EQUITY TASK FORCE

Policy workgroup

Date: Wednesday, September 1, 2021

Time: 8:30-10:00 AM CST

Location Zoom (See Details Below)

Equity Taskforce Co-Chair: Elba Aranda-Suh

Workgroup Co-Leads: Sergio Mendoza and Angela Morrison (via phone)

**Staff Present:** Brian Richard, Martha Smith, Gina Wells, Kelly Burrello

**Members Present:** Elba Aranda-Suh, Peter Creticos, \*Jamie Ewing/Elizabeth Stigler, Laura Gergely, Jason Keller, Sergio Mendoza, Angela Morrison, Julio Rodriguez, Manny Rodriguez, and Itedal Shalabi

*\*Elizabeth Stigler announced that she will be replacing Jamie Ewing who has left the workgroup.*

**Guests:** Bridget Altenburg, Kit White

**Also in attendance:** Yolanda Clark, Candace Dickerson, Becky Raymond, Lisa Bly-Jones, Joi Wilson, and Joanne Senoga

| Time | Item | Owner |
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| 8:30 am | Welcome  Sergio welcomed the attendees and informed them that co-lead Angela Morrison was having some technical issues but would be joining the call shortly. | Sergio Mendoza |
| 8:33 am | Welcome Remarks, Review of Access and Participation Guidelines and Roll Call  Gina advised that a quorum was not present. | Gina Wells |
| 8:35 am | Review of Agenda and Anchors, Drivers, and Outcomes  Sergio confirmed that a quorum was still not present, and approval of the August 4 meeting minutes would be delayed until a quorum was established.  He reminded the group that the work of the task force has been extended through June 2022. | Sergio Mendoza |
| 8:37 am | Workgroup Workplan Review  Gina presented the timeline for the taskforce to complete deliverables and answered questions regarding collaboration and interaction to complete the work of the taskforce.  Plan for Completing Taskforce Deliverables   * October – Review WIOA data * January – Discuss draft equity goals   Discuss draft recommendations   * March – Approve equity goals   Discuss full draft report   * May – Approve full report * June – Present report to IWIB   Gina also presented the Workgroup Activities workplan. She will send the document to workgroup members after the meeting, and they will also receive a more detailed version later this month.  In response to a question from Peter regarding how data beyond WIOA gets incorporated into the workplan, Gina explained that the data workgroup meets after the monthly workgroup meetings but hasn’t met yet this month to discuss the insights that came out of the task force meeting and what next steps should be. Gina will provide an update on that later in the month. Lisa and Elba can review the plan and determine how to include topics and opportunities identified by workgroups into the plan. | Gina Wells |
| 8:44 am | Introduction of new member  Sergio introduced Dr. Elizabeth Stickler who will be taking over from her colleague Jamie Ewing in this group and the Equity Task Force at large. | Sergio Mendoza |
| 8:45 am | Approval of Minutes - August 4, 2021  A quorum having been established; Sergio called for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting.  Manny Rodriguez moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Laura Gergely seconded the motion.  With no further discussion, the minutes were approved as presented by unanimous voice vote. |  |
| 8:47 am | Sergio advised that the data work group needed a bit more time and will be providing the data that was to be presented at this meeting for discussion at the October meeting. The data will be provided via email prior to the meeting.  Sergio introduced Bridget Altenburg and Kit White and their presentation: Promising Practices in Increasing Equity at the Service Delivery Level and Policy and Programmatic Barriers  Bridget began by providing some history of her organization looking into equity barriers in the workforce system and shared the background and some results from a recent survey that included questions about how the pandemic impacted people. The survey identified 33 barriers within the workforce system – they are in the process of identifying the sources and creating a group of advocates to help make the changes that can be made. Bridget highlighted some specific barriers opened the floor to comments and questions.  Peter commented that the numbers seemed low and asked which groups are not being served, and what is being done to penetrate these populations. Bridget agreed, saying ABLE is trying to identify partners within those communities and suggested that WIOA look at this. Peter suggested also looking outside WIOA.  In response to a question, Bridget talked about changing one of the assessment tests to make it more appropriate for non-traditional learners. She cited this as an example of how One-Stop partners can address specific issues and get people into training and jobs.  Kit began by providing background on her role and the non-profit where she works. She introduced Becky Raymond from the Chicago City-wide Literacy Coalition. Becky gave a background of her agency and explained why their coalition serves as a one-stop operator and how they are trying to break down silos to help reach disconnected referral partners.  Kit shared information about “Together We Heal” an initiative from the Chicago Mayor’s Office. The initiative focuses on empowering organizations in racial healing. Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is adding equity as an organizational value and shared what they developed with the group. Also discussed pivoting in the face of COVID, reaching out in neighborhoods where there are poverty and violence issues, and the Cook County Re-entry council which served returning citizens. | Sergio Mendoza  *Bridget Altenburg, President and CEO, National Able Network*  *Kit White, Senior Policy Analyst, Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership* |
| 9:15 am | *Discussion: What did we learn from the presentations? How might this workgroup lift up promising equity practices at the service delivery level? What actions might this workgroup take based on what we heard today?*   * New member Joanne Senoga introduced herself and shared her perspective/experiences as an African American PhD public health. Has noticed job descriptions are asking for levels of experience/education that aren’t truly needed to perform the job. * Discussed how clients view advantage/disadvantages of self-reporting their situation and the equity tool as it relates to the ETPL. * Lisa reminded the group this information is very Chicago-centric and to consider AJCs in other areas of the state and their unique needs. * AJCs outside of Cook County might not have the budget needed to gather data. * Bridget feels the training funding requirement needs to be more than 50%. Need more funds to get over the barriers * Need to identify buckets of funds to get over barriers * Need to be able to adjust for certain sectors and identify how to better forecast fluctuation – suggested taking a rolling average. Might be something there policy-wise * Need to be able to identify unscrupulous training programs and steer clients toward reputable programs * Losing a training provider can mean losing an occupation * This is two conversations – one about the occupations on the list and the second is about the providers on the list * Some trainers are at an advantage because they have resources to get them over hurdles * Need a deeper dive into how we’re reading these providers – are they mission driven, do they have community support * Organizations need to be trained on how to use and navigate the system * Need to get staff into the community more, since fewer people are coming to the centers * Training alone will not get us out of systemic racism * Steering people toward training for minimum wage pathways is the ‘third rail’ people are reluctant to discuss. * The racist systems and structures in place are setting boundaries and limitations on the progress of lots of groups of people. * Gina asked if this group would like to discuss ways IWIB and the workforce system might influence broader systems of structural racism – since there’s some interesting work going on nationwide in this space. * Lisa suggested bringing some examples of this to the IWIB – so they have an example of an approach to take/best practices. * Jason Keller (Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago) suggested developing a list of policy recommendations. He offered to share those recommendations with other Reserve banks that are focusing on workforce development equity nationwide. * Gina advised that she is documenting recommendations from this workgroup that will be shared with the group in the next couple of weeks. Plans to discuss the list at the October meeting. * Lisa shared that Claire Menson in Atlanta has begun some good work out of the Atlanta Bank of Reserves, that might serve as an example of a foundation for policy changes in the workforce system. | Angela Morrison |
| 9:58 am | Upcoming Conversations and Next Steps  October Meeting (please read materials prior to the meeting)   * Review recommendations for increased collaboration with community-based organizations * Review summary of other recommendations to date * Review and discuss WIOA data   Status of additional ETPL/training questions   * Brian is focused on data workgroup analysis. We will report back on data requests that can be addressed, vs. those that need to become recommendations for future research and analysis.   Status of Equity Tool   * We are developing a plan for sharing the tool with the other workgroups and identifying additional steps. | Gina Wells |
| 9:59 am | Call for Public Comment - none | Gina Wells |
| 9:57 am | Announcements   * Next Workgroup Meeting is October 6, 2021 | Sergio Mendoza |
| 9:59 am | Sergio called for a motion to adjourn.  Manny moved that the meeting be adjourned. Jason Keller seconded the motion. Following a unanimous voice vote to adjourn, the meeting was adjourned at 10:01 am. | Sergio Mendoza |

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