



**Draft Minutes of the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force  
Community Reinvestment and Workforce Training Workgroup  
February, 17, 2022  
Virtual Meeting**

**Workgroup Members Present:**

Michelle Merriweather, Co-Lead  
Raft Hollingsworth, Co-Lead  
Tamara Berkley, Co-Lead  
Jim Buchanan  
Zach James Fairley

Elmer Dixon  
Kate Kelly  
Jim Makoso  
Donna Moodie

**Workgroup Members Absent:**

**Guests and Other Participants:**

Throughout the meeting, approximately 42 members of the public joined and participated. The workgroup thanks all of those who attended and shared their time, expertise, and lived experience to help shape this important work.

**Staff Support:**

Anzhane Slaughter  
Lauren King

Crystal Ogle

**Call to Order**

Tamara Berkley, Co-Lead, called the public meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and read from a prepared statement (on file). Anzhane Slaughter, Staff shared the Zoom protocol, conversation norms, and reviewed the agenda.

**1. Introductions**

Michelle Merriweather, Co-Lead facilitates introduction of Workgroup Members. Other Zoom Webinar Panelists present include: Representative Melanie Morgan, Task Force Chair, Micah Sherman, Task Force Member and Co-Lead of the Licensing Workgroup, Representative Kelly Chambers, Task Force Member, Carmen Rivera, Task Force member and Paul Brice, Task Force Advisory Member.

**2. Workgroup Scope and Priorities**

Raft Hollingsworth, Co-Lead explains the scope and priorities of this workgroup which address community development and workforce job training. Representative Melanie Morgan, Task Force Chair explains that she is the prime sponsor of HB 1827 and offers clarification on the specifics of scope and priorities when it comes to Community Reinvestment. She explains that the Department of Commerce and Office of Equity will come up with eligibility criteria, and she envisions the workgroup providing helpful resources to them. For example, who will be the attorneys from the community? Who are the faith based and nonprofit organizations the community knows and trusts to be fiscal agents? She would like the workgroup to come up with a list of resources for the Department of Commerce. What organizations do home ownership in the community?

The workgroup members ask some clarifying questions including how the Department of Commerce will know who is eligible. They discuss how Disproportionately Impacted Area (DIA) criteria was recommended by the Task Force, and how/if it will be utilized in the process. The workgroup also determines that it would be helpful for workgroup members to read over HB 1827 to better understand their scope and believe the legislative update, next on the agenda, will provide the workgroup more foundation.

### **3. Legislative Update**

Michelle Merriweather, Co-Lead asks Lauren King, Staff to provide a legislative update, who begins by letting members and the public know that hyperlinks seen on the slides are available under materials on our website. HB 1827 has made it through the House and is onto the Senate. HB 1827 has not yet passed, so things can change, but provides a summary (on file) as it reads now. Kate Kelly, workgroup member from the Department of Commerce, provides the workgroup with an understanding of programs the Department of Commerce currently has and utilizes which could be used in phase one of HB 1827. She covers examples such as housing and as well as small business support. For quick disbursement, she explains that the Department of Commerce is considering breaking funding into 5ths equally for each area of Community Reinvestment and as stated in the bill, utilize their existing programs for disbursement. Co-Leads facilitate a discussion amongst Workgroup members.

Some discussion regarding the language in the bill “Projects or programs do not require continuing state support” occurs. Workgroup members worry this could be a challenge, especially for organizations such as small, non-profits who depend upon fund raising and grants. Workgroup members also feel economic development and economic justice in the way of helping small businesses and housing should be the main focus of funding. They believe the need in all other community reinvestment areas would reduce greatly if communities were provided with a boost in housing and small business. Co-Leads would like to hear about the background and information on the plan for funds and know what organizations the Department of Commerce currently works with in its programs. If they will be using them for Phase

one, they would like to know are they minority owned? Do the programs have a way of distributing these funds as they are intended to the right communities? It's decided that if Kate could return with a presentation regarding the organizations the Department of Commerce currently works with, and address/educate the workgroup on their questions and concerns, it would be helpful in moving forward and for the future of the workgroup. Additionally, they believe hearing about budget and funding of some of these programs would be helpful to know how many people can be helped with so many funds. Kate believes the folks that run the programs would love to speak with the workgroup about them. Kate also points out the Department of Commerce's website is a great resource.

Co-Leads open the floor to public comment which includes support for funds focusing on economic development, concern for oversight to ensure people of color are being serviced, some want Black folks in particular and are concerned with using Disproportionately Impacted Areas because neighborhoods are no longer as they were due to gentrification. People have disbursed.

Raft Hollingsworth, Co-Lead, calls for a short break and for the discussion to continue after the break.

After the break, public comment continues. Public comment includes support asking for funds to be distributed by trusted community organizations, for fear that they won't reach intended communities and competitive proposals will lead to large organizations getting funding over smaller organizations. There were also feelings of disappointment for HB 2022 not making it through.

#### **4. Discussion – Distribution of funds within the community reinvestment account**

Co-Leads begin workgroup discussion regarding thoughts on splitting the 125 million into 5 equal parts for all community reinvestment areas. Raft Hollingsworth, Co-Lead proposes 99% be for economic development – housing and small business and the other 1% be divided into other community reinvestment areas. Generally, the workgroup agrees most of the funding go to economic development, but some don't want to commit to recommending 99% or a percent quite yet. The point is made that there are existing programs for many of the other community reinvestment areas that are already funded. Kate suggests she can come back with examples of some organizations and businesses that they have provided funds for that fall within BIPOC communities and who their biggest funders are. The discussion is wrapped up.

#### **5. Discussion – Eligibility Criteria for Community Reinvestment Dollars**

Due to updated scope, this item no longer pertains. Any discussion around this item is noted in agenda Item 3.

Michelle Merriweather, Co-Lead asks Anzhane Slaughter, Staff to review Next Steps.

### **Next Steps**

Anzhane Slaughter, Staff shared upcoming meetings

Community Reinvestment & Workforce Training Workgroup will meet again on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

Licensing Workgroup will meet on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Staff will connect with Kate on existing programs and regarding workgroup questions for upcoming presentation and share information obtained with Co-Leads. Anzhane encourages people to join our distribution list via our website or by emailing [healthequity@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:healthequity@sboh.wa.gov). Additionally, all meeting information can be found on our website at [healthequity.wa.gov](http://healthequity.wa.gov), social equity in cannabis task force meetings.

### **Adjournment**

Michelle Merriweather, Co-Lead thanks everyone for joining and adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m..

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