2020 Office of Equity Task Force

Final Proposal

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Statement of Acknowledgement

We are indebted to those who came before us, and we recognize that efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion did not begin with this Task Force nor will they begin with the Office of Equity. We recognize and honor the tremendous efforts our communities, agency staff and leaders, and legislators have contributed to advancing DEI throughout our state and within our government. This includes the work over many years to identify and implement best practices, to demand transparency and accountability, and to establish the Washington State Office of Equity in statute. We urge our state leaders to remain committed to advancing these efforts and ensure this commitment is manifested through meaningful change and tangible benefit for communities across the state.

We are deeply grateful to all those who traveled beside us on this yearlong journey. Your hands and hearts have lifted this work up. Words cannot fully capture nor do justice to your greatest aspirations. At minimum, we hope this proposal accurately captures your demands for an equitable, inclusive, and accountable government.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Equity

Developing, strengthening, and supporting policies and procedures that distribute and prioritize resources to those who have been historically and currently marginalized, including tribes.

Equity requires the elimination of systemic barriers that have been deeply entrenched in systems of inequality and oppression. Equity achieves procedural and outcome fairness, promoting dignity, honor, and respect for all people.

Equity Statement

Equity requires a commitment to bold action. It begins with the acknowledgement of historical systems of institutional racism and oppression that have led to the uneven distribution of benefits and burdens in our communities. Racism is ingrained in our history and deeply embedded in our institutions, affecting all sectors. An equitable decision-making process prioritizes community-led solutions, driven by those most affected. Generational healing takes time and requires us to embrace discomfort and practice humility.

Equity ensures everyone has full access to the opportunities, power, and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential.

Diversity

Describes the presence of differences within a given setting, collective, or group. An individual is not diverse – a person is unique. Diversity is about a collective or a group and exists in relationship to others. A team, an organization, a family, a neighborhood, and a community can be diverse. A person can bring diversity of thought, experience, and trait, (seen and unseen) to a team — and the person is still an individual.[1]

Inclusion

Intentionally designed, active, and ongoing engagement with people that ensures opportunities and pathways for participation in all aspects of group, organization, or community, including decision making processes. Inclusion is not a natural consequence of diversity. There must be intentional and consistent efforts to create and sustain a participative environment. Inclusion refers to how groups show that people are valued as respected members of the group, team, organization, or community. Inclusion is often created through progressive, consistent, actions to expand, include, and share.[1]

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[1] State Human Resources (within the Office of Financial Management) coordinated work around a glossary of equity-related terms, see Appendix F.

Contents

RECOMMENDATIONS

"Not all peoples have the same historic and cultural backgrounds. We honor that there is more than one belief system and accept that the values, knowledge, and behavior of a people must be understood within their own story and cultural context. Acceptance is the opposite of oppression."

— **Vicki Lowe,** Descendant of the Jamestown S'Klallam and Bella Coola First Nations & Executive Director, American Indian Health Commission for Washington State

Foreword

From Jan Ward Olmstead and Benjamin Danielson, Chairs of the Office of Equity Task Force

It has been a remarkable honor to participate in this yearlong effort to create and define the Office of Equity for the state of Washington. Our state will distinguish itself, once again, from all other states in the nation with the inception of this office. Beyond its equity-centering operating principles and pragmatic functions, the office is a manifestation of the raised voices of Washingtonians. The office boldly sculpts the tools to make equity our north star.

"The office boldly sculpts the tools to make equity our north star."

The work to promote equity is timely. As our nation struggles to address longstanding racism with especially ardent purpose in this moment, a state Office of Equity represents a vital component at the right time. This moment in our nation's history reveals that we have not done enough, that the existing efforts have been insufficient to excise racism's deeply rooted cancer from the fabric of our country. As we reach earnestly for substantive change, the transparency and accountability found in an Office of Equity will make this a permanent part of state government.

"As we reach earnestly for substantive change, the transparency and accountability found in an Office of Equity will make this a permanent part of state government."

We all pay for inequity. In terms of diminished dignity, deferred opportunities, and decreased health. Pragmatically, we all also pay for inequity financially. In terms of compromised work productivity, higher public service needs and healthcare costs. An investment in equity is a cost-saving venture, by any measure.

"An investment in equity is a cost-saving venture, by any measure."

As is made clear in this report, the word equity is multidimensional and sometimes unsettling. Defining equity is its own challenging exercise in co-definition. It asks a group of people to struggle together in a way that feels like the healthy discomfort of growing pains. Creating processes based on equity is an exercise in challenging convention. It demands a deep and honest critical assessment of well-entrenched practices and comfort zones. A year of well-planned gatherings have been spent to define and assess equity in ways that assure the office will tangibly benefit Washingtonians.

Washington State has made efforts over the years to promote equity. This history of good work represents a strong intention. The Office of Equity is not a replacement, duplication, or denigration of the state's commitment. The office will conserve effort while amplifying and spreading good work. The office will efficiently bring more innovation and creative energy into equity efforts. The office will enable every corner of state government to realize its equity goals. The office will add increased accountability and transparency. The office is a widening of the door for community voice to influence our equity efforts and pave the way for racial and cultural authenticity in the workplace and in our communities across the state.

"The office will efficiently bring more innovation and creative energy into equity efforts. The office will enable every corner of state government to realize its equity goals."

As co-chairs we are very proud to toil with this remarkable group of task force members and many allies. We have struggled together, respectfully challenged each other, sincerely listened to each other, and kept our efforts oriented toward our north star: equity. We have made that word real and operational. We have done exactly what we know that Washingtonians ask of us: help our government visibly convey its equity commitment to every one of you and for the benefit of our future generations.

Sincerely,

Jan Ward Olmstead   Benjamin Danielson

Chairs of the Office of Equity Task Force

Acronyms

List of Common Terms/Titles and their Acronyms	
Acronym	**Full Term/Title**
CAAA	Commission on African American Affairs
CAPAA	Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CHA	Commission on Hispanic Affairs
DEI	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
DES	Department of Enterprise Services
ESHB 1109	Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1109 (2019-21 State Operating Budget)
E2SHB 1783	Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1783 (creating the WA State Office of Equity) from the 2020 Legislative Session
ESJ	Equity and Social Justice (e.g. King County ESJ Office)
GARE	Government Alliance on Race and Equity
GCDE	Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment
GOIA	Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
HB	House Bill (e.g. HB 1783)
LEP	Limited English proficiency
LGBTQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer
OFM	Office of Financial Management
OFM SHR	Office of Financial Management - State Human Resources
OMWBE	Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises
Results WA	Results Washington (within the Office of the Governor)
SAO	Washington State Auditor's Office
SB	Senate Bill (e.g. SB 5776)
WA	Washington (as in Washington State)
WSHRC	Washington State Human Rights Commission
WSWC	Washington State Women's Commission

For a glossary of equity-related terms, see Appendix F.

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic and the intolerable ongoing legacy of police brutality further expose the devastating state of racism and its many related forms of discrimination that exist in our society. Discrimination due to skin color, culture, immigrant status, language, ability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, beliefs, and where a person lives. Discrimination for being Indigenous. Despite our hope for a different reality, oppression and erasure are embedded in every part of our lives, including our state government.

Today we are facing the incontrovertible and centuries-long truth that the work of promoting equity must be *all our work*. It must include re-envisioning and re-sculpting our infrastructures with an intentional focus on equity. We are in the midst of an uprising—a rejection of racism. The overt forms of racism, like the killing of Black and Brown men and women by police. The eroding kind of racism that makes a virus and its response cause inequitable suffering. And the more generally broad-reaching kinds that subvert futures, constrain opportunity, deny access, undermine dignity, and shorten lives for so many communities of color.

We are in the midst of an uprising for justice. A loud and firm call for substantive change—the kind that was at the heart of the Governor and Legislature's decision to convene the Office of Equity Task Force a year ago. This decision set in motion a conversation about how to lift equity higher in state government. Six months ago, we submitted a report to the Legislature with some tangible steps laying out how to transparently and accountably see equity's powerful lens change the way things are done. This is the very kind of change that today's uprising is resoundingly calling for.

This final proposal marks the end of the Task Force's journey and the beginning to a very important legacy. It contains our collective voice and hope for a better future for all communities. On these pages, we outline the structure for a robust, resilient, and fully effective Office of Equity. Incorporated throughout are individual statements from Task Force members, expressing their greatest hopes for the Office of Equity and its positive impact on the communities we serve.

The Office of Equity's mission and responsibilities are non-duplicative. Rather, they are reinforcing and synergistic and add enhanced accountability when combined with the work of partner agencies, including the racial and ethnic commissions, Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises, WA State DEI Council, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, LGBTQ Commission, Human Rights Commission, and others. By focusing inward on government structures and processes, the Office of Equity will assist state agencies in applying an equity lens to decision making, providing barrier-free access to services and opportunities for participation, and improving outcomes statewide across sectors.

It is important to emphasize that **the Office's scope is internal to state government and focused on breaking down systems of racism and oppression and rebuilding systems of equitable opportunity.** The Office is not meant to provide direct services—that is the work of the agencies. The Office's resources and capacity need to be focused on state government systems, policies, and processes. Policy makers and decision makers must resist the urge to charge the Office with equity-focused programmatic work that should be led by the respective agencies, as it could detract from the Office's core mission and set it up for failure.

As all agencies must do, the Office of Equity will engage with communities in meaningful ways to gather their input and feedback and to ensure priorities and solutions are community-generated. The Office should conduct outreach and engagement in partnership with state entities that serve as focal points in government for their represented communities. These efforts must ensure engagement is barrier-free, fully inclusive of all identities (including yet-to-be named groups that may be excluded or pushed to the margin in the future), and does not replicate systems of oppression.

Our vision for equitable state government places community voice at the center of all decision making. We have embedded recommendations for meaningful community engagement throughout the proposal to demonstrate the indivisible relationship between community and government. Practicing this commitment, the Task Force held public meetings between August 2019 and July 2020 to provide opportunities for generative engagement—to listen, learn, and co-create with those leading equity work in communities, local jurisdictions, and state government. The recommendations in this proposal are informed by their stories and the lessons they imparted upon us.

The message we heard was loud and clear: **Communities demand real change, not incremental steps. They demand meaningful action.** State government must match the solutions to the problem. Now more than ever, we need a Washington State Office of Equity to assist agencies in identifying and implementing effective strategies to eliminate systemic inequities. The passage of E2SHB 1783 (creating the WA State Office of Equity) was a necessary and historic first step, but it is not enough. **The work of creating more equitable, inclusive systems must no longer reside in the margins—the Office of Equity must be adequately funded to fulfill its urgent purpose.**

The pandemic has reinforced a devastating lesson: we can only be as healthy as our most vulnerable and marginalized communities. Our state can no longer afford a system that accomplishes what it was set up to do—to provide opportunity to some at the expense of others. Our state can no longer afford to underinvest in diversity, equity, and inclusion. **Budgets reflect our priorities, and they are the clearest demonstration of who we are, who we are willing to stand up for, and who we are unwilling to leave behind.** When the state says 'no' to funding options that promote transformative change, it is saying 'yes' to maintaining a status

quo built on historical inequities. As leaders consider the cost of an option, they must also consider the cost of *not* choosing that option.

Investment in the Office of Equity will save much more than it costs, and will improve lives in priceless ways. It will reduce the avoidable financial toll that inequity takes on the state; from health-related costs, to lost productivity, to falling short on the future wealth of assets this state could enjoy. Investment in the Office of Equity ensures smart and effective use of limited resources.

The Office of Equity's work will cultivate welcoming and inclusive spaces where public employees, saddened and outraged by recent tragic events, can discuss the role each person plays in upholding systems of privilege and oppression. This acknowledgement is the first step to dismantling systems of oppression and addressing historical injustices. **Together, we can embark on the journey of collective healing.**

This proposal is a blueprint for action. State government must act swiftly to provide equitable relief in a pandemic that has placed disproportionate burden on vulnerable and marginalized communities. Every agency must act deliberately to disrupt inequities and dismantle oppressive systems. Every employee must act boldly to re-envision and rebuild systems that guarantee opportunity, wellbeing, and inclusion.

DISRUPT

ableism

xenophobia

cisgenderism

antisemitism

heterosexism   classism   colorism   genocide   microaggressions   colonialism

sexism   racism   erasure   homophobia   ageism   transphobia

religious imperialism   stigma   ethnocentrism   hate   white supremacy   anti-Black racism

appropriation

assimilation

DISMANTLE

prejudice

patriarchy

discrimination   bias   exclusion   inequity   oppression   persecution

segregation   violence   disparity   dominance   stereotype   exploitation

RE-ENVISION & REBUILD

community   justice   accountability   equity   humanity

dignity   unity   diversity   intersectionality   access

health   opportunity   healing   wellbeing   inclusion

respect   representation   understanding   human rights   safety

pride   reconciliation   security   compassion   support

The Office of Equity Task Force

The Office of Equity Task Force was given the great honor and responsibility of creating a vision for the Washington State Office of Equity. The information below describes the Task Force's authority, membership, core values, engagement with Indian Tribes as sovereign nations, and outreach to communities and public employees.

> "*There's a world to gain.*
>
> **But suppose I don't want it. Why take it?**
>
> *To remake it.*"
>
> — Langston Hughes
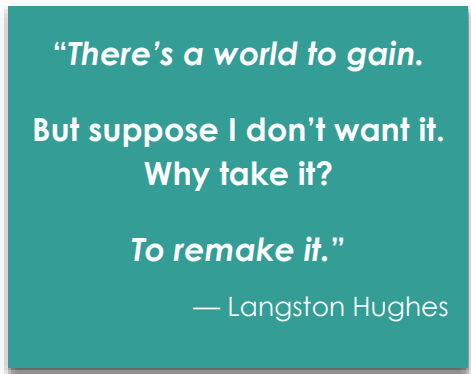
Authorizing Legislation

The Office of Equity Task Force was created through a proviso in the state's 2019-2021 operating budget (Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1109). Section 221, subsection 7 directed the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities to convene and staff the Task Force. The budget proviso outlined membership, purpose, and reporting requirements (see Appendix B).

The Task Force was given the responsibility of developing a proposal for the creation of a WA State Office of Equity. As required by the proviso, this final proposal includes the following recommendations:

- A mission statement and vision statement for the office;

- A definition of 'equity,' which must be used by the office to guide its work;

- The organizational structure of the office, which must include a community liaison for the office;

- A plan to engage executive-level management from all agencies;

- Mechanisms for facilitating state policy and systems change to promote equity, promoting community outreach and engagement, and establishing standards for the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data regarding race and ethnicity;

- Mechanisms for accountability to ensure that performance measures around equity are met across all agencies, including recommendations on audits of agencies and other accountability tools as deemed appropriate; and

- A budget proposal including estimates for costs and staffing.

Membership

The proviso outlined task force membership, and required the Chair of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities (or that person's designee) to chair the Office of

Equity Task Force. The Task Force's bylaws (adopted August 2019) permit the Chair to "designate an individual to serve as Co-chair of the Task Force."[2]

Representation on the Task Force was specified in the budget proviso. There are four seats for state legislators, including two representatives and two senators. Additionally, the Task Force includes one representative each from:

> "Now is the time,
> this is the place,
> we are the ones…"
>
> — Karen A. Johnson,
> Task Force Member,
> DEI Council

- The Commission on African American Affairs (CAAA);
- The Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA);
- The Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA);
- The Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA);
- The Women's Commission (WSWC);
- The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE);
- The Human Rights Commission (WSHRC);
- The Office of the Governor;
- The WA State Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council (DEI Council);
- The disability community;[3] and
- The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community.[4]

A roster of Task Force members and their alternates is included as Appendix A.

Meetings

The Task Force held regular public meetings, beginning with our inaugural meeting on August 19 in Tacoma. We held two community forums: one in Everett on September 5 and one in Yakima on October 20 (see the Community Engagement section on page 19).

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[2] The Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities (2019). Office of Equity Task Force Bylaws [PDF file]. Retrieved from: https://healthequity.wa.gov/Portals/9/Doc/Publications/Office%20of%20Equity%20Task%20Force%20-%20Bylaws%20(adopted%208_19_19).pdf

[3] The individual representing the disability community is the Executive Director of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) – see Appendix A.

[4] The individuals representing the LGBTQ position on the Task Force include representation from the Washington State LGBTQ Commission – see Appendix A.

FIGURE 1. 2019 Public Meeting & Community Forum Dates					
August 19	September 5	September 16	October 20 & 21	November 25	December 16
Tacoma, WA	Everett, WA	Vancouver, WA	Yakima, WA	Tumwater, WA	Olympia, WA

FIGURE 2. 2020 Public Meeting & Community Forum Dates					
January 24	February 21	April 30	May 14	May 27	July 29
Olympia, WA	Lacey, WA	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual

At the February 21 public meeting, Task Force members reflected on the question: **What is the most powerful part of how we have become the Office of Equity Task Force?** Some responses included:

- By committing to take bold action.

- By bringing in the public and making space for conversation.

- By being out in communities and meeting people where they are.

- By being open with each other and listening to others' perspectives.

- By showing up bravely to this space with honesty, respect, and assuming good intent.

- By bringing cohesion to this work even though we come from different backgrounds.

- By creating a story of 'us,' which comes from our history and our elders, and letting this story inform our future.

- By struggling together to think about what the Office of Equity should look like— we have come a long way since August.

Bylaws and Operating Principles

Bylaws describe the operation and management of Task Force business whereas operating principles are the values Task Force members hold closely and apply to our work. The operating principles were adapted from those of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities, and Task Force members thoughtfully engaged with each principle to ensure the final product is reflective of our aspirations and commitment.

FIGURE 3. Task Force Operating Principles

Embrace Equity

We are on a journey toward well-being, where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential, as defined by those impacted by inequity. Embracing equity requires us to identify, name, and dismantle institutional racism and oppression.

Focus on Racism

Racism, a construct of white supremacy, is used to oppress communities as the 'Other.' We are committed to promoting equity for all historically marginalized communities. We recognize that different forms of discrimination and oppression are related to each other, and we will take these relationships into account. We also recognize that racism is ingrained in our history and deeply embedded in our institutions today, leading to the inequities we see across all sectors. We seek to challenge and undo all forms of oppression, and we are committed to centering racism as our primary focus.

Center Community

We recognize that we can only achieve equity if communities impacted by inequities are at the center of our work. We acknowledge that communities know best their assets, needs, and solutions. We recognize and share power and structure our meetings to foster meaningful engagement. Community engagement will be intentional and inclusive. We will create opportunities as a Task Force, individual members, and staff to listen, learn, and seek input to guide our work. We will incorporate stories of lived experience into our reports and recommendations.

Commit to Bold Action

Eliminating racism and oppression requires revolutionary change. We commit to using the authority we have and our collective influence to propose changes that interrupt and dismantle historical systems of institutional racism and oppression. We will use our time in Task Force meetings to engage in discussions that lead to actionable recommendations. We will commit as individual Task Force members to be bold and serve as leaders for equity in our respective roles. We share a commitment to being comfortable with discomfort as a bold action.

Be Vigilant for Adverse Consequences and Impacts

We commit to using an equity lens in the development of recommendations as a Task Force and in our decisions as individual members. Policy, program, and budget decisions can have adverse consequences and impacts if equity is not intentionally and systematically considered. We honor the Seven Generation Principle as standing in the present, while looking back three generations to the wisdom and experience of our ancestors, thinking about issues in the current context, and planning forward for three generations for the protection of our children and the generations to come.*

* The Task Force acknowledges the Tribal and Urban Indian Pulling Together for Wellness Leadership Advisory Council, American Indian Health Commission for Washington State for sharing this articulation of the Seven Generation Principle.

> *"I want us to be a little afraid by what we're asking of our state. I want us to be afraid of the change that we are expecting in the world around us, because it's so audacious and so bold as to almost seem impossible. But because we think of it and we dream it up, and we share ideas about it and we're bold enough to say it, that it becomes possible. And then we work hard on it, it becomes probable. Then we continue to see it through because we're accountable, and it becomes a reality. I think we have to dedicate ourselves to that."*
>
> — Benjamin Danielson, Co-Chair, to Task Force members (August 19, 2019)

Government-to-Government Relations

The Task Force acknowledges the historical exclusions and attempted erasures of many Indigenous peoples. We support tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, and self-determination, and reaffirm the responsibilities included in government-to-government relations.[5]

FIGURE 4. Recognition of Tribal Political Status

The Task Force honors the sovereignty and treaty rights of tribes. There are 573 sovereign tribal nations that have a formal nation-to-nation relationship with the United States federal government.[6] As sovereign nations, tribes have the right to self-determination and the authority to self-govern.

The Centennial Accord provides a framework for the government-to-government relationship between 29 federally recognized tribes and the state of Washington. The Accord recognizes that "[e]ach sovereign tribe has an independent relationship with each other and the state."[7] Furthermore, the Accord outlines implementation procedures to ensure all elements of state and tribal governments work together to execute the relationship.

The requirement for Washington state agencies to establish a government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes is outlined in Chapter 43.376 RCW (Government-to-Government Relationship with Indian Tribes).

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[5] Washington State Legislature. Chapter 43.376 RCW: Government-to-Government relationship with Indian Tribes. Retrieved from: https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=43.376.

[6] National Congress of American Indians. Tribal Governance. Retrieved from: http://www.ncai.org/policy-issues/tribal-governance.

[7] Governor's Office of Indian Affairs. Centennial Accord between the Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Washington State and the State of Washington. Retrieved from: https://goia.wa.gov/relations/centennial-accord.

FIGURE 4. Recognition of Tribal Political Status

Agencies must:[8]

(1) Make reasonable efforts to collaborate with Indian tribes in the development of policies, agreements, and program implementation that directly affect Indian tribes and develop a consultation process that is used by the agency for issues involving specific Indian tribes;

(2) Designate a tribal liaison who reports directly to the head of the state agency;

(3) Ensure that tribal liaisons who interact with Indian tribes and the executive directors of state agencies receive training as described in RCW 43.376.040; and

(4) Submit an annual report to the governor on activities of the state agency involving Indian tribes and on implementation of this chapter.

The Task Force engaged tribes to spread awareness of this project and seek input. Tanna Engdahl, Spiritual Leader with the Cowlitz Tribe, gave a welcome address at our September 16 public meeting in Vancouver, WA (see Figure 5 below on page 18). At the same meeting, Task Force member Craig Bill (Governor's Office of Indian Affairs) spoke about WA State's government-to-government relationship with Indian Tribes.

Leading up to the Task Force's meeting in Yakima, staff visited with Yakama Nation leaders on tribal land to hear their concerns and speak about the Task Force's work. Task Force members attended the 30th Annual Centennial Accord Meeting on November 6-7 to understand tribes' priorities and speak with tribal leaders about the Task Force's work. Many tribal leaders reminded conference attendees that the work we are doing today, government-to-government, is meant to better the lives of future generations.

Through these experiences, the Task Force makes the following observations:

◈ **The Task Force recognizes and prioritizes two unique types of engagement**: (1) government-to-government relations with tribes based on their political status as sovereign nations; and (2) community engagement with American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations.

◈ **Institutional change requires connecting work across state agencies and governments.** At the Centennial Accord Meeting, tribal leaders expressed the need for more coordination across WA State government, so state government can better work with tribes to address complex issues upstream (i.e. focusing on root causes).

◈ **Formal requirements support enduring cultural and systems change.** Codification of the unique government-to-government relationship, including responsibilities for state agencies, was instrumental in advancing channels for state-tribal engagement. The current

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[8] Washington State Legislature. Chapter 43.376 RCW: Government-to-Government relationship with Indian Tribes. Retrieved from: https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=43.376.

infrastructure that facilitates government-to-government relations formed over 30 years and includes the Centennial Accord, the Millennium Agreement, and RCW 43.376 (Government-to-Government Relationship with Indian Tribes).

FIGURE 5. Cowlitz Tribe Welcome Address

Tanna Engdahl, Spiritual Leader with the Cowlitz Tribe, gave a welcome address at the Task Force's September 16 public meeting in Vancouver, WA.

Ms. Engdahl shared that the Tribe has experienced racism and inequity at the level of attempted erasure. The Tribe was decimated by illness—reduced from 55,000 individuals to only 500—after the coming of white settlers. She said the Tribe has experienced first-hand the manipulation of systems and policies based on inequity, such as through the offer of treaties. The Tribe declined to move from their land, refusing to leave the place where their ancestors lay, even as the Tribe faced devastation.

Ms. Engdahl said that 'equity' is the most difficult word we will ever try to define, live up to, and make happen. She said Task Force members have been pulled together from many places and backgrounds to do amazingly complex and extremely important work. She expressed understanding and appreciation for this effort.

Ms. Engdahl said she and the Tribe will look for the Task Force's product, and she gave encouragements and reminders. She asked Task Force members to remember who they are as they complete this work, since this is the first component of cultural humility and the most important way to keep on track. Ms. Engdahl added that cultural humility means recognizing others in the way they see themselves. For the Cowlitz Tribe, she said: "One desire we have is for others to know us as we know ourselves." She said this practice is important if we want to see equity become reality.

Community Engagement

We recognize that we can only achieve equity if communities impacted by inequities are at the center of our work. We acknowledge that communities know best their assets, needs, and solutions. We recognize and share power and structure our meetings to foster meaningful engagement. Community engagement will be intentional and inclusive. We will create opportunities as a Task Force, individual members, and staff to listen, learn, and seek input to guide our work. We will incorporate stories of lived experience into our reports and recommendations.

The Task Force was intentional in creating opportunities to listen, learn, and seek input from communities to guide our work. This section highlights some of our community engagement efforts. **This project reaffirmed the need for dedicated resources and staffing to do meaningful community engagement.** The Task Force was also intentional to learn from internal state partners—these internal-facing outreach and engagement efforts are detailed in the next section on Learning from Others' Journeys.

We heard community perspectives through the following mechanisms:

- **Representation** – Task Force membership includes representatives from Washington's Commission on African American Affairs (CAAA), Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA), Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA), the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA), the Women's Commission, the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE), the LGBTQ Commission, and the Human Rights Commission.

- **Public Meetings and Public Comment** – The Task Force heard 56 individual statements during the dedicated Public Comment periods at our meetings, while many more participants engaged in conversations with members throughout the meetings.

- **Community Engagement Updates** – The Task Force received updates at our public meetings on the Community Engagement Coordinator's work, and members provided direction to guide subsequent outreach efforts.

- **Online Survey** – The Task Force released an online survey in September 2019 to gather community members' thoughts on a definition of 'equity' and opportunities for state government to promote equity. There were 214 responses to the survey from community members across Washington.

- **Community Forums** – The Task Force hosted community forums in Everett (September) and Yakima (October). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to hold additional community forums in person during the second half of this project.

Engagement Model & Guiding Ethics

Meaningful engagement required a continuous feedback loop linking the Task Force to communities, so information could be shared both ways. This type of loop promotes timely communication, community-driven solutions, and accountability toward communities most affected by government decisions. Furthermore, the ethics below guided the Task Force's work with communities.

FIGURE 7. Community Engagement Feedback Loop

Share power and structure meetings to foster meaningful engagement

Share information with communities

Gather input and feedback to inform work

Ensure meaningful and accessible opportunities for engagement
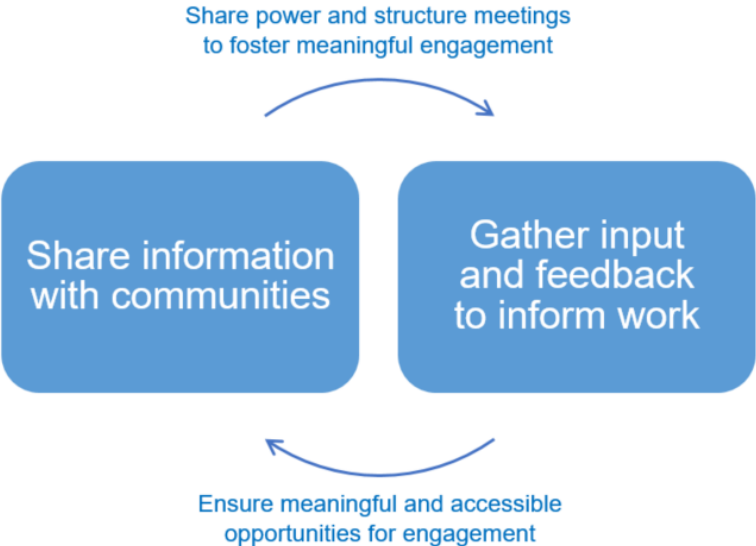
FIGURE 6. Guiding Ethics for Community Engagement

Be Humble and Responsive
- Listen to understand before trying to be understood
- Engage respectfully, even when priorities *seem* to be outside of our scope
- Understand we cannot control conversations and outcomes

Be Nimble
- Be flexible and adapt messages and methods to the context and individual
- Learn as we go—practice an open mindset and incorporate best practices along the way

Do No Harm
- Be conscious of adverse consequences and impacts
- Be mindful of historical trauma
- Be conscious not to replicate colonial models of extraction
- Seek opportunities to leave something positive behind

Community Engagement Coordinator

The Community Engagement Coordinator served as a bridge between communities and the Task Force, placing community perspectives front and center in the Task Force's policy deliberation. The Coordinator conducted statewide outreach to raise awareness along with targeted outreach in local communities prior to a Task Force meeting. When possible, the Coordinator worked with established local networks and community leaders using the 'trusted messenger' model to raise awareness of the Task Force's work and encourage communities to participate (see Figure 8 on page 22).

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, the Community Engagement Coordinator connected the Task Force with community partners to learn about their efforts and support their work. Our partners emphasized the importance of ensuring all parts of Washington—especially those that are most isolated in terms of geography, language access, and technology access—are connected and united in efforts during difficult times since communities often serve as the main channel for critical information and resources. The Task Force's online survey (discussed in more detail on page 24) reflected the isolation many communities face. There were fewer responses from Eastern and Central Washington, demonstrating that even prior to the pandemic, geography, language, and lack of access to technology can serve as barriers to meaningful engagement with state government efforts.

Community discussion, Community Forum in Everett (9/5/19).

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FIGURE 8. The Trusted Messenger Model

Institutional racism is embedded in all of our social, political, and economic systems. Communities of color, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, and other historically marginalized communities have been excluded and ignored in many decision-making processes.

The historical and intentional exclusion of communities of color has led to greater skepticism and distrust when government actors:

- engage communities only after decisions have been made;
- define agendas, priorities, and processes without prior community consultation; and
- extract data and knowledge without reporting back or demonstrating the direct benefits of their work.

The Task Force used the 'trusted messenger' model to engage communities, which relies on trusted, credible leaders serving as bridges into a community. These trusted messengers are members of that community, sharing the same background and speaking the same language. They are invested in the community's wellbeing and have nurtured relationships of trust in the community over many years. They are able to communicate messages in relatable ways and motivate action.

Trusted messengers were instrumental in the Task Force's community engagement efforts. Commissioners (from the racial and ethnic commissions, Women's Commission, Human Rights Commission, LGBTQ Commission) and community leaders spread awareness of the Task Force's work through distribution lists and word-of-mouth. They sent personal texts, made phone calls, and met in community spaces to motivate community members to attend events and voice their thoughts. Leading up to the Task Force's community forum and public meeting in Yakima, staff worked with local grassroots organizations in the Central Valley to access diverse neighborhoods and listen to community members' concerns and aspirations.

FIGURE 9. Statement from the Community Engagement Coordinator

Members of the Office of Equity Task Force have entrusted me to connect with people around the state to build relationships and work towards amplifying the voice of the people. This statement is not intended to duplicate information in this report, but rather, to add context to some of the outcomes and conversations that have taken place over this last year of work.

Since the beginning of this project, Task Force members agreed that the most marginalized communities hold the key to understanding strategies for meaningful and authentic community engagement. We must recognize that we still have barriers to knock down in order to do this work in an equitable way. One of these barriers is how we engage with tribes in this state. We must find a way to work side by side to solve problems across the state. I also recognize that we were unable to provide food for community participants, childcare for families and were unable to reimburse community members for expenses incurred through their participation in these forums. Acknowledging these limitations, we did our best to make these meetings accessible and welcoming for the community. Taking into account the historical trauma that communities of color carry, we were determined to encourage marginalized communities to participate and share their knowledge and experiences with us. Another lesson learned was that we must be intentional, creative, accommodating and understanding that this work happens collaboratively not on our terms.

I was posting flyers at the Blue Lagoon Laundromat on Casino Road in Everett when I struck up a conversation with a single mother with three children. I was trying to explain what the Office of Equity Task Force was and what we were hoping to accomplish. She was struggling to understand why I cared about her problems. More specifically, why ask about her barriers if I could not help her overcome them. She told me about being approached by "someone from the government" and that promises were made, but none were kept. This trail of broken treaties resides embedded in transgenerational trauma that demands us to make deeper connections with the community in order to heal. The lesson learned is that we must honor our commitments, stay connected and be flexible in order to cultivate community relationships.

I shared with her my struggles growing up, and said "I know it is difficult to care about the long term when we face immediate crisis, but that this work is not just for us—it is also for the future of our children." After a long conversation, I asked her if she would attend a meeting. She responded, "I will come, if there is a place for my children because I don't want them making a bunch of noise and they won't let anyone hear." There are many obstacles to participation, but the main obstacle is trust. Once I was able to establish trust, I was able to get to the other barriers.

She told me that almost all of her money goes to rent and child care. She had been trying to take English as a Second Language classes at a nearby college, but they did not provide childcare and she could not afford it. These are the types of conversations that can only be had once trust is established. According to the WA State Office of Financial Management, there is a large

population of single-parent households (ranging from 21% to 40% by county)[9] with very specific needs. I learned that more coordinated work can be done at the local and state level to provide adequate resources and opportunities for families. When we say community, it is not a monolithic group nor are their needs static; this is why we must remain engaged to flow together.

In October, the Office of Equity Task Force held a public meeting and community forum in Yakima. During our outreach efforts, I met a woman who teaches people to open small businesses in the Latinx community. She told me that she helps people access opportunities and reach their goals, despite language barriers. She said there are so many talented bakers, cooks, builders, and artists, but there are limited opportunities for the Spanish (Non-English) speaking communities to learn about business. She told me, "Many kids come from other countries and struggle in high school, but most of them also know how to survive. They have an entrepreneurial spirit." What types of opportunities can we create for youth to flourish in a non-traditional educational setting?

I spoke with a group of people working in the fields of Sunnyside. They informed me that aside from the substandard wages that they were concerned that many workers are not getting proper education and are being exposed to harmful chemicals. According to these workers, there are no training videos or written materials available to them in a language other than English. Many of these same workers went out on strike during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis due to dangerous working conditions. Sadly, one of the striking workers lost his life to COVID-19 and many others fell ill. Additionally, many farm workers have difficulty finding affordable housing since many are ineligible for assistance programs due to their immigration status. I received the news and watched the sunset thinking about the importance of our work to create a more just and equitable Washington. When the world was on lockdown these essential workers kept food on our tables and literally put their lives on the line for us.

I met a man who decided he wanted to buy a closed bar and turn the space into a laundromat. He said it was very difficult for him to get approval from the city to change the business license from a bar to a laundromat. He went around the neighborhood and knocked on everyone's door, asking people if they would use his services if he opened a neighborhood laundromat. The overwhelming majority said yes. Being from this community, he knew that they would. Despite the challenges, he was able to establish this laundromat and an unforeseen benefit was that school attendance for youth in this neighborhood went up These are the gems that only come out when we listen to the most affected.

My experience listening and learning from individuals throughout the state, tells me that communities hold the answers and they are the key to solutions. As one community member said at the Yakima community forum, "We're learning that equity takes practice. People in the

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[9] Office of Financial Management (2017). Single-parent families as a percent of all families with children (mapped by county). Retrieved from: https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/statewide-data/washington-trends/social-economic-conditions/one-parent-and-two-parent-families/single-parent-families-percent-all-families-children-mapped-county.

Valley have tremendous potential and we hold the solutions to address our needs—we just need a redistribution of resources to make this happen." When we connect with disenfranchised communities and dare to dream together, when we have the courage to challenge the system, when we commit to building relationships based on trust, we have the power to transform. As the Office of Equity forms and takes root, communities must have a leading voice in defining priorities and objectives. For the future of our children and generations yet born, this is a promise we cannot break.

Esmael López, Community Engagement Coordinator

Online Survey

To complement other outreach efforts, the Task Force conducted an online survey in September to gather community input on what actions government should take. The Task Force reviewed the concerns expressed in some of the responses, which included:

- ◈ Government should not be involved in issues of equity
- ◈ There are enough existing rules and regulations in state government
- ◈ Government should focus on existing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts without a new office
- ◈ Labeling groups is divisive and leads to preferential treatment

Yet, overwhelmingly, most respondents stated the urgent need for more equitable policies and practices in government. The Task Force embraces the following community priorities, which were expressed in survey responses:

- ◈ Equity is not the same as equality
- ◈ Recognize and address systems of privilege and oppression
- ◈ Center the most marginalized communities
- ◈ Share power in decision-making with communities and tribes
- ◈ Promote communities' access to opportunities, power, and resources
- ◈ Remove barriers to systems access and participation
- ◈ Take intersectionality into account

FIGURE 10. Online Survey Responses

What's your greatest hope or dream for your community?

"That every parent's dreams for their children will have a fair opportunity to be fulfilled."

"I dream of a place with sincere, compassionate, and sensitive conversation between decision-makers and community members and laws that reflect this."

"That each individual can aspire to be what they want to be and will see themselves represented in Government, leadership and in all types of careers."

"That Latinx immigrant, Yakama indigenous, and AAPI voices would be centered in decision-making."

"That black and brown persons are no longer systematically disenfranchised."

"My greatest hope is to be a part of a truly inclusive community."

"Hope will never

be silent."

— Harvey Milk

Community Forums

The Task Force held two community forums: one in Everett on September 5 and one in Yakima on October 20. We gathered community input on the definition of 'equity.' Community members shared aspirations for their families, their communities, and the state of Washington. They also gave input on effective ways to engage communities (see Appendix H). This input informed the Task Force's community engagement efforts and our work on creating a definition of 'equity' that relates both inward to state government and outward to communities.

Closing circle, Community Forum in Everett (Sept 5, 2019).

Learning from Others' Journeys

This section outlines the Task Force's efforts in seeking expertise to inform our recommendations. We sought community input on what government should do to support communities and promote equity across state government. We explored WA State's existing efforts and infrastructure around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and staff conducted focus group sessions with agency employees who have been leading DEI-related efforts in their respective agencies. Finally, we looked at model equity initiatives to understand what has worked well for government jurisdictions undertaking systems change.

Community Input

The Task Force asked communities for their input on what government could do to support communities and promote equity across state government. The Task Force received input through public meetings, community forums, and an online survey (see the Community Engagement section above).
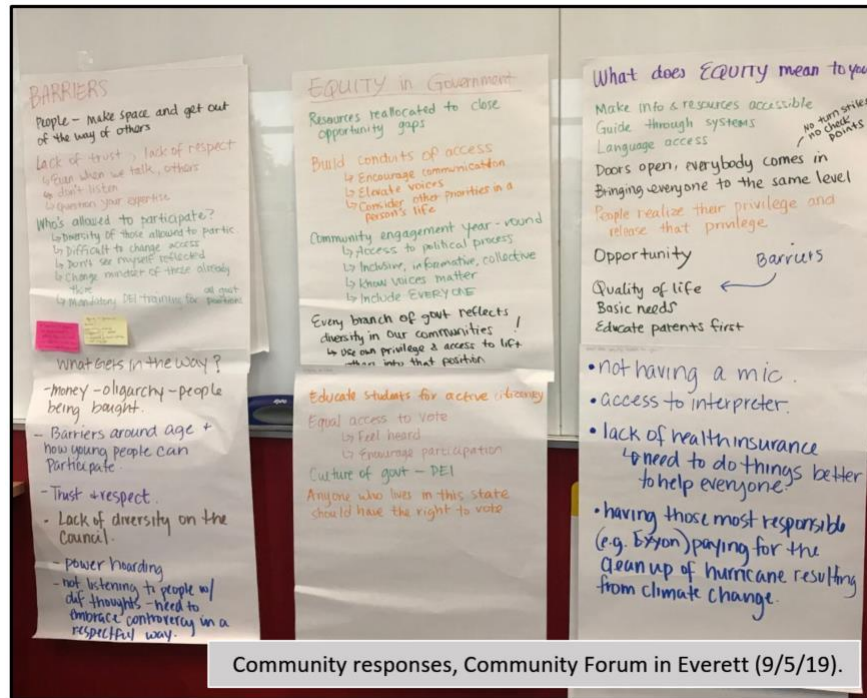
Community responses, Community Forum in Everett (9/5/19).

Community members identified meaningful action as:

◈ Leading by example

◈ Engaging communities and sharing power in decision-making

◈ Working to remove barriers (e.g. promote language access; address transportation barriers, remove financial barriers to civic engagement)Prioritizing funding for groups that work with communities

◈ Using an equity lens in decision-making

◈ Involving tribes in planning and decision-making

◈ Promoting culture and systems change

◈ Supporting DEI efforts within state agencies

◈ Ensuring government leadership is diverse and representative of communities

◈ Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce

◈ Implementing equitable and transparent hiring practices

◈ Supporting DEI training for the workforce and agency leadership

◈ Setting expectations and standards for all agencies

Existing Statewide Responsibilities Related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

This section outlines efforts to listen, learn, and seek input from external and internal partners to inform the Task Force. Due to capacity and time limitations, we were unable to engage all partners we would have liked to during this work. For example, we had hoped to conduct key informant interviews with a sample of senior leaders within state agencies. And while we did have some participation from the Business Resource Groups (BRGs) in our focus groups (see pages 34 and 94), we did not get the opportunity to fully engage the BRGs to learn from state employees with shared experiences (e.g., employees with disabilities).

The Task Force mapped existing DEI efforts and responsibilities to understand what government entities (agencies, commissions, etc.) are doing across the state and across the enterprise (see Appendix J). We organized these efforts into the ten responsibility areas defined by the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities (see Figure 11 below on page 31). The map is not exhaustive of all DEI-related efforts and does not include agencies' efforts to promote DEI internally within their organization.

We recognize agencies' efforts around DEI and honor their accomplishments. The mapping exercise demonstrates that WA State has made great strides in incorporating an equity lens in many areas of work. In response to Governor Inslee's 2018 memo on inclusive and respectful work environments, State Human Resources (within the Office of Financial Management) coordinated work around a glossary of equity-related terms and employee competencies. In 2020, OFM SHR released:

- Directive 20-02, requiring all state agencies to develop or update their workforce diversity plans; and

- Directive 20-03 with model policies in: diversity, equity, and inclusion; respectful work environments; anti-discrimination and prevention of harassment and sexual harassment; and reasonable accommodation.

Additionally, the WA State DEI Council created the DEI Summit to provide a sustainable annual event for employee development. These are just a few examples among a variety of efforts.

The mapping exercise also reveals a general lack of coordination across sectors and entities. There are concentrated efforts around workforce diversity, cultural humility, and the exchange of information and best practices. Within these areas, there is an opportunity to coordinate strategies, messaging, and delivery. For example, almost every entity on the map shares information and best practices within an area of expertise and using its own platform (e.g. websites, workshops), but there is no central space for these resources and no unifying standard.

There are major gaps in enterprise-wide resources for areas such as language assistance services, equity impact assessments, and standards for disaggregated data. These areas are instrumental in ensuring transparency and accountability, yet they are most lacking in enterprise-wide responsibility and resources. If implemented, the Task Force's recommendations in this proposal would help address these gaps.

Furthermore, we appreciate the work the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities has done to define distinct responsibility areas related to DEI, and offer the following suggestions for the list:

- The responsibility of providing ADA-compliant technology and materials should be incorporated as a distinct area in all future mapping efforts.

- Regarding Area 10 (Performance Metrics & Progress), the Task Force recognizes there is a need to revolutionize the state's approach to information collection, analysis, and representation.

Performance metrics and progress should: (1) include enterprise-wide standards for disaggregated data; and (2) transcend the use of disaggregated data to include other sources of information such as lived experience and community voice. Government must work with communities to re-examine these questions: Who decides what information is collected? Who owns that information and who determines how it is interpreted and applied? [See Recommendation 5 (Set Expectations, Measure Progress, and Ensure Accountability) in the recommendations for a fully effective Office of Equity on page 95].

FIGURE 11. Ten Responsibility Areas for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)*	
Responsibility	**Description**
1. **Community Voice**	Ensure that diverse racial/ethnic communities, Tribes, low-income communities, the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, and others are included and have a voice in state government decisions.
2. **Access to Information (Language)**	Improve access to information and services for people who speak languages other than English.
3. **Diversity of Workforce**	Increase the diversity of the state workforce to reflect the growing diversity of Washington State, including racial/ethnic, language, and disability diversity.
4. **Cultural Humility**	Improve the cultural humility of the state workforce to better serve all people in Washington State.
5. **Equity Impact Assessments**	Assess potential impacts of policy, program, and budget decisions on equity and make necessary changes to maximize benefits and limit harms.
6. **Equity in Grant and Contracting**	Improve equity in grant and contracting practices, including increasing the percent of grants and contracts awarded to organizations serving diverse communities.
7. **Accountability for State Support**	Ensure that organizations that receive state support are also accountable for promoting equity.
8. **Exchange of Info & Best Practices**	Promote the exchange of information and best practices to promote equity across state government.
9. **Disaggregated Data**	Collect, analyze, and distribute disaggregated data to uncover and raise awareness of inequities that exist within our state's diverse communities.
10. **Performance Metrics & Progress**	Create performance metrics and track progress in making state government more equitable.
* These areas of responsibility were developed by the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities.	

Model Equity Initiatives

The Task Force finds that although some jurisdictions across the nation are implementing equity and social justice frameworks, we are unaware of existing state-level efforts operating at the scope proposed in this report. The WA State Office of Equity would be the first of its kind and a leader in the nation.

The Task Force looked to local jurisdictions to identify guiding principles and draw parallels to this project. Members heard presentations from the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice (ESJ), the City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR), and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). Below are descriptions of each organization's scope of work.

In the future, it would benefit the state and the Office of Equity to learn from the work of additional jurisdictions. The Task Force reached out to the following offices, but was unable to hold conversations due to urgent commitments at the local level to serve communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- City of Tacoma Office of Equity and Human Rights
- City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) within the Office for Civil Rights

Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)

GARE is a national network comprised of government jurisdictions working to achieve racial equity. Member services include: a 'pathway for entry' into racial equity work; support through the sharing of best practices, tools, resources, and platforms for discussion; and more targeted technical assistance through contracts.

GARE leads with a racial equity lens, because "[f]ocusing on race provides an opportunity to also address other ways in which groups of people are marginalized, providing the opportunity to introduce a framework, tools, and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization."[10] Its Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action includes lessons from jurisdictions across the country and outlines six strategies for enduring systems change:

1. Use a Shared Racial Equity Framework
2. Build Organizational Capacity for Racial Equity
3. Implement Racial Equity Tools
4. Use Data and Metrics
5. Partner with Others
6. Communicate and Act with Urgency

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[10] Government Alliance on Race and Equity (2015). Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action [PDF file]. Retrieved from: https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf.

King County Office of Equity and Social Justice

The King County Office of Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) was created in 2015 as a result of multiple phases of work (see Figure 12). The Office sits in the Executive branch and is responsible for coordinating the county's efforts to advance equity in government and in its service to communities.[11] The King County ESJ Office's strategies include:[12]

> *"Although there is now an ESJ Office, every County agency and employee is still ultimately responsible for advancing and being accountable for ESJ activities and deliverables."*
>
> — King Co. ESJ Office, Strategic Plan (2016 - 2022)

- Investing upstream and where needs are greatest;

- Smartly allocating public resources by addressing root causes;

- Investing in community partnerships to better understand and address equity impacts;

- Investing in public employees to create a racially diverse workforce and workplace at all levels; and

- Tying all efforts to visible, accountable leadership in King County government.

FIGURE 12. King County's Journey Toward an Office of Equity and Social Justice

Before 2008
Many departments and agencies focused on disparities and disproportionality in areas like health and criminal justice, but equity work was not coordinated county-wide.

2008 - 2014
2008 - King Co. executive Rom Sims launched the ESJ Initiative.

2010 - Executive Dow Constantine showed strong commitment, and the County Council helped integrate equity in county work.

2015 - Present
The **Office of Equity and Social Justice** was created.

The ESJ Office is implementing a strategic plan for 2016 - 2022.

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[11] King County Office of Equity and Social Justice (2016). Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan [PDF file]. Retrieved from: https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/dnrp-directors-office/equity-social-justice/201609-ESJ-SP-FULL.pdf.

[12] King County Office of Equity and Social Justice (2016). Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan [PDF file]. Retrieved from: https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/dnrp-directors-office/equity-social-justice/201609-ESJ-SP-FULL.pdf.

City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR)

In 2011, the City of Portland OEHR was created by city ordinance and passed by the City Council. This action also created the Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Disability, both housed in the OEHR. The Office's work is a balance between compliance and equity promotion—it develops strategies to infuse equity across the city through a shared understanding of equity and through policy, practice, and procedure.

FIGURE 13. The City of Portland's Racial Equity Toolkit

RACIAL EQUITY TOOLKIT

SEE IT
1. Set Racial Equity Goals
2. Collect and Analyze Data
3. Understand Historical Context
4. Engage Those Impacted

GET READY

DO IT
5. Refine Outcomes & Develop Equitable Strategies
6. Implement Changes
7. Evaluate and Report Back

City of Portland Racial Equity Toolkit, accessed at:
https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/592526

OFFICE of EQUITY and HUMAN RIGHTS
CITY OF PORTLAND

The OEHR's Racial Equity Goals and Strategies provide a roadmap for city bureaus as they establish their respective five-year racial equity plans in which they tailor objectives and outcomes to their unique work. Bureaus also have access to a Racial Equity Tool and a Budget Equity Assessment Tool, which they can use to make budget decisions, assess how they are prioritizing resources, and evaluate how they are resourcing equity work within their institutions.

Focus Groups

To complement other research and outreach efforts, Task Force staff conducted two focus group sessions. They gathered input from state employees who are considered DEI practitioners—those leading efforts to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their respective agencies. Focus group input is incorporated throughout this proposal, and the full focus group report is included as Appendix K. Clear themes emerged from the discussion— some key findings are included below.

> *"My big dream is to see efforts aligned across all agencies. My agency wants to build a more diverse workforce, and we can't do it by ourselves. I see partner agencies at this table who need to be in the same conversation. How do we identify what we need and each agency's part in the project?"*
>
> — Focus Group Participant

Systems Change: Participants hoped the Office of Equity can be a catalyst for change at the policy and systems level. The Office would promote the recognition that systems work as intended, and we need to dismantle and rebuild the current one. Many participants said that mentorship and training for agency leaders would be critical in this work, especially around recognizing white privilege and white culture, since leaders cannot dismantle structures they cannot see.

Inclusion and Belonging: Participants expressed the need for safe and inclusive environments, which ensures all employees can go to work and know it is a safe space. Participants shared their hope that the Office of Equity can create systems centered on belonging, interconnectedness, and abundance. One participant said they hoped the Office could demonstrate to agencies what it looks like to embody and practice healing-centered approaches that recognize and address racialized trauma.

> *"The Office can provide technical assistance on how to wrestle with doing the business we have to do today and also completely transform a system that has inequities baked into it, instead of putting Band-Aids on it."*
>
> — Focus Group Participant

Systems Alignment: Participants expressed the need for alignment in definitions, policies, and practices to facilitate interagency collaboration and systemic change. The Office of Equity could lead efforts in: standardizing the definition of 'equity' to help guide enterprise work; creating standards for data collection and sharing; and harmonizing requirements across DEI-related executive orders, laws, policies, and goals.

Support for Agencies: Participants emphasized the importance of lifting up agencies and providing the support they need. The Office of Equity must recognize that each agency has a different starting point and must be willing to meet agencies where they are. Participants envisioned the Office of Equity as a place where staff can access and share resources. Agency staff want to be able to find tools and best practices in a centralized place that is updated frequently as research and practices evolve. These cannot be 'cut and paste' tools—the Office of Equity should provide support to agencies as they learn to apply tools to their own contexts.

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Benefit to Communities: Participants expressed hope that the Office of Equity's and agencies' work around DEI will be sustainable and lead to direct benefits for communities. This would lead to "healthy, thriving, and self-sufficient communities." Ideally, the Office of Equity would inform conversations at the highest levels of government and take part in decisions that affect communities across the state.

> *"Turn systems that have been used against marginalized communities to protect those communities. Repurpose the system."*
>
> — Focus Group Participant

Bring Everyone Along: Participants anticipated that public employees might not understand the need for DEI efforts, and they will not get behind something they do not understand. Therefore, participants recommended the following actions for the Office of Equity:

- Build norms within agencies to ensure consistent and adequate staffing and resources for DEI work;

- Make DEI less abstract, and help agency staff apply strategies to their own work; and

- Bring allies along on the journey—it is especially important for white men to be part of the process, so the Office must help them understand where they can start.

Legislation to Create the Office of Equity

House Bill 1783 and companion Senate Bill 5776 were introduced in the 2019 Legislative Session to create a WA State Office of Equity. In writing our preliminary report, the Task Force used this bill language as a starting point, affirming and building upon it to produce our recommendations.

The Task Force continues to acknowledge that: [13]

- A more inclusive Washington is only possible if agencies identify and implement effective strategies to eliminate systemic inequities;

- Over the years, significant strides have been made within agencies to address the disparate outcomes faced by communities of color…[yet] the work happening in agencies is fragmented across state government; and

- Smaller agencies may not have the resources necessary to identify and implement policies to address inequities based on race and ethnicity.

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[13] Washington State Legislature. Second Substitute House Bill 1783 (2019 Regular Session) [PDF file]. Retrieved from: http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/1783-S2.pdf.

During the 2020 Legislative Session, legislation was revised to include many of the Task Force's recommendations. In an historic moment for the state, Governor Inslee signed E2SHB 1783 to establish the Washington State Office of Equity on July 1, 2020. However, this was done with a partial veto, removing Section 6 (related to the creation of a Community Advisory Board) and Section 7 (related to responsibilities for state agencies). This legislation was incorporated as Chapter 332, Laws of 2020.

FIGURE 14. Responding to Legislative Outcomes
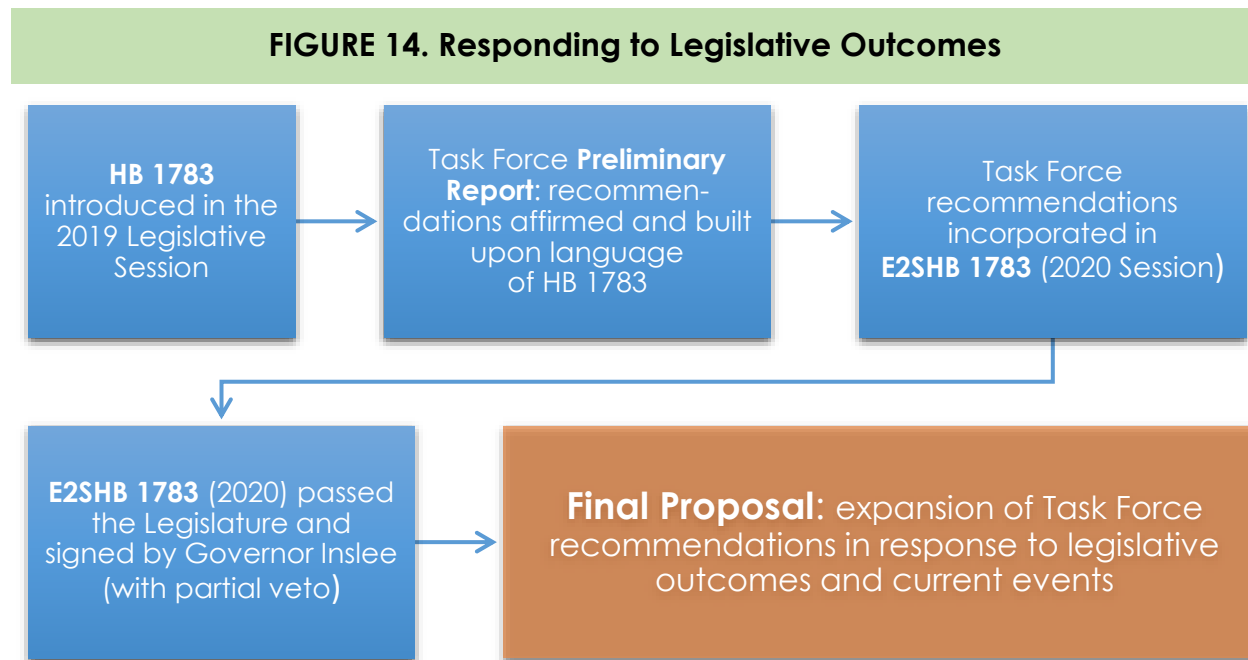
At the time of writing, no state general funds have been appropriated in the State Supplemental Budget (SB 6168) for the Office of Equity's operation. Initially, the 2020 Supplemental Budget as passed by the Legislature included $1,289,000 for the Office of Equity's operation. It also incorporated funding for DEI positions at other agencies to support the implementation of E2SHB 1783, including $800,000 for the Department of Enterprise Services to add a DEI training module to the Learning Management System by June 30, 2021.[14]

In April 2020, Governor Inslee vetoed parts of the budget bill due to a large anticipated budget shortfall, which removed the amount appropriated for the Office of Equity. The Governor's memo explains: "The supplemental budget includes task forces, work groups, reports, pilot programs, new programs, and program expansions that would be smart investments for the state under normal circumstances. However, under the extraordinary situation we now face, we cannot afford all of them at this time." [15]

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[14] http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/soHighlights_0311.pdf
[15] Veto memo accessed at: https://www.ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/budget/statebudget/20supp/Veto6168.pdf

FIGURE 15. Personal Statement from Representative Mia Gregerson

Dear Community,

Congratulations on a job well done! Becoming the first state in the nation to establish a statewide Office of Equity was no small feat, and it could not have been done without your advocacy, your time, and personal stories. It is a much better product because of the diversity of individuals—and places we traveled across the state—who were actively and passionately involved. I'm proud of us. We did this together.

Our country's centuries-long history of racism and deliberate marginalization, combined with some people's indifference to—and even support of—those efforts, has created a country where systemic racism and oppression is woven into every fiber of our being. Some were blind to this, and 2020 made it clear that this needs to change. We are in an unprecedented time that is demanding our attention: experiencing a global pandemic and the inequitable response to it, watching the resulting recession that is impacting our most marginalized and vulnerable, witnessing the racist practices of policing against our Black and Brown community members and knowing it has always been like that, taking part in worldwide civil rights movement because Black Lives Matter, and enduring honest and uncomfortable unlearning about our nation's complete history. I ask: where is our American Dream? Those who have the distinct privilege to overlook the pleas for help under the guise of "it's not me, I'm not a racist" are forced to reckon with how they benefit from a white supremacy world. But this is nothing new to us: the overt and covert forms of racism – one that is directly deadly and one that is death by a thousand cuts. Therefore, this moment is a call to action from those shoulders we stood on to lift up and dismantle so much of what in our lifetime has always been. Now is the time – otherwise we, too, are part of the problem. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work. We have 400 years to confront.

How do we move forward?

We now have the coordination and centralized approach from our newly formed Office of Equity. What will make this Office successful is its focus on regaining the trust of the most disenfranchised communities. This means that the Office will provide the equity lens that all state agencies need while having an emphasis on accountability. Like you, I also envision a time in the future when, as we look back at this moment, the need to ask for those to do their work with an equity lens is so commonplace that we are no longer labeling it as such. We should be proud of ourselves in being bold and calling for action – that is what truly makes our state a great place to live and work. We must stay focused to ensure that our promise to our communities is fulfilled. This Office is a promise to you that your expertise and vulnerabilities must be accounted for and brought to the table every time. I am truly

grateful for the people who stewarded this process and the thoughtfulness that has been taken in every part of this journey.

With the Office of Equity, so many more of us are creating a more equitable and healthier Washington - a livelihood in which everyone deserves to feel that they belong without shame and can thrive with dignity.

With deep gratitude,

Mia Gregerson, State Representative, 33rd Legislative District

"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality."

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the inequities and contradictions in our systems to a point where we, as a society, can no longer look away and tolerate what was hidden in plain sight. In the most devastating way, the pandemic has reinforced an undeniable truth: **we can only be as healthy as our most vulnerable and marginalized communities.**

> *"Can anyone of us here still afford to believe that efforts to reclaim the future can be private or individual? Can anyone here still afford to believe that the pursuit of liberation can be the sole and particular province of anyone particular race, or sex, or age, or religion, or sexuality, or class?"*
>
> — Audre Lorde

As with other crises, the impact and burden have been disproportionately shouldered by tribes, communities of color, immigrant communities, low-income communities, the LGBTQ community, the disability community, and vulnerable labor forces.[16] As a stark example, agricultural and food processing workers exist at the paradoxical intersection of being essential and underserved.

This is not by coincidence—health inequities and barriers to information, testing, and health care are manifestations of systemic discrimination and institutional oppression that have long privileged some at the expense of others. As Adam Serwer of the *The Atlantic* explains: "All the racial inequities that were in the 'before world'—they are nationally being reproduced in the coronavirus world, because the structure of our society is built along those tracks… The train is going to go to the same destination…because that's where the tracks are built to go."[17]

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[16] "The data show that communities of color are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in significant ways. For cases, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander people (NHOPI) and Hispanic people have age-adjusted rates approximately seven times higher relative to White peoples. Hospitalizations are eight times higher for Hispanics and almost twelve times higher for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders relative to Whites. Blacks and American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) case and hospitalization rates are approximately three times higher than those of Whites. Among COVID-19 deaths, we see a similar trend although not as extreme, with rates over four times higher among Hispanic, six times higher among NHOPI, three times higher among AIAN, and over 50% higher among Black people compared to Whites." Washington State Department of Health (2020). COVID-19 Morbidity and Mortality by Race, Ethnicity and Language in Washington State. Retrieved From: https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/data-tables/COVID-19MorbidityandMortlaitybyRaceEthnicityandLanguageinWaState.pdf
Similar disproportionalities exist in at least 42 states and Washington D.C. where Hispanics/Latinos make up a greater share of confirmed cases than their share of the population. In eight states, it's more than four times greater. National Public Radio (2020). What Do Coronavirus Racial Disparities Look Like State By State? Retrieved from: https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/05/30/865413079/what-do-coronavirus-racial-disparities-look-like-state-by-state

[17] Hamblin, James, Katherine Wells, and Adam Serwer. *The Atlantic*. May 13, 2020. Social Distance Podcast: The Racial Contract. https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/05/the-racial-contract/611614/

FIGURE X. COVID-19 Update from the Department of Health (June 19, 2020)

Public update from the WA State Department of Health:

Viruses don't discriminate, but we do

In Washington state, 37% of the people diagnosed with COVID-19 are white. But 68% of our population is white. If the virus causing COVID-19 affected people equally regardless of race, we would think that 68% of the people diagnosed with COVID-19 would be white. So why does COVID-19 seem to be disproportionately avoiding white people?

In a word, privilege. People who are white may have had innumerable hardships in their lives, but they likely have not been discriminated against because of their skin color. They are more likely to have been able to clearly understand the language their doctor was using. And they are less likely than people of color to be essential workers, like farm workers.

Farm workers in this state are more likely to be Latino and may have some of the structural and social challenges that are more common among Latino people than among white people, like language barriers, discrimination, stigma around immigration status, or poverty. Many lack access to paid sick leave. Latinos make up 13% of the population in Washington, but make up 43% of the people diagnosed with COVID-19. This is a health inequity. People who are Latino in this state are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and it's not fair.

Last week, a group of 1,288 public health, infectious disease and community members sent an open letter in which they explain how fighting racism is a necessary part of fighting COVID-19. Black people in the US are more likely than white people to catch COVID-19, more likely to need hospitalization, more likely to need a ventilator, and more likely to die of the disease. The letter writers attribute these differences to the toxic levels of stress Black Americans experience from living within long standing systems of oppression, bias and discrimination, unsafe working conditions, and exposure to pollution.

There are things we can do as individuals to reduce the spread of COVID-19—wash our hands, stay six feet from others, wear our cloth face coverings—and there are also things we can do as a society to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other health inequities. We need to consider where our systems continue to act out racist ideas or assumptions. We need to listen to people whose ideas and potential have been fenced in by racism. We need to use our voices and our power to demand changes to the systems that lead to health inequities. As we come back to public life, spend time listening to people whose stories are not like yours, from six feet away.

Stories from our Communities

Led by the Community Engagement Coordinator, the Task Force created space to hear from communities about their experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic, how community-based organizations have stepped up to provide relief and support for families, and key lessons from this crisis and past crises. These stories of intense struggle and courageous resilience reaffirm our belief that **this work of envisioning the Office of Equity, along with all state government work, must begin and end with community.**

Stories from the community also reaffirm what we know about systemic inequities:

- Although the issues are various and manifest in unique ways in each community, many share the **same root causes** of systemic exclusion and oppression. When some lives are valued over others, we see this value differential replicated across systems at every level.

- **We cannot trade one crisis for another.** The pandemic has put additional stress on many areas of our lives, including our financial, physical, and emotional wellbeing. Pandemic-related stressors are placing disproportionate burden on communities of color, people with disabilities, and low-income communities, exacerbating preexisting disparities related to health, food security, education, housing, etc. **Relief and recovery efforts must address *all* the social determinants of health**.

Following are statements from community members attending the Task Force's public meeting on April 30, 2020 where they described how the pandemic is affecting their local communities. Also included are a sample of issues affecting numerous communities across the state as they grapple with both the pandemic and the response.

The North Sound: David Ortiz, Communities of Color Coalition (C3)

C3 is assessing the impact of the pandemic on various communities. The virus compounds hardships and creates a confluence, exacerbating food insecurity and health care disparities and impacting communities already under distress. The 'hidden populations' in this pandemic include farmworkers and essential workers bringing desperately needed food into distribution. Response efforts need to be prioritized in high impact areas like Yakima, Wenatchee, the Skagit Valley, and Burlington. C3 is concerned by the lack of attention on detainees at the Northwest Detention Center, including in the provision of food and health care. Food banks are struggling, because they are not receiving enough food for distribution and there is little statewide coordination to get food to food banks. C3 uses the Washington Tracking Network and referrals from commissioners to determine where funding and support should go. Smaller, impoverished communities are asking for assistance to afford funeral costs for loved ones lost to COVID-19, and more must be done at the state and federal levels to provide tangible relief to grieving families.

The Central Valley: Dulce Gutiérrez, WA State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

The pandemic has brought to light inequities for our most vulnerable populations. Yakima, being a middle-size city, faces big-city issues without having the same funding and resources as larger cities. At the time of writing, Yakima Valley has the highest per capita rate of COVID-19 on the U.S. West Coast and accounts for 22% of the state's COVID-19 hospitalizations.[18,19]

Community partners report that undocumented individuals in the community are not receiving stimulus checks, and their spouses are having trouble accessing this much-needed financial resource. Such barriers will likely worsen poverty rates, increase the likelihood of homelessness, and put a greater strain on the health care infrastructure. People are reluctant to report rights violations, such as labor violations and demands for timely rent, and instead compensate in other ways like limiting the amount of food they buy for their family. These are symptoms of a huge power disparity between farmworkers and the agricultural industry; farmworkers have little political pull on state government, and little to no lobbying and union bargaining power.

Despite the huge power disparity, dozens of workers at seven fruit packing companies went on strike between May 7 and June 11 to demand access to personal protective equipment, safer work conditions and improved pay, and protection from retaliation.[20] Many workers had never gone on strike before. Community partners say there needs to be more mechanisms in place to consider vulnerable labor forces. The more we investigate, the more violations we will discover. Additionally, factors such as poverty level and pollution should inform the state's funding and resource allocation.

The Spokane Valley: Kitara Johnson, Excelsior

Eastern Washington communities are urban and rural, and racial and ethnic minority populations *are here*. For example, 69 languages are spoken by the students attending the Spokane Public School District. They reside in less concentrated areas unlike ethnic-specific neighborhoods in other regions of our state and country. Institutional racism does not have a geographic boundary, and neither do the solutions. The perception of if an individual is a racial and ethnic minority, significantly influences how that individual receives care. These influences play out in decisions about who is tested, who is arrested, what pre-existing conditions are prioritized, and what alternatives to standardized sentencing are available, and to whom.

Providing culturally appropriate services, including outreach materials for healthcare, is challenging when these services are fragmented or spread across a vast geographic region.

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[18] Joint Information Center. Recap of Today's COVID-19 News and Updates (June 22, 2020).

[19] "A total of 700 people per 100,000 were diagnosed with COVID-19 over the past two weeks in Yakima County, according to the state Department of Health." Yakima Herald, 7/24/2020. Retrieved at: https://www.yakimaherald.com/special_projects/coronavirus/update/new-numbers-700-out-of-every-100-000-people-in-yakima-county-diagnosed-with-covid/article_656fb5fc-b685-5e17-896a-d5c3f80413b1.html

[20] Yakima Herald, 6/30/2020. Retrieved at: https://www.yakimaherald.com/special_projects/coronavirus/coronavirus-underlying-issues-drive-fruit-packing-house-workers-to-strike/article_a868dd43-1814-5cff-95d3-b354d1b04647.html

Improving access to care for our racial and ethnic minority populations is a critical need for Eastern Washington. The struggles people in Eastern Washington face illustrate why all Washingtonians must have reliable access to the internet and technology. They must be able to access services such as telemedicine, counseling, and supportive services, but internet access is often the first sacrifice families make when they experience financial hardship in a down economy.

We must address structural inequities with solutions: when we see disproportionality in health professionals, we create scholarships to train health professionals. When we lack healthcare access for racial and ethnic minorities, we build a culturally responsive healthcare center. When data is not reliable regarding racial bias, we collect the data in a valid way and evaluate it.

Language Access

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Washington State Law Against Discrimination (Chapter 49.60 RCW) protect all individuals from discrimination based on national origin, which includes birthplace, ancestry, culture, and language. Title VI requires all organizations receiving federal support to ensure meaningful access to information and provide language assistance services.

Washington state and local jurisdictions ramped up their efforts to provide multilingual resources during the pandemic. Governor Inslee issued a memo in April detailing a state language access plan to provide vital COVID-19 information to individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).[21]

"We know certain communities are disproportionately at-risk or impacted by this pandemic and one way we can shift that injustice is by communicating in ways that are accessible and culturally- and linguistically-relevant."

— Governor Jay Inslee, Memo: Language Access Plan During COVID-19 (4/29/20)

We are hearing from community partners that significant gaps and barriers remain. Telemedicine and interpretation are not equally accessible in all communities. As state and federal programs are adapted or expanded, there is a lag in getting relevant, accurate information to families. Currently, the state lacks a central way to coordinate language-related barriers, issues, and services across sectors (e.g. health care, education, law, unemployment) and geographic areas. This is a key area of opportunity for the Office of Equity to serve in a coordinating role—its work can help ensure the state fulfills its legal requirements and communities have equal access to information and services.

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[21] Joint Information Center News Release. 4/30/2020. Retrieved at: https://www.cha.wa.gov/news/2020/4/30/inslee-announces-new-initiative-to-expand-language-access-to-covid-19-information

In March, Governor Inslee created the Food Security Coordination Team consisting of state agencies, select legislators, and community-based partners including Nutrition First, Northwest Harvest, Equity in Education Coalition, and others. This team is rapidly assessing needs, making an inventory of public and private resources, and adapting resource distribution to address gaps and ensure equitable service.

Northwest Harvest commissioned a report to better understand the food insecurity crisis in our state, and the main takeaways include:[22]

- Washington has not hit a peak in our food insecurity crisis—this may happen in August or December 2020. During that peak period, 2.2 million people or roughly one-quarter of Washington's population will struggle to put food on their tables, and 900,000 of these individuals (41%) will struggle with hunger, a chronic and persistent disruption in food intake that can lead to deterioration of health.

- 88% of the people in Washington who are most at risk of job loss or disruption because of COVID-19 have incomes below $70,000 per year. 60% of those most at risk of job disruption have annual incomes at or below $40,000.

- Jobs that are at most risk of disruption are disproportionately held by people of color, particularly Hispanics (13.1%), and people who do not have a college degree (78.4%).

- Timely and critical expansions of cash assistance and cash-equivalent programs like SNAP, have been essential to containing food insecurity, but those expansions are set to expire later this year.

Stress from the pandemic can manifest as violence in the home, postpartum depression, and violence against women. Social and mental health outreach must be focused on keeping organizations open and functioning, so they are available to families in distress.

Task Force members and community partners share concerns about the increase in intensity and frequency of domestic violence during the state's stay-at-home orders. Individuals must spend more time at home with their abusers, making it more difficult to report violence or access a website for information.

In Yakima, there is an increase in calls for assistance as families experience more stressors and community organizations strive to meet their needs. In the Spokane Valley, addressing domestic violence and the associated trauma were priorities before the pandemic—now

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[22] Northwest Harvest (2020). Addressing the Food Security Crisis in Washington. Retrieved at: https://www.northwestharvest.org/crisis-report

community organizations and advocates are working to create spaces for people to seek help and information in a pandemic setting.

As businesses and services move online, preexisting hierarchies are being imprinted on the digital world. There are large gaps in who has access to devices, high speed Internet, culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, and virtual spaces to conduct social, economic, political, and cultural activities. These gaps have widened in the COVID-19 pandemic. Internet access is often the first sacrifice families make when they experience financial hardship, and families have fewer public points of access as schools, libraries, and community centers close in response to the pandemic.

For people with disabilities, teleconferencing platforms and other tools may not be accessible with screen readers and other devices and, if they are accessible, those offering the services often do not receive the needed training. As services have moved to virtual service delivery, ways to request

> *"Disability only becomes a tragedy for me when society fails to provide the things we need to lead our lives."*
>
> — Judy Heumann

reasonable accommodation (e.g. sign language) are not always communicated. For people with developmental or intellectual disabilities, materials and access to systems is often complex and not in plain talk, leaving individuals unable to connect to needed supports.

> *"How can we turn this 'emergency paradigm' into a post-emergency reality that changes the way government does business?"*
>
> — Paj Nandi, Community Engagement Task Force, Joint Information Center

Observations from the State Response

Important lessons are taking shape in the state's COVID-19 response. In addition to hearing from communities, we invited state employees involved in response efforts to share their observations.

The Task Force recognizes and honors the immense effort our public leaders and employees are making within our existing systems to promote health and wellbeing across the state. We also recognize that the pandemic has further exposed how inadequate our current systems are at providing equitable access to culturally and linguistically appropriate information, services, and resources.

The imperative to control the spread of a virus has forced the state to accelerate efforts in ensuring meaningful and consistent application of existing requirements, while expanding other areas that were considered to be impossible or too costly in the pre-pandemic world.

As one person put it, "This 'building the plane as we fly it' approach is not sustainable." **This unprecedented time of hardship is also an unprecedented opportunity for transformative change.** Government must repurpose itself to serve those most vulnerable and marginalized in our society, and refashion its operation to be proactive and nimble. **Transformation is neither incremental nor reactive—transformation requires deeper structural changes that reinvent the way government does its business.** Below are a few first steps, offered by those who have been most intimately involved in response efforts.

We must address all social determinants of health. These factors influence the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, and include access to health care, education, transportation, housing, information and technology, among many other foundational areas of life. As demonstrated through communities' stories—these areas are interrelated and must be addressed in a holistic manner.

Every decision must be informed by historical, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts. The issues we face today have historical roots in settler colonialism, attempted erasure of Indigenous peoples, and institutionalized discrimination. We must acknowledge these ongoing legacies in order to develop effective policies that undo harm, build trust, and address root causes. When considering the best methods for data collection and medical research, policy makers must consider how these processes have historically been used to exclude and harm certain groups,[23] and how current systems perpetuate discriminatory practices and produce disparate outcomes.[24]

Equitable policy recognizes cultural and socioeconomic contexts, and prioritizes resources to those who are most impacted. Strict isolation guidelines have disrupted cultural norms and traditions around death and community healing. Without accessible and equitable testing, there will be greater risk of infection to certain communities. Strict isolation is also a privilege that not all have access to in their living and working situations—guidelines and resources must reflect and cater to these nuances, so no family or community is left behind.

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[23] "Investigators attempting to engage in research with racial/ethnic minorities, including AIs, must consider their mistrust of the scientific community, which is grounded in repeated, well-documented examples of unethical medical research and clinical misconduct in the name of research." Pacheco et al., (2013). Moving Forward: Breaking the Cycle of Mistrust between American Indians and Researchers. Am J Pub Health 103(12): 2152-2159. Retrieved from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3828980/
[24] Among African Americans, "[m]istrust stems from historical events…and is reinforced by health system issues and discriminatory events that continue to this day." Scharff et al (2015). More than Tuskegee: Understanding Mistrust about Research Participation. J Health Care Poor Underserved 21(3): 879-897. Retrieved from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4354806/

We must create a diverse and humble community in our institutions. Our state lacks the infrastructure to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services, and the pandemic has exacerbated this problem. Lack of cultural, linguistic, and racial/ethnic representation in the public workforce has been and continues to be a barrier; diversity in the workforce is necessary to convey the nuances of community needs, priorities, and lived experience. In addition, cultural humility training and tools are foundational to doing work in an equitable way and must be a top priority.

FIGURE 16. The Community Engagement Task Force, Joint Information Center

The Community Engagement Task Force (CETF) in the Joint Information Center has been operating like a micro-Office of Equity during the pandemic. Its approximately 13 full-time staff work in all aspects of the response, including policy development, implementation, and language assistance services. The CETF has been instrumental in quickly developing guidance and providing technical assistance to state agencies.

The CETF's work on language access demonstrates the need for a focal point in government to elevate and coordinate efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion. CETF staff worked with staff from the racial and ethnic commissions to elevate issues of information access to the Governor's Office. In collaborative effort, the Governor's Office, the racial and ethnic commissions, the CETF, the Department of Enterprise Services, and State Human Resources quickly built a system to translate all vital COVID-19 information into 36 languages. To help agencies implement the state language access plan, the CETF continues to provide technical assistance on preparing information for translation, which ensures smart and effective use of limited resources.

We must prioritize those who have been farthest from opportunity. Washington is at the forefront on many issues and is a consistent leader in the nation. But when we look at who is doing well in our state and who is not, the gaps are clear as day. Opportunity gaps are significant and persistent across sectors, including the public education system. The pandemic has highlighted and widened gaps in remote learning, access to paraeducators, technology access, and Internet access.

It was important for the Governor to set early and clear expectations for agencies, so they could continue providing essential services during the pandemic. However, for some communities, state support structures were not created for them and did not apply to their lives in the first place; they are dependent on these structures now more than ever.

We must use the right tools to make the right decisions. Agencies are undertaking major budget reduction exercises as state revenue is projected to decline by $8.8 billion through fiscal year 2023.[25] They must have the right tools, including an equity toolkit and guidance on using equity impact assessments, to avoid making the same mistakes from earlier crises. Communities that were disproportionately impacted by cuts during the Great Recession, including communities of color and low-income communities, are still reeling from those impacts and will be further injured as long as equity is seen as an afterthought or optional choice.

We must increase our capacity to do meaningful community engagement. The pandemic has shown how interconnected we are—it has left no community untouched. Yet many communities, especially those in more rural areas, feel underrepresented and disconnected from government. The state must repurpose and develop structures to facilitate communication and connectedness across the state. The ability to lean on communities, including in times of emergency, requires there to be existing relationships centered on trust and partnership. These relationships require time and concrete actions that inspire trust and demonstrate accountability.

We must build trust by changing the way we do business. Historical actions, including immigration enforcement efforts that have had the potential to impose long-term separation of families, have instilled fear and distrust of government. The state must make cultural shifts in our institutions and the way we do business, so that all Washingtonians feel safe, supported, and welcomed.

Speed and nimbleness are key. The state would benefit from inviting communities to assist in identifying gaps, such as those related to race/ethnicity, certain occupations, LGBTQ status, disability status, and language access. State contracting practices must allow and encourage communities to take the lead in creating information that is about and for them. This is an example of an area where government can step back and ask communities to lead, so efforts are quick and unhindered by bureaucracy.

Disaggregated data is essential to understanding needs and distributing resources in smart, effective ways. Lack of data has been a large barrier. Agencies, tribes, and communities would benefit from a statewide dashboard that incorporates data on unemployment rates, resource availability, health care access, and other social determinants of health—all disaggregated by race/ethnicity and other demographics. To support coordinated and holistic approaches, state agencies must apply standards for the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data.

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[25] OPB News, 6/18/2020. Inslee Orders Furloughs as Forecast Shows $9 Billion Drop in Washington's Revenues. Retrieved at: https://www.opb.org/news/article/washington-jay-inslee-budget-coronavirus-cuts-furloughs/

Equity work is full-time work and requires adequate resources. '**Building the plane as we fly it' is an unsustainable approach.** We cannot continue to have quick fixes, implemented in bits and pieces across agencies. The Office of Equity must have the right resources, support, and authority to do intentional, effective work that creates accountability, lifts up equity in every agency, and provides a coordinated response for marginalized communities during times of crisis.

FIGURE 17. Statement from the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE)

The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment is honored to join the Office of Equity Task Force outlining a vision for this critical work.

The unique convergence of events across the nation, the COVID pandemic coupled with the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, has highlighted the cracks in the systems designed to create equity and inclusion for all. Too often, the work to create equity and inclusion is disconnected from both potential champions of our causes and the communities this work will benefit. It is imperative to align resources and actions across the networks of thought leaders to underpin our work and create a more solid foundation for the future. We believe the Office of Equity is that unifying force for systemic cross-equity work that will allow meaningful change while remaining true to the needs of the communities we serve.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act; at the historic signing of the bill, the President of the United States, George Bush said "Let the Shameful Wall of Exclusion Come Down". Reflecting on the past three decades we see progress for people with disabilities, and recognize there is still a long journey ahead before that proverbial wall is removed completely.

The pandemic has disproportionately impacted people with disabilities and highlighted the need for inclusion and accommodation in every facet of our system. With the abrupt need to pivot services to meet the crisis, systematic accessibility was not fully realized resulting in people with disabilities with unmet critical needs; this effect continues to ripple through the communities to be served by the Office of Equity. Dismantling the previously ingrained prejudicial institutions will take all of us; it is our sincere hope this new office will be the unifying entity through which we can make lasting change to the systems of the state of Washington.

We urge leaders to prioritize equity and inclusion by funding and supporting the Office of Equity. We stand ready to support this Office in its crucial role bringing cohesiveness, support, and accountability to remove systemic barriers that impede equity for residents of our great state.

— Elizabeth Gordon, Executive Director
   Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment

"Freedom is not a state; it is an act. It is not some enchanted garden perched high on a distant plateau where we can finally sit down and rest. Freedom is the continuous action we all must take, and each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society."

— John Lewis

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Greatest Hopes for the Office of Equity

Equity Definition & Guiding Statements

Principles for Success

Leading with Community

Urgent Work: Ensuring Equity and Access in Relief and Recovery Efforts

With Investment: A Fully Functional and Effective Office of Equity

Systems Transformation: An Equitable, Just, and Sustainable Future

Our Greatest Hopes for the Office of Equity

◈ **State government will change the way it works at a fundamental level as all state agencies and employees do their work through an equity lens.** The Office of Equity will be a place agencies run to for support to start or continue their equity journey. The Office will bring hope and help partner agencies excel, so agencies can deliver quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate services to all Washingtonians in a way that eliminates disparities.

◈ **The Office of Equity will model the use of an intersectional, multi-dimensional framework.** Everybody will see themselves in the Office of Equity's mission, no matter their background or where they work.

◈ **Every state employee can bring their full self to work and feel welcomed, supported, and valued.** WA State will become an equitable employer. The Office of Equity will create an environment where no public employee will fear going to work or feel uncomfortable at work because of who they are. Public employees will have a forum to provide feedback on how agencies can create more inclusive work environments.

◈ **State government will be held accountable for its operations, internally and through service delivery to the public.** The Office of Equity will coordinate work across agencies, so it builds collective strength while holding agencies accountable.

◈ **The Office will help ensure everyone who lives in the state has the sense of being worthy and is recognized for the powerful and strong legacies of their communities.** The Office of Equity will help lift up voices and concerns from communities, and create partnerships throughout state government to better serve communities. The Office will create an expectation that government and community work together, in equal leadership, to create the change we want to see for our communities and our state.

◈ **The Office will help agencies fully value the humanity of every individual and operate with liberty and justice for all.** Ultimately, every Washingtonian will be successful and able to thrive.

Equity Definition & Guiding Statements

This section includes the Task Force's recommendations on a:

- definition of 'equity'
- equity statement
- vision statement
- mission statement
- glossary of equity-related terms

The Office of Equity should use these definitions and statements to guide its work and help build a common language and knowledge base for the enterprise, so all efforts are coordinated and mutually reinforcing.

Words Matter

'Equity' means many different things to different people. At the first Task Force meeting, members discussed the concept of 'equity' and how a shared understanding can serve as a touchstone throughout this project. And as Spiritual Leader Tanna Engdahl of the Cowlitz Tribe described, 'equity' is the most difficult word we will ever try to define, live up to, and make happen (see Figure 5 on page 18).

The Task Force recognizes that **words matter, and they can be a matter of life and death.** As we have seen many times throughout history, words can serve to oppress, dispossess, and disenfranchise. In her welcome address to the Task Force, Ms. Engdahl shared that her tribe has experienced first-hand the manipulation of systems and policies based on inequity, perpetuated by mechanisms like treaties. Words can also affirm our greatest ideals and demand the recognition of our human, economic, political, and social rights.[26] In a recent victory, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that federal statute prohibiting sex discrimination does, in fact, include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity.[27]

Understanding that words can give power, shape systems, and directly affect lives, we centered the following principles in our work:

◈ A definition of 'equity' must relate inward to state government and outward to communities.

◈ A definition of 'equity' must be community-informed and evolve to reflect community priorities and needs.

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[26] Example: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.caun_declaration_on_the_rights_of_indigenous_peoples/

[27] Civil Rights Law Protects Gay and Transgender Workers, Supreme Court Rules." New York Times. June 15, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/us/gay-transgender-workers-supreme-court.html

- A definition of 'equity' and its application must result in tangible benefits for communities and individuals, especially those historically and currently marginalized.

- Equity is not the same as equality, and it goes beyond reaching parity. Equity ensures everyone has full access to the opportunities, power, and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential.

- Definitions, statements, and legislation must balance the use of inclusive language with the boldness of naming specific communities that have been historically marginalized and most impacted by inequities.

> **"Equity is *Justice*."**
>
> — Esmael López,
> Community Engagement Coordinator,
> Office of Equity Task Force

FIGURE 18. Definition of Equity & Guiding Statements for the Office of Equity

EQUITY (definition)

Developing, strengthening, and supporting policies and procedures that distribute and prioritize resources to those who have been historically and currently marginalized, including tribes.

It requires the elimination of systemic barriers that have been deeply entrenched in systems of inequality and oppression.

Equity achieves procedural and outcome fairness, promoting dignity, honor, and respect for all people.

VISION

Everyone in Washington has full access to the opportunities, power, and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential.

MISSION

The Office of Equity will promote access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities and improve outcomes statewide across government.

EQUITY STATEMENT

Equity requires a commitment to bold action. It begins with the acknowledgement of historical systems of institutional racism and oppression that have led to the uneven distribution of benefits and burdens in our communities. Racism is ingrained in our history and deeply embedded in our institutions, affecting all sectors. An equitable decision-making process prioritizes community-led solutions, driven by those most affected. Generational healing takes time and requires us to embrace discomfort and practice humility. Equity ensures everyone has full access to the opportunities, power, and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential.

Task Force Public Meeting, Tacoma
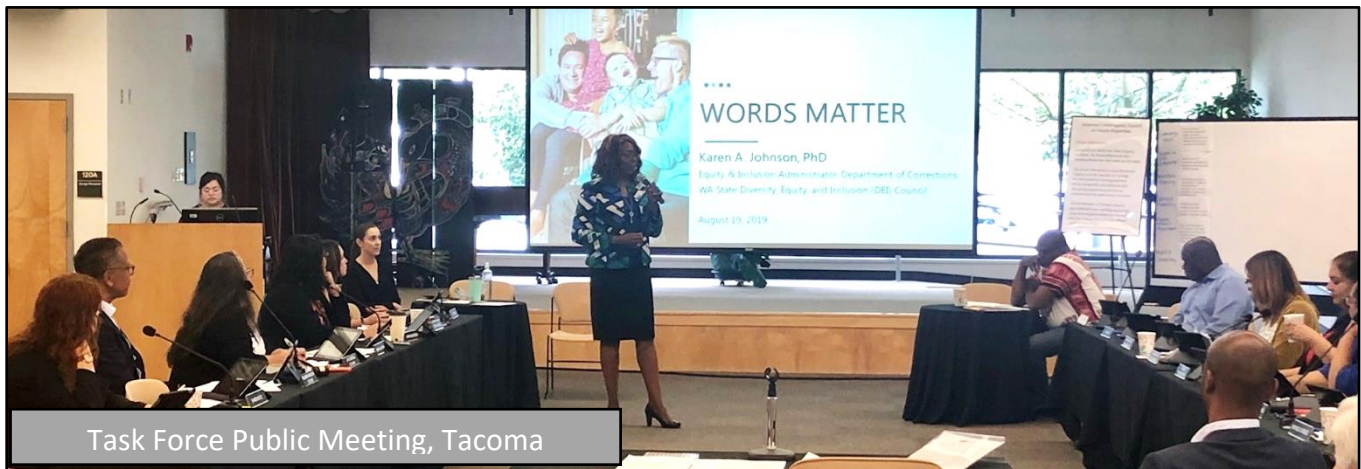
FIGURE 19. WA State Law Against Discrimination

The WA State Law Against Discrimination (Chapter 49.60 RCW) protects individuals from discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, sex, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The WA State Human Rights Commission is responsible for administering and enforcing this civil rights law.

The Office of Equity should support the Human Rights Commission's work, but not duplicate it. As envisioned in this report, the Office of Equity should change the way government does business by facilitating structural changes that prioritize historically marginalized communities in ways that close opportunity gaps and achieve equitable outcomes for all.

To achieve the intended results, the Office of Equity's work should neither be defined by nor limited to the protected classes in the WLAD. For example, the Office can work with agencies to address disparities in access to resources and outcomes for rural communities, survivors of violence, and foster youth. Importantly, this leaves room for the Office to be nimble, adaptive, and ready to help address inequities faced by yet-to-be named groups that may be excluded or pushed to the margin.

Glossary of Equity-related Terms

In order to work toward the same goals, agencies and employees must conduct their business using shared definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). As a starting point, the Task Force recommends that the Office of Equity adopt the glossary of equity-related terms created by an interagency workgroup in 2019 (see Appendix F). This glossary must be a living repository—one that is periodically refined with input from tribes, communities, and public

employees—to allow for an evolving understanding of intersectionality and uniqueness. Additionally, the Task Force recommends that the Office of Equity add definitions for these four terms to the glossary: **Indigenous**, **tribal affiliation**, **tribal sovereignty**, and **anti-racist**.

A standard lexicon promotes dialogue, understanding, and professional competencies needed to move the enterprise toward more equitable, just systems. It also prevents the misinterpretation and misunderstanding of terms. Employees and agencies should use this glossary to:

- Discuss complex issues like identity, privilege, and each person's responsibility in dismantling systems of oppression;

- Operationalize concepts of inclusion and equity to better serve communities in a way that improves outcomes and eliminates disparities; and

- Hold each other accountable in creating safe, inclusive work environments.

> *"When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak."*
>
> — Audre Lorde

"The dream knows no frontier or tongue,

The dream no class or race.

The dream cannot be kept secure

In any one looked place."

— Langston Hughes

Principles for Success

Disrupt and Dismantle Systems of Institutional Racism and Oppression

Eliminating racism and oppression requires revolutionary change. The Office of Equity's work must be transformative. It must disrupt and dismantle historical systems of institutional racism and oppression throughout every sector and layer of government. Agencies must systematically identify the harm and exclusions built into our current systems, and take immediate action to undo these inequities.

"By failing to acknowledge these inequities in the past, we play a role in perpetuating them in the present."

— Community Member

Commit to Equity at the Highest Levels of Leadership

To support a resilient structure and enduring change, the Office of Equity and equity-related statements must be codified in statute. The Office of Equity must have a seat at the table when decisions with statewide impact are being made at the highest levels of government.

Properly Invest in Equity and Inclusion

The work of promoting equity and inclusion has been undervalued and underinvested in government for too long. This work can no longer reside in the margin—it requires deep, sustained commitment. The Office of Equity requires adequate investment through dedicated staffing, funding, and other resources.

Budgets reflect our priorities, and they are the clearest demonstration of who we are, who we are willing to stand up for, and who we are unwilling to leave behind.

Share Power and Resources with Community

Communities are resilient, resourceful, and experts in knowing their own assets and needs. The Office of Equity must work to unite government and communities, so that all government work aligns with community-defined priorities and community-driven solutions. Government must invest the necessary time and resources to building strong relationships of trust and partnership with communities, especially those that are underserved and marginalized.

Prioritize Government-to-Government Relations

Efforts to promote equity must go hand-in-hand with support for tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, and self-determination. The Office of Equity must model best practices for government-

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to-government relations, and advocate for mechanisms that support tribal sovereignty, such as data sovereignty and the decolonization of data (see Figure 30 on page 97).

Operationalize Equity and Intersectionality

Government must use a definition of 'equity' that is easily understood and can be applied in practical ways. Agencies must center their work on a shared vision of equity, and operationalize equity in the form of frameworks and tools. They must embrace an intersectional approach in order to identify and addresses all sources of oppression (e.g. racism, ageism, ableism, sexism).

> **Intersectionality explains how an individual with multiple identities that may have been marginalized can experience compounded oppression (such as racism, sexism, and classism) or how an individual can experience privilege in some areas and disadvantage in other areas. It takes into account people's overlapping identities to understand the complexity of their life outcomes and experiences.**
>
> — Glossary of Equity-Related Terms (see Appendix F)

Invest Upstream

We can no longer afford a system that provides opportunity to some at the expense of others. The Office of Equity must guide the enterprise in making smart and effective use of limited resources. Agencies must use quality frameworks, tools, and guidance, and target resources to address root causes and prioritize areas with the highest need. Investing upstream minimizes avoidable financial costs, such as those related to poorer health outcomes and lost productivity.

Break Down Silos

It is ineffective and costly to continue working in a fragmented manner. Government must break down silos to tackle persistent inequities, because:

- Population-level outcomes are determined by multiple factors, so government must work across sectors (i.e. de-silo its efforts) to address complex issues.
- Many disparities exist across issue areas and sectors, because they share the same root causes.

Focus on Processes and Outcomes

Bold action and quick fixes are incompatible—beware of the illusion of quick fixes. There may be expectations for overnight change, and some may only measure the Office of Equity's success with immediate, tangible outcomes. Systems of oppression and inequality have not manifested overnight—there needs to be the widespread understanding that systemic change takes time and must include a focus on processes.

Reach Hearts and Minds to Effect Personal and Institutional Change

Equity requires culture and systems change at the foundational level. Equity should be more than a priority area—it should be woven into an agency's DNA. Make equity work everyone's work. The Office must foster a learning environment, so there is trust among internal and external partners to correct course when necessary.

Build Capacity

Capacity building within agencies is critical to advancing equity across the enterprise. Training for public employees "increases understanding of institutional and structural racism and the use of racial equity tools."[28] It should be "focused on building skills to implement strategies that promote racial equity in employees' daily work."[29] While providing tools and resources broadly, use those that have been shown to be effective (i.e. do not 'reinvent the wheel'). In addition, agency employees need training and support in ensuring access and inclusion for the LGBTQ community and individuals with disabilities. The Office of Equity, as a central/coordinating entity, must also build its own capacity to ensure it can provide expert technical assistance to agencies and lead innovative efforts.

Honor Existing Efforts

Recognize and honor past achievements, and do not overlook groups that have been instrumental in statewide DEI efforts. The Office of Equity's work should integrate seamlessly with existing efforts, instead of recreating or usurping them. The Office should elevate, unify, and reinforce efforts embedded throughout the enterprise and, in particular, the Office's work should complement that of the Department of Enterprise Services, the Office of Financial Management, the WA State DEI Council, state commissions/committees, and business/employee resource groups.

Be Guided by a Strategic Plan

The state must have a strategic plan for its work in diversity, equity, and inclusion, which includes measurable goals and minimums for each agency. Smart objectives make the difference for accomplishing agencies' goals and creating consistency across the enterprise. Creating broad standards ensures consistency across the enterprise, while still encouraging meaningful customization within each organization. Priorities and goals must be community-driven. As an example, King County engaged over 100 community organizations and interviewed 800 employees before creating its strategic plan.

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[28] Government Alliance on Race and Equity (2015). Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action [PDF file]. Retrieved from: https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf.

[29] *Ibid*.

Measure Progress

In developing individual agency plans, each organization should identify its unique areas of opportunity and measurable goals that are appropriate to its context. The state must systematically measure institutional change to assess whether efforts are leading to positive shifts in practices, policies, service delivery, and funding decisions.

Build Community within Government

We need a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. State employees must be able to show up to work as their full selves and feel they are welcomed, safe, and valued. We must build community within government and grow our capacity to engage with communities in meaningful, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate ways.

"Equity means clear representation, commonalities, and ties between the people who create systems and those who exist within them."

— Community Member

Center Storytelling

Avoid letting data drive the work—be driven by vision and informed by data. Seek out stories and lived experience to reveal inequities, and center community voice to lead us to solutions.

Provide Support and Promote Accountability

An Office of Equity must balance its approach to include promoting equity and ensuring compliance. It is important that agencies see a central office as a place to go to for assistance and expertise, not a place to avoid. At the same time, the central entity must have the authority to ensure compliance with standards to promote consistency and progress.

Build Resilience and Sustainability

**"The key to success is being nimble and willing to change. Updating, upgrading, and learning as we go.
The roadmap won't always work and we may need to go in different directions."**

— Focus Group Participant

The Office of Equity must be nimble and adaptable. It must have a well-resourced team that can build on existing efforts and work with agency and community partners to illuminate and remove barriers. The Office's structure should be the hardest thing to dismantle and should not hinge on any one component. It must have sustainable financial investment that ensures equity, inclusion, and accountability are top priorities in every administration.

Leading with Community

The work of engaging communities in iterative, trust-building relationships must live in the Office of Equity and **across all state agencies**. Below are recommendations for meaningful community engagement, which center on two main premises:

◈ **Community Engagement Means Building Relationships**
◈ **Government must Share Power and Resources with Communities**

Community engagement takes time and resources. The Office of Equity and the commissions/committees that represent communities throughout the state[30] must be adequately funded to conduct outreach and engagement. Every agency must increase its own capacity for meaningful community engagement by dedicating the appropriate resources, including time and staffing. Efforts must prioritize populations that have been historically excluded from decision-making and are hardest to reach.

> *"Really listen,*
> *try to walk in our shoes,*
> *come to our communities."*
>
> —Community Member

Community engagement means going into communities. Community members emphasized the importance of going into communities to meet them where they live their lives. This includes spaces like markets, places of worship, community centers, clubs/associations, and virtual spaces designed by communities. Although an online survey can reach a wide population in a short amount of time, it is limited to a question-answer format that does not allow real-time response and engagement. When offered, online surveys must be culturally and linguistically appropriate, accessible to all, and complementary to other efforts—it cannot be the sole mechanism.

Community engagement means working with grassroots organizations. Those that work closest to communities also have the fewest resources—it is important to reach out to these organizations and support their work, including through financial means such as grants and contracts. They are access points to the hardest-to-reach populations whose voices have been systematically excluded in decision-making. Working with grassroots organizations allows government to identify and focus on populations that are experiencing significant and persistent inequities.

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[30] The Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA), the LGBTQ Commission, the Women's Commission, the Commission on African American Affairs (CAAA), the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA), the Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA), and the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE).

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Community engagement requires practicing cultural humility and an open mindset. Agencies must seek expertise in many forms, including lived experience. Tanna Engdahl, Spiritual Leader with the Cowlitz Tribe, said cultural humility requires us to recognize others in the way they see themselves (see Figure 5 on page 18). Do not assume to know what the community needs or wants—it is imperative to ask directly. To practice humility and maintain an open mindset, avoid predetermined outcomes and seek community-driven timelines and solutions.

Community engagement means sharing power in all phases of work. One of the Task Force's guiding ethics for community engagement is 'work to understand before being understood.' This work takes time and requires sharing power with communities to define agendas and scope. Sharing power ensures projects prioritize what is important to communities, not what is convenient to achieve. With an accelerated timeline of work, the Task Force worked quickly to gather as much community input and feedback as possible to inform the recommendations in this report. However, we recognize our own approach does not fully model the recommendations laid out in this proposal. For all future government endeavors, more time and resources must be dedicated to community engagement in all phases of work, including the planning phase when scope and priorities are determined.

Community engagement means community-driven conversations and solutions.

Communities know best their assets, needs, and priorities—they are the most appropriate subject matter experts to be at the table when decisions are being made that affect them. As exemplified in the COVID-19 pandemic, community organizations are the first line of defense in their communities—they have expanded their services to meet unique local needs in culturally appropriate ways. Agencies must throw their full support behind community-led efforts, which should include funding and other resources.

> *"Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is a commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation."*
>
> — Paulo Freire

Agencies must continuously innovate in order to meet communities where they are. Engagement continues to be important during emergencies like the pandemic, but is more challenging when face-to-face opportunities are more limited. Agencies must actively listen and learn from communities: What are the additional challenges and barriers? Where are there opportunities that did not exist before? What methods of communication work best for follow up and follow through? Agencies must be nimble enough to apply what they learn and be able to connect communities with resources in a rapid, equitable manner.

Community engagement means barrier-free access and digital equity. Agencies must prioritize breaking down barriers to participation and promote access to fully inclusive spaces, including virtual spaces. All outreach and engagement efforts must prioritize interpretation services, cultural humility, accessibility for individuals with disabilities, versatile methods of information delivery, and family-friendly environments. The state must work with local government, businesses, and community partners to invest in strategies that ensure every person is able to fully participate in virtual spaces, so they can access important information and take advantage of social, political, and economic opportunities regardless of their age, income, and ability status.

FIGURE 20. Digital Equity
People want to participate in government decisions every day, not just when there is widespread pain and suffering. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) defines digital equity as**: "...a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy. Digital Equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services."**[31]   The NDIA proposes five elements for digital inclusion, which can ensure access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies for all individuals and communities, including those historically and currently disadvantaged:[32]   1. Affordable, robust broadband internet service   2. Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user   3. Access to digital literacy training   4. Quality technical support   5. Applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.   These efforts must include robust financial investment and be focused on dismantling historical, structural, and institutional barriers to access.   [*Continues on the next page.*]

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[31] National Digital Inclusion Alliance. Definitions. Retrieved at:
https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/#:~:text=Digital%20Equity%20is%20a%20condition,our%20society%2C%20democracy%20and%20economy.
[32] National Digital Inclusion Alliance. Definitions. Retrieved at:
https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/#:~:text=Digital%20Equity%20is%20a%20condition,our%20society%2C%20democracy%20and%20economy.

FIGURE 20. Digital Equity

King County considers access to information and technology "a fundamental social justice goal."[33] The County has developed a mapping tool to display Internet access and show relationships between access and income, race, and language. This information can be used to inform strategies that enhance digital access (e.g. installation of public wi-fi spots) and prioritize resources to neighborhoods that are most disadvantaged.

King County, Digital Equity: Access to High Speed Internet (Dashboard). Lighter areas have lower rates of access; darker areas have higher rates of access. Accessed on 6/21/2020 at: https://kingcounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index. html#/0121f1a54a944cbaafd803ac90eb2c41
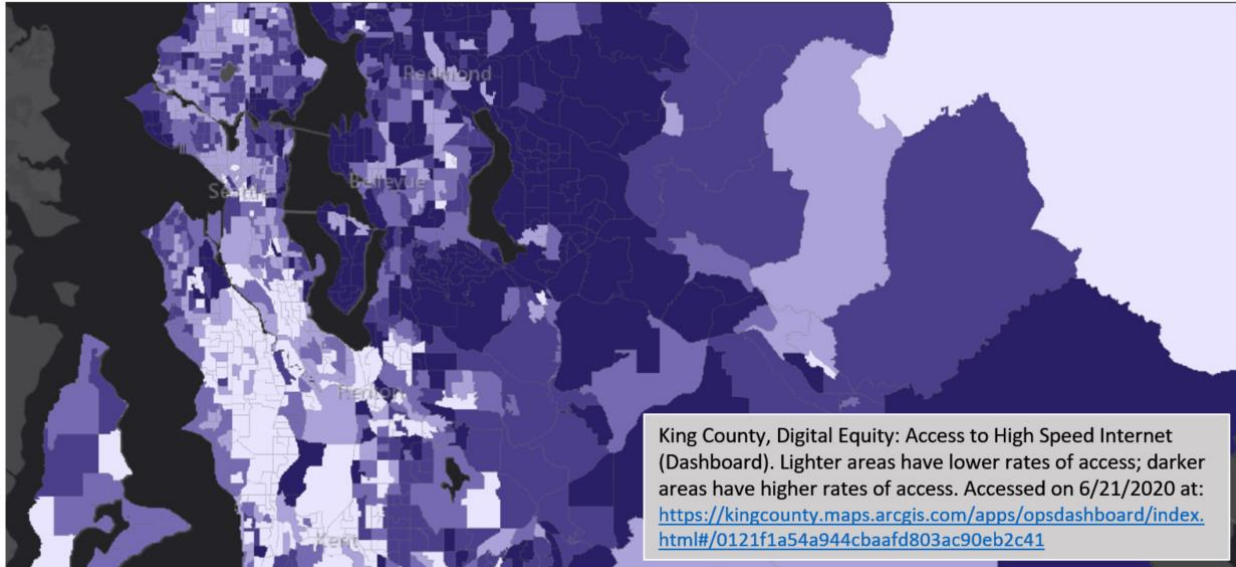
The City of Seattle works toward digital equity by collaborating with community-based organizations, businesses, and educational institutions on intentional strategies and investments that create opportunities for technology access and use. Embedded in these strategies are efforts to reduce and eliminate historical barriers, and to connect digital equity to other areas of equity and justice work.[34]

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[33] King County. Digital equity and inclusion: ensuring all residents have the opportunity to thrive. Retrieved at: https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/it/initiatives/digital-equity.aspx
[34] Seattle Information Technology. Digital Equity. Retrieved at: https://www.seattle.gov/tech/initiatives/digital-equity

Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

— Frederick Douglass

Urgent Work: Ensuring Equity and Access in Relief and Recovery Efforts

Lessons from History

Our systems are not broken—they work exactly as designed. Historically, systems and institutions have been designed to exclude, marginalize, and erase certain populations. Privileges and burdens are distributed unevenly across society, so that marginalized communities experience the worst impacts of every crisis. Communities still feel the reverberations of the Great Recession (2009), and the coronavirus pandemic has compounded and intensified these struggles.

Where we are today has direct roots in our shared history. Diseases have been weaponized in the genocide of Indigenous peoples. Diseases have been used to justify xenophobia and dehumanize, vilify, and criminalize marginalized populations. History provides abundant examples of how government has harmed Black and Indigenous communities and communities

> **"History does not repeat itself, but it often rhymes."**
>
> — Mark Twain

> **"Just like moons and like suns,**
> **With the certainty of tides,**
> **Just like hopes springing high,**
> **Still I'll rise."**
>
> — Maya Angelou, *Still I Rise*

of color in the name of public health and medical research, creating severe mistrust of government programs. Decisions around who gets life-saving treatment in an outbreak are rife with implicit and systemic biases, stereotypes, and myths—with disastrous impacts on older individuals and individuals with disabilities. Since mid-March, there have been more than 1,800 reported instances of pandemic-related harassment or violence across the nation against members of Asian and Pacific Islander communities—however, scapegoating and anti-API discrimination reach back many centuries.[35]

We know that the pandemic highlights and exacerbates systemic barriers and institutional oppression. Inequities are undeniably apparent when we engage with the questions of:

- Who is the most vulnerable?
- Who lacks access to resources and care?
- Who is on the front lines of the pandemic?
- Who is making decisions that affect the whole state?
- Who determines who gets which resources (i.e. who gets to live and who does not)?

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[35] Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council. Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center. Retrieved at: http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate/

How will this time be different?

This time must be different. State government has the responsibility to ensure no community is left behind, and this requires that we do not return to 'normal.' We must not revert back to inequitable systems and behaviors; we must not replicate and reinforce inequities through our pandemic response and recovery efforts. The norm has been to serve and privilege some at the expense and erasure of others. Rather, we must envision and build a better, more just normal—one that affirms the humanity, dignity, and equal worth of every Washingtonian. This new normal will center community voice, prioritize resources to those who have been farthest from opportunity, and ensure priorities and solutions are determined by those most impacted.

> *"One of the key lessons of AIDS activism was the importance of imagining a better reality. Now we are called to do that again."*
>
> — Daniel Wolfe, International Harm Reduction Development Program

Already, the pandemic has accelerated certain efforts that were thought to be impossible or far too costly. For instance, the state implemented a statewide language access plan, expanded multilingual resources, and targeted grants to community organizations working in the response on very short timelines. Still, local jurisdictions with resources dedicated to equity and social justice have been better situated to rapidly issue guidance and adapt their tools to the COVID-19 response (see Appendix I). This level of established infrastructure, expertise, and capacity for rapid response is missing at the state level. Our state cannot afford to continue our equity efforts like this—fragmented, under-resourced, and reactive instead of proactive.

> **"My concern is that we replicate what doesn't work: scarcity mentality, divide and conquer, failure to truly engage all marginalized voices, and defaulting to hierarchical demand and control."**
>
> — Focus Group Participant

The state must immediately stand up and resource the Office of Equity, so it can coordinate efforts and provide the needed tools, guidance, and expectations to all agencies. The Office of Equity is instrumental in setting a course toward equitable access and better outcomes statewide. It must play a central role in shining a light on equity issues and serve as a hub for conversations, resources, and community-driven partnerships.

FIGURE 21. Urgent and Foundational Work for the Office of Equity	
Prioritizing Equity in All Decisions	**Building a Solid Foundation**
▪ Serve communities and agencies during the response and recovery ▪ Shine a light on inequities; elevate partners' and communities' priorities ▪ Be at the decision making table to advise the Governor and agency leaders ▪ Promote consideration of historical, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts in policy development ▪ Develop an equity & access toolkit for agencies to use as they make decisions, including budget decisions ▪ Prioritize equity-informed approaches to adequately fund key programs ▪ Promote transparency and accountability; ensure state government serves communities in an effective and equitable manner ▪ Coordinate conversations, involving diverse perspectives, to identify systemic barriers and develop strategies to dismantle these barriers ▪ Encourage systems transformation toward sustainability and full access, inclusion, and opportunity	▪ Apply an intersectional, multi-dimensional framework ▪ Help build a diverse, culturally humble workforce; Support the development of cultural humility training and resources ▪ In partnership with other agencies, implement the use of DEI-related language and competencies ▪ Create shared spaces for employees to learn, find support, and heal; maintain a repository of resources for learning about/unlearning racism and other types of oppression ▪ Develop a repository of DEI-related resources (frameworks, tools, model policies, training opportunities, etc.) ▪ Build relationships with tribes, agencies, and communities ▪ Lead with communities; help build and resource partnerships so priorities and solutions are community-driven ▪ Develop complementary relationships with and support the work of commissions, business resource groups, and other partners in DEI

Immediate Actions for the Governor and Legislature

Signing Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1783 (creating the WA State Office of Equity) was a necessary and historic first step, but it is not enough. **The work of creating more equitable, inclusive systems must no longer reside in the margins—the Office of Equity must be adequately funded to fulfill its urgent purpose.**

The task of re-envisioning and re-sculpting our infrastructures, with an intentional focus on equity and inclusion, requires time and sustained commitment in the forms of financial investment, staffing, and other resources. The Governor and Legislature must commit to the immediate actions below to ensure that the Office of Equity can fulfill its mandate of

"promoting access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities, and improve outcomes statewide across state government."[36]

Adequately Fund the Office of Equity

Budgets are a direct reflection of our values and priorities. Investment in the Office of Equity ensures smart and effective use of limited resources. Investment in the Office of Equity will save much more than it costs, and will improve lives in priceless ways. It will reduce the avoidable financial toll that inequity takes on the state: from health-related costs, to lost productivity, to falling short on the future wealth of assets this state could enjoy.

Establish the Community Advisory Board in Statute

The Community Advisory Board shows what access, inclusion, and accountability look like in action. It is inextricable from the Office of Equity and must be reflected as such in statute (see page 81).

> *"Facing the rising sun of our new day begun Let us march on 'til victory is won"*
>
> — J. Rosamond Johnson & James Weldon Johnson

Resource the Office of Equity and State Commissions to Conduct Community Outreach and Engagement

Communities know best their assets and needs, and they hold the key to solutions. The state must provide adequate resources to the Office of Equity and commissions and committees that represent communities (e.g. racial and ethnic commissions, LGBTQ Commission, Women's Commission, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment) to connect with communities across the state in meaningful ways, so that priorities are community-defined and solutions are community-driven.

Giving input and feedback should not come at a cost to communities. All agencies, including the Office of Equity and commissions, must compensate community members for their time and participation on boards, councils, etc.

Prescribe Agency Responsibilities in Statute

Communities have said the Office of Equity cannot be more 'window dressing.' Agencies must be accountable for implementing effective strategies that eliminate inequities and promote better outcomes for all communities. The Office of Equity is not responsible for actualizing the

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[36] Chapter 332, Laws of 2020 (Office of Equity): http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1783-S2.SL.pdf#page=1

programmatic work that will eliminate inequities—that is the role of agencies. Therefore, the following agency requirements must be codified in statute:

◈ Apply an equity lens to all decision making
◈ Develop and submit a DEI plan
◈ Develop and maintain written language access policies and plans
◈ Designate a DEI liaison and require this person to report directly to the agency head
◈ Collaborate with the Office of Equity to establish performance measures
◈ Provide data and information to the Office of Equity
◈ Submit a response to the Office of Equity's report on agency performance

Give the Office of Equity Rulemaking Authority

In addition to promoting transparency and self-accountability among agencies, the Office of Equity must have rulemaking authority to define agency requirements and ensure enforcement.

There is power in naming racism for what it is, in shining a bright light on it, brighter than any torch or flashlight. A thing as simple as naming it allows us to root it out of the darkness and hushed conversation where it likes to breed like roaches. It makes us acknowledge it. Confront it.

— Jesmyn Ward

Photo: Petr Kratochvil
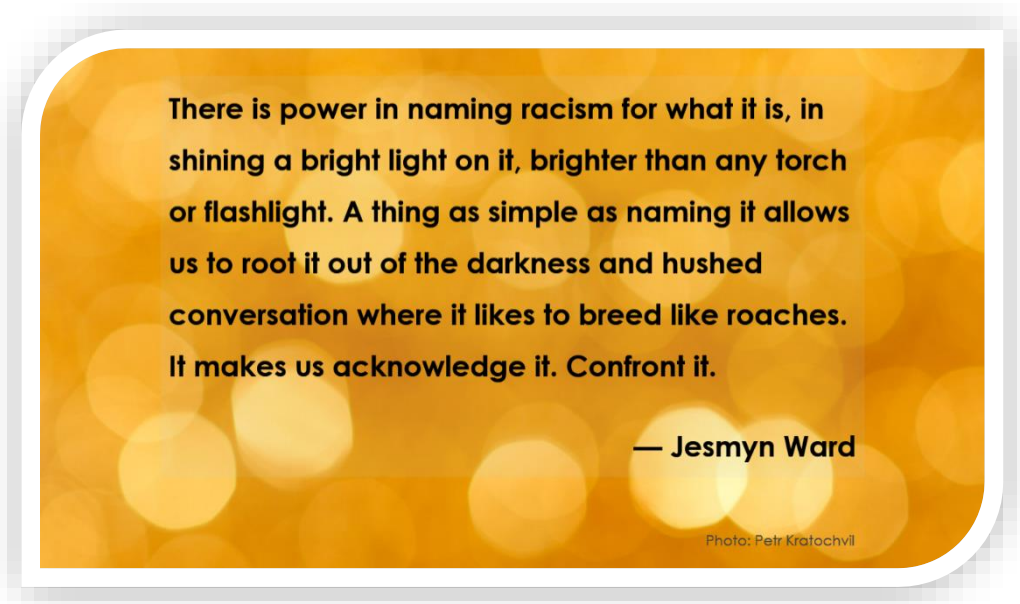
FIGURE 22. Statement from Task Force Member, Allison Spector

Dear Governor Inslee,

Today I am writing you in regards to an incontrovertible truth that the work of promoting equity must be *all our work*. If we are to ever reach an equitable future, we must disrupt and dismantle our existing infrastructures of oppression. The coronavirus pandemic and the actions of police brutality have further exposed the devastating state of racism and its many related forms of discrimination that exist in our society. The oppression and erasure

FIGURE 22. Statement from Task Force Member, Allison Spector

embedded in every part of our lives, including our state government, has become undeniable.

A spark for substantive change has become a conflagration —the kind that is at the heart of your convening of the Office of Equity Task Force. Your leadership set in motion a conversation about how to lift equity higher in state government. You have encouraged us "to push for justice and to hold our current institutions of power and privilege responsible." You have stated that we all have "a responsibility to work for meaningful systemic change." **A Washington State Office of Equity is central to making that vision a reality.** Your leadership is needed now more than ever. Our state's populace is waiting to see that vision demonstrated through actions. As best said by Harvey Milk, "burst down those closet doors once and for all, and stand up and start to fight."

The Office of Equity also presents an opportunity to bring an end to what has been a long history of oppression and inequity that people have inflicted upon each other since the beginning. Human civilization has only been in existence for about 6,000 years. And in that time, it has only been in the last century that the idea of equity has come to the forefront. From the Turco-Mongol invasions that killed an estimated five percent of the world's population, to the Nazi holocaust –most of human history is best captured by Thomas Hobbes most famous saying that "the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." European colonialism. American slavery. The examples are endless. This is a cycle that we can and must break. The Office of Equity can be an effective tool to spearhead that change.

Communities across the state are demanding change. It is time for us show up in this critical moment as our most visionary and powerful selves to ensure that this time will be different.

Ending the cycle of oppression is the struggle of our lifetime. However, it is a struggle worth having. Many people in the past risked and suffered far more than what we could ever experience. From Harriet Tubman who won her freedom only to risk it time and again to liberate others, to our nation's fight to end the institution of slavery –the sacrifices required by us are small in comparison. I take personal inspiration from an ancestor who was killed, along with 10,000 of his fellow union soldiers, charging up the hill during the Battle of Fredericksburg. He gave his life to end slavery as an institution. It is time for us to finish the job. **I urge you to adequately invest in the Office of Equity as a demonstration of our state's commitment to affirming the humanity, dignity, and equal value of every Washingtonian.**

— Allison Spector, Task Force Member

With Investment: A Fully Functional and Effective Office of Equity

The Office of Equity must be nimble enough to respond to the evolving pandemic and ensuing economic crisis. At the same time, it must build a strong foundation for long-term success, which includes fostering relationships of trust with tribes, agency staff and management, and communities. In building resiliency and its own capacity, the Office of Equity will be better able to serve agencies and communities as issues and conditions change.

The recommendations in this section illustrate how a fully resourced and effective Office of Equity will lead our state in transparently and accountably changing the way government does business, so that all Washingtonians are able to fully access opportunities and thrive. They mirror the recommendations in the Task Force's preliminary report, with the following changes: an expansion of roles and responsibilities to incorporate feedback from communities and focus groups; and a revision of a few staff roles to reflect the Task Force's conversation with state ombuds offices.

Roles and Responsibilities for a Fully Resourced Office of Equity

FIGURE 23. Summary Table – Roles and Responsibilities for a Fully Resourced Office of Equity	
REC 1 **Guide Enterprise-wide Efforts through a Unified Vision of Equity**	➤ Establish a shared understanding of 'equity' that relates to government and communities ➤ Adopt an intersectional, multi-dimensional framework ➤ Promote a shared understanding of equity-related terms and concepts ➤ Get ongoing community guidance on definitions and statements ➤ In partnership with GOIA, establish the appropriate level of communication and consultation with tribal governments, non-federally recognized tribes, and American Indian organizations
REC 2A **Serve as a Conduit between Government & Communities**	➤ Maintain a feedback loop with communities ➤ Share power and resources, and promote meaningful opportunities for engagement ➤ Build connectivity with communities that are underrepresented or isolated ➤ Convene a Community Advisory Board to set the Office's priorities and timelines ➤ Review and recommend changes to policies that govern board/commission membership and compensation ➤ Recommend strategies on how to center community voice in order to deliver barrier-free access to government services *[Continues on the next page.]*

	FIGURE 23. Summary Table – Roles and Responsibilities for a Fully Resourced Office of Equity
REC 2B **Build Synergy with Partners in DEI**	➢ Build collaborative, complementary relationships with partners in DEI ➢ Co-create resources and strategies ➢ Weave together efforts to ensure coordination and forward momentum ➢ Ensure all communities and identities are represented
REC 2C **Serve as a Conduit for State Institutions**	➢ Facilitate collaboration between agencies ➢ Facilitate systems and policy change ➢ Coordinate/convene workgroups to establish standards and produce innovative solutions ➢ Maintain an inventory of DEI efforts within and across agencies
REC 3 **Provide Guidance & Technical Assistance to Foster Systems & Policy Change**	➢ Serve as a clearinghouse for tools and resources ➢ Provide guidance and technical assistance to agencies on language assistance services ➢ Promote an 'upstream' approach focused on root causes ➢ Promote equitable decision-making practices ➢ Require every agency to have a DEI plan, and assist with plan development ➢ Require each agency to designate a 'DEI Liaison' who reports directly to the executive ➢ Establish a community of practice for mutual support and resource sharing ➢ Work with GOIA to uphold the significance of government-to-government relations and the expectation for working with sovereign nations
REC 4 **Build a Diverse, Culturally Humble Workforce that Reflects the Communities we Serve**	➢ Collaborate with OFM and DES to identify workforce development needs, and develop policies and training on maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and culturally sensitive workforce ➢ Engage agency leadership and support their development in DEI-related areas ➢ Help ensure practices in DEI are applied to the full employment life cycle ➢ Elevate employee voices and work on equity issues that are important to them *[Continues on the next page.]*

	FIGURE 23. Summary Table – Roles and Responsibilities for a Fully Resourced Office of Equity	

REC 5
 	
Set Expectations, Measure Progress, and Ensure Accountability
	➢ Lend visibility to important issues that are unheard or unseen
	
	➢ Build the infrastructure to measure and show progress in a transparent way:
	
	    o Establish standards that apply across the enterprise
	
	    o Work with Results WA (or the equivalent performance management department within the Office of the Governor) and agencies to create agency-specific performance measures and a public dashboard to publish outcomes
	
	    o Shine a light on how data should be collected and used, and convene a workgroup to establish standards for the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data
	
	    o Work with OFM and DES to coordinate messages on the prospects and use of workforce data
	
	➢ Model a supportive and engaging approach when working with agencies
	
	➢ Support performance improvement process
	
	➢ Publish each agency's performance and progress over their baseline
	
	➢ Use rule-making authority to establish regulations around DEI plans, performance reviews, and other accountability processes
	
	➢ Report directly to the Governor and submit a report to the Legislature every biennium
	
	➢ Ensure the appointment process for the Office of Equity's Executive Director safeguards the Office's credibility and resiliency

REC 6 **Reconvene the Task Force to:**	➢ Evaluate the state's implementation of an Office of Equity, including the level of funding provided for its operation ➢ Review guidance from the Community Advisory Board, the Office of Equity's strategic plan, strategic goals and standards for the enterprise, agency-specific performance measures and outcomes, and the state of DEI efforts across the enterprise ➢ Recommend any needed changes to the Office of Equity's operation and strategies

REC 1: Guide Enterprise-wide Efforts through a Unified Vision of Equity

◈ **Establish a shared understanding of 'equity' that relates both inward and outward, allowing everyone to relate it to themselves and their work**

◈ **Adopt an intersectional, multi-dimensional framework**

◈ **Promote a shared understanding of equity-related terms and concepts**

◈ **Get ongoing community guidance on the definition of 'equity,' equity statement, and vision and mission statements**

◈ **In partnership with GOIA, establish the appropriate level of communication and consultation with tribal governments, non-federally recognized tribes, and other American Indian organizations**

The Office of Equity, within the Office of the Governor, should serve a non-duplicative, coordinating role. The Office should provide a unified vision around equity for all state agencies, ensuring the state steps together in the same direction by prioritizing goals and implementing effective strategies around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). As a central entity coordinating and elevating these priorities, the Office of Equity will help normalize language and concepts around equity, racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion.

> *"I would like to see the state take unified action across all state agencies—with similar definitions of equity, similar access to training, similar expectations for review and revision of policy and practice."*
>
> — Community Member

The Office of Equity should adopt an intersectional, multi-dimensional framework, and promote this approach across the enterprise. In collaboration with the WA State DEI Council, the Office of Equity should use the glossary of equity-related terms (see page 57) to create a shared understanding of terms, concepts, and expectations across the enterprise.

- **Intersectional**: Takes into account people's overlapping identities to understand the complexity of their life outcomes and experiences. Deals with multiple forms of discrimination (e.g. ableism, racism, sexism, ageism, classism, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity) that compound oppression.

- **Multi-dimensional**: Deals with exclusions and inequities across multiple mutually-reinforcing contexts, including social, political, economic, cultural, etc.

Equity-related terms and guiding statements, including the Office of Equity's mission and vision, should be regularly updated with input from tribes, communities, and state employees to ensure they reflect their priorities and encompass the uniqueness of identities and experiences.

"There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."

— Audre Lorde

Government-to-Government Relations: As sovereign nations, tribes have the right to self-determination and the authority to self-govern. The Office of Equity should work with the Governor's Office on Indian Affairs (GOIA), and in accordance with the Centennial Accord, to establish the appropriate level of communication and consultation with tribal governments, non-federally recognized tribes, and other American Indian organizations. The Office of Equity must:

- Recognize that each sovereign tribe has an independent relationship with each other and the state; and

- Make reasonable efforts to collaborate with tribes in the development of policies, agreements, and program implementation that directly affect tribes.

FIGURE 24. Recommended Roles for the Office of Equity
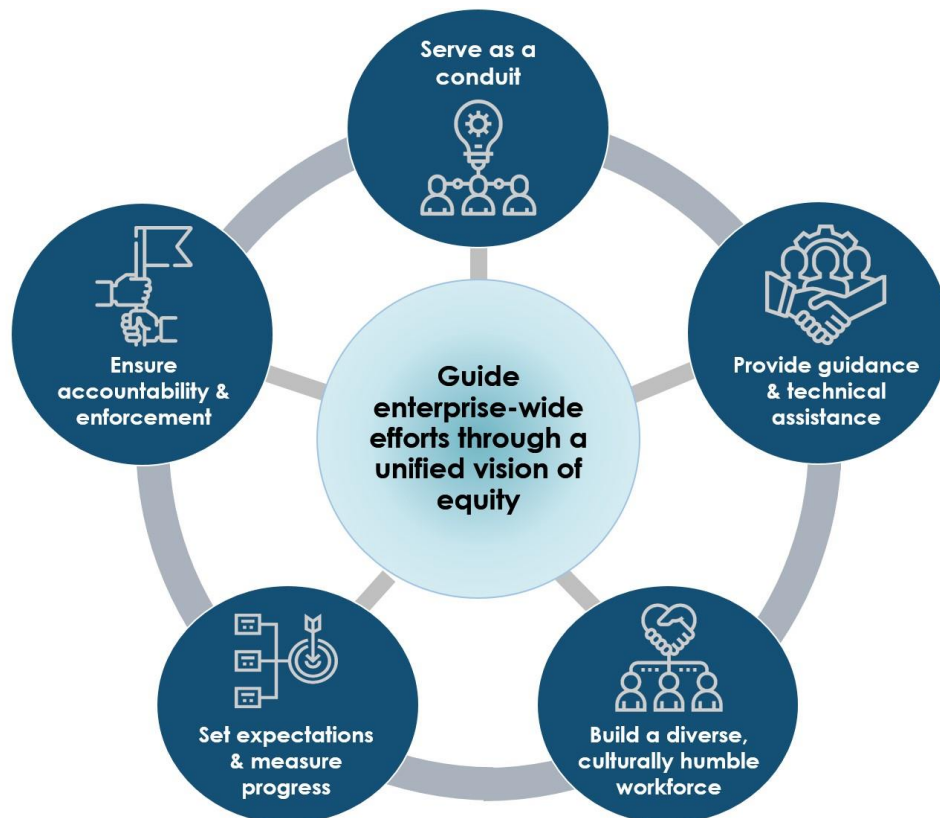
REC 2A: Serve as a Conduit between Government & Communities

◈ **Maintain a feedback loop with communities to ensure statewide efforts are prioritizing community voice and meeting community needs**

◈ **Share power and resources, and promote meaningful opportunities for community engagement**

◈ **In partnership with other groups, build connectivity with communities that are underrepresented or isolated (geographically, technologically, etc.)**

◈ **Convene the Community Advisory Board that sets the Office's priorities and timelines**

◈ **Review and recommend changes to policies that govern board/commission membership and compensation**

◈ **Recommend strategies to agencies on how to center community voice in order to deliver barrier-free access to government services**

All agencies and entities in state government should center meaningful community engagement. Further, there should be no wrong door for community and the Office of Equity, along with agencies and commissions, should serve as conduits between state government and communities. This is not about duplicating work—it is about modeling that state government is stronger when we work together. This connection also ensures the statewide vision of equity is driven by community aspirations and needs. The Office of Equity should model the community engagement recommendations outlined in this proposal, which includes providing resources to communities so they can lead in the creation of information about and for them.

> *"Whether we define community by geography or identity, communities hold the solutions."*
>
> — Christy Curwick Hoff, Manager, Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities

The Office of Equity should work with the following key partners, among others, to develop equitable policies and build connectivity among communities that have been historically underserved and underrepresented:

- Business and Employee Resource Groups
- Racial and ethnic commissions, including the Commission on African American Affairs (CAAA), the Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA), and the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA);
- The Women's Commission;

- The LGBTQ Commission;
- The Human Rights Commission;
- The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment.

Community Advisory Board: To remain **accountable to communities**, the Office of Equity should convene a Community Advisory Board that sets its priorities and timelines.[37] Participation on the Board should be barrier-free for all appointed members.

This Board would help the Office of Equity understand the complexity of communities, and it would be one point of access for communities to inform state government decisions in a direct way. Guidance from the Board should have a direct impact on the standards and performance measures the Office establishes for state government.

The Board must include majority representation from communities that are most impacted by government practices, policies, and funding decisions, including historically and currently marginalized communities. Membership must represent diverse opinions and backgrounds, including meaningful and comprehensive geographic representation and representation from communities that do not currently have commissions or committees that fully represent them in state government.

The Office of Equity must address barriers to participation including, but not limited to, barriers related to language access, time, cost, transportation, and full access for individuals with physical disabilities and sensory impairments. Functional technology should be provided for members who are unable to attend meetings and other gatherings in person. The Office of Equity should model practices in decolonizing boards and other government structures by identifying and dismantling culture-bound rules around decorum, time requirement, and educational and 'expertise' requirements. 'Expertise' has been narrowly defined in the past and must be redefined to prioritize community expertise around content and context.

In addition, the Task Force recommends the inclusion of state workforce partners in the membership of the Community Advisory Board, which includes, but is not limited to, the State DEI Council and Business Resource Groups (BRGs). Membership should also include representatives for communities across the state, including but not limited to: the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA) and the state commissions and committees.

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[37] The City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights convenes a Bureau Advisory Committee comprised of community members. The OEHR receives information and hears community voice through this mechanism, and OEHR staff are also directly connected to communities.

With internal and external membership on the Community Advisory Board, the Office may need to consider whether processes need to be established to prevent any potential conflicts of interest.

The Task Force recognizes the unique and varying roles of commissions and committees, including the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA), the LGBTQ Commission, the Women's Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Commission on African American Affairs (CAAA), the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA), the Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA), and the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE). **Commissions are uniquely positioned to serve as focal points in state government to represent and elevate their communities' needs. The Community Advisory Board would not be duplicating or replacing these efforts.** The Office of Equity should work in partnership with and/or contract with these existing commissions and committees to help unite efforts in a way that does not duplicate or supplant them.

> *"With mutual support, the Office of Equity can give the LGBTQ Commission more power and authority to represent its community."*
>
> — J. Manny Santiago, Executive Director, LGBTQ Commission

Community Participation on Boards: More generally, the Office of Equity should support strong community participation on government boards and commissions. To remove barriers to participation, the Office should review and recommend changes to:

1. statutes that govern the compensation of board and commission members; and
2. application processes for board and commission membership.

Workgroups, such as councils, commissions, and boards are often governed by statute that prohibits member reimbursement unless the agency/organization obtains an exemption. Even with an exemption, members of advisory boards can only be reimbursed for certain expenses and are not compensated for their time.[38] These barriers place the burden on community members to volunteer their time and other resources, which can be prohibitive. Providing input and feedback should not come at a cost to communities. The Office of Equity should lead the way in formalizing a process that compensates members for their time and provides upfront financial support for mileage, lodging, and meals.

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[38] Washington State Legislature. Chapter 43.03.220 RCW: Compensation of members of part-time boards and commissions—Class one groups. Retrieved from: https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.03.220.
Office of Financial Management. State Administrative & Accounting Manual (SAAM): Chapter 10.70: Boards, Commissions, or Committees. Retrieved from: http://www.ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/legacy/policy/10.70.htm.

The Office of the Governor is responsible for appointing members to over 230 boards and commissions. Individuals interested in serving on one of these boards or commissions must submit an application, which includes the following fields:

- Board/commission meetings are held during the day. Are you able to come participate in day meetings? (No/Yes)
- Employment/Experience with fields for job title and employer information

While these questions are not required, they can deter some individuals from applying and therefore serve as potential barriers. The Office of Equity should review these practices, among others, to recommend changes to the structures that promote opportunities for some populations and communities while restricting opportunities for others.

> *"[I]t is the intent of the legislature that the office and the commissions shall work in a complementary manner with each other, support each other's work, jurisdictions, and missions, and adequately fund the commissions and the office as they take on their new complementary roles."*
>
> — Chapter 332, Laws of 2020 (Office of Equity)

REC 2B: Build Synergy with Partners in DEI

◈ **Build collaborative, complementary relationships with partners in DEI**

◈ **Co-create resources and strategies**

◈ **Weave together efforts to ensure coordination and forward momentum**

◈ **Ensure all communities and identities are represented**

The Office of Equity should build collaborative, complementary relationships with commissions, committees, and other groups that have missions centered on employee and community representation, protection of human and civil rights, and the promotion of equitable, inclusive government.[39] While these groups represent certain communities and sectors, the Office of Equity will be positioned to partner with State Human Resources (OFM SHR) and the Department of Enterprise Services Workforce Support and Development (DES WSD) to consider

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[39] These groups include: Commission on African American Affairs, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, Washington State LGBTQ Commission, Washington State Women's Commission, Human Rights Commission, State DEI Council, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises, the business/employee resource groups, and more.

> *"I see the Office of Equity as a hub for resources and guidelines, weaving together efforts and strategies among partners to ensure coordination and forward momentum."*
>
> — Elizabeth Gordon, Executive Director, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE)

the whole picture (across the enterprise and across populations) in order to identify and lead efforts in reducing inequities.

The Office of Equity should serve as a hub for resources and guidelines, weaving together efforts and strategies among partners to ensure coordination and forward momentum. The Office should develop the tools and standards that agencies use to consider the impact of their decisions on specific communities and populations. When working with agencies, the Office should leverage partners' expertise to provide agencies with population-specific resources (e.g. appropriate service delivery, engagement, and communication).

Efforts should also include working with key partners, such as State Human Resources and Workforce Services and Development, to:

- Provide assistance to agencies;

- Promote education and outreach;

- Facilitate spaces for discussion and planning;

- Create shared resources in partnership with communities;

- Create uniformity in equity-related language and competencies;

- Inform workforce development and training in DEI and cultural humility;

- Ensure all communities and identities are represented in processes;

Photo Credit: Richard Lee

"The art of flocking: staying separate enough not to crowd each other, aligned enough to maintain a shared direction, and cohesive enough to always move towards each other. (Responding to destiny together.) Destiny is a calling that creates a beautiful journey."

(adrienne maree brown)

- Identify policy and systems barriers to participation and services (e.g. language access barriers), and make recommendations to eliminate barriers; and

- Support each other's priority issues and legislative advocacy.
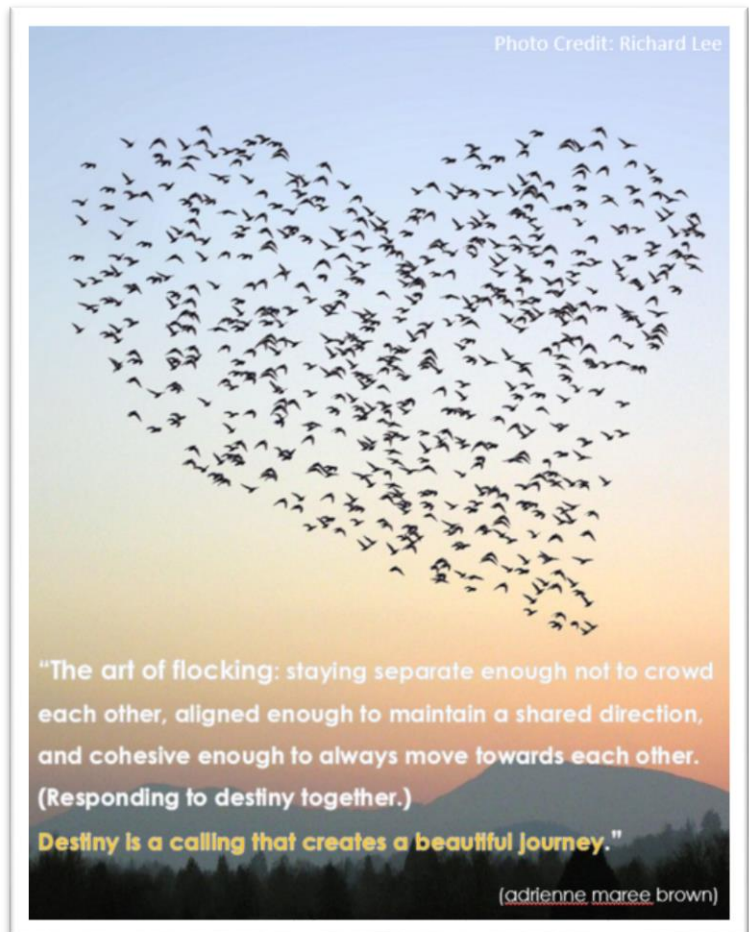
FIGURE 25. The Office of Equity as a Coordinating Entity
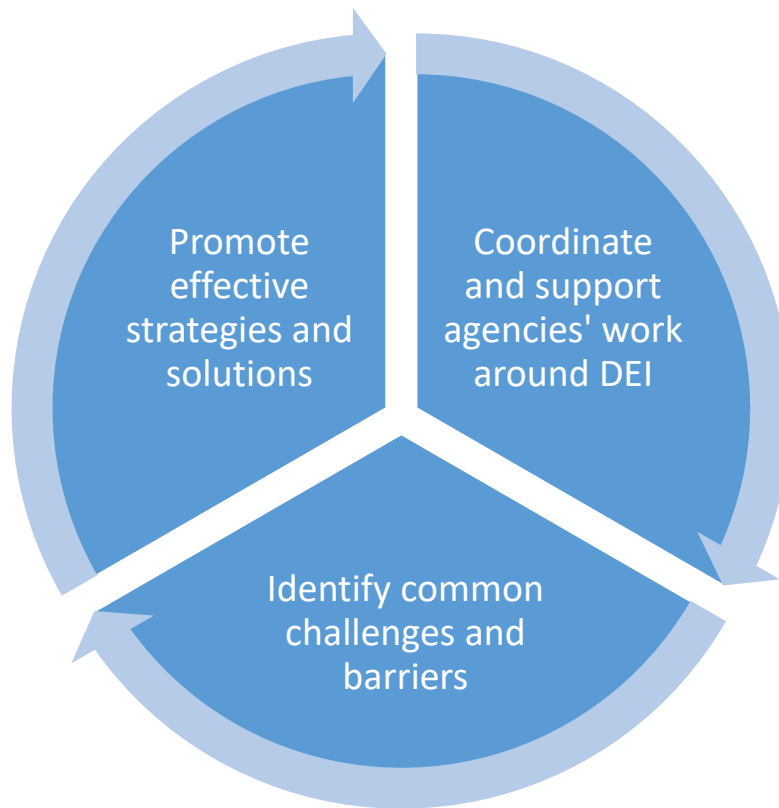
- Promote effective strategies and solutions
- Coordinate and support agencies' work around DEI
- Identify common challenges and barriers

REC 2C: Serve as a Conduit for State Institutions

◈ **Facilitate collaboration between agencies**

◈ **Facilitate systems and policy change**

◈ **Coordinate/ convene workgroups to establish standards and produce innovative solutions**

◈ **Maintain an inventory of DEI efforts within and across agencies**

Many participants in our focus groups expressed the need for more interagency coordination and collaboration, so agencies can work together across issues and sectors to eliminate disparities and promote better outcomes. Agency staff said it is difficult to identify their counterparts (i.e. DEI practitioners) at other agencies and keep track of other agencies' efforts. They expressed the need for guidance and technical assistance from a central entity in government. They would like the Office of Equity to offer consultation to staff as they apply general standards to their unique agency context.

Coordination and Collaboration: **The Office of Equity should coordinate DEI responsibilities to ensure government is addressing the most pressing needs with the most impactful strategies.** In partnership with State Human Resources and the Department of Enterprise Services' Workforce Support and Development, the Office of Equity should support consistent messaging around priorities, requirements, and standards. As a conduit between state institutions, the Office should ensure everyone doing related work is talking to each other by providing accessible channels for these groups to connect and share information. The Office should maintain an inventory of DEI efforts within and across agencies, so staff can easily identify their counterparts and connect to learn about others' efforts and successes.

While the Office of Equity's focus will be on the executive branch of government, it should serve as the channel for collaboration with the judicial and legislative branches. In particular, the Office should collaborate with the Minority and Justice Commission and the Gender and Justice Commission as they work to eliminate biases in our judicial systems.

REC 3: Provide Guidance and Technical Assistance to Foster Systems and Policy Change

- ◈ **Serve as a clearinghouse for tools and resources**
- ◈ **Provide guidance and technical assistance to agencies on language assistance services**
- ◈ **Promote an 'upstream' approach focused on root causes**
- ◈ **Promote equitable decision-making practices**
- ◈ **Require every agency to have a DEI plan and provide assistance with plan development**
- ◈ **Require every agency to designate a 'DEI Liaison' who reports directly to the executive**
- ◈ **Establish a community of practice for mutual support and resource sharing**
- ◈ **Work with GOIA to uphold the significance of government-to-government relations and the expectation for working with sovereign nations**

The Office of Equity should lead with values and use stories, data (quantitative and qualitative), frameworks, tools, and other resources to facilitate systems and culture change. It should foster a learning environment that meets agencies 'where they are,' guiding staff/agencies just beginning this work and those with more experience.

Clearinghouse and Repository: The Office of Equity should serve as a clearinghouse for tools and resources, including equity impact assessments. Within and across agencies, there is variation in resources, capacity, and commitment to furthering DEI work. Efforts and expenditures become redundant when each agency must independently seek out promising models, tools, and practices to inform its work. The cost of entry for this type of work can be prohibitive for smaller agencies. The Office of Equity can help agencies avoid unnecessary costs and establish standards for these resources to ensure transparency and accountability.

Focus group participants expressed the need for a centralized place in government (i.e. evolving repository) where they can access DEI-related tools and resources. The Office of Equity should not 'reinvent the wheel.' Instead, it should vet resources

> *"We have tons of evidence on what doesn't work. We need more on what does work."*
>
> — Focus Group Participant

to ensure only those that have been shown to be effective are shared across agencies. One participant said there are many people offering consultation services, but there is a huge range in quality. The Office of Equity should organize and promote high quality resources, services, meetings, and events.

In areas where enterprise-wide guidance is most lacking, such as standards for language assistance and data disaggregation, the Office should convene experts from agencies and communities to help produce resources.

Language Assistance Services:[40] The Office of Equity should provide technical assistance on every aspect of language assistance services and serve as a clearinghouse for the development and sharing of resources, leading to greater consistency in practices and coordination between state agencies.

Historically, agency development of language assistance services has been driven in response to litigation and civil rights complaints. Currently, agencies create and implement language assistance services to varying degrees. Instead of recreating tools and wasting extensive staff time to research and learn complex topics, a centralized technical assistance program will streamline these efforts and reduce administrative costs. Proactive culturally and linguistically

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[40] Language Assistance Services are defined as: "Oral and written language services needed to assist LEP individuals to communicate effectively with staff, and to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to, and an equal opportunity to participate fully in, the services, activities, or other programs". Limited English Proficient (LEP) Individuals are those "…who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. LEP individuals may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding), but still be LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing)." Department of Justice Language Access Plan (2012). Retrieved at: https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/open/legacy/2012/05/07/language-access-plan.pdf.

appropriate engagement with community partners improves community relations and helps to ensure that services provided are equitable as well as effective.

All sectors would benefit from a statewide coordinating entity that promotes comprehensive, high-quality language access services. As an example, language barriers figure prominently among the social determinants of health, and these barriers exact a high price in personal and societal costs, including monetary costs to individuals, families, governments, health care systems, employers, and insurers. State agencies promote equity when they provide language assistance services in a coordinated and community-oriented manner.

> *"We would realize that it costs us more to continue investing in a broken paradigm over the long-term than to humble ourselves and take care of our people."*
>
> — Community Member

Administrative cost savings to agencies will accrue when the Office of Equity coordinates the following activities:

- Sharing resources across agencies;

- Developing model policies and practices;

- Building interagency partnerships to find areas for collaboration, leveraging resources, and reducing redundancies;

- Leveraging available expertise, including contracts, to minimize duplication; and

- Establishing quality control measures to reduce errors.

For example, in the area of translations (i.e. written communications), informed quality control measures should eliminate the need for corrective steps such as re-publication of print or web materials where errors are identified too late in the process. Another example of administrative efficiency is related to gathering data on community language needs. With the requisite knowledge, the Office of Equity would research and provide this data to all state agencies and programs.

The WA State Office of Equity should include the staff position of Language Access Coordinator (see Organizational Structure on page 100) to help implement the recommendations outlined in this report. [41] This position will benefit WA State agencies and ultimately, tax payers, by: establishing robust standards of practice for service delivery; creating and sharing resources;

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[41] The King County Equity and Social Justice Office and the City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights have dedicated positions for language assistance services. In the Portland OEHR, a staff member in the Title VI program works on language access components, including on the standards for how documents are translated and how bureaus engage communities and individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).

reducing duplication; and streamlining administrative practices. Efficiencies at all levels of operation can be promoted through the use of centralized training and development of resources to assist agencies in complying with language access requirements, including the provision of interpreter and translation services. Additional efficiencies and cost savings can be realized through informed statewide vendor procurement processes that can address agency and client language access needs.

Applying an Equity Lens: **Agencies must apply an equity lens to all decision making.** This means intentionally, systematically identifying and analyzing impacts on underserved and marginalized individuals and groups. This process should be applied to all decision making, including in designs, processes, implementation of policies, service delivery, and the allocation of resources**. Agencies must identify and eliminate disparities and barriers; they must ensure access; they must develop, strengthen, and support policies and procedures that distribute and prioritize resources to those who have been historically and currently marginalized, including tribes.** Agencies must actively work toward procedural and outcome fairness, so that all Washingtonians have access to opportunity and are able to thrive.

For every emergency response plan, every strategic plan, every communications plan, every change management plan, every proposed piece of legislation, every new policy, every budget request, proposal, and decision, agencies must be guided by the following questions:

1. Who will this impact directly or indirectly? If there is an impact on any specific identity group, are members of that group at the table actively developing the plan?

2. Are we doing comprehensive engagement with groups to know the ways in which the most marginalized are receiving critical information? Are they helping to inform the vehicles, voices, and venues by which we communicate?

3. Are we offering a balance of content and compassion in our messaging?

4. Are we including historical, cultural, and socioeconomic context in our work?

FIGURE 26. Evidence-based Solutions

The Office of Equity should caution agencies on the use of 'evidence-based' practices when serving communities of color and other marginalized communities. One size does not fit all—practices and programs that work well in one community can have very different results in other communities. Furthermore, evidence-based practices have historically been developed through systems that exclude marginalized and oppressed groups.

Approaches must be culturally appropriate and community-specific. Agencies must adapt approaches by taking into account a community's culture, history, location, and unique circumstances. Sometimes this requires designing a new program or procedure. The most

effective strategy is to work with communities to customize programs that will work for them. The Office of Equity should provide agencies with technical assistance and tools to incorporate this community-centered strategy in their daily operations.

Equity Work is All Our Work: Agencies must ensure all staff are equipped with the proper knowledge and skills to apply an equity lens to their work, and the Office of Equity should be a resource in these efforts. Agency staff should be trained to implement an equity lens in common processes, such as the development of funding requests and bill analyses.

FIGURE 27. Fostering Culture & Systems Change by Making Equity Everyone's Work
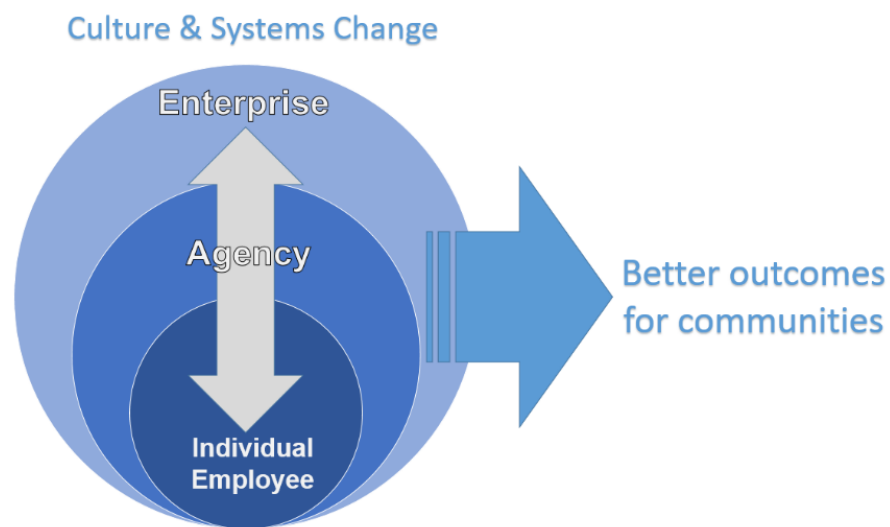
Agency DEI Plans and DEI Liaison: To ensure consistent application of standards and tools across the enterprise, the Office of Equity should require each agency to develop a DEI plan and appoint a DEI Liaison. Each agency plan must identify dedicated funding and resources for DEI work within the agency. The DEI Liaison should serve as the main point-of-contact for reporting, submitting the agency's DEI plan, and collaboration with the Office of Equity.[42] The DEI Liaison must report directly to the agency head, similar to the requirement for agency tribal liaisons set forth in RCW 43.376.020 (Government-to-government relationships—state agency duties). This

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[42] The majority of bureaus within the City of Portland have hired equity managers to advance each bureau's work on equity plans and compliance with federal laws. The OEHR provides support to these equity managers, and sits on hiring panels to help the city become more consistent in the job classification and position description for equity managers. Each position description looks different depending on the work of each bureau, but all equity managers should have direct access to the bureau director and be responsible for certain standard areas.

work should be aligned with and build off of the previous work by agencies in response to Governor Inslee's memo on Inclusive and Respectful Work Environments.

Community of Practice: The Office of Equity should serve as a central gathering space for staff across the enterprise. This 'community of practice' should be a platform for discussion, learning, and assistance. Focus group participants said they would like a central space to gather, and it is important to have frequent and intentional meetings so the same information is shared with everyone doing the same type of work. Practitioners could use this space to workshop challenges and produce innovative approaches. These individuals are instrumental in bringing back expertise and standards of practice to their respective agencies, helping implement the equity tools that change how funding and policy decisions are made.

FIGURE 28. GARE Spotlight on The City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI)

The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) features the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) in its resource guide for putting ideas into action. The following example illustrates how organizations can build infrastructure to support change:

> "RSJI helped to create 'change teams' in every city department. Change teams lead racial equity work in their department with the help of an Executive Sponsor and a liaison from RSJI. Each department has developed an annual work plan for racial equity since 2007, which can be found on the City of Seattle's website. Although consistency has varied between departments, over the course of years, the overall quality has improved, with more meaningful actions being implemented."[43]

Leveraging Resources: The Office of Equity should leverage existing efforts, including resources within agencies and commissions. This approach enables agencies to have ownership of and be accountable for their work in incorporating equity at every level of operations and within every layer of services and service delivery.

The goal should be to build a resilient system wherein the Office of Equity can devote its resources and capacity to an efficient process, while avoiding scope creep and overburden; and the enterprise experiences enduring culture and systems change.

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[43] Government Alliance on Race and Equity (2015). Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action [PDF file]. Retrieved from: https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf.

> **FIGURE 29. Leveraging Agency Resources to Facilitate Systems Change**

➢ Agencies should collect and report data to use on the public dashboard.

➢ Agencies should engage communities using best practices established by the Equity Office and commissions.

➢ Each agency should designate a 'DEI Liaison' to be the point-of-contact and take the lead in reporting, submitting the agency plan, and collaboration with the Office of Equity.

➢ With guidance and technical assistance from the Office of Equity, each agency should perform its own equity impact assessments using tools provided by/endorsed by the Office.

➢ The Office of Equity can facilitate communication between agencies and DES and OFM SHR, but DES remains the go-to agency for workforce development and OFM SHR remains the go-to agency for HR guidance/standards.

REC 4: Build a Diverse, Culturally Humble Workforce that Reflects the Communities we Serve

◈ **Collaborate with OFM, DES, and the DEI Council to identify workforce development needs, and develop policies and training on maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and culturally sensitive workforce**

◈ **Engage agency leadership and support their development in DEI-related areas**

◈ **Help ensure practices in DEI are applied to the full employment life cycle**

◈ **Elevate employee voices and work on equity issues that are important to them**

Workforce Development: The Office of Equity should collaborate with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Department for Enterprise Services (DES) to develop policies and provide technical assistance on maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and culturally sensitive workforce. **Education and training in cultural humility are foundational and should be required for all agency staff**, so they can deliver quality, effective services to communities.[44]

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[44] The City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights has a team dedicated to delivering professional development to city employees, and every city employee is required to take an Equity 101 course. This foundational course helps employees understand the OEHR's approach to equity, how equity can be applied with a city government perspective, and how equity relates to each person's role/position.

In partnership with OFM, the Office should do public outreach to identify effective methods for workforce engagement. In partnership with OFM and DES, the Office should identify needs around workforce development and culture change within state systems. Throughout these efforts, the Office of Equity should use the DEI employee competencies,[45] created by the cross-agency workgroup formed by OFM and DES, and the human resources standards and best practices set by OFM State Human Resources.

Cultural Humility: An approach to respectfully engaging others with cultural identities different from your own and recognizing that no cultural perspective is superior to another.

The Office of Equity should help develop and promote standardized employee training and policies that promote a safe and inclusive workplace, including training related to disability rights. Training should not be 'one and done.' In partnership with DES, the Office should develop training for agency staff that is consistent and includes follow-up, so concepts and skills are reinforced over time. The Office should also promote policies and practices that agencies can use to address staff concerns that do not reach the threshold of a complaint.

Engaging Leadership: The Office of Equity should build relationships with agency leadership using the business case for DEI work. It should convey that changes will not happen overnight, but they are urgently needed by the public workforce and the communities we serve. Agency leadership must match their commitment with resources, including dedicated staffing and capacity to develop and implement effective strategies that are customized to the agency's unique scope and authority. In partnership with OFM and DES, the Office of Equity should support leaders' development in DEI-related areas and expand their capacity to effect systems and culture change.

Recruitment and Employment: The Office of Equity should work with the employee unions to help ensure practices in DEI are applied to the full employment life cycle, which includes recruitment, hiring, onboarding, training, retention, and ongoing career development. Agency staff in the focus groups said they would benefit from having common strategies, practices, guidance, and expectations for all stages of the employment cycle. The Office of Equity can assist agencies in their outreach to diverse populations, and help ensure that agencies are providing intentional onboarding and career development support for staff of color and other historically marginalized groups.

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[45] Enterprise DEI Competencies—All Employees—A pathway for success. 11/18/19 Final Draft. Retrieved at: https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/shr/Diversity/SubCommit/DEI%20Competencies%20Wrkgrp%20All%20Employees%20Final%20Draft%20Accessible%2011-18-19.pdf

All agencies must implement an equity lens in their hiring processes, including when examining the application materials, when they are assembling interview panels, interviewing candidates, giving consideration to lived experience, and making efforts to increase workforce diversity so that it reflects communities served. Agencies should incorporate learning and understanding of cultural competency and DEI issues in their Human Resources programs. HR staff should use this knowledge to identify barriers that exist in teams and the organization, and be encouraged by leadership to use a human-centered approach that creates a culture that is safe for all staff to address potential issues/discomfort at the lowest possible level. The time, energy, and resources spent involved in the intake, investigation, and discipline processes could then be redirected to other efforts in building more positive and healthy workplace cultures.

> *"There is an urgent need to build the pipeline of future leaders and decision makers that get DEI and fully represent our communities."*
>
> — Focus Group Participant

Elevate Employee Voices: **The Office of Equity should work with business and employee resource groups to understand and address equity issues that are important to state employees.** The statewide business resource groups (BRGs) are employee-led groups comprised of employees and their allies who share a common interest or characteristic. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) provides staff support, but these groups are unfunded. BRGs have advocated for increased representation in workforce and leadership positions, assisted agencies in recruitment and retention efforts, and informed state strategies and policies for a safe and inclusive workplace. On an *ad hoc* basis, BGRs provide training to state agencies.

Current statewide BRGs include:[46]

- Blacks United in Leadership and Diversity (BUILD)
- Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG)
- Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN)
- Latino Leadership Network (LLN)
- Disability Inclusion Network (DIN)
- Washington Immigrant Network (WIN)

Focus group participants said BRGs have done much work, including in policy advocacy, but they lack visibility and the 'teeth' needed to ensure their recommendations are implemented. The Office of Equity should:

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[46] In addition to the statewide BRGs, individual agencies may also have their own BRGs or employee resource groups.

- **Provide support to the BRGs by advocating for resources to build/create these employee-led groups.** Support existing groups and efforts to create new resource groups. For example, it would benefit the state to create a support group for multilingual employees and advocate for more bilingual staff positions in agencies.

- **Elevate issues and help create policies to address these statewide issues.** As the Office works with leadership, including the Governor, it should elevate the issues and policy changes that matter to BRGs.

REC 5: Set Expectations, Measure Progress, and Ensure Accountability

◈ **Lend visibility to important issues that are unheard or unseen**

◈ **Build the infrastructure to measure and show progress in a transparent way:**

    ○ **Establish standards that apply across the enterprise**

    ○ **Work with Results WA (or the equivalent performance management department within the Office of the Governor) and agencies to create agency-specific performance measures and a public dashboard to publish outcomes**

    ○ **Shine a light on how data should be collected and used, and convene a workgroup to establish standards for the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data**

    ○ **Work with OFM and DES to coordinate messages on the prospects and use of workforce data**

◈ **Model a supportive and engaging approach when working with agencies**

◈ **Support performance improvement process**

◈ **Publish each agency's performance and progress over their baseline**

◈ **Use rule-making authority to establish regulations around DEI plans, performance reviews, and other accountability processes**

◈ **Report directly to the Governor and submit a report to the Legislature every biennium**

◈ **Ensure the appointment process for the Office of Equity's Executive Director safeguards the Office's credibility and resiliency**

Lend Visibility to Issues: Accountability includes highlighting and elevating issues that are normally buried, and the Office of Equity should have a central role in these efforts. It should shine a light on inequities by incorporating stories and lived experiences in its research and data to capture experiences that cannot easily be quantified. These efforts should include stories that highlight intersectionality, illustrating the diversity and interconnectedness of identities.

These stories will help the Office of Equity name power disparities and elevate the role of community assets in shaping solutions.

Enterprise-wide Standards: It is important to set standards of accountability, and the Office of Equity must model accountable behavior. The Office must be accountable to communities and responsive to their needs and aspirations. It must be accountable to the enterprise, and should take the lead in modeling equitable policies and practices. To promote consistency and accountability throughout the enterprise, the Office of Equity should create strategic goals and broad standards that still allow meaningful customization within each agency. Goals and standards must be community-driven.

Measuring Progress in a Transparent Way: The Office of Equity should systematically measure progress to see whether there are shifts in institutional practices, policies, and funding decisions that lead to better outcomes for communities. Agency-specific performance measures should be community-informed and tell a meaningful story about individual and community wellbeing. For a more transparent and accountable government, the Office of Equity should maintain performance information on an online dashboard.

Disaggregated Data and Decolonizing Data: Collecting and sharing data in a transparent manner are important for tracking progress. Consistency in data collection is critical in telling the story of access, opportunity, and outcomes in our systems. The Office of Equity should set standards and expectations around data collection, analysis, and reporting to ensure that quality, meaningful data is consistently available and shareable across state government. It should convene a workgroup—composed of Results WA (or the equivalent performance management department within the Office of the Governor), agency staff, and community representatives—to establish standards for the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data regarding race and ethnicity, including subracial and subethnic populations. In addition, the Office of Equity should support the movement for Indigenous data sovereignty and the decolonization of data (see Figure 30 on page 97).

Workforce Data: The Office of Equity should work with OFM State Human Resources to identify existing workforce data standards, and explore areas where data can and should be further disaggregated. In partnership with OFM State Human Resources and other agencies, the Office should create consistent messaging around the benefits of collecting public workforce data and provide information about: why data is collected; what data is used for/what it is not used for; and how workforce data can inform changes that benefit the public workforce and communities.

FIGURE 30. Data Sovereignty & Decolonizing Data

The Office of Equity should support the movement for Indigenous data sovereignty and the decolonization of data. It should promote best practices for supporting Indigenous peoples' rights to control data that is from and about them.

"**Indigenous data sovereignty** is the right of a nation to govern the collection, ownership, and application of its own data. It derives from tribes' inherent right to govern their peoples, lands, and resources."[47]

Abigail Echo-Hawk is the Chief Research Officer at the Seattle Indian Health Board. She creates programs and databases aimed at better serving Indigenous communities. Echo-Hawk states:

> "When we think about data, and how it's been gathered, is that, from marginalized communities, it was never gathered to help or serve us. It was primarily done to show the deficits in our communities, to show where there are gaps. And it's always done from a deficit-based framework… What they don't talk about is the strengths of our community. What we know, particularly for indigenous people, is that there was a genocide and assimilation policies and termination policies that were perpetuated against us. If they had worked, we wouldn't be here. And so we were always strength-based people, who passed on and continued knowledge systems regardless of people who tried to destroy us.

> "**Decolonizing data** means that the community itself is the one determining…the information they want us to gather. Why are we gathering it? Who's interpreting it? And are we interpreting it in a way that truly serves our communities?

> "**Decolonizing data** is about controlling our own story, and making decisions based on what is best for our people. That hasn't been done in data before, and that's what's shifting and changing."[48]

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[47] United States Indigenous Data Sovereignty Network. Promoting Indigenous Data Sovereignty through Decolonizing Data and Indigenous Data Governance. Retrieved from: https://usindigenousdata.org/.

[48] Secaira, Manola (2019). Abigail Echo-Hawk on the art and science of 'decolonizing data.' Retrieved from: https://crosscut.com/2019/05/abigail-echo-hawk-art-and-science-decolonizing-data.

Support and Engagement: Ultimately, agency accountability is not about receiving a grade, but about impacting lives across the state in a positive way. While it is the responsibility of each agency to improve their procedures and outcomes, the Office of Equity should meet agencies where they are and provide assistance for improvement.

The Office of Equity should provide customized assistance to agencies. It should assess each agency's performance and produce a report that details the agency's strengths and accomplishments, areas for continued improvement, and areas for corrective action. In response to these assessments, each agency must submit a plan and timeline for improvement, which includes: an acknowledgement of areas to address; a plan with action steps to address each area; and a timeline with milestones for progress checks. Reports and agency improvement plans should be posted online to promote transparency in this process.

The Office of Equity should recognize and leverage accomplishments. It should identify leading agencies that have made great strides to improve organizational culture, practices, and outcomes. These leaders are instrumental in inspiring and assisting other agencies, and the Office should provide space for them to share promising practices with others.

Rule-making: The Office of Equity must have adequate authority, including rule-making authority, to make accountability actionable. It should develop rules, with agency and community engagement, to regulate the following agency responsibilities and processes:

- Development and submittal of agency DEI plans;

- Development and maintenance of written policies and plans for language access;

- Designation of a DEI liaison, who reports directly to the agency head;

- Provision of data and information to the Office of Equity that is needed to assess an agency's performance and progress;

- Collaboration with the Office of Equity to establish performance measures;

- Responding to the Office of Equity's report on agency performance; and

- Consequences for non-compliance or non-improvement.

Reporting Structure: The Office should report directly to the Governor and submit a report to the Legislature at least every biennium (one report every 2 years) to show agencies' progress. The Office should share this report with the broad public.

In addition, the Office of Equity's credibility and momentum rely on its ability to be resilient to changes in executive leadership and shifting priorities. The Task Force understands that the

Governor is the appointing authority for the Executive Director in accordance with E2SHB 1783 (2020). However, to ensure that the Executive Director position is insulated from leadership changes and shifting priorities and remains accountable to the public workforce and communities, the Task Force recommends the following appointment process:

- The inaugural Executive Director should be appointed by the Governor with the consent of the members who served on the Office of Equity Task Force; and

- Subsequent directors should be appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Community Advisory Board.

> *"There will be pushback. Sometimes it will not be apparent—there could be efforts on the side and efforts to dismantle the Office over time. How can we make the Office sustainable?"*
>
> — Focus Group Participant

FIGURE 31. Accountability in Multiple Forms

Guidance and Technical Assistance

Provide agencies with the tools and assistance they need to implement equitable practices

Setting Standards and Measuring Process

Create standards for tools, practices, and resources

Assist with agency DEI plans, and promote self-accountability and transparency

Work with agencies to develop agency-specific performance measures; conduct performance reviews

Maintain a public dashboard that shows performance and progress

Enforcement

Recognize accomplishments

Help identify areas for improvement

Establish rules for acountability processes

Enact consequences for non-compliance or non-improvement

REC 6: Reconvene this Task Force

The Legislature should fund the reconvening of this Task Force to evaluate the state's implementation of an Office of Equity and review the Office's progress. The Task Force should be responsible for recommending any needed changes to the Office of Equity's operations and strategies. At a minimum, the reconvened Task Force should review:

- The level of staffing and funding provided to the Office of Equity for its operation;
- Guidance to the Office of Equity from the Community Advisory Board;
- The Office of Equity's strategic plan;
- The broad strategic goals and standards for the enterprise related to DEI;
- Agency-specific performance measures and outcomes; and
- The state of DEI efforts across the enterprise.

Organizational Structure for a Fully Functional and Effective Office of Equity

A fully functional and effective Office of Equity must employ staff to fulfill, at minimum, the following duties:

- Provide office administration and oversight
- Fully engage state agencies and communities
- Ensure government-to-government relations with tribes
- Staff the Community Advisory Board and workgroups
- Provide guidance and technical assistance to agencies, including in the area of language assistance services
- Share best practices, frameworks, and tools
- Facilitate interagency coordination and collaboration
- Conduct research, policy analysis, and advocacy
- Assist with agency-level and enterprise-wide change management
- Create agency-specific performance measures
- Promote transparency and accountability, including publishing measures and outcomes
- Help resolve barriers, conduct performance reviews, and support improvement processes

Staff Positions

The Task Force recommends the following staffing structure—each position is tied directly to the proposed functions outlined in this proposal. This overall level of staffing (25 FTE) is the minimum requirement for a fully effective Office of Equity.

Executive Director (1.0 FTE)

- Oversees administration, programs, and strategic planning
- Represents the Office in formal interactions with tribal governments, the Legislature, agencies, and communities

Executive Assistant (1.0 FTE)

- Principal assistant for administrative matters to the Executive Director
- Provides office management, support for communications and projects, and some functions related to Human Resources

Administrative Assistant (2.0 FTE)

- Performs varied administrative and secretarial support duties
- Responsible for one or more major program activities

Ombuds Liaison (1.0 FTE)

- In partnership with state ombuds offices, identify systemic barriers and develop all-systems, holistic approaches to dismantle inequities.

Agency Liaison Lead (1.0 FTE)

- Provides guidance and technical assistance to agencies
- Communicates the Office of Equity's guidelines and recommendations
- Coordinates the work of Agency Liaisons under a strategic framework and consistent messaging

Agency Liaisons (4.0 FTE)

- Connects agency staff to each other and to the tools they need
- Provides guidance and technical assistance to agencies for DEI plans, frameworks, tools
- Maintains an inventory of DEI efforts across agencies
- Works with the Data Manager, Language Access Coordinator, Results WA or equivalent performance management department with the Office of the Governor, and agencies to establish agency-specific performance measures

Language Access Coordinator (1.0 FTE)

- Communicates the Office of Equity's language access guidelines and recommendations
- Provides policy analysis and recommendations on language access topics
- Provides technical assistance to agencies regarding language access and language assistive services
- Maintains a language access toolkit for agencies including: tools, resources, and model plans, policies, and procedures
- Creates model policies and procedures for language data collection, reporting, and analysis on language assistance needs, delivery of services, and outcomes
- Helps identify and promote innovative language access practices by drawing from the resources and experiences of agencies in WA and other states, language communities, non-governmental organizations, and academia

Innovations Manager (1.0 FTE)

- Establishes the Office's role as a leader in DEI efforts
- Helps identify and promote innovative approaches by convening practitioners from state agencies, academia, and communities
- Manages accessible platforms for the exchange of information and best practices
- Staffs workgroups
- Works with the Engagement Lead to align the Office's policies and practices with the Community Advisory Board's recommendations

Innovations Officers (2.0 FTE)

- Helps identify and promote innovative approaches by convening practitioners from state agencies, academia, and communities
- Manages accessible platforms for the exchange of information and best practices
- Provides support to agencies for change management

Data Manager (1.0 FTE)

- Works with the Language Access Coordinator, Results WA (or the equivalent performance management department within the Office of the Governor), and agencies to establish performance measures
- Maintains a public dashboard that incorporates performance measures, performance reports, community priorities, and stories of lived experience
- Convenes a workgroup to establish standards for the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data
- Provides technical support to agencies around disaggregated data
- Designs and directs research projects

Project Manager (1.0 FTE)

- Helps maintain the public dashboard
- Works with Results WA (or the equivalent performance management department within the Office of the Governor) and agencies to establish performance measures
- Promotes best practices for decolonizing data
- Fulfills external data requests, and performs research and analyses for the Office

Tribal Liaison (1.0 FTE)

- Coordinates the government-to-government relationship between the Office and federally recognized Indian tribes, including establishing a consultation process
- Works with GOIA and agencies to address emerging issues

Performance Review Lead (1.0 FTE)

- Leads the performance team in conducting reviews of agency performance and progress using established measures
- Ensures community engagement is central in the performance review process
- Ensures all assessments include more than quantitative data, so that non-quantifiable experiences are meaningfully captured and considered
- Recommends consequences for non-compliance or non-improvement

Performance Analysts (2.0 FTE)

- Conducts reviews of agency performance and progress using established measures
- Compiles reports that cover an agency's strengths/accomplishments, areas for improvement, and areas for corrective action
- Works with agency staff and other Office of Equity staff to support agency improvement process

Legislative Director (1.0 FTE)

- Advises the Executive Director on all legislative areas
- Leads in the development of policy positions and legislative initiatives
- Maintains and promotes government relations with agencies and public constituents

Policy Analyst (1.0 FTE)

- Tracks legislation and assigns bills to staff for analysis
- Performs policy analysis and conducts research projects
- Supports the Legislative Director in maintaining government relations

Engagement Lead (1.0 FTE)

- Supports the Community Advisory Board and organizes meetings
- Works with commissions and other key partners to recommend best practices for community outreach and engagement
- Works with commissions/committees and other key partners to engage communities across WA and works with the Innovations Manager to ensure their priorities are reflected in the Office's projects and timelines

Community Engagement Coordinators (2.0 FTE)

- In partnership with commissions/committees, engages communities across WA and ensures their priorities are reflected in the Office's projects and timelines
- Provides technical assistance to agencies as they implement best practices in community outreach and engagement

Organizational Structure – The Office of Equity
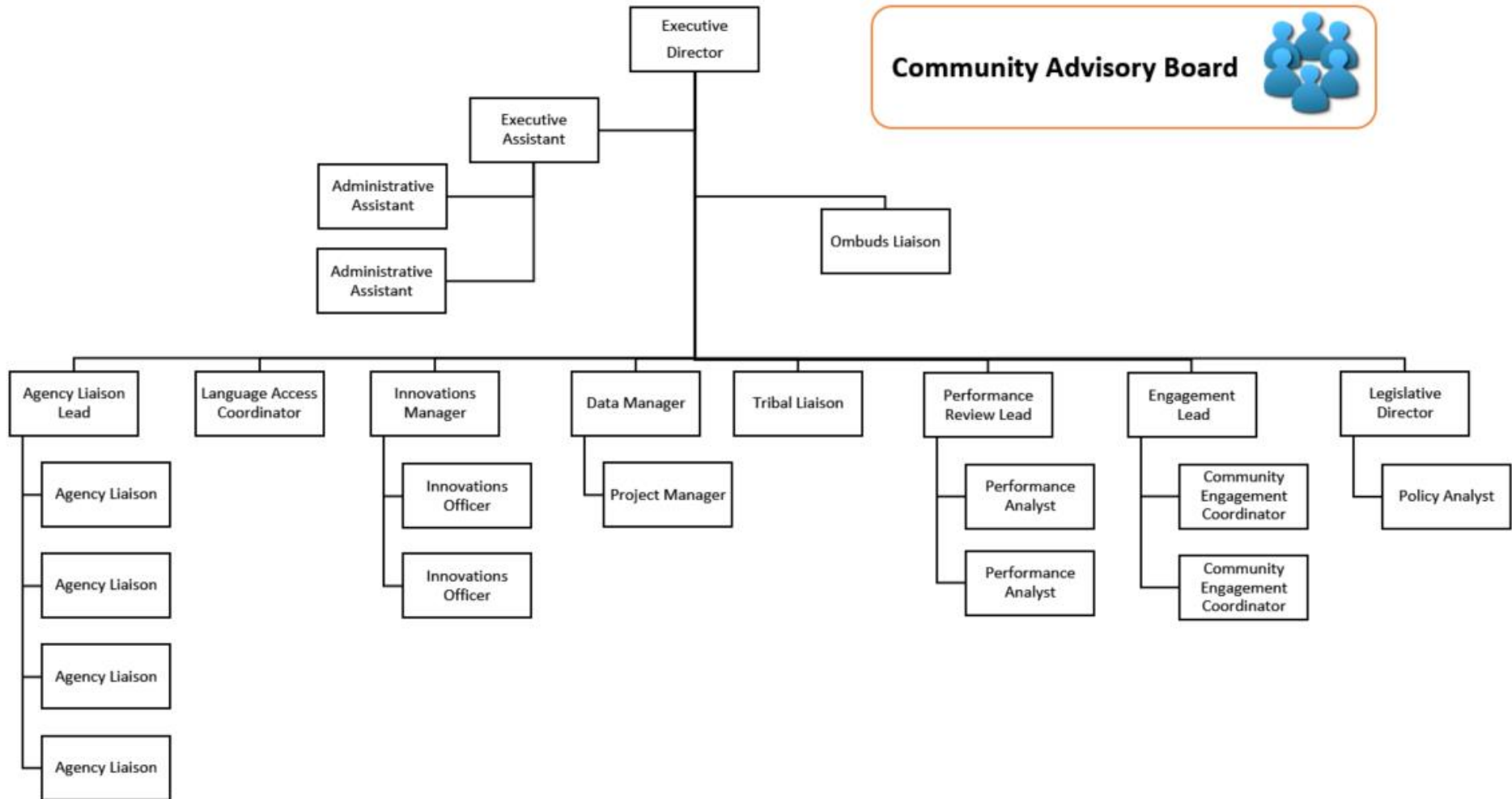
Operating Budget

The Task Force estimates an annual operating budget of **$4 million** for a fully effective Office of Equity. This does not include the robust funding needed to support state agencies, including the racial and ethnic commissions, in their community engagement efforts.[49]

As Washington enters a severe economic downturn, this estimate is understandably daunting. **However, investment in the Office of Equity will save much more than it costs, and will improve lives in priceless ways.** It will reduce the avoidable financial toll that inequity takes on the state; from health-related costs, to lost productivity, to falling short on the future wealth of assets this state could enjoy. It ensures smart and effective use of limited resources, so efforts are coordinated, strategic, and non-duplicative. Investment in the Office of Equity will send a powerful message to communities across the state that they are seen, heard, and valued, particularly during this uprising for justice.

Methodology for Budget Estimates

The Task Force included the following costs when estimating the Office of Equity's operating budget:

- salaries and benefits;
- goods and services;
- human resources services for small agencies from DES;
- lease costs and training;
- financial services for small agencies from DES; and
- one-time expenditures for workspaces and technology.

The Task Force assumed the following to arrive at the cost estimates:
- The Office of Equity would be an exempt office (not subject to WAC 357);
- The benefit factor is 32.4% based on current costing done with OFM for salary projections;
- The Executive Director's salary is an estimate based on current comparables—it would need to be evaluated through the State Officials' Salary Administration (SOSA) process;
- Salary projections do not include salary increases in subsequent years;
- Lease and office costs are based on current estimates provide by OFM;
- Salary estimates are based on the position descriptions contained in this report and a comparison of work with other exempt agencies; and
- Small-agency services provided by DES can support between 20 to 30 FTE.

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[49] Chapter 332, Laws of 2020 (Office of Equity) allows the Office of Equity to "contract with commissions or other entities with expertise in order to identify policy and system barriers, including language access, to meaningful engagement with communities in all aspects of agency decision making." Retrieved from: http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1783-S2.SL.pdf?q=20200701123718

FIGURE 32. Personal Statement from Task Force Member, Omar Santana

How will the Office of Equity's work impact the communities we serve?

It is an interesting question to pose; how will the Office of Equity's work affect the communities we serve? The question, for me, can be answered in a few different ways.

First, if adequately funded it could have a lasting impact on how we serve historically marginalized communities in our state. If funded properly we can see a future that is more equitable for all Washingtonians. Whether it be in holding organizations accountable for their actions, to protecting people's access to services and opportunities, or shedding light on "cracks" in our systems where marginalized groups fall through. These gaps in services perpetuate the systems of oppression and keep marginalized communities in a constant struggle for resources.

The second way it can be answered, is by adhering to the idea of scarcity and providing the minimal funding for the Office of Equity and expecting the organization to somehow thrive. My fear with the establishment of this office is that it ends up falling into the category of "checking a box". This idea that the office is created and that we as a system are showing the community at large that we are doing something about the issues plaguing our historically underserved Washingtonians. I have big hopes for this office, but also fears that like many organizations before it, it is underfunded, and we set it up for failure. It is my belief that if we are really serious about making Washington equitable for all of its residents that we do away with this concept that there are only so many resources for services to marginalized groups and that one way or another we need to fight for a piece of the pie.

If we really are serious about the work of this office then we need to make sure it has the resources to do the work that is being asked of it. It needs to be treated as a priority rather than an extracurricular project.

— Omar Santana, Executive Assistant, Washington State LGBTQ Commission

"In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist. We must be anti-racist."

— Angela Davis

Systems Transformation: Toward an Equitable, Just, and Sustainable Future

The Task Force's hope is that the Office of Equity can help lead the state toward becoming a truly transformed government enterprise—one that **embeds equity and justice into every action, and where doing so is simply the default to how business is conducted.**

This transformed system will be one in which relationships are valued and space is always allocated for agencies to work in meaningful ways with communities and with each other. The system will **balance compliance and compassion**, meaning that agencies will listen to communities and to each other and meet them where they are with humility and respect. The system will have no wrong door for communities to enter and will have built-in processes to help make navigation easier and seamless.

In this transformed system, **barriers will be broken and communities will have access and opportunity to co-create solutions that work for all**. At every decision making point, the system will have processes for equity assessment and results will be used to maximize benefits and reduce harms. Resources will be strategically targeted to reduce inequity.

> *"The opposite of racist isn't 'not racist.' It is 'anti-racist.' What's the difference? One endorses either the idea of a racial hierarchy as a racist, or racial equality as an anti-racist. One either believes problems are rooted in groups of people, as a racist, or locates the roots of problems in power and policies, as an anti-racist. One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an anti-racist. There is no in-between safe space of 'not racist.'"*
>
> — Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist*

In this future system, the state workforce will reflect the population in the state and workplace policies will promote inclusion and belonging. In true partnership with communities, **data and stories will be collected in ways that unmask inequities and shed light on solutions**. This transformed system will be one in which **state government is truly accountable to community**.

The Task Force believes that such a system is achievable and that a critical step forward is to declare and manifest Washington State as an anti-racist government system.[50] Doing so will send a powerful message across the state and help communities hold the enterprise accountable to change that is neither incremental nor reactionary—but rather—**change that is transformative**.

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[50] An anti-racist is someone who supports anti-racist policy through their actions or by expressing anti-racist ideas. This includes the expression or ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity. Source: Racial Equity Tools, citing Ibram X Kendi, How to be an Antiracist, Random House, 2019. Accessed at: https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#anti-racist

Conclusion

Every Washingtonian must have full access to the opportunities, power, and resources they need to flourish and reach their potential. The creation of the WA State Office of Equity is an expression of hope in the midst of struggle and turmoil. Shining a light on hope is a revolutionary act.

Washingtonians expect action. The Office of Equity cannot represent 'equity' in name only—it must ensure state government is accountable for delivering better opportunities and outcomes, resulting in tangible benefits for communities across Washington. The Office of Equity, operating at the highest level of government, will provide a unified vision of equity for Washington State. In this non-duplicative, coordinating role, the Office of Equity will ensure the state steps together in the same direction by prioritizing goals and implementing effective strategies around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Office of Equity will equip agencies with the necessary tools, guidance, and expectations to make decisions that prioritize resources to historically and currently marginalized communities—those that have been farthest from opportunity. At the center of decision-making will be community voice, so that communities and government lead together to co-create a better future.

A fully resourced Office of Equity is hope in action. It is the catalyst for systems transformation—away from oppression and exclusion, and toward equity, inclusion, and collective healing. Communities across the state are looking to government leaders to show up in this critical moment as their most visionary and powerful selves to ensure that this time will be different. Adequately investing in the Office of Equity is a demonstration of our state's commitment to affirming the humanity, dignity, and equal value of every Washingtonian.

"Let us be those creative dissenters who will call our beloved nation to a higher destiny."

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

Appendices

Appendices A through F are incorporated below.

- ◈ **APPENDIX A.** Task Force Membership

- ◈ **APPENDIX B.** Task Force Authorizing Proviso

- ◈ **APPENDIX C.** Office of Equity (Chapter 332, Laws of 2020)

- ◈ **APPENDIX D.** WA State Government Organizational Chart

- ◈ **APPENDIX E.** Letter to Governor Jay Inslee (June 2020)

- ◈ **APPENDIX F.** Glossary of DEI-Related Terms

Access the full appendices, including Appendices G through K, on our website.

- ◈ **APPENDIX G.** September 2019 Online Survey – Questions and Geographic Coverage of Responses

- ◈ **APPENDIX H.** Summary of Community Input – Strategies for Meaningful Community Engagement (Everett, 9/5/2019)

- ◈ **APPENDIX I.** COVID-19 Equity Tools from Local Jurisdictions

- ◈ **APPENDIX J.** Statewide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Responsibilities

- ◈ **APPENDIX K.** Focus Group Report (April 2020)

APPENDIX A. Task Force Membership

Office of Equity Task Force Members	
Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities Benjamin Danielson (Co-chair) Jan Olmstead (Co-chair)	**Legislators*** Senator Manka Dhingra Representative Mia Gregerson (alternate) Representative Jeremie Dufault Alec Regimbal (alternate) Representative Melanie Morgan
Office of the Governor RaShelle Davis	
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council Karen A. Johnson	**Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA)** Craig Bill Mystique Hurtado (alternate)
Human Rights Commission Sharon Ortiz Laura Lindstrand (alternate)	**WA State Women's Commission (WSWC)** Daniya Baisubanova Michelle Gonzalez (former) Marie Vela (former alternate)
Disability Community Elizabeth Gordon – Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) Mandeep Kaundal (former alternate)	**LGBTQ Community** Allison Spector Manny Santiago (alternate) – LGBTQ Commission Omar Santana (alternate) – LGBTQ Commission
Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) Lisa van der Lugt Rex Brown (alternate) Marika Barto (alternate)	**Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA)** Toshiko Hasegawa Carrie Huie Pascua (alternate)
Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA) Maria Siguenza	**Commission on African American Affairs (CAAA)** Ed Prince
* One legislator seat remained vacant, which was reserved for a Republican senator.	

APPENDIX B. Task Force Authorizing Proviso

ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1109 – State Operating Budget

Chapter 415, Laws of 2019[51]

Sec. 221, Subsection 7:

(7)(a) $285,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2020 and $15,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2021 are provided solely for the governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities to establish a task force to develop a proposal for the creation of an office of equity. The purpose of the office of equity is to promote access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities, including racial and ethnic disparities, and improve outcomes statewide across all sectors of government. The council must provide staff support and coordinate community and stakeholder outreach for the task force.

(b) The task force shall include:

(i) The chair of the interagency coordinating council on health disparities, or the chair's designee, who shall serve as the chair of the task force;

(ii) Two members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(iii) Two members from the senate, appointed by the president of the senate;

(iv) A representative from the office of the governor, appointed by the governor;

(v) A representative from the office of financial management's diversity, equity, and inclusion council, appointed by the governor;

(vi) A representative from the office of minority and women's business enterprises, appointed by the director of the office of minority and women's business enterprises;

(vii) A representative from each ethnic commission, appointed by the director of each respective commission;

(viii) A representative from the women's commission, appointed by the director of the commission;

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[51] This is an excerpt from the full bill. The full text can be accessed here:
http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1109-S.SL.pdf

(ix) A representative from the human rights commission, appointed by the director of the commission;

(x) The director of the governor's office of Indian affairs, or the director's designee;

(xi) A member of the disability community, appointed by the chair of the governor's committee on disability issues and employment; and

(xii) A member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community, appointed by the office of the governor.

(c) The task force must submit a preliminary report to the governor and legislature by December 15, 2019. The task force must submit a final proposal to the governor and the legislature by July 1, 2020. The final proposal must include the following recommendations:

(i) A mission statement and vision statement for the office;

(ii) A definition of "equity," which must be used by the office to guide its work;

(iii) The organizational structure of the office, which must include a community liaison for the office;

(iv) A plan to engage executive level management from all agencies;

(v) Mechanisms for facilitating state policy and systems change to promote equity, promoting community outreach and engagement, and establishing standards for the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data regarding race and ethnicity;

(vi) Mechanisms for accountability to ensure that performance measures around equity are met across all agencies, including recommendations on audits of agencies and other accountability tools as deemed appropriate; and

(vii) A budget proposal including estimates for costs and staffing.

(d) Nonlegislative members of the task force must be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060. Legislative members must be reimbursed for expenses incurred in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

APPENDIX C. Office of Equity (Chapter 332, Laws of 2020)

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1783

Chapter 332, Laws of 2020
(partial veto)

66th Legislature
2020 Regular Session

OFFICE OF EQUITY

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 11, 2020—Except for section 3, which becomes effective July 1, 2020.

Passed by the House March 9, 2020
   Yeas 57   Nays 39

LAURIE JINKINS

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Passed by the Senate March 5, 2020
   Yeas 28   Nays 21

CYRUS HABIB

President of the Senate

Approved April 3, 2020 1:41 PM with the exception of sections 6 and 7, which are vetoed.

JAY INSLEE

Governor of the State of Washington

CERTIFICATE

I, Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1783** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.

BERNARD DEAN

Chief Clerk

FILED
April 3, 2020

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1783

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2020 Regular Session

| **State of Washington** | **66th Legislature** | **2019 Regular** |
| | **Session** | |

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Gregerson, Morgan, Ryu, Lovick, Valdez, Ramos, Thai, Reeves, Slatter, Lekanoff, Peterson, Macri, Entenman, Pettigrew, Bergquist, Callan, Stonier, Orwall, Hudgins, Riccelli, Mead, Senn, Santos, Chapman, Walen, Kloba, Doglio, Tarleton, Pollet, Dolan, Davis, Jinkins, Wylie, Shewmake, Pellicciotti, Fey, Stanford, Sells, Morris, Kilduff, Leavitt, Appleton, Tharinger, Ormsby, Frame, and Robinson)

READ FIRST TIME 03/01/19

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the population of Washington State has become increasingly diverse over   the last several decades. The legislature also finds that as the demographics of our state change, historically and currently marginalized communities still do not have the same opportunities to meet parity as their nonmarginalized counterparts across nearly every measure including education, poverty employment health, and more. 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. When individuals face barriers to achieving their full potential, the impact is felt by the individual, their communities, businesses, governments, and the economy as a whole the form of lost wage, avoidable public expenditures, and more. This includes social ramifications that emerging technology, such as artificial intelligence and facial recognition technology, may have on historically and currently marginalized communities. It is the intent of the legislature to review these emerging technologies either already in use by agencies or before their launch by agencies if not already in use and make recommendations regarding agency use to ensure that the technology is used in a manner that benefits society and does not have disparate negative impacts on historically and currently marginalized communities or violate their civil rights. It is further intended that the office should collaborate with other state efforts in this regard.

The legislature finds that a more inclusive Washington is possible if agencies identify and implement effective strategies to eliminate systemic inequities. The legislature recognizes that different forms of discrimination and oppression are related to each other, and these relationships need to be taken into account.

The legislature finds that over the years, significant strides have been made within agencies to address the disparate outcomes faced by historically and currently marginalized communities. While these efforts have yielded positive work, the legislature finds that the work happening in agencies is fragmented across state government. Additionally, smaller agencies may not have the resources necessary to identify and implement policies to address systemic inequities. Furthermore, the legislature finds that the commission on African American affairs, the commission on Asian Pacific American affairs, the commission on Hispanic affairs, the governor's office of Indian affairs, the LGBTQ commission, the women's commission, and the human rights commission each play an important and integral role by serving as a voice for their respective communities and linking state governmentto these communities. The office is distinct from the commissions because it will serve as the state's subject matter expert on diversity, equity, and inclusion to state agencies and will provide technical assistance and support to agencies while each agency implements its individual equity plan. The office is not duplicative of the commissions, rather it is the intent of the legislature that the office will work in collaboration with the commissions. It is not the legislature's intent to eliminate the commissions or to reduce funding to the commissions by creating the office. Instead, it is the intent of the legislature that the office and the commissions shall work in a complementary manner with each other, support each other's work, jurisdictions, and missions, and adequately fund the commissions and the office as they take on their new complementary roles.

The legislature finds that state government must identify and coordinate effective strategies that focus   on eliminating systemic barrier for historically and currently marginalized groups. To support this objective, an office of equity will provide a unified vision around equity for all state agencies. The office will assist government agencies to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of their decision making, including but not limited to services, programming, policy development, budgeting, and staffing. Doing so will foster a culture of accountability within state government that promotes opportunity for marginalized communities and will help normalize language and concepts around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise. (1) "Agency" means every state executive office, agency, department, or commission.

(2) "Director" means the director of the Washington state office of equity.

(3) "Disaggregated data" means data that has been broken down by appropriate subcategories.

(4) "Equity lens" means providing consideration to   the characteristics listed in RCW 49.60.030, as well as immigration status and language access, to evaluate the equitable impacts of an agency's policy or program.

(5) "Office" means the Washington state office of equity.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3**. (1) The Washington state office of equity is established within the office of the governor for the purpose of promoting access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities, and improve outcomes statewide across state government.

(2) The office envisions everyone in Washington having full access to the opportunities and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential.

(3) The work of the office must:

(a) Be guided by the following principles of equity:

(i) Equity requires developing, strengthening, and supporting policies and procedures that distribute and prioritize resources to those who have been historically and currently marginalized, including tribes;

(ii) Equity requires the elimination of systemic barriers that have been deeply entrenched in systems of inequality and oppression; and

(iii) Equity achieves procedural and outcome fairness, promoting dignity, honor, and respect for all people;

(b) Complement and not supplant the work of the statutory commissions.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4**. (1) Theoffice is administered by a director, who is appointed by the governor with advice and consent of the senate. The director shall report to the governor. The director must receive a salary as fixed by the governor in accordance with RCW 14 43.03.040.

(2) The director shall:

(a) Employ and supervise staff as necessary to carry out the purpose of this chapter and the duties of the office; and

(b) Oversee the administration, programs, and policies of the office in accordance with the principles in section 3 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5**. (1) The office shall work to facilitate policy and systems change to promote equitable policies, practices, and outcomes through:

(a**) Agency decision making.** The office shall assist agencies in applying an equity lens in all aspects of agency decision making, including service delivery, program development, policy development, and budgeting. The office shall provide assistance by:

(i) Facilitating information sharing between agencies around diversity, equity, and inclusion issues;

(ii) Convening work groups as needed;

(iii) Developing and providing assessment tools for agencies to use in the development and evaluation of agency programs, services, policies, and budgets;

(iv) Training agency staff on how to effectively use the assessment tools developed under (a)(iii) of this subsection, including developing guidance for agencies on how to apply an equity lens to the agency's work when carrying out the agency's duties under this chapter;

(v) Developing a form that will serve as each agency's diversity, equity, and inclusion plan, required to be submitted by all agencies under section 7 of this act, for each agency to report on its work in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The office must develop the format and content of the plan and determine the frequency of reporting. The office must post each agency plan on the dashboard referenced in (d) of this subsection;

(vi) Maintaining an inventory of agency work in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and

(vii) Compiling and creating resources for agencies to use as guidance when carrying out the requirements under section 7 of this act.

(b) **Community outreach and engagement.** The office shall staff the community advisory board created under section 6 of this act and may contract with commissions or other entities with expertise in order to identify policy and system barriers, including language access, to meaningful engagementwith communities in all aspects of agency decision making.

(c) **Training on maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and culturally sensitive workforce.** The office shall collaborate with the office of financial management and the department of enterprise services to develop policies and provide technical assistance and training to agencies on maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and culturally sensitive workforce that delivers culturally sensitive services.

(d**) Data maintenance and establishing performance metrics.** The office shall:

(i) Collaborate with the office of financial management and agencies to:

(A) Establish standards for the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data as it pertains to tracking population level outcomes of communities, except as provided under (d)(i)(D) of this subsection;

(B) Create statewide and agency-specific process and outcome measures to show performance:

(I) Using outcome-based methodology to determine the effectiveness of agency programs and services on reducing disparities; and

(II) Taking into consideration community feedback from the community advisory board on whether the performance measures established accurately measure the effectiveness of agency programs and services in the communities served;

(C) Create an online performance dashboard to publish state and agency performance measures and outcomes; and

(D) Identify additional subcategories in workforce data for disaggregation in order to track disparities in public employment; and

(ii) Coordinate with the office of privacy and data protection to address cybersecurity and data protection for all data collected by the office.

(e) **Accountability**. The office shall:

(i) Publish a report for each agency detailing whether the agency has met the performance measures established pursuant to (d)(i) of this subsection and the effectiveness of agency programs and services on reducing disparities. The report must include the agency's strengths and accomplishments, areas for continued improvement, and areas for corrective action. The office must post each report on the dashboard referenced in (d) of this subsection;

(ii) Establish a process for the office to report on agency performance in accordance with (e)(i) of this subsection and a process for agencies to respond to the report. The agency's response must include the agency's progress on   performance, the agency's action plan to address areas for improvement and corrective action, and a timeline for the action plan; and

(iii) Establish procedures to hold agencies accountable, which may include conducting performance reviews related to agency compliance with office performance measures.

(2) By October 31, 2022, and every year thereafter, the office shall report to the governor and the legislature. The report must include a summary of the office's work, including strengths and accomplishments, an overview of agency compliance with office standards and performance measures, and an equity analysis of the makeup of the community advisory board established in section 6 of this act to ensure that it accurately reflects historically and currently marginalized groups.

(3) The director and the office shall review the final recommendations submitted pursuant to section 221, chapter 415, Laws of 2019, by the task force established under section 221, chapter 415, Laws of 2019, and report back to the governor and the legislature with any additional recommendations necessary for the office to carry out the duties prescribed under this chapter.

*NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. (1) A community advisory board is created within the office to advise the office on its priorities and timelines.

(2) The director must appoint members to the community advisory board to support diverse representation by geography and identity. The director may collaborate with the commission on African American affairs, the commission on Asian Pacific American affairs, the commission on Hispanic affairs, the governor's office of Indian affairs, the human rights commission, the LGBTQ commission, the women's commission, and any other agency the office deems necessary, to find individuals with diverse representation by geography and identity for the community advisory board.

(3) The community advisory board shall, among other duties determined by the director, provide guidance to the office on standards and performance measures.

(4) The community advisory board is staffed by the office.

(5) Board members shall be entitled to compensation of fifty dollars per day for each day spent conducting official business and to reimbursement for travel expenses as provided by RCW 43.03.050 and 22 43.03.060.

(6) The community advisory board may adopt bylaws for the operation of its business for the purposes of this chapter.

*Sec. 6 was vetoed. See message at end of chapter.

*NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. Each agency shall: (1) Designate an agency diversity, equity, and inclusion liaison within existing resources to serve as the liaison between the agency and the office;

(2) Apply an equity lens, as developed by the office in accordance with section 5 of this act, to assess existing and proposed agency policies, services and service delivery, practices, programs, and budget decisions using the assessment tools developed by the office pursuant to section 5 of this act;

(3) Develop and submit a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan to the office, in accordance with section 5 of this act;

(4) Develop and maintain written language access policies and plans;

(5) Collaborate with the office to establish performance measures in accordance with section 5 of this act

(6) Provide data and information requested by the office in accordance with standards established under section 5 of this act; and

(7) Submit a response to the office's report on agency performance under section 5 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8**. The office may:

(1) Provide technical assistance to agencies;

(2) Conduct research projects, as needed, provided that no research project is proposed or authorizes funding without consideration of the business case for the project including a review of the total cost of the project, similar projects conducted in the state, and alternatives analyzed;

(3) Conduct policy analyses and provide a forum where ideas and issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion plans, policies, and standards can be reviewed;

(4) Develop policy positions and legislative proposals;

(5) Consider, on an ongoing basis, ways to promote investments in enterprise-level diversity, equity, and inclusion projects that will result in service improvements and cost efficiency;

(6) Fulfill external data requests, as resources allow; and

(7) Receive and solicit gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources that are made for the use or benefit of the office and to expend the same or any income therefrom according to their terms and this chapter. The director must report funds received from private sources to the office of financial management on a regular basis. Funds received from private sources may not be applied to reduce or substitute the office's budget as appropriated by the legislature, but must be applied and expended toward projects and functions authorized by this chapter that were not funded by the legislature.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9**. Nothing in this act creates any right or cause of action, nor may it be relied upon to compel the establishment of any program or special entitlement.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10**. Sections 1 through   9 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11**. Section 3 of this act takes effect July 1, 2020.

Passed by the House March 9, 2020.

Passed by the Senate March 5, 2020.

Approved by the Governor April 3, 2020, with the exception of certain items that were vetoed.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State April 3, 2020.

Note: Governor's explanation of partial veto is as follows:

"I am returning herewith, without my approval as to Sections 6 and 7, Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 1783 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to creating the Washington state office of equity."

Section 6 creates a community advisory board, which is given certain duties. Section 7 directs each state agency to, among other things, develop plans and policies and provide data and information pursuant to the bill. Circumstances have changed dramatically since the 2020 supplemental operating budget was approved by the Legislature last month. The COVID-19 pandemic is having catastrophic effects on the health and welfare of Washingtonians. It will also have a major impact on the economic health of our state. I have conferred with leaders in the House of Representatives and Senate, and we agree that we must prepare for the effects of the lost revenue that will result from this pandemic.

For these reasons I have vetoed Sections 6 and 7 of Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 1783.
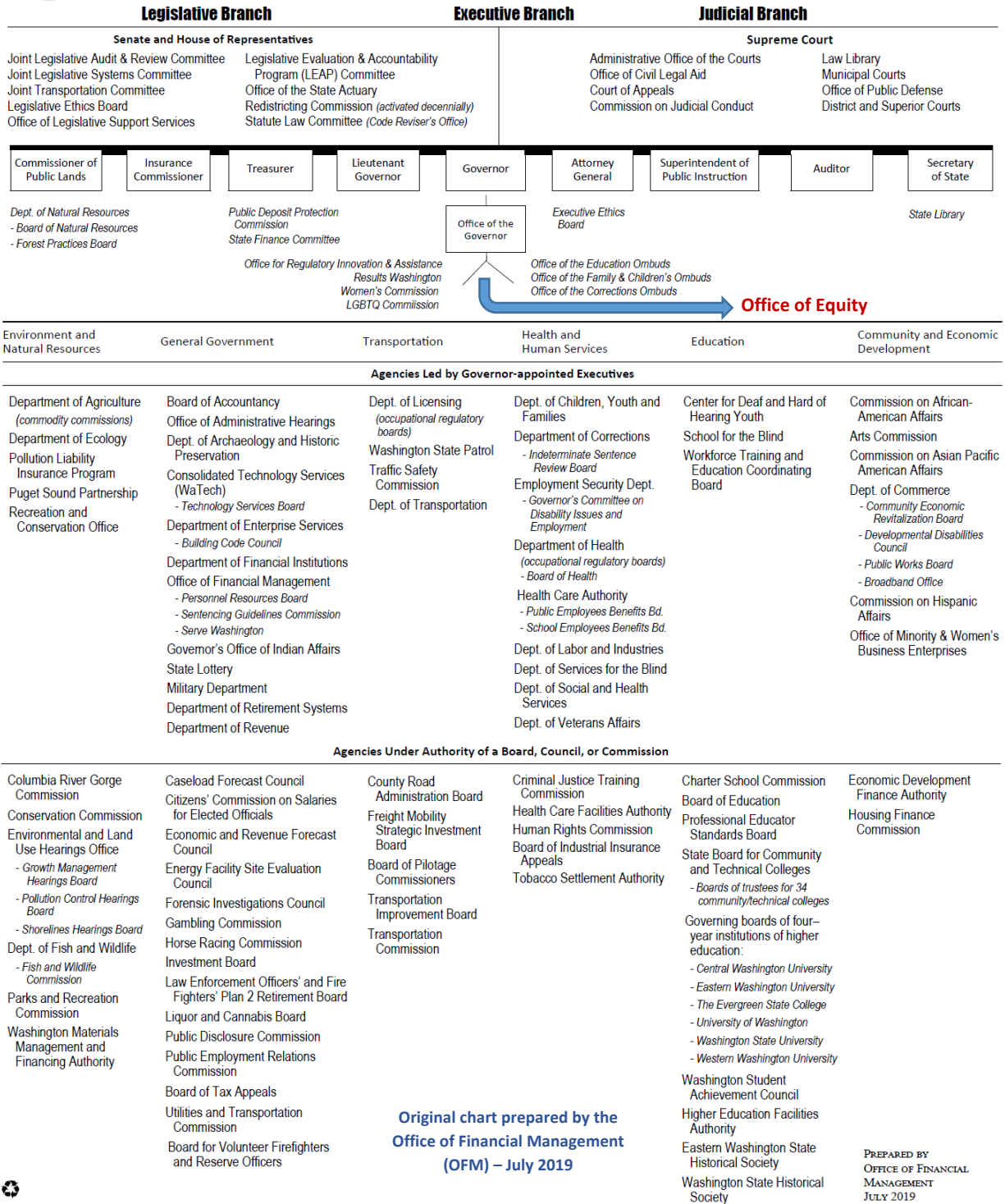
With the exception of Sections 6 and 7, Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 1783 is approved."

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APPENDIX D. WA State Government Organizational Chart

2019 Organization Chart
Washington State Government

Legislative Branch	Executive Branch	Judicial Branch

Senate and House of Representatives

Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee
Joint Legislative Systems Committee
Joint Transportation Committee
Legislative Ethics Board
Office of Legislative Support Services

Legislative Evaluation & Accountability Program (LEAP) Committee
Office of the State Actuary
Redistricting Commission *(activated decennially)*
Statute Law Committee *(Code Reviser's Office)*

Supreme Court

Administrative Office of the Courts
Office of Civil Legal Aid
Court of Appeals
Commission on Judicial Conduct

Law Library
Municipal Courts
Office of Public Defense
District and Superior Courts

Commissioner of Public Lands	Insurance Commissioner	Treasurer	Lieutenant Governor	Governor	Attorney General	Superintendent of Public Instruction	Auditor	Secretary of State

Dept. of Natural Resources
- Board of Natural Resources
- Forest Practices Board

Public Deposit Protection Commission
State Finance Committee

Office of the Governor

Executive Ethics Board

State Library

Office for Regulatory Innovation & Assistance
Results Washington
Women's Commission
LGBTQ Commission

Office of the Education Ombuds
Office of the Family & Children's Ombuds
Office of the Corrections Ombuds

Office of Equity

Environment and Natural Resources	General Government	Transportation	Health and Human Services	Education	Community and Economic Development

Agencies Led by Governor-appointed Executives

Environment and Natural Resources

Department of Agriculture *(commodity commissions)*
Department of Ecology
Pollution Liability Insurance Program
Puget Sound Partnership
Recreation and Conservation Office

General Government

Board of Accountancy
Office of Administrative Hearings
Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
Consolidated Technology Services (WaTech)
- *Technology Services Board*
Department of Enterprise Services
- *Building Code Council*
Department of Financial Institutions
Office of Financial Management
- *Personnel Resources Board*
- *Sentencing Guidelines Commission*
- *Serve Washington*
Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
State Lottery
Military Department
Department of Retirement Systems
Department of Revenue

Transportation

Dept. of Licensing *(occupational regulatory boards)*
Washington State Patrol
Traffic Safety Commission
Dept. of Transportation

Health and Human Services

Dept. of Children, Youth and Families
Department of Corrections
- *Indeterminate Sentence Review Board*
Employment Security Dept.
- *Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment*
Department of Health *(occupational regulatory boards)*
- *Board of Health*
Health Care Authority
- *Public Employees Benefits Bd.*
- *School Employees Benefits Bd.*
Dept. of Labor and Industries
Dept. of Services for the Blind
Dept. of Social and Health Services
Dept. of Veterans Affairs

Education

Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth
School for the Blind
Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Community and Economic Development

Commission on African-American Affairs
Arts Commission
Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs
Dept. of Commerce
- *Community Economic Revitalization Board*
- *Developmental Disabilities Council*
- *Public Works Board*
- *Broadband Office*
Commission on Hispanic Affairs
Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises

Agencies Under Authority of a Board, Council, or Commission

Environment and Natural Resources

Columbia River Gorge Commission
Conservation Commission
Environmental and Land Use Hearings Office
- *Growth Management Hearings Board*
- *Pollution Control Hearings Board*
- *Shorelines Hearings Board*
Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
- *Fish and Wildlife Commission*
Parks and Recreation Commission
Washington Materials Management and Financing Authority

General Government

Caseload Forecast Council
Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials
Economic and Revenue Forecast Council
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
Forensic Investigations Council
Gambling Commission
Horse Racing Commission
Investment Board
Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Plan 2 Retirement Board
Liquor and Cannabis Board
Public Disclosure Commission
Public Employment Relations Commission
Board of Tax Appeals
Utilities and Transportation Commission
Board for Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Officers

Transportation

County Road Administration Board
Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board
Board of Pilotage Commissioners
Transportation Improvement Board
Transportation Commission

Health and Human Services

Criminal Justice Training Commission
Health Care Facilities Authority
Human Rights Commission
Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals
Tobacco Settlement Authority

Education

Charter School Commission
Board of Education
Professional Educator Standards Board
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- *Boards of trustees for 34 community/technical colleges*
Governing boards of four-year institutions of higher education:
- *Central Washington University*
- *Eastern Washington University*
- *The Evergreen State College*
- *University of Washington*
- *Washington State University*
- *Western Washington University*
Washington Student Achievement Council
Higher Education Facilities Authority
Eastern Washington State Historical Society
Washington State Historical Society

Community and Economic Development

Economic Development Finance Authority
Housing Finance Commission

Original chart prepared by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) – July 2019

PREPARED BY
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
JULY 2019

APPENDIX E. Letter to Governor Jay Inslee (June 2020)

June 12, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor of Washington State
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Governor Inslee,

The coronavirus pandemic and the intolerable ongoing legacy of police brutality further expose the devastating state of racism and its many related forms of discrimination that exist in our society. Discrimination due to skin color, culture, immigrant status, language, ability, age, gender, sexual orientation, beliefs, and where a person lives. Discrimination for being indigenous. Despite our hope for a different reality, oppression and erasure are embedded in every part of our lives, including our state government.

Today we are facing the incontrovertible and centuries-long truth that the work of promoting equity must be *all our work*. It must include re-envisioning and re-sculpting our infrastructures with an intentional focus on equity. We are in the midst of an uprising—a rejection of racism. The overt forms of racism, like the killing of Black and Brown men and women by police. The eroding kind of racism that makes a virus and its response cause inequitable suffering. And the more generally broad-reaching kinds that subvert futures, constrain opportunity, deny access, undermine dignity, and shorten lives for so many communities of color.

We are in the midst of an uprising for justice. A loud and firm call for substantive change—the kind that is at the heart of your convening of the Office of Equity Task Force a year ago. Your leadership set in motion a conversation about how to lift equity higher in state government. Five months ago, we submitted a report to the Legislature with some tangible steps laying out how to transparently and accountably see equity's powerful lens change the way things are done. This is the very kind of change that today's uprising is resoundingly calling for.

Your leadership in this moment of anguish has been greatly appreciated. You have encouraged the public workforce "to push for justice and to hold our current institutions of power and privilege responsible." You have stated that we all have "a responsibility to work for meaningful systemic change." Our state's populace is waiting, with appropriate impatience, to see these words matched with actions. State government must match the solutions to the problem. **Now more than ever, we need a Washington State Office of Equity to assist agencies in identifying and implementing effective strategies to eliminate systemic inequities.**

Signing Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1783 (creating the WA State Office of Equity) was a necessary and historic first step, but it is not enough. **The work of creating more equitable, inclusive systems must no longer reside in the margins—the Office of Equity must be adequately funded to fulfill its urgent purpose.**

Washingtonians expect action. Budgets reflect our priorities, and they are the clearest demonstration of who we are, who we are willing to stand up for, and who we are unwilling to leave behind. As you and other leaders make difficult funding decisions in the days and months ahead, we urge you to consider the duality of each action. When the state says 'no' to funding options that promote transformative change, it is saying 'yes' to maintaining a status quo built on historical inequities. As you consider the cost of an option, we urge you to also consider the cost of *not* choosing that option. The pandemic has reinforced a devastating lesson: we can only be as healthy as our most vulnerable and marginalized communities. Our state can no longer afford a system that accomplishes what it was set up to do—to provide opportunity to some at the expense of others. Our state can no longer afford to underinvest in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Investment in the Office of Equity will save much more than it costs, and will improve lives in priceless ways. It will reduce the avoidable financial toll that inequity takes on the state; from health-related costs, to lost productivity, to falling short on the future wealth of assets this state could enjoy. **Investment in the Office of Equity ensures smart and effective use of limited resources.** The Office of Equity will equip agencies with the necessary tools, guidance, and expectations to make decisions that prioritize resources to historically and currently marginalized communities—those that have been farthest from opportunity. The Office of Equity's work will cultivate welcoming and inclusive spaces where public employees, saddened and outraged by recent tragic events, can discuss the role each person plays in upholding systems of privilege and oppression. This acknowledgement is the first step to dismantling systems of oppression and addressing historical injustices. Together, we can embark on the journey of collective healing.

Communities across the state are looking to you and our legislators to show up in this critical moment as your most visionary and powerful selves to ensure that this time will be different. **We urge you to adequately invest in the Office of Equity as a demonstration of our state's commitment to affirming the humanity, dignity, and equal value of every Washingtonian.**

Sincerely,

Jan Ward Olmstead   Benjamin Danielson

Chairs of the Office of Equity Task Force

APPENDIX F. GLOSSARY OF DEI-RELATED TERMS

This glossary of equity-related terms created by an interagency workgroup in 2019. The group worked in partnership with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Department of Enterprise Services (DES), and members represented a range of sectors in government, including but not limited to public health, human resources, corrections, and social and health services. The group's work was informed by research and input/feedback from agency staff and community partners.

Glossary Terms

Ability	Dominant Culture	Power
Ability privilege	Environmental Justice	Power-over
Ableism	Ethnocentrism	Power-with
Access	Equity	Prejudice
Acculturation	Ethnicity	Privilege
Adultism	Gender Identity	Questioning
Ageism	Gender-Expansive	Race
Ally	Gender Expression	Race Equity
Anti-Semitism	Gender Pronouns	Racism
Assimilate	Genetic Information	Respect
Authentic-Self	Heterosexism	Sexism
Bias	Homophobia	Sexual Orientation
Biological Sex	Identity	Social Construct
Biphobia	Inclusion	Social Justice
Belonging (ness)	Intersectionality	SOGIE
Classism	LGBTQ+	Stereotype
Color	Marginalization	Tokenism
Colorism	Microaggression	Transphobia
Culture	Military Status	Two-Spirit
Cultural Appropriation	Misogyny	Western-centrism
Cultural Competence	Nationality	White Dominant Culture
Cultural Humility	National Origin	White Supremacy
Disability	Oppression/Anti-Oppression	Workforce Diversity
Disablism	Othering	Xenophobia
Discrimination	People of Color or	
Diversity	Communities of Color	

Ability

Having the qualities, skills, competence or capacity to perform an action, or perceived as having the qualities, skills, competence, or capacity to perform an action.

Ability privilege

Unearned benefits, rights or advantages enjoyed by individuals who do not have or are perceived not to have a disability.

Ableism

The belief that people without disabilities are superior, have a better quality of life or have lives more valuable or worth living than people with an actual, perceived or non-apparent disability resulting in othering, oppression, prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination. *See Disablism.*

Access

Creating and advancing barrier-free design, standards, systems, processes, and environments to provide all individuals, regardless of ability, background, identity or situation, an effective opportunity to take part in, use and enjoy the benefits of: employment, programs, services, activities, communication, facilities, electronic/information technology, and business opportunities.

Acculturation

Process through which a person or group from one culture comes to adopt the practices and values of different cultures, while still retaining their own distinct culture[1].

Adultism

Prejudice and discrimination against young people in favor of older people.

Ageism

Oppression, prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived age. The dominant culture assigns value based on a person's actual or perceived age.

Ally

A person of one social identity group who advocates with and supports members of another group; typically a member of the dominant identity advocating with and supporting a marginalized group[2]

Anti-Semitism

Oppression, prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived membership in a Semitic group. This can include members of Judaism, those that identify as Jewish ethnically, define themselves as Hebrew, are from the nation state of Israel or are from countries where Amharic, Arabic, or Aramaic are spoken.

[1] Cole, Nicki Lisa. "Understanding Acculturation and Why It Happens," July 18, 2019. https://www.thoughtco.com/acculturation-definition-3026039.

[2] "Articles - Diversity and Inclusion Resources - Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) - University of Houston." University of Houston. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.uh.edu/cdi/diversity_education/resources/articles/.

Assimilate

The phenomenon that occurs when people belonging to the non-dominant group adjust or integrate their behaviors or attitudes in an attempt to be accepted into the dominant group's culture norms either willingly or forcibly, for the sake of personal and/or professional survival (i.e. to gain/sustain access to the same opportunities and resources as the dominant group).

Authentic-Self

Acting in alignment with your identity. Based on varied circumstances, may be expressed or suppressed.

Bias

Judgment or preference toward or against one group over another.

- **Implicit or Unconscious Bias** refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness.
- **Explicit or Conscious Bias** are biases we know we have and may use on purpose[3].

Biological Sex

Biological sex involves a combination of four elements: external genitalia, internal reproductive organs, chromosomes, and hormones.

- **Female** - Born with XX chromosomes, a uterus, female genitalia, and produces female hormones in puberty.
- **Intersex** - Born with one or more of the four elements of biological sex in a combination that is not female or male. Examples are people who are born with internal genitalia complicating the assignment of sex at birth; people born with both male and female genitalia; people born without genitalia; people born with an extra chromosome (XXX, XXY, and XYY); people with genitalia suggesting one gender while the hormones produced in puberty are more consistent with the other gender. Intersexuality occurs as often as every 1 in 100 births.
- **Male** - Born with XY chromosomes, male gonad tissue and genitalia, and produces male hormones in puberty.

Many transgender people use the acronyms AFAB (assigned female at birth) or AMAB (assigned male at birth) to refer to their given gender or biological sex.

Biphobia

A term for fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, hatred, discomfort, or mistrust that one may have toward bisexual people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as bisexual.

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[3] "Equity Language Guide." Office of Financial Management. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.ofm.wa.gov/state-human-resources/workforce-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-resources/dei-committee-documents.

OFFICE OF EQUITY TASK FORCE
FINAL PROPOSAL

Belonging (ness)

Your well-being is considered and your ability to design and give meaning to society's structures and institutions is realized. More than tolerating and respecting differences, belonging requires that all people are welcome with membership and agency in the society. Belonging is vital to have a thriving and engaged populace, which informs distributive and restorative decision-making[4] (Powell's and Balajee's works on Othering and Belonging). *See Othering*.

Classism

Oppression, prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived class to advantage and strengthen the dominant class.

Color

Pigmentation, complexion, or skin shade or tone. Skin color can be, but it not necessarily, a characteristic of race[5]. *See Colorism*.

Colorism

The belief that a person's skin color, tone, shade, pigmentation, or complexion is superior to another's within a specific racial or ethnic group and includes discrimination based on the perceived lightness, darkness or other color characteristic of a person[6]. *See Color.*

Culture

A set of values, beliefs, customs, norms, perceptions, and experiences shared by a group of people. An individual may identify with or belong to many different cultural groups. Culture is passed to others through communication, learning, and imitation.

Cultural Appropriation

Theft, exploitation, or mimicry of cultural elements for one's own personal use or profit – including symbols, dress, art, music, dance, language, land, customs, medicine, etc. – often without understanding, acknowledgment, or respect for its value in the original culture. In the United States, it results from the assumption of a white dominant culture's right to take other cultural elements[7, 8]. *See White-Dominant Culture*

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[4] "An Evolutionary Roadmap for Belonging and Co-Liberation." Othering and Belonging (blog), August 29, 2018. http://www.otheringandbelonging.org/evolutionary-roadmap-belonging-co-liberation/.

[5] "What Is the Difference between 'Race' Discrimination and 'Color' Discrimination?" Greenwald Doherty LLP. Accessed October 9, 2019. http://www.greenwaldllp.com/law-clips/difference-race-discrimination-color-discrimination/.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Resistance, Colours of. "Colours of Resistance Archive." Colours of Resistance Archive (blog). Accessed October 9, 2019. http://www.coloursofresistance.org/definitions/cultural-appropriation/.

[8] "What Is Cultural Appropriation?" Philosophy Talk. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.philosophytalk.org/blog/what-cultural-appropriation.

Cultural Competence

An ability to interact effectively with people of all cultures and understand many cultural frameworks, values, and norms. Cultural competence comprises four components:
- Awareness of one's own cultural worldview,
- Attitude towards cultural differences,
- Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and
- Cross-cultural skills.

A key component of cultural competence is respectfully engaging others with cultural dimensions and perceptions different from our own and recognizing that none is superior to another. Cultural competence is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period.

Cultural Humility

Approach to respectfully engaging others with cultural identities different from your own and recognizing that no cultural perspective is superior to another. The practice of cultural humility for white people is to: acknowledge systems of oppression and involves critical self-reflection, lifelong learning and growth, a commitment to recognizing and sharing power, and a desire to work toward institutional accountability. The practice of cultural humility for people of color is to accept that the dominant culture does exist, that institutional racism is in place, to recognize one's own response to the oppression within it, to work toward dismantling it through the balanced process of calling it out and taking care of one's self[9].

Disability

An actual, perceived, or non-apparent physical, sensory, mental, or cognitive condition that has an adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day life functions. Environmental barriers may hinder persons with disabilities from fully and effectively participating on an equitable basis.

Disablism

A set of assumptions (conscious or unconscious) and practices that promote the differential or unequal treatment of people because of actual, perceived, or non-apparent disabilities[10]. *See Ableism.*

Discrimination

Inequitable treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a specific group.

Diversity

Describes the presence of differences within a given setting, collective, or group. An individual is not diverse – a person is unique. Diversity is about a collective or a group and exists in relationship to others. A team, an organization, a family, a neighborhood, and a community can be diverse. A person can bring

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[9] "Equity Language Guide." Office of Financial Management. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.ofm.wa.gov/state-human-resources/workforce-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-resources/dei-committee-documents.

[10] "What Is Ableism?" Accessed October 9, 2019. http://www.stopableism.org/p/what-is-ableism.html.

diversity of thought, experience, and trait, (seen and unseen) to a team — and the person is still an individual[11]. S*ee Workforce Diversity and Workplace Diversity.*

Dominant Culture

The most institutionally normalized power, is widespread, and influential across societal structures and entities in which multiple cultures are present. *See Culture and White Dominant Culture.*

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. It recognizes that there are communities that are under-resourced, marginalized and oppressed across Washington that are disproportionately affected. Justice will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, access to the decision-making process, and benefits of a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work[12].

Ethnocentrism

The belief that one's own ethnic group or culture is superior to other ethnic groups and cultures.

Equity

The act of developing, strengthening, and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable (not equal) opportunity for all people. Equity is distinct from equality which refers to everyone having the same treatment without accounting for differing needs or circumstances. Equity has a focus on eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically and currently oppressed groups.

Ethnicity

A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base[13,14].

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[11] "Diversity & Inclusion." U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/.

[12] US EPA, OA. "Environmental Justice." Collections and Lists. US EPA, November 3, 2014. https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice.

[13] "Our Research – ProInspire." Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.equityinthecenter.org/our-research/.

[14] "Articles - Diversity and Inclusion Resources - Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) - University of Houston." University of Houston. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.uh.edu/cdi/diversity_education/resources/articles/.

Gender Identity

A person's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. A person's gender identity can be the same or different from their biological sex.

- **Agender** - Without gender. When a person feels they have no gender at all and have no connection to any gender.
- **Cisgender** - Describes a person whose gender identity and gender expression matches the gender typically associated with their biological sex. Often abbreviated to "Cis".
- **Gender Non-Binary** - A term of self-identification for people who do not identify within the limited and binary terms that have described gender identity: male or man, female or woman.
- **Genderfluid** - Individuals whose gender varies over time. A gender fluid person may at any time identify as male, female, agender, any other non-binary identity, or some combination of identities.
- **Genderqueer** - Describes a person who identifies outside of the binary of male/man and female/woman. It is also used as an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (i.e. agender, bi-gender, genderfluid).
- **Transgender** - An umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth do not correspond.

Gender-Expansive

An umbrella term used for individuals that broaden their own culture's commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles, and/or other perceived gender norms. Gender-expansive individuals include those with transgender and non-binary identities, as well as those whose gender in some way is seen to be stretching society's notions of gender[15]. *See Gender Identity and Gender Expression.*

Gender Expression

External appearance of one's gender, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or intonation, and which may or may not conform to societal expectations of a person's sex assigned at birth or their gender identity.

- **Gender Non-Conforming** - A way to describe a person whose gender expression does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth. It is not used as a personal identifier[16].

Gender Pronouns

A pronoun that a person chooses to refer to themselves. These include, but aren't limited to: she, her, hers, herself; he, him, his, himself; they, them, theirs, themselves; and ze, hir or zir, hirs or zirs, hirself or zirself.

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[15] "Gender-Expansive." Gender Spectrum (blog). Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.genderspectrum.org/glossary/gender-expansive/.

[16] "What's the Difference between 'Gender Identity' and 'Gender Expression'? – The LGBTQ+ Experiment." Accessed October 9, 2019. https://lgbtqexperiment.com/2018/11/08/whats-the-difference-between-gender-identity-and-gender-expression/.

Genetic Information

Genetic information includes information about an individual's genetic tests and the genetic tests of an individual's family members, as well as information about the manifestation of a disease or disorder in an individual's family members[17,18].

Heterosexism

Discrimination or prejudice against LGBTQ+ people on the assumption that heterosexuality is the cultural norm and the prejudiced belief that heterosexuals are socially and culturally superior.

Homophobia

A term for fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, hatred, discomfort, or mistrust that one may have toward LGBTQ+ people. Can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ+.

Identity

A person's innermost concept of self. How an individual perceives themselves and what they call themselves.

Inclusion

Intentionally designed, active, and ongoing engagement with people that ensures opportunities and pathways for participation in all aspects of group, organization, or community, including decision-making processes. Inclusion is not a natural consequence of diversity. There must be intentional and consistent efforts to create and sustain a participative environment. Inclusion refers to how groups show that people are valued as respected members of the group, team, organization, or community. Inclusion is often created through progressive, consistent, actions to expand, include, and share.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a framework for understanding the interaction of cultures and identities held by an individual. Intersectionality explains how an individual with multiple identities that may have been marginalized can experience compounded oppression (such as racism, sexism, and classism) or how an individual can experience privilege in some areas and disadvantage in other areas. It takes into account people's overlapping identities to understand the complexity of their life outcomes and experiences[19,20].

LGBTQ+

An acronym that describes individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual. The "+" respectively includes, but is not limited to, two-spirit and pansexual. The term queer is sometimes used within the community as an umbrella term to refer to all LGBTQ+ people. It may also be used as a political statement which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression as fluid.

[17] "Our Research – ProInspire." Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.equityinthecenter.org/our-research/.
[18] "Genetic Discrimination." Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/genetic.cfm.
[19] Crenshaw, Kimberlé, ed. Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement. New York: New Press, 1995.
[20] Crenshaw, Kimberlé. On Intersectionality: Essential Writings. New York: New Press, 2019.

Marginalization

The social process of relegating a particular person, groups or groups of people to an unimportant or powerless position. This use of power prevents a particular person, group, or groups of people from participating fully in decisions affecting their lived experiences, rendering them insignificant or peripheral. Some individuals identify with multiple groups that have been marginalized. People may experience further marginalization because of their intersecting identities.

Microaggression

The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership[21,22].

Military Status

A person's connection to the military in the categories listed below:
- **Disabled Veterans -** A veteran who is entitled to compensation under laws administered by the Department of Veteran Affairs or a person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability. This includes veterans who would be entitled to disability compensation if they were not receiving military retirement pay instead.
  - Reference: Title 38 U.S.C. Section 4211 (3)
- **Military Spouse** - Washington state recognizes military spouse as any person currently or previously married to a military service member during the service member's time of active, reserve, or National Guard duty.
  - Reference: Executive Order 19-01
- **National Guard & Reserve Service** - The Armed Forces reserve component includes the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard of the United States and the Air National Guard of the United States. The individuals are currently serving in a reserve component capacity contributing to the national security and military readiness.
  - Reference: Title 38 U.S.C. Section 101 (7)
- **Special Disabled Veterans -** A veteran who is entitled to compensation under laws administered by the Department of Veteran Affairs
  - a disability rated at 30 percent or more; or
  - a disability rated at 10 or 20 percent in the case of a veteran who has been determined under 38 U.S.C. 3106 to have a serious employment handicap; or
  - a discharge or release from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
    - Reference: Title 38 U.S.C. Section 4211 (1)
- **Veteran:** includes every person who has received a discharge or was released from active military service under conditions other than dishonorable or is in receipt of a United States department of defense discharge document that characterizes their military service as other than dishonorable (RCW 41.04.007 & Title 38 U.S.C.).

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[21] "Microaggressions: More Than Just Race." Psychology Today. Accessed October 9, 2019. http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race.

[22] "Our Research – ProInspire." Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.equityinthecenter.org/our-research/.

Misogyny

The dislike of, contempt for, or engraved prejudice against women/females.

Nationality

A specific legal relationship between a person and a state, whether by birth or naturalization in the case of an immigrant.

National Origin

System of classification based on the nation from which a person originates regardless of the nation they currently live. National origin is not something an individual can change, though origin can change through the generations of family.

Oppression/Anti-Oppression

- **Oppression** - Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access. This can occur, intentionally and unintentionally, on individual, institutional, and cultural levels.
  - Individual - attitudes and actions that reflect prejudice against a social group.
  - Institutional - policies, laws, rules, norms, and customs enacted by organizations and social institutions that disadvantage some social groups and advantage other social groups.
  - Institutional - policies, laws, rules, norms, and customs enacted by organizations and social institutions that disadvantage some social groups and advantage other social groups.
  - Societal/cultural - social norms, roles, rituals, language, music, and art that reflect and reinforce the belief that one social group is superior to another.
- **Anti-oppression -** The act of shifting power to people who have been marginalized by recognizing, mitigating and eliminating the oppressive effects of the individual, institutional and societal elements of the dominant culture.

Othering

Othering encompasses the systematically expressed prejudice on the basis of group identities or membership. It is a common set of dynamics, processes, and structures that produces marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences. It is a strategy of the dominant culture to prevent belonging. Dimensions of othering include, but are not limited to, religion, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (class), disability, sexual orientation, citizenship/immigration status, and skin tone[23,24]. *See Belonging.*

[23] "Implicit Bias and Structural Racialization |." Accessed October 9, 2019.
https://nationalequityproject.org/resources/featured-resources/implicit-bias-structural-racialization.

[24] "The Problem of Othering: Towards Inclusiveness and Belonging." Othering and Belonging (blog), June 29, 2017.
http://www.otheringandbelonging.org/the-problem-of-othering/.

People of Color or Communities of Color

Collective term for referring to non-white racial groups ICHD) – add citation.

Power

The ability to decide who will have access to opportunity and resources; the capacity to direct or influence the behavior of others, oneself, and/or the course of events.

Power-over

The ability to impact others without respect or their permission. Exercising control over another person or people through the use of force, authority, or position, and the dissemination of punishment and reward.

Power-with

Using or exercising one's power to work with others equitably for common good, showing respect, leveraging strengths, and providing guidance.

Prejudice

Prejudice is an idea or opinion that is not based on fact, logic, or actual experience. Prejudice may be formed by a person's previous experience, learning, and observations.

Privilege

Privilege is any unearned benefit, position, power, right, or advantage one receives in society because of their identity. In the United States, privilege is prevalent in the following areas:
- Ability privilege;
- Age privilege;
- Christian privilege;
- Cis Privilege;
- Class or economic privilege;
- Hetero privilege;
- Male privilege;
- National origin; and
- White privilege.

Questioning

A term to describe a person who is exploring their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Race

A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics most typically skin color. Racial categories were socially constructed, and artificially created whiteness as one of the elements of the dominant culture. Race was created to concentrate power and advantage people who are defined as white and justify dominance over non-white people. The idea of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture, and influences life opportunities, outcomes, and

experiences. Racial categories change based on the political convenience of the dominant society at a given period of time. *See Nationality/National Origin, Color, Colorism, and Ethnicity.*

Race Equity

The vision or existence of a community, society, or world in which race or color does not predict the amount and quality of opportunities, services, and benefits. The condition where one's race identity has no influence on how one fares in society[25].

Racism

A way of representing or describing race that creates or reproduces structures of domination based on racial categories[26].

In other words, racism is racial prejudice plus power. In the United States, it is grounded in the creation of a white dominant culture that reinforces the use of power to create privilege for white people while marginalizing people of color, whether intentional or not.

It is perpetuated in many forms of racism that include:
- **Individual racism** - An individual's beliefs, attitudes, and actions that perpetuates racism.
- **Interpersonal racism** - When individuals express their beliefs and attitudes with another person that perpetuates racism.
- **Internalized racism** - When people of color, knowingly or unknowingly, accept and integrate negative racist images, beliefs, and identities to their detriment.
- **Institutional racism** - Intentional or unintentional, laws, organizational practices, policies, and programs that work to the benefit of white people and to the detriment of people of color.
- **Systemic racism**: The way an entire system collectively contributes to racial inequities. This includes the health, environmental, education, justice, government, economic, financial, transportation, and political systems.
- **Structural racism** - The interplay of laws, practices, policies, programs, and institutions of multiple systems, which leads to adverse outcomes and conditions for communities of color compared to white communities[27].

Respect

A feeling or understanding that someone or something is important, valued and should be treated in a dignified way[28].

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[25] "Human Rights Commission." Accessed October 9, 2019. https://sf-hrc.org/.

[26] Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 1994.

[27] "Glossary--Racial Equity Tools." Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary.

[28] "Articles - Diversity and Inclusion Resources - Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) - University of Houston." University of Houston. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.uh.edu/cdi/diversity_education/resources/articles/.

Sexism

Discrimination or prejudice against a particular sex or gender on the assumption that another sex or gender is the social and cultural norm. It typically has the most negative impact on women.

Sexual Orientation

A person's physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic, and/or other form of attraction to others. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. For instance, transgender people can be straight, bisexual, lesbian, gay, asexual, pansexual, queer, etc., like anyone else.

- **Aromantic** - A person who experiences little to no emotional or romantic to other people. Sometimes aromantic people abbreviate the term to Ace.
- **Asexual** - A person who experiences little to no physical attraction to other people. Sometimes asexual people abbreviate the term to Ace.
- **Bisexual** - A person who has an emotional and physical attraction to persons of the same and different genders.
- **Gay** - A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to someone of the same gender. It is more commonly associated with males or men.
- **Heterosexua**l - A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to people of the opposite sex.
- **Lesbian** - A female or woman who has an emotional and physical attraction for other females or women.
- **Pansexual** - A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to individuals of all gender identities and expressions.
- **Queer** - A person who expresses fluid identities and/or orientations in their emotional and physical attraction to others. The term is sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to all LGBTQ+ people.

Social Construct

A social phenomenon or convention originating within and cultivated by society or a particular social group, as opposed to existing inherently or naturally.

Social Justice

A practice within a society based on principles of equality and solidarity that understands and values human rights and recognizes the dignity of every human being. Such a practice would strive to provide basic human needs and comforts to all members of the society regardless of class, race, religion or any other characteristic.

SOGIE

An acronym, usually used in data collection, for addressing Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, which captures all the ways people self-identify. SOGIE includes LGBTQ+ as well as heterosexual, cisgender, and non-questioning individuals.

Stereotype

Characteristics attributed to an individual or group based on generalization, oversimplification, or exaggeration that may result in stigmatization and discrimination[29].

Tokenism

The practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing.

Transphobia

A term for fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, hatred, discomfort, or mistrust that one may have toward people who are transgender or gender non-conforming. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as transgender or gender non-conforming.

Two-Spirit

A term sometimes used to describe Indigenous individuals who have a gender identity or gender expression that does not align with their sex assigned at birth or have a culturally distinct gender, apart from male or man and female or woman.

Western-centrism

The tendency to believe that Western society values, standards and norms are superior to those of other cultures.

White Dominant Culture

Culture defined by white men and white women with social and positional power, enacted both broadly in society and within the context of social entities such as organizations. *See Dominant Culture and White Supremacy.*

White Supremacy

A political, economic, and cultural system in which white people are believed to be the normal, better, smarter and, holier race over all other races. This system entitles whites with overwhelming control, power, and material resources. Conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread. White dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings. A white supremacy mindset is perpetuated when elements of this system are not named, agreed to, or actively undone[30, 31, 32].

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[29] "Diversity & Inclusion." U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/.

[30] Okun, Tema. The Emperor Has No Clothes: Teaching about Race and Racism to People Who Don't Want to Know. Educational Leadership for Social Justice. Charlotte, N.C: Information Age Pub, 2010.

[31] Crenshaw, Kimberlé, ed. Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement. New York: New Press, 1995.

[32] "DRworksBook." dRworksBook. Accessed October 9, 2019. http://www.dismantlingracism.org/.

Workforce Diversity

Workforce Diversity means a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. These include, but are not limited to, characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, political beliefs, communication styles], and family structures. The concept also encompasses differences among people about where they are from, where they have lived and their differences of thought and life experiences[33]. *See Diversity.*

Xenophobia

A term for fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, hatred, discomfort, or mistrust that one may have toward people from other countries. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived a person is from other countries.

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[33] "Diversity & Inclusion." U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/.
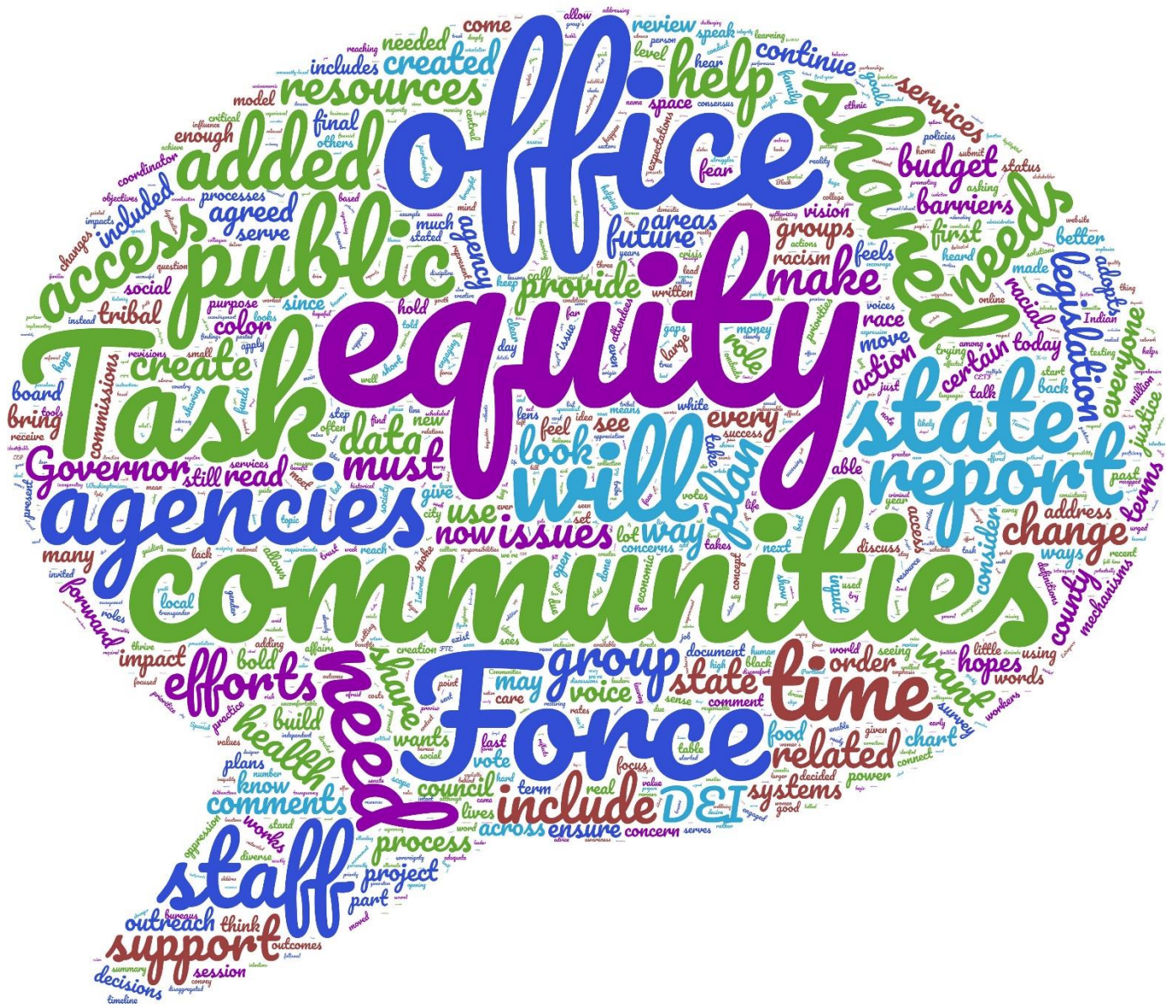
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