

This meeting summary was produced by City Bureau Documenters, in accordance with our editorial independence policy, with financial support from the city of Chicago. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email City Bureau at documenters@citybureau.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.

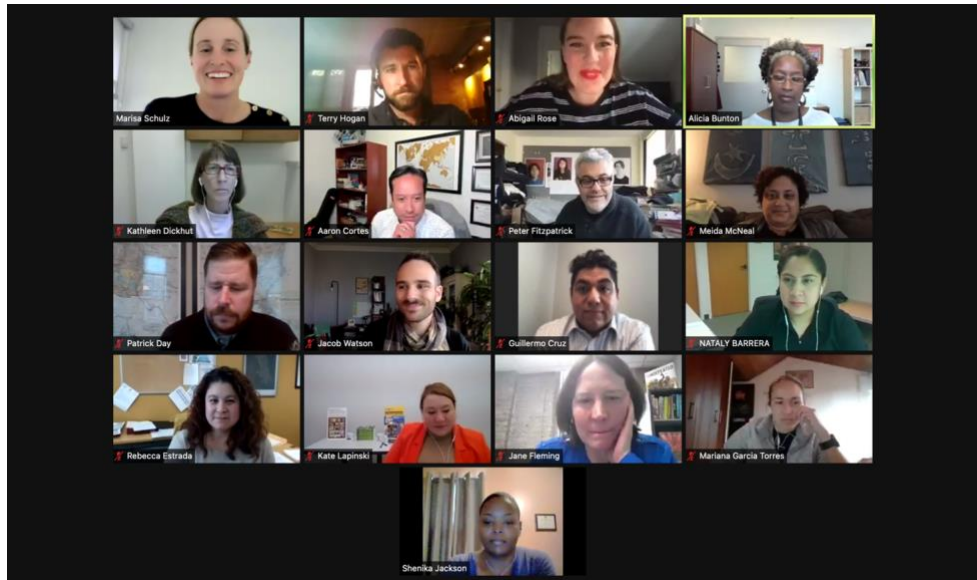
Lifelong Learning Meeting #6

November 4, 2021, 2:00 PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Karen Viado

ATTENDEES

- Marisa Schulz
- Abigail Rose
- Borja Gonzalez
- Terry Hogan
- Mariana Garcia Torres
- Rebecca Estrada
- Meida McNeal
- Jane Fleming
- Aaron Cortes
- Alicia Bunton
- Kathleen Dickhut
- Nataly Barrera
- Renuka Sharma
- Peter Fitzpatrick
- Aimee Davis
- Guillermo Cruz
- Jacob Watson
- José Luis Rodríguez
- Kate Lapinski
- Quenna Lene Barrett
- Shenika Jackson
- Patrick Day



MEETING GOAL

To create up to 5 objectives per guiding question based on the brainstorming the pillar research team did in Meeting #5 and to provide the opportunity for the team to get to know one another.

WHERE WE ARE



Step 1
We Are
Setting the Stage



Step 2
We Have and Need
Develop A Policy Toolkit



Step 3
We Will
Set Policy Framework

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

A key theme discussed at the meeting was accessibility. How could current learning resources and opportunities be more accessible and inclusive to all people? What resources and opportunities should be created to break down barriers to lifelong learning and growth? This included creating systems of support for people to use resources, including childcare and eldercare.

2

A common question was the difference between formal and informal learning spaces. What constitutes each? And what learning opportunities and resources is the City of Chicago responsible for providing for all residents, versus what is the responsibility of communities?

3

Another key theme was building a sense of trust with communities and ultimately a sense of belonging for all people at institutions and other learning spaces. It isn't enough to have free and low-cost learning opportunities; people need to be aware of those opportunities and feel like an

institution, program, or resource is for them. How do organizations that provide learning opportunities tap into informal networks to raise awareness and build trust?

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

"It goes back to a sense of belonging. I may know I can get a free pass to a museum, but if I don't see [anything of myself] in an exhibit besides African masks ... I'm still not going to use it."

Alicia Bunton | Illinois Institute of Technology, Director, Community Affairs

"I think about how the monthly book club is a really powerful thing, because it's people who live in the same community and get together once a month."

Kate Lapinski | Chicago Public Library, Manager of Adult Learning and Economic Advancement

"Sometimes the resources and spaces are not in the neighborhood due to disinvestment."

Aaron Cortes | Center for College Access and Success at Northeastern Illinois University, Director of STEAM Pathways

"When we say 'sense of belonging,' I think we're actually speaking about a sense of trust and building relationships with communities."

Aimee Davis | The Field Museum, Director of Learning

NOTES

- The meeting, facilitated by Marisa Schulz, began with a reflective prompt: Imagine your neighborhood if all of the objectives we outlined last meeting were implemented. What would it look like?
 - Group members were asked to reflect individually, then shared their thoughts in small groups.
 - When the large group reconvened, some members shared their thoughts also.
 - Common themes included accessible gathering spaces and community hubs for lifelong learning, as well as communities that were thriving, not just surviving.
- Group members then split into three breakout groups in order to brainstorm objectives for each of the five guiding questions the group formed. The goal is then to brainstorm policies for each objective at the next meeting.
- Before the meeting, group members submitted ideas for objectives for each guiding question via email. Research leads compiled those ideas and grouped them into common themes for each guiding question. In the breakout groups, members looked at the ideas and decided on objectives based on those ideas, common themes, and their own discussions within the breakout groups.
 - The goal was to differentiate what they wanted to achieve (objectives) and how they wanted to achieve goals (policies). Terry Hogan explained the goal of the breakout groups and the differences between objectives and policies.
 - Group members also flagged objectives that involved other pillars
- Schulz said that they also asked the group's artist-organizers, Jacob Watson and Quenna Barrett, to share their thoughts both on the working documents and in the meeting. Watson shared some common themes that they noticed, especially the overlap in Guiding Questions and themes. For example, there was a lot of discussion about community hubs and repurposing schools and other buildings for that use, which led to discussions on employment opportunities and job training. There were also common themes of community-led work and striving to meet the needs of a broad spectrum of learners.
- Breakout Group 1 discussed Guiding Question #1: How do we support increased awareness, interest, and belonging to learning resources accessible to all Chicagoans at all stages of life (regardless of race, gender, income level, age, ability, citizen status, and language proficiency)?
 - Key themes from submitted ideas were communications, community learning hubs/resource centers, and resources made available.
 - Communications:
 - Objective Ideas
 - Create geographically-accessible learning opportunities for Chicagoans in all neighborhoods
 - Create and disseminate opportunities that respond to the specific learning needs of communities

- Increase awareness, utilization of and engagement with opportunities that exist at the local level
 - Improve collaboration between citywide organizations to better facilitate access (financial, logistical, etc.) to learning opportunities (systems-wide)
 - Invest in maintaining centralized resources of learning opportunities
 - Allow communities to choose/design where they want their info hub to be located, curated across the city (particularly for folks that don't have internet access). Differentiated by neighborhood, but allow for redundancies.
- Policy Ideas
 - Creating info in digestible formats
 - Cultural organizations have resources and incentives to create neighborhood-specific programs (e.g., Lyric's EmpowerYouth! program)
 - Digital resources and directories
 - Signage in physical/public spaces
 - Partner with alderpersons to increase the expectation of curated learning resources by neighborhood
- Community Learning Hubs/Resource Centers
 - Objective Ideas
 - Create a sense of belonging/build trust and relationships with organizations in formal learning spaces through culturally-relevant learning resources
 - Prioritize traditionally underserved and disadvantaged/historically divested communities
 - Create an informal community learning hub in all communities
 - Policy Ideas
 - Provide guidance with community input to organizations on how to build trust within communities
 - Make culturally relevant learning resource and pathways available to Black and Brown residents in their local communities
 - Leverage informal learning opportunities to create pathways toward more formal learning opportunities (Bunton provided an example scenario of a young student learning coding in their community, and then enrolling in a city college, then transferring to the Illinois Institute of Technology)
 - Investing in community-specific learning spaces at educational and social service institutions
- Resources made available
 - Objective Ideas
 - Create and maintain an open-source Chicago encyclopedia and/or increase investment in resources that do exist

- Increase opportunities for Black and Latinx-led learning/educational organizations to have their work elevated and funded
 - Build a system of shared responsibility with local communities and the City.
- Policy Ideas
 - Create a Wikipedia-type site for Chicagoans that is open-sourced and curated, or a resource of the resources (A key question brought up in discussion was who would maintain this.)
 - Establish a city office or position devoted to informal learning and/or invest in libraries to facilitate these connections
- Breakout Group 2 discussed Guiding Question #2: How do we create sustainable pathways to the workforce for communities who have been historically disenfranchised, including individuals negatively impacted by the criminal justice system?
 - Objective Ideas
 - Create quality training programs that guarantee employment opportunities
 - Create education programs, trainings, and partnerships specifically for those negatively impacted by the criminal justice system
 - Understand the present job sectors, growth, and trends to be articulated, taught, and explored in training and work with schools to start these programs earlier
 - Policy Ideas
 - Fund workforce training programs that offer job employment, including programs specifically for those negatively impacted by the criminal justice system
 - A key question for these policies was who is building that capacity to build these programs.
 - Another key question in their discussion was how to make programs accessible, including broadband access
- Breakout Group 3 discussed objectives for Guiding Question #3: How can we build on existing programs and academic curricula to create learning opportunities and deliver on personal growth?
 - Objective Ideas
 - Increase support for and access to childcare and eldercare.
 - Build awareness of services that currently exist
 - Ensure equitable and appropriate distribution of services
 - Reprioritize civic assets and spaces to use for childcare and eldercare
 - Policy Ideas
 - Provide on-site childcare at learning opportunities

- Provide childcare and eldercare and address barriers like transportation, healthcare, and workforce initiatives that exist to increase learning opportunities
- Free access to public transit
- Incentivize childcare with nontraditional hours
- Use the Chicago Park District infrastructure to support childcare
-
- Group members did not have time to discuss objectives for Guiding Questions #4 and #5. They plan to discuss these questions at the next meeting.

RESOURCES

FIND HELP WEBSITE

[Used by the Chicago Public Library, Aunt Bertha's network connects people seeking help and verified social care providers that serve them](#)

EmpowerYouth! Program at the Lyric Opera Website

[EmpowerYouth! Is the Lyric Opera's partnership with the Chicago Urban League that immerses teenagers in the creation of an original performance](#)

My CHI. My Future. Website

[Database that connects young people to out-of-school opportunities](#)

Chicago Public Library FAQ page about Kids Museum Passes

[Information about the free museum passes program offered by the Chicago Public Library](#)

We Will Chicago Lifelong Learning Survey

[Survey for the We Will Chicago Lifelong Learning pillar's guiding questions](#)

NEXT STEPS

- Research leads will go through objectives each breakout group came up with and consolidate the work. They will share this at the next pillar meeting.
- At the next pillar meeting, the group plans to discuss objectives for Guiding Questions they didn't get to this meeting (#4-5). They also plan on brainstorming policies for each objective.
- The We Will Advisory Committee will meet on November 16, and each pillar group will report out on draft objectives.