



WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

Program Introduction

Issue:

There is not an industry in our country that is immune to the workforce shortage...education, health care, technology, construction and the list goes on and on...and we know that workers/people want to live, work and raise their children in communities that are welcoming to ALL people.

Wise Economic Development practitioners know that we no longer need to focus as much on business attraction as businesses will locate where they have a qualified workforce and have shifted toward attracting that workforce. We are in a “global race for talent” and Eco. Dev. practitioners are keenly aware of the changing demographics, populations and cultures and to successfully attract a workforce, we will need welcoming communities.

Thus, there is a financial and social **cost benefit** to those communities who are welcoming to residents. Rural communities who are welcoming to ALL people; despite their age, gender, disabilities, race, religion, national origin or family status will be the communities who win the race for the talent. When communities attract a qualified workforce, we attract new businesses and increase entrepreneurial activity AND we effectively deliver important services such as education and health care to residents. Companies and organizations create & retain jobs in stable healthy communities with a high quality of life. Being welcoming means we offer a sense of belonging, which is a quality of life VALUE or indicator.

Becoming a welcoming community can be led by the private sector **but it's much more of a movement or a developmental shift than the private sector can achieve alone**. Locally elected officials and staff of municipals and school boards and those who serve and work for non-profits can collectively lead alongside the private sector with strategies that attract and retain families.

Boards and leaders can consider how they support staff and onboarding, being intentionally inclusive when updating capital improvement or comprehensive/school plans.....and how we represent and promote our communities and schools to the rest of the world. Staff can consider how we interact with community members and students. Strategically, we should consider individual and collective roles in this movement.

Approach:

Some great work has already begun in the space of recognizing how to improve our desire to be a welcoming region. Our Workforce Investment Board and Chambers have led the way with the private sector, our foundation leadership/fellowship programs are assisting individuals in leadership growth that is welcoming and our higher educational institutions are working on intercultural development of staff and students. The Education Solutions department of Sourcewell has established some amazing programs and opportunities for teachers and school districts. ***R5DC's effort targets elected officials (county, city, township, school districts) and non-profits to be part of the “welcoming communities” effort, as an economic development/workforce attraction strategy.***

Building upon the regional branding efforts of THE GOOD LIFE, and the work of regional partners...R5DC will engage 10 local units of government (including school boards) & non-profits over the next 12 months by administering and delivering GROUP & Individual **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Assessments** that will aim to assist **our understanding and ability to experience cultural difference, how to set/achieve goals that further develop individual and group skills that impact community service.**

Differences create nothing...how we choose to interact across cultures makes a difference.

IDI offers a common language to talk about groups goals and a collective plan with customized learning options based on learning styles and preferences. It's a self-reflective tool that allows individuals and groups an opportunity to be intentional about welcoming people.

Bullets:

- ✚ **Politics:** Workforce attraction is a bi-partisan issue for all community members – being welcoming is a Quality of Life that makes people feel invested and want to work and live in our region. Being culturally connected is based on how we interact with difference.
- ✚ **Qualifications:** IDI is an internationally normed data driven developmental model and assessment tool, three R5DC staff have been trained to deliver IDI assessment results as “Qualified Assessors” via intense training supported by the Blandin Foundation. R5DC staff deliver individual and groups assessment that offer a path to improve welcoming goals.
- ✚ **Time commitment:** Each individual IDI survey assessments takes approx. 20 minutes to complete from your home/work computer. Group results are then aggregated from individual assessments. R5DC staff deliver the group assessment results in 2 hours. Following delivery of the group results, those who request individual results can schedule a follow up 30-minute confidential one-on-one session with a qualified R5DC team member. Total time for an individual who takes the survey, participates in the delivery of the group results and receives one-on-one results is less than 3 hours.
- ✚ **Confidential:** All assessments are treated as confidential information. NO right or wrong results...it simply reports how individuals and groups experience challenges across differences. It's a cultural world view!
- ✚ **Cost:** The Northwest Area Foundation is providing funding for 6 WCAGs in Region 5 to complete this assessment.



INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY (IDI) ASSESSMENT

The Intercultural Development Inventory is a 50-item questionnaire available online that can be completed in 15–20 minutes. The IDI includes up to six (6) customized questions that can be added to the questionnaire. The IDI includes contexting questions that allow respondents to describe their intercultural experiences in terms of (a) their cross-cultural goals, (b) the challenges that they face navigating cultural differences, (c) intercultural incidents that they face when they encounter cultural differences, and (d) the ways they navigate those cultural differences. These questions allow individuals to reflect on how their IDI results relate to their cross-cultural goals and challenges, increasing cultural self-understanding, and enabling improved accomplishment of key cross-cultural goals.

After individuals complete the IDI questionnaire, each person's responses to the 50 items are analyzed and reports are prepared for the group and per individual. Individual reports are offered to those who wish to see their results via one-on-one 30 minute sessions.

Outcomes

Outcomes can be customized by organization. However, some general outcomes of this assessment are:

- Provides a baseline assessment and organizational development, including training needs assessment, program evaluation and benchmarking
- Provides a language for discussing culture in a professional setting

Timeline

Group requests an IDI Assessment	Via email after informational meeting
IDI Assessment Link is sent to the participants	One week after executed agreement
Participants have assessments completed	One week after receiving link
R5DC facilitates a group profile meeting- 2 hour in length	One week after profile assessments are completed
Optional: R5DC completes Individual Profile meetings as requested- 30 to 45 minutes	Same day as group or scheduled via phone or Zoom

Contact Info

Cheryl Lee Hills, Executive Director, chills@regionfive.org, 218-894-3233 x1
Dawn Espe, Regional Development Planner, despe@regionfive.org, 218-894-3233 x3
Staci Headley, Regional Development Planner, sheadley@regionfive.org, 218-894-3233 x5