PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

This document is for discussion only and recommendations have not been adopted by the Task Force. These proposed recommendations, if adopted, would supplement the recommendations in the Task Force’s preliminary report.

GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
- In partnership with GOIA, gauge tribes’ interest in engaging in consultation. (Office of Equity)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CO-CREATION
- Adequately fund the Office of Equity and statutory commissions to conduct community outreach and engagement. (Legislature & Governor)
- Provide opportunities for communities to take the lead in creating information about and for themselves, including through contracts and grants. (Office of Equity & agencies)
- In partnership with the statutory commissions, build connectivity with communities that are isolated (socially, technologically, geographically, linguistically). (Office of Equity & agencies)
- Prioritize issues that are most important to communities and work with them on emerging issues. (Office of Equity & agencies)

IN RESPONSE TO HB 1783 & STATE OPERATING BUDGET
- **HB 1783**: “[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.”
  - Provide adequate resources for the Office of Equity, so it can build internal capacity and resilience, support the enterprise, and achieve its intended purpose. (Leg & Gov)
  - Adequately fund key partners, including the statutory commissions, to do reinforcing work. They require adequate resources and staffing to investigate complaints, advocate for and serve communities, advise the Governor, etc. (Leg & Gov)
- Work with agencies to move toward transparency and accountability. With adequate resources, assist agencies in developing DEI plans and language access plans, conduct performance reviews, and build/maintain a public dashboard to display progress. (Office of Equity)
- Give the Office of Equity rule-making authority, so it can establish regulations around DEI plans, performance reviews, and accountability. (Leg)

OFFICE OF EQUITY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
- Apply an intersectional, multi-dimensional framework to all efforts. (Office of Equity)
- Build synergy with partners—including the statutory commissions, community organizations, and business/employee resource groups (BRGs)—through mutual support and complementary relationships. (Office of Equity)
  - Be a hub for discussions; weave together work on strategies, policy, and legislation
  - Support each other in community outreach and engagement
Leverage commissions’ and BRGs’ roles as focal points for their communities
Elevate issues that matter to commissions/BRGs and their communities
Promote barrier-free access to participation and services

- Promote the use of standard equity-related language and competencies through content and policy development, education, and training. (Office of Equity with commissions, DES, OFM)
  - Glossary of equity-related terms; competencies and training requirements (for all staff, for managers, for agency leadership)
  - Work with partners to provide education and technical assistance on DEI-related laws, policies, initiatives, and other requirements

- Implement the following accountability approaches (Office of Equity)
  - Lend visibility to important issues that are unheard or unseen
  - Establish standards that apply across the enterprise
  - Create markers to show progress (or lack thereof) in a transparent way
  - Shine a light on how data should be collected and used
  - Promote consistent training, including training related to disability rights
  - Model a supportive and engaging approach when working with agencies

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (see pages 39 – 43 of preliminary report)
- Consider keeping/removing staff positions related to ombuds, investigations, audits.
  - Consider creating the role of ‘Ombuds Liaison,’ which would work with state ombuds offices to identify, elevate, and address equity issues across sectors based on concerns from families and communities.

- For performance reviews:
  - Consider designating new staff positions to conduct agency performance reviews; OR
  - Consider recommending additional agency liaison positions, which would provide guidance and technical assistance to agencies and conduct performance reviews

- Remove the ‘Staffing & Responsibilities Chart’ (page 44 of preliminary report)

LESSONS FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC & RESPONSE
- The impacts of COVID-19 highlight systemic barriers and institutional oppression. There is disproportionate burden on communities of color, immigrant communities, low-income communities, the LGBTQ community, the disability community, and vulnerable labor forces.
- ‘Hitting pause’ on services is not neutral—it is harmful. Agencies must be prepared to continue serving all populations (e.g. students with disabilities, isolated communities).
- For some communities, state support structures did not apply to their lives in the first place. They are dependent on these structures now more than ever.
- Do not revert to inequitable systems and behaviors; do not replicate and reinforce inequities.
- What will be different this time? We have the responsibility to ensure communities are not left behind, and a unique opportunity to rebuild systems to be more just and equitable.
- The door is open even wider than before for an Office of Equity—it is needed now more than ever.
Prioritization

Urgent & Foundational

• As resources allow, 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 agencies
• Promote consideration of socioeconomic and cultural contexts in policy development
• Develop an equity toolkit for agencies to use as they make decisions
• Encourage systems change by coordinating discussions and advising on strategies

[Additional items?]

Foundational

• Apply an intersectional, multi-dimensional framework
• Advocate for a diverse workforce
• Help develop cultural humility training and resources
• Help develop DEI-related language and competencies
• Build relationships with tribes, agencies, and communities
• Develop complementary relationships with commissions and support their work

[Additional items?]

With Investment

• Recommendations on the Office of Equity’s roles and responsibilities show what a fully effective Office looks like (see preliminary report and additional recommendations above)
• The COVID-19 response, including the work of the Community Engagement Task Force, demonstrates the tremendous efforts and resources needed to support the enterprise in developing and implementing equity-related policies and tools.
• The pandemic accelerated equity-related efforts, and made possible what was thought to be impossible (e.g. statewide language access plan, multilingual resources, timely grants for community organizations). Turn this ‘emergency paradigm’ into a post-emergency reality that changes the way government does business.
SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION – For the enterprise, with assistance from the Office of Equity

- Advocacy
  - Shine a light on inequities
  - Name power disparities & elevate voices

- Communication & connectedness
  - Bring communities together to work side-by-side with government
  - Invite communities to help identify and fill gaps; promote opportunities for engagement
  - Connect with underrepresented and isolated communities
  - Create space for relationship development (w/ other agencies, communities)
  - Focus on compliance and compassion

- Achieve barrier-free access (information, technology, services, resources, systems)
  - Promote opportunities for communities to create information about and for themselves

- Equity in policy development & decision making
  - Use an equity lens/toolkit: “Prioritize those who’ve been farthest from opportunity”
  - Be proactive in building equitable systems, not reactive
  - Challenge the tendency to revert to inequitable systems and behaviors
  - Consider historical experiences & socioeconomic and cultural contexts
  - Be adaptive to specific industries/sectors and consider vulnerable labor forces
  - Preserve safety net programs

- Workforce diversity & competencies
  - Ensure cultural and linguistic representation in the state workforce; build community in institutions before we can lean on communities
  - Ensure cultural humility training and resources, which are foundational
  - Ensure those in supervisory roles understand and model concepts of equity and inclusion

- Data equity
  - Disaggregate data, using enterprise-wide standards, to understand and address needs (race/ethnicity, occupation, geography, LGBTQ status, disability status, language)
  - Ensure ‘data dives’ that inform policy are community-driven; conduct participatory reviews
  - Discuss and address data collection and access issues, including those that affect tribes