

Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force

Meeting Minutes for 2/17/2022 9:00 AM- 10:00

Virtual Meeting
[TVW recording](#)

Minutes (for review and confirmation at next meeting, May 19, 2022)

I. **Welcome and Attendance** Meeting convened by DSHS Chief of Staff Don Clintsman for DSHS Secretary Jilma Meneses

Voting Members

- Rep. Michelle Caldier, (R) Washington State House of Representatives
- 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
- Caylin Jensen representing 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
- Jilma Meneses, Department of Social and Health Services (Executive Co-Chair)
- 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
- Veronica Gallardo, 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
- Nichole Ross, Economic Security Administration Interim Secretary
- Manny Santiago, Washington State LGBTQ Commission (membership pending approval of SB 5929)

Staff

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

II. **House Keeping**

- **Housekeeping:**
 - LEWPRO members are designated "panelists" and will have the ability to participate
 - All other "attendees" will have been muted
 - Chat function is turned off

- Non-Task Force attendees can request to participate in public comment periods by raising their hand at the indicated time and will be “promoted” to panelist in order to speak.
- If you have questions during the meeting the Q&A function is the best place to put those but we ask that you not use that for “comments or discussion”.
- This meeting is being recorded and will be posted to TVW soon after the meeting closes.

III. Task Force Business - Rep. Mia Gregerson, DSHS Secretary Meneses and Babs Roberts

- Review and approval [November 17 meeting minutes](#) - The minutes were approved.

IV. Legislative Session – Bills of Interest and Governor’s Poverty Package – Babs Roberts and Jim Baumgart

- **2022 Bills of Interest Tracking Document DSHS – Babs Roberts**
 - Tracking bills that have a poverty reduction aspect, includes the sponsors, and identifies what part of the strategies and recommendations it aligns with and tracks them through the legislative process (Lindsay Tracy-Morgan has been updating this herculean task).
 - Some big bills around digital equity, housing and homelessness, agency request legislation. There’s a lot happening this session.
 - Sue Birch (Director, Health Care Authority) – How do we track proviso of tracking continuous eligibility of Medicaid kids, it’s not in a bill?
 - Babs Roberts - This document is tracking the actual bills (legislative action), the proviso work is not currently being tracked, but we could look at adding a tab to discuss this in chambers and can work with Lindsay on this.
 - Sen. Dhingra loves that idea, the senate budget will go out next week, keeping a checklist or tab will be very helpful.
 - [HB 2075](#) – Discusses some specific requirements for DSHS (CSD) and requires that CSD open our offices for on-demand in-person services as soon as possible and did require that CSD answer calls within 30 minutes. The bill required that the department not take any negative actions on cases if we do not meet these timelines.
 - CSD has a very large increase in call wait times due to large increases in people asking for help and particularly impacted those experiencing poverty.
 - It opened the conversation on how to get back to opening services to everyone. DSHS Secretary has taken immediate action to move us towards the goal of in-person and telephonic access to be at more accessible levels. Our hope is to open our offices to full services by the end of the month. Regardless of the bill, we will be reopening our CSOs for on demand services.
 - Did CSD lose employees over this last year? Yes, during the pandemic and during a hiring freeze we saw attrition of staff, this is playing a role in the service delivery issues, but it’s not the only issue. There are infrastructure needs as well. Think we can open our offices, it will be longer to level out phone wait times. We want those in need to be able to access services.
 - Sen. Peterson would like to thank department, Secretary Meneses and Babs Roberts for being proactive and collaborative to address concerns in this bill. Also now aware of the antiquated state of the phone system and he is committed to work with the department to figure out IT demands because that need isn’t going away. Still wants the bill to move forward.

- *Sec. Meneses would also like an updated eligibility system.*
- *Tim Probst - Thank you to DSHS and Babs for making this move and thanks for coordinating with ESD on the rapid response system has been helpful. ESDs peek from the pandemic is starting to ease, but now have temporary employees looking for work and getting them connected with DSHS to fill positions there.*
- *Sue Birch wants to thank our DSHS partners, HBE and DCYF, they have a significant IT modernization for the last three years and significant IT requests, Washington is amongst the last 15 states in the country that have not modernize our integrated and enrollment eligibility systems. Please support the IT requests that need to come forward. Employees pay needs to be addressed as well for a livable wage.*
- **Governor's Poverty Package - Jim Baumgart, Policy Advisor Office of Governor**
 - *The executive order was signed, it builds quite effectively on the strategy for developing a sub-cabinet to get cabinet officials into a room and be deliberate in addressing system improvements.*
 - *Want to look at some systemic harms we have in place (Parent Pay bill) as first steps.*
 - *We wanted to look at our systems and better connections on topics like housing and will begin this process shortly after legislative session.*

V. Public Comment

- *Josephine Tamayo Murray – Poverty Reduction Workgroup. Appreciate the work done, but the last two years have been very difficult and tragic for the people in our communities. While economic recovery is important, please also continue to think about people's spirits and hearts.*
- *Marci Bowers - Poverty Action Network– Wants to thanks us for the discussion on HB 2075 and appreciates the effort to adjusting the services. The COVID waiver for the federal TANF time limit expires in a few months and knows that the TANF time limit increases racial disparities and would like this group to address this along with concerns mentioned in 2075.*
 - *DSHS - and the legislators have been working on how to address racial disparities to address our own data to mitigate these issues, we are also working with peers across the country to address similar issues. There's a lot of work left to do at a state and federal level.*
 - *We at CSD and TANF case managers must do our due-diligence to help families either find other extensions that they may qualify for or help them prepare for moving off TANF.*
- *Sue Birch – Added that 300,000 Washingtonians have temporarily been kept on Medicaid benefits due to public health emergency. However, thousands will potentially lose their medical coverage. The HCA are reviewing 20,000 cases a month over the next 12 months to determine how they can keep their coverage or move onto other programs.*
- *Rep. Eslick Has been working on getting Family Support Centers some funding, added a proviso with 5 million to help with capacity who catch folks as they are transition between programs. Would like to take more time to look at this list of bills in detail and identify the top 5-10 that we want to work on, prioritize them and send it back but need more time to review.*
- *Sen. Dhingra – When will proviso list be available? Babs Roberts plans to have something out for review the following Wednesday. Note: this task was completed.*

VI. Good of the Order

- *Next meeting date: Tentative - May 19th from 9am to noon*