

TO: EDB Board of Directors
FROM: Bruce Kendall, CEO
DATE: March 17, 2022
RE: EDB Work Program Modifications

Background: On December 8, 2021 the EDB annual board retreat focused on addressing potential modifications to the EDB's five-year work program (2021-2025). The full board reviewed the retreat report at its meeting on January 21, 2022.

Goal: Ensure that the EDB's work plan objectives are on track and make any necessary course corrections.

Focus: Working with the UWT Global Innovation and Design Lab (GID), the EDB Executive Committee members, Board members, staff, and community focus groups identified two interrelated lenses through which to examine the work plan: the COVID pandemic and the challenges of systemic racism.

UWT Report: The report prepared by UWT GID and presented to the board of directors on January 21, 2022 contained 23 recommendations. Some of these are amplifications of work already underway, others are new, and some relate to the entire ecosystem of organizations engaged in various aspects of economic development. The board discussed the recommendations and offered potential action items.

Next Steps: The EDB staff reviewed the report again, debriefed with the GID team, reflected on the board's input and added its own observations. I provided my recommendations to the EDB Executive Committee on March 10th. The committee discussed the recommendations and directed the EDB to move forward as described below.

Reaffirm the Fundamentals of EDB's Work

- The EDB's Mission remains the core of what we do. The EDB grows primary jobs and businesses by working with its partners to spur private capital investment; job creation; and diversity, equity, and inclusion in Tacoma-Pierce County businesses. Why do this? Answer: primary businesses are the backbone of our economy. They export a product of service and import new dollars into the local economy, thereby growing the wealth pie. Those dollars energize the community through employee wages and purchases from suppliers who employ additional people. Greater diversity, equity and inclusion across the economy boosts productivity and helps drive growth.

- The EDB work plan contains three strategic imperatives: Business Retention and Expansion; Business Recruitment; and Communications and Strategic Engagement. These remain the central organizing elements of our work.
- The retreat provided a robust discussion and brainstorm around the entire economic development ecosystem in Tacoma-Pierce County. Some of the recommendations that emerged are EDB specific and others are focused on the larger ecosystem. The EDB's job is to grasp and run with those things that it can best accomplish and also act as a bridge to other organizations in the ecosystem who are best equipped to deliver in their areas of expertise.

Recommendations for implementation

1. **Continue** – our laser focus on primary businesses recruitment, retention and communications/strategic engagement
2. **Continue** – emphasizing those areas of the work program already focused on DEI and service to BIPOC businesses, including the following (**see attachment** for complete work program with these elements in context):
 - a. (page 7 of work program) Collaborate with key stakeholders, including business leaders, educators, thought leaders and other representatives of public and private sector entities to develop enhanced support for Black and other racially underrepresented businesses.
 - i. Establish strategic partnerships with entities that have a mutual goal of increasing access to technical assistance for Black and other racially underrepresented businesses
 - ii. Leverage strategic partnerships to raise awareness of BRE program with Black and other racially underrepresented businesses
 - b. (p.7) Identify and address systemic constraints to improve the growth opportunities of businesses and advocate for their collective benefit.
 - i. Work with partners to identify and eliminate systemic racism in the economic development ecosystem.
 - c. (p.8) Implement retention/expansion strategies by jurisdiction, cluster, and workforce needs.
 - i. Engage with businesses and partners to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion are talent-drivers across all primary industries
 - d. (p.8-9) Continue convening Cluster Acceleration Teams to coordinate and promote business opportunities and partnerships between local businesses in existing and emerging clusters...
 - i. Create teams that include diverse voices that represent the Tacoma-Pierce County Community, including Black and other racially underrepresented groups.

- ii. Evaluate and update cluster team strategic plans currently in place to reflect the important cultural attributes in Tacoma-Pierce County.
 - e. (p.11) Develop and launch initiatives focused on recruiting Black and other racially underrepresented businesses.
 - i. Leverage the BRE and Cluster Acceleration Team programs to engage local Black and other racially underrepresented firms to lay the groundwork for recruitment targets
 - ii. Partner with local Black and other racially underrepresented business associations to identify targets and outreach strategies
 - f. (p. 13) Communications and Strategic Engagement: Engage Black and other racially underrepresented leaders, as well as next-generation leaders, from the private, public, and non-profit sectors to enhance the EDB's business retention, recruitment, and marketing programs.
3. **New short term** – List smaller employers on the EDB website to help connect us to more businesses
 4. **New short term** – Make outreach, diversity and inclusion part of everyone's job (e.g., update job descriptions and performance metrics)
 5. **New short term** – Update marketing collateral as necessary
 6. **New mid term** – Create a new EDB staff position focused on board member and investor development, including connections to two and four year higher educational resources (talent), investor briefings, and bridge building to partner organizations including BIPOC partner coordination (highlighted for emphasis as this hire is fundamental to all other recommendations)
 7. **New mid term** – Join the Pierce County Community Engagement Task Force at WorkForce Central to help build a more inclusive business community
 8. **New mid term** – Craft a mentorship program for EDB board members that connects them to BIPOC businesses and/or students looking for connections to the businesses community
 9. **New long term** – Create structures where primary businesses and the broader community can come together

Recommendations for ecosystem partners (WorkForce Central, Goodwill, Chambers, Higher Education, County and Local Governments, Urban League, Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Korean Women's Association, et al):

10. Showcase age-appropriate work experiences for youth
11. Create a structure for youth to find what their workforce path looks like
12. Locate online sites that people are using to search for jobs
13. Launch an external campaign to ask the question "who does that?" to help students remain open and curious about different careers
14. Create a model for a talent pipeline for diverse businesses, educational opportunities, and resources
15. Connect social service providers, nonprofits, and businesses

16. Host a common platform for showcasing people who are qualified for work
17. Train workforce for a career, not the job at hand
18. Identify a structure to help grow individuals
19. Create education/talent pipelines through apprenticeship, research, scholarships, etc.
20. Create a bridge to connect diverse communities to businesses seeking a diverse workforce
21. Create an environment for belonging for all workers
22. Open access to free education
23. Lower barriers and provide more access/bridges/roads/money to opportunity

ATTACHMENT – EDB 2021-2025 WORK PROGRAM