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Your Information

Your Name

Amanda Afifi

Your Commission

Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission

Email

BC-Amanda.Afifi@austintexas.gov

After question three, which questions from the flowchart are you prepared to answer?

Is there funding?
Which department holds the funding?
Which orgs receive it?
How is success measured?
What are the impacts, and gaps?

Root Cause Analysis

Story: What did you hear from the community?

The community reports the City of Austin's Economic Development Department is not prioritizing culturally led contracts. Culturally led programs and agencies apply for funding year after year to no avail. A specific example from the community is Latinitas. They have not traditionally been considered for these contracts, though they specifically work on coding and job training. Additionally, last year the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission recommended funding STEM and STEAM programs for Latinas. The recommendation was lumped with other recommendations for STEM and STEAM programs. The solicitation was focused on providing services to the African American community.

Problem: What is the problem you identify?

According to the Workforce Development Audit dated November 2017, the City lacks a comprehensive workforce development plan, the contracts are not centrally managed, and the contract performance measures are not consistent or effective. The City does not have reliable data relating to contractor performance and outcomes. The audit also indicates that the City did not appear to prioritize contracted services to meet its own goals or the needs of the community.

The Economic Development department completed a SWOT Analysis as part of the Equity Assessment Tool. The department identified the following weaknesses:

- The racial breakdown of all clients, consultants and contractors is unknown.
- The Department conducts some customer satisfaction surveys, but does not collect data on the race, ethnicity, gender, national origin or income level of respondents.
- There is no department-wide process or policy for deciding when to engage the community in decision making.

How does the problem show up in your community? Who is most impacted by the problem?

We continually see underfunding of culturally led programs in the City's workforce development contracting. The majority of the funding awarded is large contracts to large organizations. Funding is not equitably distributed to include smaller contracts awarded to culturally led organizations. These organizations are rooted in the community, and are better able to serve the community. Due to limited funds, these organizations are unable to meet the community's needs.

Additionally, the audit shows that programs failed to train individuals in what the City considers to be target markets. The programs failed to prioritize the certifications most needed by employers. The skills need to be better aligned with labor needs of employers. This provides a sense of false hope among the participants.

The program providers are required to report on outputs and outcomes; however, they are not required to report on race. We do not have data to show how the current programs are specifically impacting the Hispanic/Latino community.

Is there funding to address the problem?

Yes

Do multiple departments administer these funds?

Yes

What is the primary department that administers the funds?

Economic Development

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| What is the secondary department that administers the funds? | Austin Public Health |
| Which organization(s) or program receives the funding? | Most of the funds are received by Capital IDEA, Skillpoint Alliance, Workforce Solutions of the Capital Area, Goodwill of Central Texas, and Easterseals Central Texas. |
| How is success measured in the contract/department? How does this align with SD2023? | <p>According to the Workforce Development Audit dated November 2017, the City lacks a comprehensive workforce development plan, the contracts are not centrally managed, and the contract performance measures are not consistent or effective.</p> <p>EDD measure cost per client trained. APH's three workforce development performance measures are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of individuals served, • percent of individuals demonstrating improved life skills or knowledge, and • percent of individuals who maintain or increase their income. <p>However, these measures do not effectively measure program impact, and apply to limited contractors.</p> |
| What are the impacts of the funding? | <p>According to the audit, only 19% of individuals received training in the City's target markets, and non of the graduates were trained in two of the target markets (fashion and zero waste). The City's investments did not prioritize the certification most needed by Austin employers. Additionally, contracts did not consistently prioritize the unemployed or hard-to-employ despite those target populations being identified in at least one RFA solicitation. Though contracting records indicate target populations were prioritized in RFA solicitations, these priorities were not detailed in the contract agreements signed with service providers. Specifically, all but one contract required participants to be at or below 200% of federal poverty income guidelines to be eligible for services, but none of the five contractors reviewed in this audit prioritized the unemployed over the underemployed,⁵ and contractors did not track service to individuals in hard-to-employ populations. Without established goals and strategies on what the City aims to achieve with its workforce development investments, virtually any outcome could be seen as a success. Further, it is difficult to determine if services are duplicated or there are gaps in addressing community needs relating to workforce development if contracting decisions are not driven by City goals and expectations.</p> <p>Demographics of clients is collected on a volunteer basis.</p> <p>There are gaps in funding smaller, culturally led organizations.</p> |

Considering all of the information you have or have not collected above, how do we solve for this problem?

The Commission recommends addressing disparities in outcomes in current contracts and inefficiencies in the current funding stream by:

- Requiring funding intent, including metrics, strategic plans, and growth strategies with regard to the Hispanic/Latino community;
- Funding impact follow up, including statistics and demographics from funding years;
- Continuing to collect and report data on race;
- Presenting the data to the Commission on a regular basis; and
- Continuing to respond to the recommendations from the audit.

The Commission also recommends the Economic Development Department collect data regarding marketable training to better prepare for high demand jobs, and drop out rates for people of color. The Commission also recommends adding language and requirements around cultural competency in the contracts awarded.
