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Lifelong Learning Meeting #5

October 12, 2021, 02:00PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Jason Tompkins

MEETING MATERIALS

[Agenda <Link to Agenda>](#)

[Presentation <Link to presentation>](#)

ATTENDEES

- Quenna L. Barrett
- Jacob Watson
- Emilia Chico
- Aisha Jean-Baptiste
- Adam Levine
- Matie Ovalle
- Meida McNeal
- Marisa Schulz
- Patrick Day
- Terry Hogan
- Jane Fleming
- Mark Potter
- Renuka Sharma
- Kathleen Dickhut
- Dr. Catherine Hollis
- Aaron Cortes
- Quenna Lene Barrett
- Shenika Jackson
- Rebecca Amato
- Wanda Santiago



MEETING GOAL

Reviewing research, analysis and trends; refining the guiding questions for the Lifelong Learning Pillar; reflecting on cross-pillar education-specific trends as they relate to racial equity; and surveying participants on what additional data they would need for the next pillar meeting.

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

Recurring theme in response to the facilitator prompt “What can we learn from the data and our own lived experience to help guide our work forward?”: the importance of leveraging lived experience and anecdotal feedback as datasets, and valuing accessible, “one-stop,” informal learning pathways and opportunities.

2

The proposed extended structure of the pillar work is based on previous participant feedback and is greatly desired. An expansion of Step 2 will lead to additional community engagement opportunities, reflection on cross-pillar topics and a more in depth historical reckoning and human rights and equality impact assessment (HREIA).

3

Feedback from the live pillar objectives brainstorm will be utilized to build consensus and vet five priority objectives, for which action items will be determined in future meetings.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

“How do you send that information back and how do you engage the individuals in the community? I think it's having those spaces, understanding ways of disseminating information in a much more digestible format. Many of us look at the charts and might be like ‘Oh, yeah, I totally understand’ and there might be others who are like ‘Ah, sure, I mean you know ... I guess I get your point’ ... being able to provide the information in layman's terms is always good to involve people ... Dissemination needs to be key.”

Aaron Cortes | STEAM Pathways at Northeastern Illinois University, Director

“Our hope is that we close this digital literacy gap and create that awareness that is already existing ... it's just spreading that awareness and making sure that the adult learners are given the opportunities that are already there within their communities.”

Renuka Sharma | Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition, Community Engagement Manager

“With respect to naming root causes, I think we can be open and honest about the fact that many past plans and policies aimed at building a ‘better Chicago’ have had a disproportionate negative impact on Chicago's Black and Latinx residents and that we can now be unapologetically proactive and targeted in our strategies and recommendations for investments to rectify past injustices. I've noticed that we sometimes reference new investments to ensure ‘all Chicagoans’ have access to lifelong learning, and I think we can push ourselves to start naming and crafting specific enough strategies that will achieve true reckoning for Black and Latinx residents.”

Jane Fleming | Chicago Public Schools, Director of Literacy

“While we are talking about job readiness and training, are we also talking about job availability, specifically those with a living wage? I'm just curious about placement and career sustainability AFTER the formal and informal pathways have been taken.”

Rebecca Amato | Illinois Humanities, Director of Teaching and Learning

NOTES

Kickoff and Introductions

- The meeting starts at 2:02 p.m. with Marisa Schulz facilitating consent and a reflective prompt: “What can we learn from the data and our own lived experiences to help guide our work forward?”
- Chico acknowledges that data is not just numbers and maps; data has been playing out in our communities. “Each of us enters this [conversation] from different lived experiences. Self reflection helps us understand our own relationship to power and privilege. HREIA framework will continue to be used to resist triggering and retraumatizing participants. Really important to share that context so that we are not moving through these convos without intentionality.”
- Chico re-presents data slides that were presented at Meeting #3: maps, data related to segregation, decades of disinvestment, education and enrollment, role of educational attainment in relation to household income, lack of funding, role of associate’s degree, literacy and digital literacy rates.

Overview

- At 2:10 p.m., Chico facilitates open reflection on the data presentation shared at last session:
 - Aaron Cortes commented that aligning data to experiences is important. Understanding both data and lived experience, and “how can we explain this in a way that will allow youth to have voice.”
 - Chico: We are engaging in community in a variety of ways (i.e. brown bag lunches).
 - Chico affirms a commitment to addressing root causes of systemic racism, and prompts: “What do you need from us as facilitators to move through those convos so that we aren’t recreating harm and [are] being intentional?”
 - Jacob Watson notes that feedback from the ongoing [Virtual Brown Bag Lunch Series](#) are viewable on a [Jamboard](#) used in those events. Common threads in feedback include the need for more accessibility, a “one-stop shop” for resources and funding opportunities.
- Marisa Schulz mentions that participants were emailed information last week outlining ways to improve the pillar process based on recent survey responses.
 - Proposal: extending the planning process beyond the initial 9 meetings into June 2022. This extension would allow space to synthesize feedback by pillar. A public survey will be used to gather input to inform pillar work. Attendees are asked to share the [Guiding Questions survey](#) with their networks.
- Chico further reviewed the data presentation:
 - Adult Education:
 - Barriers exist to achieving an associate’s degree: BIPOC students get placed in remedial classes and have disproportionate dropout rates. Furthermore,

70%-90% of training occurs informally, in workforce settings, highlighting the need for mentors and relevant bridge programming.

- Learning hubs must focus on formal and informal learning spaces. Culturally relevant learning is key.
- Chico: “What do we need? What’s missing? What other trends should we talk about/be familiar with? What might be helpful to move this work forward?”
 - Rebecca Amato: “My apologies if this is a silly question (I missed last week, unfortunately), but while we are talking about job readiness and training, are we also talking about job availability – specifically, those with a living wage? I’m just curious about placement and career sustainability AFTER the formal and informal pathways have been taken.”
 - Renuka Sharma: We should speak to adult learners that are being served and get more data about them. How many Black and brown institutions, how many are Black and brown led?
 - Mark Potter: Makes me think of the ecosystem, that everything is connecting in an equitable manner.
 - Marisa Schulz: We will review the chat and fulfill the appropriate data requests.
 - Kathleen Dickhut: Art education. Are there arts jobs at the other end of the trainings? Trends regarding getting training for jobs that are going to actually be there.
 - Patrick Day: We should map to different pillars and identify work that has been successful for replication.
 - Meida McNeal: “For informal learning, would it be helpful to look at the range of program offerings in parks and libraries over a certain number of years to see what kinds of content are being taught, learned and shared and age groups served/targeted.”
 - Jane Fleming: “Similar thought ... seems as if a lot of our group's focus is on increasing access to lifelong learning opportunities and I'm curious about what gets identified by these orgs or in the We Will Brown Bag/community sessions as barriers to access to formal or informal lifelong learning opportunities or interest/ability to persist once accessed.”
 - Jacob Watson: “@Jane, to your question about the Brown Bags: I do think we'll want to pull together a list of barriers, and so far it really varies based on topic/org. For example, early childhood talked a lot about systemic barriers like lack of equitable pay for ECE [early childhood education] workers. For other topics, like personal fulfillment or civic participation, it was more about making sure that people know about opportunities and have the means (transportation, childcare/eldercare, etc.) to access them.”

- “A lot of the feedback was about wanting to centralize resources and cut through red tape where possible, while still remaining flexible enough to adapt to the specific needs of different communities/contexts.”

Objectives Brainstorm Exercise (2:57 p.m.) led by Marisa Schulz via Menti

- 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)?
- 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?
- How can we build on existing programs and academic curricula to create learning opportunities and deliver on personal growth?
- How might we elevate existing social support systems to increase formal and informal learning opportunities?
- How can we expand the availability and accessibility of places where lifelong learning can occur, especially in communities that have been historically excluded?
- At 3:31 p.m., Marisa Schulz proposes that participants look through objectives and pare them down a bit into a Google Doc for group discussion at the next session.

RESOURCES

Honey Pot Performance

[A creative collaborative committed to interrogating and chronicling modern Afro-diasporic feminist and fringe subjectivities](#)

Scrapbook submission page

[This submission form allows community members to submit their unique Chicago moments, stories and experiences about learning, which will contribute to the pillar's album initiative.](#)

Lifelong Learning Guiding Questions Survey

[Responses to these questions will help design policies related to Lifelong Learning throughout the city.](#)

We Will Chicago Calendar

[A calendar of community engagement events and activities led by Honey Pot Performance. These events focus on the seven pillars and are free and open to the public.](#)

NEXT STEPS

- Meeting #6 will begin with further Q&A regarding the proposed extended timeline. Feedback will be used to assess willingness and process to extend planning.
- Meeting #6 will include reviewing pillar objectives in a full group, then breaking into smaller breakout groups
- Meeting #6 will flag cross-pillar and cross cutting objectives, to map out how to address those objectives across