

Racial Equity Advisory Panel (REAP)
Via Zoom
Minutes
April 15, 2020

PRESENT: Panel members: Stephanie Seguino, Karen Richards (minutes); Clarence Davis, Nancy Waples, Chair, Andrea Brett. Guests: Xusana Davis, Executive Director of Racial Equity; Catherine Russell, Panel Assistant.

BUSINESS MEETING:

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Seguino at 4:08 p.m.

Agenda- Motion: Richards made a motion to accept the agenda without changes. The motion was seconded by C. Davis. Vote: 4-0. Chair Brett not yet present.

State Equity Plan- Rollout of the Equity Impact Assessment Tool (similar to an environmental impact assessment) for use whenever a new proposal is submitted within the executive branch has been delayed due to the COVID 19 crisis. The Plan has been revised to include COVID 19 and other emergency measures with regard to racial equity.

2020 Public Engagement Strategy: This has been delayed due to COVID 19 and it is not clear when public engagement sessions will be able to proceed. The Panel discussed having health disparities as one of the topics given the racial disparities with COVID infections and deaths in people of color. Vermont will begin collecting COVID related statistics on race and ethnicity.

Budget: At the current spending rate, the budget is expected to be approximately \$116,000 under budget. The Panel agreed that the excess could be put to good use in creating a centralized data dashboard for equity-related indicators across state government. ED Davis will follow up with a retired IT person recommended by Seguino to get an idea of potential cost, design, etc. This would inform the components of an RFP.

NEW BUSINESS

COVID 19- The legislature has passed new laws regarding voting, open meetings, etc. to take into consideration the inability of committees like ours to meet in person in places also accessible to the public. Meetings may now be held electronically as long as call-in information is provided for the public.

Economic Recovery Task Force: The Governor has established this task force through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) to provide advice regarding the re-opening and recovery of Vermont's economy as the COVID 19 crisis abates. ED Davis will be serving on both the Executive Team and the Local Support and Solutions subcommittee. She will raise issues related to the Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Executive Order. Other issues that may need attention to determine if there are racial equity issues were identified by Panel

members including: Unemployment compensation applications and denials, access to COVID testing by people of color, processing by banks of applications for CARE.

The crisis is pointing out many of the long-standing racial equity issues.

Racial Equity Team- The ED is using the new Teams platform to capture and display information across a broad range of topics. Team members are not limited to state employees so individuals interested in the issues can join the team.

Racial Profiling- The state has secured a federal grant for training law enforcement on racial profiling issues. The Vermont State Police will be the contractor for the training of other law enforcement agencies. It can also be used to create an on-line data dashboard for tracking racial disparities in stops, arrests, searches, etc. They will likely partner with some UVM social scientists. The funding is for two years and can be renewed.

CAPS Training re: Bias and Civility is being re-designed. ED Davis is on the committee. They will evaluate and make changes to the existing curriculum including adding a significant piece on privilege. This is training for new and existing state employees.

Next Meeting:

May 27, 2020 tba

Information will be displayed on the REAP website re: call-in for public access if meeting is held electronically.

Whereby the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Richards

Karen L. Richards, Panel Member