

Employment Task Force Meeting Minutes
Friday, December 2, 2016 at 9:30am
Michael Barlow Center
2120 W Warren Blvd

In attendance: Gwen Turner, Lynne Cunningham, Chris O'Hara, Danny Nicholson, Jennifer Miller Rehfeldt, Nancy Phillips, Ellen Ray, Carrie Thomas, Joel Mitchell, Consuella Brown, Margaret Smith, Alan Placek, Tinisha Morgan, Michelle Rafferty, Katrina S Van Valkenburgh

- I. Welcome and Introductions:** There were introductions. Due to the recent Miles Davis "Keeping It Cool" Award being presented to Chicago Jobs Council's Connections Project, attendees also described, "what's cool." Many attendees expressed sadness at Ellen Ray's departure from the group, but wished her well in her next undertakings. Consuella mentioned that the unemployment rate is apparently down, and provided a brief update on the CoC's application submittal to HUD's Homeless Youth Demonstration Project Competition. Joel expressed pleasure at being present at the "cool table," Alan described his tour of the "cool" farm that Nancy coordinated, and there were various other descriptions of cool things going on.
- II. Approval of November 2016 Minutes:** The wrong version of the ETF Slate table had been inserted into the November 2016 minutes. The table sent to the CoC includes Otha's name and not Renee's, and the grid had also been updated to include a state agency. The minutes were approved pending the insertion of the correct table.
- III. City of Chicago A Day for Change Presentation by Joel Mitchell:** Joel Mitchell presented on A Day for Change, a pilot program administered by DFSS based on a program in Albuquerque called There's a Better Way. The Albuquerque program came about due to the mayor in Albuquerque driving around and seeing signs saying "Will work for food," etc. He said, "Let's give it a shot" and so his city came up with a program that would canvass the city and engage "panhandlers" and offer them a day of work, thereby offering them an alternative to "panhandling" for a day, and an offer of dignity. Quickly after implementation, the program was recognized as a tool for engagement.

According to Joel, Rahm Emanuel decided that he wanted to bring this type of program to Chicago. The city was being challenged by encampments on the north side, and the thought was that a program of this kind could engage that particular population. The idea was brought to DFSS, who analyzed whether the program could be implemented in Chicago. The idea that was brought forward was "A Day for Change," a name that was described by Joel as having a double meaning: "change" was meant to reference both currency and the stated goal of changing participants' outlook.

The main challenge described by Joel was access to funding and paying individuals. The pilot partners with A Safe Haven's social enterprise programming. The participants do landscaping and cleaning of vacant lots. The pilot was announced in October, and launched in November, and observations of the pilot currently point to it being an engagement tool, potentially particularly effective at engaging hard to reach individuals who are not connected to any kind of services. It was described as being a day labor program, and this is due primarily to the cap on how much money someone can make in a year before it becomes taxable income (\$600). The individuals are paid

\$11/hour and work for a maximum of 8 hours per day, but it usually ends up being 5-6 hours in a day.

Joel also mentioned that the data from this pilot is also serving to supplement the data from the Chronic Homelessness Pilot (the Day for Change pilot uses the Vulnerability Index to assess individuals). For example, there is an understanding that not every “panhandler” is homeless, and the City believes the data coming out of this pilot will help illuminate the relationship between “panhandling” and homelessness. The pilot has engaged 105 people thus far. It has focused on the central business district and the uptown viaducts. According to Joel, many participants have shared that substance abuse is one of their biggest challenges. One hundred percent of participants have been assessed using the Vulnerability Index tool, 56% have exhibited mental health issues, the primary barrier noted has been substance abuse issues, 60% have been homeless for 1 year or more, 40% have been homeless for less than one year, and 44% have felony convictions that may preclude employment. Joel also indicated that the city understands that this is not a work services program proper, but rather a tool for engagement and data collection/assessment for a difficult to engage population.

Katrina wanted to know if participants are paid in cash. Joel answered yes, but also voiced a concern of the City about whether this involves enabling those with substance abuse issues, and wondered if perhaps gift cards should be considered. This launched a conversation about the question of enabling by providing cash, and several people spoke to the established benefits of providing cash in programs such as these. The main points were that cash has been shown to heighten length of engagement of individuals. Fast cash payment has been shown to correlate solidly with continued engagement; every day without pay leads to a drop off in engagement. Thus immediate cash pay is an evidence-based practice. Nancy also mentioned that these questions are an opportunity to think about harm reduction and safety planning, and scaffold up trust and reduce barriers to work with a hard to reach population.

Chris wanted to know how long the program is expected to last, and what case management looks like. Joel explained that everyone in the program is assigned a case manager, but case management is flexible and non-invasive. There are two vans in the program that can hold 5-10 people each, and each van has two case managers and a site director. Case managers conduct the vulnerability index assessment, describe the programs offered by A Safe Haven, and invite participants for an opportunity to come back to A Safe Haven. Participants can also receive breakfast and lunch and an opportunity to come back for dinner. Regarding length of time, initially the program was supposed to run for 3 months, but there is a possibility for more going forward. They are trying to have people “max out” their allowed \$600.

Alexis asked if the pilot has goals around attachment. Joel stated that the pilot is trying to emphasize engagement, as this is a difficult to engage population, but did want to place any hard metrics on this going forward. Nancy asked if the Albuquerque program is seeing good numbers on engagement, and Joel stated that they are collecting data on that, but he did not have access to the numbers at that moment. Alan wondered if the program could mimic some of what is going on with transitional jobs programs with information procurement on how to keep people engaged. Nancy suggested looking into the research on asset-building, which has information on critical time interventions; there are possibilities to have motivational interviewing conversations at critical times, but there must be care

in not being so directive with people that they don't re-engage. It must take a harm reduction approach, and be tied to people's goals.

Carrie brought the cash topic back with a nod to one of the early pre-federal welfare reform studies, where it was shown that when people could cash out food stamps and use it according to their discretion, their children had better outcomes. Nancy also mentioned that gift card/LINK card economies end up reducing people's wages due to the decrease in resale value.

Chris requested information on how the Albuquerque program dealt with felonies being a major issue in reentering the work force, and Joel offered to make that information available.

Ellen took the opportunity to point out the apparent knowledgeability of the table, and encouraged thinking about how engagement and attachment can be integrated into this kind of a program. She also asked what the city's intention is on looping in the Employment Task Force and the Continuum going forward. She voiced particular concern about the possibility of engagement and attachment being siloed rather than integrated into this work. Joel explained that DFSS is planning on having that be a conversation that occurs over this next year. The City is already planning on working with Carrie and the CJC, as well as the Employment Task Force as a whole. They are also planning to begin scrutinizing the program models on the workforce side, and would like to enlist the help of the ETF and workforce board to see if there are opportunities to make revisions on the program models. Joel also explained that with a Day for Change there was a tight turnaround and the mayor wanted it right away, and didn't have time to get everyone at the table, but going forward will be utilizing the expertise of different groups and what was learned from ADFC to inform future program models. There probably won't be another RFP on City side until 2018 – so they want to prepare for that eventuality.

Carrie asked if there was data from the data collected on ADFC on of those 105 people, how many came back, and/or how many ended up in some kind of service. She explained that even at this granular level and without goals/outcomes being set, this would be very interesting to know. Joel explained that the pilot would be working with All Chicago and doing much to integrate with HMIS etc. Consuella added that All Chicago has a meeting set with DFSS to begin working on these questions.

- IV. Workforce Training for Housing Providers update:** Carrie recapped the last meeting, where attendees brainstormed about this training. There was an idea to use All Chicago's Learning Center, and there was feedback around incorporating the concept of why thinking about employment at all is important. After last meeting, the training will likely be a two-parter on both the importance/impact of employment services and how to understand/navigate the workforce development system in Chicago. Carrie has reached out to Chris Harlan and Carl Wiley from Heartland, and a next step involves putting a date/dates on the calendar.
- V. Response to proposed questions from Coordinated Access Committee:** Carrie provided two handouts: one (in gray) was the set of sequential questions proposed by the ETF to the Coordinated Access Steering Committee for Coordinated Entry, and the other (in color) was the set of questions the Coordinated Access Steering Committee came back with and is requesting ETF approval on. Essentially, the difference was that the first two questions on the left side ("Would you like to explore

a way to increase your income through work?” and if yes, “Would you like to be connected to employment services?”) were combined into one initial question: “Would you like to explore a way to increase your income through work and be connected to employment services?” The following proposed question, if yes, was: “Select a provider from either of these lists” This brought up a concern from Katrina, which was then echoed by others, that this will not catch data on people who want to increase income through work but do not want to be connected to employment services. Michelle suggested that the questions be separated as was initially suggested to CASC, but the question “Would you like to be connected to employment services? If so, select a provider from either of these lists” replace “Select a provider from either of these lists.” That way data could still be collected on interest in employment regardless of interest in connecting with services, and no extra space/questions would be expended.

A decision was made that Carrie would make the change and bring it back to the Assessment Tool Subcommittee.

- VI. Navigator Pilot Plan:** Carrie explained that there has been some conversation about the idea of having a specific navigator position for employment services in the continuum. This person would have a caseload and would help people get connected to workforce development. Carrie provided a pilot memo which breaks down goals of the position and the basis for pursuing this position at this current time. The purpose of such a position would be to connect workforce service models for homeless job seekers to one or more CoC program models. From work done by the ETF and from asset mapping, we have knowledge of workforce services best practices and understanding of capacity for each. There is little or no formal relationship between workforce program models and homeless services system/models. Carrie explained that major thought has been going into what we can learn from Seattle’s and Houston’s experience with their navigator models and how we can apply that to Chicago’s specific, and different, landscape.

General discussion on what the pilot might look like ensued. There was some thought that the navigator should be housed in a workforce organization but spend most of their time engaging within housing programs. Attendees also emphasized that training on how to do proper assessments/referrals will be a critical piece. The two conversations of housing and employment will need to be integrated with each other and occur at the same time, rather than one coming before the other. There was then some discussion around which type(s) of housing models would be best to connect with a workforce services model in a pilot program. Rapid Re-Housing and Interim Housing were both proposed as possibilities, but IH was determined to be better for a pilot due to participants being relatively contained geographically; in RRH participants are spread out. It was also pointed out that IH has more of a shared outcome with employment services. Katrina then pointed out that we can take what we learn from working within the IH model and use to towards working with RRH. Consuella suggested taking a youth angle, and Chris pointed out that the Youth Advisory Board has been voicing a need for more credentialing services for youth. Ellen pointed out that in the CoC, IH has typically been used as a pool for RRH, and this could be a possibility for scaling up at some point.

Nancy will look into the evidence base for Interim Housing paired with Transitional Jobs. More discussion will occur in January!

- VII. Next meeting – IPS (Individual Placement and Support) in January!:**

Carrie has secured expertise of an individual from DHHS to come and speak to the group about Individual Placement and Support. This is a networking connection from the *A Nation That Works* conference, and his name is Darius. Nancy gave a brief overview of IPS, which is an evidence-based approach to employment services that specifically focuses on people with disabilities and mental illnesses. IPS supports people in working towards steady employment in mainstream competitive jobs. Individuals must be involved with clinical services and employment services concurrently. Providers help to meet stated employment goals for the kind of *mainstream* employment that the participants desire. Because it has been shown to be effective, there is a fair amount of thought going on currently on how it can be applied to other vulnerable populations, including people experiencing homelessness. The model includes fidelity tools, which measure how closely the model is being implemented in practice.

Consuella suggested extending an invitation to other agencies and individuals not necessarily connected with the ETF. Carrie stated that CJC is putting out a general invitation. Consuella stated that it could go in the CoC newsletter. Chris suggested inviting someone from Thresholds. Nancy wanted to focus on middle-level providers, with some degree of participant touch.

VIII. Other Announcements: Ellen made a plug for the semiannual CoC meeting on December 15, where there will be some amendments to the CoC Charter proposed.

Consuella provided update on Youth NOFA, which was submitted and a copy of which is now on All Chicago website. DFSS will be hiring a project coordinator who will be charged to head up this work around homeless youth. Consuella made some additional remarks on the move to address youth homelessness: It's clear that young people want to be attached to the workforce; they just want to know how. Youth homelessness is a different issue from adult homelessness, partly due to the fact that we don't necessarily know who and how many are homeless. We don't often see young people in context of "panhandling," rather, they're much more likely to be doubled up or in transportation or in someone's couch house. They experience a much higher level of invisibility. One basic challenge is to figuring out how many youth are homeless: PIT count has 850, CPS has much higher number, Voices of Youth count has different number. These discrepancies in numbers need to be addressed. Some ideas in engaging youth in employment that came out of the Youth NOFA were hiring youth to do inspections of group homes, and hiring youth to do trainings for case managers.

Chris also announced the PIT Count, which will be occurring on January 26th.