### Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force

11/25/2019| 8:30AM-11:30AM

J.A. Cherberg Building / Conference Room ABD

304 15th Ave SW, Olympia, WA 98501

# Minutes *(for review and confirmation at next meeting, January 2020)*

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

*Meeting convened by Senator Hans Zeiger and Dept. of Social and Health Services Secretary Cheryl Strange*

**Quorum met by task force members (or designee) in attendance as follows**:

*Jim Baumgart, Marie Bruin (for Tim Probst), Rep. Michelle Caldier, Cecil Daniels (for Diane Klontz), Sen. Jeannie Darneille, Sen. Manka Dhingra, Erin Frasier, Rep. Christine Kilduff, Rep. Gina Mosbrucker, Nam Nguyen, Daisye Orr, Nicole Rose, , David Stillman, Cheryl Strange, Sen. Hans Zeiger.*

**Guest Presenters & Additional attendees**:

*Michael Althauser,* *Johanna Dwyer, Leanne Eko, Dawn Eychaner, Emil Floresca, Sarah Garcia, David Hlebain, Susan Kavanaugh,* *Ami Magisos,* *Amy Magnusson, Alexis Marx, Alison Mendiola, Anna Minor, Lori Pfingst,* *Jessica Porter, Babs Roberts, Laura Lee Sturm, Matthew Tremble, Suzy Young.*

*Co-chairs began the meeting by reiterating the goals of the Task Force and reviewing the meeting agenda – noting full agenda and importance of staying on schedule.*

1. **Task Force Business**
   * **Confirm prior meeting minutes**
     + *Minutes confirmed as written.*
2. **WorkFirst Updates**

*Babs Roberts, DSHS*

* *Update on budget/expenditures postponed*
* *Historical overview of Post-TANF support services*
  + *WorkFirst partner agencies have interest in offering 6 months post-TANF support services within existing budget, no RCW or budget change needed. Wanted to present this idea to the Task Force for consideration. Currently the only post-TANF support services available are within the Post-TANF Employment Transportation Support Services pilot launched by DSHS in 2018.*
  + *Post-TANF supports can help families by providing support to keep employment after exiting TANF, avoid returning to TANF. Likewise for students who exit TANF, these supports can help those in educational programs, still working towards completing their education, stay in school.*
  + *Both the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and Dept. of Commerce feel they can provide these supports within their current budget, though they have not been provided in so long that it is hard to know what the current level of need is.*

1. **Presentation: Statewide Poverty Action Network – 2019 Listening Sessions Overview & Themes**

*David Hlebain, Emil Floresca, Laura Lee Strum – Statewide Poverty Action Network (SPAN)*

* *Overview of annual listening sessions*
  + *Goal is to get to know the communities across the state over several hours in intimate setting (7-15 people), accessible (childcare and meals provided), facilitated by Poverty Action Network members who have lived experience themselves (trust is established). Discussion is encouraged through open-ended questions to get an in-depth conversation.*
  + *Participants include those referred by Community Action Councils and WorkFirst participants at local community colleges.*
  + *Information from these listening sessions inform the policy agenda for the Statewide Poverty Action Network.*
  + *Purpose of this presentation is to elevate some issues and perspectives of those who participated, may not reflect the opinion of all living in poverty. Gives some weight to issues that pop up year after year.*
* *Major themes identified from this round of sessions - snapshot of Okanagan, Longview, Des Moines, Aberdeen, and Walla Walla:*
  + *Housing instability (high rents, lack of available units, limited access to subsidized housing programs)*
  + *Domestic violence*
  + *Lack of access to dental care via Medicaid/Apple Health*
  + *Lack of substance use disorder treatment options*
  + *Childcare costs, difficult to qualify for subsidy to cover both school and employment, childcare workers are paid low wages.*
  + *Stigma attached to low-income/homeless status (DV, Criminal Justice, etc.)*
  + *Criminal justice/re-entry challenges*
  + *Navigation and communication challenges with the Social Service system*
    - *Negative treatment by DSHS caseworkers*
    - *Lack of helpful referrals*
    - *Lack of timely response*
    - *Lack of communication/coordination of partners*
    - *Have to retell their story multiple times (retraumatizing)*
    - *Lack of wraparound services*
    - *TANF participation requirements not aligned with participant educational goals*
    - *TANF requirements are too strict*
    - *TANF grant does not cover basic needs*
  + *Credit used to meet basic needs, this debt leading to garnishment/debt collection, contributing to cycle of poverty*
* *Discussion:*
  + *Throughout the history of the listening sessions (15 years) the consistent issue is increasing difficulty of meeting basic human needs. Assistance hasn’t kept up with increasing costs.*
  + *Differences between rural and urban areas – rural areas tend to have a lack of services and transportation to cover longer distances is a common barrier.*
  + *Dental access – Community Health Centers should offer the basic safety net for emergency services. Challenge with Medicaid rates being low. Sometimes access is limited for those who have missed appointments in the past.*

1. **Presentation: Implementation Update – 2SHB 1893 and ESSB 5800**

*Erin Frasier - SBCTC, Ami Magisos - Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)*

* + - *2SHB 1893 implementation includes* *low barrier program for emergency funds open to all students, without assessment of financial eligibility.* 
      * *Colleges submitted program proposals for these funds as part of a competitive application process based on guiding principles and delivery model suggestions provided by SBCTC.*
      * *28/34 colleges applied, 16 applicants were approved to receive funding. There were a range of innovative ideas and implementation will look different from school to school depending on what fits best with the individual school. All 16 will have their programs rolled out by January 1, 2020. Progress report will be forthcoming in summer 2020.*
      * *Lessons learned from implementation will be shared with all the colleges to support future expansion. Data is being collected to identify what the students’ emergent needs are. Also capturing data to help inform whether this assistance helps keep students in school to complete their education.*
    - *ESSB 5800 implementation includes a pilot to provide a wide range of accommodations to homeless students and students formerly in foster care.*
      * *Piloting at two universities and four community colleges with two others to be determined. Different accommodations at each school, examples include: case management services, access to laundry, storage, locker rooms and showers, reduced price meals, etc.*
      * *Assessment of the pilots’ effectiveness will be evaluated by WSAC. Non-academic supports are a current focus of WSAC. SBCTC and WSAC will partner to report on the pilots and cover a true needs assessment, number of students served, and recommendations on how to better serve eligible populations.*
      * *Hope to involve community partners and student leadership and voice. Work with area landlords to address challenges of student tenants and problem solve.*
      * *Discussion:*
        + *Help students weigh cost of housing (roommates vs. on-campus housing, grocery meals vs. cafeteria meal plans)*
        + *Hope increased funding for the State Need Grant (Washington College Grant) helps alleviate issues of student homelessness*
        + *Extended foster care is also a resource (through age 21)*
        + *Consider reporting pilot findings in a trade publication for information-sharing*

1. **Presentation: Community Eligibility Provision in Washington**

*Leanne Eko, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)*

* *Administration of USDA-funded child nutrition programs. Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows high poverty schools to provide meals to all students at no costs to families, but comes with some challenges.*
  + *Details of the program make it complicated. A certain calculation/percentage of students eligible for direct-certification must be met to use the CEP.*
  + *Reimbursement to schools: for free or reduced meals outside of CEP, every meal that is served is tracked, who it was served to down to each individual student (free, vs. paid). CEP looks at community data, all meals are paid based on a multiplier.*
  + *CEP saves some administrative costs up-front, however it increases the number of people getting lunches which increases staff costs. Also, some schools do not have the facilities to provide hot lunch to all the kids.*
* *Using the CEP can impact receipt of poverty data that school use to get learning assistance funding, translates to a loss of student-level poverty data. Removes the incentive for families to fill out and submit the application that captures this information.*
* *Currently, 319 schools participating which is about 50%. Last year CEP ensured that 110,000 students had access to two free meals for everyday for school.* *Interest is growing. OSPI provides support to assist schools through the decision of using the CEP.*

1. **Five-Year Strategic Plan**

* *The first deliverable of the Task Force is the five-year strategic plan. Due December 1, but working on a delayed timeline. The Governor’s Poverty Reduction Workgroup (PRWG) ten-year strategic plan is also in process of being drafted. Aspects of the PRWG related to WorkFirst/TANF, intergenerational poverty, and equity, diversity, and inclusion will be pulled into the five-year plan.*
* *Approval of the plan will happen at an upcoming meeting. A draft report will come out to the Task Force prior to the next meeting for comments/feedback. Current framing is around six strategies with specific recommendations under each strategy.*
* *Structural racism - People of Color are disproportionally affected by poverty. Governor’s office and other state agencies are also looking into equity issues. Positive to see this work aligned.*
* *Equal space and power for those impacted by poverty - including those experiencing poverty in decision making, recognizing all communities and providing compensation for their time and expertise.*
* *Equitable income growth - increase affordable housing, low- or no- cost financial resources.* 
  + *Try to address issues related to poor credit history, cost of and access to lending and banking.*
  + *Predatory lending has already been addressed by the legislature in our state.*
  + *Think about where asset building coalitions fit into this work. Philanthropic groups may also have a role.*
  + *Think about calling out who is on-point for implementation of the various recommendations.*
  + *Keep bipartisanship in mind for recommendations, rent control is a controversial topic and may have limited support.*
* *Invest in families with young children and youth as they transition into adulthood – prenatal and maternal services/supports, post-partum care, home-visting, peer support, child savings account, youth access to long term contraceptives, etc.*
* *There is research showing child savings accounts help keep kids in school through high school and continued education.*
* *Integrated continuum of care model to address the holistic needs of individuals and families – aligning systems that are there to help but can be siloed and difficult to navigate.*
  + *Recognize that this includes private and non-profit sectors as well as government.*
  + *Kresge grant funded design lab work connects with this recommendation.*
* *Ensure a just transition to the future of work – incorporating recommendations from the body of work coming out of the Future of Work Task Force.*
  + *Set an economic floor, accelerate pathways for immigrants for accreditation, invest in upskilling and training like incumbent worker programs and career pathways, etc.*
* *Next steps for Task Force to provide comment on the strategic plan:*
  + *Draft will be provided, considering a survey to gather feedback.*
  + *May need to think more about how to pull recommendations from the PRWG plan without diminishing the weight of those that are not incorporated. We can adjust as needed to the course of action that the Task Force agrees to, but the two groups serve different functions which should be reflected in the distinct plans. Language can be added to the report to explain the interplay between the two groups’ recommendations.*
  + *Another possibility is to pull short-term recommendations into the 5-year Task Force plan, and longer term in the 10-year PRWG plan.*
  + *Overall it is positive that these efforts to focus on poverty-reduction are happening now, in terms of both intergenerational poverty and poverty in general.*

1. **Public Comment**
   * + *Amy, one of 25 members of the PRWG steering committee, Clark county resident. Shared her lived experience with poverty. Many of the things discussed in the meeting connect with her life experience.* 
       - *Challenges with TANF not meeting basic needs, housing costs and sub-standard housing, mental health, student loan debt, not having equal power/voice. She is learning how to advocate for herself and others as a member of the steering committee.*
       - *Needed more support after she lost her mother at a young age. Need to look for more ways to offer support, she has had a great experience with support associated with ECEAP/early learning. Financial issues have kept her from filing taxes or working and she has experienced challenges in returning to the workforce. Her experience is that support can make a difference in keeping people on positive pathways during critical times in their lives.*

* *Members of the task force expressed appreciation for Amy’s willingness to share her story and recognized that it breathes life into the recommendations under consideration.*

1. **Wrap Up**

* *Next meeting - regular meeting schedule could be challenging during legislative session.* 
  + *Friday mornings may be best during session, to work around committee schedules.*
  + *Considering a meeting for early January – before session begins.*
  + *Dates will be sent out to see what works best for the majority of the group.*