

Problem Assessment:

In early 2012, community members began to take notice of challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion in Dubuque. Individuals were having trouble accessing needed services and connecting to parts of the community, neighborhoods were experiencing struggles related to demographic changes, and businesses were reporting difficulty attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. With a shared desire to understand challenges and engage community members, leaders from business, nonprofits, education, government, philanthropy and the faith community came together. Together, this dynamic group of individuals developed a vision for an initiative called Inclusive Dubuque.

Project Description, Implementation, Impact and Lessons Learned:

Inclusive Dubuque is a peer-learning network of partners committed to creating an informed, equitable and inclusive community where all people are respected, valued and engaged. By building a network of nearly 60 local partners dedicated to equity and inclusion, Inclusive Dubuque aims to organize people, identify opportunities, and take action to challenge and change social and economic structures. The Inclusive Dubuque network officially launched in October 2013, with City of Dubuque Mayor Roy D. Buol as a featured speaker. City Council goals for the period 2014-16 included a policy agenda item called Inclusive Community: Action Plan as a top priority, and the City Council allocated \$75,000 per year over a three-year period to support the effort. Since that time, the network has continued to grow and now consists of over 60 network partners, with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque serving as the backbone organization. The group meets monthly, shares learning, identifies opportunities through

data collection and dialogue, and takes action on those opportunities. Through this work, the community hopes to adapt to our changing demographics and address workforce needs for the 21st century. In 2015, the Inclusive Dubuque network launched its first major collaborative effort: The Equity Profile Project. This was an extensive process to discover how diverse groups are affected by various systems in our community that impact economic wellbeing, housing, education, health, safe neighborhoods, transportation, and arts and culture. Each month, the committee leading the effort took one focus area and gathered qualitative and quantitative data from published sources and from community members through community surveys and participation in community dialogue sessions. The effort to create the Community Equity Profile paid particular attention to improving participation in government and the community by all segments of the community. Working with the Interactivity Foundation, we trained 24 diverse community members as facilitators to lead the dialogue sessions in the community. We reached members of traditionally marginalized communities through a series of events during the summer months. We met with formal and informal community leaders within various groups, worked with them to develop culturally appropriate processes, negotiated the parameters of participation (survey and/or dialogue), translated materials as needed, and attended events to conduct dialogue sessions or gather surveys. Ultimately, 584 community members attended 60 community dialog sessions and nearly 2,000 community members completed online surveys. Over 300 members signed up to stay connected and that number continues to grow. We also trained 24 community members from diverse backgrounds to facilitate the community dialog sessions. The Community Equity Profile summary was released

in November 2015. We then developed working groups for each of the core focus areas and task the groups with identifying key strategies and action areas. Community members participating in working groups are quite diverse in age, gender, and race. The working groups use a results based framework to determine where to focus strategies and what disaggregated indicators to track at the population level in order to evaluate progress over time. City staff from various departments serve on working groups along with community members. An Impact Council was also established, whose role is communication across groups and identifying intersections between focus areas. The Equity Profile process has helped to catalyze a larger community conversation about both cultural and equity issues that extend beyond those working on equity in a professional capacity. The process has encouraged ongoing input and actions by community members of diverse cultural backgrounds, and increased engagement on government commissions and community boards by linking people together through the Inclusive Dubuque network. Each Network Partner also determines how they can be part of creating an inclusive and equitable community by "doing what they do best." Examples include: the Dubuque Community School District implementing cultural proficiency training; the Chamber of Commerce developing its first Minority Business Council; Greater Dubuque Development Corporation instituting an entrepreneur strategy; and Northeast Iowa Community College hiring an outreach coordinator specifically tasked with connecting minority community members to education and training opportunities.

Project Cost and Financing:

The total project cost is \$220,000 annually to support research, outreach, and community engagement around inclusion. The City of Dubuque has committed \$75,000 a year for three years to support Inclusive Dubuque and the implementation of recommendations from the equity profile. The remaining funds come from 6 network partners, including business, education, and non-profits.

Agencies & Companies Involved:

Inclusive Dubuque network partners include advocacy and non-profit groups led by African-American and Latino community members, an Interfaith group consisting of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim members, the local Multicultural Family Center, large employers and health care providers with a diverse employee base, K-12 and higher education institutions, government, and local human services organizations.

Contributions of Local Government:

While the Equity Profile Project is a collaborative effort of the Inclusive Dubuque network as a whole, each network partner also chooses how they might best contribute. The City of Dubuque has participated by having staff serve on the Equity Profile committee, and now on working groups, and also by beginning to more closely examine the ways in which our operations contribute towards equity and inclusion, whether that is through delivery of our services, development of our workforce, community engagement with government, or partnering with residents and other organizations on actions to move equity forward. Elected city officials were involved not only in the early initiation and kick-off, but also have supported the effort by establishing a City Council priority around being an inclusive community and allocating funding to Inclusive Dubuque. The Council has supported reorganization and expanded staffing in the

Human Rights Department so that we might lead collaborative efforts to impact equity both inside the organization and with community partners. This city is also examining the ways in which our operations contribute towards equity and inclusion, whether that is through delivery of our services, development of our workforce, community engagement with government, or partnering with residents and other organizations on actions to move equity forward. Working with the Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a core team of City staff has developed a draft equity toolkit to assist with decision making and is creating a template for department level equity plans that includes clear parameters and expectations, including benchmarks to measure progress.

Total Time project took/projected to take for completion (start and end date)

In February 2015, the Inclusive Dubuque network launched the Equity Profile project and hosted a series of community dialogue sessions. The community profile was released in November 2015. Following this work groups were developed for each of the core focus areas, and they are tasked with identifying key strategies and action areas. This program is a good example of cultural diversity because its core focus is on how different cultural groups in the community are impacted by the various systems in our community, and the methods used to discover the impacts extended beyond quantitative data to community engagement. The project blends government and elected official leadership with private partnerships, and is grounded in a recognition of the importance of citizens being active and engaged in the choices and direction for the community. It is reflective of what can be possible in a pluralistic democracy.