



Dane County Department of Human Services

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TO: Dane County Board, Personnel & Finance Committee

FROM:  Michele Dickinson, Planning & Evaluation Manager, Dane County Department of Human Services

DATE: Thursday, February 16, 2023

SUBJECT: Request exception to Co. Ord. Ch. 20.16

The purpose of this memo is to acquire travel exemption approval for two (2) Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS) Planning & Evaluation staff to travel to Utah for the X4 Summit held March 7-9th, 2023.

Dane County ordinance Ch 20.16 **PROHIBITED TRAVEL TO STATES THAT DISCRIMINATE** prohibits reimbursement for travel to restricted states unless the Personnel & Finance Committee grants an exception. Ch 20.21 **EXCEPTIONS** allows the finance committee to create exemptions where “it determines that such exemptions are reasonable.”¹

There are five (5) main reasons an exemption should be made for these two employees, which are outlined in more detail below:

1. Lessons learned directly correlate to both staffs’ 2023 professional development goals
2. Unparalleled networking opportunities
3. Hosted by DCDHS’s new survey platform, Qualtrics
4. In-person attendance is the only option
5. Staff have worked hard to save Dane County money, a lack of approval will force staff to cover incurred costs themselves

The two employees we are seeking approval for are Betsy Strahin and Jenna Ramaker.

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For 2023, Betsy and Jenna have both identified performance and growth goals that are achievable by attending the X4 Summit. Betsy’s goal is to “Work with DCDHS program staff to explore and develop at least one new opportunity to collect and act upon client feedback.” Jenna’s goal is to “Complete data

¹ <https://www.countyofdane.com/documents/pdf/ordinances/ch020-04-30-20.pdf>

story telling training(s) to assist with creating survey reports.” Each employee has identified breakout sessions that directly address these goals. Betsy will bring back learnings from the session *Government Built by the People, for the People* that shares insights into how the City of Corona used customer and employee feedback to take the right actions for every resident, instead of just a small group of “squeaky-wheel residents.” With inspiration from this session, Betsy is looking forward to rethinking how Human Services asks Dane County residents for their input. This allows her to assist program staff in designing better, more inclusive client feedback strategies. Jenna will rethink how she displays and describes data after attending the session *Storytelling with Data*. In that session, Jenna will uncover how to drive action using data and tailoring presentation of survey results to be meaningful to different audiences. These are just two sessions, of many, that the staff will attend. Betsy and Jenna are committed to bringing learnings back to their colleagues and multiplying the impact of their attendance. There are 100 breakout sessions and some sessions of interest overlap in timeframe, sending both Betsy and Jenna will allow the team to not miss out on learning opportunities since they will divide up their attendance.

2 X4: The Experience Management Summit features 10 keynotes that explore the power of human connection, authenticity, and how to make organizations more relatable. Highlighted speakers include Malala Yousafzai, Ryan Reynolds, and Chip & Joanna Gaines. Aside from inspirational learning from celebrities, leading brands in consumer experience will share insights about connecting with people. There is a track specific to government and public sector – attending these sessions is a great way to meet others in government. It will help DCDHS Planning & Evaluation staff think about resident experience and have informal conversations with public organizations about their feedback programs. Additionally, there are opportunities to create connections with DCDHS’ account representative and members of the XM Community. XM Community is an online forum of Qualtrics users. These users have helped Dane County with free Javascript code because of relationships Betsy has built with other users. Deepening these connections will help DCDHS continue to create complex surveys that allow us to leverage Qualtrics as a database, not just a survey platform.

3 X4 Summit is hosted by Qualtrics, which is DCDHS’ Planning & Evaluation survey platform. The team has switched from SurveyMonkey to leverage features not available in SurveyMonkey. These features are already in use. Qualtrics, however, lives and breathes experience management. They are always seeking input from users. Attending the X4 Summit allows Human Services to see demos of upcoming changes and connect with Qualtrics user-experience scientists. It is a chance for Dane County to have a say in the future of this product.

4 There is no other way to attend the X4 Summit except in-person. The only domestic location the conference will be held is in Salt Lake City, Utah. Sessions go until 5:00pm on March 9th with additional networking events that night. Staff have arranged flights schedules that enable full attendance at the conference, while being flexible with travel times in order to minimize costs for the County.

5 Last, but not least, staff have done their best to reduce cost to Dane County. Both Betsy and Jenna are taking advantage of conference hotel rates and greatly reduced registration fees. Betsy received a waiver of the registration fee (saving Dane County \$1,799) and Jenna is taking advantage of a discounted government rate of \$499 (a savings of \$1,300). Additionally, Jenna has decided to pursue platform training – called Basecamp – free, online rather than adding on Basecamp Live during the X4 Summit. A Dane County p-card was used to take advantage of these time sensitive savings (registration & hotel) before the low prices sold out. If the county will not reimburse already incurred charges, those costs will have to directly come out of Betsy and Jenna’s personal money. If they do not cover the cost themselves, then the county will lose out from them canceling their attendance and not bringing back learnings.