



# Minutes

**Committee:** Equity Committee

**Date:** 02/24/2022

**Duration:** 12:00 – 1:30

**Meeting Place:** Zoom virtual meeting

**Attendance:**

P = Present  
 TC = Attended via Dial in  
 A = Absent

Equity Committee Members							
A	Guen Brown	P	Claire Burrus	A	Junghee Cho	A	Kellee Coleman
P	Jesus Gonzales	P	Kimberly Holiday	P	Netanya Jamieson	A	Sulipsa Luque
P	Lori Neyland	A	Esteban Olave	A	Steven James Potter	A	Rachel Calhoun Schmidt
P	Soleece Watson	P	Summer Wright				
Co-Chairs							
P	Netanya Jamieson	P	Summer Wright				
Other Community Members							
ECHO Support Staff							
P	Chris Davis						
Other ECHO Staff							

AGENDA		DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS
I.	<b>Welcome &amp; Check-in</b>	All	Icebreaker: What drew you to the Equity Committee?
II.	<b>Scope of the Committee</b>	S. Wright & N. Jamieson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Level-setting               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Committee purpose: equity, leading with race, looking at populations who would be treated inequitably without an explicit focus</li> <li>○ Other committees look at concrete services, etc. – this committee’s goal is to improve equity all over, so it can look like what it needs to look like – more freedom and flexibility</li> <li>○ Committee chairs are setting up a space to talk and connect, and LC works to make sure there’s not overlapping work and people are working together</li> <li>○ Employment piece is very important to increase equity within the system</li> <li>○ API 2.0 and further</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

AGENDA	DISCUSSION	ACTION	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Undoing Racism is a great training, but hard to get everyone to take three days off, etc. – how do we help incorporate this more widely in our system?</li> <li>● Workgroups overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Policies and procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ API took priority, so not much work happened in this space</li> <li>▪ Might be a bit nebulous</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focused on data and CA originally, though maybe it now means something more than that</li> <li>▪ Formed to brainstorm and develop pilot questions for the API</li> <li>▪ Monitoring and continuous improvement will continue in this group (also in different spaces, so need to continue to develop ways to coordinate with other workgroups and committees)</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Training and Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meant to take place, but as new governance set up, it fell by the wayside until new body was set up</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>III. Mission, Vision, Expectations</b>	S. Wright & N. Jamieson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Examples</li> <li>● Open discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Vision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Everyone on committee works in homelessness services and provides services empathetically to meet people where they are</li> <li>▪ Work on minimizing the number of people who experience homelessness regardless of race/gender + sexual identity, and for everyone to be treated as a human being deserving of a home</li> <li>▪ Be assertive and purposeful about bringing a multifaceted lens to the work that we do, to seek out areas where we fall short in addressing equity, and work to improve that</li> <li>▪ “Unhoused”</li> <li>▪ Addressing disparities – not regardless of race, etc., but with explicit intention – for HRS as a whole the goal is to reduce homelessness, but for equity it’s about reducing disparities in our system to whatever extent possible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are we bringing different to the table? Intentionality</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Some goals shared from a different project a committee member worked on: Homelessness is RARE, Homelessness is BRIEF,</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Action Item: Co-chairs and ECHO staff support will draft possible vision/mission statements for committee’s review</li> </ul>

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	<p>Homelessness is NON-RECURRING, ALL of our neighbors are treated with DIGNITY and RESPECT, Housing stability is accessible to all who want it when they want it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to housing stability does not differ based on race/ethnicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are we looking at things that are creating barriers in the system, and how do we address them?</li> <li>• Want to assertively go out and find the barriers and get to the core of where these come from</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Mission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Could expand mission to include equity-centered advocacy and system change efforts in interrelated systems that cause, overlap with, and/or impact homelessness including: healthcare, criminal justice, LGBTQ+ rights, local/state/federal government laws &amp; policies, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Example: Focusing on trans equity, TX's Attorney General's recent decision to treat gender-affirming care as child abused could have an impact on ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) which we know impacts the pipeline to 'future' homelessness. Equity Committee seems like the most appropriate existing HRS governance entity to create a strong statement/response and direct advocacy &amp; policy responses to that and other such issues (neurodiversity, geographic equity, etc.) from the system level of homelessness services. Address equity issues further upstream, not just here in the homelessness response system. Perhaps the Equity Committee could think about creating some sort of "Equity Advocacy &amp; External Systems Change Workgroup" alongside the Tools, P&amp;P, and Training &amp; Professional Development workgroups?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ LC holds the outward advocacy efforts, but committees can bring issues to their attention.</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be present + active in the meeting</li> <li>▪ Speak your mind</li> <li>▪ Be raw, honest, and truthful</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agree to disagree respectfully</li> <li>▪ Acknowledge that no one has a perfect understanding and we are all here to learn</li> <li>▪ Respect each other and ourselves</li> <li>● Projects to pursue in the future               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Diversity in hiring + educating staff about privilege – this is a real need because clients are more comfortable talking to people they can relate to                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All about understanding the people we serve</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Geographic equity – current system essentially redlines our housing for people who are exiting homelessness – unclear what this committee’s purview can be here, but want this to be something people are talking about                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diversity of housing partnerships</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Trans equity – crisis response system is heavily gendered – no active acknowledgement of barriers trans people face, especially in system that relies so much on religious institutions for crisis response</li> <li>○ How are things looking once people are housed – intersection with systems improvement – how many people are being housed/exited/bridge housing practices with an equity lens                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Our work is generally more nebulous because we’re trying to tackle the system as a whole</li> <li>▪ Want to look at this agency by agency – prevent evictions if there’s a lapse in funding or a program is unable to keep someone housed</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ speakers offer support to sobriety groups – we can use this same model to connect people waiting for housing with people who’ve been through the list/system/etc. – support groups for people who are on the waiting list (help them stick to appointments, learn how to talk to landlords, what to expect when they’re housed, etc.) – certificate for people who’ve completed classes (so landlords can see the work people are doing and stop refusing vouchers)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invest more fully in peer support – it’s different coming from a peer vs someone else – in our community, peer support people are treated as the lowest in the hierarchy, but also tends to be the most diverse group – work on how we get to the respect in organizations that peer support folx deserve</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shifting that old-fashioned narrative that lived/peer expertise is less valuable than clinical/academic expertise, and then proportionally paid less</li> </ul>	
<p><b>IV. API Pilot Questions</b></p>	<p>P. Petty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation (possible pilot questions available <a href="#">here</a>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Previously used the VI-SPDAT, replaced with Austin Prioritization Index (API)</li> <li>o Part of API process is to continuously evaluate and improve questions</li> <li>o No one deserves to be outside tonight, but if it's not possible to get everyone inside, what are the factors that move someone's journey along over someone else's? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is everyone comfortable tonight wherever they are...</li> </ul> </li> <li>o New questions are important, but don't want to bombard people with a million questions during an assessment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Only two current pilot questions because others have either been adopted or rejected</li> <li>o Can typically pilot between 8-12 questions at a time</li> <li>o Q1 feedback: Are we able to screen between people who are street homeless vs. shelter homeless? Black people are more likely to be in shelter, so would have to control for this <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes, possible for conditional logic questions – only if someone reports unsheltered homelessness, etc.</li> <li>▪ Doesn't necessarily make sense not to ask someone who's currently in shelter because people bounce around</li> <li>▪ Speaks to vulnerability and also empirically interesting in terms of daya – but concern that more white men are going to answer yes</li> <li>▪ Also need to be clear about language if we're looking specifically at the violence of sweeps – a security guard asking you to move is different</li> <li>▪ Some shelters force people not to bring all their belongings inside - shelter version could be, "if staying at a shelter were you allowed to bring everything you needed, and were you given a secure place to store it?" Also, shelter security sometimes forces people to change their physical location "inside a shelter" (or shelter staff ban them from the shelter) the same way police or security force people away</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

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	<p>from public spaces out on the street, so that part of the question could be adapted for sheltered use as well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Concern: cold weather shelter - is there a chance someone will lose points because they get asked this question the one night they happen to be in shelter? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would probably be an exception for CWS because they work so differently</li> <li>• Lots of people use shelter intermittently – possible unintended consequence</li> <li>• Some questions ask about generally or usually, not just last night, etc.</li> <li>• Always an opportunity to bring this back to the drawing board since it's a pilot question</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Q2 Feedback: Similar question in previous pilots, but pulled – why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Voted on but not selected in previous version; also have a juvenile justice question on the current API</li> <li>▪ Question: How do we measure that we're capturing the right data and the right population? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That's why these are in pilot, so we can gather data before making a statistically significant judgment</li> <li>• Empirically important question to know audience, so if we're trying to focus specifically on people with long-term criminal justice involvement vs drunk tank – think about the wording to make sure we're getting at what we want to get at</li> <li>• Diversity of group allows us to address as many blind spots as possible; not opposed necessarily to having people in drunk tank answer this question</li> <li>• Perspective of assessor is also important – if client shares more information than API can capture, how does it factor in? – this was a major factor in bringing this to the forefront</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>o Q3 Feedback: copy-editing needed</li> <li>o Add/remove/swap could be part of pilot process</li> <li>o Had some good, juicy arguments and wordsmithing in developing the original API questions – look at these questions through the lens of people who will be taking this assessment</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o API Pilot Question suggestion (building off of questions 4 &amp; 5): "Have you ever been discriminated against due to your mental health or any other invisible or harder to see diagnosis or disability?"</li> <li>• Optional: Vote to approve               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Quorum not reached</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Next Meeting: 3/31/2022, 12:00PM – 1:30PM; Virtual meeting via Zoom</b></li> </ul>	