



**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL  
RACIAL EQUITY  
TASK FORCE**

# INTRODUCTION

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the County Council voted to approve CR142-2020, legislation establishing the first Racial Equity Task Force for Howard County. The Task Force is charged with recommending legislation to the County Council to address racial disparities and inequities in Howard County.

Comprised of over 60 experts, community leaders, students, and activists, the Racial Equity Task Force will identify and evaluate actions that the County Council can pursue to advance racial equity in Howard County. To accomplish this goal, Task Force members will be placed among six policy subgroups that will focus on racial equity in personal and public safety, land-use and housing policy, economic and workforce development, public health and environmental policy, education, and legislative processes.



The Task Force shall recommend legislative actions to the Howard County Council to remedy racial disparities and inequities in our community by:

- reviewing indicators of disparate outcomes, findings of applicable studies, best practices, and local data to ascertain pertinent information on issues related to racial equity and identifying metrics for measuring progress in improving racial equity
- identifying new County policies and changes to County ordinances and policies that could improve racial equity
- recommending legislation to the County Council that can be passed that will improve racial equity
- recommending actions that other Howard County entities, that receive County funds, can take that will improve racial equity outcomes





**RACIAL EQUITY  
TASK FORCE WEBSITE**

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# RACIAL EQUITY TASK FORCE CONTACTS



## Economic and Workforce Development

Ashley Alston, D2

Michael Harris, D2

Lauren Marra,  
Facilitator



## Education

Ashley Alston, D2

Michael Harris, D2

Lauren Marra,  
Facilitator



## Public Health and Environmental Policy

Colette Gelwicks, D3

Felix Facchine, D3

Karla Morrison-Brooks,  
Facilitator



## Land-Use and Housing Policy

Felix Facchine, D3

Colette Gelwicks, D3

Lauren Marra,  
Facilitator



## Legislative Process

Colette Gelwicks, D3

Felix Facchine, D3

Karla Morrison-Brooks,  
Facilitator



## Personal & Public Safety

Ashley Alston, D2

Michael Harris, D2

Karla Morrison-Brooks,  
Facilitator

# CONTACT INFORMATION



**Ashley Alston**

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# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUBGROUP

The Economic and Workforce Development subgroup is comprised of innovative leaders who possess professional expertise in economic equities. These valued leaders will review current policies and equal employment opportunities for residents through entrepreneurship. Concluding the subgroup analysis, the subgroup will offer legislative suggestions to the County Council for a formal introduction to be enacted.

## MEMBERSHIP

Candace Dodson-Reed, Chairperson  
Nathaniel Alston  
Darin Atwater  
Roger Barnes  
Ayesha Holmes  
Aaron Johnson  
Leonardo McClarty  
Pamela Pina  
Jonathan Studdard  
Minah Woo  
Young Ran Smith



# EDUCATION SUBGROUP

The Education subgroup will evaluate current curriculum policies ensuring that all student's needs are met. Although the County Council is unable to provide legislative oversight to the Board of Education (BOE), this subgroup will suggest remedies to combat various educational challenges by Council Resolutions as a guide for the Board of Education.

## MEMBERSHIP

Karen Randall, Chairperson  
Bita Dayhoff  
Mavis Ellis  
Grace Ko  
Meina Liu  
Jaqueline McCoy  
Natalie Pretzello  
Patricia Silva  
Sabina Taj  
Erika Strauss Chavarria  
Ying Matties





# PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY SUBGROUP

The Public Health and Environmental Policy subgroup of the Racial Equity Task Force will evaluate matters of public health, sustainability, and the environment in Howard County as it pertains to advancing racial equity. This work will include reviewing pertinent data, evaluating public health disparities, analyzing environmental racism, and making recommendations to the County Council to address racial disparities in public health and the environment.

## MEMBERSHIP

Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, Chairperson  
Myiesha Padder  
Nia Leak  
Paula Goodwin  
Jean Silver-Isenstadt  
Yvette Oquendo  
TiQuoria Jackson  
Chiara D'Amore  
Delora Sanchez Ifekauche  
Michael Allen  
Buffy Illum



# LAND-USE AND HOUSING POLICY SUBGROUP

The Land-Use and Housing Policy subgroup of the Racial Equity Task Force will evaluate matters of housing and land-use policy in Howard County as it pertains to advancing racial equity. This work will include reviewing pertinent housing data, evaluating exclusionary policies, and making recommendations to the County Council to address racial disparities in housing.

## MEMBERSHIP

Jessica Coates, Chairperson  
Isabella Battish  
Taneeka Richardson  
Vonda Orders  
Ian Kennedy  
Suzanne Haley  
Herbert James Smith, Jr.  
Jonathan Edelson  
Phil Engelke  
Peter Engel, Ex-Officio



# LEGISLATIVE PROCESS SUBGROUP

The Legislative Process subgroup of the Racial Equity Task Force will evaluate matters of the local legislative process, public engagement, local legislation and County Council operations in Howard County as it pertains to advancing racial equity. This work will include reviewing pertinent data, evaluating best practices for inclusive government operations, and making recommendations to the County Council to address racial equity in the local legislative process.

## MEMBERSHIP

Rashida George, Chairperson  
David Koralov  
Lucas de Melo  
Bruce Nelson  
Allyson Owens  
Dana Davenport  
Beth Hufnagel  
Laura Mettle  
Kathryn Valentine



# PERSONAL AND PUBLIC SAFETY SUBGROUP

The Personal and Public Safety subgroup is comprised of community leaders who possess professional expertise in personal and public safety. These esteemed leaders will review current practices and policies that veil systemic judicial injustices for the disenfranchised and most vulnerable members of our community. Concluding the subgroups analysis, the subgroup will offer legislative suggestions to the County Council for a formal introduction to be enacted.

## MEMBERSHIP

Allison Sayers, Chairperson  
Zainab Chaudry  
Zikora Akanegbu  
Jonathan Branch  
Maya Carey  
Augustin Bibum  
Rahel Petros  
Jumel Howard  
Eduardo Riberio  
Richard Gibson, Jr., Ex-Officio  
Marcus Harris, Ex-Officio



## **Meeting Preparation and Facilitation**

- ❖ Prepare for and facilitate two-hour monthly meetings with each subgroup
- ❖ Additionally:
  - ❖ Set subgroup meeting goals and agendas in partnership with chairs
  - ❖ Provide guidance to Council staff on research and analysis to collect and conduct before and after meetings
  - ❖ Support and ensure subgroup members are doing reading, reflection, and analysis between meetings through follow up emails as needed
- ❖ Prepare for and contribute to periodic meetings with the County Solicitor alongside subgroup chairs
- ❖ Support subgroup chairs in conversations with and formal presentation to County Auditor
- ❖ Support subgroup chairs as they present at Council meetings and facilitate/present at two public hearings

## **Final Report Development**

- ❖ Create outline and review with chairs and subgroup members
- ❖ In close partnership with the chairs, develop first draft of report.
  - ❖ Groundwork will write the portion of the report focused on the top priority recommendations (roughly 6-8 pages total), while the chairs will be expected to write the cover letter/executive summary introducing the report as well as the appendix with other recommendations.
  - ❖ Groundwork will edit the chairs' pieces, so all report tone/style is consistent.
- ❖ Socialize first draft of recommendations with subgroup members in partnership with chairs; refine first draft of report
- ❖ Share revised draft of report with County Solicitor and County Auditor (when needed)
- ❖ Incorporate feedback into final report with subgroup chairs; finalize report
- ❖ Hold prep meeting with chairs to support them in presenting final report to the Council

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

# FACILITATORS - GROUNDWORK PARTNERS

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: SUBGROUP CHAIRS

## **Meeting Preparation and Facilitation:**

- ❖ Help shape the agenda for their subgroup meetings (8 meetings each)
- ❖ Co-facilitate and/or participate in the subgroup meetings
- ❖ Prepare for and present during hearings and meetings
- ❖ Regularly communicate with subgroup members to share and collect research, testimony, and other information gathered, as well as subgroup meeting agendas (the latter with support from Groundwork Partners)

## **Research and Data:**

- ❖ Oversee all research and analysis, including liaising with staff on county data needed, providing guidance to subgroup members conducting research, and ensuring subgroup members and Council staff complete research in a timely manner
- ❖ Alongside subgroup members, take primary responsibility for conducting discrete research assignments
- ❖ Prepare pre-reads for subgroup meetings; likely will include compiling research and analysis in clear manner and sharing with Groundwork to shape meeting agendas
- ❖ Provide Groundwork distilled research, analysis, and discussion points that supports recommendations developed by subgroup for the final written report

## **Progress Reports:**

- ❖ Review, comment, and approve subgroup meeting minutes provided by staff after each meeting
- ❖ Prepare to share subgroup progress with County Council members or residents (upon request)

## **Report writing:**

- ❖ Identify equitable policy and practice recommendations for the County Council to adopt in partnership with subgroup members
- ❖ Assemble all research and analysis needed to support report writing
- ❖ In close partnership with Groundwork, develop first draft of report.
  - ❖ o Chairs will be expected to write the report's cover letter/executive summary, as well as an appendix with recommendations that were not stated as top priorities but worth consideration. Meanwhile, Groundwork will write the portion focused on top priority recommendations (~6-8 pages total) and edit the chairs' pieces, so report tone/style is consistent.
- ❖ Socialize first draft of recommendations with subgroup members in partnership with Groundwork; incorporate feedback in partnership with Groundwork
- ❖ Share revised draft of report with County Solicitor and County Auditor (when needed); incorporate feedback in coordination with Groundwork

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

# SUBGROUP MEMBERS

## **Meeting Participation:**

- ❖ Attend each assigned subgroup meeting (~8 meetings)
- ❖ Complete pre-reading, research, or reflection for each subcommittee meeting as assigned
- ❖ Support chair's presentation at hearings and/or town halls
- ❖ Support chair's presentation to the County Council

## **Research and Data:**

- ❖ Identify research topics and data relevant to subgroup's work
- ❖ Alongside subgroup members, take primary responsibilities for conducting research and analysis to support subgroup learning and decision-making in a timely and diligent matter
- ❖ Review all research and analysis in preparation, or following, each subgroup meeting

## **Report writing:**

- ❖ Identify equitable policy and practice recommendations for the County Council to adopt
- ❖ Periodically review drafts of final report and provide feedback
- ❖ Distill feedback from the County Auditor, County Solicitor, and Council, as collected
- ❖ Aid chairs and Groundwork in finalizing report and preparing for final presentation to Council

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: COUNTY COUNCIL STAFF

## **Meeting Preparation and Participation:**

- ❖ Schedule and attend meetings for all six subgroups
- ❖ Schedule and attend meetings for the subgroup chairs' meeting with County Solicitor & County Auditor
- ❖ Take meeting notes and identify any decisions/action items; share notes with subgroup chairs, Groundwork, and Council
- ❖ Upload subgroup meeting agendas, notes, etc. to County Council website

## **Research and Data:**

- ❖ Partner with task force facilitators to identify research topics and data
- ❖ Gather data on specific Howard County policies as well as from Howard County public agencies on matters such as health, housing, land use, and economic data.
- ❖ Support subgroup chairs and members as needed on other research needs, such as connections to national organizations and their research
- ❖ Analyze data and present it in clear documentation; share with task force facilitators and chairs for dissemination

## **Report writing:**

Provide data and research to support recommendations in written reports, as needed



# OPEN MEETINGS ACT

## What is the Open Meetings Act?

The Open Meetings Act is a Maryland statute. It states the goal that “public business be conducted openly and publicly” and sets as the policy of the State that, except in certain “special and appropriate circumstances,” the public “be provided with adequate notice of the time and location of meetings of public bodies, which shall be held in places reasonably accessible to individuals who would like to attend these meetings.”

## When does the Act apply and what is a quorum?

The Act applies only when a “quorum” of the members of a “public body” is “meeting.” The Act gives each of these terms a special definition.

A quorum is a majority of the public body’s members unless the law applicable to that particular public body sets a different number.

## What counts as a “meeting”?

A “meeting” occurs whenever a public body’s quorum convenes to discuss public business. An occasion that starts out as a purely social event is a “meeting” only if a quorum uses it to discuss the public body’s business. A gathering at which a quorum discusses public business is a “meeting” no matter where it occurs and no matter whether the quorum takes an action.

Generally, a quorum can be present either in person or by telephone. Email communications among a quorum, as opposed to between individual members, might constitute a meeting if the emails are so close in time as to show that a quorum was in on the discussion together. For details on “meetings,” see the Open Meetings Act Manual, Chapter 1, Part B.

# THE FINAL REPORT

The final report will include the following elements:

- A letter, or executive summary, from the subgroup chairs regarding topline recommendations and the outputs of the Task Force
- Clear, actionable recommendations, by subgroup, regarding: (1) new County policies; (2) changes to existing County ordinances and policies; (3) legislation the County Council can pass that will improve racial equity; and (4) within these, key progress indicators that should be regularly tracked. These recommendations will be prioritized by subgroups according to potential effectiveness and timeframe to impact (0 to 2 years; more than 2 years). Each subgroup's top 2-3 recommendations will be in the main body of the report written by Groundwork.
- An appendix with the additional recommendations—mostly for the long term—and other salient information, such as data and white papers that informed thinking

Groundwork Partners will be responsible for creating the report outline, writing the main body with top recommendations (6-8 pages), and editing the chairs pieces (especially the appendix) for consistency in tone/format. The chairs will be responsible for writing the opening letter and developing the appendix described above.





**\* If I am unable to attend a meeting who do I contact?**

Please send an email to your subgroup chair, facilitator and district liaisons.



**\* How can someone submit testimony or contact a subgroup?**

There is a RETF Comment Form on the website: <https://bit.ly/3lzZ3gq> They can also email documents to [racialequitytf@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:racialequitytf@howardcountymd.gov)



**\* Will my email address and emails be public?**

Due to the "Open Meetings Act" your emails could be requested by the public. We encourage members to set up a separate email address for RETF correspondence.

# FAQ

# Howard County Council Racial Equity Task Force



## Virtual Kickoff Meeting

NOVEMBER 19, 2020 • WEBEX • 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM