

2019
November



WDN Regional Council
Meeting Summary

Host: Excellus BCBS
Topic Discussion: Racial Equity & Justice Initiative

The November meeting topic was an overview of the Racial Equity & Justice Initiative (REJI) in Rochester, presented by Sashanna Mitchell, REJI Coordinator.

Update on Excellus DEI Initiatives

Sady Fischer, Director of Diversity & Inclusion at Excellus, began the meeting with an overview of the extensive DEI initiatives that are underway in the organization. The key points covered included:

OUR PEOPLE

- Inclusive Job Descriptions
- Pay Equity
- Equitable Interview Process & Experience
- Diverse Sourcing & Recruitment
- Inclusive Benefits
- Inclusive Onboarding Experience

OUR PERSPECTIVES

- Inclusive Leadership
- Increase Baseline Knowledge of All Employees
- Employee Engagement/Employee Resource Groups
- Understanding Employee Perspectives

OUR POTENTIAL

- Support Continuous Development of Employees & Leaders
- Use data to identify gaps in representation across all job levels & develop interventions to reduce gaps
- Perform internal audits to identify and mitigate any disparaging impact or unconscious bias in hiring, promotions, pay, succession planning and more. Correct any findings and development new equitable processes as necessary.

Overview of the Racial Equity and Justice Initiative (REJI)

In a presentation given by Sashanna Mitchell, Racial Equity & Justice Initiative (REJI) Coordinator, and Mike Bleeg, REJI Faculty, participants learned of the community wide effort that Rochester area organizations are driving to tackle structural racism and how it affects our community.

The main topics that were addressed include:

- Information on REJI (History, Community Tables, Current partnerships, and Current Processes)

REJI is in the process of convening Community Tables to:

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- provide community collaborations and partnerships with organizations working towards similar goals or projects related to the promotion of racial equity and justice;
- break-down power dynamics and hierarchies between the haves and the have-nots allowing all participants equal opportunity to be heard;
- share resources and influence decisions so that organizations receive attention and resources;
- provide space for the average person, who may not be engaged, to participate and enhance the efforts.

In a broad ranging discussion, other issues addressed included the need for shared goals to align actions; breaking down silos that prevent collaboration; managing competition for limited resources; agreeing on what we are accountable for and who we are trying to help. This meeting was an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of some of the key initiatives underway in our area to address structural racism and how WDN members can engage to support them! The PowerPoint used to guide the discussion is attached.