

Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, & Health Equity Task Force

Accomplishments of the Task Force 2020-2022



On June 4, 2020, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper signed Executive Order No. 143 establishing the Andrea Harris Task Force to address the social, economic, environmental, and health inequities exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governor Cooper appointed a strong group to the Task Force, and the 40+ members stood to represent diverse communities, initiatives, and agencies. Diversity, equity, and inclusion played an incredible role in the establishment of 22 recommendations for the Office of the Governor. With the help of Task Force contacts and agency liaisons, five subcommittees took outstanding initiative in working to enact change in honor of the legacy of Dr. Andrea L. Harris.

Dr. Andrea L. Harris was a North Carolina native who dedicated her life to supporting and advocating for underserved communities across the state. After graduating from Bennett College, Dr. Harris became one of the youngest civil rights activists and community agency directors in the national fight against poverty within rural communities. Co-founded by Dr. Harris in 1986, the NC Institute of Minority Economic Development continues to serve minority and women-owned businesses out of Durham, NC. Numerous prestigious awards and accolades were presented to Andrea Harris throughout her impactful career and her time serving on various advisory boards. The Task Force has upheld, and will continue to uphold, the incredible legacy of Dr. Andrea Harris.

Biannual Reports



June 2021 Report Status:

- a) The Office of the Governor, Department of Administration, RTI International (an independent non-profit research organization), and state agencies worked with the Task Force to propose the 2021-2023 Fiscal Year Budget. The budget included streams of state and federal funding, legislation, agency actions, and community engagement as pillars for implementing the recommendations made.
- b) In collaboration with RTI International, the Task Force created an implementation plan for its proposed recommendations which included an organizational matrix, recommendations classifications, and a summary of recommendation priorities based on topic and key stakeholders.

December 2021 Report Status:

- a) The Task Force recommendations were being addressed individually with continued progress. At this point, seven recommendations were successfully implemented and provided to the Office of the Governor. Several recommendations were officially funded by the Governor’s 2021-2023 Fiscal Year Budget as well (see table to the right).
- b) The NC Department of Administration created a live implementation tracker based on the organizational matrix proposed initially by RTI International. At the time of this report, 54% of the original recommendations were in-progress, 32% were completed, and 14% were awaiting external action from various state agencies.

Broadband Infrastructure	\$ 1 Billion
Lead Pipe & Asbestos Remediation	\$ 150 Million
COVID-19 Equity & Population Prioritization	\$ 94 Million
COVID-19 Control Expansion	\$ 36 Million
Establishing HBCUs	\$ 3 Million
NC Community College System Apprenticeship	\$ 3.5 Million
COVID-19 Mitigation in American Indian Tribes	\$ 10 Million
COVID-19 Research Position within Commission on Indian Affairs	\$ 73,578.00

June 2022 Report Status:

- a) Of the original recommendations, 14 have been implemented completely by the Task Force with the remaining in the capable hands of other state agencies or to be reevaluated by the new Andrea Harris Equity Task Force established under Executive Order No. 268.
- b) The Task Force’s Business Engagement Group held a series of three virtual webinars on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with a variety of panelists and audience members throughout April-June 2022.



Task Force Progress Summary



Access to Healthcare Subcommittee

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Summary</u>
Increase opportunities for patients to utilize telehealth services	Completed	With \$90 million has been invested in targeted grants to address local infrastructure needs connecting underserved households, the Office of Rural Health will continue to apply for federal funding to further this initiative.
Appropriate \$1,527,642 in state funding for the Office of Rural Health's Health Information Technology Assistance Program	Completed	The Office of Rural Health will continue to share details on the program and its impact throughout the next two years.
Increase investments in rural hospitals, community health centers, and federally qualified health centers to provide quality care, vaccines, and digital literacy training to underserved communities	Completed/Ongoing	The Task Force and the Office of Rural Health continue to support the Department of Health & Human Services in providing equitable vaccines, education, and service to undocumented/low-income/vulnerable populations.
Actively expand opportunities for historically marginalized populations to participate in state government affairs to provide a diversity of opinions on government values	Completed/Ongoing	[Executive Order No. 246- Environmental EO with Public Participation Directive] The Task Force, the Office of the Governor, and state cabinet agencies continue to engage community members in public policy creation by offering opportunities/platforms for input.
Expand Medicaid	Awaiting External Action	The Office of the Governor and the NC General Assembly continue to advocate for statewide expansion.



Economic Opportunities & Business Development Subcommittee

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Summary</u>
Create economic incentives to encourage participation with Historically Underutilized Businesses	In Progress	In collaboration with the Department of Commerce, the Task Force is working on tax incentives and access to funding which may require new legislature to implement.
Offer educational support and mentorships to diverse businesses and leverage partnerships with NC HBCUs to develop executive education programs for minority-owned businesses doing work with the state	In Progress	Working with the HUB Office and the Department of Commerce, the Task Force is building a mentorship program to put forward for businesses throughout the state. Currently, research to identify an appropriate place for this program in government is being done.
Support apprenticeships and workforce pipelines that create job growth	Completed/Ongoing	The Task Force is exploring a potential statewide HBCU internship program to be housed within the Department of Administration which will further this work.
Implement a Tier 1 and Tier 2 Subcontracting Plan requiring corporations doing business with the state to commit to supporting HUBs through subcontracting plans.	Completed	The Subcontracting Plan has been enacted within the Department of Administration.

Educational Opportunities Subcommittee

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Summary</u>
Assist, advocate, and encourage the Department of Public Instruction (and other state agencies) to adopt a digital literacy toolkit accessible to all students and parents in their native languages	Completed/Ongoing	The Department of Natural & Cultural Resources continues to work with the chosen libraries within the pilot program created while providing updated feedback.
Advocate for the NC General Assembly to pass funding for House Bill 924 which provides personal financial literacy education for high school students and similar content for post-secondary institutions	Completed/Ongoing	The Department of Public Instruction and the NC Council on Economic Education received \$1 million to support the training of high school teachers poised to teach the HB 924 financial literacy course beginning in the 2023-2024 school year. Recurring funding will be necessary to continue this effort after July 1, 2023.
Support community health centers by implementing telehealth and telemedicine initiatives along with partnering with other groups sharing similar goals of increasing broadband access to health literacy	In Progress	The Office of Minority Health received a two-year federal grant to advance health literacy in Durham, Mecklenburg, and Wake counties through local health and human service departments. The Health Information Technology Team at the Office of Rural Health has completed several telehealth initiatives. The Task Force continues to engage the NC Community Health Centers Association to determine best practices in long-term support for community health centers.
Establish a statewide health literacy coordinating council and corresponding regional health literacy councils as consistent with the Area Health Education Model	In Progress	The Task Force continues to work with the NC Area Health Education Center to find areas of alignment between existing AHEC programs and the subcommittee's interests in expansion across the state.



Environmental Justice & Inclusion Subcommittee

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Summary</u>
Support the creation of environmental justice, equity, and inclusion positions at the following NC departments: Commerce, Transportation, Natural & Cultural Resources, and DPS Emergency Management	Completed	All NC departments have established an environmental justice, equity, and inclusion position.
Utilize existing training and incentive programs to create job initiatives in disadvantaged communities geared toward remediation and resiliency work on public and low-income buildings	Completed/Ongoing	Executive Order No. 246 directs the Office of the Governor along with several agencies and organizations to partner in establishing Clean Youth Apprenticeship Programs that prepare graduates for fulfilling, well-paying careers in the growing NC clean energy economy. Further, the NC Business Committee for Education has been encouraged to begin these programs at additional educational institutions that serve underrepresented communities.
Support funding the efforts to remediate the environmental issues in public schools	Completed	The Task Force continues to monitor the efforts as they are implemented through the Department of Health & Human Services.
Support the expansion of the inventory and remediation process to include other types of infrastructure (housing, courthouses, public buildings) in environmental justice communities	Awaiting External Action	The Task Force will obtain further information regarding this progress as there has been an outstanding decision regarding potential funding opportunities.
Support a legislative strategy to look at changes to statuses and rules to incorporate environmental justice criteria into regulatory actions	Completed/Ongoing	There are two spheres the Task Force has identified for data collection especially within the collegiate system. The Task Force has identified the focus of these pipelines and gaps in education are math and science particularly in middle school years. The Task Force will continue to identify stakeholders for these collaborations.



Patient Engagement Subcommittee

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Summary</u>
Establish mandatory and uniform cultural methods of collecting patient demographic information across all healthcare systems	Awaiting External Action	The Task Force is working with the Department of Health & Human Services to refine demographic capturing best practices and in developing educational materials for health care systems on these best practices.
Increase funding to strengthen the capacity of federally qualified health care centers to increase the number of undocumented, low-income, and vulnerable patients served	Completed/Ongoing	The Task Force continues to support the Office of Rural Health and the Department of Health & Human Services in the expansion of this work.
Expand Medicaid	Awaiting External Action	The Office of the Governor and the NC General Assembly continue to advocate for statewide expansion.
Ensure and strengthen medical sick leave policies for essential workers, particularly that of historically marginalized communities	Awaiting External Action	The Office of State Human Resources is analyzing the effects of parental paid leave on recruitment and retention rates of state employees. The Task Force and the Department of Administration continues to estimate expansion costs with the Office of State Budget & Management.
Strengthen medical school admission pipeline programs for students of color and disadvantaged communities	In Progress	The Office of the Governor and the NC General Assembly continue to advocate for statewide expansion.

The work of the new Andrea Harris Equity Task Force will continue under Executive Order No. 268 signed by NC Governor Cooper on August 17, 2022. With new and continuing members and liaisons, the work of Dr. Andrea Harris will continue.