



Governor's Commission on Workforce Equity & Access

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How Did We Get Here?

- The **Governor** formed the Governor's Commission on Workforce Equity & Access in recognition of the need to re-envision Illinois' workforce system
- House Bill 2170, known as the **Education and Workforce Equity Bill**, passed in January 2021
- The resulting **feasibility study** provided a snapshot of current workforce development structure, identified opportunities for potential consolidation, and pinpointed areas for further research

Why Now – Contributing Factors Identified in the Feasibility Study

- Unprecedented unemployment disproportionately impacting communities of color
- Unequal access to economic opportunity
- Multiple entry points for users results in the experience of a fragmented system
- Continuous duplication of administrative and program efforts
- Over-reliance on (diminished) federal funding; limited state investments
- Limited investments have prevented necessary technology upgrades, such as a common intake and performance dashboards
- Data sharing across agencies is cumbersome

This Commission's Charge

The Illinois Equity & Access Workforce Commission ("Commission") shall create a **vision for an equitable, accessible, and effective future state workforce system** grounded in an understanding of user and stakeholder experience, including how racial, social, and geographic inequities inform experience and outcomes across Illinois' federally and state-funded workforce programs.

In alignment with this vision--and based on a stronger understanding of user and stakeholder experience--the Commission shall make recommendations for:

- key **design enhancements/improvements** to the state workforce system,
- the **streamlining of state agencies**, and
- the **governance structure and state leadership** needed for execution

Commissioners

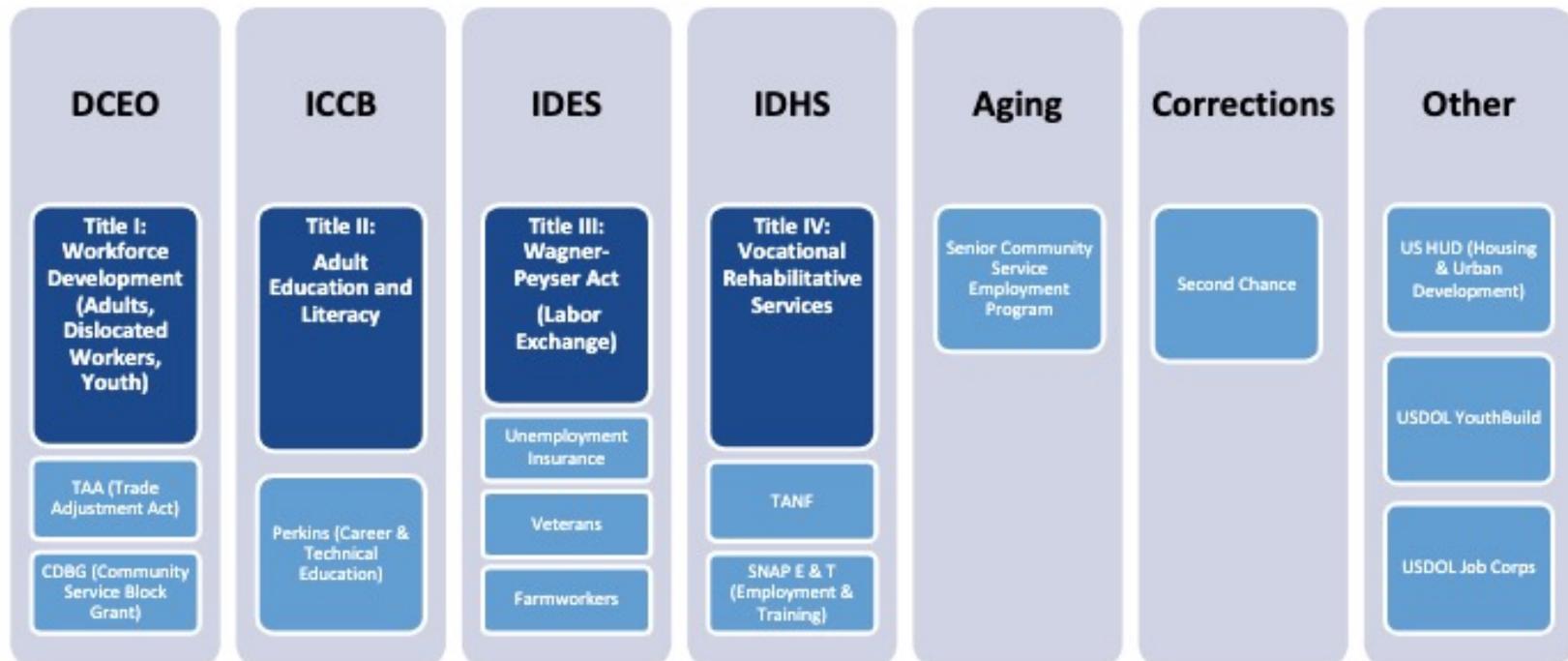
Representatives were chosen to represent the following groups:

- Illinois' Administrative Agencies
- Workforce Development Providers
- Illinois' Workforce Innovation Board
- Local WIBs
- Higher Education
- Advocacy & Policy Organizations
- Employers
- Organized Labor

What we mean by the “system”

ILLINOIS WORKFORCE SYSTEM UNDER WIOA

WIOA 4 Core Partners + WIOA Required Partners



Our Process

Our Path to (Re)Visioning

1 User Perspective

Understand what quality outcomes and success look like for the workforce system **from the perspective of current and future users**

User Experience
Working Group & Focus
Groups

2 Vision & Outcomes

Identify and recommend vision and desired outcomes for the system (beyond compliance metrics) that are **aligned to user definitions of quality and success**

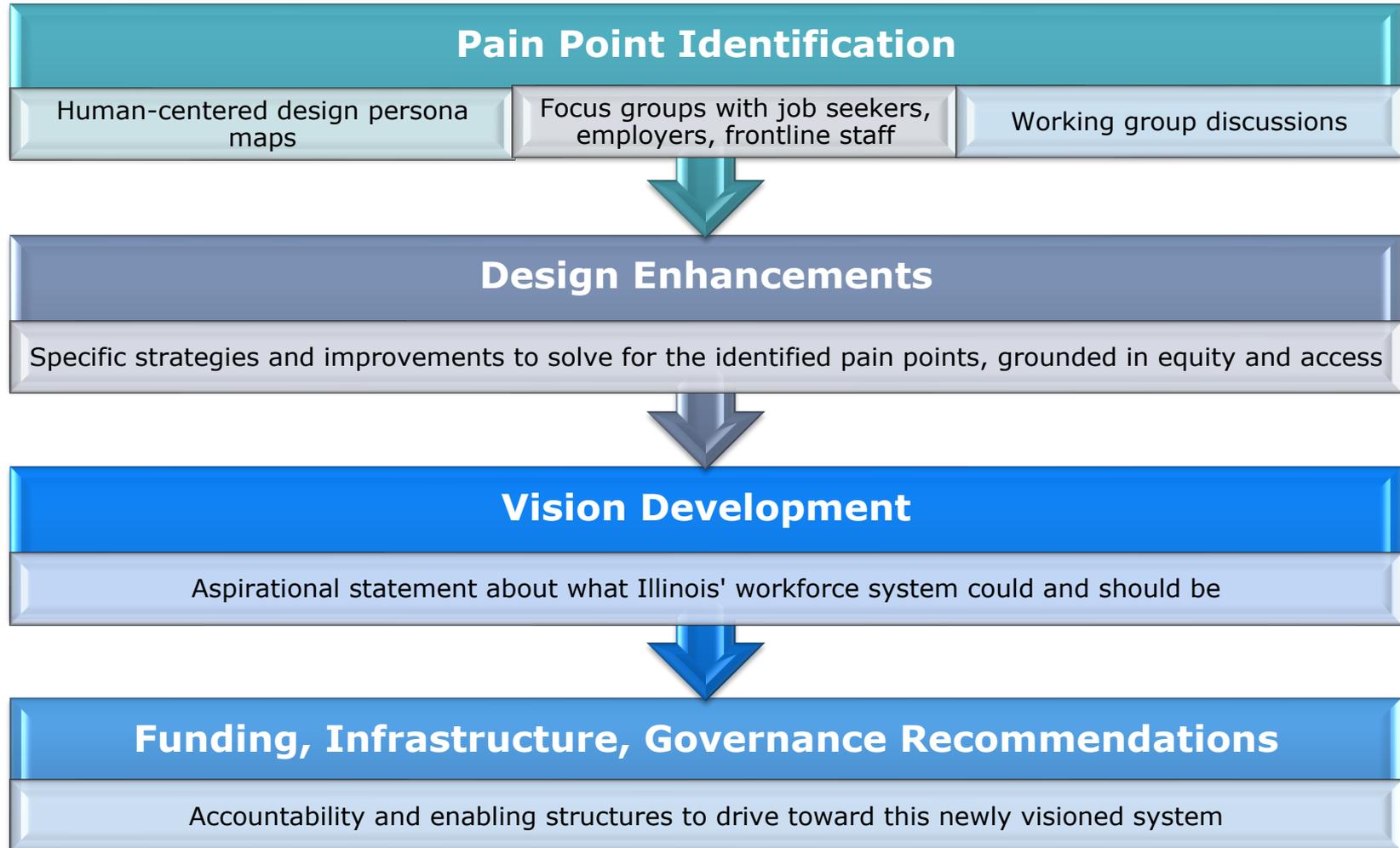
Funding / Infrastructure /
Governance Group

3 Structure

Recommend design enhancements, streamlining of state services, and governance in a way **that reflects and advances our equity and accountability objectives**

Commission

Commission Process To-Date



Human Centered Design Process

Identifying Pain Points, Vision, and Design Enhancements

Verna Persona

Verna Williams, 55 | she/her/hers



"I just want things to go back to normal."

Caseyville, IL

PERSONAL AND FAMILY LIFE

- Moved to the suburbs 10 years ago after living in East St. Louis for many years. Have more ties to where they used to live than their current community.
- Married with 4 kids (ages 17, 25, 27, 29) and 7 grandkids. Youngest kid and oldest grandkid (age 13) live with them.
- Her husband Art is a state employee and nearing retirement, worried about pension.

SKILLS AND INTERESTS

- Treasurer of the trustee board at her church, volunteers at East St. Louis food bank, member of quilting guild in old neighborhood, and huge Cardinals fan.

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

- Earned a BA in sociology
- Recently laid off from position as a bank teller at US Bank in St. Louis. Her branch closed and she didn't get a new role.
- Not emotionally or financially ready for retirement. Feels like she still has a lot of working life left.
- Her experience looking for work has been that no one is looking for an older person.
- She's sending out hundreds of online applications but doesn't hear back and doesn't know why. It seems like most of the applications are being screened by computers and not people.
- She's feeling really frustrated.

GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS

- She wants a job where she can help people—similar to how she helped people as a bank teller.
- Wants to be a good role model for kids and grandkids.
- Wants to maintain ties to her former neighborhood and maintain status in eyes of friends

CHALLENGE

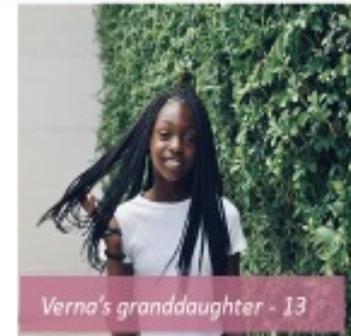
- She feels like she's facing a lot of age discrimination.
- There seem to be fewer customer service jobs and they pay less and less.
- Wasn't planning on still supporting kids at this age.

TOP OF MIND THOUGHTS

- *"Nobody is going to give me a chance at this age, are they?"*



Home: 1006 E Ofallon Drive



Verna's granddaughter - 13



Job Seeker Pain Points

Numerous redundant, burdensome processes, practices

Assessments to determine eligibility cause fear, hesitation (i.e., TABE)

Virtual and physical "front doors" of AJCs are confusing, not welcoming

Unfavorable view of system; many without knowledge of how to access system or what services are offered

Many occupations users want to explore/pursue are not supported by US DOL funding/regulations

Individuals with entrepreneurial skills/interests are not recognized by the system

Frontline staff lack training to respond to full range of user needs

Users' digital literacy needs reduce their competitiveness in the labor market

Alleviating Job Seeker Pain Points Alleviates Employer Pain Points

Pain Points with the **System**

Aligned with job seeker pain points; opportunity to be remedied via recommended design enhancements



Aren't aware the system exists



Services are difficult to access and navigate



Access to more data and information from the system



Better connection to small and mid-sized businesses

Key Takeaway:

The Commission's work to alleviate *job seeker pain points* will simultaneously solve for these employers' pain points with the system.

Pain Points with **Equitable Practices**

Opportunity for the WFD system to implement solutions with employers that *benefit job seekers*



Lack hiring vision for all kinds of candidates

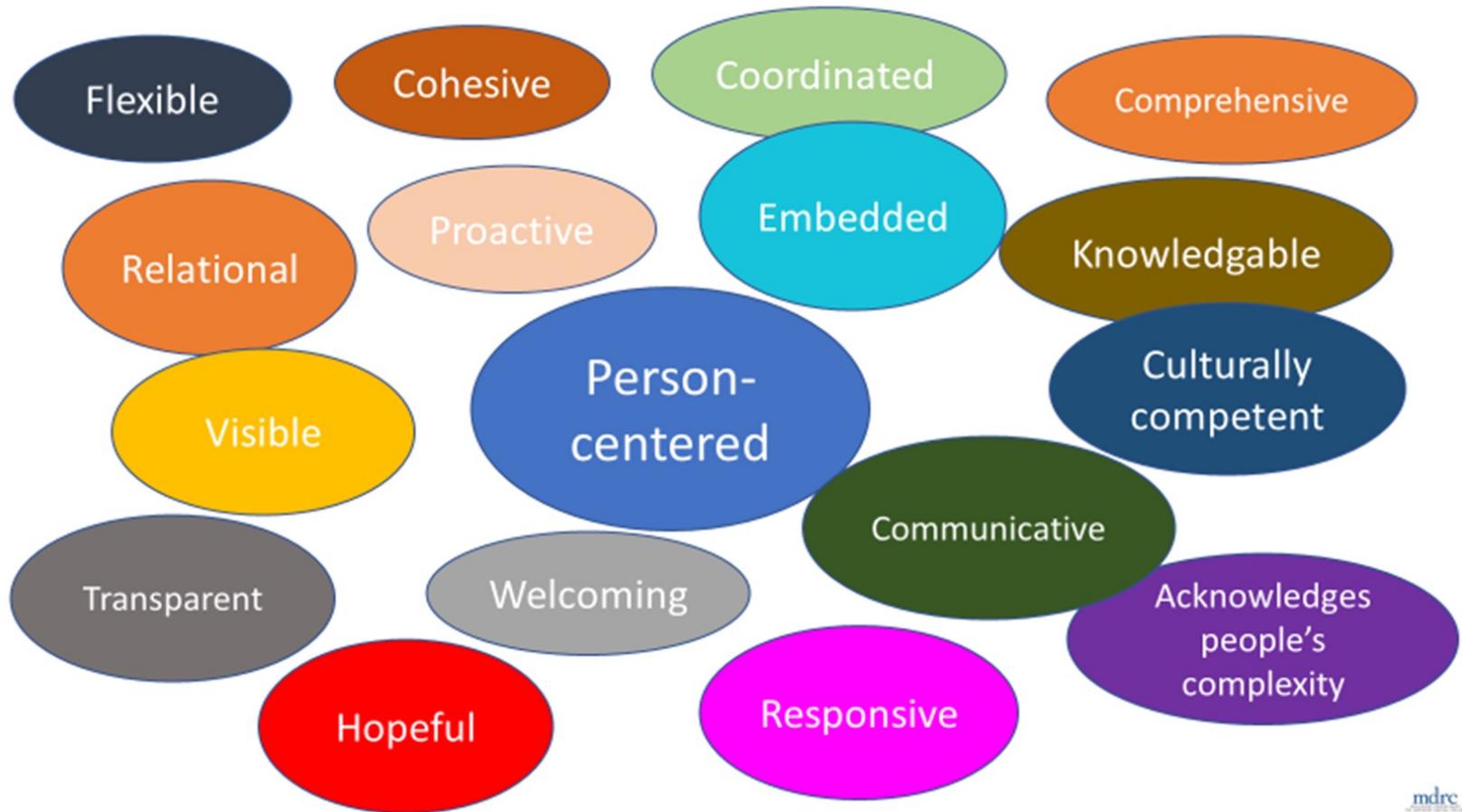


Limited tools for employee retention

Key Takeaway:

Providing education, advocacy, and tools to employers about inclusive hiring and retention practices both *centers job seekers* AND *solves for employers' pain points*.

Vision Themes for a Re-imagined State Workforce System



Select Design Enhancement Recommendations

 Staff training and increased frontline staff compensation

 Proactive outreach and designing for multiples modes of engagement

 Eliminating unnecessary steps

 Using an integrated MIS (Management Information System)

 Allocating additional state funding

 Developing user feedback protocols

 Promoting digital literacy

 Expanding support for entrepreneurship

Takeaways from the full set of design enhancements and vision

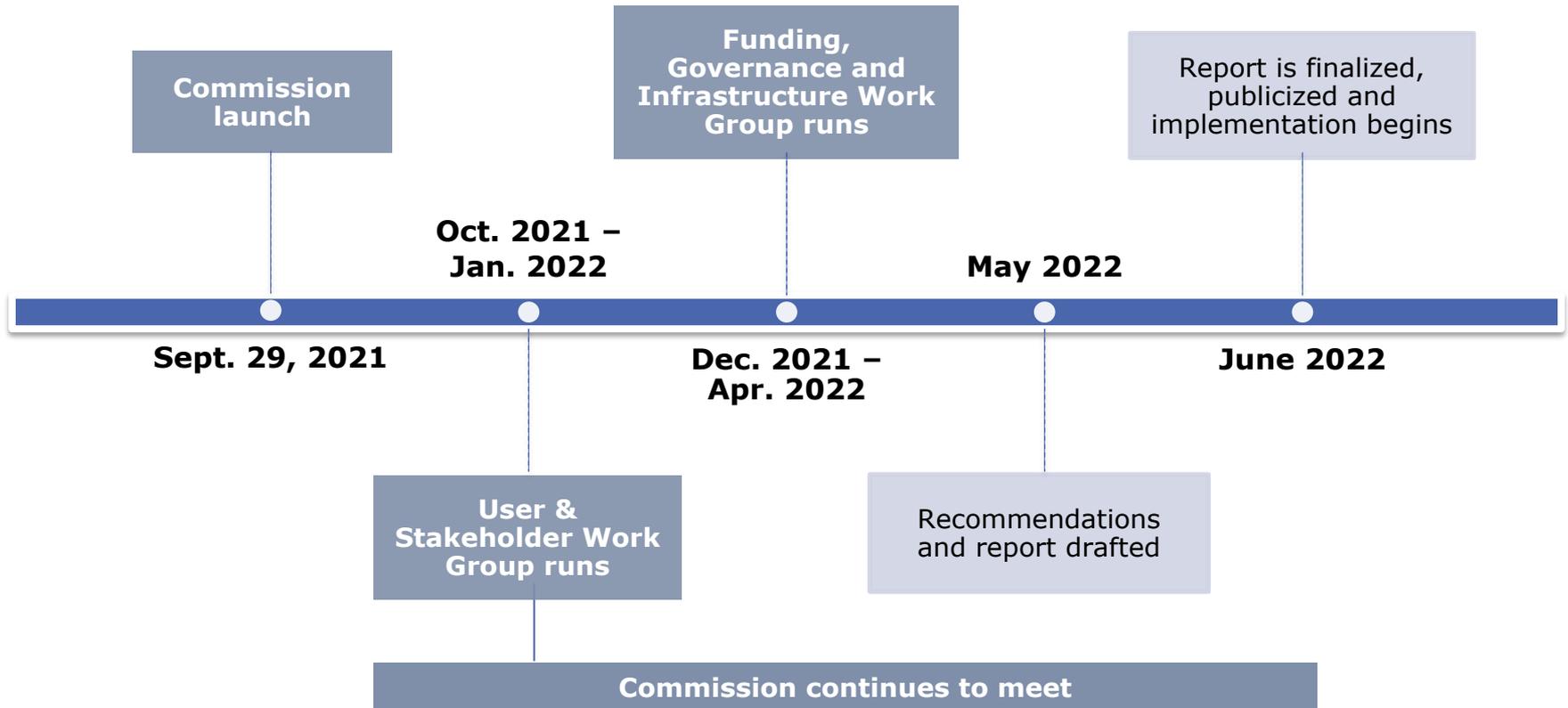
Many enhancements **cut across our state and local agencies and system – community colleges, American Job Centers, employers, and providers**; some are program/agency-specific

These enhancements will require **cross-agency collaboration and coordination - and incremental resources**

The enhancements remind us that **federal requirements do not incentivize us toward our vision**

Adopting the recast vision incentivizes our state to **identify equity & access workforce outcomes** that multiple agencies, programs, and funding sources can contribute toward

Timeline



Questions?