

Request for Board Action Details

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On agenda: 8/16/2022 **Final action:** 8/16/2022
Title: Authentic Connections Program Fee Adjustments
Sponsors: Public Health
Indexes:
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Attachments: 1. Authentic Connections, 2. Resolution

| Date | Ver. | Action By | Action | Result |
|-----------|------|------------------------|----------|--------|
| 8/16/2022 | 1 | Board of Commissioners | approved | Pass |

Sponsor: Public Health

Title
Authentic Connections Program Fee Adjustments

Recommendation

1. Approve adjustments to Public Health Authentic Connections program fee from \$73 per service to \$75 per hour, plus travel expenses and additional program costs.
2. Authorize the County Manager to approve and execute service revenue agreements and amendments for the Authentic Connections program, in a form approved by the County Attorney's Office.

Background and Rationale

Since 2004, Public Health's Healthy Communities Division, has conducted violence prevention work with three initiatives: the Wakanheza Project; Making Authentic Connections; and Creating Welcoming Environments. Each program worked to address social inclusion, healthy relationships and the prevention of violence with a specific audience. The programs have been successfully implemented in libraries, governmental, nonprofit and public sector agencies throughout Ramsey County. The three initiatives promote racial and health equity and inclusion as tools to create violence interventions. In 2019, the three initiatives were reviewed and found to contain overlapping content. The three initiatives were merged and renamed as "Authentic Connections" and continues to promote meaningful connection with others as a protective factors in health, such as individual or environmental characteristics, conditions, or behaviors that reduce the effects of stressful life events.

Authentic Connections is a community-based violence prevention program that utilizes the six key principles of environment, bias, empathy, culture, power and connection which are rooted in improving social connection to support individuals, organizations, businesses and communities in reducing, addressing and de-escalating stressful situations in public settings. Authentic Connection principles are supported by research, which shows when there is an increase in social connection, there is a decrease in incidents of violence. When individuals, families, community members or work colleagues feel secure and connected in their lives, they can better thrive in various environments and achieve positive health outcomes.

This is accomplished by inviting individuals to consult, collaborate and be involved in making small changes by

reviewing the following interactions:

- How do individuals see themselves or their role?
- What does the physical environment do to promote or inhibit positive interactions?
- What are the predictable or repeated stress points?
- How can people be more intentional in creating interactions to promote connection and belonging?

The core principles of Authentic Connections can be applied and are effective in many different settings.

Levy-funded Public Health staff collaborate with agencies within Ramsey County to tailor individual goals and strategies of the program to maximize the needs of the organization. This collaboration includes conducting training sessions, creating a program implementation plan and providing ongoing consultation as the work progresses, expands and evolves.

Over the past three years, Public Health received numerous requests to provide Authentic Connections training to other municipalities, nonprofit organizations and private entities in greater Minnesota and nationwide. Since staff are levy-funded, Public Health has not been able to offer training to agencies outside of Ramsey County. Requests have been received from:

2022:

- Stillwater Library, Stillwater, MN.
- Penn State College of Medicine, Hershey, PA.
- Arapahoe Libraries, Englewood, CO.
- YouthLink, Minneapolis, MN.

2021:

- Crookston Library, Moorhead, MN.
- Dakota County, MN.
- Clayton Children's Museum, Santa Monica, CA.
- Explora Science Center and Children's Museum, Albuquerque, NM.
- Children's Museum, Richmond, VA.

2020:

- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs national conference,

2019:

- Minneapolis Veteran's Affairs Health Care Systems, Minneapolis, MN.
- MN Association of Law Libraries.
- University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis, MN.

To expand the work of Authentic Connections, Public Health seeks to adjust Authentic Connection program by offering the training to agencies and organizations beyond the county and charge a fee for the service. Additionally, Public Health seeks to revise the current fee of \$73 per service to an hourly rate of \$75 for staff time, plus travel costs and expenses related to the delivery of presentations via virtual platforms/webinars and/or in person. The Authentic Connections training program would result in service revenue agreements with the agencies and organizations that receive the service.

The revision to the fee structure will allow the county to recover the costs of conducting Authentic Connections programming and would remain in the fee schedule each year. Sharing Authentic Connections with other entities enables Public Health to strengthen programming, enhance the county's reputation as a leader in violence prevention and fulfill Public Health's core values of innovation, leadership, partnership and prevention.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being

☐ Prosperity

☐ Opportunity

☐ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

While Authentic Connections is not explicitly a racial equity program, research shows that racial equity is associated with violence prevention. A racial equity evaluation was conducted in 2021, and stakeholders from past and present partner organizations were interviewed. The results from these interviews show there is an agreement that Authentic Connections can be implemented in various settings and in a variety of ways, to meet the specific needs of an organization. Understanding the core principles of the program allows organization to create their own strategies to address existing issues, build upon their organizational values, improve services to their public/patrons, and enhance the organizational culture among employees.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Community partnership is integral in the work related to this program. Community partners identify their vision and objectives for implementation, as well as the specific application within their community or organization they desire to see impacted. Public Health staff work in partnership to support long term growth and sustainability of practices that promote welcoming environments, healthy relationships and increased racial and health equity through ongoing evaluation and collaboration.

☒ Inform ☒ Consult ☒ Involve ☒ Collaborate ☒ Empower

Fiscal Impact

The service revenue agreements will generate an estimated \$4,500 for staff time in yearly revenue for the county. Staff time is calculated by 10 hours of service per event x 3 estimated total events per year at \$75/hour per staff time x 2 staff = \$4,500. Also includes airfare (or mileage) plus hotel which may vary from locations. Travel cost would align with federal guidelines for per diems (<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>). All collected fees would be routed to Public Health's Healthy Communities general fund for general operations. The impact would be that it offsets staff time for services with agencies outside of Ramsey County. This is to remain in the fee schedule every year.

Last Previous Action

On February 26, 2019, the Ramsey County Board authorized charging fees to cover the costs of providing Authentic Connections programming (Resolution B2019-050).

Attachments

Authentic Connections