



Hispanic Employment Plan Advisory Council

Minutes

August 25, 2017

Hispanic Employment Plan Advisory Council Meeting: 1:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Quarterly Meeting

James R. Thompson Center, Suite 9-036, Chicago, IL

Video Link William G. Stratton Building, Room 500 ½ Springfield, IL

I. Call to Order

Council Chair Roberto Sanabria called the council meeting to order at 1:35pm.

II. Roll Call

A. Council members

1. Council members physically present

Guadalupe Preston, Roberto Sanabria

2. Council members present via telephone

Elizabeth Ortiz, Adrian Soto

3. Council members absent

Jaime Garcia, Christian Roldan Santos, Roberto Sepulveda, Dolores Tapia

B. Agency Ex-Officio Liaisons

1. Agency Ex-Officios Physically Present

Department on Aging (Melina Tomaras-Collins)

Department of Children and Family Services (Lourdes Rodriguez,

Jose Lopez)

Department of Human Rights (Martin Duncan)

Department of Human Services (Vaneza Lozada, Elizabeth Diaz Castillo)

Department of Transportation (Clarissa Williams, Ivan Barajas)

2. Agency Ex-Officio Liaisons Present via Telephone

Department of Human Services (Ganapathi Ramaswamy, Krista Culbertson)
Department of Employment Security (Tina Tiliks, Stan Volkhovsky)

3. Agency Ex-Officio Liaisons Absent

Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Department of Corrections
Department of Healthcare and Family Services
Department of Public Health

C. Non-Council Members in Attendance

Lisa G. Williams (*Central Management Services*)
Fred Stewart (*Central Management Services*) (Springfield)
Myra Magaña (*Central Management Services*)
John Nelson (phone), Chima Enyia (*Department of Revenue*)
Jose Lopez (*League of United Latin American Citizens*)
Carlos Charneco (*Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees*)
Ivan Barajas (*Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees*)
Loretta Kidd (*Illinois Association of Minorities in Government*)
Enoch Clark Bay (*Illinois Association of Minorities in Government*)

III. Introductions

Lisa G. Williams introduced herself and provided information about her background. She also introduced Myra Magaña, and recognized Carlos Charneco for his extremely valuable service and expressed gratitude that he will remain on the Council in his capacity with the Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees (IAHSE).

IV. Opening Remarks

Lisa spoke about her experience with workforce diversity for the State (Tollway, Illinois Commerce Commission) and her vision for the future. She praised the Council for its great ideas on how to improve the diversity of the State's workforce and committed to pursuing these and other initiatives.

V. Appointment/Designation Letters

Lisa explained the State does not have appointment documents for members of the Council nor designation letters for ex-officio members. She asked Council members to send her their

appointment letters if they can find them. She asked ex-officios to send her a letter from the agency head naming that person as the Director's designee.

VI. Approval of Minutes

The Council voted to approve the minutes from the February 24, 2017 Council meeting. Motion by Council Member Liz Ortiz, second by Council Chair Roberto Sanabria. All in favor; no one opposed. Motion passed.

VII. Workforce Updates from Ex-Officio Liaisons

Lisa suggested that in the interest of time, these updates be saved until the end, if the clock allows.

VIII. Annual Diversity Reports (Bilingual Needs and Bilingual Pay and Hispanic Employment Plan) and Efforts to Increase the Diversity of the State's Workforce

A. Agency Surveys for Annual Bilingual Needs and Bilingual Pay Report and Annual Hispanic Employment Plan

Council Chair Roberto Sanabria raised that agencies should be discouraged from responding "N/A" as it does not provide meaningful information.

Council Member Guadalupe Preston suggested survey questions regarding the number of certified Latino Rutan interviewers. Carlos Charneco suggested asking how many Rutan-exempt employees are employed by the agency, and how many of those are Latino. He also suggested training agencies to include community-based organizations in their outreach. And he suggested the surveys request the average Rutan scores for Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American applicants.

Lisa asked everyone to review the survey questions and email her if they had ideas for additional questions. She explained that it will be difficult to make many changes to this year's survey.

B. Determination of Agencies' Bilingual Staffing Needs

Council Chair Roberto Sanabria noted that agencies have various ways of determining the number of bilingual positions needed to address their service populations. He said the number of bilingual positions should be based solely on the Latino population surrounding the facility. This avoids a piecemeal approach where two agencies in the same region have different determinations of bilingual need. Lourdes Rodriguez (DCFS) agreed.

Lisa mentioned the Council had previously discussed relying on metrics to determine bilingual need. Currently, some agencies are relying on "client needs" (too vague) or supervisor observations (estimates) or caseload (not tied to language encounters) to determine the number of bilingual staff needed. Carlos suggested the following metrics: population demographics,

frequency of interaction in a particular language, and agencies' engagement with community-based organizations.

Council Chair Roberto Sanabria predicted agencies will agree they need to increase bilingual staff but claim there is a lack of qualified applicants. Consequently, the Council should ask agencies to document their outreach efforts.

Carlos described prior Council discussions regarding the lack of bilingual staff in the southwest part of Illinois, particularly Belleville/Fairmont, which services about 20,000 Hispanics, employed by the Department of Revenue, Department of Employment Security, Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Human Services, and Department of Health and Family Services. He asked the agencies for updates.

Department of Revenue (John Nelson) said the agency has not hired a bilingual person in its southwest office but is striving to provide real-time translation services in all of its facilities, either through bilingual staff, language services provided through CMS's Master Contract, or consultants.

Lisa asked why Revenue would use telephone services or consultants instead of bilingual employees. John said the cost is significantly less, although he also said those external to the agency pose a higher risk to the agency's legal requirement to protect confidential taxpayer information in its possession. He also said it is difficult to justify additional staff without supporting data. For example, while the Fairview office is surrounded by a large Latino population there were no requests for Spanish in the office during the course of a year. This, however, may not be an accurate measure of the bilingual need because sometimes people bring their own translator or avoid the facility assuming bilingual services are not available. Revenue is working to overcome this by developing signage to encourage people to request bilingual services. And they conduct many of their approximately 100 annual job fairs in Beardstown.

IDES said Latinos are not underutilized in the southwest region for the agency. Moreover, preliminary data shows that 17% of its total workforce is Latino.

DCFS (Lourdes Rodriguez) did post a vacancy in southern Illinois and hired a bilingual, Latino caseworker, but the position does not include the bilingual option. DCFS is considering whether they can convert this to a bilingual position, along with the possibility of hiring one or more bilingual floaters for the region.

C. Evaluation of Language Abilities

Carlos said the Governor's Office of New Americans used to review agencies' language proficiency assessments, but this office is now dormant. He said agencies do not use uniform language assessments. Some agencies have a verbal assessment, a written assessment, a reading comprehension assessment, or some combination. IDHR (Martin Duncan) said its language assessment includes both verbal and reading comprehension components. IDOT (Ivan Barajas) said it asks candidates to translate both from English to Spanish and from Spanish to English. DCFS (Lourdes Rodriguez) said it has developed 12 language proficiency exams that progress

from assessments of verbal conversation to reading comprehension to translating one written paragraph from English to Spanish and a different paragraph from Spanish to English.

Council Member Liz Ortiz said there should be some consistency among the agencies. Council Member Guadalupe Preston said the tests should be related to the job requirements.

D. Outreach / Educational Campaign around the State's Hiring and Selection Process

Lisa and Carlos discussed that CMS likely does most of the outreach for the agencies, though some agencies conduct their own.

The group discussed launching an educational campaign about the State's hiring process through the existing workshops and job fairs State agencies sponsor. Chima Enyia (Department of Revenue) recommended workshops over job fairs given they provide more specific and relevant information, guide candidates through the application process, and reduce the chances that the candidate's application will get rejected on a technicality, which is common. He also noted the limitation that graded positions require applicants to travel to either Springfield or Chicago to take a written test. He recommended that as part of the educational campaign applicants be given a study guide for the written tests. He stressed the importance of focusing on barriers to entering the State's workforce.

John Nelson (Department of Revenue) said their workshops now constitute the second highest source for new hires, and the two most appreciated topics concern the application and the interview.

For two outreach events, Lisa introduced Loretta Kidd (Council Chair) and Enoch Clark Bey of the Illinois Association of Minorities in Government (IAMG). Council Chair Kidd said IAMG's mission is to advocate for all minorities in State government and suggested IAMG and the Council collaborate. She offered to help with outreach, and invited agencies to participate in IAMG's upcoming State of the State Training Conference. Lisa then gave the floor to Ivan Barajas, President of IAHSE, to announce IAHSE's upcoming Training Conference / Job Fair.

E. Potential Barriers to State Employment

1. CMS Application Too Long and Frequently Completed Incorrectly

Many participants commented that the State's employment application is long and often gets rejected for lack of completeness. For example, candidates who fail to include background information because it is included on their resume will be ousted from the selection process for an incomplete application.

2. Inability to Open the Hyperlink to the CMS Application

Jose Lopez (LULAC) remarked that many are unable to open the employment application on CMS' website on their computers. Mayra Magaña (CMS) explained this is a software

compatibility issue that arose when the application was revised to allow applicants to expand fields.

3. State's (CMS') Employment Webpage Deters Applicants

Carlos brought up that the website announces that applicants have a less than 2% chance of getting hired, which could deter people from applying. He suggested removing this language.

Mayra, a CMS career counselor, said that she sends instructions to candidates with whom she works for how to open and complete the employment application. She suggested providing these instructions on CMS' webpage above the link to the application. She said that there is helpful information on CMS' employment website, but it is buried and many people miss it.

Council Chair Roberto Sanabria asked how to change the website. Mayra said the website is run by NeoGov and CMS is limited in the changes it can make directly.

4. The Rutan Interview

The group agreed that the Rutan interview process is different from the typical interview process and the ensuing discussion revealed that agencies have various ways of implementing Rutan. Some agencies (IDOT) allow interviewees to take notes. Some agencies (Tollway) do not allow follow-up questions during the interviews if the applicant forgot to answer part of the question or to clarify a response. Many agencies (Tollway, DCFS) do not allow Rutan interviewers to see candidates' resumes, leaving candidates at a disadvantage if they fail to mention accomplishments listed on their resume on the assumption that the interviewers already possess this information. Some agencies (IDOT, IDHR, Revenue) allow interviewers to review candidates' resumes and applications. However, IDHR tells interviewers to base interview scores solely on interview performance, and Revenue tell interviewers to consider supplemental documents only in the event of a tie.

Council Member Liz Ortiz noted that depriving the interviewers of the candidates' resumes puts the candidate at a disadvantage, and is inconsistent with the standard practice of bringing a resume to a job interview.

Lourdes Rodriguez (DCFS) said she is a Rutan interviewer and has noticed that minorities often do not pass the interview. Daniel Fitzgerald (DCFS) said that often Latinos are not good at selling themselves as this is inconsistent with Latino culture. Council Chair Roberto Sanabria agreed and said that the Rutan interview process probably has a disparate impact on Latino candidates. He said the Council should examine the agencies' interview data. Lisa said that women also might not be as good at self-promotion. She offered that disparate impact can be statistically determined by comparing the selection rates for the various EEO groups.

Fred Stewart (CMS) and Martin Duncan (IDHR) countered that Rutan interviews do not have a disparate impact on minorities and instead poor interview performance is generally due to unfamiliarity with the State's structured interview process.

Council Chair Roberto Sanabria asked how the Council can make changes to the Rutan procedure. The group discussed that there is very little the Council can do since the Rutan process is built around a US Supreme Court case and several Illinois laws, codes, regulations, and administrative orders.

Several participants recommended an educational campaign to coach candidates how to complete the application, how to prepare for the written tests, and how to interview during the Rutan process.

Carlos suggested that when agencies notify candidates of their interview, they also send the candidates information about what to expect during the Rutan interview process. Currently, DCFS does this, but it is likely that most agencies do not. He proposed all agencies send the same information.

F. Best Practices

Mayra asked if anyone has compiled a best practices list for outreach that could help the Council with recommendations and with asking questions of the agencies.

Daniel Fitzgerald (DCFS) suggested a subcommittee to look at what agencies are doing well and how they can improve based on the many good ideas floating around the Council's table. After deliberation, the subcommittee would offer the Council their top recommendations.

Daniel said DCFS is making a lot of progress and its strategies can be shared with other agencies. As examples, he referenced DCFS' record high representations of Latinos over the past three years, DCFS' Diversity Recruitment and Retention Committee made up of the Affirmative Action, Communication, and Employee Services units, and DCFS' YouTube videos on the State's selection process and tips for the Rutan interview.

Carlos recommended that every agency have a Latino Advisory Council like DCFS to help with recruitment and identify the need for bilingual staff.

IX. Council Vacancies

Council Chair Roberto Sanabria offered that there are a few vacancies on the Council and asked those present to brainstorm regarding potential Council members, especially those in the southern part of the State for purposes of geographic diversity.

X. Adjournment

Lisa thanked everyone for attending.

Council Member Guadalupe Preston moved to adjourn. Seconded by Council Member Liz Ortiz. All in favor; no one opposed. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned.