



Draft Minutes of the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force
July 27, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Workgroup Members Present:

Rep. Kelly Chambers	Christopher Poulos
Rep. Melanie Morgan	Yasmin Trudeau
Sen. Rebecca Saldaña	Cherie MacLeod
Sen. Curtis King	Tamara Berkley
Carmen Rivera	Pablo Antonio Gonzalez
Michelle Merriweather	Raft Hollingsworth
Joe Solorio	Monica Martinez
Ollie Garrett	

Workgroup Members Absent:

Craig Bill	David Mendoza
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Guests and Other Participants:

Throughout the meeting, approximately 44 members of the public joined and participated. The Task Force (TF) thanks all of those who attended and shared their time, expertise, and lived experience to help shape this important work.

Staff Support:

Christy Curwick Hoff	Anzhane Slaughter
Joe Radermacher	

Call to Order

Rep. Melanie Morgan, Chair called the public meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and read from a prepared statement (on file). Anzhane Slaughter, Staff Member shared the Zoom protocol, conversation norms, and reviewed the agenda. Rep. Morgan asked Anzhane Slaughter, Staff Member to facilitate introductions of members.

1. Approval of Agenda

Motion: Approve July 27, 2021 agenda.

Motion/Second: Sen. King/Member Michelle Merriweather. Approved unanimously.

2. Approval of May 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Approve July 27, 2021 minutes.

Motion/Second: Members Ollie Garrett/Cherie MacLeod. Approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment

One member of the public expressed their concern that bias was a part of license issuance. Another suggested priority be given to those who were victims of such bias as amends and suggested ideas such as using tax dollars as funding and for rehabilitation. In general, comment was that there is not enough money being allotted to this issue and the public present wanted to see more licenses made available. Concern was also made about proper representation on the TF and the absence of a TF member. Public comment also included support for this opportunity to develop SE framework for other states.

Rep. Morgan, Chair: Thanks to all who have commented. . When i502 was created, we put money into rehab programs. The money from taxes is also going to rehab education. A reminder that this TF does not appoint its own people. Rep Morgan acknowledged that a TF member resigned in May. We'll start the updates and if time allows, ask for public comment.

4. Update: Technical Assistance & Mentorship Workgroup

Raft Hollingsworth and Tamara Berkley, Co-leads provided an update on the progress of the Technical Assistance & Mentorship Work Group (WG) (on file). The WG is requesting that the TF makes the recommendation that FY22 money is used to start developing the mentorship program. The TF recognizes and generally agrees that the original funding is not enough to develop and sustain a robust TA&M program.

Some ideas and concerns were voiced by TF members, WG members, and the public. One concern was regarding including current licensees who meet SE criteria as eligible for grants through the program. The WG felt that it was necessary so that the funding can be used in time as well as to promote the success of SE industry members as a whole. Another idea was to look for existing courses/trainings that may be applicable in a general business sense which can be included in the program to save development costs. Lastly, it was stated that the mentorship program needs to outline the most important things: taxes, inventory development/management, not selling to minors, etc. Industry members stated that knowing and complying with all the rules is one of the most difficult parts.

The Task Force recessed for break at 10:38 a.m. and reconvened at 10:50 a.m.

5. Update: Disproportionately Impacted Communities Workgroup

Cherie MacLeod and Christopher Poulos, Co-leads provided an update on the progress of the Disproportionately Impacted Communities WG (on file). Highlights from the DIA sub-group included that they are working to develop ranked tracts

across at least three separate decades, variables will include unemployment rate, conviction data and median household income. They want to include indicators that capture racial make-up of each tract. Michelle Cadigan shared a preliminary mock-up map as an example of the direction the WG is going. Highlights from SE Plan sub-group included that they decided on a holistic definition of “family” based on the Paid Family Leave Act and that they are working to prevent creating a cumbersome process for applicants who need to provide historical information regarding criminal history and impacts from the war on drugs. Their next focus will be on finalizing the elements required in SE plans as well as developing a way to prioritize applicants based on those plans.

Some ideas and concerns were voiced by TF members, WG members, and the public. One concern was that it has been difficult to obtain data needed for the development of the DIA maps, specifically court data from the Seattle Municipal Court and Administrative Office of the Courts. Another matter mentioned by the group was the new census data showing the population growth in the state of 11%. Becky Smith shared that the LCB has conducted a preliminary review of retail license numbers and they feel an increase of up to 51 new stores would be viable based on population growth and other factors. A final thought from the group was that they needed to ensure that if expansion occurs, new stores would be able to survive and be profitable.

6. Update: Licensing Workgroup

Monica Martinez, Co-lead provided an update on the progress of the Licensing WG (on file). First, the WG looked at the 11% population increase from 2013-2020. Second, violent crime has not increased, nor have auto accidents. Retail locations per capita is lower than many other states, including CO and OR. Dramatic growth in the industry is another indicator that the state could hold more. The WG also looked at potential job and revenue growth.

Some ideas and concerns were voiced by TF members, WG members, and the public. First, it was recommended that looking at where population growth has occurred could also show where more stores will survive and would support an increase in retail spaces. A concern from the community was that there are people who are ready to start business immediately. They hope that the licensing process can be prioritized and expedited so that they can work to get their stores open. They also stated that prioritizing previous dispensary owners needs to be included in the licensing process. Lastly, both members of the WG and community are looking for ways to promote removal of bans/moratoria and ease zoning and buffer requirements. The LCB has been conducting outreach to those areas with some success, but the community is looking for more pressure to be put on those areas to open up to retail cannabis sales.

7. Discussion: Overall Goals for Creating an Equitable Cannabis Industry

TF members discussed making the industry more equitable. Discussion included the number of licenses thought to make it equitable, Concern was voiced for those

licenses in banned areas. Also discussed were ideas for identifying those most harmed and including all sectors of the industry. Consideration was also given to what other states have done or are doing. Rep Morgan, Chair then opened it up for public comment.

Public comment included concerns there is not enough money, too much red tape and need for reparations for those who were harmed. One public member said while other sectors of the industry need equity, retail is where the most were harmed.

8. Next Steps

Before Next Steps, an update on the LCB website was given. A preview was given. The website should be live in 1-2 weeks. Additionally the LCB has had success in reaching out to banned areas. Anzhane Slaughter, Staff Member provided next steps to the TF, asking members to provide direction on where the TF goes from here. Future meeting dates were given.

Good of the Order & Adjournment

Rep. Morgan, Chair thanked all the members and community for their input and said it will all be considered. She thanked the staff for their work in preparing and managing these efforts. She adjourned the meeting at 12:36 p.m.

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.

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