if everyone's a 4 or 5. Can leave the voting at two-thirds. Like the idea of being able to tell the strength of a yes
  - Fist to five might be cumbersome in this larger setting. Are we going to talk about the other options that came up at the meeting and not just five to five?
  - Vote: Do you want to use Fist to Five as a tool for discussion? Reached 16 yes's so passed
  - Vote: two-thirds majority to pass a vote? Reached 20 yes's so passed
- Subcommittees
  - Results of survey
    - Prevention & front-end
      - 12 names with 2 maybes and 2 yeses for co-chair
      - Additional suggestions but missing names: pretrial services, district court judge, law enforcement, Poverty Solutions Opportunity Index person
    - Court process
      - 15 names with one maybe and one yes for co-chair
      - Heavy on government
    - Post-sentencing & reentry
      - 11 names with one maybe for co-chair
      - Missing names: city council, poverty solutions, parole violation expert
    - Youth justice & schools
      - 23 names with one yes for co-chair
      - Missing name: Juvenile probation
    - Behavioral Health
      - 9 names with two maybes for co-chair (light)
    - Data
      - 16 names with 3 yeses for co-chair
      - Missing: County IT, courts, sheriff's office, MDOC, poverty solutions index person, BOC member
  - Survey also surfaced concerns about moving forward with subcommittees too quickly
    - Need to understand better what they will do before recommending others
    - Wanting to open membership to public – reach those who want to be involved, but haven't been invited or hand selected to join – goes to equity
    - Stipends for participation
    - Others to add before we discuss each of those?

- There are people who have been deeply harmed by law enforcement, MDOC, jail, so asking them to participate, we need to be cognizant of power dynamics in the group. For example, someone might be on parole and someone else in the group may have complete control over their life.
- To better understand roles, we will walk-through subcommittee memo shared previously but not discussed in any detail due to time constraints:
  - Subcommittee basics:
    - Meet monthly
    - Chair or co-chairs, preferably members of the Working Group
    - Conduct outreach to subcommittee members
    - Set agendas
    - Run meetings
    - Vera is here to help! Staffing, research support, and guidance as needed.
  - Subcommittee tasks:
    - Determine research questions relating to racial equity within the particular subcommittee topic and identify specific issues they will examine
    - Establish work plan
    - Do a deep dive into the identified issues – data analysis, qualitative research (focus group, observations), more informal information gathering (meet with system actors, community town hall, tours), best practices research, reaching out to other counties doing similar work
    - Develop recommendations for the Working Group
  - Our list of proposed focus areas for each subcommittee was not exhaustive or prescriptive – it would be up to each subcommittee to prioritize focus areas and research questions, recognizing that
    - Time and resources are finite,
    - We will not be able to address all questions or issues in this one process,
    - Deeper impact may be possible within certain areas, especially depending on who’s participating in this process, and
    - There may be other groups outside of the WEP already working on a particular issue
  - As mentioned, subcommittees will kick off in January
    - Q1: Research questions finalized, and data sources identified
    - Q2: Research plan developed and launched
    - Q3: Continuing deep dive
    - Q4: Recommendations developed and presented to WG for integration into community plan
- Open call
  - Proposing that we cap membership at 25

- Proposing that we appoint subcommittee chairs to facilitate open call process and finalized formation of subcommittee
  - For now, this would mean those who said yes in the survey (and 'maybe' if there wasn't a yes or was only 1 yes)
    - Prevention/front end: Aubrey Patiño & Heather Martin
    - Court process: Deb LaBelle & Carol Kuhnke
    - Post-sentencing & reentry: LaWanda Hollister (+1?)
    - Youth justice & schools: Morgan Foreman (+1?)
    - Behavioral Health: Lisa Gentz & Bradley Schmidt
    - Data: Dan McNeil, MaryAnn Sarosi, Linda Rexer
- Reflections/thoughts on this?
  - How would we reach out to get additional names? Would each chair figure out how to broaden the call?
    - Collectively the group of co-chairs would put out a call for all subcommittees. It would list out the different subcommittees. Suggest that we ask people to select more than one so we can create more balance across subcommittees.
  - There are people on this roster who haven't joined a subcommittee
  - Five to five: do we want to do an open call to the public to join the subcommittees?
    - 5 (9)
    - 4 (5)
    - 3 (1)
    - 2 (0)
    - 1 (0)
    - Discussion:
      - This is a sacred space and we're here because we have experience and expertise in this area. Not to keep it homogenous to my network, but to keep the fidelity. Don't want it to be crowded and unmanageable.
      - We should assign everyone on the roster before we make an open call
      - Agree, let's make sure everyone here has a place in this space. Maybe the subcommittees go to the public and bring that information back.
      - Want to make sure we have balance. Hearing from people who wouldn't normally be invited into this space is important, but don't want to be a burden on people.
      - We were all 4s and 5s so we're pretty good on consensus. Having it be public means people are aware and can't say they didn't know about it. I didn't submit specific names because of the questions/concerns I had so those people are not included on this list. These are just suggestions, the positions are not held.

- Don't want to be gatekeeping, but concern with efficiency around making groups too large
- Clarified that open call would only be for subcommittees not this working group. Can we specify which subcommittee a recommendation goes to? (Answer is yes, they will not be added randomly)
- Would rather reach out to contacts within this group first. Concerned about reaching out to people but then saying no there's no room.
- Agree re: filling out the list from our contacts first. I did a brain dump of people to recommend thinking we'd discuss it, they may not all be needed.
- A call to the public is premature. We need to firm up who's on the list already.
- These working groups could get very court heavy. You might have someone employed in pretrial services, but what about someone with direct experience with pretrial services. Structural racism is at the root of carceral systems and we're going to reinvent the wheel if we don't have public participation.
- Concerned about telling people no. Need to make it fair when determining who makes the cut.
- In favor of making a public call because if we only use our connections, we may not bring in new voices who wouldn't otherwise be here.
- Need to provide details on timeline, commitment, etc. People should be able to make informed decision about whether they can participate.
- if we wait on public call, we likely won't be able to start subcommittees in Jan.
- Hard to sell something to others if we don't fully understand it ourselves.
- Summary: This group needs more time to fill out the survey before reflecting on open call.
- We could move forward on both tracks
- Fist to five: We will convene co-chairs in the meantime to work on outreach and public call. Everyone fill out the survey by this Friday.
  - Note: Lisa won't be able to work on outreach, someone else can support with subcommittee
- Natalie Holbrook will work with LaWanda Hollister on re-entry subcommittee
- Peri Stone-Palmquist will work with Morgan Foreman on the youth justice subcommittee

- Stipends
  - Update from Alma: Have discussed with some foundations possibility of providing stipends. Conversations are beginning. Have a commitment from one group already on some money for stipends, hoping to add United Way and another foundation. No information on how much yet because we don't know how much we can offer. We haven't done this before, so this is new ground. We are committed to doing this.
- Miscellaneous items
  - Suggestion of posting working group meeting recordings on website to encourage transparency. To be discussed further in future meetings.
  - If anyone is interested in reviewing and providing input on the website draft, reach out to MaryAnn Sarosi.
- Co-chairs Alma and Sue closed the meeting