

Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE)

Executive Director's Report to the General Membership

Time Frame: April 11, 2024-November 8, 2024

Submitted by: Elizabeth Gordon, Executive Director

Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Roundtable: GCDE coordinates the RA Roundtables in partnership with the Office of Financial Management and the Attorney General's Office. One RA Roundtable was held during this period. The June 20th roundtable focused on the intersection between Family Medical Leave, Paid Family Medical Leave and Reasonable Accommodations. Typical participation is from 100-200 folks each session.

Statewide Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Council: I attend the council meetings to represent people with disabilities, and workers with disabilities employed by the state. The group meets monthly. For more information, visit the website: [OFM State HR DEI Council](#)

Digital Equity Forum (DEF): Washington State Office of Equity and Washington State Broadband Office convene this group to further the state's goal "to provide all residents access to high-speed broadband". Forum coordination is now housed within the Office of Equity. The group meets monthly with subcommittee meetings at least monthly or more often based on work. I am part of the Broadband Accessibility and Service Subcommittee.

Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Work: Executive Order (EO)22-04, Implementing the Washington State Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Plan & Playbook, declares that Washington will be an anti-racist state, and affirms a commitment to take action to ensure that Washington "is a state where all are welcomed and will have the opportunity to thrive regardless of race, ethnicity, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sex, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or the presence of sensory, mental, or physical disability." GCDE participates on the PEAR team for ESD and attends meetings and workgroups to ensure inclusion for people with disabilities in the work. I also participate in the subcommittee on engaging the community in the PEAR work.

Office of Equity Commission meetings: Representatives from the various Commissions and Committees meet with the Office of Equity in a roundtable discussion of the work happening at each agency and to have collaborative working space. Agencies represented include: Commission on African American Affairs, Department of Veteran's Affairs, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, Women's Commission, Commission of Hispanic Affairs, LGBTQ Commission, and Commission on Asian Pacific Affairs.

Community Compensation Guidelines Committee: I participated in the committee to review and update the community compensation guidelines. GCDE supported legislation that allows Washington state government to pay members of the community for their time when they provide their lived experience to commissions, committees, and workgroups. [Community Compensation Guidelines | Office of Equity](#)

Disability Rights of Washington Listening Session on Priorities for 2025: Attended listening session to learn about partner priorities. You can participate in this work by going to their website and sharing your thoughts. Here is a link: [Inform our Advocacy Priorities - Disability Rights Washington](#)

Disability Access and Functional Needs Collaborative: This is a group from many different sectors to ensure that a disability equity and inclusion lens is applied to the work of Washington State Department of Health. It is a companion group to their work with the Community Collaborative that focuses on social justice for communities disproportionately harmed by COVID-19. [Community Collaborative | Washington State Department of Health](#)

Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Washington State Rehabilitation Council public form on Order of Selection: DVR is closing some of its priority of service categories through a process known as Order of Selection. Order of selection creates transparency when the number of requests for services exceeds budget. This forum described DVR's budget concerns and which categories they are closing. When DVR customers are found eligible for services, they are put into a category based on the significance of their disability. People with the most impacts from their disability will be put into a category that makes them eligible for services. People with the most significant impacts from their disability are a priority to receive services while people with less significant impacts will be placed on a wait list. People who are already receiving services through DVR will likely continue to receive those services. Here is a link to their website for further information: [Order of Selection Information | DSHS](#)

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Public Meeting regarding the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan Update: I attended the meeting to learn about the ADA plan. Our Associate Member from DOT discussed these forums at our last General Membership meeting. Here is a link to that plan: [WSDOT ADA Transition Plan Update](#)

Developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) Equity, Access and Inclusion for All: This was a series of meetings with federal agencies, AI leaders, and the disability community hosted by a partnership among the United States Access Board, the American Association of People with Disabilities and the Center for Democracy and Technology. The purpose was to hear from the disability community on the impacts of AI and how its use impacts people with disabilities both positively and negatively. Here is a link to a preliminary report from those sessions: [U.S. Access Board Presents Preliminary Findings on Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) for Disability Community and AI Practitioners](#)

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Candidates Forum for Youth and Mental Health. This forum was organized by NAMI and featured youth interacting with candidates around youth mental health concerns.

Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities: I attended their quarterly meeting. Legislation proposed last session would give GCDE a seat on this council. That legislation is likely to be reintroduced this session. This is an important way for GCDE to have a voice to talk about health equity from a disability perspective. [Home | Health Equity](#)

Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreter Shortage Workgroup: ODHH was given funding for this critical work. They are convening a group of Deaf and DeafBlind people to drive this work forward. There is a **State Partners ASL Interpreter Shortage Action Planning** group who will come together to implement suggestions and recommendations from the workgroup. GCDE is a part of the state partners group—but I attended both meetings.

Nothing About Us Without Us Implementation Group: Office of Equity is convening folks to implement the work outlined in NAWU. They are creating a tool kit which will be influenced by people with lived experiences that will give state leaders the tools they need to effectively support people with lived experiences. There will be a couple of disability community meetings that we will push out through our listserv. If you are not on that list contact [Emily Heike](#) so you can get updates.

Washington DeafBlind Consortium: This is a partnership across various public and private agencies to strengthen services for the DeafBlind community. They meet on the third Wednesdays at 2pm and I attend as I can.