# Workforce Development Exchange (WDX)

**Overview**

The public workforce system is being called to provide a whole new level of care and support to the record-high numbers of individuals that are currently unemployed.  This systems shock provides an opportunity for the public workforce system to fundamentally rethink the design and delivery of services. The Workforce Development Exchange (WDX) is a 3-month program that provides Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) with training and coaching to create customer-focused services to meet the needs of people affected by the massive economic disruption due to Covid-19. Participating WDBs will: (1) learn about and practice design thinking and innovation strategies, (2) work to improve customer experience and outcomes for unemployed and underemployed people, (3) connect with and learn from other workforce boards aiming to improve the quantity and quality of job placements and retention for vulnerable populations, and (4) learn how to identify behaviors, service design, and materials (forms, signage, workshop language, etc) that perpetuate elements of racism, and how to incorporate new ideas, critical thinking and equity and inclusion efforts.

There is no cost to the WDB; only a genuine commitment of time to the training and activities. Participating WDBs will receive design Toolkits and materials which will be mailed to them upon acceptance to WDX. The [Application](#) can be found here.

**How will the program work?**

We will guide you through the core phases of the design thinking process: observe and notice, frame and reframe, imagine and design, and make and experiment. You will learn in the context of a project that you choose – this can entail a change your WDB would like to make in its interactions with customers (e.g., improve efficiency of job placement), or an internal project that forwards an agency agenda (e.g., increase collaboration between the WDB and AJCC). We will provide materials to help participants use the learning to enrich both staff capacity and customer experience. And, we promise that we will have some fun along the way!

This is the second cohort of a pilot conducted with 4 WDBs in 2020, and we have adjusted a number of elements as a result of feedback. We have added several days to the class so that we can go a little slower and have more time to reflect on the learning. We are also bringing in more guest speakers and have contracted with [Racism Untaught](#) to provide teaching and coaching to become more aware of ourselves and our systems' implicit biases as we design.

We will deliver the training online, primarily using Zoom and [Miro](#). MIro is an online collaborative platform that allows users to all see the same material, and contribute their ideas as individuals and in teams. We are sensitive that Miro is not currently accessible to people who are visually impaired, and are working to create other ways to engage that will be inclusive to all people.

Please review the schedule at the end of this document. This kind of learn-do teaching model works when participants can be present at all of the sessions. We know that things happen at the last minute, but we ask that you only apply if your team can make all the dates and have time allotted for additional work outside the sessions. Outside of the sessions, participants will engage in ~1-2 hrs per week of work on their projects. Classroom and coaching hours will be about 40 hours. Overall, this is an investment of around 45 - 50 hours per staff person. It's worth it!

**Who should apply?**

We are looking for up to 4 California WDBs whose leaders have an appetite and capacity to further develop a customer-focused innovative culture. We want to work with teams who are ready and willing to make a commitment to learning and practicing, who have problems they want to tackle, and who can set aside time and resources to learn. We are focusing on helping WDBs redesign services in their America's Job Center of California (AJCCs) by training and coaching AJCC managers and front-line staff in human-centered Design. See the application for details on who should be included on your team. *We want to make explicit that we are prototyping the inclusion of a much more robust focus on design and racism, and want to ensure that participants see this as a critical value add.*

**Why should my WDB participate?**

Participation in this program:
- Will equip WDBs with tools to better meet the needs of people affected by the massive economic disruption due to Covid-19
- Will provide you with methods, tools and support to create services or re-design program elements that could make a significant difference in the life of your customers.
- Your AJCC managers and staff will have new tools to see problems as puzzles to be solved, develop a mindset of continuous improvement, and learn how adapting to new circumstances can be an important habit.
- Will support and deepen your diversity and inclusion work, to better design services for People of Color, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups.
- Participants will forge deeper and more trusted relationships with co-located partner agencies.
- Will help provide engagement and rediscovered connection to mission. Participants in our programs have reported a renewed sense of engagement and purpose as they spend time learning about the goals, motivations and emotional states of customers.

**Where and when do I apply?**

The Application can be found here.  The application period will open on February 15, 2021. All applications are **due March 16, 2021**. Please put the dates below on your calendar if you apply, because there is a very short turn-around between application and the start of the program!

Final selection will be announced on March 19, 2021.

The first session will start March 29, 2021 and end in June with a Showcase (date TBD).

**Who is running the program?**

This project is funded by the James Irvine Foundation, which is committed to helping California's Workforce Development Boards adapt to new ways of doing business by learning how to use design thinking mindsets, skill sets and tools to improve customer experience and outcomes for unemployed and underemployed people. The program will be facilitated by Virginia Hamilton and Alisa Oyler, with content focused on recognizing and reducing racism delivered by Lisa Mercer and Terresa Moses, from Racism Untaught.

Virginia Hamilton is an independent consultant with over 40 years in workforce development. Virginia is an accomplished teacher and public speaker. She owns a small consulting company Make Fast Studio. Her consulting work includes facilitation, strategic planning, meeting and event design, civic engagement, public participation, design thinking, collaborative processes, and large scale system change. After 17 years with the Employment Development Department, she founded the non-profit California Workforce Association and ran it for 15 years. She served as the U.S. DOL Regional Administrator for 6 years, where she catalyzed the use of Customer-Centered Design in the public workforce system. She has spent her career in non-profits and as a public servant with the mission of making government work better for vulnerable populations.

Alisa Oyler is a consulting facilitator, trainer, and curriculum designer specializing in participatory and inclusive methods that engage a diverse range of stakeholder groups at every level of transformational change.  She has worked for 15 years, across 20 countries, in the international humanitarian sector with large NGOs and bilaterals such as the World Bank and USAID. In recent years she has worked to support public engagement efforts of Cities, Counties, Public Sector Boards & Commissions and Community Based Organizations in the US and specifically around the SouthWest where she is based. She is a Certified ToP Facilitator and Mentor level trainer with a Masters in International Program Management and Leadership from the School for International Training.

**What did last year's participants say?**

*"The (WDX) series provided an opportunity to collaborate with other workforce professionals. It gave us insight into our common challenges in providing accessible and customer-focused services.  The hands-on workshops provided an opportunity to focus our attention on the design thinking process and break down each idea and carry it to the implementation phase."*

*"This training was amazing. I have practical tools I can use in my job, a new set of peers who I can check in with when I am stuck, and I feel more connected to the reason I started in workforce development - to help people who need our help. I think I can do that better now."*

*"Online sharing can be accomplished with similar intensity as in-person sharing!"*

Any questions? Please email Virginia Hamilton at [vhvahamilton@gmail.com](mailto:vhvahamilton@gmail.com).

| Workforce Design Exchange<br><br>Spring 2021<br><br>Facilitators: Virginia Hamilton and Alisa Oyler | | |
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| **Program Orientation Day 1** | | |
| **Mar. 29, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Introduction to WDX and Tech Onboarding |
| **Training Workshop 1 Days 2-3** | | |
| **April 8, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Introduction to the Design Process + Teaming |
| | 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Activity |
| **April 9, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Design Dash + Customer Research |
| | 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Coaching |
| **Training Workshop 2 Days 4-5** | | |
| **April. 15, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Problem Framing, interviews |
| | 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Activity |
| **April.16, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Participatory facilitation |
| | 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Coaching |
| **Training Workshop 3 Days 6-7** | | |
| **April 29, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Personas, HMW, journey maps |
| | 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Activity |
| **April 30, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● BI + Trauma Informed Care |
| | 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Coaching |
| **Training Workshop 4 Days 8-9** | | |
| **May 13, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Creativity, Ideation, Equity in Action |
| | 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Activity |

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| **May 14, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Prototyping and Testing |
| | 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Coaching |
| **Training Workshop 5 Day 10-11** | | |
| **May 27, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Implementing DT, Curve |
| | 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Activity |
| **May 28, 2021** | 9 am - 12 pm PST | ● Design + Equity, Research plan |
| | 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm PST | ● Team Coaching |
| **Celebration and Showcase Day 12** | | |
| **TBD June** | 10:00 am - 11:30 am | ● Sharing Projects and Next Steps |