

## Jackson Focus Group, 8/2/23

### Attendees:

- CIS – Lindsay Frilling (customer)
- CIS – Bernadette Fuller (employee)
- CTAS – Kelsey Schweitzer (employee)
- CTAS – Casey Swift (customer)
- LEIC – Mike Pitts (customer)
- LEIC – Rodney Wilkins (customer)
- MTAS – Reynold Douglas (customer)
- MTAS – Kim Foster (customer)
- MTAS – Donald Pannell (employee)
- NCEL – Keith McGee (employee)
- NCEL – Steve Howe (customer)
- TLC – Eric Amos (employee)
- IPS – Macel Ely (moderator)
- IPS – Martha Kelley (moderator)

### Overall Top 3 Issues:

- IPS agency websites need to be easier to navigate and simpler to find pertinent information (search engines need improving).
- Making an IPS app available to external customers which would provide basic information that is frequently needed such as directory of contacts with areas of expertise, library access, etc. (This would prevent many folks from having to frequently reach out to their consultants during commission/council meetings to ask for this information.)
- IPS sponsoring regional meetings for local officials to meet, collaborate and hear about the services and potential opportunities available to their communities from IPS (discussing what is available from all six agencies).

### One word to describe your relationship with IPS and its agencies?

- Advocate
- Blessed
- Reliant
- Thankful
- Fulfilling
- Invested
- Excellence
- Improvement
- Networking
- Knowledge
- Essential
- Grateful
- New

**Polling** - Ease of doing biz with IPS agencies: 2.25 mean average (Scale 1 to 10, easiest to most difficult)

### **#1 How could we improve the ease of doing business with us and accessing our services?**

- App available with directory of contacts, services, etc. (5)
- Websites – need to be simpler, easier to use and navigate (make more intuitive), make smarter with search features (5)
- Orient new community employees/leaders on services offered through IPS (4)
- Keep IPS names and customers in front of people/ directory with leadership changes (3)
- Add an interactive forum to agency websites to discuss issues/best practices with others – allowing a profile development for users (3)
- Proactively engage with customers and discussing issues/services. (3)
- Improve the balance between consulting and training roles for IPS consultants, challenging for them to do both roles at times (3)
- Communicate/display/market services more readily (2)
- Add a skills bank (2)
- Increase marketing of IPS services (2)
- Shift the way people get information according to customer comforts (Zoom, apps, etc.) (1)
- Have consultants more in our communities (1)
- Making available current video footage of programs/services (1)
- Concise information on services for collaboration (0)
- Improve and use skillsets across agencies to help any industry or stakeholder groups (0)
- K@te is challenging, needing improvement, i.e., registration (0)
- Hard to find K@te registration link (0)
- Tough to attend trainings at other end of state (0)

### **#2 How might we improve collaboration internally and externally?**

- Focus groups for counties to discuss issues and become more familiar with IPS resources, etc. (4)
- Optimize training audiences to familiarize them with other IPS agencies and services available (4)
- Provide training opportunities that cross-over training specialties, perspectives and expertise i.e., credits offered beyond traditionally given credits (3)
- Offer more exposure to other IPS agencies' training opportunities. (3)
- Concentrate on how agencies might continue their promotion to collaborate on issues or programs. (3)
- Creatively market to understand collaboration will benefit all Tennesseans (1)
- Proactively seek new opportunities – especially with external groups and associations (0)

### **#3 IPS employee skills needed to be relevant in the future:**

- Mental health experts (4)
- Case studies, practical information (2)
- Tech-based skills (0)
- Service mindset (0)
- Clear, concise instruction (0)
- More focused SME analysts (0)

- Existing relationships they can build on (0)

#### #4 Ways to attract and keep employees with these skills?

- Stay competitive with salary and benefits (4)
- Make it easier (streamline) recruitment and hiring process/Let up on restrictions and requirements because you are losing potential candidates (4)
- Provide flexibility on how you work and where you work (1)
- Recruit from local levels (0)
- Expand marketing (0)
- Creatively recruit (0)

#### #5 What should we **START**, **STOP** and **CONTINUE**?

##### **START**

- Regional focus groups or meetings to collaborate services, opportunities, etc. (5)
- Additional hybrid models for delivery (4)
- AWA assessment services or consulting on the topic as a means for retention of employees (0)
- Certified Fraud Examiner Course (0)

##### **STOP**

- *No feedback was offered.*

##### **CONTINUE**

- SELA (2)
- Recruiting opportunities for college credit (2)
- "In the Field" relationships (1)
- TCED (1)
- CPM (0)
- COCTP(0)
- CMFO/CCFO (0)
- MTAS Assessment Center (0)
- Encourage Basic Economic Development course to new audiences (0)

## **Nashville Focus Group, 8/3/23**

- CIS – Rachel Powers Selbe (customer)
- CIS – Audra Pinson (employee)
- CTAS – Karen Paris (customer)
- CTAS – Melisa Kelton (employee)
- LEIC – Tim Eads (customer)
- LEIC – Clayton Williams (customer)
- MTAS – Carlton Cobb (customer)
- MTAS – Julie High (customer)
- NCEL – Trent Clagg (employee)
- NCEL – Lisa Hanner (customer)
- NCEL – Danny Sutton (customer)
- NCEL – Miriam Stein (customer)
- TLC – Jenny Rish (employee)
- TLC – Mal Wall (customer)
- IPS – Macel Ely (moderator)
- IPS – Martha Kelley (moderator)

### **Overall Top 5 Issues:**

- Offer an IPS membership or subscription with discounts to trainings and/services (7)
- Make IPS websites easier to navigate (i.e., iPad users) (6)
- Help increase community collaborations and capacity, especially in rural areas (6)
- Offer flexibility in the structure of work at IPS (6)
- Connect mentors with newly elected officials (6)

### **One word to describe your relationship with IPS and its agencies?**

- Family (repeated by two other participants)
- Partner (repeated by two other participants)
- Educate
- Advocate
- “Crutch” offered for our immediate assistance
- Connected
- Curious
- Invested
- Spanish
- Learner

**Polling** - Ease & Accessibility = 2.1 mean average (Scale 1 to 10, easiest to most difficult)

### **#1 How could we improve the ease of doing business with us and accessing our services?**

- Make IPS websites easier to navigate (i.e., iPad users) (6)
- Better market services and provide clarity of those services (3)

- Provide new or fresher products (2)
- Improve the registration process in K@te (1)
- Pricing can limit some customers access (0)
- The process of making payments needs to be easier (0)

## **#2 How might we improve collaboration internally and externally?**

- Help increase community, capacity, especially in our rural areas (6)
- Offer more county/city partnering (MTAS/CTAS) (4)
- Get better at developing and sharing stories to increase awareness (3)
- Expand offerings to include wider municipal leaders/departments (1)
- Better ways to dialog and connect (0)
- County government follow up – explaining the resources available to customers (0)
- Intentionally find places where missions/organizations are compatible (0)
- Work to develop more professional development opportunities for administrative support staff (0)

## **#3 IPS employee skills needed to be relevant in the future:**

- Strong relationships (4)
- Passion for service (3)
- Keeping employees relevant and fresh to stay current (3)
- Generational understanding (3)
- Tech skills (2)
- Technical assistance, broad base, and institutional knowledge (1)
- Diversity in delivery of information (1)
- Critical thinking skills (0)
- Communication skills (0)

## **#4 Ways to attract and keep employees with these skills?**

- Flexibility in the structure of the work (6)
- Foster belonging and connect input with employees (3)
- Flexibility in compensation (lifestyle benefits) (0)
- Ask for more feedback (0)
- Allow them to make more decisions (0)
- Identify and celebrate more “wins” (0)

## **#5 What should we **START**, **STOP** and **CONTINUE**?**

### **START**

- IPS membership with discounts (7)
- Did you know? Campaign for mayors and other officials (4)
- Partner with DoHR to let new state employees know of UT IPS offerings (4)
- Extend supervisory training to Executive Level (LEIC) (1)

## **STOP**

- Use ROI and attendance #s (0)
- Merge/Streamline services (0)

## **CONTINUE**

- Connect mentors with newly elected officials (6)
- CPM and leadership programs (4)
- New Orientation for elected officials (3)
- Hybrid Offerings (2)
- Supervisory and management (LEIC) (0)

## **Knoxville Focus Group, 8/4/23**

### **Attendees:**

- CIS – Kathy Barber (employee)
- CIS – Lauren Longmire (customer)
- CIS – Gary Human (customer)
- CTAS – Tim Shelton (customer)
- CTAS – Kaley Walker (employee)
- IPS – Kristy Keel-Blackmon (employee)
- LEIC – Jeff Lindsey (employee)
- MTAS – Warren Nevad (employee)
- NCEL – Trent Clagg (employee)
- NCEL – Marcus Kennedy (customer)
- NCEL – Chris Thomas (customer)
- SMART – Jeremy Kourvelas (employee)
- TLC – Amanda Shappard (employee)
- IPS – Macel Ely (moderator)
- IPS – Martha Kelley (moderator)

### **Overall Top 3 Issues:**

- Provide product presentations and promotions of various programs and services available to customers on a regular basis (7)
- Increase civic engagement among youth (6)
- Have more involvement with college students for future recruiting (i.e., expand internships) (6)

### **One word to describe your relationship with IPS and its agencies?**

- Partnership (repeated by another participant)
- Collaborative
- Growing
- Champion
- Resourceful
- Integrated
- Optimism
- Committed
- Connectivity
- Creative
- Alliance
- Service

**Polling** - Ease & Accessibility – 3.23 Mean Average

**#1 How could we improve the ease of doing business with us and accessing our services?**

- Help customers understand the IPS services and classes still available for them on their professional journeys (5)
- Offer more specialty certifications (2)
- Make customers more aware of all agencies and services (1)
- More variety in class offerings (i.e. CTAS to begin offering HR classes) (1)
- Improve payment and contracting services for vendors, make it more customer friendly (0)
- Continue to address capacity and succession planning of expertise and knowledge (0)
- Consider offering more training opportunities when traditionally offered only in a single geographic area (0)

## **#2 How might we improve collaboration internally and externally?**

- Provide product presentations and promotion of various programs/offerings to customers on a regular basis (7)
- Increase civic engagement among youth (6)
- Streamline with an improved mobile website (3)
- Summit with consultants in all agencies (2)
- Provide more virtual information sharing within IPS agencies (1)
- Intentionally integrate IPS employees/partners within the community (1)
- Specific Facebook page for specialties (i.e., Registrar of Deeds) with information and a Q&A (1)
- Bring in nonprofits with similar missions (0)
- Expand job shadowing opportunities (0)
- Overcommunicate what we do (0)
- Expand app to include all agencies (0)

## **#3 IPS employee skills needed to be relevant in the future:**

- Adaptability (4)
- Relationship Builder/Collaborator (2)
- Law & Accounting Expertise (1)
- Sustainable Mindset (1)
- Communication Skills (1)
- Resourceful (Institutional knowledge) (0)
- Innovative (0)
- Benchmarking (0)
- Tech Savvy (0)

## **#4 Ways to attract and keep employees with these skills?**

- Career days for recruitment and banking (5)
- Increase priority to mental health and work-life balance (5)
- Flexibility to work practices (4)
- Succession planning with no position to go (3)
- Stay interviews of current employees (2)
- Sensitive/adapt to generational needs (2)
- Celebrate individuals (1)

- Compensation unfair to current employees (1)
- Evaluate employee workloads (0)
- Job stability and workforce culture (0)
- Offer professional development and opportunities to expand their capacity (career growth) (0)

#### #5 What should we **START**, **STOP** and **CONTINUE**?

##### **START**

- More involvement with college students (i.e., internships) (6)
- Use UT Resources more for leverage with customers (4)
- Let partners find needs of IPS (1)
- Expand research capabilities (1)
- Focus on additional industry specialties (0)
- Offer scholarships work commitment to IPS (0)

##### **STOP**

- Look at ROI and numbers in programs (1)
- Improve K@te (0)
- Streamline modes of communication (short/once a week training opportunity) (0)

##### **CONTINUE**

- Highlight customers and best practices occurring across the state (4)
- CPM (1)
- Success stories (1)
- Focus groups and feedback (0)
- Provide information and updates with new information and reminders to customers (0)