

Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment

Coordinating Committee Meeting | Friday, August 25, 2023 | 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Minutes

10:00 a.m. to 10:05 a.m. – Welcome, housekeeping, roll call (5 mins) - Damiana Harper, GCDE Chair

- Meeting called to order by Damiana at 10:02. Welcomed all and did roll call. Reviewed housekeeping. Clarence arriving late (excused).
- Present: Emily, Elaine, Elizabeth, Ryan, Damiana, Matt, Warren, Yvonne, Megan, Kristin, Marsha, Cullynn, Clarence, CART (clarification), interpreters (check)
- Note about robust discussion today (agenda change)
- No other updates to agenda heard
- Approval of last meeting minutes (sent out) – no corrections or additions heard, approved

10:05 a.m. to 11:05 a.m. – Subcommittee Updates (1 hour):

- Damiana reported a decline in volunteerism for unknown reasons during COVID, resulting in strain to the committee, with the projects exceeding our manpower (staff/volunteers).
- Posed a question – are activities as impactful and effective as we want them in the disability community?
- Open discussion – are there things we should be doing differently or have surpassed their value? Could we reorganize? (Clarence suggested more functional teams in the past).
- Recognition of big topic, still wants to hear thoughts, particularly to how things fit into the EO (vague) – there is lots of freedom to do the work needing to be done in a way that makes sense
- Open floor – pause for reflection – Cullynn and Marsha with hands raised
- Cullynn appreciates this being brought up, important convo, acknowledged. Liked Clarence's idea. Noted that post-pandemic, lots more communications in general, can we organize despite remote work (project management tools aside from just email due to volume). Elizabeth hand.
- Response to Cullynn before Marsha. No response to Cullynn. Elizabeth wanted to explain the idea of functional teams in case folks weren't aware. Damiana recapped on Clarence's behalf (Marsha may have insight as well). Project based teams currently (YLF, CO, etc.). Idea to organize around tasks (marketing across projects, etc.) Former Chair prior to Pat suggested as well (hard to wrap heads around at the time, not as needed, more volunteers).
- Marsha recapped her thoughts to Damiana. Intersecting issues (change in volunteerism a factor). Otherwise, takes a long time to feel connected these days, could be challenge for new folks. It can be a challenge with resignations. Maybe we could try an in-person meeting once everyone is here (distance could be a factor, but might be worth it).
- Additionally, felt top down when she joined (despite specific concerns such as ACAC's). Has changed. Did not have a chance to express them, could be true for others. Not encouraging to just be told to do tasks to keep legacy programs going. Struck by statement about empowering PWD. Prominent.
- What would happen if we looked at all of what we're doing and asked if it empowers PWD? We may be at a time to do that. Communities are organizing. Cross-state opportunities may be present. Yvonne hand up.

- Yvonne piggybacked on Marsha (Kristin hand up too). Had passions for transition and employment. Thought that would be more of an influence. Been disappointed that it is glossed over aside from recognition at Awards.
- Not creating venues for advocacy, awareness, or other activities around it. Has mentioned it before to various groups. We are an innovative state that does this, but we aren't focusing on that in GCDE. Megan hand up. We are cross disability, which is great, but would like to see the employment focus.
- Kristin has many thoughts. Likes Clarence's idea. Utilize skills and focus them to do certain work. It is harder post-pandemic.
- Otherwise, she is exhausted. She loves YLF, pride and joy, loves the new leadership's ideas. Without going too into depth, she wants YLF to stay, however we move forward.
- Personally, she thinks we should be engaging young people, who have the power to shape things for future generations. They are paving the pipeline for others to follow our footsteps into adulthood.
- Manpower wise, would have done it the same way again despite being short staffed and low budgeted, and it went well. But looking back, it was hard to know in advance the effects the short staffing would have.
- Underscoring others, certain types of work need certain types of people at certain times. YLF is in-person, all hands-on deck, during the event. Planning stages, not so much, aside from making decisions and doing things to prep.
- In person is what counts for that event, which can be hard. Noticed same thing (people will come, but sometimes there's not much they can do). They want to do work. But there isn't a ton that people who can't be there in-person can do aside from during the YLF week.
- Apologies for business. YLF is her day-to-day job at her school of 700. It impacts her free time and energy. Perhaps should have had this conversation sooner. Was a lot to take on to lead two committees. She had not volunteered previously for a reason.
- It is too much with her job and YLF. It isn't that she doesn't love legislation or have a heart for that, but it is hard to manage everything. We need more people who are on fire for the work, whatever it is. And to line them up with where they can be of use.
- It applies in the real world, too. We should be asking what we are good at, even if we don't like them, but if we don't hate them and they match a need. That is how it works. Our structures may not allow for this on our committee unless something changes.
- Especially in these times with connection. That may take effort too. There is overlap. Ceding time. Megan and Cullyn with hands up.
- Great point about building leadership. It's the first time we've had someone chairing more than 1 subcommittee, kudos to Kristin for that feat. But it is worrisome that we might not be developing people to fill those leadership roles, and the work associated. How to address?
- Megan had many thoughts too. She thinks we should do a needs assessment of what's needed in the disability and employment community. What can we provide these groups? She works for an employer that does this intentionally. One thing is how to provide accommodations, and another is how people can advocate for themselves.
- The things she sees in the world don't match what she sees on the committee to be honest. DEI is important right now. We could make that connection (also relates to the empowerment

piece). She agrees with Kristin about having time for work and self-care too. No one should be stretched too thin.

- If we have in-person meetings (even 1 per year) because that's how those of us can make connections, commitments, and feel engaged with groups outside of those we participate in. She also suggested seeking volunteers outside of our appointed members.
- We have a lot of new folks to onboard right now. What if we had a volunteer coordinator reach out to colleges, high school students, other short-term volunteers. Could we expand our horizons of how we think about volunteers?
- We shouldn't be underestimating people, we need to look at people's strengths and how to utilize them, it is a form of empowerment and is the way the world is going. We should apply that leadership model here.
- Damiana wonders how we could do a needs assessment. We could ask employers. In her agency they do presentations on accommodations. Aside from JAN and ADA, people want to know real life situations.
- EDI is important right now, and people want to do it, but they don't know how to make it work. We could survey of our own community. Not necessarily a huge undertaking, but targeted would be a start, to get a vision for what might work well for our charge.
- Kristin hand up. They concur with Megan. Her work focus is now on DEI. Disability needs to be included. It is very intersectional. It impacts everyone at some point.
- Agrees with the needs assessment. Echoes Megan's thoughts. Her students come to her about these things as well. Emily hand up. Kristin liked the idea of part time volunteers. Maybe it's a way to get people's foot in the door as well. Thinks we should lead lean into that if possible and would help.
- Shoutout to Marsha from Damiana for involving the local community in Outreach this round. The event is still to come and remains to be seen, but is fruitful so far.
- Emily deferred to Cullynn. Seconds Megan. Also wanted us to consider that our folks may be pulled in a lot of different directions, something to keep in mind. Hand down.
- Damiana wanted to call on those we haven't heard from. Does Matt have anything to add?
- He seconds what has been said so far. He'd like to see if there's a way that we can interact with federal agencies on some level as well at intersections (such as SSA, even though we can't impact them at this level, but they affect us). Is not sure how that might be possible.
- Thanks. It is a big thing to think about. Elizabeth does some of this work. There was someone from SSA there at the last GM meeting, but he could not attend. Having a representative from some of those groups come to a meeting every year would be helpful.
- Megan hand up. Clarence joined. Question for Yvonne. Wanted to clarify hopes with regard to employment piece.
- Yvonne said Megan touched on a lot of it. Advocacy, accommodations, disclosure. Building awareness for employers, breaking stigmas. Her vision is not exactly defined. Was more excited for the opportunity to build that awareness. That is her passion.
- As she works with youth, she sees this too. How do we educate the general public, how do we teach advocacy, educate, outreach, build inclusive communities, engage employers. People may not even be aware of the possibilities (sometimes due to resources). How can we amplify messaging around this. Both for the employees and the employers.

- Matt had a hand up. First, Damiana recapped for Clarence about trying to explain his idea about functional teams, and asked him to explain again.
- Clarence thanked Damiana. He is not at his best right now. He wanted a better refresher.
- Damiana recapped about if we are working effectively, how we might reorganize to serve folks better, etc. Instead of having project teams, maybe organizing more towards tasks like marketing, or social media, etc.
- He is still adjusting and sends his apologies. He will email after the meeting and think about it.
- Matt and Warren with hands up. Matt concurs with Yvonne about lack of resources, particularly in Eastern WA. He runs into this as well. They don't have a lot where he is. There is an employment organization, but that is it.
- More resources are needed to represent folks and outreach to. Folks don't know how to get the help they might need.
- Over to Warren. He wanted to answer her question about functional teams. If we go back to Mandeep (likely folks don't know him), to explain the idea (echo's Clarence), the silos were seen (legislative was not created).
- Within those, there were cross-cutting or similar tasks being done separately. In his view, there was efficiency and effectiveness in a cross-cutting approach instead of being in silos, and have the folks doing those skills doing them across committees (such as social media). He believes that was the thought.
- Megan referred to it as a needs assessment. Mandeep was headed this way as well. We even had an outside consultant to help us with this at the time. In Warren's view, strategic planning needs to be comprehensive, data driven, organized, and compare to resources that you have and what's feasible. Advocates for this.
- Lots of interviews, lots of info gathering about needs, and what's realistic for us with our funding and resources. This leads us to figure out empowerment, impact, what we are good at that we can do to have benefit. What can we accomplish.
- Brining in volunteers from outside may be more difficult than anticipated. Folks may be weighing where they are having the most impact with their time when considering participating. It might be worth an inward look.
- Where is our impact coming from, and then organize accordingly. Start with a blank sheet. Are any of our programs the best use of time. Each one has their own history and resources to consider. But we need to do that analysis. Needs, talents, constraints, what can we do.
- While vice chairs, during the strategic planning, looking internally and effectiveness of our committee and members (goal for statewide). Concur with Megan that it's less about getting the members to commit more, but what are we doing to be of benefit to the state. May be more effective but also more challenging. How can we do this with our resources. Megan.
- Megan. 1 of the committees is mandated (AC). CO could be rebranded (providing education to communities, inviting employers to something similar to what is already happening). Maybe not a total overhaul, but changing somethings up a bit in some of the committees. Warren's hand.
- Warren thinks it's worth looking at more broadly since it's hard to pinpoint the reasons for the lack of participation. Pandemic, lack of in person meetings, many factors. In the end, it comes down to how important they feel their time on GCDE is. This implies a hard look at the programs and what will motivate people to spend their time with us instead of elsewhere.

- We need to consider impacts and find a way to measure that. What are our constraints (people, funding) and match those in a way that makes people feel valued and that the time is worth spending. Slightly disagrees with Megan about needing to look more broadly than minorly.
- Damiana mic out. Megan then over to staff.
- Megan appreciates Warren's input. She worries that sometimes if things are too in depth, things won't get done. We may be able to leverage people's existing knowledge and connections more quickly. She thinks it may not be too time consuming.
- Warren understands what Megan is saying. Employment is part of our name. Lots of people currently, staff, and prior members have experience in this. We could do an assessment in this area relatively quickly. What sets us apart and have an impact from what other agencies are doing in this area with our funding and resources. Yvonne and Clarence.
- Yvonne wonders why we aren't partnering with those other agencies instead of it being siloed. She talked with Kristin and Damiana about transition. Can the RTCs come to YLF, etc. There are ways that some of our advocacy and outreach could piggyback on workforce development. She may drop off. Thanks. Over to Clarence.
- Clarence agrees with the prior 3 statements in regard to employment. If we want to do an overhaul of GCDE, we should be partnering with these agencies. Groups are working individually from each other. That is a waste of time. If we all try to take a little bit of time to help each other, it wouldn't be so much overlap.
- Warren and Emily have hands up. Teams need to coordinate and communicate within their umbrellas. Things will be better this way. Damiana restarting. We could do the same with others, not without effort, but should be possible.
- Pause for break early for those who dropped offline. Warren will voice his comment after. Back at 11:15. Caught up Damiana and paused for interpreters too.
- Back from break. Wants to hear from Warren and staff. Time at end of meeting for virtual v in person. Take off agenda. Clear we want to do in person. Elizabeth thinks possible with help from IT for hybrid.
- Over to Warren. Agrees with comments about partnering. We might have to take a hard look at what we can offer to others first as we seek new partnerships. What is our value added. What are our skills, how we are organized, partnering is a vehicle. Assessment of what we can accomplish. How might it fit into our current projects if we keep them.
- Clarence and then staff since they will be impacted as constants vs members. Values opinions.
- Clarence agrees with Warren but sometimes there are just different viewpoints or perspectives and ideas needed, and people willing to help with tasks such as calls or marketing, so although we need to look at what we can offer – sometimes it is just being there to help their cause.
- Over to staff starting with Elaine. Question about vice-chairs attending – only if chairs can't make it? Can we elaborate on that (Ryan's hand up).
- Couple parts (subcommittee representation on behalf of chair). Also, it is open, so anyone is welcome like our other meetings. They may have different insight. Some serve more than 1 role (such as MAL). Just for information.
- Elaine is with Matt about SSA from her personal experience and those in her circle (backpay has been an issue with earning too much when going back to work). It is near to her and those in her community. It is a disincentive to go back to work.

- Benefits are also an equality issue and is troubling. She is passionate about this employment problem as well. She worries a bit about in-person meeting. She has to be careful about COVID personally. It is still a reality. She does see the value of in person meetings though. She just wants us to be mindful. The flu is also upon us.
- Over to Ryan. Likes hearing other comments. Supports them. Can see that we have a lot of growth and change opportunity. That is important to him. Office of Equity when compared to GCDE is interesting because Office of Equity is higher than us. We might need a reorg. He's discussed this with other staff. He doesn't like the silos we've created with staff working on their separate programs. It is not balanced. That is his opinion.
- Over to Elizabeth. Unmute. Missed cue. Appreciated the conversation. Has wanted to have it during her tenure. Lots of food for thought. Is passionate about hearing from the community. Figuring out how to do that and integrate what we hear is a challenge.
- We've had these programs for a long time. Her role participates in everything. If we can bring more voices into her work, that is important.
- To respond to Ryan, the Equity Office is internally facing. Ours is externally facing. Identify issues, hear what is going on, bring it back to the legislature and governor. She has been looking at how many staff other commissions the state has and how they do their work.
- We have more staff. They are not event focused. Community engagement at their quarterly meetings is the core of their work. How can we be more responsive and engaged. She doesn't know our next steps, that is a big question.
- She also looked at other state GCDE's. She talked to B&C (300 boards here in WA), curious to find out if participation issue is widespread, and the feedback was yes definitely in all groups. In talking to other commissions (ethnic and disability focused) people are struggling to get people to show up at meetings or volunteer for subcommittees with less of a commitment involved than GCDE.
- It is the landscape and current trend, interestingly. Hybrid meetings are doable. Some people in person is important, and other times it's a barrier. We need to do it in a quality way. Loves the conversation, wants to hear more. Emily and then Clarence and then moving on. Ideas for GM.
- Emily does not have anything particularly insightful to add, Agrees with everyone. Is nervous for the changes but appreciates everyone's support.
- Clarence suggested next step is sending out a survey to the full GCDE membership. What they like currently, what they maybe don't, what would be their end goal as a suggestion. Damiana did do that at the start of her term as chair. That is where legislative subcommittee came from. There were other suggestions such as in-person meetings and employment piece.
- Next pressing item, moving on, GM – next CC meeting is too close to bring in speakers. Ideas are present, not a path forward.

11:05 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. - Break (10 mins)

11:15 a.m. to 11:35 a.m. - Planning for GM meeting (20 mins) – Damiana Harper, GCDE Chair

- Maybe this gm meeting could focus on this topic. Members, push for associates to get their input. Put it out to the public as well. May be an opportunity for a listening session to hear from the statewide disability community. Just came to her. Welcomes thoughts.
- Do have a list from the Spring meeting as well that was sent out. Open floor.

- Clarence. Wanted someone from Office of Equity to give an update and how we could partner, be more involved, to better their DEI efforts statewide. They just appointed the new director. The meeting is later in the fall. It might be a good opportunity to invite them in once they've had a chance to settle in. It is Megan Matthews. We could add them to our list. Other thoughts.
- Warren. Connected to our current discussion. If one of barriers to participation has been in-person lack thereof, have someone who is experienced in hybrid meetings and how to do them well to address the virtual only issue. Unless Elizabeth can do it.
- Damiana asked for thoughts about how we hold space for this at our next meeting. Marsha is in favor. Patti has experience with using the Owl hybrid meeting tech. She has an article about some of the challenges she can share.
- She just participated in a meeting earlier this week with that and was effective. Perhaps we could borrow Patti's. Elizabeth clarified that the last time she may have mentioned that we were looking at getting an OWL.
- Subsequently that is not an option for us. She's reached out to IT for some assistance in getting something similar that meets certain safety requirements in state govt. Maybe we can persuade them.
- Emily clarified to make sure we won't be having the upcoming meeting as hybrid, and just talking about it. Damiana thinks that since Awards and Outreach will have just happened, it is likely unrealistic to do then. One thing we didn't talk about in rearranging our work is staff capacity.
- Our staff is amazing, but there are only so many hours in the day. We need to be mindful of this as we schedule events. She talked about this with Elizabeth. There should be at least 6 weeks in between our in-person events.
- There is a lot of work that goes into make them happen and it is a heavy lift. If we keep doing things the way that we are, we want to ensure it is quality. Those take time.
- Clarence added that if we were to do a hybrid meeting, to do it correctly, it would take at least 6 months to do testing, reconfiguration, learning, designing the process etc.
- Damiana is glad his thoughts were not the opposite. We don't have the capacity right now with everything else going on to make it happen for the next meeting. We can do it, just not by then.
- Time is running out. We have the list of other items that didn't get addressed. These shorter meetings are helpful for those who work. It is difficult to have full discussions when time is short. Carrying on.
- Hybrid meetings, inviting OEO, other items on the Spring list that carried over and we can look at.
- Elizabeth had a suggestion. We just invested a lot of energy in looking forward. We did not get buy in to bringing to the larger membership. Her worry is if we don't, then we might lose momentum.
- If we set that as a theme, and could invite Megan from OEO that fits. The hybrid meeting discussion would likely be more staff focused and have resources. People can disagree. But we would need to do that internally anyway since the state has parameters.
- Damiana agrees. It brings up another topic that we don't have time for today, which is our logo. We have some great drafts. We can bring that to the GM as well to review and vote on within the theme.
- Cullynn is working on them. She did some really rough drafts versions based on initial feedback. She has not had time to polish. But would appreciate feedback if they are on the right track or

would need a whole redesign. There are a couple different ideas recently sent. But would appreciate more feedback before spending more time.

- Damiana wonders if we could have pictures in a survey monkey. Emily thinks we could do that and reminded folks that we would of course have to include descriptions. Emily will touch base and send it to CC to narrow down to the top 2-3 choices to bring to GM.
- If not, we can brainstorm. MS forms might work too. Elizabeth can help with descriptions. Cullyn offered to label them by number and people could just say that they like certain ones to get an overall direction with the latest updates.
- Cullyn wondered if we need use certain do fonts. We can connect offline on that. That may be a communications dept. question. Elizabeth said we have latitude and don't have brand guidelines in the same way. But she will follow up with some guidelines that have to do with accessibility and things.
- Cullyn still appreciates the guidance. Thanks to staff for following up. Damiana has enjoyed this. Thank you to Cullyn as well.

11:35 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. - Logo review (10 mins) - Damiana Harper, GCDE Chair

See action items below from 6/23 (initial drafts sent already, still need to be narrowed down/polished).

11:45 a.m. to 11:55 a.m. - Virtual vs in-person meetings (10 mins) – Damiana Harper, GCDE chair

Time permitting, looped into above discussion

11:55 a.m. to 12 noon - Wrap up and action items (5 mins) – Damiana Harper, GCDE Chair

- Thank you for the discussion
- We do want and need to make some changes, building the roadmap of how.
- That will be the focus of our next GM meeting. We will work on looking at OEO, having the listening session for associates and the public (marketing included), and looking at logos.
- We will draft an agenda and hope we can devote a chunk of time for it. Maybe we can come up with an exercise instead of an open discussion (maybe something similar to Outreach with a narrower focus).
- We'll still have some time to perfect that at the next CC meeting. Over to Clarence. Tech difficulties. Please put it in chat if needed.
- Emily thinks we captured everything well enough for now.
- Clarence was just going to clarify that we can do pictures in survey monkey. He can help.
- We will adjourn now, thanks for taking a bit of extra time, and for your patience and a great discussion. Meeting adjourned, have a great weekend.

Action Items for August 25, 2023:

- Draft GM agenda – continue discussion about future of GCDE (advertise to partners/public)
- Consider inviting the Office of Equity to the next GM meeting as well
- Emily to connect with Cullyn and Damiana about next steps on logo (bring top ones to GM)
 - Elizabeth can share some resources around accessibility if necessary
- Clarence will follow up about his task focused (vs project focused) teams idea
- Elizabeth to seek more help from IT about the possibility of hybrid meetings (adequate time)

Next Coordinating Committee Meeting Date and Time will be on Friday, October 27, 2023, from 10 a.m. to noon. **Written reports required.**

Suggestions so far for future of GCDE: consider using project management tools, how we might implement Clarence's idea of task/skills focused (vs project) teams to reduce silos and coordinate work, consider doing at least 1 in-person meeting, look at what we're doing to see if it empowers PWD, consider partnering more with and listening to other statewide groups without duplicating around what we can offer one another (to include work around transition and employment including advocacy and awareness, and education and awareness activities to address lack of resources), keep YLF or a youth focus somehow, differentiate where prep and in-person work is needed for events, ensure we are sharing the leadership load and building folks up to step into that space, find people who are passionate or good about certain aspects of our work and place them accordingly to match the needs and optimize people's time (even if it requires rethinking our structure), expand how we think of volunteers and coordination (such as temporary help for projects similar to what's being done on Outreach right now), conduct a needs assessment or targeted survey with key partners and employers of what the disability community needs right now and whether we are addressing that in our efforts such as around accommodations, disclosure, addressing stigma, and advocacy and equity focus, could consider an outside consultant to help us do this thoroughly and within our resources and impact and benefit while still moving forward (leverage existing skills and knowledge), work with federal partners where we can as well to interact with our group (such as around SSA), consider restructuring subcommittees to better meet our charges,

Please review action items from June 23, 2023, and follow up on them accordingly (see below).

Action items from 6/23:

Action items:

- Send out **logo ideas** (attached). **Would like feedback.** Will **discuss at next meeting.** Cullynn will describe.
- Will send out [lived experience stipend guidelines](#) for review and **discuss more at next meeting.**
- Will **discuss how to integrate PEAR work at next meeting**, be thinking about ideas.
 - Include internal and external, focus on intersectionality.
 - Will send link to [Watch Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America | Netflix](#) (also available on Amazon Prime, Google Play, and Redbox) to start with educating ourselves
 - Megan also has resources from her agency that she can share.
- Will assign mentors for Angela and Ivy Anne (coordinate with [Megan](#)).
- Damiana to think more about the group mentor meeting idea.

Action items not covered at end of meeting:

- Approved Mission statement will be added to recruitment info.
 - And will add time commitment information on recruiting, once approved.
- We may consider documenting some of our current diversity efforts as a part of PEAR work.
- Chairs to take note of participation generally, and possibly manage expectations.
 - Consider assigning specific tasks.
 - Continue to think about in-person gatherings.

- *Share more participation ideas otherwise per Damiana.*
- *Reach out to ethics presenter if questions ([contact info](#) if needed).*