

Minutes (for review and confirmation at next meeting, August 26, 2021)

## I. Welcome and Introductions

*Meeting convened by Economic Services Administration Assistant Secretary- David Stillman*

### **Quorum met by task force members (or designee) in attendance as follows:**

*Diane Klontz, Sen. Jeannie Darneille, Jennifer Dellinger, Sen. Manka Dhingra, Sen. Chris Gildon, Rep. Mia Gregerson, Kole Musgrove for Rep. Gina Mosbrucker, Daisye Orr and Nicole Rose.*

### **Additional taskforce members**

*Jim Baumgart, Nam Nguyen, Babs Roberts, Maria Siguenza (Nancy Aguilar) and David Stillman.*

### **Guest Presenters & Additional attendees:**

*Briana Allen, Victor Amabile, Lena Brodsky, Sarah Garcia, Drayton Jackson, Dr. Karen Johnson, Juanita Maestas, Alexis Marx, Alison Mendiola, James Miles, Anna Minor, Lindsay Morgan Tracy, Erik Peterson, Lori Pfingst, , Grete Schultz, Nicole Ross, Anne Stone, Nicholas Swiatkowski, Josephine Tamayo Murray, Matt Tremble and Ron White.*

## II. Washington State Office of Equity – [Introduction and Overview](#)

*Dr. Karen Johnson, Office of Equity*

- **New agency of Office of Equity March 8, 2021.**
  - *This work will take a community and all agencies to move towards equity and removing disparities*
  - *Office's mission? Equity and justice for all. Legislature finds that population is growing increasingly diverse. Inequities based on race, ethnicity, gender and other characteristics continue to be deep, pervasive and persistent and they come at a great economic and social cost. The COVID pandemic also exposed systemic inequities.*
    - *70% of the state is white*
    - *Graduation goals, there are different targets for different races of children with white being the highest*
    - *Poverty rate in Washington shows that Native American poverty has the highest rate, Asian Americans has the lowest.*
    - *While unemployment rate has been reducing among all races, we can still see some inequities by race.*

- *Ethnicity in jails and prisons in Washington – Latinx are a much larger proportion of jailed population than they make up in the state as a whole.*
- *Why? To ensure everyone in Washington has full access to the opportunities, power and resources they need to flourish and achieve their potential. Mission is to promote this across the state.*
- *What? Developing a five year equity plan. Currently gathering the baseline and will then establish equity goals.*
- *Office of Equity is facilitating listening sessions with different agencies and communities.*
  - *How will agencies measure the work they are doing?*
  - *Design online performance dashboard next year*
  - *Create language-access requirements*
  - *Identify barriers to accessing services.*
  - *Help agencies develop DEI plans.*
- *How? Build a strong foundation. Build on the work that is already being done.*
  - *Washington needs to have equity laws and policies and make sure there aren't unintended equity consequences.*
  - *Washington needs to address root causes through bold systemic and cultural change; "Why is group A 3 times more likely to meet this measurement instead of group B?"*
- *Timeline*
  - *Develop a baseline*
  - *Work with agencies and communities to develop five year plan*
    - *Assessments will determine who is doing this work in different agencies. How will agencies define equity and institutionalize equity. Agencies will determine how they are structurally including equity in policies, human resources, etc. They will be asking state agencies to have all staff respond to the assessment.*
    - *Will conduct a survey with agencies, and will be asking, "What are you already doing that is working well?" We will be able to share and include that work.*
  - *Measures and dashboard to go live in 2022.*
  - *Work with agencies to put together decision packages.*
- *Questions:*

- *Sen. Gildon - Appreciate that this office will go beyond just the data, to explain the root causes and the why. Will need support, there will be some discomfort around exploring racism, sexism to move forward.*
- *Nam Nguyen – Will there be changes around diversity and the workforce? We need to understand that we are already diverse, because we are all different. We need to learn to respect everyone. For example, introverts vs. extroverts. Inclusion means that every person in the workforce has a voice.*
  - *We'll help agencies build an internal structure around this, it might look different depending on the population around the state so they can deliver superior services.*
- *Daisye Orr- What is the role of your office as a repository, as a central function agency? Being part of this work shows that while there are many who want to help, it can be difficult to do this and know where to plug yourself in. We are looking for lived experience. Is there a role to help people with lived experience plug into different opportunities to be involved?*
  - *Equity Office is a coordinator, collaborator, not quite a repository, but for information all things equity. For example, if someone wants to stop Asian hate, they can connect them to the right people. They want to create space to have conversations around race. They see interactive skill building. It will be a hub for state agencies and the public to follow what they are doing. Haven't thought about plugging in those with lived experience yet.*
- *What is your plan to put more people of color in those positions?*
  - *Talk with enterprise services – contract with racial colleges and institutions to help hire individuals*
  - *Look at the system to make it easy for agencies to find these people*
  - *Set up internships to start doing DJAs – informal informational interviews*
  - *Create environment where marginalized groups are felt welcomed and stay/thrive in the organization and don't leave.*
  - *Dr. J asks we get comfortable with being uncomfortable, with having conversations around the why.*
  - *State workforce is centralized in Olympia and diverse populations live outside of this area how to address this issue*
    - *Will be focusing on building a work culture where everyone is able to thrive and deliver services in a way that makes sense to the people we serve.*
- *Office of Equity will be sending a survey link to this group to give them an opportunity to weigh in. You can reach Dr. Johnson at Karen.Johnson@equity.wa.gov, 360.480.7453 /cell-text*

### III. Task Force Business

- **Confirm prior meeting minutes**
  - Minutes from December 3, 2020 meeting were reviewed, motion to approve minutes by Sen. Dhingra, seconded by Rep. Gregerson, motion carried, minutes approved.

#### Taskforce membership update

Babs Roberts, DSHS/ESA/CSD

- Sen. Gildon has joined us on Senate side, still waiting for another representative. Rep Strong Peterson has been asked to join this group as well. CSD is willing to do an orientation to provide some history.
- Still need a legislative co-chair.
  - David Stillman asked the legislators to convene themselves and determine who would agree to be the legislative co-chair. Sen. Dhingra said she would get her office to coordinate this meeting.
  - Hope there will be a joint process for building agendas.

### IV. TANF/WorkFirst Updates

Babs Roberts, DSHS/ESA/CSD

- **WorkFirst Spending Plan 2021-23** ([see document](#))
- The recently completed legislative session was great for our programs and made some great strides in helping the most vulnerable citizens of our state.
  - Legislature included in the budget bill a 15% TANF grant increase.
  - Starting July 1, 2021 there will be a slower pace for WorkFirst sanctions, this was passed in a previous session and will increase caseload.
  - There was funding to continue broader definition of homelessness for time limit extensions, potentially increasing caseloads.
  - 2SSB 5214 increases the time limit when the state's unemployment rate is 7% or higher, the primary impacts probably won't be seen until FY 2023.
  - WorkFirst services – important to note that this includes services we provide directly or through partner agencies (here today). This also includes local contractors in regional areas to provide WorkFirst services and LEP pathways.
    - These dollars will be distributed very soon.
    - We are shifting \$250,000 as request of SBCTC away from state board and into ORIA line to offer WorkFirst services to LEP pathways.
  - Childcare section has a number of bills, we only show the impact on TANF funds.
- Discussion
  - Sen Darneille– Was there a significant increase for childcare? Why is the caseload increase not showing in the TANF childcare budget?
    - Babs - The line item for childcare is two pots of TANF funding. It's from the TANF block grant, doesn't necessarily translate to the number of TANF households receiving childcare.
  - Sen Darneille –Interested in doing a legislative overview on policies. Were there other bills that passed that weren't in the budget overview?
    - Babs – yes, we were able to approve request legislation SHB 1151 which allowed the Disaster Cash Assistance Program (DCAP) more than 1 time in a year, updating the need standard and a transitional food program for those exiting food for employment or requesting to close

food benefits. ESA is contracting with University of Washington to create a new need standard for use beginning July 2022.

- SB 5241 did not pass. It would have given us the opportunity to do community work and helping families navigate programs. There was unanimous support for that bill, just ran out of time.

## V. Poverty Reduction Work

- **Update on strategic plan activities – Lindsay Morgan Tracy, DSHS/ESA**
  - Reviewed tool for tracking bills that aligned with the poverty reduction plans (attached in [LEWPRO](#) site).
    - Highlighted sections are the ones that were signed by the governor.
    - This was a first attempt, agencies track things differently but we were able to track what passed and what didn't passed.
    - Open to feedback to make changes for the upcoming leg session to track this important work.
      - Sen Darneille- This is impressive, was hoping to be sent the link so they can study it a bit more. Impressed with link between poverty issues and work that needs to be done in criminal justice space. Were we tracking any of that?
        - We will forward this to everyone. Anything that would impact criminal justice system will have a checkmark in strategy 7 Decriminalize Poverty on the document.
      - Gregerson – Would love this to be a live document during leg session. There was such an influx in federal dollars, unsure if this is reflected here, also interested in budget provisos that are not bills?
        - We haven't tracked previously but can add a column to track that work as well.
      - Thanks to Sen, Darneille for an idea of a dashboard, helped develop this idea of where the work is being done and how it is being lifted up among all the strategies to bring more cohesive effort.
      - Diane Klontz – wanted to make sure that we highlight huge infusions with broadband and those in poverty across the state and funding for our steering committee and to support that work. Got \$200 million for diaper bank, food banks, homeless youth etc. Will look forward to this document and the funding to help support Washington families.
    - Shared Program Updates framework on progress to date. There's a Smartsheet showing the recommendation, the progress to date from different agencies, policy or program implementation, and how they intersect with other recommendations within the plan.
    - There've been a lot of non-profits wanting to share the work they are doing that aligns with the poverty reduction strategies and recommendations. This helps to connect this effort going forward, for example, Spokane County asked who else was doing steering committees and they were connected. Hoping that they will have a living document in LEWPRO so you can see updated versions.
    - Great work moving forward and a way to show folks what we are doing to implement the strategies.
- **Poverty Reduction Workgroup (PRWG) Updates – Babs Roberts DSHS/ESA/CSD**
  - PRWG is the advisory committee to this group.

- *There have been a couple meetings since LEWPRO last met. Effort now is to ensure this plan is moving forward. They spent all of the last meeting reviewing presentations from the Human Centered Poverty Reduction Design group (HCPR) whose goal is to implement recommendations in strategy six. This work is made up of a number of agencies and there are committees to take on the recommendations including a common intake so households don't have to retell their story, data sharing options, updating the need standard, building resiliency into our work and making cash not dependent on work.*
- *This is a big piece of work to do across agencies, they have been learning and connecting in a number of areas to make sure the work aligns. They have started on charter development, talking to other groups and will look at three larger deliverables: current state, ideal state and mapping the steps to get to ideal state. The HCPR presented to the PRWG to gather feedback and make sure they were on the right track.*
- *Great conversations on how PRWG could provide information to the LEWPRO and want to continue the momentum of this group.*
- *Lori Pfingst – Wanted to highlight two developments.*
  - *Earlier in the year PRWG presented a technical advisory group to think about, what are we recovering from and what we are recovering towards. 10-year plan should be about recovery and economic well-being. This is a measurement effort for those not represented by the date. This effort aligns with Results Washington. PRWG is now part of this effort and will be reporting out to Governor on June 26<sup>th</sup>. Looking at- “What does success look like?”. The American Public Human Services Association did a [case study](#) on the steering committee work and state poverty reduction effort.*
  - *Some folks from the steering committee will be presenting to the National Academy of Social Services, it will be summarized and sent to the Biden Administration to advance state poverty efforts.*
    - *Steering committee is a group of rock stars, they are now getting national attention.*
- **Agency updates on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – All**
- **ESA/CSD – Babs Roberts**
  - *Updates to the pandemic EBT program implemented since onset of COVID-19, helps us clarify funding sources and Admin costs.*
  - *Line items in bill around SNAP and COVID response and 15% increase and student eligibility during this crisis. The increase was extended through September and appreciate legislature matching the state funding for food programs as well.*
  - *Emergency allotments being issued under SNAP.*
  - *Also provided some TANF funding, pandemic emergency funding. Allows us to provide additional assistance to TANF or TANF-like families. The benefit must be a non-reoccurring short term benefit. It couldn't be used for employment and training or other things that are already being done. Similar to diversion or a one-time program. This could not supplant MOE funds. The Department is determining what this might look like:*
    - *One-time benefit to TANF and TANF-like families (still working on income threshold) to give them a boost. Hoping to time this shortly after other emergency assistance items run out.*
- **DCYF- Nichole Rose**

- In childcare there were a lot of funds, \$600 million through ARPA, much of this went to stabilization for childcare providers for a variety of things and offsetting costs for families and tuition reimbursement. Thought about compensation for the providers.
- There was an ask for \$12 million for provider technical support in different languages as they apply for these grants.
- Increasing the rates paid for childcare, eligibility, and support for training with languages and trauma informed care.
- Looking at engagement strategies and go beyond traditional advisory groups.
- Additional ARPA dollars, less prescriptive and what the plans are related to that. Very thankful about where they placed this funding for childcare providers and making sure they roll this out in an equitable way.
- Question – Rep, Gregerson Was there funding for concrete goods to support families?
  - Nichole - There are discussions around this, will circle back with an email to this group on this.
- Commerce - Diane Klontz
  - Significant amount of rent assistance. Getting a lot of applications and reviewing those applicants. These funds will be paid directly to landlords, hoping to get this out.
  - Significant housing assistance funds with Washington Finance Commission to keep people in their homes once the foreclosure go into effect.
  - They have LIHEAP funds through counties and existing providers. There a large numbers of people behind on utilities, about 150,000 that are low income.
  - Don't have a dollar amount yet, but they are creating a water assistance program.
  - Jim Baumgart – robust money in budget, doesn't cover all the need but does begin to address some of the problems we are looking at. They are confident that Commerce will get this out to address rent and utilities and forbearance for foreclosures.
  - Landlords are also eligible to apply, not just tenants. They already submitted first quarter results to treasury and hoping to get information back on the numbers served.
  - Some of these plans are going out for public comments, Diane can forward this to folks.
- SBCTC - Jennifer Dellinger
  - Just received guidance from Dept. of Education on distribution of funds from ARPA, do not know how much is being distributed to the 34 colleges. There is a requirement that 50% of all funds must go to students receiving Pell grants. ARPA funds do not count as part of attendance so it can be used to meet other basic needs. Agency is working with all CTCs to provide outreach for students that applied for Fin Aid this year. Hoping to get this out to student with minimum barriers. Can get back to the group once they know which colleges are receiving which amounts. Yes, please send.
- DOH - Daisye Orr
  - Looking at COVID response that relate to poverty and equity. Can provide this in written form, they are also doing contract tracing work. Yes, please send this information.
  - Sen. Darneille - Is there a master list of agencies receiving ARPA funds?
    - Not aware of one, can field that question by checking back with Anna Minor (OFM)? Jim said OFM will take that on.

## **VI. Economic Security for All update ([see One Pager](#))**

Tim Probst – Economic Security Department

Tabled until future meeting. Please direct questions to Tim.

## **VII. Public Comment**

- *Drayton Jackson asked- How do we build a more diverse workforce? Want to build state agency relationships with historically black and latinx colleges and universities. Looking at informational interviews and internships.*

## **VIII. Closing**

- *Link to [LEWPRO](#) site with meeting materials*
- *David celebrated 10 years in ESA. When he first started they were coming out of great recession. They balanced the budget by reducing services to those in poverty, with this most recent bout, began the year with focus on balancing the budget, but thankfully now looking at a budget that will increase services to clients.*
- *Upcoming meetings, proposed dates:*
  - *August 26, 2021*
  - *November 18, 2021*