

**Racial Equity Advisory Panel (REAP)**  
**Via Microsoft Teams**  
**Minutes**  
**January 13, 2021**

PRESENT: Panel members: Andrea Brett, (Chair), Karen Richards (minutes), Stephanie Seguino, Clarence Davis. Guests: Xusana Davis, Executive Director of Racial Equity (EDRE); Catherine Russell, Panel Assistant, Maria Davies (member of the public).

**BUSINESS MEETING:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brett at 6:03 p.m.

Panel Introductions: Panel members introduced themselves to the guest.

Agenda changes: The Panel added an agenda item- Discussion of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout with regard to black, indigenous, and people of color populations (hereafter BIPOC).

C. Davis made a motion to move public comment up on the agenda as the next item. The motion was seconded by Seguino. Vote 4-0.

Public Comment: The panel was asked by our guest whether the Panel had been involved in the creation and/or approval of the Implicit Bias training currently offered by CAPS. The EDRE indicated that the training was developed prior to the Panel's existence but that it was currently under review by a committee. See the training item under COVID Relief Fund Projects for more information.

Approval of the November 18, 2020 Minutes: C. Davis moved to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Seguino. Vote: 4:0

Approval of the December 2, 2020 Minutes: A clarification of information related to the charges for the Panel's partner email accounts was suggested by Russell. C. Davis moved to amend the minutes by substituting the following:

"The Panel Assistant, Russell, reported that the licenses for the "partner" email accounts set up for the panel members in 2019 were included in the DHR budget, but now properly belong in the reorganized REAP budget under the ED's AOA department i.d. Russell is in the process of working with the Agency of Digital Services to make this transfer happen. As of FY22, approximately \$440 will come out of the REAP budget."

The motion was seconded by Seguino. Vote: 4:0, whereby the amendment was approved.

**ON-GOING BUSINESS**

1. Review and Discussion of the Draft Legislative Reports due 1/15/21:

EDRE's Report: The EDRE's report draft was provided to the Panel in advance of the meeting. Panel members were pleased with the content and had no comments or suggestions for changes. The EDRE indicated that she plans to add some additional information on some criminal justice and education issues before submitting the report.

REAP Panel's Report: The Panel approved the Panel's draft. Richards indicated that changes had been made since they reviewed it to correct the terms of office for Panel members. The final report will be submitted to Panel Assistant, Russell, and the EDRE for filing with the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations (and other entities) by the January 15, 2021 deadline. Seguino's July 2020 PowerPoint presentation, *REAP Economic and Social Data by Race and Ethnicity* which highlights racial disparities in Vermont, will be attached as it provides a basis for further state government analysis and focus.

The EDRE indicated that the Senate Committee on Government Operations wants to have presentations on the reports on either January 19 or 20. She will let Panel members know the date and time and Panel members will all attempt to attend.

## 2. COVID Relief Funds Project Updates:

The EDRE indicated that the COVID-19 relief funds have been a roller coaster for our proposed projects. With the new legislation, the deadline for expending funds was changed to 12/31/21 making it feasible to pursue projects that were shelved at the last meeting due to the inability to expend the funds by the original 12/31/20 deadline. Secretary Young has agreed to reinstate the funding originally designated for the REAP.

Racial Equity Training: The Legislature allocated \$50,000 in CRF funding for equity-related training. The EDRE will complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Training in February as originally planned. The other funds will be used to provide advanced equity training to agency and department designated Equity Liaisons and to hire a vendor to revise the unconscious bias (UB) training. The new deadline will allow for a more thorough review and a better outcome. If any funds are left, they will likely be allocated for further training for the liaisons. A suggestion was made that to the extent possible, a Training of the Trainer model be used to make the best use of the funds. The EDRE indicated that is the plan for the UB training and may be possible with the liaison trainings. Her long-term goal is to create a Green Belt series for equity training.

Equity Dashboard: The uncertainty of on-going funding to maintain a Dashboard, created by a contractor, continues to be an issue even with the extended deadline. The state has two existing potential tools for this task: Scorecard and Power BI. The EDRE is exploring whether either of these tools could serve as the basis for the proposed Dashboard. If not, the funds could be used for another related purpose.

Economic Stimulus Equity Fund- The Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) has been contracted to distribute general funds to individuals who were residents of Vermont on April 1, 2020 but who were unable to participate in the federal COVID

relief programs due to immigration status. The funding is available to individuals and families of undocumented people. It does not include immigrants who are present for a finite period of time (i.e. student or work visas). VCF is working with Migrant Justice, the Association of Africans Living in Vermont and other immigrant organizations to assist with outreach, completion of applications, and disbursement of funds. It was suggested that this be coupled with information to build trust in these communities, BIPOC population, about both the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine and that this is not a ploy targeting these populations for harm, as has occurred in past through eugenics, forced sterilization, and medical experimentation programs.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

COVID-19 Vaccines for BIPOC- The EDRE indicated that there have been a number of discussions with the Commissioner of the Department of Health and the Deputy about prioritization of BIPOC individuals for the vaccine given the significant disparities in infection and death rates among the BIPOC populations in Vermont (and nationally). The state is currently prioritizing according to “age bands” which means that few BIPOC individuals will be eligible in the early stages of the rollout, as the population in Vermont trends younger.

The Panel felt it would be helpful to weigh in with the Commissioner on deviating from, or altering, the strict age band criteria currently proposed. The Panel asked the EDRE to prepare a letter to the Commissioner to be sent on behalf of the Panel. She will provide a draft by tomorrow a.m. and Panel members will review and approve so that it can be sent as soon as possible.

Budget- The REAP budget is projected, at current spending rates, to end about \$20,000 under budget. The Panel will have further discussion on expending some of the likely surplus—revisiting the suggestion earlier from the EDRE to create a grant program for women and minority owned business enterprises. The Panel will also take a look at the budget in advance of submission of the FY22 budget to AOA in December of 2021.

Seguino made a motion to adjourn. (No second is required). Vote 4:0  
Whereby the meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Next Meeting:

**To be determined (via Microsoft Teams).**

**The agenda and information re: call-in for public access will be displayed on the REAP website.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Richards*

Karen L. Richards, Panel Member