



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of

Date: Wednesday, July 30, 2014
To: Council Vice President Elizabeth Glidden, Chair, Committee of the Whole
Referral to: City Council
Subject: **Urban Scholars Youth Engagement and Policy Recommendation Presentation**

Recommendation: To receive the Urban Scholars – Youth Engagement Project and forward recommendations within it to the NCR Department and NCEC for incorporation into the final report on the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement that will be presented to City Council by December 1, 2014.

Department Information

Prepared by: Lance Knuckles, Access and Outreach Manager, NCR Department
Approved by: David Rubedor, NCR Director
Presenters in Committee: David Rubedor, NCR Director and Urban Scholars Project Leadership

Reviews N/A

Financial Impact *(delete all lines not applicable to your request)*

Community Impact

City Goals:

One Minneapolis: Disparities are eliminated so all Minneapolis residents can participate and prosper

Strategic Directions:

- Equitable systems and policies lead to a high quality of life for all.
- Residents are informed, see themselves represented in City government and have the opportunity to influence decision-making.

Supporting Information

Each year the Urban Scholars conduct a group project as a part of their leadership and skills development. This year, the Urban Scholars project was focused on gaining an understanding of how youth feel connected to the City of Minneapolis and to the decision making processes. In addition, the project is an intentional strategy to engage youth and to inform the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement Strategic Action Plan.

The scholar's focus group project included developing the project scope, stakeholder identification, coordination/logistics of focus groups, framing of discussion questions, developing policy recommendations from focus groups and the development of their project presentation.

Each session adhered to the City of Minneapolis Core Principles of Community Engagement, International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) engagement framework and NCR's engagement practices of "meeting people where they are". In this project the scholars met with over 40+ youth within different communities across Minneapolis.

Focus Session Questions:

1. How would you describe your level of engagement within the City of Minneapolis?
2. What are some of the issues that affect youth living in Minneapolis?
3. What would drive you to become civically engaged with the City of Minneapolis?
4. How can city leaders work better with the youth to assure access to decision making processes that affect the community?

The Urban Scholars reviewed the youth feedback and identified themes that supported policy recommendations aimed at our Boards and Commissions:

1. Have all Development Boards and Commissions to conduct at minimum an annual engagement session with youth organizations adhering to the City's [*Core Principles of Community Engagement*](#).
2. Have all Development Boards and Commissions develop and submit an annual report to City Council; focused on community engagement activity, diversity and inclusion that explicitly frames on-going youth engagement and participation.
3. Modify the Equitable Solutions - *Guide to Engaging Boards and Commissions* to incorporate youth as intentional stakeholders in recruitment, membership, decision making and engagement.

The feedback and information gathered from these sessions will also be incorporated into the final report that will be submitted to the full City Council in the Fall of 2014, inform the new business plan of the NCR department and the work plan of the NCEC.

Blueprint for Equitable Engagement

The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement is a multi-year strategic action plan to ensure ***an equitable community engagement system*** for the City of Minneapolis.

The City's Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) department and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) are utilizing an engagement strategy consistent with the **City's adopted Core Principles of Engagement** to create the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement to ensure the City's engagement efforts are equitable in their approach and implementation. An equitable engagement system ensures that all community voices are sought and valued and that decision makers reflect the communities of which they serve. The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement focuses in the following areas of the City's engagement work:

1. **Neighborhood organizations**: We aim to help neighborhood organizations assess whether or not their outreach efforts, board decision making processes and distribution of resources is being conducted with a lens of equity and inclusion. The City intends to include the 70 neighborhood organizations as partners in addressing racial disparities in our community. With access to local political and social resources neighborhoods are able to utilize millions of dollars annually and become central places of empowerment for marginalized community members;
2. **City's board and commissions**: The City has a goal of having the advisory and planning boards and commissions reflect the diversity in the community. The City

Council charged both the NCR department and the NCEC with making recommendations on the best way to achieve this goal. Recommendations have been developed and are in either being considered or implemented.

3. **City enterprise outreach and engagement**. The NCR department supports the community engagement efforts of City departments and connects this work with the efforts stated above.

The NCR department's Access and Outreach team will support the aforementioned efforts. The Access and Outreach team has staff dedicated to ensuring that equitable engagement practices are utilized where cultural norms and/or practices, language and disability create barriers. Specific initiatives that support equitable engagement include ADA support, the Latino Engagement Task Force and the American Indian Memorandum of Understanding. The department has initiatives to strengthen engagement with the Southeast Asian, East African and African American communities in 2014.