



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Draft Meeting Minutes – April 2, 2020
Virtual Only

Task Force members present:

Victor Rodriguez	Allison Camden
David Mendoza	Laura Johnson
Stephanie Celt, alternate for Cassie Bordelon	Emily Pinckney
Sarah Vorpahl, alternate for Michael Furze	Rowena Pineda
Millie Piazza	Peter Godlewski, alternate for Gary Chandler
Leah Kintner, alternate for Larry Epstein	Judy Twedt
	Larry Epstein

Task Force members absent:

Ignacio Marquez
Tomas Madrigal
John Stuhlmiller
Sonia Bumpus

Task Force staff present:

Elise Rasmussen, Project Manager	Esmael Lopez, Community Engagement Coordinator
Hannah Fernald, Administrative Coordinator	

Guests and other participants:

Cait Lang-Perez, Health Disparities Council Staff
LinhPhung Huynh, Office of Equity Task Force Staff
Claire Richards, WA Physicians for Social Responsibility
David Ortiz, Communities of Color Coalition
Xóchitl Garcia, Community Health Board Coalition
Vivian Chan, Wing Luke Museum
Leah Wood, MPH/MPA student at University of Washington
Susan Cozzens, Quaker Voice on Washington Public Policy
Anne Miller, South Seattle Climate Action Network
Matt Doumit, government relations consultant for Cowlitz PUD, Lewis PUD, Tacoma Public Utilities, and Port of Longview
Isabel Carrera Zamanillo, University of Washington College of the Environment
Lauren Frelander, Washington State Dept. of Health
Scott O'Dowd, Washington State Dept of Ecology
Morgan Michel, Washington Environmental Council and Washington Conservation Voters
Othmane EI-Haddade
Effenus Henderson, Co-Director, Institute for Sustainable Diversity and Inclusion
Grace Hope, 350.org and the 350 Washington Network

Teri Kannor
David Morales
Coco Chang
Kurtis Robinson
Sameer Ranade
Dori Peralta Baker
Maria Batayola
Richard Gelb
Bereket Kiros
Toby Joseph
Kate Griffith
Damarys Espinoza
Bridget Ray, Na'ah Illahee Fund

Victor Rodriguez, Task Force Co-chair, called the public meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. and read from a prepared statement (on file).

1. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

David Mendoza and Victor Rodriguez, Task Force Co-Chairs, introduced themselves and reviewed the procedures and expectations for the virtual public meeting. Victor Rodriguez, Co-Chair stated the purpose and goals for the Environmental Justice Task Force and reviewed the community agreements (on file). He then began a conversation with Task Force members and members of the public to discuss the intersection of the COVID-19 response and environmental justice.

There was a concurrent discussion happening using the Zoom (teleconference web platform) In-Meeting Chat function. The majority of comments came from the public. Below are comments related to the COVID-19 response discussion:

- “In Yakima 40% or more of workers are essential, meaning the decision has been made to not protect this community so that the food production can go on. Unless something changes (like a flood of masks), it will spread here at a similar rate as before the shutdown in King County.”
- “Agree with the re-traumatization of Asians in our community. I am concerned about the rising bias against Asians. I am also seeing an increase in bias against lower income citizens, people with disabilities and the LGBTQ community. All of these communities are disproportionately in jobs and occupations in the service and health sectors.”
- “Thousands of undocumented immigrants in the state are struggling with job stability and lack of culturally relevant resources. Unfortunately, many of them do not know very well what kind of support they can receive and are afraid to be considered a "public charge" that can threaten any possibility to change their migratory status. The Commission of Hispanic Affairs has been meeting with other organizations and the Mexican Consulate to identify resources, including resources in indigenous languages.”

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

David Ortiz, Communities of Color Coalition, shared that they just received \$25,000 grant from Group Health to support vulnerable communities and communities of color. His organization is in charge of distributing this grant statewide. He stated that those who would like to apply should get in touch with him.

Kurtis Robinson, NAACP Spokane Chapter, shared his concerns with the justice-involved population who is currently incarcerated during this pandemic as well as those who are formerly incarcerated who are now seeking housing. He stated that the lack of affordable housing leading to homelessness has the potential to extend the life of this virus. He also shared that he is meeting with local elected officials to discuss the fiscal impacts to small businesses in Spokane as a result of the COVID response. He shared that communities of color are lacking access to resources, quality health care, and funding, and that the next challenge getting the eastern Washington impacted communities of color heard on their thoughts around environmental justice before the Task Force work is done. Last, he shared that there is a letter out from the Spokane chapter of the NAACP to Spokane's Mayor, a lawsuit from Columbia Legal Services about incarceration issues, and a Smart Justice Spokane letter to the media that dovetails into environmental justice work.

Ileana Ponce, Community Health Worker Coalition for Migrants and Refugees, shared that migrants are not receiving health care because they often do not have insurance. She stated that she wishes we could get data on how many people have received health care during the COVID response. She spoke about how people in Seattle are also coming to rural areas without protecting themselves. She spoke about the challenges with getting information in languages other than English, so those who speak other languages are not sure what their health care options are, how to protect themselves, or how to school their children in English while schools are closed. Ms. Ponce spoke about how community health workers are working to provide basic food for the community and that has been getting information from the Mexican Consulate to get Spanish information to communities about COVID.

Bereket Kiros, Community Coalition for Refugees, Immigrants, and Communities of Color, spoke about literacy and ask how we can help those families who may not be literate but will need to help their children with schooling online, perhaps for the rest of the year. Mr. Kiros made a point that there are disparities beyond the computer hardware, and that it is also a challenge to help their children with school when they might not be familiar with the American education setting.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: [The Task Force approves the April 2, 2020 agenda.](#)

Motion/Second: [Allison Camden/Stephanie Celt. Approved unanimously.](#)

4. ADOPTION OF JANUARY 14,2020 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: [The Task Force adopts the November 21, 2019 meeting minutes.](#)

Motion/Second: [Allison Camden/Stephanie Celt. Approved unanimously.](#)

MAPPING SUBCOMMITTEE BRIEFING

Elise Rasmussen, Staff, provided background information about the purpose of the Mapping Subcommittee. She also added that there is a research team and a team of

University of Washington graduate students supporting the Mapping Subcommittee. She explained the parameters of the research of the Subcommittee and that the focus of the presentation today would be about how State agencies should use the Environmental Health Disparities map (materials available).

Millie Piazza, Mapping Subcommittee Co-Chair and Task Force Member, one of the primary lifts of the Mapping Subcommittee is to provide recommendations for how to use the Environmental Health Disparities map (EHD map). She stated that the Subcommittee compiled examples of how agencies represented on the Task Force have used the map. She then shared preliminary recommendations from the Mapping Subcommittee regarding promising application of the EHD map for State agencies:

- Recommendation One: Area Assessment
 - The EHD map can help agencies understand the demographics and health data of a community, including languages spoken, education level, and existing environmental health risks. Using the map in this way can be an informative first step to then aid with planning for meaningful community engagement with communities across the state.
- Recommendation Two: Equity Impact Analysis
 - The map can help to understand who might be impacted by a project or policy. By using the relative ranking in the EHD map, an agency can see if a policy or project might negatively affect a highly impacted community, denoted by a higher ranked census tract in the map. More specifically, if a project has cumulative impacts considerations, the map could trigger enhanced community engagement, project or policy mitigation to frayed disparate impacts, or possibly the agency or organization may need to consider alternatives for that project based on the map's data.
- Recommendation Three: Project Prioritization
 - The EHD map can help to prioritize and guide where an agency or organization's investments are going and can help agencies to prioritize resources and services to areas that are most burdened with environmental hazards.
- Recommendation Four: Service Equity Evaluation
 - The EHD map can help evaluate how past investments have been distributed across the state or an agency's service area; this use of the map is a strong method for agency accountability. More specifically, agencies can use the map to figure out where the agency is prioritizing investments and services, who the agency's work is benefitting or burdening, where there is a service gap, and if there is an equitable distribution of benefits based on the map's relative rankings. Agencies can identify if they are doing service in the areas with the lowest or highest ranked areas in the map.

Laura Johnson, Mapping Subcommittee Co-Chair and Task Force Member, spoke about strengths and limitations of the map (on file) and facilitated a conversation with Task Force members and the public to learn about additional strengths and limitations of the map.

Allison Camden, Member, shared that she agrees with these limitations and stated that the map is a really good starting point, but that her agency needs more detailed data at a more granular geographic scale than the map can provide in order for the agency she represents to make decisions. Alison Beason, Port of Seattle, shared that the Port of Seattle is adopting this map to inform their grantmaking process. She shared her concern with having the presence of people of color as a negative data point, which paints the narrative that it is a risk to be around her as a Black woman. Bereket Kiros, Community Coalition for Refugees, Immigrants, and Communities of Color, spoke about the need to engage communities, and not just State agencies, about how to use the map. He also discussed that the map's demographic data might be outdated, and that gentrification and displacement should be taken into consideration since these issues may not be represented on the map. Maria Batayola, El Centro de la Raza, spoke about seasonal environmental justice phenomena with farmworkers, for example, and the map is not able to capture those seasonal impacts. Furthermore, she spoke about how the map is not about to capture the harmful effects of noise pollution. Victor Rodriguez, Co-Chair, discussed how we need to use qualitative data with the quantitative data represented in the map in order to understand the everyday lived experiences of people in highly impacted communities, and discussed opportunities for the two Subcommittees to collaborate. Stephanie Celt, Member, shared a suggestion to do a systematic review of available data sources that we could use to help address the limitations of the map.

There was a concurrent discussion happening using the Zoom (teleconference web platform) In-Meeting Chat function. The majority of comments came from the public. Below are comments related to the Mapping Subcommittee:

- "I testified last year to add aviation travel because of the air and noise pollution they emit. Was this done? Maria Batayola El Centro De La Raza on behalf of Beacon Hill EJ project."
- "There have been no changes to the map since it went live on the WA Tracking Network. We will be touching on some of the limitations of the map. One of them is that it is based on data that is publicly available, statewide and reducible down to the census tract level."
- "Another strength is the EHD is enabling both an index and an individual conditions"
- The map is very useful for giving a visual element to storytelling, makes it easier for visual learners to engage with the disparities it represents."
- "It can be difficult to give people instructions on how to use this map tool in part because of just how much info it includes. Some of the organization is not intuitive (for example, the groups in Sections/Topics), so can be difficult to help people dive down if they have specific data needs."
- "Adding the ability to run a disparity assessment at regional geography (district or sub-region -- of something like 50 - 100 tracts) would be useful improvement."
- "The problem we have is engagement how to educate citizens, in particular community of color to participate. They are communities who study the impact on Air noise pollution from prospect of racial equity. Please contact Maria."
- "Thank for you comment Alison Beason! Black and brown skin color SHOULD NOT ever be a negative data point. We need to be considerate of our language."
- "Does anyone have a link to tutorials on this map? Please post them here."

- “WTN Info & Training:
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/WashingtonTrackingNetworkWTN/Resources/Training>”
- “Would also be helpful to have a back-end to complement the query function on the front so that IT can automate data pulls for analyses we want to repeat.”
- “One value of pursuing this tool is that it shines a light on how ineffective Washington's data are for understanding language distributions. Census data are deeply limited and having a state-specific tool could give us the power to develop other local data sources.”
- “Has a how-to-video translated into 3 different languages as well :
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/WashingtonTrackingNetworkWTN/InformationbyLocation>”
- “Hear, hear on combining story (qualitative) and data (quantitative).”
- “Quantitative and Qualitative analysis = holistic approach!”
- “Many of the desired functions folks have mentioned, including crowd-sourced storytelling and analytic tools, are included as part of Esri AGO Hub product.
<https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-hub/overview>”

The Task Force took a break at 2:29 p.m. and reconvened at 2:35 p.m.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE BRIEFING

Ms. Rasmussen, Staff, began by thanking the Community Engagement Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Megan MacClellan and Emily Pinckney, and asked them to introduce themselves. She mentioned that the content and slides are available online, and began the presentation with an update on the Community Engagement Subcommittee’s (Subcommittee) progress.

Megan MacClellan, Subcommittee Co-Chair discussed the budget proviso language that requires this Task Force to provide guidance on best practices for community engagement. She introduced the Guidance Document the Subcommittee is working on (on file) and provided a rationale for this approach to state agencies. She then introduced the central preliminary recommendation from the Community Engagement Subcommittee: *All Washington state agencies should create their own agency-specific community engagement plans*. These plans would be heavily informed by the Subcommittee’s Guidance document on Community Engagement.

Ms. Rasmussen said the Subcommittee is looking for feedback on the following:

- The preliminary recommendation that all state agencies should create a community engagement plan
- The approach to the best practices for community engagement deliverable, namely the Guidance document (on file)
- The primary audience for this Guidance document being agency community engagement implementers, and not necessarily agency executive leadership

Ms. Rasmussen shared a high level overview of the Guidance document (on file), including the major elements of the document that outline best practices for community engagement as well as current and future examples and resources that will bolster agency community engagement work.

Ms. MacClellan, Subcommittee Co-Chair, transitioned the discussion to the measureable goals and model policies required deliverables, also outlined in the budget proviso for the Task Force. She specifically asked for Task Force feedback on the Subcommittee's approach to measureable goals, which consists of providing evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness of agency community engagement work.

Ileana Ponce, Community Health Worker Coalition for Migrants and Refugees, shared that she is thinking about what is happening now with the COVID-19 response, and considers how we could do community engagement around emergency response and preparedness. Toby Joseph, community member, discussed the importance of hiring and including people who are already embedded in communities as a way to reduce disparities. He went on to say that many agencies do not have direct ties to highly impacted communities, and that in emergencies these disparities become even more pronounced. Ms. MacClellan, Subcommittee Co-Chair, thanked Mr. Joseph for this perspective, and said that the Subcommittee would be grateful for more community involvement to inform what this work should look like. David Ortiz, community member, said that we may be jumping too far ahead here before discussing Japanese internment, workers' rights, and other historic and current trauma that needs community healing. He stated that many communities need an acknowledgement of the inequities they have faced before we can begin to heal from trauma and engage with and trust the government. Ms. MacClellan, Subcommittee Co-Chair, asked for clarification about distinguishing Task Force and Subcommittee responsibilities. David Mendoza, Co-Chair, responded that Subcommittees are responsible for the large majority of the work, and that the Task Force will move forward by approving or amending Subcommittee work.

Victor Rodriguez, Co-Chair, thanked the Subcommittee for their work, commented on specific community engagement plans that already exist, and stated that this recommendation could be a tangible win for a lot of agencies. He recalled a past meeting where the Task Force discussed power dynamics, and stated the need to elevate community wisdom as necessary information for agencies. He also discussed the importance of community power: namely, for communities to decide for themselves what will contribute to healing intergenerational trauma so that state government can co-create solutions to healing trauma alongside communities. Mr. Rodriguez also provided feedback on the Guidance document's audience: If the document focuses only on practitioners instead of agency leadership, we may miss some important policy and procedural barriers that may hinder us from doing community engagement work effectively.

There was a concurrent discussion happening using the Zoom (teleconference web platform) In-Meeting Chat function. The majority of comments came from the public. Below are comments related to the Community Engagement Subcommittee:

- "I suggest you include two additional groups to your engagement plan: Age, People impacted by disability and the LGBTQ community."
- "Can you describe (and maybe it is coming) how this community engagement plan is different from an external communications plan?"
- "Please think about "belonging" residents of WA belong to communities and families that need access, resources, etc..."

- “Investment in community partnerships is foundational for community engagement. Investment in the broad sense, from resources to decision making power, etc.”
- “Introduction needs to state that ‘community engagement is the doorway to ensuring compliances with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to provide equal access to programs, services and facilities.’”
- “Having engagement built into the program/project schedule, so engagement effort can inform timely and relevant project /program/policy outcomes, and have project/program/policy teams define what input can shape or influence”
- “‘Community engagement’, recruit, employ + support people who are already deeply connected with community and well-versed.”
- “Highlight the difference in expectations between community engagement and community outreach.”
- “Engagement is the creation of a relationship whereas outreach is more of giving people information.”
- “Hi, rather than training people on "community engagement", recruit, employ + support people who are already deeply connected with community and well-versed in community work.”
- “Really appreciate that comment on developing emergency response/preparedness communication plans. I believe CAPAA developed one years ago - would be great to collaborate with other including the Ethnic Commissions to make this happen.”
- “This is also very important work that the Office of Equity could do to create a lens for emergency response.”
- “In tribal communities, a lot of our ‘engagement’ happens around auntie’s kitchen tables and food. Many government agencies have tribal liaisons, but they operate on the Government to Government consultation, and community engagement is different. I will be taking a close look at this section of the plan. We have started doing virtual talking circles. And a ‘call your Gramma’ phone campaign.”
- “What bothers me about this approach is that culturally and linguistically competent community engagement is hard because it has not been systematized. This approach further institutionalizes/bakes in the cake he disconnects and disparities. These recommendations allow agencies to cherry pick given that there is no criteria for success that should be created and measured by BIPOC and all other marginalized communities.”
- “70% Native population live in urban areas.”
- “We have to be careful how we deal with Tribes during pandemics due to Govt to Govt relationships. What about Urban Natives? Such a huge and complicated issue.”
- “King County Clean Water Plan has a pretty good Community Engagement practice.”
- “In terms of WA policies, look at the historical archives back in the late 70s and early 80s from DSHS Office of Equal Opportunity when we were a mega agency that had policies, procedures and conducted systems audits of agencies.”
- “Given that you do not have authority, use the federal Title VI requirements as basis for WA state to do so.”
- “We need to think about community healing. Think about the need to apologize for Japanese Internment--which started in WA...”

- “I would recommend looking at the legislation for the Office of Equity and consider how a community engagement plan, language access plans and policies, and measurable goals can be rolled into those efforts/requirements.”
- “Check out the King County Land Conservation Equity Cabinet”
- “The OEO in the 80’s were far stronger than today in terms of authority and the legal basis has not changed. We need both cultural change and legal tools to flip into EJ.”
- “When the Equity Office Task Force conducted a focus group with agency staff (DEI practitioners), we heard that there are so many resources, tools, models, etc. to look to. There are also a lot of consultation services being offered, but the range of quality is quite large. They asked that an Office of Equity vet and compile resources, so agency staff can access these vetted resources in a central location in government. I thought about this when you mentioned that you will be compiling resources for community engagement plans--perhaps there should be a lens/set of criteria you can apply to the plans and approaches as they get sent to you so you highlight the most promising models in your report.”
- “Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a good place to start.”

6. DISCUSSION & FUTURE DIRECTION

Esmael Lopez, Community Engagement Coordinator for the Task Force, shared that it has been difficult to do good community engagement work during this shelter in place order. He asked, as communities are facing real consequences, how can we do this work better? He says that the Office of Equity Task Force has been working to address gaps in services and elevating and sharing information for and by communities. He concluded by saying we need to build our future work in community engagement by speaking with those that are vital to their communities during this time.

Ms. Rasmussen shared that more information about what is next to come will be share with members via email.

ADJOURNMENT

David Mendoza, Task Force Co-chair, adjourned the meeting at 3:43 p.m.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Victor Rodriguez, Task Force Co-chair
David Mendoza, Task Force Co-chair

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact Kelie Kahler, Washington State Board of Health Communication Manager, at 360-236-4102 or by email at kelie.kahler@sboh.wa.gov TTY users can dial 711.

PO Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington • 98504-7990
360-236-4110 • wsboh@sboh.wa.gov • sboh.wa.gov