

10.20.2022

The Big Table: Greater Peoria



Post-Event Report



The Big Table 2022 Report

Peoria Civic Center - October 20, 2022



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION
INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE
WORKFORCE & EDUCATION



2022 Recap Video



THE BIG TABLE: Greater Peoria 2022

Event Summary

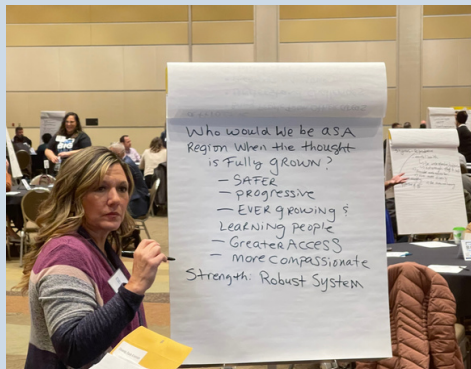
On [October 20th, 2022](#), more than [400 community members](#) gathered for **The Big Table: Greater Peoria** to engage in conversations designed to *strengthen and deepen our understanding of one another and what our region needs*. This event was a collaborative effort run by volunteers and organized by several community organizations including CEO Council; Regional Chambers of Commerce: East Peoria, Morton, Pekin, and Peoria Area Chamber; Greater Peoria Economic Development Council, Discover Peoria, and Peoria Area Association of Realtors.

The ideas created and data collected at this event will continue to support and inform our regional planning strategies, which help organize and coordinate economic development goals for our region. Post-event surveys indicate that more than [97% of participants were satisfied with their experience](#) at The Big Table, and almost [99% of participants would attend a similar event](#) in the future. Moving forward, The Big Table Greater Peoria will take place every other year, with smaller events in between to continue community conversation and engagement.

Members of the community are encouraged to stay connected through our social media pages & website:

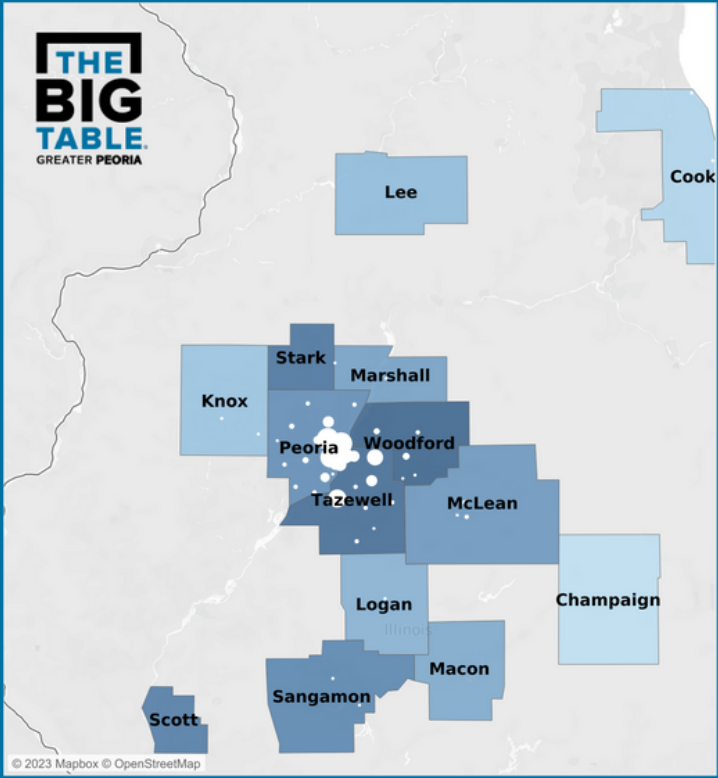
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/BigTableGP
- **Instagram:** www.instagram.com/BigTableGP
- **website:** www.BigTableGP.com

More information about **The Big Table: Greater Peoria Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**, our regional planning document, can be found at <https://data.greaterpeoria.us/ceds/>.



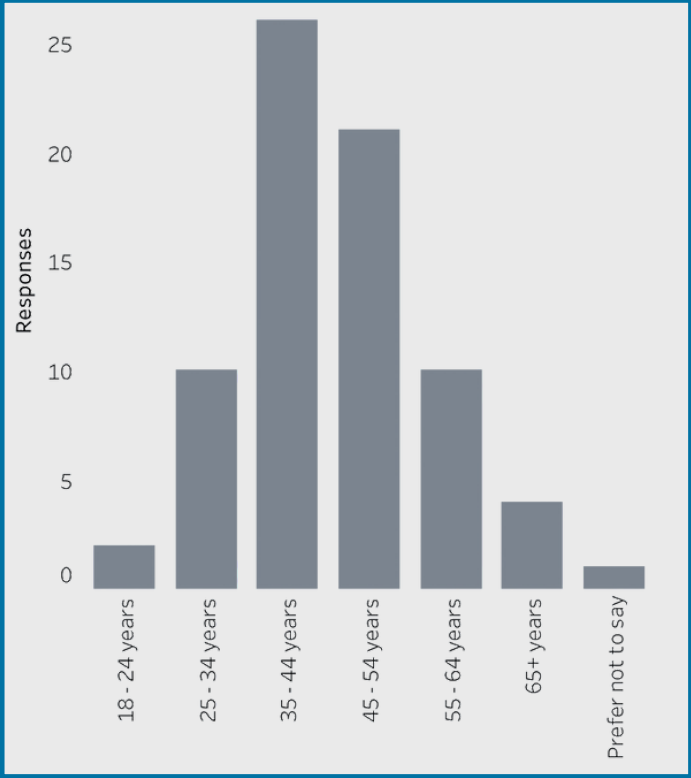


PARTICIPANTS FROM 14 COUNTIES



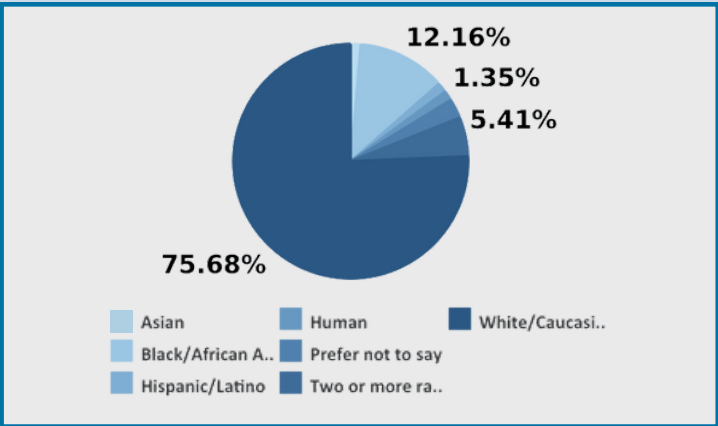
*based on registration

AGE



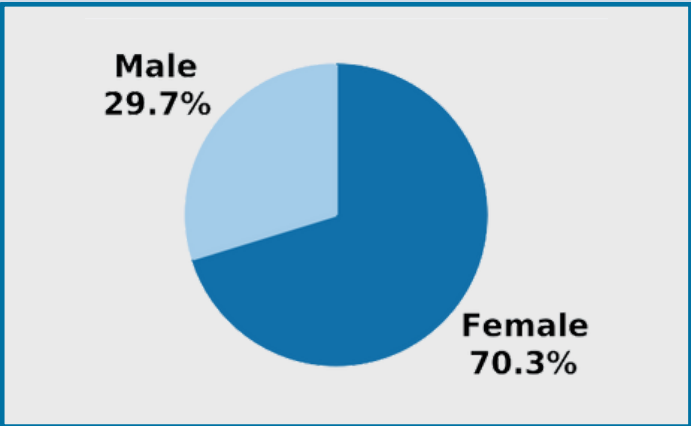
*based on exit survey results

ETHNICITY



*based on exit survey results

GENDER



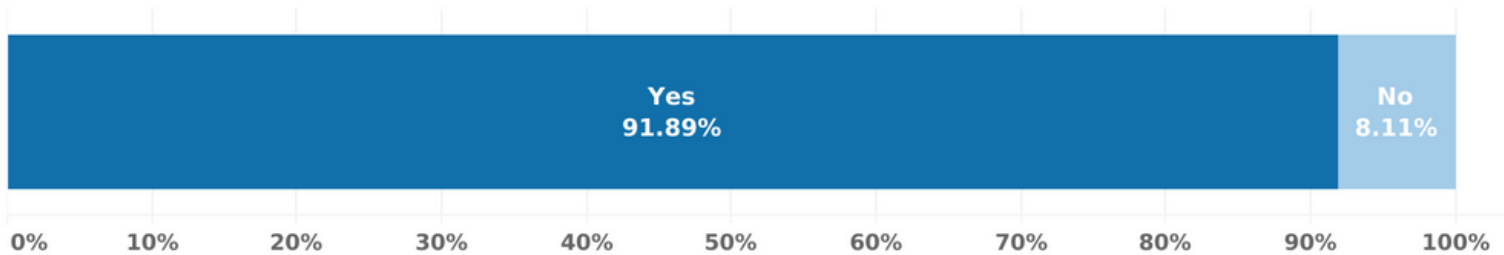
*based on exit survey results

Big Table Survey Results

Participants of The Big Table were asked to fill out a survey on their experience at the event. This feedback will be used to help develop future events to have increased participation and accessibility. The results below are based on the 74 surveys that were completed.

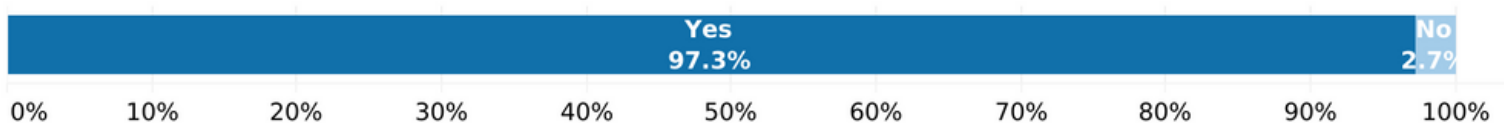
Optimism

Do you feel more optimistic about the next 12 months after the Big Table?



Satisfaction

Were you satisfied with your Big Table experience?

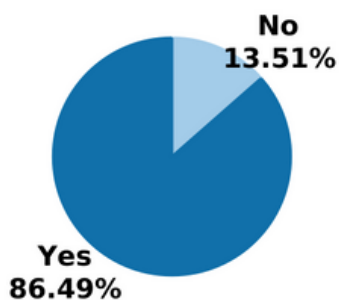


How Many New Connections Did You Make Through Your Table Discussions?



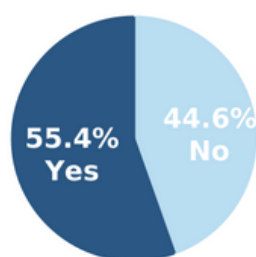
Initiatives

Did you learn about a new initiative or project already ongoing in our region?



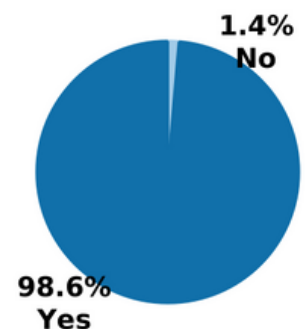
Challenges

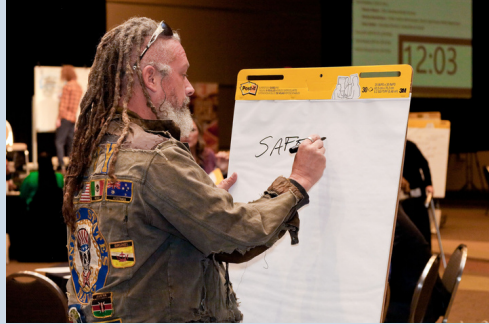
Did you learn about any current challenge for our region that you didn't already know about?



Next Year

Would you attend this (or a similar) event in the future?







This Session featured the following speakers:
Deric Kimler, Central Illinois Friends
Sharon Adams, Heartland Health Services
Monica Hendrickson, Peoria City/County Health Department

*Moderated by **Joshua Gunn, Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce.**

Takeaways from 2022 Big Table

“ I wasn’t sure what to expect. Now I understand more that The Big Table is all about **big conversations** by all the little people that make Peoria one, and to **make Peoria better.**”

- Lynette Fernandes, *Bradley University*

“ This is **The Big Table**. This is an opportunity for our region to create **meaningful connections** and those intentional collisions to talk about the key challenges that our region has, but more importantly, to **celebrate all the successes** that we have, all the great things that make the Greater Peoria region one of the best places to live in the country.”

- Joshua Gunn, *Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce*

Common Views

- Lower income communities and minorities do not have equitable access to healthcare
- There isn't enough capacity of community healthcare workers to handle all the healthcare cases especially in marginalized communities
- There is a need for People of Color (POC) in all levels of leadership and decision making roles
- Our region boasts of a robust healthcare system and services

Barriers

- Access to technology
- Language barriers
- There is a need for People of Color (POC) in all levels of leadership and decision making roles
- Some section of the population/communities cannot easily access health services
- Disparity in health insurance policies

Ideas

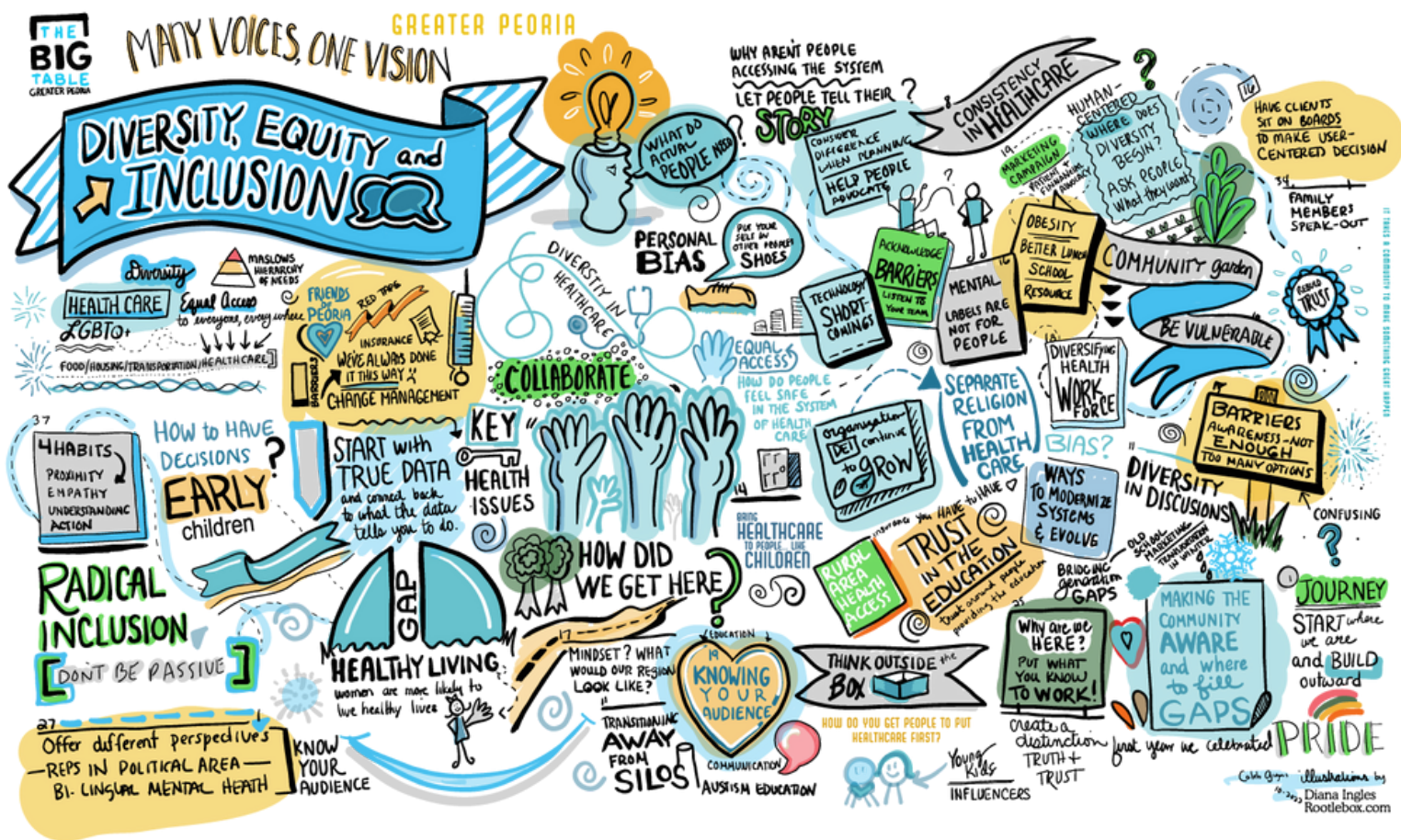
- Improve the connection/relationship between patients, community and medical professionals
- Diversify the medical workforce
- Access to healthcare should not be limited by race, creed, gender or sexual orientation/identity
- Early interventions for mental health challenges especially for the youth

Where We Are Going

By promoting conversations that are engaging, purposeful, and centered on policy, we aim to keep equity concerns in the spotlight specifically in healthcare access. Our region has the potential to be a leader in championing equitable practices at all levels by sharing best practices and models. Through the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity, and by addressing equity in our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs), we can create a place that uses policy and programs to tackle equity issues.

Progress from 2020 Big Table

- City and County of Peoria established the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity to examine issues and make policy recommendations around diversity, equity and inclusion
- First River City Pride Festival celebrates the LGBTQ and diverse community, and the Murray Baker bridge lit up to celebrate Pride
- Peoria Equity Accountability Program (PEAP) created to provide certification for minority and/or women-owned businesses



Created by Diana Ingles - Rootlebox



Greater Desire to Listen & Learn from people with different backgrounds & perspectives



This Session featured the following speakers:

Bridget Booker, *Reign Construction Inc.*

Pierre Paul, *We Hear You ASL*

Samantha Hutchinson, *Bear's Bites*

Hunter Trenary, *Sun Collectors*

*Moderated by **Nate Domenighini, *Distillery Labs gBeta***

Takeaways from 2022 Big Table

“ I’m a Big Table veteran, so I’ve been here since the first one in 2019, and to see hundreds of people who are **passionate about this region**, coming together to have some interesting conversations, some tough conversations, but also developing some **solutions** for how we take our region forward.”

- Dr. Jamel Wright, *Eureka College*

“ My **hope** is that these discussions lead to **action**. So I’m hoping we see action in terms of **building**, in terms of **support** for **Distillery Labs**, **Peoria NEXT** and **gener8tor**.”

- Pierre Paul, *We Hear You*

Common Views

- Need for more collaboration and alignment of ideas and products instead of competing in the ecosystem
- Need to share success stories and failures for others to learn from it and improve in their innovation journeys
- Finding innovative solutions to compliment our biggest industry- healthcare

Barriers

- Access to finances/ banks and credit cards
- Negative perceptions about doing business in Illinois
- Access to information on availability of resources
- Financial literacy
- Red tape and bureaucracy

Ideas

- Become a community that not only acknowledges but effectively addresses its challenges through innovation
- Make entrepreneurship cool
- Introduce the concept of entrepreneurship at an early age in grade and high schools
- Encouraging, supporting and accepting women and minority businesses
- Offer grant information, writing, and review support for aspiring innovators and entrepreneurs.

Where We Are Going

As Distillery Labs and its programs take shape, it's important to support other resources that are also available to help small businesses, such as Peoria NEXT Innovation Center. Allocating more resources to these types of programs creates an environment for successful small businesses, which are crucial to our community. Institutions can play a role by building relationships with small businesses to create mutually beneficial outcomes. Meanwhile, individuals can play their part by shopping locally, promoting the "Shop Local 365" initiative, and finding new ways to keep their spending within Greater Peoria.

Progress from 2020 Big Table

- Distillery Labs started with funds secured for the building of an ultra modern innovation space with regular programming ongoing
- Launch of "Start a Business Greater Peoria" a dashboard aimed at providing assistance and resources to entrepreneurs looking to start or grow a business in Greater Peoria.



Created by Diana Ingles - Rootlebox



Work together to collaborate and find innovative solutions to our challenges.





This Session featured the following speakers:

J.D. Dalfonso, *Discover Peoria*

Amy McCoy, *Pekin Area Chamber of Commerce*

Robert Ross, *Greater Topeka Partnership*

*Moderated by **Joshua Gunn, *Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce***

This Session was preceded by a keynote from Bob Ross of the Greater Topeka Partnership, who shared the details of their successful talent attraction campaign. Bob discussed how Greater Peoria can leverage its existing foundation to win the talent competition.

To watch his full keynote, simply scan the QR code:



Common Views

- Rich history and availability of natural resources
- Harnessing our industrial and manufacturing history and experience
- Showcasing our resilience and ability to pivot and innovate
- Building a cohesive brand the entire region can get behind
- Emphasizing the midwest hospitality

Barriers

- Lack of a vibrant downtown
- Fragmented community
- Lack of reliable public transportation
- Negative perception held by some local residents
- Not enough celebration of local culture
- Lack of entertainment options for young adults

Ideas

- Improving/uplifting the region's self esteem through a dedicated branding initiative
- Highlighting positive characteristics and features of the region to drown out the oft-misplaced negativity
- Providing incentives for relocation to Greater Peoria
- Provide more entertainment/leisure options to prevent young people from leaving
- Campaigning to out of town college students to encourage them to make the region their home

Where We Are Going

As the driving narrative of our region continues to evolve, we can relate Greater Peoria's resilient and adaptive spirit to the world. We can continue promoting the assets that make our region a valued destination and a great place to live and work. By addressing social and income issues, there is tremendous opportunity to raise the quality of life of our residents, keeping our population here and attracting new talent to the region.

Takeaways from 2022 Big Table

“ I think The Big Table event is really, really powerful and I am just hopeful that people will stay involved and stay connected and continue to, you know, share their voices here at The Big Table.”

- Amy Davis, *City of Elmwood*

“ One of the things that I love about this event is as much as it's about loving where you are, **blooming where you are planted**, it's also about recognizing that loving a place doesn't mean pretending it's perfect. It simply means you love it enough to invest in it, to engage in **meaningful conversations**.”

- Joshua Gunn, *Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce*

Progress from 2020 Big Table

- Launch of the Greater Peoria 2030 Talent Attraction initiative which aims to enhance the region's reputation and highlight why it offers an unbeatable combination of exceptional quality of life and affordability.

Live Visual Notes



Created by Diana Ingles - Rootlebox

Take the time to celebrate all the great things about our communities rather than telling a negative story



Workforce Development & Education



This Session featured the following speakers:
Arnitria Shaw, Illinois Central College
Carl Holloway, May-I Community Outreach
Kevin Cassidy, International Labour Organization

*Moderated by **Evan Jenkins, Manpower- Central Illinois**

Takeaways from 2022 Big Table

“What I am hopeful for about The Big Table here in Peoria is that professionals and individuals inside of our community are going to leave here inspired.”

- Evan Jenkins, Manpower-Central Illinois

Common Views

- Need to change the narrative that college is the only pathway to a successful career
- Revisiting the relationships between employers and employees
- Rethinking the workforce solutions as the status has been upended by COVID

Barriers

- Transportation challenges
- Mass corporate recruitment
- Quality of life
- Stigmas toward higher educational requirements and timelines
- Burnout

Ideas

- Job flexibility
- Adapting hiring practices to align with current times
- Comprehensive benefits
- Lower education costs
- Promote dual credit courses
- Reevaluating credentials needed for roles
- Free upskilling opportunities

Where We Are Going

While the Regional Workforce Alliance continues to drive and develop many workforce development efforts, there are still vast opportunities for organizations and individuals to get involved and take on the challenges of an evolving working environment. By engaging our future workforce and expanding accessibility to resources, workforce development will play a vital role in both economic recovery and in making our region a more equitable place to live.

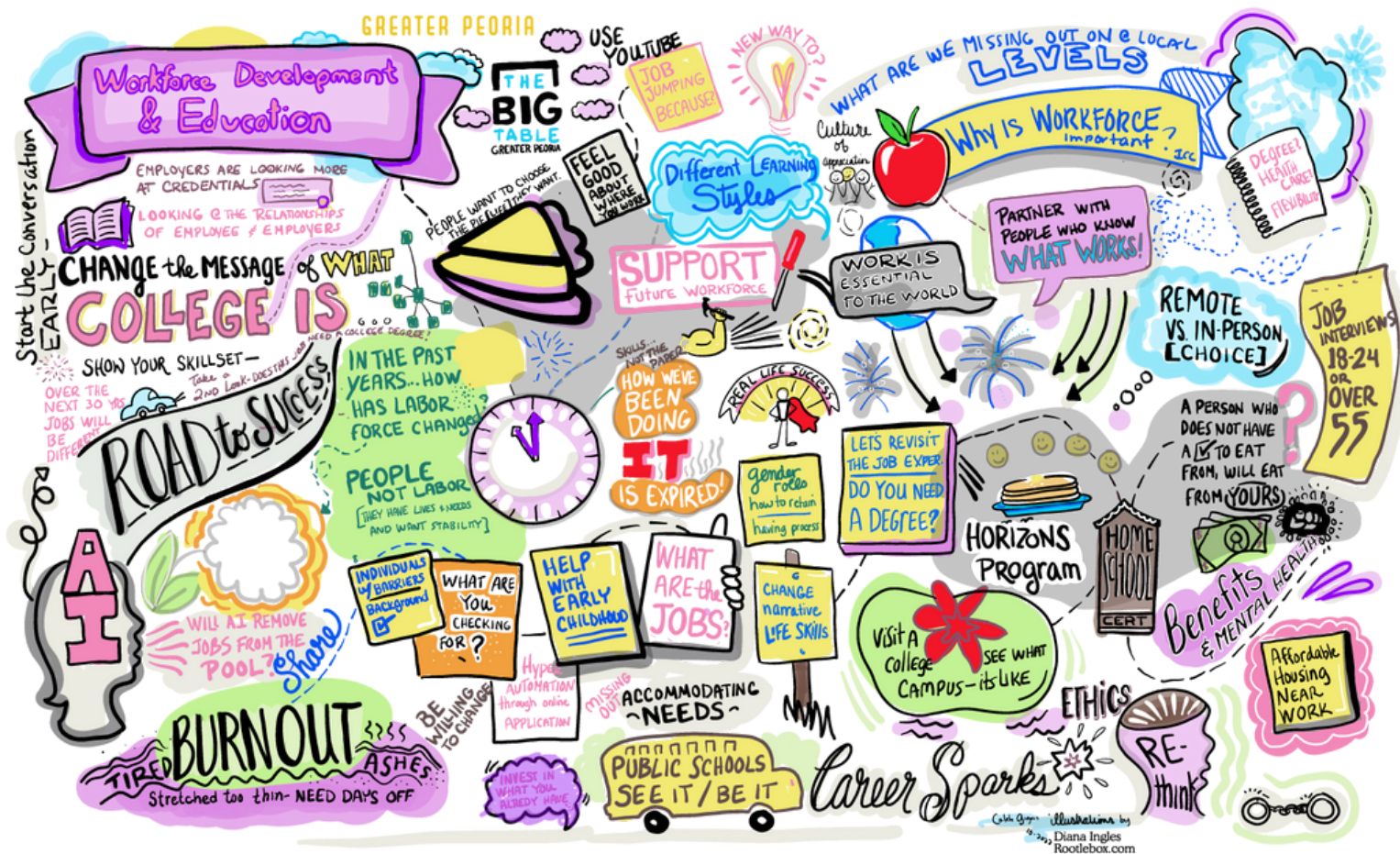
“This event is critical for bringing stakeholders and community members together to address the local workforce shortage, one of the biggest challenges of our time. The generated ideas affirmed our regional workforce development efforts and provided suggestions for expansion and better communication.”

- Kari Rauh, Greater Peoria Economic Development Council

Progress from 2020 Big Table

- Illinois Central College and its partners were awarded a Good Jobs Challenge grant of \$14.5 million to train 1000 people in IT professions. The grant is aimed at promoting workforce equity, and as part of the Workforce Equity Initiative, it will provide low-income and minority participants with a credential and a living wage.
- To make job search easier for job seekers in the region, the [Greater Peoria Job Board](#) was developed. The job board is a resource for employers and job seekers in the Greater Peoria area to connect and find opportunities. The development of this job board is part of a larger effort to promote economic growth in the region and create more job opportunities.

Live Visual Notes

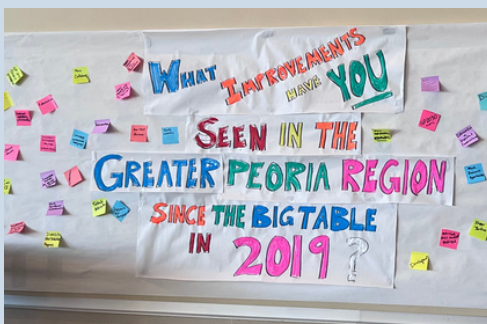
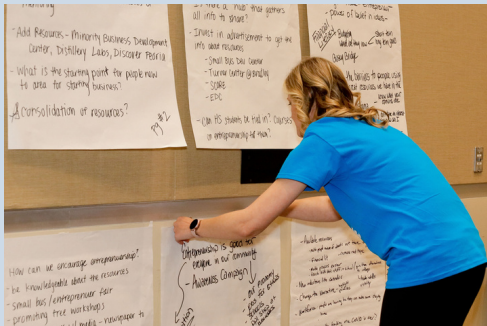


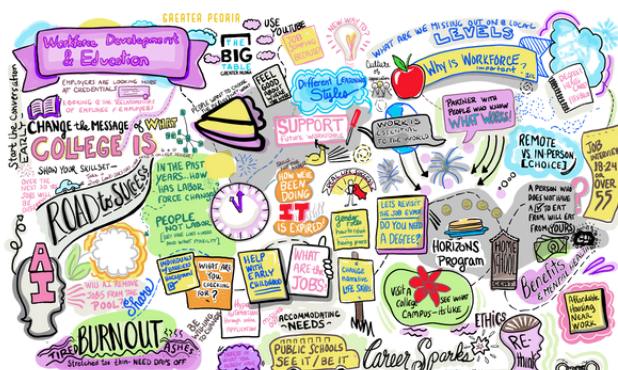
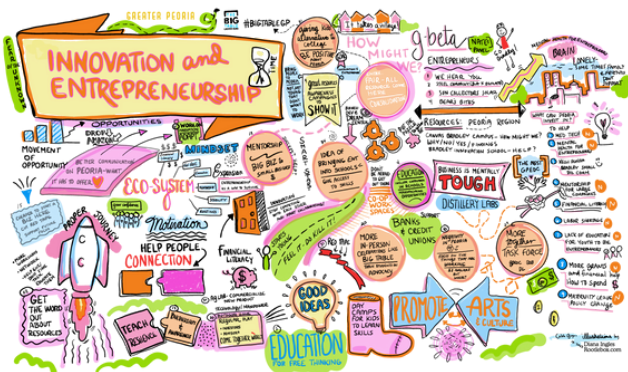
Created by Diana Ingles - Rootlebox



The need for skilled labor has increased faster than the number of skilled individuals







Connect with us and be a part of these ongoing conversations



www.BigTableGP.com



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2022 BTGP REPORT

- Research | Analysis | Design -
 - Kelly Schneider: CEO Council
 - David Aduama: Greater Peoria Economic Development Council
 - Brandon Thompson: Illinois Central College

VISUAL ART

- Live Visual Notes - Diana Ingles: Rootlebox & Caleb Gigous

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Professional Images - Shaun V.: Shaun V. Photography
- Candids - Submitted by attendees & BTGP partner organizations.

VIDEOGRAPHY

- 2022 Video Recap - Pat Clark: Pat Clark Productions

COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE -

- CEO Council, Discover Peoria, Greater Peoria Economic Development Council, Pekin Area Chamber of Commerce, Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce, Morton Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development Council, & many more!