

DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES WORKGROUP  
WORKPLAN AT-A-GLANCE WITH EXAMPLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**BACKGROUND & SCOPE OF WORK**

In accordance with RCW 69.50.335, the Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB) must create a social equity program for existing retail licenses (currently 36 open allotments, including 15 in areas where there are no local bans or moratoriums). Social equity applicants must have resided in a disproportionately impacted area (DIA) or have been convicted of a cannabis offense (or be a family member of such an individual). DIAs are defined as areas with high rates of poverty, participation in income-based programs, unemployment, and arrests, convictions, or incarcerations related to cannabis.

- This workgroup must develop proposed recommendations to better define the social equity applicant criteria with an equity lens so that LCB can ensure licenses will actually be issued to individuals from communities that have been disproportionately harmed by cannabis enforcement.

In addition, RCW 69.50.335 specifies that in determining who to issue a license to, LCB may consider the strength of applicants' social equity plans and how they will meet social equity goals.

- This workgroup must develop proposed recommendations to provide additional guidance to LCB on what to consider when reviewing applicants' social equity plans to ensure review criteria are thoughtfully considered with an equity lens.

**WHAT WILL THE FULL TF BE DOING WHILE WORKGROUPS ARE MEETING?**

Staff is tentatively recommending that the full TF reconvene in April for a briefing of all the workgroup's progress to date and to provide feedback. Staff is also tentatively recommending that the full TF meet once in May and once in June to finalize, and hopefully adopt, proposed recommendations that come out of the Disproportionately Impacted Communities workgroup in time for the October 2, 2021 deadline (subject to change depending on outcome of HB 1443) for Commerce to stand up the pilot technical assistance grant program. *We will have to be flexible, but this is our best guess at this point in time.*

**TASK A (FEB-MAY): CREATE CRITERIA FOR DEFINING A DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED AREA**

**Objectives related to Task A:**

- Define "area"
  - *Example question that the workgroup will likely explore:* What is the appropriate geographic area to best understand disproportionate impact, as defined below (note: must be comparable to a census tract), and why?
- Specify "cutoffs" for what is considered a high poverty rate, high income-based program participation rate, high rate of unemployment, high rates of cannabis-related arrests, convictions, or incarcerations
  - *Example questions that the workgroup will likely explore:* What are important considerations for selecting rate cutoffs, in general, and specific to this work? How are these rates defined elsewhere, and what lessons can we learn from this?

**TASK B (FEB-MAY): CREATE CRITERIA FOR DEFINING WHO QUALIFIES AS A SOCIAL EQUITY APPLICANT**

**Objectives related to Task B:**

- Define time period of focus

*\*\*Note: Task timelines are subject to change.*

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- *Example question that the workgroup will likely explore:* Why is the selected time period appropriate?
- Define "family member"
  - *Example questions that the workgroup will likely explore:* Who is considered a family member? What are the outer limits for who is considered a family member (e.g. Does a 3rd cousin or other more distant relative that has a cannabis conviction suffice for eligibility)? What documentation will be required to meet this qualifier?

**\*POSSIBLE\* TASK C (MAY-JUNE): PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEETING SOCIAL EQUITY GOALS**

**\*Possible\* Objective related to Task C:**

- Provide clarity (i.e. through real world examples, community needs/asks, etc.) on what "reducing accumulated harm" means in WA.
  - *Example questions that the workgroup will likely explore:* How does reducing accumulated harm look different for individuals vs. families vs. highly impacted areas? Where is there overlap/similarities? How can LCB reduce said "accumulated harm"?

**TASK D (MAY-JUNE): PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WHAT THE SOCIAL EQUITY PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE & THE SOCIAL EQUITY APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Objectives related to Task D:**

- Define what the Social Equity plan should include.
  - *Example questions that the workgroup will likely explore:* Referring to the provision "at least some of the elements", what are mandatory requirements for the Social Equity plan application (if there are any) and what is may be optional? Are there optional, yet encouraged, elements? What else might the plan include?

**TASK E (MAY-JULY): PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO IMPLEMENT AN EQUITABLE & JUST APPLICATION PROCESS**

- Recommend strategies for an equitable application process
  - *Example question that the workgroup will likely explore:* How may an applicant submit a social equity plan (e.g. written responses only, interview process, site visits if they have a property secured, combination of all three)?
- Conduct an equity review LCB's broader licensing requirements to avoid perpetuating institutional racism.
  - *Example questions that the workgroup will likely explore:* RCW 69.50.335 Subsection 3(bii) indicates that LCB may deny an application if it does not otherwise meet licensing requirements. What are these licensing requirements, and should they be modified?

**TASK F (APRIL-JULY): FINALIZE, COMPILE, AND PUBLISH RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES**

**\*\*Note:** Task timelines are subject to change.