WDVA EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Agenda

- Date: September 15th, 2026
- Time: 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM
- Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Member Attendance

- Chair | Dawn LaFond, Office of the Secretary (Present)
- Co-Chair | Jennifer Van Haaften, Wisconsin Veterans Museum (Chair Retention) (Absent)
- Secretary | Gina Strobusch, Veterans Homes-King (Present)
- Leslie Busby-Amegashie, Veterans Benefits-Grants (Present)
- Jenny Fahey, Veterans Benefits-Health Services (Absent)
- Patricia Grant, Veterans Homes-King (Present)
- Kristy Hartke, Veterans Benefits-Cemeteries (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) (Present)
- Gina Strobusch, Veterans Homes-King (Present)
- Kris Ward, Enterprise Services (Co-Chair Culture) (Present)

Optional or Other Member Attendance

- Jennifer 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 1:31pm.

- Roll call (please mute phones)
    - There are 12 total voting members present of which there are 14 total members. A quorum requires 1/3 of members present, so a quorum was present.
    - Engagement Activity was, “Two Truths and a Lie”

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

- Sub-Committee Chair Reports
    - Recruitment | There has not been any Recruitment meetings since Andrew Northwood stepped down. Dawn reviewed the items that the Subcommittee was working on, including:
        - WDVA Voices
            - Filmed at Central Cemetery and 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 had to find, every limited information
            - Recommend a dedicated page, robust
            - View DNR’s site, as a great example
            - Promote opportunities to Serve Wisconsin
        - Future items:
            - Research Wisconsin specific volunteer policies
            - Service Wisconsin Partnership
            - Audit website navigation and visibility
            - Create volunteer contact list
            - Develop presentations
            - Research out to DOR Communication Team – Video production

- Retention | Jennifer was not in the meeting and there have been no updates since last meeting, which was July 21
    - Surveys
        - The Subcommittee will be holding working group meetings to review the 2026 survey responses to see how we can best address concerns from the survey this past spring – two meetings scheduled for September 25 and October 13.
    - ACTION: Discussion will need to occur at upcoming meeting on whether we combine the Recruitment and Retention Subcommittees.
- Culture | Jamie
    - Met and squared away with work life balance screen savers, basic ideas slotted and ready to get sent to Tony Cooke who creates the screen savers
        - Will show screen shots of where links are located
        - Posters will be created to show a link to a 17-minute video showing what EAP can do
        - Setting dates for upcoming screen savers
    - Looking for someone to move over or add Culture as one of their Subcommittees
- Partners in Giving | Dawn
    - Dawn and Kris attended the kick-off meeting on August 19 with not much to report out on. Dates of the campaign run Oct 12 through Dec 1.
    - Last meeting, Dawn sent a request to the Committee to provide any contact information or any leads for donations from vendors, however, none were received. Dawn has been reaching out to Union Grove and King area to get the Homes interested in the silent auction. If you need the letter to send to vendors for the request, please let Dawn know.
    - Lauren Beaumont, Commandant at UG, will be our volunteer at Union Grove and Joni is still trying to figure out who could assist at King. If you have an interest in the volunteer portion, let us know - mostly to assist with marketing materials (posting in the Homes), the silent auction and baked good sale, any donations received at the Homes (picking up, etc.) and assisting with the change jar.
    - Marketing materials will be provided to King, Union Grove, Claims and each of the Cemeteries: Posters, charity books and magnets.
    - We will be sending an email to all staff to gauge their interest in participating in a Thanksgiving Silent Auction and Baked Good Sale, both of which the Department of Revenue head (Rimrock Road).
    - Still on the pipeline for events are:
        - Waiting for an update from the Deputy on allowing Union Grove and King staff opportunities to attend events while clocked in
        - Santa Letters were a big hit last year, so we plan on continuing with this for 2026
    - Silent auction will run with DOR again and so far are expected to receive:

- Green Bay Packer signed football
- Official signed football from Matthew Golden from Bergstrom Automotive
- Hotel stay at Best Western Inn Towner in Madison
- Famous Dave's BBQ gift cards
- Hotel stay at Holiday Inn Fort Atkinson

  - Received donations from:
    - Chick Fil A basket and 200 in gift cards
    - Two $25 gift cards for Farm & Fleet
    - Two $25 gift cards for Sugar River Pizza
    - $50 gift card to Food Fight Restaurant Group
    - Madison Float gift certificate
    - Two $25 gift cards to TinCan Roadhouse (Union Grove)
    - Packer sweatshirt
    - Tabletop marshmallow grill
    - Madison shirt

- Old Business

  - Review and discuss the five (5) goals from RRAP Plan
    - Nothing to discuss since we have not met recently
  - Update on EIAC Bylaws
    - Waiting until after November elections, the Deputy Secretary felt there was no need to make changes twice if the DVA leadership would be changing. Draft has been created but will wait until the end of the year.
  - Influence Award Nomination
    - Nomination was sent by Kris Ward on or around September 10-11 and response for winner is due on September 28, 2026.

- New Business

  - Election of Officers
    - Chair: Motion for Dawn LaFond to be re-elected was made by Kristy Hartke, second by Leslie. Nomination was accepted and approved with no objections.
    - Co-Chair: Motion for Jennifer Van Haaften to be reelected was made by Kristy Hartke, second by Cortney Mihulka. Nomination is pending acceptance.
      - ACTION: Confirmation will need to be made by Jennifer that she accepts the nomination.
    - Secretary: Motion for Gina Strobusch as Secretary made by Kristy Hartke, second by Leslie Busby-Amegashie. Nomination was accepted and approved with no objections.

- Leadership Roles for Subcommittees
  - We currently only have a Chair or Co-Chair listed for our subcommittees and discussion on whether there should be a secretary to officially take notes, etc.
    - ACTION: Discussion will be handled after the decision on whether to combine Retention and Recruitment Subcommittees.
- Communication Plan for RRAP *Communications Plan and Action Items.pptx*
  - Brief discussion on the idea of the Communication Plan is so that we can hold ourselves accountable and use the material as a dashboard to see where we are.

- HR Dashboard Updates | Jeni Ginter-Lyght
  - Reviewed the dashboard for the past six months
    - Exit interview metrics were discussed and are currently showing 25% of employees completing, which is a decrease from previous report out.
      - Supervisor ratings
        - Positive thinking, but in the current staff survey this is shown differently
        - Home Administrator – target any specific area?
    - Growth potential within the agency – how do you show that someone can work up in a position?
    - Less complaints, probably due to resources being provided more consistently (screen savers, posters)
    - ACTION: Jeni will provide EAP utilization data to Dawn to add to our SharePoint site under culture (raw data)
    - James Listug noted what a great job we are doing with our recruiting and data does not show the actual data:
      - Stable leadership at Union Grove
      - Lots of information sent out and communicated
      - ACTION: Dawn to discuss with Deputy Secretary/HR ways to incentivize exiting staff to complete the survey, possibly with Chick Fil A gift cards?

- Future agenda items

  - October: Co-Chair acceptance by Jennifer Van Haaften
  - October: Recruitment & Retention Subcommittees – do we combine?
  - October: Subcommittee leadership roles
  - Audit of Items on RRAP Plan
    - DHS provided information that BEI will audit Plan for compliance possibly Summer 2027 and will be looking for:
      - Progress of activities toward specific goals
      - Collection of baseline data (quantitative and qualitative) to support progress or change in direction
      - Employee satisfaction with progress

        - Benefits to the agency
        - Adherence to timelines

- Public comment
    - None

- Adjournment
    - MOTION: Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Kris Ward; second by Chris Leslie; and carried on a vote to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 2:56pm.

Dawn LaFond, Notetaker