

# Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force

Meeting Minutes for 11/17/2021 9:00 AM- 12:00

Virtual Meeting

[TVW recording](#)

Minutes (for review and confirmation at next meeting, February 17, 2022)

## I. Welcome and Attendance Meeting convened by Rep. Mia Gregerson and Acting DSHS Secretary Don Clintsman

### Voting Members

- Rep. Michelle Caldier, (R) Washington State House of Representatives
- Don Clintsman, Department of Social and Health Services (Executive Co-Chair)
- Kelly Cooper, Department of Health
- Sen. Perry Dozier, (R) Washington State Senate
- Sen. Manka Dhingra, (D) Washington State Senate
- Rep. Carolyn Eslick, (R) Washington State House of Representatives
- Sen. Chris Gildon, (R) Washington State Senate
- Rep. Mia Gregerson, (D) Washington State House of Representatives (Legislative Co-Chair)
- Joe Holliday representing Carli Schniffner, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Diane Klontz, Department of Commerce (Co-Chair Advisory)
- Mark Kucza, Department of Corrections
- Rep. Strom Peterson, (D) Washington State House of Representatives
- Tim Probst, Employment Security Department (Co-Chair Advisory)
- Nicole Rose, Department of Children Youth and Families
- Vacant, Washington State Senate (D) Washington State Senate
- Vacant, Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction

Quorum? Yes No

### Non-Voting Members

- Mystique Hurtado, Governor's Office Indian Affairs
- Anna Minor, Office of Financial Management
- Nam Nguyen, Asian Pacific Islander Commission
- Ed Prince, Commission on African American Affairs
- Maria Siguenza, Commission on Hispanic Affairs
- David Stillman, Department of Social and Health Services (Co-Chair Advisory)

### Staff

- Jim Baumgart, Office of the Governor
- Babs Roberts, Department of Social and Health Services

The group recognized and thanked members leaving the task force - Senator Darneille, Daisye Orr, and David Stillman.

## II. Public Comment

None

## III. Task Force Business - Rep. Mia Gregerson, Acting Sec. Don Clintsman and Babs Roberts

- *Approval of By-laws. Sen. Dhingra motioned to approve, Rep. Gregerson seconded. Voting – all ayes, no nays.*



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Bylaws draft1.docx

#### **IV. Enhancing and Modernizing LEWPRO Work – Rep. Mia Gregerson, Don Clintsman, Babs Roberts**

##### ***Decision making approach***

- *Last meeting we compared meeting structure of three legislative and executive taskforce groups (LEWPRO, Food Policy Forum, and 3CTF). We want to talk more about the Childcare Collaborative Task Force.*
  - *The Childcare Collaborative Task Force- No formal process for action reports etc. but they have a set of norms over time. They have an external facilitator. They use Liberating Structures as a model. Voting members vote by a simple majority. Staff and facilitators spend most time creating agendas, story boards and working with task force chairs before finalizing the agenda. As needed, they form ad hoc groups to complete work in between meetings and bring back to the task force.*
- *Decision on taskforce structure*
  - *The PRWG is still the advisory committee, interested in how they fit into this kind of structure? Babs will get Tim Probst that information.*
  - *If a facilitator is approved, we would need to request funding for that position. Does the group want a facilitator to run the meetings?*
    - *No one opposed to adding a facilitator. Also interested that everyone, regardless of membership status, participate and be more inclusive.*
    - *We will move forward with that structure/ model.*

#### **V. Upcoming Legislative Session – Related Bills and Decision Packages – Executive Branch Agencies**

##### ***Governor’s Executive Order – Jim Baumgart***

- *Governor is looking at how to incorporate the complimentary work from the 10-year and 5-year plans forward, looking at LEWPRO and PRWG to move into implementation work.*
- *Started an executive order draft using a base document created with the PRWG chairs and has evolved since then with Budget and Policy counterparts and peers. The executive order is currently with state agency directors/cabinet for review. If the Governor decides to move forward as an executive order, will bring it back to executive team and community by mid-December to coincide with request legislation.*
- *Three main goals of this work:*
  - *Addressing continuum within state agency portfolios and mandates (e.g. basic needs, childcare, healthcare, wealth building, building income opportunities, education and job training).*
  - *Advancing and normalizing the appropriate involvement of community voice for things like policy and budget development and program implementation.*
  - *Long range focus on system reforms that are necessary, exist outside of state government, and require collaboration with other states and national partners.*

- Will be bringing leg requests together as a package when they have similar goals around poverty reduction recommendations. 5-year plan was approved by this group and will assist agencies bringing their recommendations forward, it moves into the entire cabinet to incorporate their work.
- Haven't contemplated how PRWG would continue to be a part of the advisory committee for an executive order. It's about implementation now. It will continue to keep a component of community voice.

### **Draft Request Leg/DPs that align with the 5/10 year plan**

- DSHS – Babs Roberts
  - Remove TANF time limit for ineligible parents (includes those on SSI, undocumented parents). Undocumented parents don't have access to WorkFirst supports during the 5 year time limit.
  - Add a new time limit extension that allows families a 3 month approval when the most recent unemployment rate is 7% or higher
  - Expand transitional food assistance for families leaving TANF to help stabilize families as they “ramp off” TANF. USDA said that we can now include folks who are transitioning in sanction (as long as they are not being terminated due to sanction).
  - Include membership of Office of Equity and LBGTQ Commission as non-voting members within LEWPRO. Also want to include Women's Commission, does the group agree?
    - No concerns with adding this, moving forward with including Women's Commission.
- DCYF - Nicole Rose
  - Remove parent pay statute, requiring parents to pay part of the costs for children in juvenile institutions.
  - ECEAP decision package, moving towards entitlement program and increased rates paid to providers.
  - Combined in home services package, trying to look at the service availability and array of out of home placement and successful reunification.
  - Ensuring service providers have a living wage, access to mental and behavioral health.
- DOH – Kelly Cooper
  - Asking for state dollars to leverage federal funds to test water for lead and help with remediation.
  - Behavioral health packages with a health equity zone work that passed last year. Communities identifying health disparities and identifying what they want to work on. Setting up an additional zone.
  - Birth equity project training for community health workers.
  - Surveying American and Alaskan natives and black communities around prenatal supports. Building communities before, during, and after pregnancy.
  - Tobacco quit line supports.
  - Coverage to bridge gap for therapeutic formal coverage in WIC program.
- ESD – Tim Probst
  - Economic Security for All, there are 11 partnerships working on poverty reduction, moving from federal to state funding to continue this work developing and expanding partners.
    - Focus on moving people above the UW self-sufficiency standard. Usually over 200% of FPL.
    - Focus on people who are on SNAP and create continuum of care and career plan for self-sufficiency. This would add about 1,800 more households moving to self-sufficiency wages and helps communities build partnerships focused on poverty reduction.
    - No legislation required, just funding.

- SBCTC – Joe Holliday
  - An extension of SSEH initiative (Support for Students Experiencing Homelessness), originally funded in 2019 as a pilot with 4 colleges, it has been followed up in 2021 that expands (doubled) the pilot, now 8 are providing this for homeless or prior foster care youth and includes a variety of services. DP would expand this to all 34 Community and Technical colleges.
  - Increasing financial aid awareness and numbers in the state. SBCTC has struggled to get FASFA levels up with other states, working with other community agencies with a focus on minority populations.
- DOC – No updates at this time. Marc had to leave early.
- OSPI – No representation at this time.
- Task force asked agencies to link these requests to specific strategies in the 10-year plan and provide that to group.

## **VI. Poverty Reduction Workgroup (PRWG) Updates – Lori Pfingst**

- Governor’s workgroup met October 28, 2021, and determined how they want to implement the 10 year plan.
- What was most important to them was the spirit of the work.
  - They want to continue building relationships and trust, including LEWPRO and CBOs.
  - They want to highlight work of the steering committee and incorporate voices historically not included.
  - Issues they would like to see addressed - compensating those with lived experience. Possible consideration for CBOs and how they might be compensated in this space as well.
  - Policy and program issues were integrated with eligibility and a continuum of care, affordable housing, tax fairness and more unconditional cash to people through UBI pilots and programs like TANF.
- PRWG is continuing in an advisory role in to LEWPRO, steering committee still exists to continue their role.

## **VII. WorkFirst Spending Plan 2021-23 (see document) - Babs Roberts**

### **TANF**

- The spending data goes through September only, but the TANF caseload increased by over 1,500 households (6%) from September to October; it was the third largest monthly increase in TANF history.
- The increase was entirely among households in which both parents and children receive benefits.
  - With our forecasting partners, we believe the October increase is due in large part to the end of Pandemic Unemployment benefits in September.
  - In coming months we expect Afghan arrivals (majority are families with children) to impact the caseload.

### **Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA)**

- As a reminder, this is one-time assistance for families who would otherwise qualify for TANF but only need a short period of assistance as they have some other source of income to meet ongoing needs.
- Throughout the pandemic we saw a significant drop in use of DCA; this may have been due to families not feeling confident of their ability to sustain their households for 12 months without needing TANF during pandemic.
- The number of DCA cases in October almost tripled from previous few months. With a recovering economy, availability of jobs and return of mandatory WorkFirst participation, we expect this number will continue to rise.

### **WorkFirst Services**

- *In March 2020, we temporarily suspended WorkFirst participation requirements and associated sanctions.*
- *With the recovering economy, resumption of in-person school and reduction in COVID-19 related shutdowns, we resumed normal participation requirements in September 2021.*
- *Staff are scheduling reengagement appointments with all those required to participate in WorkFirst. During the meetings the parent and our staff use a new client-centered evaluation tool to discuss the family's current situation and develop a plan for WorkFirst activities.*
- *Referrals to partner agencies have started and should be increasing but may not yet be quite to where we hoped to see them. Our partners are also ramping back up to provide services in job search, community jobs and education.*
- *We are tracking the engagement progress, and our data indicates that as of last week, we have either met or scheduled to meet with 85% of participant households.*

### **Spending Levels**

- *For reasons just described, during the first three months of the fiscal year, spending on WorkFirst services has been low, almost across the board. The spending is growing, however, with the resumption of required WorkFirst participation and we expect it will continue to grow.*
- *We are making some changes in regards to local contracts and support services, which include:*
  - *Raising the yearly maximum support service cap from \$3,000 to \$5,000 and broadening the available services to include supports for virtual participation.*
  - *Offering Post-TANF employment related transportation support services for families transitioning off TANF due to a job.*
  - *Partner agencies are also working to adapt their services to meet the needs of the current TANF population. As with WorkFirst services that DSHS provides, partner agency spending has been impacted by low referrals during the first months of the fiscal year. It is possible that there will be some FY22 underspending in this area – but VERY hard to predict.*

### **VIII. Public Comment**

*None*

### **IX. Good of the Order**

- *Next meeting date: February 17, 2022 9-noon (tentative). It's during legislation week 6 so subject to change.*
- *Rep. Peterson – Ask agencies as they go through DP and RL please get to committee chairs, the sooner the better as they are trying to navigate the virtual leg session.*
- *Concerns that OSPI hasn't been participating and want to help them catch up the group or help getting caught up. School systems have been very busy with COVID related issues, not just education.*