

**To:** Jobs Plus Program Administrator

**From:** Giovanna Arizpe

**Re:** Updating JRC Demographic Integration and Intra-partnership Communication

**Date:** April 15, 2024

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### **Background**

Rainier Vista is a public housing site that homes 1,200 multicultural residents who largely rely on welfare or food stamps. The community is 74% female, 61% foreign born (with 43% from Vietnam) and 39% Black (with roughly 30% of that born in the United States). To improve quality of life for all public housing residents at the Vista, Jobs Resource Center (JRC), is tasked with providing employment related services. To fulfil this mission, JRC partnered with Washington Works (WAW), an organization that focuses on teaching an introspective “dis-identifying” approach for women in the workforce, and Refugee Woman’s Alliance (REWA), an organization, known for providing English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to immigrant and refugee women, to provide language specific employment assistance.

### **Organizational Strengths**

*People:* Each organization brings unique strengths across motivation, knowledge, and influence to accomplish its mission to assist Vista residents:

- WAW’s strength is its motivational approach that prepares unemployed women on welfare for employment. Its increased client intake, positive national attention, and 75% retention and completion rate are indicative of its approach’s success.
- REWA’s 20-year tenure teaching refugee and immigrant populations is an asset that demonstrates that it is proficient in instructing employment skillset classes for Vista residents.
- JRC’s employment coach utilizes her social status to develop interpersonal relationships with the Vista community. By going through informal channels to provide residents tax form assistance, work clothes, or transportation for interviews, she can build credibility and establish trust between JRC and Vista residents.

*Process:* JRC’s logic model visually demonstrates how it intends to align with its mission.

- JRC’s illustration of itself as part of a “Community support for work environment” demonstrates that it is intentional in carrying out its mission and that it has provided specific steps in its programs to support Vista residents.

*Performance:* JRC’s intake is interpersonal.

- JRC evaluates each Vista community member by documenting work skills on an intake form. Simultaneously, JRC’s employment coach assesses the resident’s English language proficiency. Through this interpersonal approach, JRC quickly identifies female, non-English-speaking community members for referral to REWA’s skill training services.

### **Organizational Concerns**

*People:* Despite all organizations utilizing WAW’s employment model, JRC and its partner organizations are operating independently, threatening the success of JRC’s mission.

- REWA relies on WAW’s workplan because of its own inexperience with specifically teaching work skills. As a result, REWA’s work program has a learning ceiling for foreign born Vista residents. Additionally, not utilizing REWA’s ESL training continues to perpetuate the gap among Vista residents in language and employment success.
- Because of its inexperience with teaching across multicultural backgrounds and without proper knowledge of associated cultural dynamics, WAW’s staff can alienate Vista residents with culturally insensitive comments. This creates an exclusionary environment and can discourage Vista residents from participating in WAW’s employment skill assistance program.

- When residents with varied employment skills are sent to JRC from REWA, JRC, without further intake or investigation, refers them back to REWA. Without attempting to understand why the resident was referred back, JRC anchors onto their recommendation and is unwilling to believe that its initial resident assessment was wrong. JRC's fixed mindset of avoiding information to improve others' and referring them back to REWA disincentivizes people from utilizing JRC's services.

Process: JRC's logic model only integrates high-level concepts.

- JRC's logic model has inputs, outcomes, and impact, but it does not explicitly illustrate how other factors or organizations interact to help accomplish its mission. As a result, JRC is left to fill gaps in rapport with Vista residents, and REWA and WAW are not integrated into its steps, reinforcing the lack of communication between the organizations.

Performance: JRC programs are exclusionary and do not account for cultural differences.

- JRC's intake process is personal, long, and not provided to its partner organizations for their own intake. JRC's focus on referring women who lack English proficiency into REWA classes creates a bottleneck for women with sufficient employment knowledge but insufficient English proficiency who never receive employment assistance (Exhibit A).
- WAW's restrictive requirements exclude several English-speaking residents. WAW requires on-time attendance Monday through Friday, from 8 AM to 3 PM; attendees are also expected to dress in professional attire. 1/3 of Vista residents have a GED, 1/2 do not have difficulty with English, and 3/4 are women, 3/4 of households have children, and 1/2 of residents are employed; of over 1,000 residents, less than 50 have the availability to commit to WAW's program.

### **Key Issues**

Joint organizational attempts to integrate employment programming have been ineffective: the Vista's first WAW employment training was attended by only 5 of 32 registrants. JRC's processes led REWA and WAW to deploy programs that dismiss Vista's diversity, resulting in an intake process that is misaligned to residential employment needs. This memo proposes recommendations to improve internal processes and encourage the community, while encouraging JRC to consider inclusivity in both its intra-partnership communication and intake processes. Implementing these recommendations will improve the employment resources offered to Ranier Vista residents.

### **Recommended Strategy:**

To mitigate JCR's challenges, JCR should partner with collaborative members and local affinity groups, update its logic model, and update its intake and referral processes.

Partner with collaborative members and local affinity groups: Partnering with collaborative members like Promoting Assess Across Cultures (PAAC) provides cultural education to JRC and WAW, resolving people and process concerns. By taking time to understand cultural norms, WAW gains the knowledge to prevent culturally alienating Vista residents. Likewise, JRC can utilize collaborative members' resources to find individuals who benefitted from taking employment training and have them discuss their experiences with Vista residents. While the risk that some residents could feel alienated and perceive "preferential treatment," JRC should exchange speakers between advocacy groups and local intersectional affinity groups to further prevent favoritism. By integrating cultural understanding in WAW's training and inviting others with backgrounds similar to Vista residents, the residents will acknowledge the possibility of success and feel empowered and motivated to complete employment training. JRC can reference these successes and thus fulfill its mission.

To implement this, JRC should review its list of collaborative members and local affinity groups through a stakeholder map and determine who would best represent the Vista and arrange meetings to discuss its plans to educate JRC's partner organizations and include collaborative members to discuss positive employment training experiences. If a collaborative member/group declines JRC should revisit the stakeholder map to arrange educational opportunities.

Update logic model and communicate responsibilities: Diverse groups of people working together work harder and create a better product. JRC can utilize this method and include WAW and REWA to specify their organizational responsibilities and emphasize the importance of inclusion in JRC's mission. It is possible for both the organizations to continue to view their roles independently from each other, JRC should lead status meetings to center the organizations. The meetings should be utilized as this opportunity to inquire about optimizing and integrating REWA and AWA programs into its logic model. This process provides transparency to both organizations and fosters an understanding of the organization's purpose and their own interactions with JRC's mission. Having all three groups come together closes communication gaps and enables AWA and REWA to learn from each other.

To do implement this change, JRC should keep its original logic model as a way to communicate its overall mission but should integrate a logic model like Exhibit B when discussing JRC program mission. JRC should meet with WAW and REWA so JRC can outline their outputs in the logic model.

Update JCR Intake Process: JRCs current process is time consuming and inefficient. As shown in Exhibit A, it lacks structures to serve or refer U.S. born men and women or foreign-born women who have skills needed for employment. It is recommended that the intake process be extended to include U.S. born men and women and have REWA provide ESL classes to those with sufficient work skills but needing assistance with English. By updating the process to triage those who speak English and those who don't, JRC can streamline service referral, eliminate the bottle neck of women looping from JRC to REWA more accurately by including ESL as a needed step. Additionally, to ensure the viability of the WAW program, women who complete ESL classes can be eligible to participate in WAW's program. It is important to note that the requirements for the WAW's program remain and could risk ESL graduates' eligibility. As mentioned previously, its partnership with collaborative members and affinity groups should update these requirements to be more in line with the needs of Vista residents.

To implement this, JRC should utilize the proposed process map as a guide on deciding who Vista residents are referred to. In cases where skills are unknown, JRC should refer residents to ESL classes to reduce the risk of redundancy.

### **Conclusion**

JRC's mission to provide interpersonal employment assistance to Ranier Vista residents is supplemented with the support of highly respected and tenured organizations of AWA and REWA. Both programs have educational support for residents but act independently and result in JRC filling in process gaps and redundancies that do not prioritize inclusion Vista resident inclusion. It is therefore recommended that JCR partner with its collaborative members to obtain cultural diversity education and seek success stories to inspire Vista residents. To ensure collaboration with its partners, JRC should create an additional logic model detailing AWA and REWA responsibilities. Finally, the JRC should update its intake process to ensure all Vista residents are provided with the referral that meets their needs. Through these updates JRC will successfully carry out its mission to improve the quality of life for Vista residents.

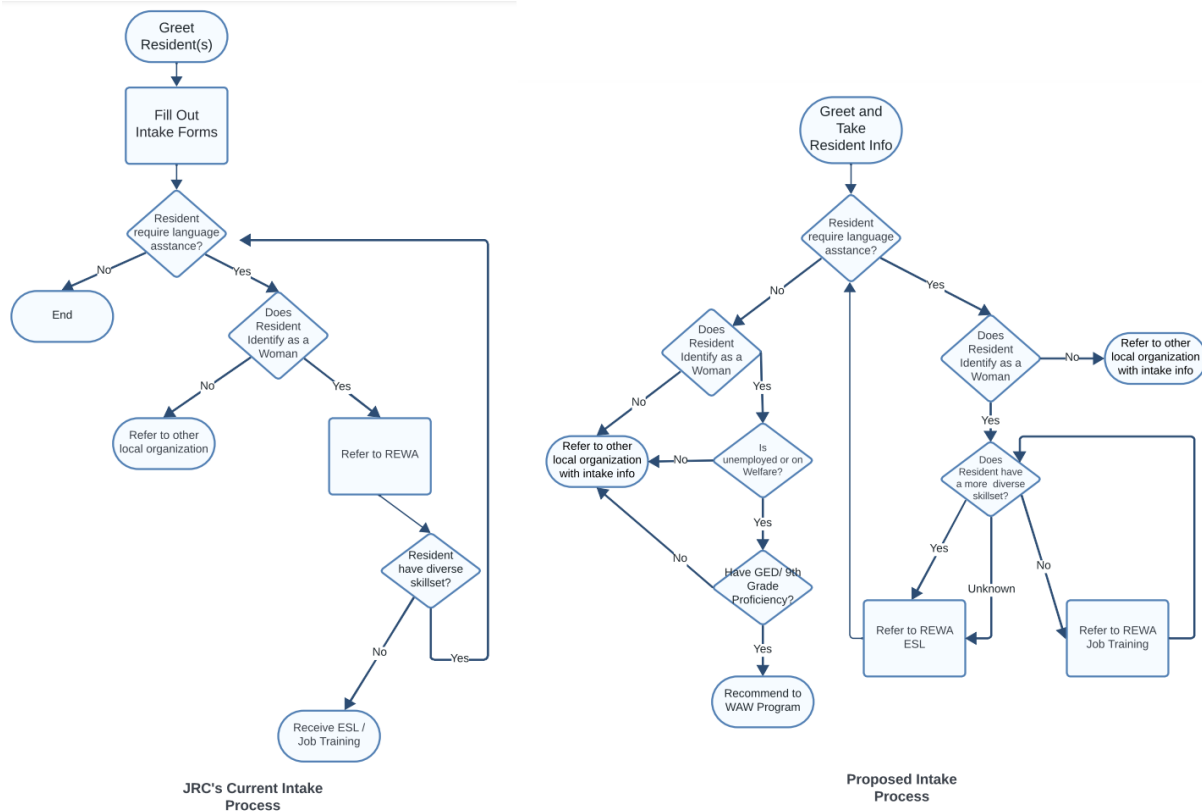


Exhibit A

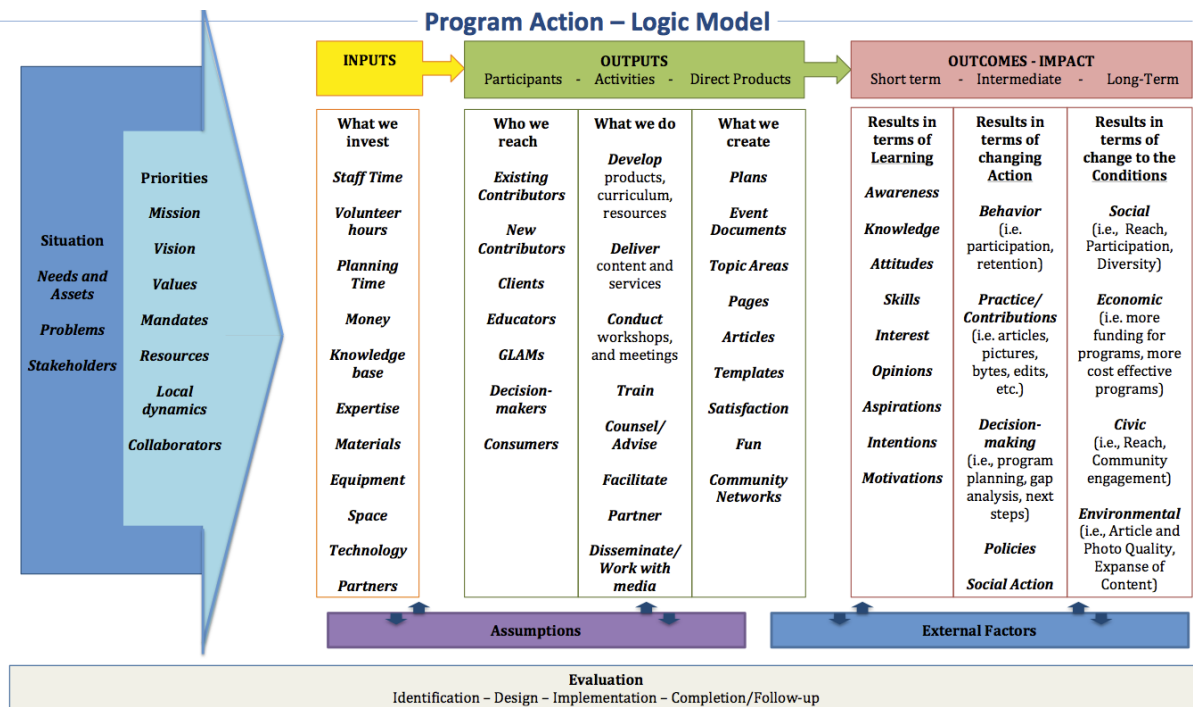


Exhibit B

### References:

1. Magee & Frasure: Status and Power: the Principal Inputs to Influence Public Managers.  
This text describes the what status and power are, the difference between (i.e. competency versus image) and how combining both can create interpersonal influence. This was utilized in discussing the strengths REWA has. As a 20-year-old institution, it has asymmetric control over its knowledge. As a result of this power, REWA is hesitant to distribute this information to WAW to improve the implementation of WAW's work plan.
2. Portillo: How Race, Sex and Age Frame the Use of Authority by Local Government Officials  
This text discusses how women and minorities often have to deal with a paradox of rules and are seen as lower status. As a result, many solve issues outside of institutional power. This was utilized when discussing the strength the employment coach has. The employment coach can work outside the rules through informal channels to help residents of Vista obtain their shared goal of employment.
3. Why Diverse Teams are smarter: Katherine Phillips  
This discussion details the differences between working in homogeneous groups versus working in a diverse group. The discussion includes that diverse groups work harder and usually have more creative solutions and that diversity is not just racial but can be various intersectional traits. This was utilized as a reason to advocate for bringing JRC, REWA and AWA together and discuss how to complete the JRC's proposed logic model.
4. Hatry: What Outcomes Should be Tracked?  
This text describes various performance measurement, including logic models. Logic models have inputs, processes/activities/methods, outputs, outcomes, and impact as elements. The purpose is to link outcomes with processes and activities showing a direct path from start to end of an organization's mission. This is utilized as a recommendation, JRC's current logic model did not clearly display how its partners were integrated into its mission and creating a new one that does would create clarity.
5. Miller: Faster  
This text provides suggestions to create efficiency in organizations. Some suggestions are to triage, simultaneously process, and bust your bottleneck. This was included in the recommendation to update its processes utilizing the proposed process map. The loop of intake and referring Vista's residents to REWA only to be sent back to JRC was highly inefficient. By getting rid of the thorough intake process and extending the process so that more people are served, JRC was able to remedy its process bottleneck.