

MEETING MINUTES
EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 24, 2026
TEAMS Meeting

Members Present:

Amy Formella
Andrew Martin
Cortney Mihulka
Dawn LaFond
Jamie Peterson-Johnson
Jennifer Fahey
Jennifer VanHaaften
Kelly Harrison
Kris Ward
Kristy Hartke
Lesli Busby-Amegashie

Optional Attendees Present:

Jennifer Ginter-Lyght

Members Not Present:

Andrea Northwood
Chris Leslie
Danielle Wheelock
Gina Strobusch
Justine Taylor

Total members: 16

Total voting subcommittee members: 14 (Chair and Co-Chair not included as voting members)

Quorum for subcommittee (one-third of total voting membership; Chair is not considered a voting member): 5

1. Welcome and Call to Order

- The meeting of the Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee was called to order by Dawn LaFond at 2:02pm.

2. Roll Call and Engagement Activity

- Roll call and engagement activity was completed by Kristy Hartke and a quorum was Present.
- Engagement activity's question was, "Give a brief description of what you do for WDVA, more than your title"

3. Certification of Notice of Meeting

- Certified by Dawn LaFond that agenda posted at WAMS, DPM HR Site and WDVA internet site.

4. Adoption of Minutes from January 27, 2026

- MOTION: The January 27, 2026 meeting minutes were circulated via email – no edits requested. Motion to approve by Jennifer VanHaaften; second by Andrew Martin. Minutes are hereby approved and will be posted to WAMS, DPM HR Site and the WDVA internet site.

5. Special Election – New Co-Chair

- Amy Millard's last day was February 10, 2026 – the committee is looking for a new co-chair
- Jennifer VanHaaften was nominated by Leslie Busby-Amegashie
- No more nominations made – Dawn closed nominations
- Jennifer VanHaaften accepted

6. Subcommittee Reports

- Recruitment
 - No report – Andrea absent
- Retention
 - Reviewed the NEO documents and have shared them with Jen Drabsch who is the current NEO person for Central Office. After she reviews this topic and materials will be brought back to the OOS for further review. The Homes has been utilizing their NEO which was recently updated.
 - Noteworthy News – The Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Comms and Dawn have a meeting scheduled for March 6, 2026.
 - Stay Survey will be in the works as a follow-up to last year's survey. The subcommittee will be working on a few tweaks.
- Culture
 - Kris reported they are working on more screen savers and more ideas for the screen savers

- Catch a co-worker is going strong. Candy bars on order and paid for. Waiting for them to be ready.
- Partners in Giving
 - Newest subcommittee that just had their first meeting
 - Chair - Dawn and Co-Chair Kris Ward, with Justine Taylor from Union Grove and Amy Formella from King
 - Working on announcement to send to all WDVA staff, once approved by Deputy will send out - goal to Deputy is 03.05.2026
 - Also working on a mission statement to add to the Partners in Giving page, once its buttoned up it will be added as a link to the EIAC Site, just like the other subcommittees
 - Ongoing updates to the master donation list
 - Change jars will be set up at King, Union Grove and Central Office to help with events and the remaining amounts to a charity that will be chosen at a later date
 - Committee is meeting every three weeks
- If there is anyone who has an interest in changing the subcommittee that you are on, please send an email to Dawn, Jennifer and Kristy informing us of any changes. We do have a few members on multiple, so if there are multiple interests, that fine.

7. Old Business

- None

8. New Business

- New member recruitment - I have not received any emails from the Committee or anyone outside the Committee showing interest.
 - Currently we are sitting at 16 members
 - We have a few terms that will be ending this year:
 - Kelly Harrison (05.12.2026)
 - Kristy Hartke (10.06.2026)
 - Me (07.23.2026)
 - Andrew Martin (05.12.2026)
 - Andrea Northwood (07.23.2026)
 - Danielle Wheelock (06.30.2026)
 - Jennifer, term was up 12.31.2025, will get a new reappointment letter.
- Please send me an email 30 days before your term ending to let me know of your intention on staying on the Committee
- Retention & Recruitment Plan
 - Upcoming new plan, hoping this may spark some new interest for anyone wanting to work on the Committee

- The timeline is relatively short when we have a mid-May draft deadline and BEI is looking to go live on July 1
- The plan will run for two years versus three years and cuts into the current plan which was originally scheduled to end 12.31.2026 - the current plan will sunset
- Any items that are currently being worked on can move over to the new plan
- Reminder, this is also a subcommittee and was voted on during our last meeting in January and selection of the subcommittee was made by the Deputy Secretary. This team consists of Dawn, Kristy, Jennifer, Jeni and Scott Sussman who will review from a legal perspective
- It is our understanding that the goals will be more streamlined and may only consist of one goal for each of five categories. However, those initiatives that are currently being worked on can be added to one of the five areas consisting of
 - Recruitment
 - Retention
 - Culture
 - Veteran Hires
 - Wisconsin Work Hires
- There is also a section on Workforce analytics and Jeni will be filing out that information
- The format is such that it will be the same for all Wisconsin State Agencies
- We will be focusing on goals that will be centered around recruitment and retention and we will be mindful on how we can measure these goals
- The team was recently given direction that all meetings relating to this Committee, including the Sub-Committees, will need to be properly noticed. The Partners in Giving Subcommittee will not fall under the noticing requirements. We have been noticing our EIAC meeting in three (3) places, which we certify at the beginning of all meetings: WAMS, DPM Region 4 Site and the WDVA Wisvets site. This means that an agenda and minutes will also be required Retention, Recruitment, Culture and E&I 2027-2029 Subcommittees.
 - The subcommittee chairs for these four subcommittees can forward final agendas and meeting minutes to me and Kristy and we will handle posting. I am more than willing to assist with creating draft template and as your go-to for any meeting guidance.
 - Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law (Wis. Stats. §§ 19.81-19.98) requires government bodies to provide public notice of all meetings at least 24 hours in advance (unless impossible). Notices must include the time, date, place, and agenda, and be posted in three public places, or one public place plus the website, or via official newspaper publication
 - Note that while the plan and its directives are transpiring we may need to make further adjustments.
- March Madness - the NCAA Mens and Women's Brackets
 - Guidance in previous years was the request to participate was only sent to Central Office staff only in previous years and this would be the same for this year

- About a dozen entries for each bracket and Dawn thinks in previous years we have had more
- Motion to go forward with March Madness by Andrew Martin; second by Kris Ward.

9. Future Agenda Items

- None

10. Public Comment

- Jamie and Amy came on after roll call and added what they do for WDVA during this time

11. Adjournment

- MOTION: Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Andrew Martin; second by Leslie Busby-Amegashie and carried on a vote to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 2:37pm.

Kristy Hartke, OPA