

Equity Council Agenda

Zoom Meeting Time: May 29, 2020 04:00 - 5:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

1) Welcomes & Introductions

Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) Secretary Womazetta Jones

- Secretary Jones welcomed the council members.
- The council observed a moment of silence for the death of George Floyd.
- Secretary Jones clarified that, upon legal advice, the Equity Council Meetings are not a public body subject to the Open Meetings Act, but rather a critically important, advisory group of community leaders of color staffed by state employees.
- Agendas and actionable items will be shared after each meeting on the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) website.

2) Updates from the Last Meeting: Report-outs, Information Still Pending, and Areas to Explore Further | Secretary Womazetta Jones

- **Eviction Assistance – Progress Made.** Governor Raimondo announced an additional \$5 million in funding for the Housing Help RI emergency rental assistance fund, for people having difficulty paying their rent.
- **Testing for Businesses – Not Yet Determined.** Some level of testing and recurring testing will take place among certain businesses.
- **Mask Distribution – In Process.** We are arranging for the HEZs to assist the distribution of surgical masks.
- **Follow-up on Discussion with Director Tanner – Progress Made.** The Department of Business Regulation will have about a half dozen inspectors go with Central Falls Spanish-speaking leaders to do inspections on two main streets in Central Falls. Director Tanner will also connect Mayor Diossa to Christian Cowan of the nonprofit organization Polaris to discuss connecting Polaris with Central Falls manufacturers.

3) RI Department of Health (RIDOH) discuss strategy for highest risk communities | Ana Novias, Deputy Director

- Share PowerPoint presentation with the council members.
- Work with State communications staff to get clear signage at testing sites.
- Work with State communications staff council to ensure that there is a new, integrated communications campaign that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.

- Responded to multiple follow-up questions to the presentation that related to data, testing, contract tracing, and outreach.

4) Community Feedback: What are you hearing from the community? What should the State know?

| Secretary Womazetta Jones

- Secure or confirm there are Portuguese and Spanish interpreters at business inspections in Central Falls.
- Map out a way to work directly with direct service agencies to reach out to communities of color so residents feel comfortable to get tested.
- The self-selection process and screening criteria should be designed through a racial equity lens to eliminate additional barriers to access testing.
- Work with the 10 Health Equity Zones (HEZ) to ensure mask distribution in areas where there are non-HEZs.
- Support small businesses (specifically minority owned businesses) to help them reopen.
- Support organizations led by communities of color because these organizations have different challenges.

5) Next Steps | Secretary Womazetta Jones

- Track the rental assistance funds. If there are barriers to people accessing these funds, notify us.
- Research unemployment issues impacting the refugee community, and possibly others.
- Explore sub-committee structure to more aggressively do council work.
- RIDOH is working on identifying and eliminating office visit charges for COVID-19 test across the state.

6) Close | Secretary Womazetta Jones

- Closing remarks.
- Extend the council meeting to 90 minutes to allow for a more time for discussion and to move through this work more quickly.