

# EQUITY TASKFORCE PROGRAM WORKGROUP

**Date:** Thursday, March 4, 2021

**Time:** 11:00am – 12:00pm

**Location:** Zoom

**Facilitator:** Adrian Esquivel



## Committee Members Present

Diana Alfaro | Bridget Altenburg | Morgan Diamond | Adrian Esquivel | Jere Boyle | Pat Devaney | Emily Garrity | Delmar L. Gillus | Aime'e Julian | Andrew Wells

## Committee Members Absent

Katie Blank | Lisa Bly-Jones | Gregory Harle | Jonathan Lanning | LaTanya Law-Fountain | Clayton Pryor | Tom Wendorf | Laura Wilhelm

## Staff

Molly Cook | Terah Scott | Jeannette Tamayo

## Welcome and Roll Call

Terah Scott led roll call. Adrian Esquivel welcomed the group and presented the agenda. He asked for any additions to the agenda, and the members did not have any.

## Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the meetings on December 9, 2020 and February 12, 2021 were both approved by members.

For the minutes on December 9, 2020, Adrian asked for a motion to accept them. Jere Boyle moved to approve the minutes and Bridget Altenburg seconded. The minutes were accepted with no nay's. For the February 12, 2021 minutes, Aime'e Julian moved to approve them and Jere Boyle seconded. The minutes were accepted with no nay's.

## Review the definition of equity lens and framework as it applies to programs across State agencies.

Adrian shared with the group themes discussed during the Task Force meeting on February 24, 2021. Adrian asked if the group had additional comments to share. Adrian noted that he considers the definitions to be working definitions.

Aime'e Julian noted that the Task Force has a unique opportunity to define equity and the equity lens for the workforce system. She noted that an equity definition is important. If we don't define it, then others will define it for us.

## Review Process Flow for WIOA

Bridget Altenburg reviewed the WIOA process for workforce services. The process is for dislocated workers, low income adults, and youth. Bridget noted that the process can be very overwhelming due to the many documents that determine eligibility.



Morgan Diamond explained that for homeless youth, having or finding the required documentation is very difficult for them.

Jere Boyle explained that all of the required documentation appears to be a barrier.

## Review barriers discussed in the last meeting and human centered design

Based on the notes from the last meeting, Molly Cook presented a summary of barriers to programs discussed in the last meeting including: opportunity cost, housing/mental health needs, the mandated script, TABE-specific barriers, awareness, and procedural injustice.

Molly also presented examples of definitions for human centered design from workforce GPS.

## Discussion

### 1.) Are there barriers to the WIOA process flow?

Group members discussed that acquiring the required documentation to receive service was a huge barrier.

Delmar Gillus asked if there was a way the qualification for other similar programs could somehow qualify customers for WIOA programs? Considering human centered design, are programs designed to meet the needs of the participants or the needs of the system? What role do participants have in the design process?

Adrian Esquivel agreed that it is important that participants have a voice in program design.

Molly Cook explained that the Task Force plans to have the full report vetted by participants, partner agencies, and others as the work progresses to incorporate their voices.

Diana Alfaro noted that a barrier for individuals she works with is language. She discussed the importance of documents being translated into Spanish and other languages in addition to having staff Spanish-speaking capacity.

Jeannette Tamayo explained that there are no requirements at the Federal level to translate forms into Spanish. However, Illinois has a goal to have as many forms as possible available in Spanish. This is an example of procedural injustice because there are also many other written and spoken languages.

There is also the assumption that if someone speaks a language, they also read and write in that language, which is not always the case.

Bridget Altenburg noted that the WIOA documents are in Spanish and at the Pilsen Center, half of the staff has Spanish speaking capability. However, when someone speaks another language, they need to access translation services, which can take a very long time.



2.) Are there a list of barriers that we want to present to the Task Force?

Diana Alfaro suggested adding the digital divide as a barrier. Jeannette Tamayo explained that digital literacy is as important as language, and could be added under procedural injustice. Terah Scott noted that there is a Broadband grant available now to address some of these issues.

Delmar Gillus suggested adding the application process itself as a procedural injustice. He also suggested expanding on youth needing homes and mental health assistance before accessing jobs – this applies to other populations as well.

The group wondered what the mandated script was, so Adrian suggested we remove that as a barrier.

Bridget Altenburg explained that in terms of awareness, many people are referred to WIOA programs, but don't know why they're referred or what to expect out of the process.

Jere Boyle suggested that there is a difference between terminology used on forms and language. Both should be presented as barriers.

Molly Cook explained that at the next meeting, a revised barriers list would be presented, and the group could vote on it to bring back to the Task Force.

3.) Review existing models and identify elements we might want to bring back to the group. Do we know examples of human centered design focused programs?

Adrian Esquivel shared an example from Chicagoland Funders Alliance. They looked at Career Pathways from a human centered design focus. They studied how young adults find career info, and Adrian will share that information with the group.

Diana Alfaro noted that she knows there are great harm reduction models that she will research.

Delmar Gillus explained that many programs utilize human centered design principles, but as budgets or time get tight, they are often the first to get cut.

The group will research models and bring them to the next meeting.

4.) Is there a simulation or experiential learning component to understand better the customer experience from their perspective?

Bridget Altenburg explained that people have 'secret shopped' at her program to learn about the customer experience. She will share the notes from that.

Aime'e Julian noted that experiential professional development is important and will help improve the experience of frontline staff.

## Public Comment

One member of the public, Shirlondra Brooks, Senior Program Manager for Women Employed, was present for the meeting.

Terah Scott asked for public comment, and there was no public comment.

## Next Steps

- 1.) Staff will prepare a revised list of barriers to vote on to share with the Task Force at the next meeting.
- 2.) Bridget Altenburg will share 'secret shopping' notes.
- 3.) Adrian Esquivel will share his Career Pathways human centered design example.
- 4.) All members will research PD/model program opportunities to address barriers



## Next Meeting

Thursday, April 1 from 11:30am-12:30pm (we will start each meeting thirty minutes later moving forward).

## Adjournment

Adrian Esquivel asked for a motion to conclude the meeting. Jere Boyle moved to conclude the meeting and Bridget Altenburg seconded the motion.