



WDVA EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Agenda

- Date: 7/28/2026
- Time: 2:01pm to 2:37pm
- Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Member Attendance

- Chair | Dawn LaFond, Office of the Secretary (Present)
- Co-Chair | Jennifer Van Haaften, Wisconsin Veterans Museum (Chair Retention) (Present)
- Secretary | Kristy Hartke, Veterans Benefits-Cemeteries (Present)
- Leslie Busby-Amegashie, Veterans Benefits-Grants (Present)
- Jenny Fahey, Veterans Benefits-Health Services (Present)
- Amy Formella, Veterans Homes-King (Not Present)
- Patricia Grant, Veterans Homes-King (Not Present)
- Christopher Leslie, IT-King (Present)
- James Listug, Office of Public Affairs (Present)
- Andrew Martin, Veterans Benefits-SAA (Present)
- Cortney Mihulka, Wisconsin Veterans Museum (Present)
- Jamie Petersen-Johnson, Veterans Home-King (Co-Chair Culture) (Not Present)
- Gina Strobusch, Veterans Homes-King (Present)
- Kris Ward, Enterprise Services (Co-Chair Culture) (Present)

Optional or Other Member Attendance

- Jeni Ginter-Lyght

Meeting Purpose

- To meet and discuss the Recruitment & Retention Action Plan and make any decisions as a Committee.

Minutes

- Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting of the Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee was called to order by Dawn LaFond at 2:01PM.

- Roll call (please mute phones)

There are 11 total voting members present of which there are 14 total members. A quorum requires 1/2 of members present, so a quorum was present.

- Certification of notice of meeting

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

- Adoption of minutes from June 23, 2026 meeting

MOTION: The June 23, 2026 meeting minutes were circulated via email – no edits were requested. Motion to approve by Cortney Mihulka; second by Chris Leslie. Minutes are hereby approved and will be posted to WAMS, DPM HR Site and the WDVA internet site.

- Sub-Committee Chair Reports

Recruitment | Dawn LaFond Reported

- WDVA Voices – rough draft was shown
 - Filmed at Central Cemetery
 - Explains Military Funeral Honors services: three-round volley, Taps, flag folding/presentation
- Volunteer Assistance: What work can volunteers do?
- Volunteer Target Audience: Schools, Businesses, Community Groups, etc.
- Volunteer Outreach Method:
 - Attend community groups
 - Outreach to Organizations
 - Social Media
 - Job Fairs
 - Fairs, concerts, and other public activities
- Website Updates: Volunteers and Donations
 - Currently hard to find, very limited information
 - Recommend a dedicated page, robust
 - View DNR as great example
 - Promote opportunities on Serve Wisconsin
- Future Items:
 - Research Wisconsin specific volunteer policies
 - Serve Wisconsin Partnership
 - Audit website navigation and visibility
 - Create volunteer contact list
 - Develop presentations
 - Reach out to DOR Communication Team – Video production

Retention | Dawn LaFond reported on behalf of Jennnifer Van Haaften

- Next plan goal
 - Discussed the plan to refine and implement the NEO program
 - Will review what other departments do and see if there's anything we need to add
 - Need to get buy-in to train supervisors how to use NEO, so it is consistently applied across the agency
 - We will need to create a survey or other measurement to see if new employees retain the knowledge the Secretary hopes they retain
- 2026 Employee Survey – Dawn is about 90% complete with her analysis between 2025 and 2026 and will then be incorporating this into her findings. Laurice Lincoln provided Dawn with suggestions and she will also be working this information into the analysis. Dawn met with someone from DOA and he showed her the software that they use and she was quite impressed. It is something that he said he could share the back-end information with Dawn if we decided to use this for future surveys versus using Survey Monkey. (Power BI or Tableau ACTION for Dawn to find out if we have access to either of these)
- Noteworthy News - Dawn believes this is gaining a little bit of momentum and continue to receive positive feedback. Again, any information from the Homes is greatly appreciated!
 - Jenny: Waiting for the grant to go through from Medical college for the firearm hygiene kits

Culture | Kris Ward

- Screen saver ideas, including work/life balance
- Dawn stated she has not received the poster from marketing yet for the Homes, but actually wondering if we still need this at this point. UG has significantly increased their catch a co-worker recognition, although mostly by the Commandant and Deputy Commandant
 - Consistent in posting everywhere
 - Chris Leslie: **ACTION: Click a QR Code for posters**

Partners in Giving | Dawn LaFond

- Kris and I will be attending the campaign meeting on August 19
- Committee has been working on sending out requests for donations from local vendors with Kris taking east Madison and Dawn taking west Madison. Amy is working on vendors in the Waupaca area. If you have any vendors that you have a personal relationship with or suggestions, especially in your area, you can send the information to me, including contact, organization, address, email and website. If you have that special contact and prefer to contact that vendor yourself, please indicate that, but we would like to include in our tracking spreadsheet. If you need the letter for the request, please

let Dawn know. **ACTION: for ALL to identify any vendors for donations and send to Dawn/Kris/EIAC Mailbox**

- Efforts:
 - Ice Cream Social raised \$78 on 06.16.2026, which still have ice cream left over and will need to determine when to hold at Central Office
 - Committee is in the process of finding out how they can make these happen at UG and King
 - Santa Letters were a big hit last year so planning on continuing with this for 2026
 - Sweet treat bake sale silent auction the week if Thanksgiving
 - Silent auction which committee hopes to run in conjunction with DOR again
- Old Business
 - Next Retention & Recruitment Plan - the Plan was approved by BEI. Dawn updated the SharePoint Site and subcommittee pages which show the action items under each of the five areas we are focusing on. Note that the W2 and veterans hires are on the main page.
 - Jeni asked whether committee wants to discuss and consider the implementation framework of the new plan and whether we move forward with all three subcommittees as is?
 - Do we keep the subcommittees structured as they are, or make any changes? We know that Recruitment has no leadership right now with Andrea stepping down from the EIAC and there are also no Recruitment Meetings scheduled.
 - Kristy: Recruitment & Retention as one committee with potential work groups?
 - Leslie: Could work together?
 - Cortney: Agree with combining, but would need more time to understand if it is divided
 - Kris: Lacking members, no choice to combine
 - Dawn: Work groups due to two different goals
 - Kristy: On both due to workload, so in favor of
 - Dawn: Probably going to have to go on Recruitment so in favor
 - **ACTION: Dawn to run by Jennifer and vote on next meeting**
 - Do we want to have any subcommittees for the W2 and veterans' hires goals?
 - Kristy: No subcommittees and always part of the plan
 - Dawn: Already excel in those two areas so not so much an issue, and will address with R&R
- New Business
 - New Member Recruitment – now sitting at 14 with 6 vacancies

- Locations where there is no representation: Claims, Union Grove
 - Please submit any recommendations to me and Jennifer
- Influence Award nominations
 - We are buttoning up the KPIs for the nomination submission and will be providing the nomination before the next meeting which we will vote on and then will then send to the OOS for their final review. Kris do you have anything to add?
- **ACTION: Kris, Jennifer and Dawn to get together and discuss the KPIs.**
- We received a request for nominations for the Virginia Hart Award, Dawn added that to the Aug 3 Noteworthy News. Nominations are due 09.11.2026, same as the Influence Award.
- New Templates [Equity and Inclusion Committee - Documents - Templates - All Documents](#)
 - Dawn created templates for agendas and meeting minutes
- Future agenda items
 - Communication Plan - Kristy, Jeni and Dawn attended a meeting led by Laurice Lincoln at DOA who did a fabulous job identifying how to create a communication plan. As soon as Dawn has the PPT, she will be sending this to everyone on the Committee and at your next subcommittee meetings, Dawn asks that we come up with a communication plan based on what was presented at that meeting. Dawn was only able to attend the first 2/3 of the meeting, but will also add her notes, which includes an exercise we did in break-out rooms. Kristy and Jeni, do you have any notes to add where I can incorporate them, too? (No Kristy; No Jennifer)
ACTION for Dawn to send Laurice's PPT and notes to Committee
 - Bylaws - Dawn redrafted the bylaws and once Jennifer has a chance to review, Dawn will be sending these for the Committees review and then will send to OLC for input. Once Chad has his comments, then Dawn will send to the Deputy Secretary for final approval and then we'll try to get these up for vote at the August meeting.
 - **ACTION: Dawn to send draft of bylaws for committee review once Jennifer provides her feedback**
 - **ACTION: James Listug to weigh in Comm**
 - Officer positions - we will also vote on officer positions at the August meeting
- Public comment

None

- Adjournment

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

Submitted by,
Kristy Hartke