

Employment Task Force Meeting Minutes
Friday, November 4, 2016 at 9:30am
Michael Barlow Center
2120 W Warren Blvd

In attendance: Gwen Turner, Shannon Stewart, Consuella Brown, Ellen Ray, Alexis Canalos, Lynne Cunningham, Carrie Thomas, Lizzie Harrington, Jennifer Miller Rehfeldt, Nancy Phillips, Chris O'Hara, Danny Nicholson, Michelle Rafferty, Margaret Smith

- I. **Welcome & Introductions:** There were brief introductions due to the full agenda and people shared excitement over the Cubs World Series win.
- II. **Approval of Sept 2016 Minutes:** Renee Edwards was mistakenly written on Attendees, and Lizzie Harrington should be added. With that exception, minutes were approved.
- III. **Highlights of *A Nation That Works* Conference:** Several attendees who attended the A Nation That Works conference spoke about highlights. Chicago Jobs Council's Connections Project won a "Keeping It Miles Davis" Award. Lizzie expressed excitement around the engaging panels and relevant tools and techniques discussed in the sessions. She favorably compared it to other similar conferences she has attended, citing its high level of organization and focus on concrete tools and best practices. Several people also mentioned the TANF panel as a highlight of the conference, explaining that it seemed to get people energized about the work and particularly fed the solution-oriented atmosphere that permeated the conference. The Seattle Navigator model that was presented was also mentioned by Gwen and others as inspiring. Chris liked the information on Employment First, the intersections of employment with race and incarceration, and the impacts of overseas positions and work visas on job availability. Jennifer appreciated the reminder of the impact of policy and advocacy on the lived experience of individual persons. Carrie recounted that she had connected with someone who is involved in the IPS model, and thought of them as a possible speaker for a future meeting, or even a possible group member. Carrie was featured in a video presentation where she emphasized, "They do want to work."

Nancy provided some additional background information on the conference. She explained that the focus of the conference was meant to provide practical tools for employment practitioners working with chronically unemployed individuals, and to lift up "emergent practices" with real thought given to what data and experiences have shown to work. However, the conference was meant to provide also a systems context, pointing out the greater political, institutional, and systemic frameworks that affect employment outcomes, rather than merely a focus on transactional exchanges between practitioner and participant. The last similar conference that Heartland planned was the National Transitional Jobs Conference in Baltimore in 2012. Nancy explained that there will probably not be another conference like this next year due to the ambitiousness and scope of such a project. According to Nancy, the survey link is now available to give feedback on the conference.

- IV. **HIC (Housing Inventory Count):** The committee discussed the question of collecting data related to interest in employment on the HIC vs the PIT surveys. The current HIC survey includes questions related to employment, and the task force has been using this

data to estimate the number of people who are interested in employment services. It was explained that this process is not ideal because the questions are not being asked of individuals themselves, but rather service providers. Attendees also brought up the importance of obtaining a means of insight into how outreach teams are learning about employment.

Consuella brought up the question of adding an employment section to the PIT (Point in Time) Count survey. She indicated that there are two possible drawbacks to this move: first, this data technically belongs to DFSS and the committee would have to work within their sphere to manipulate and gain access to it; and second, changes to the PIT information collected might hinder the ability to compare changes over time. However, adding such a section to the PIT would allow this crucial information to be collected directly from individuals. Consuella also provided a handout of the PIT questionnaire from January 2016.

Some time was spent brainstorming pros and cons to these approaches. Jennifer pointed out that the PIT survey would not collect data on those in Permanent Supportive Housing. Ellen confirmed that the PIT would only collect data on those in emergency and transitional models of housing. Shannon explained that originally, the HIC was the only opportunity to collect this information. She wondered whether at this point we are missing an opportunity to collect information directly from people who are experiencing homelessness or in PSH where they are already accessing an assessment somewhere through the Internet (like the CRS or coordinated access)? Ellen pointed out that the goal is to assess people new to the homeless services system as well as existing people, and the CRS would only assess new people. The HIC data collection process solved the problem of how to continue accessing people already in shelters and programs. Chris brought up the question of whether PSH models discourage people from making too much money, i.e. seeking out or improving employment. This could affect how people respond to that question if they are in a PSH model. Michelle and Nancy brought us back to our general purpose: we want to be able to know, of the people we're already serving, how many of those are currently looking for or interested in employment.

Ellen stated that she thought the committee was working with HMIS to take that data from the Coordinated Access assessment. She explained that the PIT would help the quality of the data since it would be asking both existing and new people to the system the questions directly. Carrie pointed out that the PIT is really about collecting descriptive data, and would not be appropriate for the "are you interested" question, which is more of an assessment question. Others also brought up the potentially problematic nature of asking if assistance is desired, and then moving on from them. Those questions about desire of assistance should only be asked if a follow up can happen, and that is not the purpose of the PIT count.

Ellen pointed to Question 11 on the PIT questionnaire handout, which asks if respondents are receiving or have ever received services for the following: physical disability, alcohol use, drug use, HIV/AIDS and related health issues, mental health problem, developmental disability, other (please specify), refused to answer, or none of the above. She posed the question of whether that would be an appropriate place to ask if respondents are or have ever received employment services, although this would not be asking about interest in employment. It was generally understood amongst attendees

that the PIT is the best way to access current clients in the system, but the PIT is not appropriate for asking about *interest* in employment, which is crucial information. Carrie expressed her opinion that Coordinated Access is the best place for such questions about interest.

At this point Consuella offered to take this back to her team at All Chicago, and emphasize the Task Force's need to have an effective means of capturing this information. She explained that currently, the roll out of coordinated entry is targeting veterans, youth, and chronically homeless individuals. In response to the question of why employment isn't being considered in Coordinated Entry, Consuella explained that employment has not been a front and center topic. She suggested that the CoC Board of Directors be used to raise a motion around this topic, or that the Service Providers Commission (SPC) be utilized to raise this up. Nancy pointed out that Plan 2.0 calls for this kind of assessment. General frustration was then expressed regarding the fact that this conversation is still happening, yet little has materialized around it. Need for commitment amongst leadership was expressed. Consuella requested that task force members send her an email so that it could be taken back to her team to think about solutions and prompt conversations. Consuella will also be setting up a meeting with Carrie and Shannon around this question. Carrie stated that the strategy around this should bring to front and center the popular misconception that people will lose something if they go to work. Here, Nancy brought up that this may be an opportunity for a training at All Chicago for service providers on the importance of employment and the measureable benefits it brings people.

A decision was made to keep the employment data collection on the HIC survey this year. Consuella has requested email communication regarding needs from HMIS and Coordinated Entry, as well as around general commitment to collecting employment data and making that issue front and center.

Ellen requested that All Chicago lead advocacy push with DFSS to add "employment services" and "education services" boxes to question 11 in the PIT count survey for this year. Chris and Lynne can also lead that push from fronts in their committee postings.

Consuella requested that SPC allow some time on the agenda to ask this question. Lynne responded that the SPC is mired in process and this might not be possible. Consuella stated that she would get the next date for the Assessment Tool Workgroup so that these needs could be brought up directly. Carrie emphasized that what is really important to the group, for Coordinated Entry, are a set of funded interventions that are available for those who indicate interest, and also collecting data around why people are not looking for employment (there is specific interest in catching people who are receiving public benefits and are wary of losing eligibility). Nancy explained that this plan was drawn from effective models. Carrie wanted to know how she could get a draft of the Coordinated Assessment, and it was explained that she would have to be at a meeting.

- V. **Coordinated Assessment Follow-Up:** Committee members agreed that this agenda item had already been covered within the immediately previous agenda item.
- VI. **Updated Workplan – Special Focus on Advocacy Priorities:** The committee discussed updates to the committee work plan, specifically around advocacy priorities.

Updates for other sections of the work plan were completed in June, but this section had not been completed at that point. There was then some feedback in July around what to include, but it needed to be tightened up and finalized. Thus the goals of this discussion were to identify what the activities would be, confirm that committee is in agreement, and that we have capacity and are remaining within the bounds of the strategic framework. Nancy summed this up by explaining that a list of advocacy ideas was already generated, but now we need to identify whether it makes sense within the scope and scale of the group.

Ellen pointed out that the greatest piece of policy advocacy was the WOIA recommendations. Carrie agreed, saying that following up on WOIA recommendations is a lot of work, and should stay on the list. She also suggested that the group consider additional recommendations for the Youth Advisory Council. Carrie requested information on whether names should be sent to the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership for consideration. Michelle stated that she would find out what the plan is regarding that – there is some delay because the first meeting isn't meant to engage youth directly because they are still working out what they will be wanting from them.

Attendees also discussed keeping SNAP Employment & Training on the list. Carrie had a number of suggestions on this point. She suggested that the committee leave support for those working on SNAP waiver for Able-bodied SNAP customers on the list, and also to request updates on what's happening with regard to SNAP E&T and looking for opportunities to provide recommendations. She stressed the importance of understanding the risk of expanding employment training under this administration because the underlying motivation may be to get people off of SNAP. Additionally, DHS may not be in a place where they could develop a very effective workforce training program. The first priority must therefore be to keep workforce training voluntary and not mandatory.

The committee decided to keep the following focuses for policy/advocacy in work plan:

- Follow through on SNAP E&T
- Learn more about employment First and IPS at the state level
- Find out more about SNAP focus on students
- Support efforts to increase wage policies
- Coordinate with Advocacy Committee

- VII. Workforce 101 Training:** Carrie presented her ideas for a Workforce 101 Training and discussion ensued. The training is meant to address the disconnect between workforce training services and homeless services. The training is geared towards CoC service providers, and the purpose would be to explain how front line workforce system works and how they think about things, and how to work through partnerships on both sides.

Carrie presented a chart with bulleted talking points for the FFTI/CJC's "Intro to Workforce Development System" training, along with customization ideas to make it geared towards a CoC audience. She also provided PowerPoint slides. Alexis suggested thinking about the Systems Map that was provided in the PowerPoint slides a little differently, starting from the of the entry point, and flowing through in the way that the participant moves through the system. Ellen suggested a general emphasis on what the access points are to the system. Nancy pointed out that funding often follows

populations, and there could be different access points due to that. Ellen also suggested that the training emphasize the interactions between the two systems, and what the shared outcomes are (making a self-interested case).

When discussing the Program Models section of the training, Ellen suggested bringing up that each of these models do not fit each housing type. "Model Alignment" between housing type and employment models might help with matching. When discussing the Service Provider Panel Discussion section, Shannon suggested stressing that there are many different funding sources with different requirements, and so referrals can't just be made haphazardly. There was additional support for covering the gaps, and what the challenges are in making and receiving appropriate referrals.

Consuella offered the use of the Learning Center at All Chicago. Carrie added that working with Chris and Carl from Heartland could provide a two-parter training. Carrie secured 2-3 volunteers to help review the revised Workforce 101 training plan based on the above discussion.

VIII. Potential Speakers: Attendees were encouraged to contact Shannon with ideas for potential speakers. Shannon also has some ideas (Joel Mitchell). Chris suggested Michael Russell with City Colleges employment education.

IX. SOAR Application: Consuella described new RFA released by HUD on 11/3/2016 for CoC participation in SOAR's Technical Assistance program. Participation in the TA program would essentially be an opportunity to work directly with the SOAR TA center to develop an action plan for establishing the community infrastructure and collaborations needed to solidly implement SOAR within the CoC. A SOAR local lead will also be able to attend a Leadership Academy where they will learn skills to sustain the SOAR structure within the CoC. Consuella posed the question to the group of whether the CoC should apply, and if so, whether the committee would be able to take this on.

Discussion around this question ensued, and while there was consensus that SOAR is shown to be an effective and important tool and the CoC should apply in order to more solidly implement the SOAR processes, the question exists as to whether the Employment Task Force is an appropriate vehicle for that. A decision was reached that the CoC should apply, but completing the RFA is not within the scope of the Employment Task Force.

X. Setting Dates for 2017 meetings: It was decided that the first Friday of each month, 9:30 to 11:30, will continue to be the committee meeting time in 2017. There will also be a month sometime between July and September when there will be no meeting.

XI. Proposed Leadership Slate:

Seat	Name & Organization Affiliation (if any)	Term end date	Member in good standing? (yes, no, unsure)	Do you anticipate needing the Nominating sub-committee's assistance to fill a vacant or expiring seat? (yes, no, not applicable)
LEC	Chris O'Hare	12/31/2018	Unsure	
LEC	Gwendolyn Turner	12/31/2018	Unsure	
LEC	Otha Gaston	12/31/2017	Unsure	
SPC	Nancy Phillips, Heartland Human Care Services	12/31/2018	Unsure	
SPC	Ellen Ray, Center for Changing Lives	12/31/2017	Unsure	
SPC	Shannon Stewart, Inspiration Corporation	12/31/2017	Unsure	
ESG Rep	Alan Placek, Chicago Department of Family and Support Services	12/31/2018	Unsure	
State Agency				Yes
Key Stakeholder	Carrie Thomas, Chicago Jobs Council	12/31/2018	Unsure	
Major System	Michelle Rafferty, Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership	12/31/2017	Unsure	
Private Funder	Jennifer Miller Rehfeldt, The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation	12/31/2018	Unsure	
At-Large	Katrina Van Valkenburgh, Corporation for Supportive Housing	12/31/2017	Unsure	

XII.

XIII. Other Announcements: Ellen Ray will no longer be on the 2017 committee and Alexis will be taking her place.

XIV. Adjournment