Our second convening of workforce development leaders focused on the impact of COVID-19 on our organizational missions and on methods for meeting the needs of program participants and staff in a changing context. The graphic below summarizes the strategic, operational, and tactical questions that were raised.

Mission

Business Model

How your organization operate:

ng How your work is funded

ion and goals How your work is staffe

Programs

What you offer your clients

How you define and measure success

Staff

The individuals who execute your mission program goals and operations

What's Happening Now

- Mission focus has shifted for providers rom long-term to short-term impact; many providers are reasessing approaches to service delivery and shifting service to engage those more in need.
- Workforce providers are challenged by the relevance of their offerings as many program participants have different, more immediate needs.
- Providers are amplifying their work by reinvigorating previously dormant parts of their missions and offering additional services to meet the current needs of clients like providing referrals to health services and daily case management support.
- Growing client familiarity with remote engagement has led providers to consider continue to provide some services remotely post-recovery.
- Providers are upskilling staff and identifying what skills staff need to continue providing services remotely post-recovery.
- Some funders have shifted contract requirements in response to the pandemic in an attempt to meet the immediate needs of program beneficiaries and to help organizations develop plans for continuity of services; providers have found it challenging to pivot program approaches in response to new requirements.
- Providers are conflicted about preparing clients for frontline work opportunities due to health risks
- Financial pressures experienced by employers has made it challenging for providers to cultivate reationships and placement
- Consistent, day-to-day, client engagement has proven to be effective in keeping clients engaged in the current context.
- Providers have begun to offer clients laptops and hot spots to improve connectivity and access to services.
- Providers are increasingly leaning on social media to recruit program participants.
- The digital literacy gap continues to be a challenge for clients, specifically older populations.

- Providers are concerned that existing workspaces might not be conducive to the health and safety of staff, due to COVID-19.
 Providers are considering creating staggered schedules to lower the number of staff on-site and implementing new space restrictions.
- Remote work has helped advance more egalitarian work cultures as organizations are providing more opportunities for team building digitally.
- Staff are increasingly concerned about becoming unemployed.
- The prospect of online schooling in the fall has staff concerned about being able to work. Employers are creating additional resources and tools to make remote work more sustainable like encouraging staggered schedules, and providing staff new hardware to improve connectivity.

Questions to Consider for Recovery

- How should organizations realign their mission with the needs of their clients in the short and long-term?
- How can workforce providers meet the immediate needs of their clients?
- What resources or partnerships do they need to do so?
- What aspects of mission, which may be less relevant in the current crisis, are likely to be critical for the long-term needs of program participants?
- Are aspects of workforce development organizations' mission at risk of becoming obsolete post-recovery?

- How can providers position themselves to expand their services? What resources will be needed?
- What fundraising opportunities exist for organizations to expand their work to new topic areas?
- What must providers consider to sustain operations?
- How can providers navigate increasingly complex funder relationships?
- How can workforce providers work with employers to ensure they are taking the necessary precautions to protect staff?
- How can providers coach program participants to advocate for their safety?
- How can workforce providers work with employers to understand their needs in the current context?
- What new staff capacity and resources will be needed to continue to offer clients ongoing engagement post-recovery?
- What resources will providers need to continue to increase digital access?
- How can providers continue to build the internal capacity to effectively use social media for client engagement?
- What additional resources and trainings can be provided to bridge the digital literacy gap?

- How will workspaces need to be reimagined in order to ensure staff health and safety while offering direct services?
- What shifts do organizations need to make to cultivate positive work cultures now and post-recovery?
- How can organizations help their staff understand their current financial situation? How can organizations support their staff during this uncertain time?
- How can organizations continue to accomodate challenges encountered by their staff due to the pandemic?



