

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Legal & Justice Systems Subcommittee
DRAFT Meeting Summary for August 11, 2020

1. Call to Order

Committee Co-Chair Raylene Lewis called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. The meeting was held remotely via Zoom webinar.

Members Present: David Doll, Bill Elfo, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Deborra Garrett, Stephen Gockley, Deborah Hawley, Raylene King, Jackie Mitchell, Moonwater, Darlene Peterson, Eric Richey

Members Absent: Bruce Van Glubt, Maia Vanyo

2. Discussion of Implicit Bias Training

Blaine Police Chief Donnell Tanksley explained implicit bias training, including:

- Aspects of fair and impartial policing
- Implicit bias is the attitudes and stereotypes that unconsciously affect our understanding, actions, and decisions
- A goal is for law enforcement to recognize everyone has bias. Training lets everyone know that bias is normal
- The assumptions that result from bias shouldn't impact how people are treated
- Different types of biases, including We vs They bias and complicit bias
- The four elements of procedural justice are respect, trust, having a voice, and being neutral

The committee members and Chief Tanksley discussed how creating change comes from the top of any agency; bias as a human condition; the Harvard Implicit Association Test; creating a comprehensive list of local trainers in Whatcom County on racial bias and similar issues; and racial equity toolkits, including the Washington Race Equity Justice initiative (REJI).

3. Racial equity

Elfo reported on jail statistics, which includes only those who are incarcerated, not everyone in the criminal justice system. Also, the FBI changed their crime reporting process beginning in 2019, which no longer includes Hispanic ethnicity. Hispanics are now counted with the race they identify. That change may skew the following statistics:

In 2019, the average daily population was 304 people, they self-identified as:

- 73 percent Caucasian
- 8 percent African American
- 4 percent Asian
- 14 percent Native American (which may or may not involved in the tribal court system)

In 2017 and 2018, before the FBI reporting change, 6 percent identified as African American Whatcom County total population (per Wikipedia, so these estimates must be verified):

- 88.2 percent of people identify as Caucasian

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- 1.3 percent African American
- 3.4 percent Native American (per U.S. Census Bureau)

The committee members discussed the number of jail inmates who are from outside Whatcom County; getting more reliable statistics on the composition of Whatcom County's population from the Information Needs & Data Exchange (INDEX) Committee; encounters that are law enforcement-generated, such as traffic stops and field interviews, as opposed to calls for service from store security calls about shoplifters, for example; concerns with the accuracy of the federal census data; and gathering statistics on how many who are incarcerated are mentally ill.

Melanie Campos, Lummi Police Department, confirmed the following Lummi statistics:

- Total Lummi Enrolled Tribal Members: 5270 (as of 5/1/19)
- Enrolled Tribal Members on the reservation: 2980 (as of 5/1/19)
- Unemployment Rate on Lummi Reservation: 14.7% (as of 5/30/19) *Unemployment Rate provided by US Census Website, 2017 Estimates, Census Tract 9400*
- Lummi Nation Poverty Rate: 22% (as of 11/27/19) *According to American Fact Finder / US Census Data Estimates, percent of people on the reservation that live below poverty.*

The committee members continued to discuss the need for collecting data on behavioral health (mental illness and substance use) and how it affects law enforcement, arrests, and incarceration.

4. Reentry

Mitchell reported on the behavioral health reentry program:

- The new staff person, David Bradshaw with Compass Health, started work on July 27
- They are working with the managed care organizations to fund the position
- They are working to ensure a more clinical focus and that the needs of the funders are met.

The committee discussed reentry during Covid and the possibility for reducing fees for inmate phone use in the jail.

5. Other Business

Doll thanked Moonwater for facilitating the recent listening sessions.

6. Next Steps

The committee discussed whether or not to have a discussion on the feedback gathered during the racial and justice listening sessions.

7. Public Comment

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Heather Flaherty stated she thanks everyone for being willing to work together on racial disparity in law enforcement and supports getting better data. She asked for information on the new Pretrial Services Unit.

Caryl Dunavan stated nearly 10 percent of the population identifies as Hispanic in Whatcom County. Need to collect statistics on the population involved in the justice system that identify as Hispanic, despite the FBI reporting system.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m.