

Downtown Madison, Inc. (DMI) Plans and Strategies for Inclusiveness

Executive Summary

“Why is Inclusiveness Important to DMI?”

If DMI’s mission is to offer a “best-in-class quality of life” for the types of businesses and residents who will increasingly populate our city, we must seek to broaden the appeal of the downtown as a place where Madison residents of all races, cultures, and ethnicities feel welcome to live, visit, work and locate their businesses.

1. No later than January 2016, DMI will hire and work with a consultant (to be determined) to conduct an internal self-examination of its current demographic makeup and practices with respect to inclusiveness.
2. DMI will plan for learning/development opportunities for its leadership (staff and Board) to become more familiar with and knowledgeable about the current state of the organization and how we can enhance the inclusiveness of the organization.
3. After completion of learning/development opportunities, staff and DMI Board will conduct a review of the DMI Mission Statement, committee structure, website, and promotional materials for cultural and linguistic competency and inclusion and make revisions as needed.
4. Reach out and partner/collaborate with other organizations such as: **Latino Chamber of Commerce, Madison Black Chamber of Commerce, Urban League of Greater Madison, YWCA Madison, Centro Hispano, Network of Black Professionals, Latino Professionals Association, Latino Academy of Workforce Development, the Ho-Chunk Nation. Have DMI Board and staff attend their programs/events and invite them to DMI’s. **Co-host annual or semi-annual events/programs with partner organizations.**

*** This list is not inclusive*

5. Develop a DMI inclusiveness commitment statement that focuses on: **Listen, Learn and Leverage.**

-Listen - to communities and leaders who have experience and equity in communities impacted by DMI’s mission

-Learn - encompass more than being current on research/studies about historical and current inclusiveness challenges. Learn from our partner organizations.

-Leverage - DMI’s voice, membership and influence to contribute to solutions in the areas of race relations, diversity and inclusion.

6. Develop a communications strategy that focuses on Listen, Learn and Leverage. Update current print/web materials so they reflect the DMI we are/want to be. Create materials that communicate DMI's commitment statement externally.
7. Retain the DMI Ad Hoc Inclusiveness Committee to act in an advisory capacity.

Purpose/History of DMI Inclusiveness Initiative

DMI's Mission Statement provides:

DMI is committed to planning for, sustaining and growing downtown Madison as a thriving regional economic engine that offers a best-in-class quality of life for businesses, residents and visitors

During the first half of 2015, the DMI Executive Committee more intentionally considered the cultural, demographic, and economic context in which DMI and its member organizations currently exist and operate. The Executive Committee recognized that if DMI is to be true to the admirable and still-relevant principles set forth in our current Mission Statement, DMI must embark on a path to examine what we can do inside and outside our organization to expand the opportunities for a “best-in-class quality of life” to the full spectrum of Madison residents, both those that live here now, and the tens of thousands of additional residents who will make Madison their home in the coming decades. To “plan for” and “grow” downtown Madison’s economy means that DMI must increase the opportunities for the segments of our population that not only do not currently feel welcome downtown, but are the fastest growing. We must invest in this future population by identifying, confronting, and dismantling the structural and cultural barriers that deprive current communities of color of meaningful opportunities to fully participate in life downtown, and threaten to do the same to future generations. Similarly, if we wish to offer “best-in-class quality of life” for the types of businesses and residents who will increasingly populate our city, we must seek to broaden the appeal of the downtown as a place where Madison residents of all races, cultures, and ethnicities feel welcome to live, visit, work, and locate their businesses.

The Executive Committee further recognized that given its strong ties to the downtown business community, its excellent working relationships with City staff, and its deep relationships with its partners throughout the city, DMI is uniquely positioned to be a leader in our community to work toward making downtown Madison a place where *all* Madison residents feel welcome and can enjoy a quality of life that is “best in class.”

June 2015, The DMI Board of Directors appointed a nine member Ad Hoc Committee to “investigate, consider, and recommend: (1) a process by which DMI will enhance the inclusiveness of DMI membership and leadership so that DMI and its leadership reflect the full spectrum of cultural richness and viewpoints within the downtown community;

(2) resources required to implement the recommended process; and (3) a timeline for implementation.” The Ad Hoc Committee was asked to present its recommendations to the DMI Board no later than September 15, 2015.

DMI Ad Hoc Committee on Inclusiveness members: Shiva Bidar-Sielaff; Brad Grzesiak; Megan Jerabek; Joann Kelley; Dan O’Callaghan; Stacy Ozanne; Doug Poland (Chair); Mark Richardson and Jeff Vercauteren. The Ad Hoc Committee met five times over the course of the summer. The first meeting was held on Friday, July 3, and for the final time on Friday, September 4. DMI Staff members were present for the meetings.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Conduct Internal Self-Examination and Inventory of Current Practices

A. Document current situation in terms of demographic makeup of leadership and membership and actions being taken at each level to enhance inclusiveness. Specific activities include:

- Inventory DMI current membership roster to identify how many businesses/organizations that focus on inclusiveness issues are currently members. Draw upon the identified members by meeting with them to understand the process they used and how it is making positive changes in their organization (Agrace, Overture, Sustain Dane, Dane Dances, etc.).
- Analyze how much participation from diverse groups DMI is seeing from individuals within our current membership.

B. Work with (an agreed upon) consultant to conduct an inclusion assessment of the organizational environment, knowledge, and capabilities regarding diversity to:

- Determine the current level of cultural competency and atmosphere of inclusion that exists at DMI at the board, committee and staff levels.
- Identify challenges, needs and opportunities in DMI that are critical to being successful in a diverse world.
- Identify cultural competence gaps that DMI needs to address and suggest education and other activities to help DMI move towards higher stages of inclusion.
- Help identify metrics to measure and track progress as plan is implemented.
- Use insights and conclusions from the assessment to help guide/inform recommendations in this plan.

C. After completion of training recommended later in this plan, conduct review of DMI mission, committee structure, website, and promotional materials for cultural and linguistic competency and inclusion and make recommendations as needed to revise.

Recommendation #2: Create Learning and Development Opportunities

A. Conduct an initial learning “event” for the DMI Board and Staff

B. Prepare an initial series of programs that are available to DMI leadership, Committees, Staff, and members that further the inclusiveness of DMI.

- Acknowledge the need to enhance inclusiveness
- Support efforts to enhance inclusiveness
- Recognize efforts that have enhanced inclusiveness

C. Prepare a “second wave” of events or programs.

D. Include in the DMI newsletter programs, materials, events, etc. that connect to inclusive activities and invite DMI leadership, staff, and members to participate.

Recommendation #3: Partner and Collaborate with Other Organizations

Creating partnerships and increasing collaboration with other organizations strengthens DMI and other groups within our community.

A. Identify organizations with which DMI can partner and collaborate.

***As a start, the committee recommends the following partner organizations: Latino Chamber of Commerce, Madison Black Chamber of Commerce, Urban League of Greater Madison, YWCA Madison, Centro Hispano, Network of Black Professionals, Latino Professionals Association, Latino Academy of Workforce Development, the Ho-Chunk Nation.*

***This list is not inclusive*

B. Establish a more collaborative culture at every level of DMI.

- Members of the Board, Committees, and Staff will be informed of opportunities to attend partner organization events; will be encouraged to attend and make connections at those events; and will be asked to invite partner organization members to DMI events.
- Members of the Board, Committees, and Staff will be encouraged to add members of partner organizations to their networks and to interact through social media to foster involvement in each other’s organizations.
- DMI Board members/staff will organize a series of small roundtable discussion with partner organization board members/staff to learn how we can better support each other.

C. Co-host Annual or Semi-Annual Programs with Partner Organizations.

Recommendation #4: Establish and Implement a Communications Strategy

A. Develop a commitment statement for the inclusiveness initiative based on Listen, Learn and Leverage.

- **Listen** - to communities and leaders who have experience and equity in communities impacted by DMI's mission. It would encompass engaging with our partners, Board members, and members to better understand our challenges and opportunities.
- **Learn** - learning would encompass more than just being current on research/studies about historical and current challenges. It would require that we learn about organizations, programs and people immersed in communities of color in an effort to understand existing efforts and how DMI can leverage considerable civic and political capital.
- **Leverage** - DMI's voice, membership, and influence to contribute to solutions in the areas of Race Relations, Diversity and Inclusion. We will communicate the importance of this issue both internally and externally.

B. Develop a communications strategy that focuses on the pillars of commitment statement.

- Separate focus on internal and external strategies. (Possibly seek assistance for the external strategy piece)
- Include talking points/messaging for executive committee/board/committee members and staff.
- After this has been presented to the executive committee and board, considering having inclusiveness as the sole topic for one month of committee meetings to get broad participation and varied viewpoints from membership.
 - Presentations followed by open questions.
 - Follow up with short (3 question max) anonymous survey.

C. Develop schedule for the multi-stage launch of the initiative.

- Internal launch
- To Committees during October Committee meetings.
- To Membership at large during annual dinner.
- External launch/Early 2016

D. Audit current print/web materials to consider whether they accurately represent the DMI we are/want to be

- Short term goal: Development of Updated Materials: Mid-range goal: DMI membership committee/advisory member of Ad Hoc committee
- Consider whether it shows what we want it to show. Develop recommendations for improvement to materials if necessary.

E. Develop collateral/video materials to communicate commitment statement externally

- Consider hiring professional or seeking in-kind donation from marketing/video production company who is also a member of DMI
- Review existing videos being used by other groups to determine whether there may be a way to use what is already out there.
- Messaging should explain why DMI is implementing this initiative, including making the business case for doing so.
- Considering including committee members/high-profile members that are moving in this direction (i.e. MG&E, UW-Madison, etc.)

Recommendation #5: Complete/Apply the DMI Code of Conduct and Expectations

A. Implement Code of Conduct at all levels of DMI.

- Board/Committees/Staff
- Membership

B. Interpret and apply the Code of Conduct on an ongoing basis.

- Have the DMI Code of Conduct available at all DMI meetings.
- Make the Code of Conduct available on DMI's website.
- Hold members of Board and Committees, Staff, and Membership accountable for violations of Code of Conduct.

Recommendation #6: Retain the Ad Hoc Inclusiveness Committee to Act in an Advisory Capacity

A. Query the members of the Ad Hoc Committee about their willingness to act in an advisory capacity or as a resource on an as-needed basis during the implementation of the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations.

B. Establish an advisory group comprising those Ad Hoc Committee members who are willing to serve for a period of one year after the Board's adoption of the recommendations proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee.