



EQUITY TASK FORCE QUARTERLY REPORT JUNE 2021

Charges of the Equity Task Force

This Task Force will develop recommendations for Illinois' workforce system that align with the education system and establish goals that will reduce inequity for the populations we serve.

Priorities of the Equity Task Force:

To Start by February 2021:

- Charge 1: Examining programs, policies, and practices to infuse issues of equity and inclusion into these programs, policies, and practices as authorized by law
- Charge 2: Assessing and recommending education and workforce tools that can track program access and outcomes and disaggregate data to reveal disparities in policies and program delivery
- Charge 3: Making recommendations regarding inclusive and diverse approaches to organizational capacity, including professional development to ensure use of an equity lens in serving diverse populations

To Start After February 2021:

- Charge 4: Creating shared definitions for a set of key terms
- Charge 5: Establishing equity goals for the system

Target Populations identified by the Equity Task Force

(Red – WIOA, Blue – disenfranchised groups, Green – Priority of Service):

- Women
- Rural Residents
- People of Color
- Individuals with Disabilities both cognitive and physical
- Veterans (also Priority of Service)
- Justice-impacted populations
- Immigrant populations
- LGBTQ Community
- Homeless and homeless youth
- Low Income Individuals – unemployed and under-employed, including GIG workers (also Priority of Service)
- Foster Care Youth and Alumni
- Migrant and Seasonal Worker
- Individual working to achieve their High School Equivalency
- Recipients of public assistance
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient, and low-income individuals.

*CIC Committee
Evaluation Workgroup
Performance Workgroup*



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Quarterly Update:

Task Force Meeting: The Equity Task Force, led by Co-Chairs Dr. Lisa Bly-Jones and Ms. Elba Aranda-Suh, first convened on October 28, 2020 to begin its charge to develop recommendations for Illinois' workforce system that align with the education system and establish goals designed to reduce inequity for the populations we serve. The Task Force met again on December 9, 2020 and February 24, 2021.

In December 2020, the Task Force reviewed workforce data on equity and the target populations provided by Dr. Brian Richard from the NIU Center for Government Studies. Three workgroups were also formed to examine data collection and analysis efforts, policies, and program access related to workforce equity. Workgroups meet monthly and will provide updates to the full Task Force at the bi-monthly meetings.

In February 2021, the Task Force discussed the use of a definition of an equity lens for its work, noting the importance of incorporating a process into the work and recommending such a definition to the IWIB. The Equity Lens definition researched and identified by Co-Chair Dr. Lisa By-Jones is:


"An equity lens is an ongoing process for analyzing or diagnosing the impact of the design and implementation of policies on under-served and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers."

University of Minnesota University Policy Library Definition

The Task Force discussed revisions to this definition and the need to define both equity and equity lens. The Co-Leads of each workgroup met with the Co-Chairs this quarter to discuss both a working vision of equity and an equity lens. The working vision of equity has been presented to each workgroup and will be presented to the full Task Force at the June 23, 2021 meeting. The working vision of equity, adapted from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is:

Equity is "The state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial and fair. The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept."

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The full Task Force will meet next on June 23, 2021. The meeting will include a discussion of data and a presentation on approaches to integrating equity into state agency work.

The Task Force will meet bi-monthly until October 2021 when the report is expected to be completed.

Maher & Maher

The Equity Task Force welcomed Kelly Burrello, Gina Wells, Joi Wilson, and Carrie Yeats from Maher & Maher in May. The Maher & Maher team will help with the project management of the Task Force, facilitation, and in the creation of the final report.


Workgroups:

The three workgroups of the Task Force: Data, Policy and Program, meet monthly.

Both the Task Force and the workgroups use the following framework to approach their work:



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Data Analysis

Co-Lead: Dan Sullivan, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

This workgroup focuses on assessing, analyzing, and recommending education and workforce tools that can track program access and outcomes and disaggregate data to reveal disparities in policies and program delivery.

This quarter, the data analysis workgroup accomplished the following:

- Identified primary, secondary, and hidden gaps in the data
- Compared participant demographics with a representative target population as a high-level assessment of the equitable delivery of services
- Identified disproportionate impact as a methodology to identify the level of disproportionality for WIOA participants in certain groups
- Calculated disproportionate impacts using the 80% Rule and Proportionality Index for WIOA Title-I Adult participants

Moving forward, the workgroup will continue to use the disproportionate impacts method to analyze data and perform statistical analyses to determine if intersecting characteristics (e.g., race, gender, socioeconomic status, level of education) impact performance outcomes.

Policy

Co-Leads: Sergio Mendoza, Quad Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Angela Morrison, Chicago Jobs Council

This workgroup focuses on examining programs, policies, and practices to infuse issues of equity and inclusion into these programs, policies, and practices as authorized by law.

The quarter the Policy workgroup reviewed WIOA funding and how it relates to Title I programs and the challenges and opportunities community organizations face while working with American Job Centers.

Next steps for the workgroup include: examining how organizations qualify for the state's Eligible Training Provider List to identify potential barriers to equity for small community based organizations and creating a framework for analyzing policy with an equity lens.

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Programs

Co-Lead: Adrian Esquivel, Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance

This workgroup focuses on making recommendations regarding inclusive and diverse approaches to organizational capacity, including professional development to ensure use of an equity lens in serving diverse populations.

The Program workgroup developed a list of barriers to success that they would like to address through professional development, which it is refining.

The group also discussed current professional development offerings and gaps – including professional development that specifically focuses on equity, institutional racism, history of racism, etc. Throughout the summer, the group will work to make recommendations on professional development offerings that address equity for the workforce system.

Progress on Task Force Deliverables: The Equity Task Force is in the initial stages of developing a work plan for the Task Force report.

A copy of the Workgroup Guide is provided for reference.

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WORKGROUP

EQUITY TASK FORCE WORKGROUP GUIDE

Data Analysis Workgroup

Assessing, analyzing, and recommending education and workforce tools that can track program access and outcomes and disaggregate data to reveal disparities in policies and program delivery.



Policy Workgroup

Examining programs, policies, and practices to infuse issues of equity and inclusion into these programs, policies, and practices as authorized by law.

Program Workgroup

Making recommendations regarding inclusive and diverse approaches, including professional development of staff, to ensure use of an equity lens in serving their diverse populations.

Our Working Vision: Our working vision for Equity is "the state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial and fair." The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept." Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation

Equity Lens: Defined by the University of Minnesota, University Policy Program: "An equity lens is an ongoing process for analyzing or diagnosing the impact of the design and implementation of policies on under-served and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers."

Target Populations as our scope: Women, rural residents, people of color, individuals with disabilities, veterans, justice-impacted populations, immigrant populations, LGBTQ community, homeless and homeless youth, low income individuals, foster care youth and alumni, migrant and seasonal workers, individuals working to achieve their high school equivalency, persons receiving public assistance, individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Framework and Approach:

