



**Legislative Executive Workfirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force**

Meeting Minutes | November 7, 2024 | 9 am to noon

Virtual Meeting: Zoom Meeting

TVW Link: <https://twv.org/watch/?eventID=2024111031>

**Attendance**

**Voting Members:**

**Quorum? YES**

<b>Senators:</b>		<b>Representatives</b>	
	Sen. Perry Dozier	X	Rep. Mia Gregerson (co-chair)
X	Sen. Manka Dhingra		Rep. Michelle Caldier
	Sen. Chris Gildon		Rep. Carolyn Eslick
	Sen. Joe Nguyen		Rep. Strom Peterson

<b>Agency Members:</b>			
X	Jilma Meneses, DSHS (co-chair)	X	Jennie Fitzpatrick, DOC
X	Colleen Thompson, DOH (delegate)	X	Tim Probst, ESD
X	Matthew Frizzell, OSPI	X	Mary Sprute Garland, DCYF (delegate)
X	Katie Meehan, Commerce (delegate)	X	Jennifer Dellinger, SBCTC

**Non-Voting Members:**

	Terry Redmon, DSHS, ESA Assistant Secretary	X	Maria Siguenza, Commission on Hispanic Affairs
	Bill Craig, Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs		Ed Prince, Commission on African American Affairs
	Omar Santana-Gomez, Office of Equity	X	Anna Minor, Office of Financial Management
X	Andrea Carrillo, WA State Women’s Commission	X	Drayton Jackson, Advisory Council
	Nam Nguyen, Commission on Asian Affairs		TBD, Advisory Council
X	Lisa Keating, WA State LGBTQ Commission (term starts after 8/2024 meeting)		

**Staff:**

X	Lori Pfingst, DSHS/Economic Justice		Lindsay Morgan Tracy, DSHS/Economic Justice
X	Babs Roberts, DSHS/Economic Justice	X	Livey Beha, DSHS/Economic Justice
X	Alex Panagotacos, DSHS/Economic Justice		Gwen Teok, DSHS/Economic Justice

**Presenters:**

- Mark Finny, Thrive International
- Jim CastroLang, Trive International
- Faduma Fido, People’s Economy Lab
- Lisa Nicoli, DSHS/ESA
- Melissa Kenney, DSHS/ESA

**Opening**

Meeting opened at 9:03 am. Introduced new facilitator, Alex Panagotacos. Housekeeping and meeting engagement rules for this virtual meeting were shared.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Representative Mia Gregerson and Secretary Jilma Meneses, co-chairs, welcomed members and attendees. Introduced new members, Andrea Carillo, Washington State Women’s Commission and Lisa Keating, LGBTQ Commission.

**Consent Agenda**

Quorum was met for this meeting. The consent agenda was itemized to include the agenda for this meeting, the minutes for the August 2024 meeting, and the WorkFirst Spending plan financial reports. No discussion or requests for deletion. Adopted.

**Public Comment**

No Public comment at this time

**Aligned Poverty Efforts and LEWPRO Engagement**

Recapped Alignment themes and options discussed at August 2024 meeting and asked for discussion or questions. None offered. Rep. Gregerson discussed her thoughts about the alignment proposals indicating that Option 1 would allow for full alignment with the larger poverty reduction work happening. Senator Dhingra also expressed her support for that direction. Lisa Keating asked if this option would change the Commissions would become voting members. Currently that is not in statute and would need a change in the voting structure to be codified and could be considered if a trailer bill moved forward. With no further questions or discussion, Rep. Gregerson motioned for Option #1 to be

approved and asked for second. Tim Probst seconded. Nine members voted yes, one nay vote. **Motion to adopt Option 1 passed.**

***Post Meeting note: Dr. Frizzell appeared to vote no during the meeting but subsequent email from him indicates he was trying to vote yes.***

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## Economic Justice Alliance

Clarified this agenda item historically was where the Poverty Reduction Work Group and the Steering Committee offered updates and discussion. As the poverty reduction work associated with the 10-Year Plan evolved over the last year into the Washington Economic Justice Alliance, it was necessary to adjust the title of this agenda item to align. In this agenda item we'll hear from Alliance members and the work happening and provide an opportunity for discussion and requests for support from this body with the intention of creating an accountability loop.

Dr. Lori Pflugst talked about the Washington Economic Justice Alliance (Alliance) vision and mission. Spoke the importance of Lived Experience. Showed related video: <https://youtu.be/j9A0-6pMI2Q> or go to [Home - Washington Economic Justice Alliance](#) and scroll down to "Stories of Impact".

The Alliance has released a 3-Year Impact Report ([Impact Report - Washington Economic Justice Alliance](#)). Dr. Pflugst highlighted that more than 270 policy, program or funding allocations taken by alliance partners. The work has been cited as a best practice nationally and internationally. And Washington has the 10<sup>th</sup> lowest poverty rate in the nation. Importantly, we are seeing that the gaps by demographic and race are closing. And while 31 of 39 counties in this state have seen reduction in poverty rates, too many people continue to experience poverty and economic hardship. She also highlighted some key program / policy changes made by strategy (see slide deck).

Matt Finney and Jim CastroLang from Thrive International presented information about the work they are doing in communities (Spokane, Seattle and Tacoma) focused on refugee resettlement. Played a video of their program (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tF3H-Lz7jxeBDOAI MxxZuXbbxf1yH9qN/view?usp=drivesdk>). Thrive's mission is to help refugees move from surviving to thriving. Key piece of their work is to center the participants. Program leads at Thrive International have firsthand, lived experience as refugee/immigrant experience. Key connections to 10-YP are Strategy 1 (undo structural racism), Strategy 2 (balancing power), Strategy 4 (ensuring foundational well-being). Secretary Meneses asked about their main sources of revenue and where they hope to go in the future. Mark indicated they are about 50/50 between public and private funds; clients pay a portion of their rent as part of supporting their resettlement training/efforts. Recently started advocacy efforts especially related to how to make the model sustainable and are planning broader policy and program advocacy. Rep. Gregerson asked how they use TANF funds in their program. Mark explained that they support clients in getting access to TANF when eligible and clients use their TANF funds to pay their rent.

Faduma Fido, People's Economy Lab, presented information and updates on the Community Assembly work in Washington State (slide deck for this presentation is on LEWPRO site [WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force, Legislative-Executive | Governor Jay Inslee](#)). With a focus on environmental and economic justice and funded through the Climate Commitment act, this effort aligns

with Strategy 2 (balancing power/centering lived experience) and 4 (foundational well-being). People's Economy Lab is a partner in this work. Faduma spoke to collaborative governance which builds trust and engagement in democracy by opening space for shared learning and co-creation. BIPOC populations have been on the frontline of these issues. Community Assemblies are about building civic muscle, a path to self-determination and essential to building a healthier democracy. Faduma gave some background on how this work started, and details about the current work efforts. Highlighted work in Walla Walla with Blue Mountain Action Council. Rep. Eslick had several questions about how the community is being invited, staff in this effort and are communities showing up. In terms of workforce – there are layers of collaboration that have teams and include about 20 people to support the work and data. They have funded 6 organizations to mobilize teams. Rep. Eslick asked for emails as she'd like to attend in her area. Invitations would come from community anchors, Faduma will add her to the list.

Alex Panagotacos, Director Strategic Partnerships, Economic Justice Alliance team, gave an update on the work done to move from the Poverty Reduction Work Group to the Advisory Council. The team and the Advisory Council have been working hard to ensure they are structured and supported to help move this work forward. She provided information regarding the Steering Committee activities who are pursuing tailored roles like policy advocacy and being ambassador work. The Alliance Advisory Council did adopt the Alliance vision and mission. They continue to serve as the LEWPRO Advisory Council.

Livey Beha, Senior Program Manager, Economic Justice Alliance team, spoke to current Alliance budget and policy priorities. The Alliance is working to coordinate and support this work across a spectrum of agencies. The Team is tracking these efforts and coordinating those related to the 10-Year Plan. Recently the Subcabinet put together a letter to the Governor that recommends the items be supported. We will send that letter and priorities later.

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## TANF Performance Measures & Impact of Fiscal Responsibility Act

Lisa Nicoli, DSHS/ESA, presented TANF Performance Measures located at this site:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/workfirst-performance-measures>. Lisa gave background on the performance measures and presented the data.

- Exits and Employed at Exit
- Employment & Earnings
- Employment Retention & Earnings
- Exits lasting at least one year
- Adults Exiting WorkFirst Service Pathways
  - Employment after Exiting by Pathway
  - Quarterly Earnings after Exiting by Pathway & Hourly Wages
- Enrollment Counts
  - Referrals by Partner
  - Enrollment by Pathway (Educational Activity)

Melissa Kenney, DSHS/ESA, presented information about the impact of the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) of 2003 on TANF and other federal actions. The FRA adds new work and outcome measures to be reported for the TANF program, recalibrates the base year for caseload reduction credit, increases

minimum for small payments to working parents from \$10 to \$35 dollars in order to count them in the Work Participation Rate. Further the FRA established a six-year pilot. Melissa walked through the timeline for implementation of this federal legislation and noted that proposed rule-making still needs to happen. Melissa also spoke to a pending, unrelated proposed rule that would limit state flexibility in spending federal TANF and claiming of state Maintenance of Effort funds as well as requiring all state TANF program offering and budget allocations to align with the four purposes of TANF. Each of these federal rules will negatively impact the calculation of the state's Work Participation Target, meaning that the target we will need to meet will be higher.

## LEWPRO - Next Steps

Due to time constraints, this agenda item is postponed to the next meeting.

## Public Comment

Public Comments were shared by:

- Erica Walker, Statewide Poverty Action Network, in support of the work that went into sharing the impact report, the support of the steering committee and all the work that is aligning with the 10-Year Plan. Excited to see and be part of the work around Community Assemblies.

## Good of the Order

Secretary Meneses expressed appreciation to everyone for their participation today and grateful for everyone who continues to support this work and especially grateful to Rep. Gregerson for her work co-chairing LEWPRO. She proposed a letter to Governor Inslee thanking him for his work and support of economic justice in Washington as well as a letter to Governor-elect Ferguson introducing the Task Force and its work. Rep. Gregerson agreed and the support team will draft a letter and circulate it for TF members to sign. Rep. Gregerson thanked Secretary Meneses for her work at DSHS. The meeting was adjourned by Secretary Meneses at 11:11 am. with her thanks for their participation today.

## Attachments/Links

- [WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force, Legislative-Executive | Governor Jay Inslee \(wa.gov\)](#)
- <https://waeconomicjusticealliance.com/>
- [Impact Report - Washington Economic Justice Alliance](#)
- Thrive International video:  
<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdrive.google.com%2Ffile%2Fd%2F1tF3H-Lz7jxeBDOAIMxxZuXbbxf1yH9qN%2Fview%3Fusp%3Ddrivesdk&data=05%7C02%7Cbabette.roberts%40dshs.wa.gov%7Cff4f0c098bfe428ffc608dcfa8bc85f%7C11d0e217264e400a8ba057dcc127d72d%7C0%7C0%7C638660728873211640%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojoiMC4wLjA%7C%7C%7C&sdata=L1W04Edu0ksQ3gKxE7hJxGKeRjHnpDRCHqHkdc5%2BxxE%3D&reserved=0>
- TANF Performance: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/workfirst-performance-measures>