



Action Plan Workgroups Summary

October 10 & 11, 2023

Attendees

Workgroup 1 present: Abigail Duor, Adilene Lopez, Allison Hilliard, Amy Alviar, Andrea Vargas, April Wiertz, Deedee Buscher, Dulce Trujillo, Elodia Castillo, Gretchen Schulz, Jessica Dishroon, Josephine Dubski, Kristy Brown, Lizbeth Martinez, Lorena Nuñez, Lorena Rodriguez, Natali Ricardez, Stephanie Carnduff, Veronica Tellez, Wendy Mendoza.

Workgroup 2 present: Ashely Pe, Christine Blanchard, Sofia Patino, Tricia Sabathne.

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Recommendations
 - a. **Workgroup 1 Recommendation: Awareness of Programs and Available Supports.** The recommendation of Awareness of Programs and Available Supports was made in the Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessment to ensure that individuals and organizations have access to the resources they need to achieve their goals. By increasing awareness of programs and supports, people can make more informed decisions about the services they need and better navigate the available resources. This is particularly important in areas where resources may be limited or difficult to access. By improving awareness, the community can work together to ensure everyone has access to the resources needed to succeed.
 - b. **Workgroup 2 Recommendation: Affordability.** In the Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessment affordability was identified as a significant challenge for many families who cannot access quality early childhood education and care due to financial constraints. This obstacle is having a significant impact on children's development and success. The councils recognized the need to address this issue and chose the recommendation because they saw the potential to significantly impact the lives of families and children in the community.
3. SMART goals
 - a. SMART goals are important to our work because they break down the steps to implementing recommendations into small, manageable pieces.



- b. This allows for more community buy-in and gives us all the ability to adjust our goals and the steps to reaching those goals if something doesn't work or is accomplished ahead of schedule.
 - c. SMART goals for recommendations are rooted in the data and findings from the Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessment.
4. What are the goals that must be achieved to implement the recommendation?

The workgroups met to discuss this question and began to fill out a matrix that includes a list of SMART goals, a list of steps needed to achieve each goal, and a timeframe for accomplishing the goals. Below is a summary of some of the most important goals discussed during the workgroup meetings.

- a. **Workgroup 1 Recommendation: Awareness of Programs and Available Supports.** The workgroup created SMART goals to improve awareness of programs and available supports. These goals include implementing a targeted outreach campaign to increase the number of families accessing available resources and programs. They also aim to develop and implement a user-friendly website that provides families with a comprehensive list of available resources and programs. Additionally, the workgroup aims to increase the number of providers registered on the Illinois Resource Information System (IRIS) by conducting targeted outreach and training sessions for local providers. To identify gaps in knowledge and awareness of available resources and programs, they plan to conduct a community-wide survey. Lastly, the workgroup intends to partner with local schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations to provide regular workshops and training sessions on available resources and programs to reach a wide audience.
- b. **Workgroup 2 Recommendation: Affordability.** The workgroups have developed SMART goals to make the recommendations for affordability more effective. These goals include setting up open-hour clinics with volunteers who can help people fill out forms and guide them through the process of applying for assistance. They also aim to make language lines available in languages other than Spanish and English during these clinics to cater to a wider audience. Furthermore, they plan to increase the number of CCAP applications by introducing a pre-screening process to determine eligibility for child care assistance and to track the number of people who are screened. The workgroups are also focused on providing more information to providers, connectors, and families to ensure that everyone is well-informed. Additionally, efforts are being



made to identify the grants that can be used to support child care options for families.

5. What are the barriers and challenges we may encounter?

During the discussions, the workgroups identified certain barriers and challenges that they may encounter when attempting to address the recommendations. The identified barriers and challenges will need to be addressed to ensure the successful implementation of the recommendations.

- a. **Workgroup 1 Recommendation: Awareness of Programs and Available Supports.** Several barriers and challenges were identified during the discussion around awareness of programs and available supports, including lack of awareness among families, language barriers, limited resources, stigma associated with accessing certain programs, and lack of trust in government or social service agencies. These challenges will need to be carefully considered and addressed as the councils work to promote awareness of programs and available supports in the community.
- b. **Workgroup 2 Recommendation: Affordability.** We may face barriers and challenges in addressing affordability in our community, including lack of awareness and information about available programs, funding and resource shortages, cultural and language barriers, and resistance to investing in childcare and early education. It will require collaboration and adaptability to overcome these challenges and meet the needs of our community.