

Governor's Council on Women and Girls  
Leadership Subcommittee

**Meeting Minutes**

**September 14, 2020 – 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Microsoft Teams Teleconference Meeting

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***1. Call to Order***

Secretary McCaw, OPM called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

Secretary McCaw began the meeting by thanking all participants for joining and hopes they are all safe and healthy. She shared Shannon Wegele is unable to join the meeting and asked if there were any work group participants on the call that could provide a summary of the boards and commissions work group. Monica Nugent announced she was on the call and provided a summary.

***2. Update from Work Group #1: Diversify Representation on Boards and Commissions by Shannon Wegele, Chief of Staff, SOTS***

Monica Nugent, CT MAC Representative, shared the group has had robust discussions about looking at where shortfalls are with getting a more diverse group of people to serve on boards and commissions. The group is currently coming up with a list of actions to take, both policy and legislative related. They are also having conversations with various stakeholders to take a more collaborative approach. The group is working on legislative proposal language that adjusts some existing statutes to be more inclusive of diversity by adding extra sections.

Secretary McCaw added some general work group points Ms. Wegele provided in advance of the meeting. DAS added an application for the website portal. This gives people the opportunity to easily access the application and apply. The group intends invest resources into their current

work group members to help find various representatives for State Boards and Commissions. The group recently discussed their outreach efforts and how they can persuade individuals that their service and expertise of knowledge is valuable, necessary and realistic to bring to the board level. The Secretary of State has been supportive of this.

### ***3. Update from Workgroup #2: Women in Leadership by Secretary Melissa McCaw, OPM***

Secretary McCaw informed the group of the upcoming Women in Leadership Monthly Panel Series. McCaw was happy to report the October panel has been scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup>. As mentioned at the last meeting, the group has decided on five panelists and we are in the process of sending invitations to them. They are:

- Dr. Zulma Toro
  - Ms. Toro is the first female president of Connecticut State University and the first Hispanic chief executive. Dr. Toro has a strong passion for higher education and thrives on helping under-represented students, particularly young women. Dr. Toro holds a Ph.D. in Industrial and Systems Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.
- Dr. Leslie Torres-Rodriguez
  - Dr. Torres-Rodriguez is the Superintendent of Hartford Public Schools, one of the largest urban school districts in Connecticut. Raised in Hartford and a product of Hartford Public High School, she has served as an education leader in Greater Hartford for over two decades.
- Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno
  - Ms. Mosquera-Bruno is the Department of Housing Commissioner. The Commissioner brings a wealth of knowledge to state government and is well versed in housing policy. Commissioner Mosquera-Bruno has vast and extensive experience in advocating for affordable housing on a state and national level and has participated in many organizations to help strengthen communities throughout the state.
- President Lena Rodriguez

- Ms. Rodríguez has committed her professional life to assisting people who are trying to forge better lives for themselves. She spent a decade at the New York City Board of Education, most recently as Director of Finance for the Division of Special Education, serving a population of more than 20,000 students and managing a \$450 million annual budget. Seeking an organization with an even broader impact on families, Ms. Rodríguez moved to the Community Renewal Team in Connecticut. At CRT she works closely with funders and builds region-wide relationships in order to increase the resources and services available to residents of Central Connecticut.
- Evelyn Trinidad, RN
  - Ms. Trinidad is the Medical Surgical Intensive Care Unit (MSICU) Nurse Manager at St. Francis Hospital. Ms. Trinidad has been in the industry for nineteen years and a leader on the front line of the COVID19 pandemic. Ms. Trinidad developed, designed, managed, and facilitated two additional COVID-19 dedicated ICU's in order to strategically isolate and contain viral spread, control capacity, improve 'risk-management', and provide essential care to the most 'at-risk' patients.

McCaw mentioned there will be more information to come regarding solicitation of the event panels. She suggested the group's help to promote the event. Specifically, syncing with school districts and children learning from home. It would be nice to have them learn about their state leaders during this time.

***4. Update from Workgroup #3: Employee Development and Training – Cultural Competency by Deputy Commissioner Nick Hermes, DAS and Deputy Commissioner Jodi Hill-Lilly, DCF***

Deputy Commissioner Nick Hermes, DAS, shared the team had several great meetings with the work group. As a group, they discussed one of the more helpful things to focus on to help the state is by drafting DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) framework for agencies to use as a guide. The group has received various feedback from representatives in the group,

as there is adequate cross sections of the state working on this. Deputy Hermes shared that it is quite obvious the DEI path of agencies varies. Some agencies are just starting to recognize its importance and others have already defined working units and operations that have developed similar programs over the years. The DEI draft will be tweaked and provided to state agencies as a guide for where they can find themselves on the path and how important it will be to continue the work in this area.

The second piece of work Deputy Hermes shared is the reality that many of the terms that are used in DEI work can range and vary by individual. The team felt that providing a standard glossary of terms for this subject matter would be helpful to provide so that everyone is working with the same terminology moving forward. The terms have been defined by the group's diverse expertise individuals.

Thirdly, Deputy Hermes discussed the reality that some state agencies have taken an independent step on drafting their own DEI framework programs. The Office of Multicultural Health Equity team at DHMAS graciously shared they are contracted with the Kaleidoscope Group. The CEO is from Hartford and has been partnered with DHMAS for a number of years on diversity inclusion issues. The group intends to develop a statewide contract for others to use for when they determine they are in need of this resource and that the agency is vetted and reputable. Deputy Hermes looks forward to continuing this procurement.

Lastly, Deputy Hermes mentioned the signing of a Statement of Work (SOW) is imminent as the procurement for a learning management system is underway. The goal is to have a platform of a variety of different trainings for employees to access as well as upload state trainings.

Deputy Commissioner Jodi Hill-Lilly added her enthusiasm that it is extremely important people have a place to turn to for trainings and cultural competency as the world continues to face new challenges.

Secretary McCaw asked the group how they plan to build accountability for each agency to participate in the plan. Ellen Boynton, Office of Multicultural Healthcare Equity at DHMAS responded and shared that their work with the Kaleidoscope Group has hopefully set benchmarks for this missive on a statewide and agency wide level. The work Ms. Boynton's office does is consistent with state goals and they are looking at how this can be doable for

each state agency. Ms. Boynton mentioned DHMAS has eight different facilities that are creating benchmarks consistent with state goals. Perhaps the group will implement accountability deadlines, requirements or report cards in their plan that each agency has to follow and where the downfall is and how to fix it in order to excel.

Deputy Commissioner Hill-Lilly shared she is appreciative of the COWAG subcommittee for reviewing these standards. She would like to see the outcome make a true impact instead of checking off a training on file. The goal is for real improvement in the state system.

Deputy Hermes shared that Secretary McCaw hit the nail on the head with her question. The good news is there are many subject matter experts on the committee, and they have recognized this is an important milestone down in the journey of this work group.

***5. Update from Work Group # 4: Affirmative Action Review & Effective Recruitment Strategies by Christine Shaw, Assistant Treasurer and Attorney Claire Coleman, OPM Undersecretary of Legal Affairs***

Attorney Claire Coleman, Undersecretary for Legal Affairs shared that the group brought in and met with CHRO to evaluate what can be done to continue the progress that has been made with other Affirmative Action plans in the state. The goal is to ensure the state continues to diversify its workforce more efficiently. Attorney Coleman shared the feedback from CHRO, and evidently, they have been also reevaluating their own regulations. CHRO shared their draft proposed changes to their regulations which the workgroup will be reviewing as a team to see if their edits would improve some of the concerns the workgroup has identified. The work group also focused on bringing in Department of Labor to provide data or feedback in regards to the 2000 census data used and just how different would the Affirmative Action plans be if the census data used was from recent surveying. Attorney Coleman mentioned that the focus would be on goal setting even from a legal and statutory framework point of view.

Assistant Treasure Christine Shaw shared the group is extremely dedicated as to what can be achievable in a short amount of time within existing framework. The group is attempting to address these issues that deserve

being studied. The hope is to present a road map as the team unbundles some of the questions are brought to the table.

Secretary McCaw shared that given the pandemic and current health situation, the Department of Labor has had significant delays that could last up to two years. Recognizing that the current data being used is very old, could the future work consist of sampling some Executive Order groups where the Affirmative Action goal says to hire the follow type of individual. Would being able to sample a few agencies with current census data provide us with the results we are hoping for or would the timeframe of data not play into this? Secretary McCaw also wondered if CHRO recognized the current system basically creates a mirror image of the demographics that exists in employed and unemployed market. Attorney Coleman shared the commission does understand this and has narrowed down in their necessity of getting the right data of the goals. CHRO has explained they have been advised by the Attorney General's office that parody framework is legally required and are taking steps to confirm and evaluate what advice has been given and what the standard is. Secretary McCaw wondered if there is a federal component to this which Attorney Coleman shared that it's written very broadly but the question comes down to if the state approves the future plans and if it impacts Affirmative Action policies. There has been some guidance that CHRO was given to, for example, remove white men from the hiring goal that is being looked into.

Secretary McCaw feels this working group has been doing a tremendous amount of work in just a short period of time. Perhaps there may be more work to look into to ensure the Affirmative Action methodology is consistent across the nation. It could potentially raise a policy discussion that could become very engaging with the legislature.

## ***6. Legislative Proposals Update***

Secretary McCaw reminded the subcommittee that if their group is working towards any legislative proposals, the deadline is October 7<sup>th</sup> for submittal.

## ***7. Closing Remarks***

Secretary McCaw reminded the committee the full leadership meeting is tomorrow. The next leadership meeting October 7<sup>th</sup>. Secretary McCaw also asked that a leader of each sub working group be present at the full council meeting tomorrow.

**8. *Public Comment***

No comment made.

**9. *Adjourn Meeting***

Meeting adjourned at 1:33 p.m.