

# **Bridging Connections between Workforce and Housing Systems**

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# Who We Are / What We Do

Chicago Jobs Council (CJC) is a workforce development intermediary that keeps jobseekers at the center of all we do. CJC:




**Advocates for jobseekers**, by researching current pressing matters for the field, develop recommendations and share them broadly to create systemic change.



**Builds capacity for workforce development field**, by developing curriculum that's offered through trainings, cohort learning and leadership academies based on our research of best practices.



**Influences City, State and Federal Policies** related to increasing funding for our public workforce system, creating equitable pathways and eliminating barriers to employment.



Employment & Income Task Force, is an Affinity Group of the Continuum of Care, at All Chicago-Making Homelessness History

A primary objective of the EITF is: Tackling Housing/Homeless Response and Workforce systems silos to better support job seekers experiencing homelessness and housing instability to meet their goals.

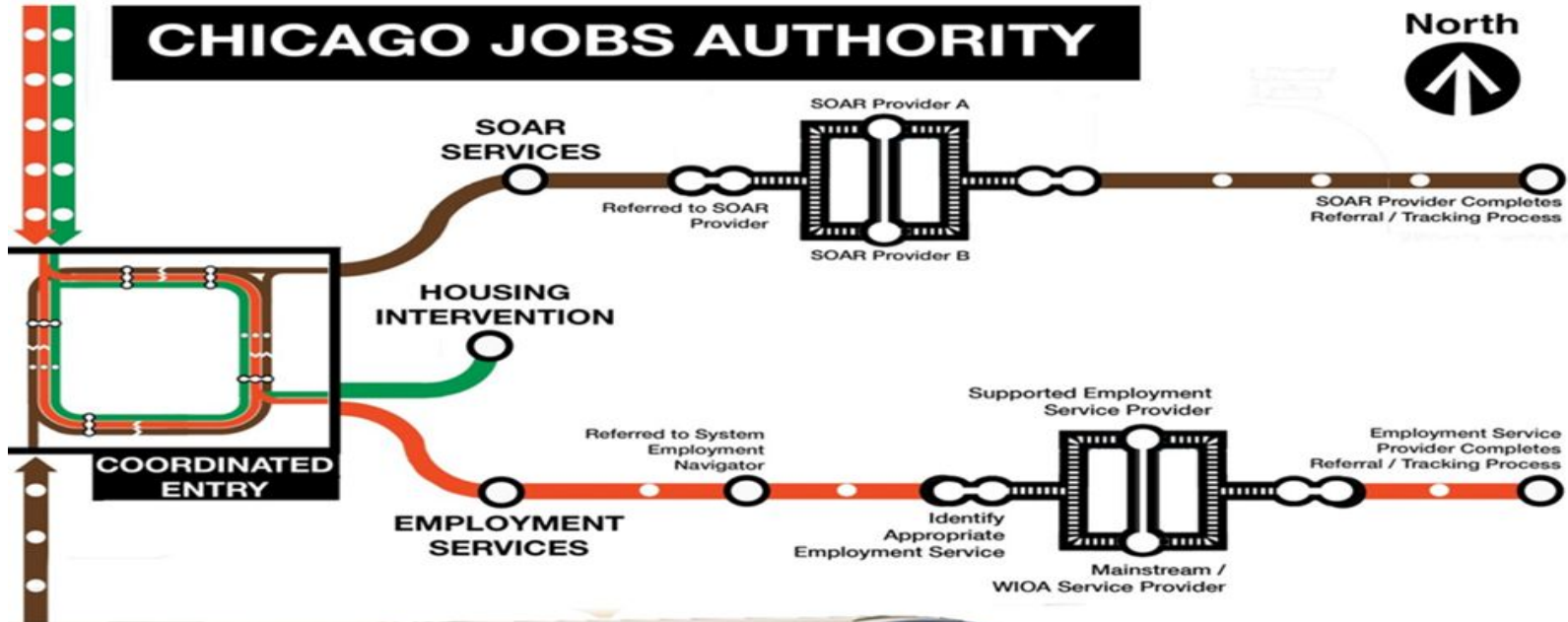
# Job Seekers Experiencing Housing Instability

- At entry point of the homelessness system, 60% of people express interest in seeking employment.
- Annually, only ~4% of participants exiting Chicago homeless programs increase their income due to employment.
- A data match between Career Connect and the Homeless Management Information System showed very few people are being served by both systems.
  - 2.33% of WIOA participants experienced homelessness
  - 0.94% of people who experienced homelessness interacted with Career Connect

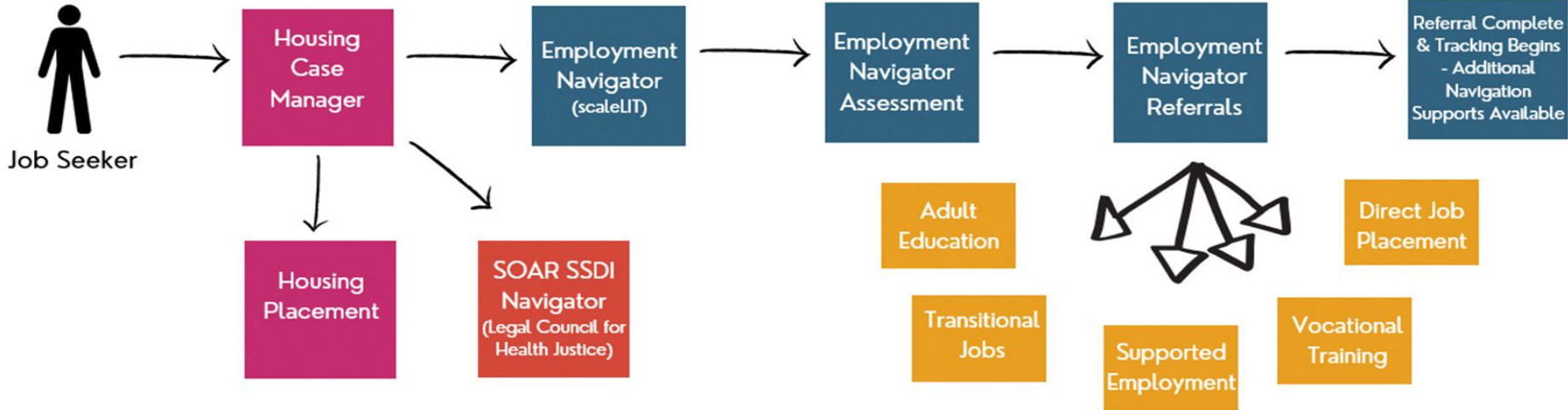
# This Priority Population is usually working or interested

- Research performed by Inspiration Corporation showed 77% of these individuals have work history of 5+ years.
- 74% worked in the previous 12 months, 72% had a high school diploma and 50% had college experience.
- This disconnect wasn't unique to just Chicago or Illinois in general. Other studying cities included Houston, Baltimore, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Seattle

# The Vision: Employment Navigation



# The Pilot: Employment Navigation



# Development of the Model and Implementation

## Housing Case Manager

- Works on housing placement
- Assesses for employment & income supports
- Provides referrals to Employment Navigator and/or Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Navigator

## Employment Navigator

- Assess Individual for needs
- Provides referrals for adult education, transitional jobs, vocational training and/or direct job placement
- Tracks additional navigation support



# Development of the Model and Implementation

## Human- Centered & Asset-Based Services in Program Design

- Developed an Individualized Service Plan with Participant/Client input
- Participant identifies their interests in training programs, industries, and jobs; Employment Navigator supports (training/educational requirements, labor market information, career path opportunities)
- Address barriers that may impact employment (*i.e., childcare, transportation, clothing*)

# Overall Impact

- Before the Expedited Housing Initiative, 60% of those assessed for housing in Chicago reported wanting help finding a job
- Expedited Housing Initiative served 1,888 households
- Employment Navigators received over 300 referrals

**300+ Individuals referred to EN**



**100+**

received  
transportation  
assistance



**200+**

referrals  
to job  
opportunities



**100+**

referrals  
to social  
services



**175+**

referrals  
to workforce  
development and  
adult education  
programs

# Employment Navigation - Lessons Learned

- Communication/Coordination
  - Importance of housing and navigator connection as participants phone numbers became outdated and/or did not have email accessibility
  - Balancing the impact of income and housing subsidy
- Trainings
  - Establishing clear roles and expectations of case managers and navigators - especially crucial with staffing turnover
  - Implementing racial equity trainings for staff to support in recognizing biases
- Data management systems & Technology
  - Use of technology in a proactive way to engage participants by using text and emails
  - A need for a central database that is accessible for both case managers and navigators
- Coordinating Entity
  - Individual agencies operating their program without a coordinating entity may lead to isolated impact and unable to work to solve on systemic problems
  - Case conferencing support to understand each other's level of support for individuals and identify any barriers emerging (e.g need for mental health and substance use support)

# Building Trust and Developing Partnerships

## Building trust

- Identified most immediate needs and provided support quickly (i.e., *transportation, food, toiletries*)
- Bilingual Navigator supported Spanish-speaking clients, regardless of location, literacy level, work authorization, etc.

## Develop life-skills

- Decision-making skills to plan for the future and take advantage of opportunities
- Encouraged clients to be self-reliant and independent

## Continued engagement

- Scheduled in-person meetings ahead of time to distribute support and create opportunities for check-ins
- Navigators maintained connections with clients, despite communication challenges





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