Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental and Health Equity Task Force
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 2, 2022
10:00 a.m.
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

A regular meeting of the members (the “Members”) of the Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental and Health Equity Task Force (the “Task Force”) was held remotely on Wednesday, February 2, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. Eastern time via a virtual Microsoft Teams meeting.

Leadership Present
Secretary Pamela Cashwell (Chair)

Members Present
(Unless otherwise noted below, all members joined the videoconference at the opening of the meeting at approximately 10:02 a.m. and all members exited the videoconference by approximately 11:45 a.m. when the meeting was closed.)

Victor Armstrong
Dr. Giselle Corbie-Smith
Andres Henao
Dr. Viviana Martinez-Bianchi
Dr. Carlos Rish
Rep. Yvonne Holley
Stephanie McGarrah (Designee: Jamilla Hawkins)
Kevin J. Price
Lynn Bottone
Dr. Lenora Campbell
Dr. Sonyia Richardson
Margaret Weller-Stargell
Quinny Sanchez Lopez
Annette Taylor
Sec. Elizabeth Biser (Designee: Carolina Fonseca Jimenez)
Gregory Richardson
Dr. James Johnson Jr.
Cornell Wright
Gene Woods (Designee: Fernando Little)
Yazmin Garcia-Rico
Juvencio Rocha Peralta
Dr. Cedric Bright
Dr. John Lumpkin

Members Absent
Dr. Catherine Harvey Sevier
Rep. Donny Lambeth
Dr. Christy Clayton
CC Lamberth
Dale Jenkins
Trey Rabon
Adriana Chavela
Walter Baucom
Pat Martinez
Rev. Dr. Johnathan Augustine
Rev. Dr. T. Anthony Spearman
Dr. Rhett Brown
Dr. Charlene Green

Others Present
Evin L. Grant, Policy Director, NC Department of Administration
Samanta Noyola-Luviano, Task Force Intern, NC Department of Administration
Tammie Hall, Director, Historically Underutilized Business Office
Call to Order; Welcome

Secretary Pamela Cashwell called the meeting to order at approximately 10:02 a.m. Eastern time and welcomed all in attendance. Secretary Cashwell noted that there was a lot on the agenda, so proceeded to the roll call.

Roll Call; Vote by Roll Call

Secretary Cashwell asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, Juvencio Rocha Peralta so moved, and the motion was seconded by Dr. Cedric Bright. Samanta Noyola-Luviano, Task Force Intern, NC Department of Administration, asked for a roll call and vote on the December meeting minutes and indicated a quorum was present and the meeting minutes have been approved.

Overview of December 2021 Biannual Report and Vote

Secretary Cashwell introduced Evin L. Grant, Policy Director, NC Department of Administration, to provide an overview of the December 2021 Biannual Report. Mr. Grant noted that the Governor’s office is aware that the report is complete, but pending approval by the Task Force at today’s meeting.

Mr. Grant provided an overview of the report, noting that the structure of the report was adjusted to focus on implementation progress to note the items that have been completed, those that are in progress and awaiting external action, those that are in progress generally, and those that have not yet been started. The report also detailed items that were included in the recently approved budget.

Secretary Cashwell asked for a motion to approve the December 2021 Biannual Report, Dr. Cedric Bright so moved, and the motion was seconded by Juvencio Rocha Peralta. The December 2021 Biannual Report was unanimously approved.

Dr. Giselle Corbie-Smith asked when the December 2021 Biannual Report could be shared more broadly. Secretary Cashwell noted that the report would be final and signed later today, at which time it could be shared broadly.

Presentation HUB Rules and HUB Plan Update

Secretary Cashwell introduced Tammie Hall, Director, Historically Underutilized Business Office, to assist in an overview and update of HUB Related Rules. Secretary Cashwell noted that there were 4 different initiatives, as follows: revised procurement rules, new HUB rules, a statewide HUB plan and improvements to solicitation documents.

With regards to the revised procurement rules, the proposed rules will raise the small purchase benchmark from $5,000 to $25,000 and provide for automatic increases, suggest informal bid procedures and adjust the formal bid procedures. Secretary Cashwell noted that there were public hearings and a public comment period. The new rules are expected to become effective on March 1, 2022.
Secretary Cashwell also described the new HUB rules, which were based upon recommendations from the Disparity Study authored by Griffin & Strong, PLLC. The new rules will require vendors that propose to use subcontractors to use “good faith efforts” to include HUBs in their proposals, and will allow the Secretary of the DOA to set the HUB participation goal annually based upon the most recent Disparity Study, the prior year’s HUB participation rates and HUB vendor availability.

Director Hall provided an overview of the new statewide HUB plan, which is intended to build off the success of use of HUB vendors in construction and expand it to government procurement of goods and services.

Director Hall further updated the Task Force on steps taken to improve solicitation documents. Director Hall noted that there have been additions/revisions to solicitation instructions and template documents in order to strengthen the likelihood that HUBs will be encouraged to participate in opportunities to do business with the State.

Representative Holley noted that she is excited about the administrative rule changes, but stated that the goal of 8% in utilization of HUB vendors is below the standard 10% and asked if we can take another look at that goal. Representative Holley also stated that she understands the need for an increase in delegation, but noted that all State agencies are not the same and recommended that the agencies meet their HUB goals before they receive increases. Secretary Cashwell confirmed that there are requirements, including accomplishing training goals, to receive the increase in delegation.

Secretary Cashwell thanked Director Hall for her overview and update.

Subcommittee Reports

The Task Force proceeded to provide subcommittee reports.

Access to Healthcare Subcommittee

Dr. Giselle Corbie-Smith, chair of the Access to Healthcare subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee is working to determine an agency in DHHS to lead efforts to promote and coordinate support for access to care and the use of digital literacy. The subcommittee recognizes that many of the recommendations are in process or have been completed and they want to ensure that those recommendations can be continued and implemented in the future.

Michael Leach stated that the subcommittee has met with several agencies in DHHS and they are coordinating with those agencies to ensure implementation and achievement of the recommendations.

Economic Opportunity and Business Development Subcommittee

Rep. Yvonne Holley, chair of the Economic Opportunity and Business Development subcommittee, referred back to her earlier statements regarding the HUB rules and HUB plan. Secretary Cashwell noted that a lot of what was reported on came out of this subcommittee.

Educational Opportunity Subcommittee

Dr. Charrise Hollingsworth, staff liaison to the Educational Opportunity Subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee focuses on digital, financial and health literacy. Currently, the subcommittee is working to make sure that the work being done is sustainable beyond June 2022. Dr. Hollingsworth noted that the subcommittee’s digital literacy recommendation in collaboration with the State library is currently getting
implemented. The subcommittee has spoken with people from DIT and the North Carolina Business Committee for Education to find ways to expand incentives for participation in the digital literacy program as well as to identify future libraries that they can work with across the State.

With regards to the other 3 remaining recommendations on financial and health literacy, the subcommittee continues to work with other subcommittees to combine efforts. There is a lot of overlapping work around financial and health literacy, and they are focused on not duplicating efforts and work.

**Environmental Justice and Inclusion Subcommittee**

Carolina Fonseca Jimenez, staff liaison of the Environmental Justice and Inclusion subcommittee, noted that at the last subcommittee meeting, the focus was to discuss the listening session specifically for Long Term Goal #1, which is to support a legislative strategy to look at additions and changes to statutes and rules to incorporate environmental justice criteria into regulatory actions. The subcommittee continues to work with the Governor’s Office of Public Engagement and Inclusion to hold the listening session, tentatively scheduled for February 24, 2022.

Ms. Jimenez also provided an overview of Dr. Johnson’s work regarding the rural childcare crisis. The research was based around the effects of COVID-19 in the eastern portion of North Carolina. The research showed that the largest impact was felt by women in the areas of childcare, nutrition and schooling. A three-pronged, beta test approach was used to try to address these concerns in Edgecombe and Robeson Counties. The three prongs were as follows: (i) a childcare business accelerator to equip existing and aspiring childcare entrepreneurs with business acumen and skill, (ii) a childhood equity fellows program to train childcare workers in the best practices and creating whole community health and (ii) a childcare wage accelerator to address the low wage conundrum.

**Patient Engagement Subcommittee**

Cornell Wright, chair of the Patient Engagement Subcommittee, reminded everyone that it is Black History Month and Heart Health Awareness Month, and wanted to take some time to remind everyone to remember other health issues beyond the pandemic. Mr. Wright noted that the subcommittee has been working really hard on connecting the dots on its recommendations and to work across the subcommittees.

Mr. Wright also stated that the huge issue of ensuring a pipeline of diverse medical students remains, and the subcommittee is working to ensure that work on that front continues after the Task Force sunsets.

Annette Taylor asked for the name of the health alliance Mr. Wright mentioned. Mr. Wright stated that it was the North Carolina Alliance for Health Professions Diversity, which is a group that formed as a collection of groups that were already meeting to establish and create pipeline programs for health and medical students.

Margaret Weller-Stargell noted that as we talk about patient and client services, and sun-setting of different services, we continue to see the sun-setting of services that were allowed and provided during the pandemic, with many of them going away on March 31, 2022. Dr. Weller-Stargell’s concern is that we are still in a pandemic and many of these services and allowances may still be needed.

Juvencio Rocha Peralta stated that input on the subcommittee’s goals would be welcome, particularly around the pipeline of medical students. There continues to be a need to have bilingual and diverse medical providers.
Gerry McCants asked if there is a budget number we are considering to incentivize HUB companies across the state other than the 10% goal. Mr. McCants noted that there are a lot of private sector opportunities. When recruiting large private firms to North Carolina, we spend hundreds of millions of dollars to get them here, and we could also take similar action for HUB companies. Secretary Cashwell noted that it is important to make sure that the large companies entering North Carolina are made aware of what vendors, including HUB vendors, are here and able to help them.

Dr. Viviana Martinez-Bianchi stated that she agrees with Juventicio Rocha Peralta’s comments that there is lack of diversity among our health care providers. Dr. Martinez-Bianchi noted that anything we can do to continue to support community health workers by increasing the number of diverse health workers is great.

**Business Engagement Group**

Justin Truesdale, Secretary of the Task Force, stated that since the last Task Force meeting, Evin Grant has worked to connect others interested in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion virtual conferences. After some discussion, the group has decided to hold the conferences independently, but with the opportunity to cross-promote other events if possible. Rather than holding them all back to back in one week, the conferences will be held monthly. Mr. Truesdale stated that if anyone on the Task Force was interested in the panels, to please reach out, as any additional support to assist in finalizing planning and holding the programs would be appreciated.

**Announcements and Closing Remarks**

Secretary Cashwell introduced Haley Pfeiffer Haynes, NC Department of Administration’s Deputy Secretary of Service Operations, who recently joined the NC Department of Administration.

Secretary Cashwell also provided an update on the RETOOLNC Grant Program which provides funding to support HUBs impacted by COVID-19. Over $21 million was distributed to 1,124 grantees, that were all small businesses, each of which were HUB certified or MBE certified with the Department of Transportation. Kevin Price noted that the first two rounds of the program were very successful and he looks forward to the third round of funding. Secretary Cashwell also noted that the Department of Transportation has been instrumental in assisting with execution of the program.

Secretary Cashwell also highlighted the Department of Revenue’s Business Recovery Grant program and noted that the application period has now closed, but it may be reopened.

Mr. Grant noted that a lot of the content in Executive Order 246 regarding environmental justice and equity was due to the work of the Task Force, including a requirement that each agency have a public participation plan by June 1 to engage the members of the community that are impacted by the agencies and apprenticeship programs that encourage workforce diversity.

Tracey Burns, Deputy Secretary of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion at the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, noted that the DNCR has a 10 week internship program for students of HBCUs and asked the Task Force to encourage eligible students to apply.

Yazmin Garcia Rico, Director of Hispanic/Latinx Policy and Strategy at the NC Department of Health and Human Services, noted that the NC DHHS will host a live Cafecito and Spanish language tele-town hall on February 3, 2022 to discuss COVID-19 vaccines, boosters, testing and how to stay safe.
Tunya Smith stated that the NC Department of Transportation will be hosting a webinar for small women and minority owned businesses on funding, finance and the future of transportation. In addition, the NC Department of Transportation will be posting some internship positions for HBCU students as well.

Annette Taylor shared that the North Carolina Council for Women Advisory Board will be releasing the next installment of the status of women report focused on poverty and opportunity, and she will be happy to share the report and findings once complete.

Kevin Price noted that the headquarters of the Institute is located at 114 West Parrish Street in downtown Durham, NC. The building was intentionally built at only 6 stories to not cause attention to it, due to the fact that it was built at the same time as the race riots in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Mr. Price wanted to note this as some Black history regarding the Black Wall Street of the South.

Juvencio Rocha Peralta noted that there will be 6 regional Latino Summits to discuss health equity and education equity and encouraged the Task Force members to participate in these summits.

Dr. Charlene Green just wanted to encourage everyone to continue the 3 Ws and get vaccinated. Dr. Green stated that not a significant number children from 5-11 years old are getting the vaccine and she encourages everyone continue spreading the word in order to help get back to normal.

Secretary Cashwell reminded everyone of the next Task Force meeting on April 6, 2022, and thanked everyone on the call and for their work and efforts.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:45 a.m. Eastern time.