

REPORT OF THE
RACIAL EQUITY ADVISORY PANEL

JANUARY 15, 2020

Submitted to the General Assembly of the State of Vermont
Senate Committee on Government Operations
House Committee on Government Operations

This report is submitted pursuant to statutory mandate as issued in 3 V.S.A. Chapter 68 §5002 (c)(3):

“on or before January 15, 2020, and annually thereafter, report to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations on:(A) the extent to which the State is achieving the performance targets and measures as developed pursuant to section 5003(c) of this title; and(B) the nature and quality of the collaboration between the Governor’s Cabinet and the Executive Director.”

The Racial Equity Advisory Panel has worked closely with the Executive Director of Racial Equity since she began in her role on July 29, 2019. In the months since, the Panel has met with the Executive Director four times and has provided guidance to the Executive Director on the development of proposed work plans and policy areas of focus. Due to the fact that selecting a candidate for appointment to the role took longer than expected, the Panel and the Executive Director remain in the early stages of their work. Nevertheless, the Panel is very satisfied with the performance of the Executive Director and believes that her work has followed a reasonable timeline to date.

ACHIEVEMENT OF PERFORMANCE TARGETS

The Panel has worked with the Executive Director to identify relevant metrics indicating racial disparity in state service, criminal justice and court access, and other areas. The Panel has also helped the Executive Director identify gaps where more data are needed. This ongoing exercise has informed the development of an equity-themed strategic plan, in consultation with the state’s Chief Performance Officer and relevant agency staff. This plan will set or update performance targets for state agencies, the Judiciary, and the Legislature to achieve greater equity in its dealings with employees, visitors, and clients. To a large extent, it will also serve to establish baselines for new data that have not been historically collected by the state.

The Panel is satisfied that these targets are being thoughtfully generated and will continue to advise the Executive Director on this work.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNOR’S CABINET

The Panel has received timely updates on the Executive Director’s interactions and collaborations with the GC and is satisfied with the nature and quality of that collaboration. To the best of our knowledge, Cabinet members have forthrightly furnished resources, information, and assistance to the Executive Director as needed for the accomplishment of racial equity work at the agency level. Further, the Executive Director has conducted numerous substantive presentations on the topic of racial equity in policymaking for Secretaries and Commissioners, agency leadership teams, and other agency staff at the invitation of agency leadership. Most recently, the Executive Director engaged Cabinet members in an exploratory exercise designed to identify the race data and equity policies that agencies have implemented or desire to implement, and through this exercise, Cabinet members demonstrated enthusiasm and general support for including more equity-based policy in their work and practices.

CONCLUSION

The Racial Equity Advisory Panel believes that to date, the state of Vermont has made reasonable progress via the Executive Director of Racial Equity in identifying appropriate performance targets and policy areas of focus.