



**Date:** January 3, 2022

**To:** Members of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities

**From:** Benjamin Danielson, Chair

**Subject:** Discussion—Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force

**Background and Summary:**

RCW 69.50.336, amended by ESHB 1443 (Chapter 169, Laws of 2021), directs the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities to staff the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force until the Washington State Office of Equity asks for staffing to be transferred to the Office of Equity. The Task Force is responsible for making recommendations to the Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB) to establish a social equity program to issue existing retail cannabis licenses. It is responsible for making recommendations to the Department of Commerce related to the technical assistance grant program. It is also responsible for making recommendations to the Legislature in several specific areas with the goal toward promoting equity in the cannabis industry.

The Task Force first convened in October 2020 and has met 7 times. The Task Force created three workgroups, which combined, have met an additional 19 times to date. As of its November 2021 meeting, the full Task Force has approved a number of recommendations for LCB, the Department of Commerce, and the Legislature. While already approved by the Task Force, the recommendations have not yet been formally submitted.

Generally, the recommendations provide guidance to LCB on how to prioritize applications for the social equity retail licenses to ensure licenses are issued to those most affected by the war on drugs. Recommendations also aim to reduce barriers and support individuals who receive social equity retail licenses to foster success. The Task Force also approved recommendations to direct cannabis sales revenue in ways that reinvest in disproportionately impacted communities.

As the entity charged with staffing and supporting the Task Force, the Council received a briefing on the Task Force's work and recommendations at its December 2, 2021 meeting. As was done with the Office of Equity Task Force and Environmental Justice Task Force recommendations previously, the Council considered whether it wanted to endorse the current, approved recommendations of the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force. At today's meeting, we will have an opportunity to continue that discussion.

### Recommended Council Action:

After discussion, the Council may choose to consider, amend if necessary, and adopt the following motion:

Proposed Motion: The Council believes that the war on drugs has resulted in significant harm to the Black community and other Communities of Color. As the entity responsible for providing staff support to the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force, the Council strongly supports the Task Force's work and the broad policy concepts of ensuring licenses are issued to those most affected by the war on drugs, reducing barriers and supporting individuals who receive social equity retail licenses to foster success, and reinvesting cannabis tax revenue back into disproportionately impacted communities.

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](mailto:kelie.kahler@sboh.wa.gov). TTY users can dial 711.

PO Box 47990 • Olympia, WA 98504-7990  
360-236-4110 • [healthequity@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:healthequity@sboh.wa.gov) • [www.healthequity.gov](http://www.healthequity.gov)