



Washington State Commission On

# African American Affairs



Commissioner Joseph Todd, Chair  
Representing South King County

Commissioner Stacy Estes  
Representing Central Washington

Commissioner Michael Bailey  
Vice Chair  
Representing King County

Commissioner LeRoy Laney III  
Representing King County

Commissioner Zellynda Perkins  
Representing Pierce County

Commissioner Dr. Yolanda Geolingo  
Representing Thurston County

Commissioner Sheila Stanton  
Representing King County

Commissioner Lolinda Turner  
Representing Pierce County

Commissioner Corwin Scott  
Representing Pierce County

Executive Director Edward O. Prince

## Commission on African American Affairs Public Meeting Minutes Friday, January 17, 2025 | 1:00 pm - 4:00 p.m. | In Person 1110 Capitol Court Way S, Room 135 1st floor Olympia, WA 98504

**Members present:** Chair Kendricks, Vice Chair Todd, Bailey, Laney, Dr. Geolingo, Estes, Perkins, Executive Director Edward Prince, Program Manager Charlotte Kerney, Executive Assistant Keahna Umpstead. Quorum established.

**Absent:** Turner, Stanton

**1:00pm** – Meeting called to order by Chair Todd

**1:02pm** – Roll Call

**1:03pm - Motion to approve meeting minutes by Commissioner Laney – Motion seconded to correct and accept minutes by Vice Chair Bailey.**

**Chair Todd called for vote to accept November 2024 Meeting Minutes**

**Voice vote** – no objections. Motion carried. November 2024 commission meeting minutes approved.

**1:10pm – Executive Directors Report – CAAA Executive Director, Edward Prince**

### Current Work

- Meetings with Washington State Representative and Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, Kristine Reeves, to discuss the Caucus's agenda for the 2025 Legislative session. Those main issues to tackle being the Community Reinvestment Project (CRP), social equity in cannabis and funding for the reparations study.
- Met with the Black Panther Legacy Project that is being led by former members of the Seattle chapter of the black panther party who have received some funding from the state through the department of commerce to create a museum to showcase the history of the Seattle chapter and all that they did as the 2<sup>nd</sup> ever chapter of the Black Panthers. Looking for further funding to complete the project.
- The education and opportunity gap study is close to completion with the Commissions consultant, Angela Powell, convening a work group to move the project to conclusion and give a debrief to the Education Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC), and the report should be completed by May or early June for final review.

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- Newly appointed CAAA Commissioner by former Governor Jay Inslee's team, Corwin Scott out of Pierce County.
- Received request to discuss the proposal to create a Commission on boys and men.

### **Governor's Budget for FY 2026-2027**

- Former Governor Jay Inslee released his budget proposal in mid-December after receiving submissions from state agencies with proposed cuts for this biennium, but the governor did not include CAAA's proposed cuts in this budget unlike other agencies. This budget is not the final budget, the legislature and newly appointed Governor Bob Ferguson will also propose a budget, and the final budget will be passed by late April following the close of the 2025 legislative session.
- The State is looking at an over \$10 Million state budget shortfall leading to a proposed state wealth tax and a new business and occupation tax this year.

### **1:30pm – BIPOC ED Coalition Rebrand and Overview– Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director, Andrea Caupain Sanderson**

**Discussion** – BIPOC ED Coalition is a collection of 200+ non-profit leaders and organizations that serve the BIPOC communities across Washington State. Created in June 2020 to address the need for space made for the BIPOC community to discuss community needs and how to demand change without fear of judgments. Working to promote wellness and restore resources in the black, indigenous, and people of color communities in solidarity. The goal of the Coalition is to create a Washington where everyone is included and resources and opportunity flow freely through all communities throughout Washington.

### **Coalition Values**

- Centering – creating spaces to center the voices of nonprofit leaders.
- Relational – lifting one another's strengths and build on each other's wisdom.
- Intersectionality – recognizing that all our lives are interconnected and holding space for multiple ideas and lived experiences to unite across racial groups.
- Nourishment – recognizing the importance of collective wellness and rest.
  - Sabbatical Leadership Program- designed for nonprofit leaders to allow them to take needed time to recharge.
    - Sabbaticals support leaders in taking a one week to three-month recharge through a grant application process.
    - Impact of the program
      - 2021 - 20 BIPOC leaders took part in one-week paid leave.
      - 2022-2023 – 32 BIPOC Leaders took part in either a three month or one month sabbatical.
      - 2024-2025 – 51 BIPOC Leaders took part in three-month, one month, or two-week paid sabbaticals.
- Liberatory Power – working to together to dismantle dominant power dynamics and social systems that were never created and do not serve BIPOC communities.

### **Advocacy Leads to Impact**

- 241 leaders of color signed the coalitions letter to increase long-term, unrestricted grants.
- 16 Philanthropic organizations signed the [Equitable Funder Pledge](#).

- 13 advocacy gatherings and trainings were held to help connect BIPOC leaders and further develop new skills to raise our individual and collective voices.
- 23 bills prompted by the coalition over the previous two Washington Legislative sessions (2023 and 2024) that were then signed into law, further improving equitable opportunities.
- Washington LEAD for Racial Justice – To counter DEI attacks this initiative brings together nonprofits, funders, and legal partners to fortify and secure BIPOC organizations and in turn secure the communities they serve. Through advocacy, media campaigns, statewide learning community, assistance obtaining legal support, and multi-state community practice.
- Legal Education Advocacy and Defense Program – Developed to gather materials to assist organizations in how to fight back against the attack on Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and race conscience work.
  - Working with attorneys across Washington to gain knowledge on how to combat these assaults along with attorneys from the states of California and Minnesota who have already had to battle bills aimed at challenging and eliminating DEI in their states.
  - Materials that are generated will be shared with those non-profits and organizations within the BIPOC ED Coalition and their partners along with the Governor's Office, Attorney General's Office, and Civil Rights Office.
  - Currently tracking the companies that are abandoning their DEI initiatives and what that process looks like on a large scale and in Washington.
  - Launching a media campaign on how organizations doing race conscious work can protect themselves in case these DEI suits that are being seen across the country come their way.
  - Launching a public facing campaign to combat the misinformation being spread about DEI.
  - Current Collaborators:
    - California Black Freedom Fund
    - Seattle Foundation
    - Equitable Recovery and Reconciliation Alliance (ERRA)
    - Black Future Co-op Fund
    - Philanthropy Northwest

**Discussion** –BIPOC ED Coalition will be undergoing a name change coming Spring 2025 to Ile Kimoyo meaning Healing Home to better align with community identity.

### **1:48pm – Washington State Representative and Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus Kristine Reeves**

#### **Top three priorities of the Black Legislative Caucus for the 2025 Legislative Session –**

Created by the collective concerns across Washington from the black Community

- **1** – The need to keep the community reinvestment project up and running and make the account permanent.
  - Originally created as a two-year account that would end this year.
- **2** – Making Social Equity in Cannabis not just a good bill but good practice.
  - Of the 42 licenses that are available out of this program only 7 individuals have access to their license.

- **3** - Gain funding for a reparations study

#### **Top three priorities for the Caucus**

- **1** - Making sure that the black people who are serving Washington within the Capitol as elected officials and policy advocates are being taken care of when operating within a system that was not built for us or with us in mind to make needed change to that same system.
- **2** – Lifting up community voice as a collective group to enhance the power of one voice
  - Black members now make up 23% of the Democratic Caucus in WA.
- **3** - Enhancing Leadership throughout the capital and its many committees
  - Several black legislative members are now heads of legislative committees.
  - Making sure to find ways to get black representation into all sectors of the legislative process and discussions to make sure black people are seen and recognized in those spaces.

#### **2:00pm – Racial Equity Team/Equity in Education Coalition – Board Vice President, Bernal Bacca**

**Discussion** – comprised of only two staff members the racial equity team leads charge in gathering community groups and agencies that are leading charge in gaining racial equity throughout WA.

#### **Equity in Education Coalition**

- Funded to challenge the inequities that plague public schools across WA.
- The first project was tackling the lack of internet access for all students

#### **Members of Color Caucus Reception**

- Hosted yearly by the Racial equity team in February to allow for networking and relationship building between the members of the racial equity team and the legislative members of color.
  - Groups fill out a form to apply to become a member of the racial equity team with the requirement that they must be demonstrating work to combat racial inequities in Washington.

#### **2:30pm – Washington Thriving and the effort to develop a sitewide behavioral health strategic plan for children and youth – Strategy Lead, Raili Marks**

**Discussion** – Created in response to the continued statewide crisis in behavioral health among children, youth, and young adults. The goal is to develop a prenatal through age 25 (P-25) behavioral health strategic plan that will ensure equitable access to high quality, developmentally appropriate and culturally attuned supports and mental health services at every stage of development. The development of this new P-25 behavioral health care system aims to address the systemic gaps in the state's current systems and bring together intersecting systems and factors that impact individuals' behavioral health (education, child welfare, housing, disability, employment, crisis response).

- WA state is currently 48<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states in how we respond to and treat mental health.

- Aims to address:
  - Systemic gaps and disconnects in Washington's behavioral healthcare system
  - Identify the intersecting systems and factors that impact behavioral health and how to connect these systems to create a more holistic approach and fill gaps within the communications between these systems.
  - How to use the successful systems that are already in place and create a better support system for them to make them even more effective/expand them.

### **Washington Thriving Leaders**

- Co-Chairs
  - WA State Representative Lisa Callan of the 5<sup>th</sup> Legislative District
  - (DBHR) Section Manager for Prenatal to 25, Diana Cockrell
- Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group (CYBHWG) has helped curate the Washington Thriving Advisory Group to make sure that WA Thriving's work is being led by not just experts in the field but experts in lived experience and those that are and will be directly impacted by this work.
  - Youth and young adults
  - Parents and caregivers
  - System Partners (educators, service providers, insurers, advocacy groups, etc.)

### **Vision Created**

- Comprehensive support and services that can be accessed through settings that individuals find themselves in from prenatal to age 25 including clinics, schools, community programs, and caregivers.
- Create an actionable roadmap to provide investments and policy initiatives to move toward this comprehensive system.
- Strategic plan is due to the Legislature by end of November 2025
- Three-pronged Approach to services

**Discussion** - Next Steps of WA thriving is to gather all of the information and data that has been collected from the information gathering process of the last year and begin putting it into a cohesive set of recommendations that works to support the work already being done and the goals already being set by respective BIPOC communities to create a holistic response to youth and young adult mental health response in WA.

### **3:00pm – Advanced Payment: an equity proposal to allow partial grant payments up front – Director of Community Engagement and Outreach (COM), Cheryl Smith**

**Discussion** – Commerce is a Washington State agency that has more than 7,000 active contracts throughout the state that total \$7 billion in funds per year. Currently commerce operates on a reimbursement only system that is the required statute for commerce but has shown itself to be a significant barrier for communities and organizations that have historically been excluded from funding programs offered by commerce in the past. Due to the nature of large out of pocket expenses that are reimbursed weeks maybe even months after the fronting of these funds by the organization. Commerce's equity in funding report highlighted these disparities and launched the agency into developing efforts to more

equitably invest in excluded communities, one of which is the advanced payment option an equity proposal to allow for partial grant payments up front.

**Advanced Payments Program Potential Legislation** – Change statute to allow partial upfront payment under certain circumstances.

- Potential eligibility requirements
  - Small organizations
  - Some type of track record of responsible management, potentially 3 years or more
  - Organization is in current regulatory compliance
  - Organizations that work to assist historically marginalized communities

**3:30pm – Public Comment** – 3 People in audience – 1 Person gave public comment

**3:45pm – Discussion** – Newly appointed Commission Chair, Joseph Todd and Commission Vice Chair, Micheal Bailey discuss their goals and potential updates to commissioner communication and work for 2025.

**4:00pm – Meeting Adjourned**