Strategies that Center the Voice of the Underestimated Job Seeker

Preparerd by Imagine Deliver
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DESIGNING SOLUTIONS

On September 16, 2019, MSPWin board members and youth from Juxtaposition Arts (JXTA) gathered together to brainstorm and develop potential workforce solutions that would eliminate disparities in wealth in Minnesota and lift up the voice of underestimated job seekers. For this session, participants defined the underestimated job seeker as someone who is:

- 18 years or older

- Located in Minneapolis or St. Paul

- Indigenous, black or a person of color

- Considered to be the most unemployable by the workforce system (which can include individuals connected to other systems, such as those who have been in foster care or those who were previously incarcerated)

During the session, participants focused on answering the question: "How do we incentivize systems to value and then act on the voice of the underestimated job seeker in order to serve them?" To do that, Imagine Deliver divided the group into three teams and led participants through a four-hour design sprint.

WHAT IS A DESIGN SPRINT?

A typical design sprint is set up as a time-constrained session where a facilitator uses a five-step design thinking process to guide teams toward developing solutions to complex problems using co-creation, rapid prototyping and immediate feedback. Facilitators usually follow these five steps:

Empathize   Participants research or empathize with user's needs.

Define   Participants define users' needs and problems.

Ideate   Participants challenge assumptions and generate solutions.

Prototype   Participants select a solution and build it in 3D.

Test   Participants test their solutions and receive rapid feedback.

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At Imagine Deliver, we believe the best systems, services, and products are designed by the people who use them. That means we encourage our clients to trust and elevate the lived experience of folks who experience a problem to dream up the most elegant and efficient solutions. To embed that belief into our facilitation efforts, we follow a six-step equity-centered design process, rather than the traditional five-step design thinking process outlined above.

The sixth step we add to our design sprints is called "user as designer." It's actually the first step in our process, and comes before "empathize." What this means is that we kick off all of our projects by finding ways to integrate the expertise of consumers or end users into the design of a product through community engagement and co-creation.

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USER AS DESIGNER

For this project, MSPWin identified two groups of end users that were important to include in the process: underestimated job seekers and the organizations or nonprofits that serve them. To include those voices in the design sprint, Imagine Deliver did two things:

1

First, we kicked off the project with a community engagement phase. During that time, our team hosted three focus groups to learn from workforce leaders. We also partnered with the tactical urbanism team at JXTA. Its team hosted three community pop-ups and conducted several one-on-one interviews with job seekers who are indigenous, black or people of color (IBPOC). In all, we spoke with more than 80 job seekers and workforce leaders to learn about the challenges they face and the solutions they had to create a better workforce system. From this learning, we wrote a report with JXTA outlining our most important findings. Prior to the design sprint, MSPWin board members reviewed this report so the session could be rooted in and grounded by the thoughts of the people who are closest to—and most directly affected by—the workforce system. In addition to the report, JXTA opened the design sprint by playing a <u>six-minute piece of audio</u> its team created from recordings of one-on-one interviews with job seekers. This piece of audio gave MSPWin board members a chance to hear directly from job seekers before moving into the rest of the equity-centered design sprint process.
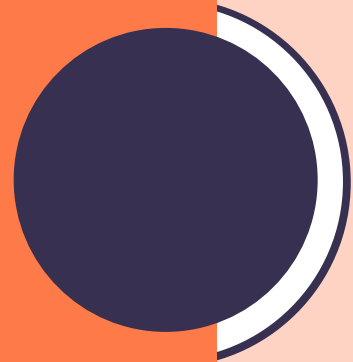
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MSPWin took its commitment to design with end users a step further by inviting youth from JXTA to participate alongside board members during the design sprint. The young people who participated not only identified as IBPOC job seekers, but they were also the same individuals who hosted the community pop-ups and conducted one-on-one interviews with job seekers during the community engagement phase. Because of this, the youth at JXTA were able to contribute solutions for how to improve the workforce system from their lived experiences, as well as provide a direct link to what they heard job seekers say in their communities.

OUR PROCESS

A recap of the six steps Imagine Deliver led MSPWin board members and JXTA youth through during the design sprint on September 16.

User As Designer

MSPWin partnered with Imagine Deliver on a community engagement phase to hear from more than 80 job seekers and workforce leaders prior to making any funding decisions. MSPWin also invited youth from JXTA to participate in the design sprint and co-create solutions.

Empathize & Understand

Participants focused on understanding and learning from job seekers by listening to an audio recording created by JXTA, and by asking clarifying questions about the insights report that Imagine Deliver and JXTA prepared prior to the meeting.

Define

Imagine Deliver divided participants into three teams, and each team wrote a description of a fictional character that represented their ideal user, or the person they wanted to design a solution for. Then, each group created a problem statement that described their character's challenge and how their team hoped to lift up their user's voice through a new solution.

Ideate

Teammates brainstormed solutions individually, and then shared their three favorite solutions with the members of their group. Then, each team agreed upon a single idea to move forward with. Teams built on that proposed solution by writing 2D descriptions that added additional details and specifics.

Prototype

Teams built a 3D representation of the solution using creative, everyday objects like pipe cleaners, pom poms and colorful cardboard shapes.

Test

Each team presented their prototype to the group and received feedback based on what people liked, what they wished for and what they wondered about the proposed solution.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

Three connected concepts—based on flexible funding and navigation—emerged from the teams during the design sprint. We recommend MSPWin pursue this focus area as its **primary solution** since it had unanimous support from both JXTA youth and MSPWin board members, and because it generated the most excitement and energy during the design sprint. It's also a solution that will have an immediate and direct effect on job seekers, and could be adopted, piloted and tested in small ways with relative ease of implementation.

How do we incentivize systems to value and then act on the voice of the underestimated job seeker in order to serve them?

In addition to describing this primary solution, we've expanded on three other promising **supporting solutions** throughout the report in order to activate the multiple levers needed to support system-wide change and innovation. We recommend MSPWin explore these supplemental solutions because we know systems change doesn't happen with a single intervention, but rather requires multiple levers that tackle different angles of the same problem.
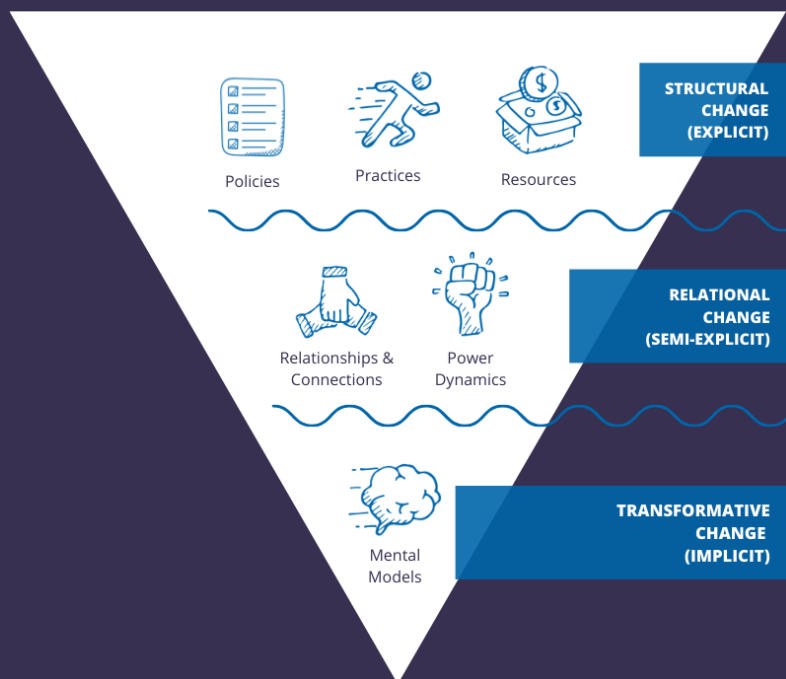
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According to FSG, a global consulting firm, there are six interconnected conditions that lead to systems change: policies, practices, resource flows, relationships and connections, power dynamics and mental models.

Six Conditions of Systems Change

Policies   Practices   Resources   **STRUCTURAL CHANGE (EXPLICIT)**

Relationships & Connections   Power Dynamics   **RELATIONAL CHANGE (SEMI-EXPLICIT)**

Mental Models   **TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE (IMPLICIT)**

The first three conditions—policies, practices, resource flows—lead to explicit structural change. They sit in the first tier in the inverted triangle, which is the place where most foundations, nonprofits and other social sector actors focus their efforts. The next two conditions in the second tier of the graph above—relationships and connections, and power dynamics—address semi-explicit relational change. This tier is key because as FSG says, "Transforming a system is really about transforming the relationships between people who make up the system." The final condition—mental models—sits in the third tier and leads to implicit transformative change. This is a new area of work organizations are starting to move into as systems theorists point to mental models as the foundational drivers of change in a system.

While systems actors can target and activate each of these levers independently, true systems change takes an approach that accounts for all six conditions. Oftentimes changes in the first tier can't be sustained without work in tiers two and three. **That's why we've crafted a set of solutions for MSPWin that collectively addresses all six of these conditions in order to maximize the probability of true systems change.** Each of the four solutions on the following pages are marked with icons to represent the system change levers they activate.

Fund Flexible Resources & 'People-First' Support Structures for Job Seekers

THE OPPORTUNITY

Create a funding stream that isn't tied to a single direct service, but rather invests in individual job seekers and gives them the flexibility and agency to support their unique needs in a way that is tailored to them. This will require rethinking sometimes rigid grant requirements (and working with public sector funders to do the same) while sourcing efforts that work collaboratively to more deeply consider the unique human needs—and assets—of job seekers. In addition to scoping flexible, person-centered (and less restricted) funding mechanisms, test a project that provides job seekers with a navigator—a trusted support system that will stick with job seekers through the course of their journey across systems and help them navigate those systems in a way that works best for them. For example, MSPWin could fund a pilot program that offers a direct and unrestricted cash stipend for jobseekers who agree to partner with a long term navigator. This navigator would be available to coach job seekers across systems (like healthcare, education, housing, etc.) over time. This effort could be stewarded by a private organization that is deeply familiar with workforce systems, but sponsored by a public entity (such as DEED). A successful pilot model could eventually be adopted regionally at scale by public institutions. This solution is attractive because it activates immediate change, while encouraging the system to continue to work to dismantle its internal barriers and inequities by testing solutions.

How did each team describe the primary solution?

TEAM ONE

A Vehicle of Self-Determination

Trust job seekers to control their own resources and make decisions about how to build their future. The workforce system should make direct investments in job seekers, and then let those individuals decide how to best use those funds to create stability in their lives, whether that's paying for child care, health care, housing or something else.

To build support for this idea in the workforce system, Team One believes its model needs cheerleaders and advocates who can shake up the current system (which is based on control) and create an opening for a new model or pilot phase like this to exist. These cheerleaders and advocates need to work together to dismantle racist narratives such as that of the "welfare queen" narrative that shows people how a humanized approach lifts up job seekers and their families in ways that bring about justice and change.

TEAM TWO

The Prosperity Mobile

Put job seekers in the driver's seat to access the services they need. Team Two built a navigational vehicle that takes job seekers from a place of need to a place of self sufficiency and prosperity. To make sure services and funding reflect the real needs people face, Team Two put job seekers in the driver's seat of the Prosperity Mobile to ensure the money job seekers get from 'braided' funding can be used to access any kind of support that will truly provide lasting and transformative assistance(ie; housing, health, mental health, counseling, etc.).

Team Two added two additional people on the back of their 'Prosperity Mobile' to represent the multiple support systems—like families, case workers, employers, etc.—that job seekers need to help them navigate through the workforce system across the different phases of their life.

Team Two's model is based on the notion that a job seeker's path won't always move in a straight line. Therefore, the workforce system needs to be set up in a way where it can adapt to the unique path that is best for each job seeker, rather than asking those individuals to conform to a single path.

TEAM THREE

Navigate to Your North Star

Give job seekers a navigator that sticks with them regardless of geographic boundaries or employer (ie: a navigator that isn't tied to a specific service or agency, but follows the individual), and who believes that life experience counts as a credential.

In addition to navigators, Team Three also believe employers need to rethink the benefits they offer based on the holistic needs of job seekers (ie: daycare or housing allowances). This doesn't mean employers need to invest more money to fund new programs, but rather they need to find ways to reallocate funding toward benefits that actually help job seekers move forward toward their goals.

Workforce leaders desire flexible funding dollars and multidimensional solutions that allow them to uniquely "meet people where they're at." Helping people find a successful path toward meaningful employment requires an approach that recognizes the many unique experiences, barriers and challenges that job seekers face. No two paths toward a career are the same, and likewise, no one strategy or solution will work for everyone. Flexibility is key to serving job seekers better, yet many leaders in the nonprofit and government sectors said few resources exist that give them the freedom to serve job seekers as well as they would like.

MSPWin has the opportunity to retrain the workforce system to trust job seekers structurally. The best systems, services and products are designed by the people who use them. Flexible funding and direct investments in individual job seekers demonstrates a commitment to trust job seekers' expertise and to integrate their voices into the design of the workforce system in a way that carries real influence and decision-making power to dismantle, rework and rebuild outdated structures and practices.

THE
# REASONING

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION

Universal Basic Income

When it comes to the pros and cons of Universal Basic Income (UBI), the research is mixed, but testing projects like these is a step in a direction that demonstrates a restorative approach to, and a fundamental trust in, job seekers. Use this article from the New Yorker—along with the individual pilot projects and case studies the author references in it—to gain inspiration about how to experiment and test around direct investment in job seekers.

Pathways to Prosperity and Wellness

The Pathways to Prosperity and Wellness pilot program is a new model of flexible funding being tested in Dakota and Olmsted counties that hopes to put single parents and their children on a new path out of poverty. Use this example to understand how partners collaborated to create a model of flexible funding, and how MSPWin could support an improved pilot or a second iteration of this project.

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION
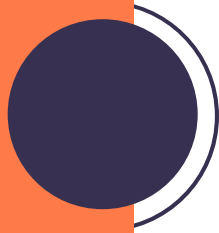
GiveDirectly and the Community Sharing Fund

GiveDirectly is the first, and largest, nonprofit that lets donors send money directly to people in poverty. The organization believes that people living in poverty deserve the dignity to choose how best to improve their lives, and that direct cash donations are the best way to enable them to have that choice. Based on evidence GiveDirectly has reviewed and collected, the organization found that cash transfers are one of the most evidence-based tools to reduce poverty and improve lives. The research shows that cash transfers have positive impacts, especially on children; that cash transfers have long-term effects; and that those in poverty do not systematically abuse cash transfers.

The Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundations take a similar approach to GiveDirectly with their Community Sharing Fund. Since 1980, the Fund has given more than 25,000 grants to individuals and families experiencing short-term financial setbacks. The Fund is one tool local foundations use to respond to emergency needs in our community.

Both of these examples demonstrate radical ways we might place job seekers in the drivers' seat. Consider whether MSPWin could apply GiveDirectly's international giving model to a hyper-local context within the Twin Cities.

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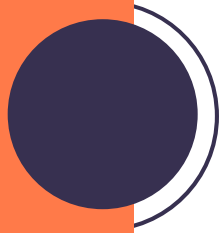
Small Sums

With about $200 or less per person, <u>Small Sums</u> removes the obstacles that often prevent people who are experiencing homelessness from being able to take a job by paying for the specific necessities they need to start back at work, such as required work clothes and shoes, trade tools, professional licenses, union dues and bus passes.

In 2015, Small Sums surveyed its 2014 clients and found that 57 percent of people it served were in stable housing and still employed. Of the individuals who provided wage information, the average wage rose from $10.99 at the time of assistance, to $12.42 at the time of follow up.

Small Sums demonstrates how a fairly small financial commitment to an individual can be transformative when an organization lets that individual dictate how the funds are best spent and used to navigate the unique challenges they face.

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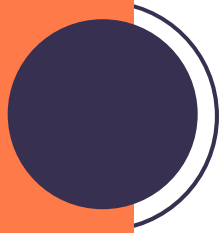
Self-Directed Supports

Dakota County offers three consumer or self-directed supports for individuals with disabilities. These supports (the Consumer Support Grant, the Family Support Grant and Consumer Directed Community Support) are more flexible than other funding sources and are designed to help residents create personalized plans that meet their unique circumstances and allows them to take responsibility for their services. There's a wider movement among the disability services community to use flexible funding to help individuals with disabilities determine their own career path. Here's an article from the Institute for Community Inclusion that shares how 15 individuals got and used flexible funding. The disability services community demonstrates a long standing commitment to give individuals direct, flexible funding. What could MSPWin learn from their approach and experience about how to create flexible funding options in the workforce sector?

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION
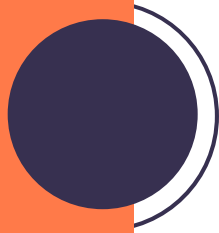
Collaborative Navigator Design

In 2015, the United Way of Cass-Clay partnered with the FM Coalition to End Homelessness to create a design team of 25 people (from different agencies, organizations and service providers) to collectively design an RFP around housing first case management. This process resulted in a brand new pilot project to create three positions for housing navigators that would follow people on their journey through the system—regardless of their geography or the services they use—to ensure a continuous point of contact in service. In 2016, Presentation Partners in Housing was selected as the agency to launch this pilot and hired three housing navigators. Since the program's inception, Presentation Partners in Housing has hired two additional housing navigators. Read more about this example on pages 33 and 34 in this report from United Way of Cass-Clay. Use this example to understand how service providers can collaborate to build relationships and dream up better ways of working that help users navigate complex systems.

POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS

Most collaborators were sourced directly from participants during the design sprint. Imagine Deliver added additional organizations based on previous relationships and knowledge of the organizations' work and values. Employers made the list because they have a stake in the workforce system and could pilot new benefits programs that intersect with this solution. This list is not comprehensive, but is intended as a starting point that MSPWin can build on, using its own relationships, to create a comprehensive list of people who can lift up the work together.

County governments
Saint Paul Foundation
The Minneapolis Foundation
Greater Twin Cities United Way
The American Public Human Services Association
The Kresge Foundation
Future Services Institute
Private companies
Large companies
Target
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How does this change the system?
This solution touches on four conditions of systems change: policies, practices, resources and power. Those four conditions activate both structural change and relational change. The workforce system is stuck, and this solution pushes workforce leaders to break out of their established patterns and experiment with a new way of delivering funding and services. By changing the policies and practices around how people give and receive resources, this solution shifts the power dynamic in the workforce system and gives control back to individual job seekers to make their own decisions and operate in nonlinear ways.

Activate a Job Seeker Advisory Council to Equitably Embed the Voice of the Underestimated Job Seeker into Workforce Policy Decision-Making

THE OPPORTUNITY

Create opportunities for advocacy that are designed by and for underestimated job seekers. Organize the voice of the underestimated job seeker and integrate it into policy and advocacy efforts by establishing a job seeker advisory council.

Jobseekers must have a central voice and stake in workforce decision making that is aligned with, and equitably positioned alongside, business voices. Shaping policy and advocacy levers that elevate the voice of job seekers in places where decisions get made and money gets allocated is critically important. Yet in many of those spaces—at the legislature, at the regional workforce boards, at DEED—the voices of job seekers are largely missing. As an organization that takes a big picture approach to workforce systems change, MSPWin is uniquely positioned to create a structural opportunity for job seekers to influence conversations around funding, policy and legislation where they've historically been excluded.

THE
REASONING

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION

Youth On Boards and YouthBank

Since 2014, more than 150 youth have served on local boards in Northfield through the Youth on Boards program launched by Northfield Healthy Community Initiative. The organization has also created programs that embed young people in granting and allow them to make funding decisions through YouthBank and its Investing in Youth program. Read more about the work of Northfield Healthy Community Initiative in this story from Pollen, created as part of a series that profiles winners of Bush Foundation's annual Bush Prize award.

Youth on Boards and YouthBank are two examples of how underestimated voices can be integrated into a system in a way that leads to concrete and measurable changes. How could MSPWin use Youth on Boards and YouthBank as inspiration to invest in structural ways that trust job seekers to influence and direct funding, advocacy and policy decisions?
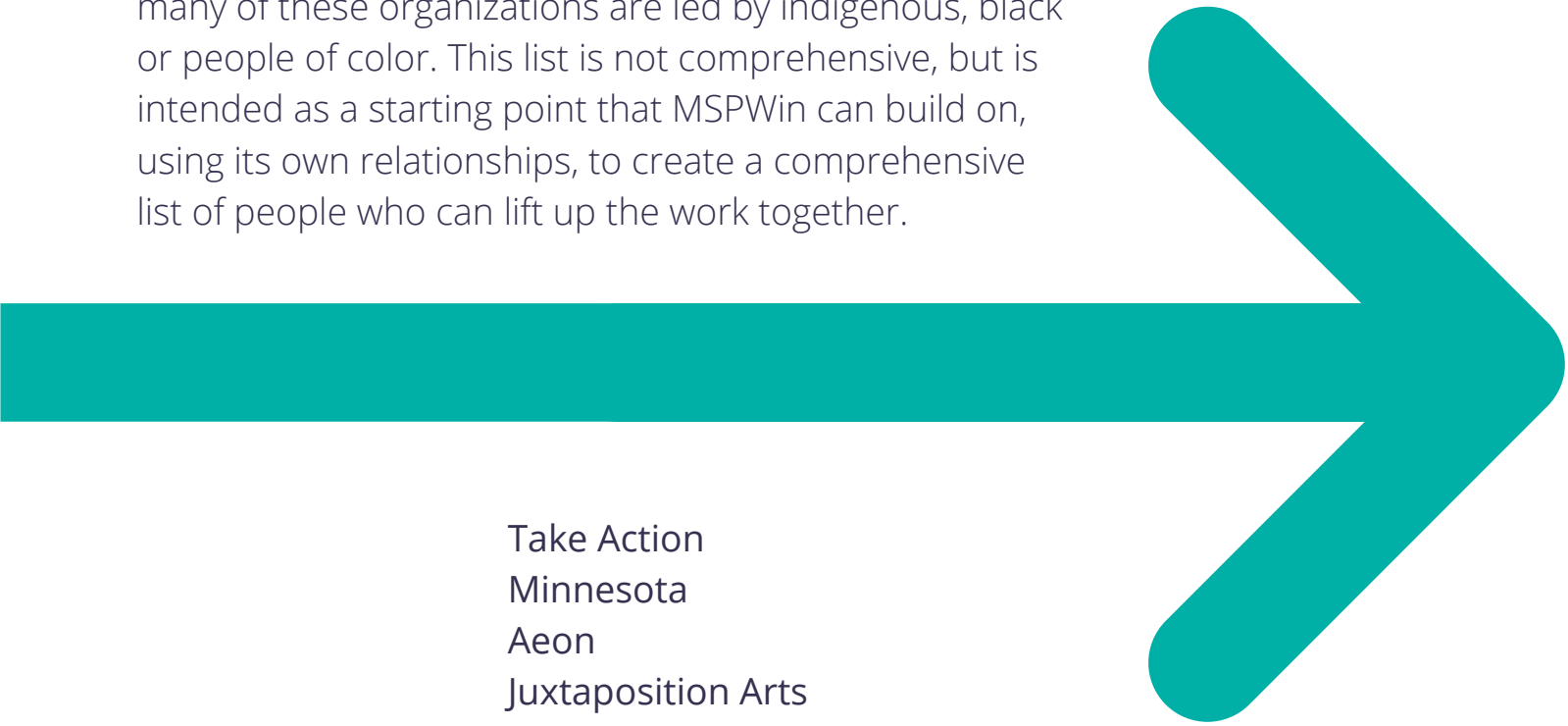
OUTSIDE INSPIRATION

Ban The Box

In 2014, Minnesota became the third state to enact a "ban the box" law. While the research on the effectiveness of ban the box laws are mixed, it's important for the system to test out solutions like these in order to move toward dismantling racist hiring practices and attempt to build a more equitable system.

- Star Tribune: "So you 'banned the box.' How did that work out?"

- MinnPost: "How 'Ban the Box' has affected attitudes towards employing ex-offenders in"

- Minnesota Duluth News Tribune: "A new approach to 'Ban the Box,' five years later"

POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS

Imagine Deliver selected potential collaborators based on previous relationships, knowledge of the organizations' work and with the understanding that many of these organizations are led by indigenous, black or people of color. This list is not comprehensive, but is intended as a starting point that MSPWin can build on, using its own relationships, to create a comprehensive list of people who can lift up the work together.

Take Action Minnesota
Aeon
Juxtaposition Arts
Growth and Justice
Youthprise
Metropolitan Economic Development Association
Northside Economic Opportunity Network
Center for Economic Inclusion
Fortune 500 employee resource group leaders
Women's Foundation of Minnesota
Workforce Next
Nexus Community Partners

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How does this change the system?
This solution touches on three conditions of systems change: policies, practices and power. An advisory council gives job seekers the ability to inform decisions, policies and practices at an individual organizational level, and at a state level. This shifts power back to people who have personal experience, and therefore expertise, navigating the workforce.

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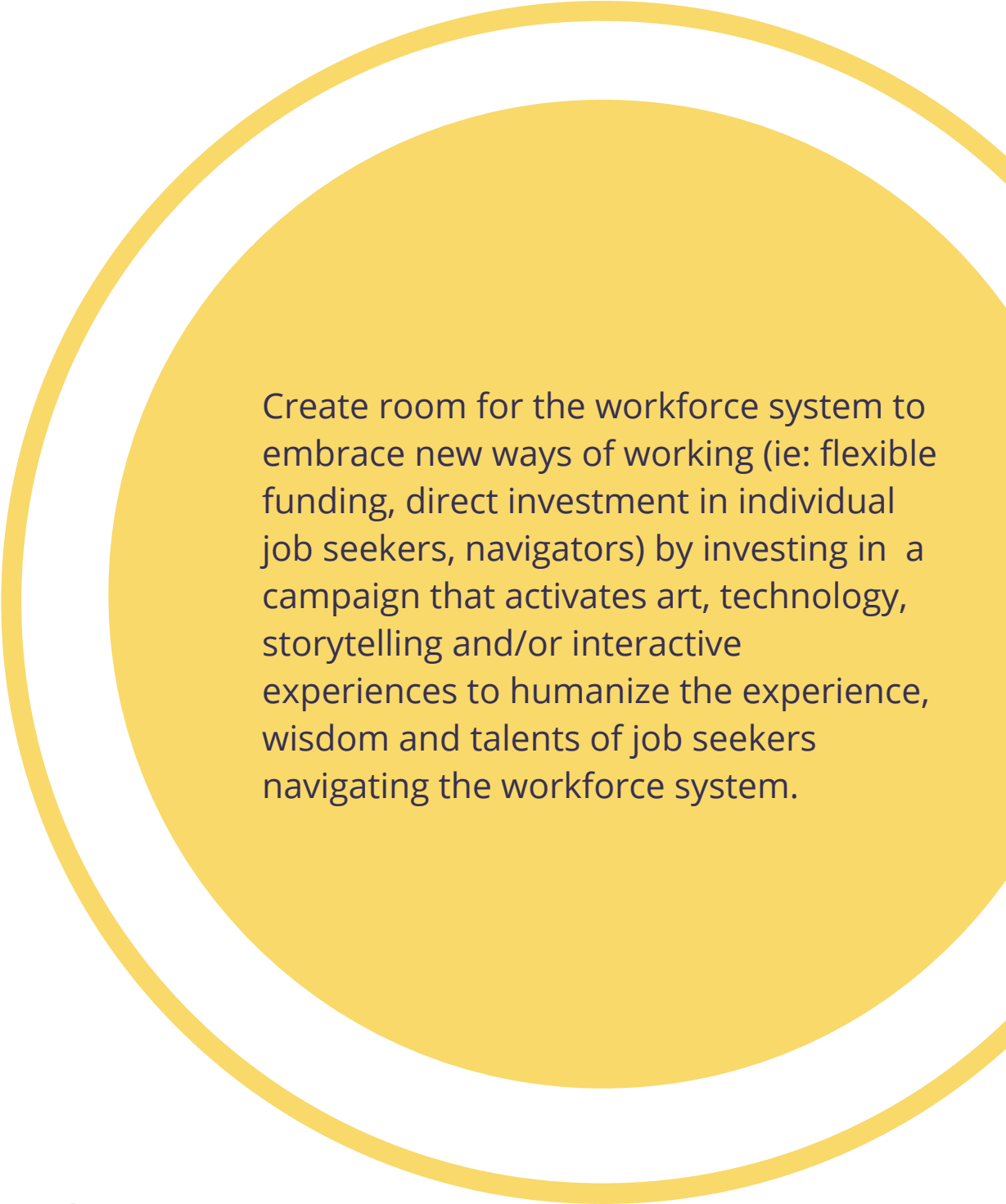# Invest in Asset Based Narratives That Create New Possibilities for Underestimated Job Seekers

THE OPPORTUNITY

Create room for the workforce system to embrace new ways of working (ie: flexible funding, direct investment in individual job seekers, navigators) by investing in a campaign that activates art, technology, storytelling and/or interactive experiences to humanize the experience, wisdom and talents of job seekers navigating the workforce system.

Changing the system requires changing the narrative and how people see underestimated job seekers. To create the widespread political will and willingness to invest differently in jobseekers, MSPWin should work with systems actors to activate imagination, storytelling and creativity to rapidly dismantle oppressive and racist narratives about job seekers, and reframe them in anti-racist and affirming ways. Our current workforce system operates on discriminatory narratives:

- People with dreadlocks are unprofessional.
- Former felons aren't safe to hire.
- People with disabilities aren't skilled enough to contribute at work.
- People experiencing poverty will abuse the resources they receive.

These stories prevent our system from activating the amazing talent that exists among underestimated job seekers, and keeps them from contributing their skills in a meaningful way. In the age of social media, there is power in creating a moment or story that is both shareable and transformative. Storytelling, art and interactive experiences build empathy and understanding in a way that connects people more personally to one another. By lifting up Minnesota's most valuable resource (its people!), MSPWin can change the workforce system by shifting specific patterns of thought that prevent direct service providers, leaders, employers, funders or the general public from embracing a fair and diverse workforce.

THE REASONING

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION
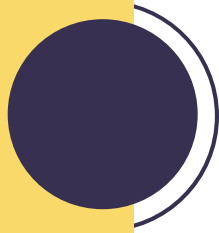
Love Has No Labels

In 2015, the Ad Council released its campaign, "Love Has No Labels." The video featured a large x-ray installation in Santa Monica where onlookers watched as "skeletons" kissed, hugged and danced behind an x-ray screen. When the unexpected couples—a mixed race couple; a family with two dads; a pair of sisters, one with a disability—stepped out from behind the screen, they challenged viewers' implicit bias that love has no labels or barriers based on how people identify. The launch video received more than 2.6 million shares across social media and more than 2 billion media impressions, thanks to coverage from high-profile media outfits like ABC's World News Tonight, Good Morning America, CNN, NBC, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times and The Washington Post. YouTube even selected the video as one of the 10 most iconic viral films of the decade. This video is an example of how a public art installation and ad campaign can raise awareness and get people engaged in important public issues. How could MSPWin use storytelling, art and interactive experiences to create a measurable difference in the lives of job seekers?

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION
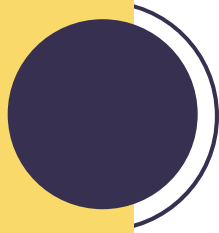
Wing Young Huie

For more than three decades, local artist Wing Young Huie has put Minnesota's changing cultural landscape in the spotlight by photographing people and places that are often overlooked. In 1995, he transformed a vacant lot in Frogtown into a gallery of 173 photographs depicting neighborhood residents. In 2000, he installed 675 of his photographs along a six-mile stretch of Lake Street. In 2010, 500 other photographs from the artist were installed along a six-mile stretch of University Avenue. For Northern Spark in 2011, he created an experience where people could view his photography and play ping pong with glow-in-the-dark balls. His work is an example of how art can transform everyday spaces into places where people can explore and celebrate the cultural realities that exist around them. What unexpected spaces could MSPWin transform through story or art to lift up the experiences of underestimated job seekers?

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION

Love Them First

"Love Them First" is a documentary created by KARE 11 reporter Lindsey Seavert and photojournalist Ben Garvin. The documentary follows the journey of one north Minneapolis principal as she navigates the successes and challenges in a school where more than 80 percent of the students live near or below the poverty line, and in a state that has the largest achievement gap between black and white students in the country. Use this documentary as inspiration for how storytelling can humanize complex experiences and redirect people's focus toward the humanity of those most directly experiencing a challenge.

We Are All Criminals

Consider exploring how Amy Baxter's work and nonprofit organization, We Are All Criminals, could inspire a public art installation or interactive marketing campaign to change public perception around employing people who have been formerly incarcerated.

POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS

Imagine Deliver selected potential collaborators based on their demonstrated commitment to creativity, high-quality content and an ability to work with individuals in the community. This list is not comprehensive, but is intended as a starting point that MSPWin can build on, using its own relationships, to create a comprehensive list of people who might design an exciting project together.

Knight Foundation
McKnight Foundation
The Ad Council
Northern Spark

Considering partnering with these organizations to create an open call for a community competition that invites local artists, journalists, writers, marketers or job seekers to submit their most creative solutions for how to grab people's attention and tell the true and equitable story of Minnesota's underestimated job seekers.

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How does this change the system?

This solution addresses the final condition of systems change: mental models, or the assumptions and beliefs that guide what we think and do. Systems don't change permanently unless the narratives and mental models they're built upon change, too. To move toward systems change, MSPWin must address the implicit scripts in the workforce system that perpetuate inequities and prevent people from embracing new, innovative and justice-oriented ways of working. In the Twin Cities, there are few organizations addressing this kind of implicit change. MSPWin has the resources, the influence and the will to rewrite narratives in the workforce system to center the voices of underestimated job seekers and lift up their stories (and assets!) in affirming ways. Without a solution that shifts the mental models of the workforce system, the success of other efforts to implement alternative policies and practices could be limited.

Convene and Incentivize System-Wide Collaboration

THE OPPORTUNITY

Convene the workforce system together and promote collaboration to accelerate systems change by:

- Supporting an annual day-long workforce innovation "sprint" that is attended by key actors (including job seekers) in the workforce system.
- Surveying the workforce system and asking them to share specific, promising practices that could lead to statewide systems change when implemented at scale.
- Hiring workforce leaders to train their peers in the innovative methods and strategies that are working within their individual organizations.
- Starting a new funding stream that grants money and resources to organizations willing to pilot new models, promising practices or collaborative fundraising campaigns. Then use what grantees learn to develop best practices and learning that can be shared sector-wide.

What could an in-person gathering look like?

If MSPWin opts to support a day-long event or in-person experience, it needs to forgo the traditional nonprofit conference model and take inspiration from creative or alternative approaches to gathering people that inspire systems actors connect with one another in deep and meaningful ways. One angle MSPWin could explore is using a day-long convening to invite the workforce system to participate in a series of design sprints based on the four solutions presented in this report. For example, picture this: Two hundred people from the workforce sector gather in a single location. The day begins with four keynote speakers—each one sharing a TED-style talk about an innovation related to the four possible solutions in this report. After the keynote talks, participants self select into four groups based on which of the four solutions they want to focus on during the design sprint portion of the event. Each one of those four larger groups then breaks into individual teams of four to six people, just like we did during MSPWin's design sprint. Over the next four hours, teams are guided through the equity-centered design process. By the end of the design sprint, teams have created several specific and actionable solutions based on the four larger categories of solutions in this report. To end the conference, each of the four larger groups picks one individual team to present their solution back to the entire conference. The rest of the prototypes are put on display for people to look at during the social hour at the end of the conference, and all ideas are documented so people can reference them after the event.

Systems leaders need programming, mechanisms and incentives that lead to collaboration, innovation and resource-sharing that don't currently exist. Workforce leaders are aware of best practices and promising research —like person-centered services and flexible funding—that can create a stronger workforce system. Yet these strategies aren't shared or implemented system-wide. Workforce leaders need opportunities where they can creatively collide and explore ways to implement and build on each others' best ideas. The culture of competition and scarcity among workforce organizations must shift to one of collaboration and abundance in order for the sector to truly move toward innovation.

During focus groups, workforce leaders shared the perception that MSPWin often fills the role of a much needed convener in a sector where system-wide convening doesn't typically happen. Bringing the entire workforce system together to center the voice of the job seeker is a unique role MSPWin has the capacity and clout to carry out, and it's an action that could accelerate efforts around systems change.

THE
REASONING

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION
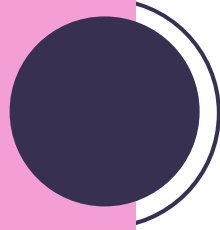
Impact Foundation

Read about the Impact Foundation's approach to fundraising and collaboration in this excerpt from a story created by Pollen as part of its series profiling winners of Bush Foundation's annual Bush Prize award (see the full story here):

> *"Fundraising isn't an individual sport. To raise the overall tide of giving in the state, Impact Foundation convinced nonprofits to stop fighting for donors and to start working together on Giving Hearts Day. Organizations partner to share promotional costs, create regional marketing and develop strategies that promote the collective work of participating nonprofits. On average, organizations that collaborate on Giving Hearts Day raise an average of 15 to 20 percent more than those that don't. To encourage once divided charities to work alongside one another, Impact Foundation incentivizes teamwork. Every winter, collaboratives receive $1,000 to spend on marketing for Giving Hearts Day. Impact Foundation also gives an additional prize each year to the most unique collaboration."*

Unlike Minnesota's Give to the Max Day, Giving Hearts Day has a clear strategy to incentivize collaboration between direct service providers and organizations that are fundraising. Use this example as inspiration for how MSPWin could incentivize collaboration to accelerate systems change, experimentation and the widespread adoption of innovative best practices.

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION
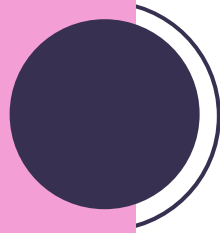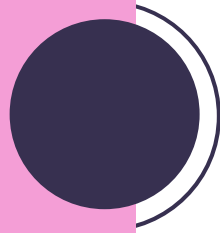
Creative Connections

Use the following events as examples for how to redesign an in-person experience that focus on creativity, deep connection and transformation:

- Spark Camp is an intimate gathering of people brought together around a central theme (such as giving, money and newsroom leadership and management). Spark Camp hosts no panel sessions or keynote speeches, instead focusing on working groups where people come together as equals to solve problems, spark projects and create solutions. After three years and five camps, the Spark Camp team put together a report outlining what they've learned when it comes to re-thinking how to host in-person events.

(continued on next page)

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION

Creative Connections

(continued from previous page)

- C2 is a three-day immersive event that includes inspiring talks, masterclasses, hands-on workshops, experimental labs and one-on-one "braindates." Thanks to a slew of artistic partners, including Cirque du Soleil, C2 is a platform that values unusual collaborations and experiences that blend artistry and creativity with cutting edge ideas.

- Hatch aims to build deeper personal connections between attendees by keeping their event small (100-200 people); assigning people to shared cabins (6-8 people per cabin); creating a board where people can post notes about what they need from others and what they can offer to others; and by hosting activities that give people opportunities to connect in small groups by sharing their personal stories, experiences and challenges.

- Other events to consider: Summit, Camp Good Life Project, The Feast, 15 Toasts, Death Over Dinner, Foo Camp, the unconference.

OUTSIDE INSPIRATION
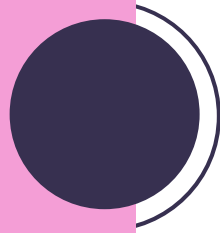
The Art of Gathering

Priya Parker and her book, "The Art of Gathering," provide an approach for how to gather people together better. For example, she recommends that all gatherings:

- Have a clear purpose.
- Pay attention to the "The Chateau Principle," which states that the location where you host your event has a tremendous impact on the outcomes of the experience.
- Not be afraid of 'heat,' or the kind of good controversy that can make an event matter more.

MSPWin could use Priya Parker's bold approach to gathering as inspiration for how to design an event that transforms how actors in the workforce sector spend their time together.

POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS

Imagine Deliver selected potential collaborators based on their ability to gather people in creative and meaningful ways, and with the understanding that many of these organizations are led by black, indigenous and people of color, or are leaders with multiple intersectional identities. This list is not comprehensive, but is intended as a starting point for MSPWin to build upon, using its own relationships and ideas, to create a comprehensive web of leaders who might lift up the work together.

Imagine Deliver
Events by Lady K
The Coven
Pollen Midwest
Lunar Startups
Studio E
Giant Steps
Knight Foundation
Future Today Institute
Priya Parker
Foma Labs
Ida Benedetto
Mari Sierra
Jerri Chou

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How does this change the system?

This solution activates a condition of systems change in the second tier: relationships. Workforce leaders in Minnesota are disconnected from one another, more often than not working in isolation rather than in collaborative situations that allow them to build on each other's best work. In a disconnected system like this, simply bringing people together is a radical step that can transform how organizations interact with one another. This relational change can shift people's focus away from thinking about their organization in a silo, and toward finding ways to amplify their organization's efforts alongside others to create collective change and lasting results.

HOW TO
START ON MONDAY

Strategic documents like this report present a challenge when it comes to prioritizing and sequencing next steps. In order to provide MSPWin with truly actionable strategies, we've created a recommended approach below. This will help MSPWin begin to immediately implement the contents of this report, starting on Monday.

1
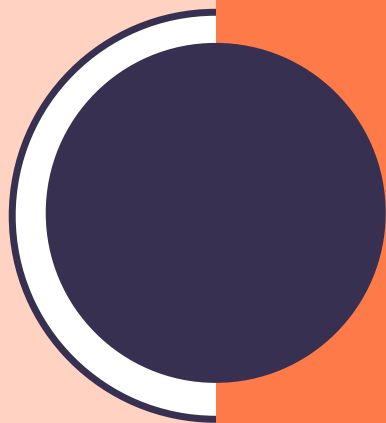
Key Action
Get on the same page.

Answer These Questions
Which solution(s) are most exciting?

Which solution(s) are most feasible right now?

How might these solutions relate to our own individual efforts outside of MSPWin?
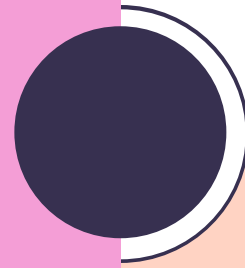
Timing
November 4, 2019

2

Key Action
Share learning generously.

Answer This Question
How might we rapidly share what we learned from underestimated job seekers with the workforce system to start lifting their voices right now?

Timing
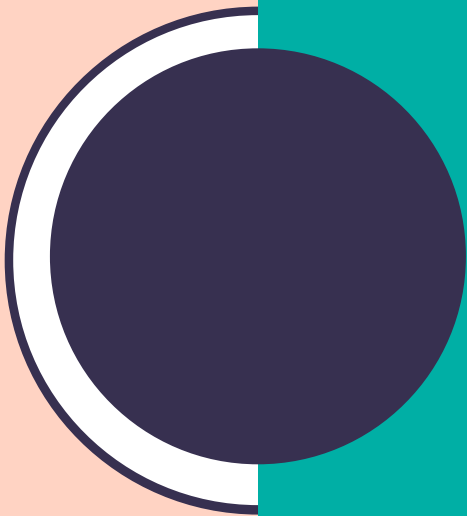November 2019

3

Key Action
Co-create an action plan.

Answer These Questions
What do we need to do in the next 90 days to bring the solution(s) to life?

What is most achievable in the least amount of time?

Timing
November 2019

4

Key Action
Invite collaborators.

Answer These Questions
Who are the most unlikely collaborators that could bring this effort to the next level?

Which partners will insist upon—and hold us accountable to—an applied equity and justice lens every step of the way?

How might we work with collaborators? For example, MSPWin could:
- Host a creative forum around any of these possible solutions with diverse systems collaborators in the room to explore implementation partnerships.
- Create an open RFP for a pilot project and invite collaborators to apply.

Timing
November 2019
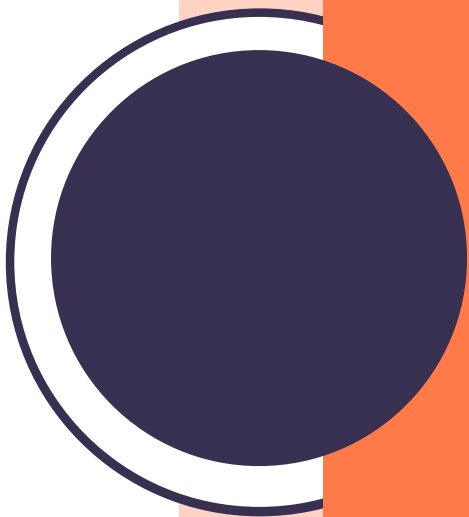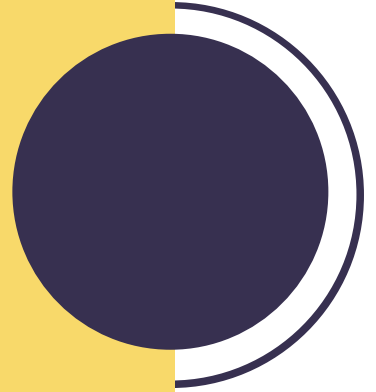
5

Key Action
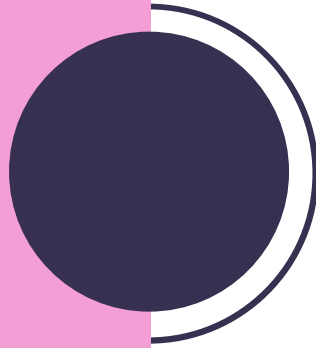Test your prototype.

Answer This Question
What is the minimum viable iteration of our solution that we can implement and learn from before the start of second quarter 2020?

Timing
February 2020

SPECIAL THANKS!

Many thanks to the MSPWin board members and JXTA team members who participated in the design sprint on September 16 and co-created solutions with one another.
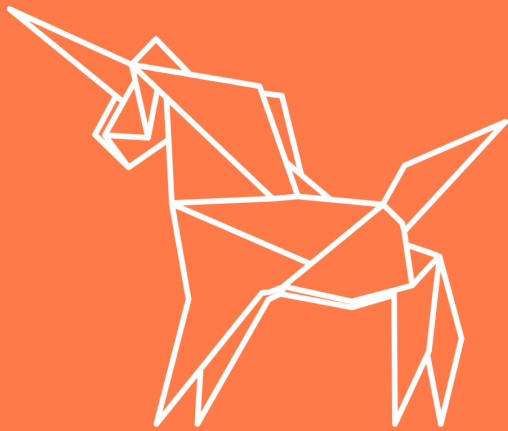
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IMAGINE DELIVER

The design sprint and creation of this report was led by Kate Downing Khaled and Morgan Mercer of Imagine Deliver, with support from Theon Masters and Yukeria Haywood.

Imagine Deliver is a consulting firm that helps clients take action on new ways of working that benefit everyone. We use universal and human-centered design to encourage people to tap into their creativity and uncover inventive solutions fueled by their communities.

Our team cares about taking concrete action on the change we want to see in the world. That's why we chose to become a certified B Corp, joining the ranks of more than 2,500 socially responsible companies across the US that use business to build better communities. In our work, we help clients dream up and act on better and more equitable ways of working. Being a B Corp is one way we choose to show up for our community. An investment in Imagine Deliver's work doesn't just stop with our company, but instead, it extends to our people, our neighborhoods and the planet.