

Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment

Executive Director's Report February 27, 2026 – May 8, 2025

Immigration subcabinet: The Immigration subcabinet was formed by Governor Ferguson in [EO 25-09 - Protecting Immigrant Communities](#). The subcabinet hosts open conversations with community members and works to coordinate services between state agencies. The goal is to enhance access to resources, protect data privacy and security, and continue to make Washington state a welcoming jurisdiction that protects the rights of immigrants, refugees, and asylees.

GCDE sponsors the Disability Subcommittee in partnership with Department of Services for the Blind. The subcommittee focuses on disparate impacts and identifies needs of the immigrant community with disabilities. The subcommittee has identified that specific guidance about the rights of immigrants with disabilities, as well as families who have children with disabilities, is needed. Additionally, transparency and accountability for the rights and needs of people housed in the federal detention center in Tacoma is critical. The group reached out to Representative Jayapal's office to ask that data on disability be requested, along with other data requested by the congressperson's office.

Other work includes review of legislation related to the immigrant community to prioritize next legislative session. Top concerns include supporting Washington state's Department of Health gaining access to the Tacoma detention facility to ensure detainees have access to medication, reasonable accommodations, and durable medical equipment. Other areas of focus include privacy of data in applications for financial aid, and transparency of state law enforcement participation in federal immigration actions.

Executive Order [24-05 - Improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities in state employment](#): This executive order was a project of GCDE, in partnership with the disability community and many state agencies and partners. Implementation is ongoing. GCDE joins in several subcommittees and workgroups to implement the order.

- *Agency impact assessment workgroup:* EO 24-05 focuses on accountability for state agencies. State agencies are required to report to Office of Equity on how well they are doing with hiring people with disabilities. This workgroup builds the assessment for the report state agencies must submit. Ultimately, the information is sent to the governor, along with other information about implementation of the executive order.

- *Training subcommittee*: This subcommittee builds trainings for state employees and supervisors required by the EO. The subcommittee works with subject matter experts who are employees with disabilities. To date, the group has released two trainings -- building an inclusive culture for leaders and supervisors, and reasonable accommodations. More trainings will be released in the coming months.
- *Steering committee*: This subcommittee manages the implementation plan for the EO, and makes sure that all the groups are working together well.
- *Disability employment consortium*: this subcommittee focuses on employment. One of the focuses is the Supported Employment in State Government (SESG) program. State agencies are required to work with the SESG program under this EO. There is a workgroup being convened to examine the program and make recommendations for improvements. Other workgroups will be convened as work is identified.

Other ongoing work:

Digital Equity Forum (DEF): DEF provides recommendations to the governor and the legislature on how to increase digital access in Washington state.

Quarterly Statewide Transition Council was developed to better serve students with developmental/intellectual disabilities by expanding transition services to reach underrepresented students in rural areas.

Commissions/Committees/Office of Equity Collaboration: This cross-government collaborative is convened by the Office of Equity and includes Commission on African American Affairs, GCDE, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs, Women's Commission, and the LGBTQ Commission. Work focuses on intersectionality and ways that we can partner across all populations to better impact equity in Washington state.

Federal Subcabinet: Convened every other week by the Governor's office to brief agencies on federal actions and their impact.

Directors' collaboration: Twice monthly collaborative between disability focused statewide leaders to collaborate and support one another's work.

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund briefings to keep abreast of Federal happenings.