

Question 1: Short-term Solutions: What can your organization do to encourage African-Americans and Latinos to apply for current vacancies in the:

- **Rockford Public Schools' teaching and administrative staff**
- **City of Rockford's Police and Fire departments**
- **City of Rockford's variety of Departments**

Career Information/Communication

- **Work with persons already aboard**
- **Organizations attend all minority community events as hand out to new EEs**
- **Need to know where to get information, where jobs are available, interpersonal part that needs to be addressed.**
- **Make known what is available. What benefits are available. Educate each other.**
- **Better pay/benefits**
- **Make info known on continuing basis- Especially to youth- Encourage applying.**
- **Educate early about process and policies**
- **Keep Contact Info**
- **Communicate. How do they get on lists to know about job opportunities in a timely manner to circulate applications?**
- **Let people know about career opportunities. (Good to know that the Fire Department has a 45-day window for hiring).**
- **Important to be able to relate to future applicants what jobs are available that could be viable to them.**
- **Must be intentional about how the job is obtained and provide assistance with interviewing skills, etc.**
- **Info on how.**
- **Focus on hiring practices**
- **Use same strategies to hire whites to hire minorities.**
- **Keep communication open**
- **Be honest**
- **Knowledge is power! Recruit in businesses where advancement is limited.**
- **As a community, carry the message**
- **Post job vacancies as they receive them at the different churches etc.**

Social Media

- **Bridge the information gap. Most people of color don't use the old means of communication. TV news, newspaper and radio never get to certain groups of people.**
- **More marketing, social media**
- **Get word out on Social apps**
- **Ads in newspapers/social media to inform**
- **Churches can publish and promote activities on Facebook page and at church.**

School Issues

- Principals: who they know makes it hard for outside to get in to be hired.
- RPS working NABSF is an asset- Starts with Schools.
- No Child left behind-disservice. Children passed on without meeting educational mastery.
- Migratory nature of citizens in SE and SW side (Change schools when you move.)
- Why wasn't data shared about teacher and students RPS climate and environment?
- Lack of RPS data limits ability to successfully create a solution to problem

City Issues

- Help expungement with seminars around city for young people
- Host an expungement seminar with an expert
- Modify testing timeframes for police/fire

Question 2: Long-Term Solutions: What suggestions do you have for long-term solutions to address the racial disparities in the work force, particularly in high paying or salaried jobs in our public schools and our City Government?

Career Education/Create a Pipeline

Grow Your Own

- Organize a Black Teachers group to talk to children to encourage career in teaching
- Grow your own idea, think about development, grow your own programs
- Successive planning. Hire people already doing the job. Just don't look outside
- On websites: grow your own type program: RU Pathways.
- Commitment from the people that hold the jobs to hire African Americans.

HR Incentives

- Increase resident offer programs. Expand to education and fire-fighters
- Don't always need lots of certifications. Embrace talents of people
- Admit that racial disparities exist. Disparities are real. Put more money for relocating here to address racial disparities.
- Stop using tokenism/people and position
- Give incentives

Elementary

- Students do not see a single teacher that looks like them which discourages motivation to attend college.
- Start to talk to children earlier about teaching careers
- Children need to learn more about getting an education.
- Help students view the future. Begin as young as possible
- Give youth tools they need.
- Strategy of teachers to tell kids
- Environmental experiences outside of education, broaden minds
- Dept to attend group meetings. Going down to children's level

- **Vote: change approach to hiring in RPS. Get word out to younger students**
- **Early mentoring of kids. High School too late.**
- **If children should be involved to see adults handling problems.**
- **Engage students in elementary and as early as pre-school**
- **Involve kids early**
- **Do children/students need tutors, meals?**

Middle School

- **Expose students to many careers on the middle school level.**
- **Make students aware of what is available to student by using job camps, internships, internet, 1-day work.**
- **Career education in middle school**
- **Give youth tools they need.**
- **In school job fair in middle school and high school**

High School

- **Introduce students to high paying jobs that are available out of high school/high school classes. Ex: construction, skill trades**
- **Take students to the job site. Ex: construction- Discuss: requirements, pay, job**
- **Make sure counselors are not discouraging Black/Hispanic students**
- **Greater exposure to people in higher paying jobs**
- **Night-time career fairs with parents**
- **Partner with RPS to encourage High School grads to consider Education**
- **Scholarships for college**
- **Give youth tools they need.**
- **Right people offering youth guidance-trusted administrators address mistakes and methods to progress**
- **Job Fairs at High Schools**
- **Guidance counselors high school preparing for future**
- **Encourage minority students to broaden the scope of the careers they consider.**
- **Start early with education for information-high school/college about jobs**
- **Address the racial disparities in school graduations**
- **Open the door to Students of Color that are interested in politics, medicine, teaching, social services by going to the site.**
- **Why were RPS students not invited to this event?**
- **Promote at the high school levels**
- **STEM advocates mentoring students in high school exposing monetary benefits**
- **Advise students by highlighting pathways to accomplishing education career days**

Partnerships

College

- RVC partners with RPS 205 & City of Rockford
- Partner with Rockford University
- Developing partnerships with universities to get into the classroom
- HBCU: Go where students are-Be aggressive
- Adult Ed: Make students aware of training & career opportunities
- Wider Tutoring program for social workers, marketing, job training, family stress
- Help students seek employment in RPS 205 and city
- Better city transportation (To get to College)

Internships

- (Internships) Many youths have been enticed to move to other big city and so there should be more encouragement to the young folks by providing an easy minimum wage opportunities that can be motivation them to develop their city.
- Paid summer internship: Must include People of Color
- Provide paid "clinical experience" i.e. paid internship

Mentor

- Mentor young boys in the community. Problem-getting trust of mothers
- Mentoring with Best Intentions regarding all issues-job struggles, housing, drug, discrimination, mental issues, food, & shelter sacrifices.
- Make connections with students
- Focus on young people to enter the work force. If they show interest, encourage them
- Role models-eliminate discouragement with building relationship, earlier in life/
- Professional volunteers to answer questions from potential candidates regarding a chosen career choice path. Ex: citywide listings
- Minority professionals return to neighborhoods
- Make sure they "see" others like them in the profession
- Get out and learn and encourage our children.
- Invite people in those careers to speak and model the target careers

Business

- Company adopt a school/class/student. Use government and company funds
- Administrators and businesses must take risks for People of Color
- Invite AA & Latino to serve on Boards and Committees- Young people included
- What about local businesses and industry, corporations? What can we do to encourage them to hire more minorities?
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Retired Teachers

- Make use of retired teachers to encourage those current teachers

Churches

- Get word out with job fairs-churches
- Sponsor events-example: gospel event present there
- Encourage people to attend Sunday School for children-start at children's level.
- Encourage Churches to stay in the loop—more encouraging
- Get the word out to the community (i.e. churches etc. and make connections and relationships early)
- HR, mayor, church engaging in discussion with community.
- Churches should go into the neighborhoods to welcome those who arrive. Let them feel welcome
- Pastors on board
- Coalitions of organizations and churches.
- Organizations and churches need to reach out to diversity.
- Jeremiah Development tries to Eliminate Racism.

Latino Community/Newcomers

- In the Latino community, have a meeting with their neighborhood. Outreach to organizations about issues.
- Women's group bring in speakers to the Latino community
- More assistance education-inform about GED's language education

City & School Collaborate

- Both the city and the school district can help by insisting that the companies they do business with be making the genuine efforts to attract, grow, recruit, retain, and promote underrepresented minorities
- Offer community support. i.e. events to bring in minorities collecting donations for staff.

City Issues

- Need community organizers
- Minority Organization Coalition. Work together. Min. ward 7, 13, and SE
- Get alderman involved.
- Go door to door if necessary. Organized canvassing
- Get millennials involved
- Communicate with politicians
- Build up the westside aggressively.
- Hold City accountable

School Issues

Curriculum

- Curriculum Culturally responsive pedagogy
- Teach employable skills
- Curriculum that's relevant and meaningful to poor people and people of color

Parenting

- Consistent parent outreach to develop plans of higher education with students in high school. My parents had no clue what to do and how and when etc. Everything falls on a 15-year-old kid.
- In school: Parental involvement
- Instill value of education
- Family education: reach families
- Pre-Head Start
- Reach out to and connect with families and teach soft skills
- More parent conference training.
- Wrap around services

City and School Issues

Trauma

- Generation Trauma recoup past parents
- Social work
- DCFS: social workers for kids and families without the threat of DCFS
- Boots on the ground. More social workers and counseling. Tutoring services sponsored by the city or non-profits that work directly with teachers.

Crime Issue

- Do case by case review of people who have committed crimes. For "ex-cusable crimes" hire.
- Reference: Hiring people with felony convictions

Areas to Improve

Social Life

- Rockford doesn't offer lifestyle activities that encourage diverse community
- Not just minority organizations but all community organizations need to communicate their events.

Welcoming

- Community Fair for schools and city to welcome new hires.
- Reach out to newcomers and welcome them. Create a welcome program.
- Plan welcome events in neighborhood groups. Get to know them on a first name basis.
- If we reach out, we will find that we have more in common than that which separates.
- Establish NEIGHBORHOOD WELCOMING GROUPS.
- Open our homes for meals, small gatherings
- Invite them to our organization

Improve Rockford's Reputation

- Rockford can and should be an **example metropolitan area**.
- Encourage people to dream big.
- Getting people to say we need to love our community to keep people to stay.
- Rockford is boring! Need more activities for young adults. Westside communities need to be a pleasant place to live in
- Positive people in the community
- Need to be careful about what we say to others and ourselves in talking about our city. Stop negative comments. Speak positive things.
- It will be hard to attract and retain talent when Rockford consistently finds itself on the top of the worst places to live for African Americans; many of the people who were raised here and live here struggle to say what's great about the area and are developing exit strategies. Change that reality, change that mindset, and change the outcome.
- Ways to be proud of being here.
- What or why African American come and stay in Rockford: Present Rockford reputation and culture does not impress people to come and remain
- Safety Issues
- Housing is affordable in Rockford.

Build Relationships

- Friendships should be formed in our daily lives. Interactions and all will follow. Positivity and love should be spread with people from the Organizations and the community will look upon them as a role model. Therefore, the minority will gain respect in the society and our city will flourish.
- Come together more
- Increase hope
- Look at what the needs are and not generalize
- Everyone has different needs. Important to build relationships to find out.
- Let kindness be your motivating factor

Need to Feel Valued

- City must make "a place" in Rockford for minorities
- Take a chance on People of Color
- Different nationalities don't feel embraced. People want to feel that they are valued in all walks of life
- Racial disparities and racism is a condition stemming from the heart
- Healing starts at home with values and faith
- Continued support
- Hope, Faith, God
- Credentials for higher paying jobs
- The best paid people in the school board should be the teachers because the amount of work they are doing is immeasurable and that makes them so outstanding in the company or organization
- Respect each other's cultures
- Develop personal relationships
- Use Christian values in appreciating each person
- Don't come to the table with pre-conceived notions/prejudices
- WDI---Rockford Housing : African Americans don't feel they are qualified.
- If we each make effort to reach each other on personal level. Music, entertainment, everyone's values.
- Communication important. Show respect
- Job satisfaction. Value education for its own sake.
- Current culture sensitivity is lacking.
- Movement for westside. Keep moving East, disappointing to see the disparity of the eastside vs westside. No mall for young adult.
- Change culture
- Give serious consideration to people with disabilities. Perhaps they need encouraged.
- Everyone should feel included in the advancement of the city and everyone should get a balanced tax charge that reflect to what he or she is making in general.
- Recognition of teachers should be introduced in our city. If they do a good job then there is no argument of why they shouldn't get recognition. Mostly African American and Spanish communities since they are the minorities.
- Deal with the whole person-include emotional, spiritual, social
- Celebrating through the ARTS
- Get the ideas of young people and act on them
- Not exposed to these types of jobs. Didn't have a good relationship with police or teachers to want to do that kind of work.
- Make students feel valued. Community values you!

Need Confidence

- Change perception-feel you won't get job when you apply
- Not sure because of racism
- Self-efficacy
- These people who are unable to go to college need to be recognized because they are also able to do great things in the community. Not everyone is the same.
- Experienced disappointment and sadness of qualified applicants not hired by police & fire.
- There should be more communication/feedback why they didn't get the job.
- Help youth overcome the fears they have of pursuing dream careers.
- Give youth experiences seeing people of role models in positions of leadership.

Diversity Training

- Address that racism does exist
- City and district need to work out plan, encourage higher training/development
- Diversity teams in workplace
- Talk about racism
- Accept that Racism is the core problem.
- Oneness for humanity and safe places to communicate with each other in community. How do we raise that up for people to see?
- Respect: if I say it is racism, it is
- As a community, diversity, value, culture, bias training

Human Resource Dept

- At my job I see the white employees being groomed and helped to develop skills so they can move up and get a promotion but no one seems to do that for People of Color.
- Soft skills training: typing and time management
- Typing on gaps on soft skill on applications. We will train
- Teachers: eliminate the ed TPA

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- Resources so that monetary issues do not prevent future endeavors
- Need to keep up with labor market as far as salaries in the area.
- Equitable living conditions.
- Increase salaries. Increase incentives.
- The city should look upon lowering the property taxes because not everyone can afford it. Mostly African American and Latino communities.

Communication

- Create a social media position. The position would run constant ads and study the analysts to target certain audiences. Sub-categories should include a feedback improvement page, diversity page, job posting, social services etc. They should connect parents and students and public to proper services. Give people the option to text back and forth with schools. Most don't check email
- Community with diversity proper building communication. Different outlet for everyone.
- Mean what you say: Lack of communication
- Bring info to outside groups
- Continuing outreach is ongoing
- Be honest; manipulation of data, numbers, and language rarely goes unnoticed
- Need to share concerns to all; not just a small group

Question 3: Retention Solutions: What can our community organizations do to support the African American and Latino staff/residents in our community so they feel valued and happy and will want to make Rockford their life-long home?

Welcoming

- When minority hired, current employees need to be welcoming. Training on welcoming diverse work force.
- Have receptions & celebrate new people when they come into town to welcome them.
- Welcome committee

Promotions/Opportunities

- Make sure positions are available to meet the requirements to layer to move up into job positions.
- Teachers should get a better working positions so that they will not be demotivated and stay on the run to look for another better job. This also applies to all kinds of jobs in the City of Rockford.
- Give more opportunities
- Find better jobs for all throughout city—for both members of all family
- Retention is important. Doesn't work here. People see opportunities other businesses offer that Rockford doesn't.

Racism

- Prevent racial battle fatigue-only one in the room or group
- Get to core issues-Obstacles that appear to cause battle fatigue
- Subtle discrimination: need watchdog not paid by organizations i.e. city, school district
- Fear of Retaliation: people withhold criticism of place of employment
- No one indispensable-need to complain to have solutions.
- Judge minorities in high paying jobs like they did not fairly earn.
- Racism on people having high paying jobs.
- Enforcing rules only on minorities, not general workforce.

- Watch dog society with hands on help. Silent racism of current employees. Minorities don't complain about treatment for fear of retaliation.
- Have outside group able to talk to employees on treatment.
- Black people in professional positions keep quiet about inequity.
- Helpful for teaching staff to reflect demographics of the student

Support

- Providing a mentorship and making the entire staff aware of what's happening so the issues are on people's minds
- Mentoring needed due to discrimination
- Provide support and give ideas of how to handle situations
- Mentor Mentor/Mentee-same ethnic background will ...Keep talking about this.
- Be honest in city to address real problems. Targeted mentorship
- Must retain and support advancement for People of Color
- Mentors when in profession
- Person to go to community. Need help getting qualified mentoring program
- Constantly continue the conversation to keep program alive to work. People need to feel valued.
- Mentoring Group
- Develop structured approach for addressing needs of new hires on ongoing basis until they are engrained into community.
- Culture & Climate Supportive
- People need to know that there are people are going through what you're going through.
- Encourage participation
- Rockford as a community does not welcome or support the culture chain

Culture of the Organization

- Trickle down from CEO
- Company values
- History of company and people in company
- Company values its employees.

Evaluations

- Have expectations in writing and have signed.
- Multiple people to evaluate person
- Prevent having to be mandated for correction or forced.

Youth

- Work to encourage youth to stay in Rockford
- Young people need to know reason for staying here

Social Issues

- City can organize social events for Black and Hispanic culture in citywide events.
- Events need to be not just "white" centered.
- Ways to make a life in Rockford-Not Chicago
- Education plays a big part and relationship
- Aware of city events of weekends
- Fun Activities for youth
- Diverse activities
- Be happy outside of work
- Organize events for all generations o connect= app for what's happening
- "Green Book" where you can to see things—dating scene
- Where can you find things to do!
- Communication to people
- Cultural events for minorities
- Organizations need to set up calendar of events. All churches -Community events calendar

Human Resources

- Check how happy the current African American Teachers are in RPS
- Build in a way to monitor level of satisfaction of new hires. Establish trust so they be honest.
- Retention is a greater problem. Rockford Public School has had numerous African American administrators and teachers.
- Exit interviews with young people to get at key issues and ways to resolve.

General Ideas/Thoughts

- Why was the event planned and held under white leadership?
- Community Activism needs to be viewed separately from employment.
- Lead by example
- Stop current process and actions to Eliminate Racism.
- Continue positive conversations about these issues.
- Add more time to next gathering (2 ½ hours)
- Send out questions ahead of time to give people time to think
- This kind of dialogue should continue so people can give their suggestions. This is essential.
- Doing this event more often
- Ongoing invitation to keep doing this
- It will take more than a single event to make significant changes.
- Stop doing what is being done
- Current system is working
- Starting and continuing plans