

Bruce M. Watts & Associates

Portland Housing Bureau
Equity Business Plan
FINAL DRAFT February 20, 2012

Introduction

The Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) engaged Bruce M. Watts & Associates (BMW) in June 2011 to assist the Bureau in the development of an Equity Business Plan. With the Bureau having already established long term goals regarding equity in their 2011-2013 Strategic Plan, the Equity Business Plan provides short term tactical actions and business practices to be implemented across the Bureau's three business lines: Ending Homelessness; Neighborhood Housing emphasizing Minority Home Ownership; and Housing Development funded with PHB resources.

This engagement has deepened our understanding of the intentions of the Bureau, and the actions that have already been initiated. Based on this we sincerely believe that the Portland Housing Bureau is in a position to provide leadership within the City and in the affordable housing/social service provider industry on issues related to equity and social justice, and hope that these recommendations guide the Bureau on that path.

The key tactical steps we recommend are refinement, adoption and utilization by PHB of two primary tools – **Guiding Principles**, which will communicate the Equity and Social Justice values PHB holds for itself and set forth the expectations it has for its partners; and an **Equity Impact Analysis Tool**, to define and measure the social impact of PHB policies, programs and investments

Taken together these tools can be used to operationalize PHB's goals for social equity and inform actions within specific areas, which are more fully discussed in the recommendations at the end of this report and include: Strategic Partnerships; Meaningful Community Engagement and Communications; Data Collection and Measurement; and Organizational Development.

The next section of this report includes a summary of the process through which BMW gathered and analyzed information to develop the PHB Equity Business Plan, and highlights the insights we gained from a wide range of PHB stakeholders. This background is provided because it signals the importance of the involvement of key stakeholders in the next steps of refining, adopting and utilizing the Plan.

Summary of the process

To familiarize themselves with the work and staff across those business lines, BMW met with the following internal stakeholders:

- Executive Team
- Neighborhood Housing/Home Ownership Team
- Ending Homelessness Team
- Data Team
- Housing Development Finance Team
- Diversity and Equity Council
- Equity, Policy, and Communications Team
- Portland Housing Advisory Commission

BMW also met with external PHB partners and stakeholders, including:

- Portland Development Commission
- Multnomah County Equity Council
- Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
- City of Portland Procurement Office

Key insights and ideas suggested by staff and stakeholders from meetings from September-December, 2011 include:

- A. Establish target equity goals within the three business lines
 1. Currently the bureau uses quantitative outcome goals and measurements of success. Each of the teams expressed a desire to track more qualitative variables to capture the stories of the work being done and the people being served in addition to the quantitative data
 2. The Data Team suggests that with the switch to a new data system (HDS), they can work with each of the teams to identify questions, variables, and measurements
 3. External stakeholders including PDC and BPS are attempting additional qualitative measures as well
- B. Clarify role of PHB as funder, versus role of borrower/developer/contractor using public funds
 1. PHB Housing Development Finance (HDF) staff have identified actions and processes appropriate to its role as a funder of sponsored projects that can be built into the application for and awarding of funding for construction of affordable housing.
 2. PHB has recently modeled how its role as a funder can be leveraged to create significant and meaningful outcomes in construction contracting opportunities for MWESB firms (Block 49 Veterans Housing, Glisan Commons).

3. Other PHB business lines need to identify specific actions and processes changes that will impact how funded contractors can demonstrate meaningful results
 4. PHB will benefit from Guiding Principles for equity to be used to communicate PHB's intention to all partners; and an equity analysis tool to be used as an internal way to assure that processes and business practices will achieve the equity outcomes desired
- C. Recommend business process changes within delivery teams and business operations
1. PHB staff and business line teams can and should participate in development of tools and finalization of Equity Business Plan for business process changes
 2. Specific tools used by other jurisdictions can be adapted to the work at PHB as outlined below, such as an Equity Analysis Tool.
- D. Review staffing structure and advise PHB on modifications that could lead to stronger accountability.
1. PHB staff and leadership are hardworking talented professionals who are, in large part, committed to the goals of advancing equity as outlined in the bureau's Strategic Plan. However, it is not clear *who leads* the equity work for the bureau, what individual and team responsibilities and accountability are for outcomes.
 2. In order to be accountable for outcomes bureau-wide, staff needs clear definition of measurable changes for which they are responsible, clearly articulated expectations, and training on how to achieve them. Additionally, key leadership and staff will benefit from specific professional and leadership development focused on building their skills to develop and manage staff accountability actions and measurements
- E. Outline best methods for leveraging efforts of City Procurement Office
1. City Procurement office is actively interested in partnering with PHB to develop methods that will serve the bureau and inform Citywide procurement practices
 2. Further exploration of how to work together is needed.
- F. Outline communications and community involvement steps
1. Communications and community involvement are two distinct issues.
 2. Ideas for specific marketing strategies, some of which came out of meetings with PHB teams, can be further developed.
 3. Our interviews with members of PHAC and the Coalition of Communities of Color, and our own experiences with the communities you serve, suggest an opportunity for enhanced relationships and engagement between PHB and the community
- G. Develop reporting and accountability metrics that leverages the new Housing Development software
1. Each of the teams have identified specific recommendations for quantitative and qualitative measures that are described later

2. Opportunities exist to partner with both BPS and PDC on development of common metrics.
- H. Identify linkages to the Portland Plan and the City's Office of Equity and Human Rights
1. Linkages to PDC, BPS, Office of Equity, and other City bureaus and County departments have been identified throughout our interviews with internal and external stakeholders
 2. With the development of the City Office of Equity, PHB has the opportunity to inform and play a significant role in this citywide effort.
 3. BPS, PDC and other City bureaus, in common with PHB, have identified Equity as a priority for the respective strategic direction for each of those agencies, and are actively involved in developing implementation plans.
 4. These linkages provide opportunities for leveraging leadership, resources, and products and outcome measurement.
- I. Comment on most effective use of PHB's Equity and Diversity Council
1. Their exact role is yet to be determined, especially given the creation and role for the Equity, Policy, and Communications Team
 2. The PHAC is a valuable resource for the PHB and its Equity Business Plan that should be engaged and leveraged.
- J. Convene a focus group, comprised of representatives of Multnomah County, Tri-Met, Portland Development Commission, and Home Forward to test the suggested new business practices prior to implementation, gather feedback and modify the model as needed. Collaboration with these and other jurisdictional partners remains a top priority. Whether to learn from each other and adapt best practices or to jointly develop measurement metrics.
- K. Consult with PHAC for recommendations about additional partners with whom to test suggested practice changes.

As follow up to the initial round of interviews and input, and in consultation with PHB leadership, in late January, 2012 BMW held two 3 hour work sessions with PHB staff, one with representatives from the Executive Team and Program Managers, the other with The Diversity and Equity Council, and Equity Policy and Communications (EPC) team. The purpose of these meetings was to finalize input for development of recommendations.

At those meetings BMW:

- Discussed the utilization of the PHB Statement on Equity and Social Justice as the base document for the PHB Guiding Principles
- Presented the framework for an Equity Analysis Tool (using the Equity Lens model developed by Multnomah County Health Department) that could be used by PHB to create their own Equity Analysis Tool
- Identified key Organizational Development activities necessary for successful implementation of the PHB Equity Business Plan

- Identified some next steps for Program Managers and the Data team to develop Equity Goals and measurements to capture qualitative data that expands and deepens the understanding of quantitative data already collected.

Based on our experience of bringing solutions for organizations advancing their own work in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and on the wealth of information and input gathered in our work to date, BMW offers the following recommendations:

Recommendations

The key tactical steps we recommend are refinement, adoption and utilization by PHB of two primary tools – **Guiding Principles**, which will communicate the Equity and Social Justice values PHB holds for itself and set forth the expectations it has for its partners; and an **Equity Impact Analysis Tool**, to define and measure the social impact of PHB policies, programs and investments.

1. Guiding Principles

In order to fully operationalize its values and goals for Equity and Social Justice the PHB can utilize one of its own assets, namely the work completed by the Equity and Diversity Council in the creation of the Statement on Equity and Social Justice which asserts that *the Portland Housing Bureau is committed to equity and social justice in its delivery of housing resources and opportunities to all residents from Portland's diverse and multicultural communities.*

Guiding Principles will become part of every communication and public document published and utilized by the PHB, and will leave no question about how decisions are made, resources are allocated, and to what measure the PHB will be accountable.

The process of refining the **Guiding Principles** must be completed by PHB Leadership, staff and community stakeholders. As a framework BMW would suggest the following drawn from the Statement on Equity and Social Justice:

PHB Guiding Principles (Draft):

PHB will apply these **Guiding Principles** when developing policies and organizational priorities, and when making financial investment decisions.

- PHB employs an **Equity Analysis Tool** to strategically target resources in a manner that will seek to correct identified patterns of inequity for people of color.

- PHB & its partners seeks to develop deeper community relationships for shared success.
- PHB will adopt and communicate its equity message for various audiences
- PHB seeks opportunities to provide technical assistance support to stakeholders & borrowers groups to improve Equity outcomes from our work
- PHB will encourage & reward innovation
- PHB will measure & rate success

2. Equity Impact Analysis Tool

The ultimate goal of using the **Equity Impact Analysis Tool** is to increase the social impact of PHB policies, programs and investments as changes in the social impact lead to changes elsewhere in the system.

The refinement and utilization of an **Equity Impact Analysis Tool** to define and measure the social impact of PHB policies, programs and investments will likewise operationalize the significant results PHB has achieved through its efforts to identify and promote equity outcomes as its way of doing business.

Examples of these achievements include the Fall 2011 Notice of Funding Availability document, which gave specific guidance to proposers regarding equity goals; and the Bureau's work with Communities of Color Coalition to create race/ethnicity specific metrics based on community verified demographic data with which PHB will develop goals across its business lines for community specific impacts.

BMW recommends that a framework for an **Equity Impact Analysis Tool** (Multnomah County's Equity and Empowerment Lens – Social Justice Version) be adapted by PHB as a method to uniformly apply equity metrics to all decision making.

We strongly recommend that PHB leadership, in collaboration with PHAC and key stakeholders, review the draft PHB Equity Impact Analysis framework for outcomes, both intended and unintended, and review and refine the tool as needed over the initial 12-24 months of implementation.

PHB Actions and considerations to complete this element of the Equity Business Plan:
(Recommended)

- Using the framework presented, EPC and The Equity and Diversity Council take responsibility for development and implementation the Equity Analysis Tool

- Convene a working group including representatives from the PHB Executive Team, EPC, Equity and Diversity Council, PHAC, and PHB Managers to meet with Multnomah County Equity Council members to understand their use of an Equity Lens and how it can be adapted to PHB needs.
- When developing the outcomes for the **Equity Impact Analysis Tool** use a Holistic approach that addresses:
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Health
 - Land Use
- Develop an adaptable tool that can be used *internally* by project managers and technical experts when making decisions
- And *externally* in NOFA/RFP and other procurement processes; with developers and contractors; and in working with the City Council. This extends PHB influence beyond the developers and contractors to the construction contractors and provider subcontractors
- Focus on values and solutions

3. Application of Guiding Principles and Equity Impact Analysis Tool

PHB is likely to achieve improved outcomes resulting from utilization of **Guiding Principles and Equity Impact Analysis Tool** in some key areas, our recommendations include the following:

Strategic Partnerships

Participate and provide leadership and support, and serve as a convener for key equity partners which include other city bureaus and departments, and regional jurisdictions

A key first step could be to convene a focus group of representatives of these key stakeholders and community leaders to test the suggested new business practices as steps in the plan are implemented.

Meaningful Community Engagement

- Address “assumptions” about the communities we serve and collaborate with
- Clarify assumption that as a group people of color have little or no power
- Engage non-traditional (those not typically or historically solicited for input) partners and stakeholders

- Capture information not available internally and to the “usual suspects”
- Collaborate with PHAC, and other non-traditional community partners to develop a meaningful engagement model for PHB and the communities it serves:
 - Invite PHAC and other community leaders to participate in the review, and provide input in creation of the final Equity Business Plan
 - Focus Group or other vehicle to test the plans assumptions and suggested changes
- Develop a plan to engage other communities in the implementation of the plan
- Engage community earlier in all processes
 - In the development and changes to PHB policy and operations
 - At the table for decision making
 - PHB staff s to spend more time in the community (e.g. OAME, NAMCO, with non-profits, etc.) to have better understanding of climate prior to considering policy and operational changes

Communications

- Strong and consistent messaging from the top of is essential
- EPC, PIO, and the Equity and Diversity Council to clarify the equity message and develop a communications plan that includes **Guiding Principles** and a feedback loop.
- Successful communications of PHB’s equity commitment can be a means to increase support; influence the public, special interest groups, opinion leaders, political leaders, media, etc.

Organizational and Staff Development

The increased focus on equity, the changes in leadership and structure at the City (especially the new Office of Equity and Human Rights) and recent changes in leadership at PHB create a more complex layer of changes for the organization. Implementing this tactical plan will require significant organizational development and training.

Staff professional and leadership development

- Mentoring
- Job Sharing or Shadowing
- Training:
 - Institutional/Structural Racism
 - Social Determinants and impacts of housing policy
 - Leadership Development
- Team Development (restructuring)
 - Increase awareness of work across business lines
- Principles and practice of a Learning Organization: including
 - Encourage and reward all work, particularly innovation and risk taking

- An environment to take risks and speak out

Tools, Data and Measurement

- Each of the three PHB business lines create and own the Equity Goals for their programs
- EPC and/or Equity and Diversity Council convene meetings with the three business lines and the Data Team to:
 - Define individual team equity goals and opportunities for cross-team goals
 - Identify the variables they believe tells the “equity story” they want to capture
 - Create a data set that captures qualitative data (the stories) in a measurable and reportable system
- Tie the equity goals to the budget

4. Implementation Timeline

The Portland Housing Bureau is in a position to provide leadership within the City and in the affordable housing/social service provider industry on issues related to equity and social justice and it has many of the elements in place to move this work forward with the urgency that the issues demand.

It is our final recommendation that PHB take advantage of the goodwill and leadership edge it has established and complete the work to assure that this Plan and the tools described herein are fully operational for the 2012-13 fiscal year, by developing an implementation work plan upon receipt and review of this Plan.

