



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL REINVESTMENT/ WORKFORCE COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2026 Meeting 2:00 P.M.
ZOOM

1) Call to Order, Welcome and Attendance

Committee Chair Ojala Naeem called the meeting to order and conducted roll call.

Committee Members Present:

Ojala Naeem (Chair)
Kyle Abercrombie
Avery Gaddis
Andrea Hawkins
Michael Jefferson

Committee Members Absent:

Corrie Betts
Andrea Comer
Shirley Skyers-Thomas
Kelli-Marie Vallieres
Kevin Walton

A quorum was established.

Executive Director: Brandon McGee

With quorum confirmed, the meeting proceeded.

2) Approval of November 26, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes

Chair Naeem requested a motion to approve the November 26, 2025 Special Meeting minutes.

Motion: Michael Jefferson
Second: Kyle Abercrombie
Upon vote, members present voted in favor.

Andrea Hawkins abstained, noting she was not present at the November 26 meeting.

Result: Motion carried. Minutes were approved.

3) Update on Community Reinvestment and Workforce/Educational Opportunities

Chair Naeem recognized Executive Director Brandon McGee to provide programmatic updates.

Community Reinvestment (R2 Program)

Director McGee reported that staff hosted the first regional R2 information session in Bridgeport, in partnership with members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus and the selected regional grant manager, Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. Approximately 40 community-based organization leaders attended to learn about funding opportunities across the three R2 priority areas.

Director McGee emphasized the Council's intentional outreach strategy to ensure equitable access to funding opportunities across all regions. Additional regional information sessions are planned.

Staff are currently:

- Working with approved grant managers to finalize Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs);
- Completing required documentation for submission to the Office of the Attorney General for final contract approval;
- Reinforcing program expectations and accountability standards with grant managers as contracts move forward.

Director McGee reiterated that community partners are eager for clear information about accessing funds, and outreach efforts are designed to ensure transparency and accessibility.

Workforce and Educational Opportunities

Director McGee reported that workforce development remains a central pillar of the Council's strategic three-year plan. With the reinvestment framework largely established, staff are now focusing on defining workforce development priorities within Connecticut's cannabis ecosystem.

Key updates included:

- Ongoing collaboration with the Connecticut State College System, including work toward finalizing a Memorandum of Agreement to expand cannabis industry-aligned

training opportunities.

- Exploration of partnerships beyond Southern Connecticut State University to leverage broader state college resources.
- Continued coordination with the Office of Workforce Strategy and internal SEC liaisons.
- Review and refinement of workforce development plan evaluation criteria submitted by licensed businesses, including development of clearer metrics and standardized scoring templates.

Director McGee noted recent statutory changes affecting how workforce development plans are evaluated and stated that adjustments will be made to ensure clarity, compliance, and measurable reinvestment impact within Disproportionately Impacted Areas (DIAs).

Mariedy Collazo Cruz, Chief Program Officer, confirmed that Director McGee's summary reflected current program efforts.

No additional questions were raised by committee members.

4) Good of the Order

None

5) Adjourn

Motion – by Kyle Abercrombie

Second – by Michael Jefferson

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.



A Plus Reporting, LLC
55 Whiting Street, Suite 1A
Plainville, CT 06062
203-269-9976
scheduling@aplusreportingservice.com

Date: January 21, 2026

**RE: Minutes: January SEC Reinvestment/ Workforce Committee Meeting
Minutes**

Please be advised that the above-referenced typewritten minutes are a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations to the extent that the audio could be clearly heard/understood. Portions that could not be heard/understood have been notated with a (an “inaudible” or “?...”).

Sincerely,

I certify that this document is a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations contained in the listed audio file.

Boden Truitt

**Boden Truitt,
Transcriber**