

Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force
Operating Principles
Adopted December 2020

EMBRACE EQUITY

We embrace equity as we strive for fairness and justice to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Equity is not equality—equity acknowledges that everyone is not starting from the same place. Equity is achievable and requires unwavering commitment to prioritizing resources and supports toward communities facing inequity. Achieving equity requires us to identify, name, and dismantle institutional racism and oppression.

FOCUS ON ANTI-BLACK RACISM

We are committed to promoting equity for all individuals and communities that have been disproportionately harmed by cannabis law violations. However, we recognize that Black and African American people have experienced particularly stark inequities in the criminal legal system generally, and specifically in the enforcement of cannabis laws, which have had a lasting impact on Black communities across Washington. We also recognize that different forms of discrimination and oppression are related to each other, and we will take the intersections of various identities into account.

CENTER COMMUNITY

We recognize that we can only achieve equity if communities impacted by inequity are at the center of our work. We acknowledge that communities know best their assets, needs, and solutions. We strive to recognize and share power and structure our meetings to foster meaningful engagement. We will strive to incorporate stories of lived experience into our reports and recommendations.

COMMIT TO BOLD ACTION

Inequities exist because of racism, economic injustice, and systemic oppression that hinder opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive. Eliminating racism, injustice, and oppression requires transformative, not incremental, change. We commit to using the authority we have and our collective influence to push for bold changes that interrupt and dismantle historical systems of oppression and create systems of fairness and justice.

BE VIGILANT FOR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Policy, program, and budget decisions can have adverse unintended consequences if equity is not intentionally and systematically considered. We, as a government entity, understand that our decisions have long-term impacts. We commit to using an equity lens in the development of recommendations as a Task Force and in our decisions as individual members.