

# Equity Office Task Force – Links & FAQs – May 2020

## LINKS

### Main Info Page for Task Force:

<https://healthequity.wa.gov/TheCouncilsWork/OfficeofEquityTaskForceInformation>

- Creation, purpose, deliverables
- Operating principles, bylaws
- Membership
- News stories about our meetings and progress
- Reports: community forum report, [preliminary report](#) to the Governor and Legislature, [summary sheet of recommendations](#)
- We will post the final proposal (due July 1) here

### Meeting Materials (all meetings):

<https://healthequity.wa.gov/TaskForceMeetings/EquityOfficeTaskForceMaterials>

- The June date is TBA, and we will post the exact date at a later time
- Subscribe to our distribution list (email [healthequity@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:healthequity@sboh.wa.gov)) to receive notifications of meetings, agendas, and exact times

**Social Media:** <https://www.facebook.com/WAHealthEquity/>

**Distribution List:** Send an email to [healthequity@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:healthequity@sboh.wa.gov) to be subscribed to our distribution list and receive updates on meeting times, agendas, and more.

## FAQs

### What is the purpose of the Task Force? What was it mandated to do?

The Task Force is developing a proposal for the creation of a WA State Office of Equity. The Office of Equity is intended to promote access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities, including racial and ethnic disparities, and improve outcomes statewide across all sectors of government. More info here:

<https://healthequity.wa.gov/TheCouncilsWork/OfficeofEquityTaskForceInformation>

### How is the Task Force related to the Health Disparities Council?

The Office of Equity was created through a proviso in the [2019-2021 biennial operating budget](#), ESHB 1109 (section 221, subsection 7). The proviso directs the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities (HDC) to convene and staff the Task Force. To preserve state funds, we use the same web platforms as the HDC, but the Task Force has its own mandate, membership, operating principles, and bylaws. More info here:

<https://healthequity.wa.gov/TheCouncilsWork/OfficeofEquityTaskForceInformation>

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### How do I become a member of this Task Force?

Membership was specified in the proviso that created the Task Force (ESHB 1109 / [Chapter 415, Laws of 2019](#)). You can see a list of our members [here](#). We are unable to expand membership, but we would love to connect with you to understand how the Task Force's work can be informed by your perspective and experiences. One of the Task Force's operating principles is Center Community—members recognize that we can only achieve equity if communities impacted by inequities are at the center of our work. To engage with our work, please email: [linhphung.huynh@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:linhphung.huynh@sboh.wa.gov) and [esmael.lopez@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:esmael.lopez@sboh.wa.gov). Thank you!

### What are the Task Force's future meeting dates?

You can access our schedule for future meetings along with meeting materials here: <https://healthequity.wa.gov/TaskForceMeetings/EquityOfficeTaskForceMaterials>

Our upcoming meetings are on May 14 and May 27. They will be virtual meetings, and exact times and agendas are forthcoming. We will likely have a meeting in June and will update our webpage with more information. To stay up-to-date with the Task Force's activities, subscribe to our distribution list by sending an email to: [healthequity@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:healthequity@sboh.wa.gov).

### Why is the Task Force doing virtual meetings? Will there be in-person meetings?

We are holding virtual meetings to protect the health and safety of Washingtonians during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are supporting the Governor's "[Stay Home, Stay Healthy](#)" order requiring people to stay at home and his [recent emergency proclamation](#) that limits the size of events and gatherings. We will continue to monitor conditions and access the Department of Health's [recommendations](#) to inform our decisions.

### What are the Task Force's recommendations for an Office of Equity? Where can I read the preliminary report?

The Task Force believes that communities deserve real change, not incremental steps. The Office of Equity should play an integral role in coordinating and elevating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in state government. Its work should promote smarter government by helping agencies invest resources in an equitable way and toward effective strategies. More info here: [full preliminary report](#) / [summary page of recommendations](#).

### What is the status of legislation to create the WA State Office of Equity?

The Task Force submitted a [preliminary report](#) to the Governor and Legislature in January 2020, which outlined recommendations for the Office of Equity's general structure, roles, and estimated operating budget. This report informed legislation to create the WA State Office of Equity ([E2SHB 1783](#)). HB 1783 was signed into law on April 3 with a partial veto, and state general funds were not appropriated for implementation. The Governor made this decision based on the enormous economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (see [veto statement](#)). The Office of Equity may still be established in July 2020, but the Task Force has not received details yet on implementation (funding, resources, staffing).

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### **When is the final proposal due? What will be included in the final proposal?**

The Task Force will submit a final proposal by July 1, which will include additional recommendations and guidance. We will post the final proposal on [our website](#) when it is complete.

### **What is the Task Force doing to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?**

The Task Force's mandate is outlined in [ESHB 1109](#), and it has not been directed to organize or implement response efforts. However, Task Force members in their individual and agency capacities are involved in various response efforts. For example, WA State's racial and ethnic commissions ([CAAA](#), [CHA](#), [CAPAA](#)) are providing resources and information to communities, advocating communities' needs and priorities, and elevating communities' interests at the highest level of state government. In the Task Force setting, we will continue to have conversations about equity issues seen through the pandemic and response.