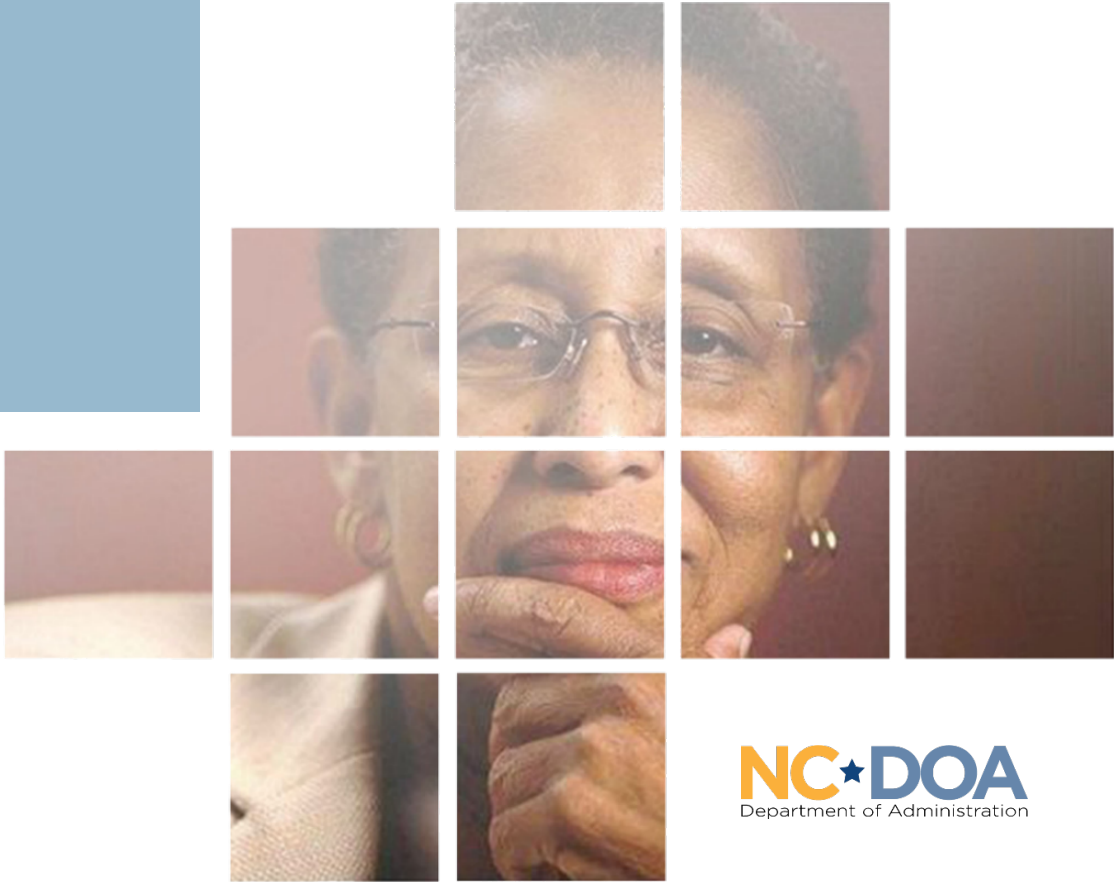
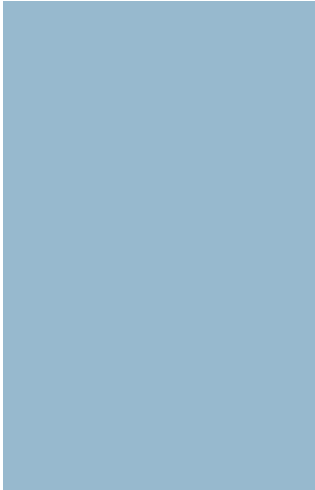

Andrea Harris Equity Task Force

August 2024 Final Report



NC★DOA
Department of Administration





Roy Cooper
Governor

Pamela B. Cashwell
Secretary

Dear Governor Cooper,

Since my appointment as the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Administration (DOA), it has been an honor to chair both the first iteration of the Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force and the second iteration of the Andrea Harris Equity Task Force (Task Force). Both Task Forces have proudly carried out the legacy of Dr. Andrea Harris.

Through Executive Order 268, the Andrea Harris Equity Task Force was reconstituted to further the economic development of disadvantaged communities, improve health and wellness outcomes in underserved communities, and advance equitable and inclusive practices within state agencies that are inclusive of the lived experience of all North Carolinians. Our committees have been hard at work connecting with community partners and creating new recommendations to drive forward our next steps.

As the Task Force ends, the work will not. We will continue the legacy of Dr. Andrea Harris by carrying on the work beyond the Task Force. I look forward to working with my colleagues in other cabinet agencies and our community partners to keep equity and inclusion at the forefront of everything we do on behalf of the people of North Carolina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela B. Cashwell". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Pamela B. Cashwell
Secretary

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August 2024 Final Executive Summary

To continue work that began under [EO 143](#), the Andrea Harris Equity Task Force (Task Force) was reestablished on August 17, 2022, under [EO 268](#). With a new charge given to this Task Force, members and staff liaisons got to work evaluating what was left to complete from EO 143 and in what direction to move any new goals. The mission of the Task Force is to identify best practices and advise state government on actions that will further the economic development of disadvantaged communities, improve health and wellness outcomes in underserved communities, and advance equitable practices within state agencies that are inclusive of the lived experience of all North Carolinians.

The [June 2023 Report](#)¹ summarized full board meetings and the work happening within subcommittees to develop new recommendations. The Task Force split into three subcommittees to tackle each of these goals laid out by EO 268. Subcommittees gave updates and shared information for collaboration in large group Task Force meetings and met regularly outside of large group meetings to work towards building recommendations.

Since 2022, the Task Force has been developing future goals and recommendations to meet the charge in EO 268. Seventeen recommendations are presented in this report that will carry forth the charge laid out for the Task Force. This report serves as the culminating report for the Task Force and provides recommendations to advance goals throughout key areas of state government and external stakeholders.

¹ *Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force* (June 2022 Biannual Report, p. 23). (2022).

Andrea Harris Equity Task Force Members

Chair: Pamela B. Cashwell, Secretary, NC Department of Administration

DEI & Outreach Committee

Betty Marrow-Taylor (Chair) *
Dr. Shun Robertson
Greg Richardson *
Stephanie McGarrah *
Annette Taylor *
Quinny Sanchez Lopez *
Juvencio Rocha Peralta *
R. Andrew Spainhour
Dr. James Johnson Jr. *
Christy Dunston
Adrienne Spinner

Economic Development Committee

Haihui Huang
Annette Stevenson
Yahel Flores
Tunya Smith
Kevin Price *
Dr. Angela Coleman
Albert "Trey" Rabon III *
DeWarren Langley

Wellness Outcomes Committee

Dr. Sonyia Richardson (Chair) *
Margaret Weller-Stargell *
Jordan Lopez *
Yazmin Garcia Rico *
Dr. Lenora Campbell *
Debra Farrington *

The following members are no longer on the Task Force:

Dr. Cedric Bright

*Indicates returning members from EO 143

Liaisons and Agency Staff Support List

The following staff members from state agencies support the Task Force subcommittees in their work.

Name	Agency	Subcommittee
Gianna Quilici	NC Dept. of Administration (DOA)	Wellness Outcomes
Michael Leach*	NC Dept. of Health and Human Services (DHHS)	Wellness Outcomes
Michael Arnold*	NC Office of State Budget & Management (OSBM)	Wellness Outcomes
Christy Berk	NC Department of Transportation (DOT)	Wellness Outcomes
Dr. Andrea DeSantis (Co-Chair)* ²	Office of the Governor	Economic Development
Emily Roach (Co-Chair)	NC Department of Commerce	Economic Development
Carolina Fonseca Jimenez* ³	NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)	DEI & Outreach
Tracey Burns*	NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR)	DEI & Outreach

*Indicates returning members from EO 143

² Dr. Andrea DeSantis served as the liaison for Office of the Governor until April 2024, before transitioning to the NC Department of Commerce.

³ Carolina Fonseca Jimenez served as the liaison for DEQ until May 2024, before transitioning to the NC Department of Adult Correction.

Final Recommendations

Economic Development Committee

Tasked with furthering the economic development of disadvantaged communities, members and agency liaisons identified their desired focus laid out through EO 268:

- 1. Discuss strategies to provide economic incentives to encourage participation with Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs), Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), and Historically Underutilized Providers (HUPs);*
- 2. Promote mentorship opportunities to diverse businesses and leverage partnerships with North Carolina Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions to develop executive education programs available to minority-owned businesses doing business in the state; and*
- 3. Identify and promote education pipeline programs for students of color and students from disadvantaged communities.*

To address this charge, the subcommittee engaged in a series of meetings to learn more about the following topics, which also included presentations from subject matter experts:

- The Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses provided an overview of the 2020 NC DOA Disparity Study ([Volume 1- State Agencies](#)⁴ & [Volume 2- Community Colleges & Universities](#)⁵) to increase awareness of statewide HUB procurement outcomes as well as the report recommendations.
- Subcommittee members shared examples of mentorship programs for a variety of certified and non-certified diverse businesses from other states, which was used to inform the subcommittee's third recommendation.
- Jennifer Mundt, the Assistant Secretary for Clean Energy Economic Development with the NC Department of Commerce, provided an overview of supply chain opportunities in offshore wind along the East Coast and opportunities for collaboration with the North Carolina Taskforce for Offshore Wind Economic Resource Strategies (NC TOWERS).

⁴ State of North Carolina Department of Administration Disparity Study Report Volume 1, State Agencies, <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/documents/files/disparity-study-volume-1/download> (2020)

⁵ State of North Carolina Department of Administration Disparity Study Report Volume 1, Community Colleges & Universities, <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/documents/files/disparity-study-volume-2/download> (2021)

After synthesizing all relevant information and continuing to address the topics above, the Task Force recommends the following:

Recommendation 1: Increase awareness of organizations focused on equitable economic development and strengthen partnerships between state, local, and community organizations focused on small and minority business growth as exemplified by increased revenue.

Status: The subcommittee proposed a series of site visits to local nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, business hubs, or community centers to raise awareness of organizations focused on advancing equitable opportunities and to foster strong partnerships between the state and community organizations addressing economic and workforce disparities. In August 2024, Cabinet heads and senior leaders from the NC Department of Commerce, Administration, and Transportation called attention to these priorities as they visited relevant communities and businesses across the state.

The subcommittee drafted a *Leaders in Equitable Economic Development* proclamation ([Appendix B](#)) and submitted it to the Governor’s Office for consideration. The proclamation has been approved and members of the Economic Development Subcommittee have begun referencing the proclamation in their organization’s events in August 2024 to raise awareness of the Task Force’s mission and the state’s continued prioritization of small and minority business growth.

Recommendation 2: Increase awareness of economic opportunities in clean energy and offshore wind for underrepresented populations and businesses and continue to invest in public-private partnerships focused on increasing economic opportunities for historically underutilized businesses.

Status: In February 2024, the [NC Taskforce for Offshore Wind Economic Resource Strategies \(NC TOWERS\)](#)⁶ partnered with the Ocean Network on an Offshore Wind Ready training. The AHTF Economic Development subcommittee and the HUB Office promoted the training opportunity to small businesses in North Carolina. Of the 60 participants, approximately four attendees were people of color representing their employers or their own businesses. This indicated a need for increased outreach to HUB vendors about opportunities in the offshore wind supply chain in the future.

⁶ N.C. Taskforce for Offshore Wind Economic Resource Strategies [NC Towers] | NC Commerce. (n.d.). <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/about-us/boards-commissions/nc-taskforce-offshore-wind-economic-resource-strategies-nc-towers>

The NC TOWERS August 2024 meeting was originally scheduled to take place in Wanchese, North Carolina, but was moved to a virtual meeting because of Tropical Depression Debby. The AHTF Economic Development Subcommittee, the Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses, and the Commerce Department partnered on a panel called, *Resources for Small and Diverse Businesses in the Offshore Wind Industry* during the task force meeting. Panelists from small business support organizations shared resources available to businesses interested in pursuing new opportunities in the offshore wind industry. Wind Turbines are comprised of over 8,000 parts that can be manufactured by companies located in North Carolina and transported by our rail and highway networks and ports. Some companies located in North Carolina already participate in the offshore wind industry, but many small businesses are starting to consider how to shift their business model to secure contracts in offshore wind as more projects are developed along the East Coast.

In October 2024, the [NCWorks Partnership Conference](#) will include a workshop titled, *Wind Works for NC- Opportunities in a \$200B Industry*. Participants will learn about the state of the offshore wind industry in North Carolina, the types and variety of careers the offshore wind industry provides, and workforce development opportunities in the wind sector. Commerce will partner with the Economic Development Subcommittee and DOA's advocacy divisions to promote the learning opportunity to targeted populations. Commerce is working on identifying how to collect pertinent business demographics.

Recommendation 3: Establish a business-protégé program to increase supplier diversity in North Carolina. The business-protégé program should be housed in the NC Department of Administration's Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses because of their access to resources for underutilized businesses and connections to companies that have been awarded government contracts by NC DOA's Division of Purchase & Contract.

Status: The subcommittee drafted a proposal to establish a business-mentor protégé program in the NC Department of Administration ([Appendix A](#)). The purpose of the program is to connect small businesses to mentor businesses with experience pursuing government contracts to help prepare small and underutilized businesses for government contracting opportunities.

Wellness Committee

Members and agency liaisons identified their focus areas of health and wellness under the following charges from EO 268:

1. *Assess existing opportunities for patients to utilize telehealth services and identify gaps in access to medical services; and*
2. *Advocate for adequate, sustainable financial resources for digital and health education, partnering with state agencies and other groups that share similar goals to increase broadband access and address digital, financial, and health literacy.*

Based on the above charges, the committee created broad goals to encompass healthcare and wellness issues facing North Carolina. Working groups were created to establish recommendations within three broad goals.

1. Partner with community-based organizations to educate residents on NC Medicaid with a specific focus on rural and disadvantaged communities and maintain ongoing communication.
2. Advocate for a program evaluation plan for the 988 Crisis Line across various demographic groups (i.e., race, ethnicity, age, college status, veterans, etc.) and results in the overall improvement of service implementation.
3. Advocate for the Historically Minority Serving Institutions (HMSIs)/Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and community college provider pipeline efforts and seek support for community partnerships around health care workforce pipeline programs.

Medicaid Expansion

Background: The subcommittee found that for low-income/independent-status students, Medicaid coverage could be a cheaper alternative to the Student Blue plan or other private options. This may also be a way to ensure long-term communication of the Medicaid program and to sustain enrollment of eligible individuals.

Recommendation 1: UNC System and community colleges should communicate Medicaid eligibility and option to initiate enrollment on the waivers students must complete when declining Student Blue Health Coverage. Including this information/option to begin enrollment on the declination waiver gives students a last resort option for coverage due to the requirement that all students obtain some form of health insurance before an academic semester begins.

Status: The subcommittee has communicated with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and identified partners that will help reach the remaining individuals eligible for Medicaid. Conversations are being initiated with UNC system schools, community colleges, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) groups to expand efforts to reach students and pull in diverse providers. In addition to state-wide efforts, the committee hopes to streamline consistent enrollment processes with adequate resources using local contacts. This work will continue by maintaining relationships with DHHS and their local partners and by establishing working groups to focus on working at a local level.

988 Crisis Line

Background: To get the full picture of the current work happening around 988, the subcommittee heard presentations from 988 Crisis Line, UNC Suicide Prevention team. From these discussions, the subcommittee identified groups to focus on for equitable services (veterans, minorities, non-English speaking, LGBTQ+, American Indian populations, American Sign Language users, etc.). Based on the information gathered, the subcommittee recommends the following:

Recommendation 2: The subcommittee advocates for collaboration to continue with the NC DHHS (Crisis Center/Suicide Prevention) and/or the Office of Digital Equity to make sure all demographic groups can access 988.

Recommendation 3: To support the sustainability of 988 and advocate for adequate funding at the state level, the subcommittee recommends the development of an annual report. There is no regular reporting to the NC General Assembly on 988. We recommend establishing a subcommittee to assist with the development of an annual report. This report could be presented to leaders (i.e., Appropriations Health and Human Services Committee, NC Minority Health Advisory Council) and provide county-level insight. This annual report and communication of findings can help to promote education and advocacy with political leaders.

Recommendation 4: Ensure 988 services are inclusive and responsive for Black, Latinx, American Indian, immigrant, and veteran populations who are at an increased risk. Ensure services are culturally tailored and available for each of these demographic groups.

Status: DHHS is in the process of developing an FAQ sheet with language for decreasing stigma for mental health and crisis services utilization. The subcommittee inquired about the creation of a Black youth suicide prevention action plan for North Carolina and discussed a Pilot program to tailor services by routing by cell tower and not area code. The subcommittee advocated for rural communities and digital access to 988 and focused on access for inmates (including learning modules for psychoeducation).

Healthcare Diversity Pipeline

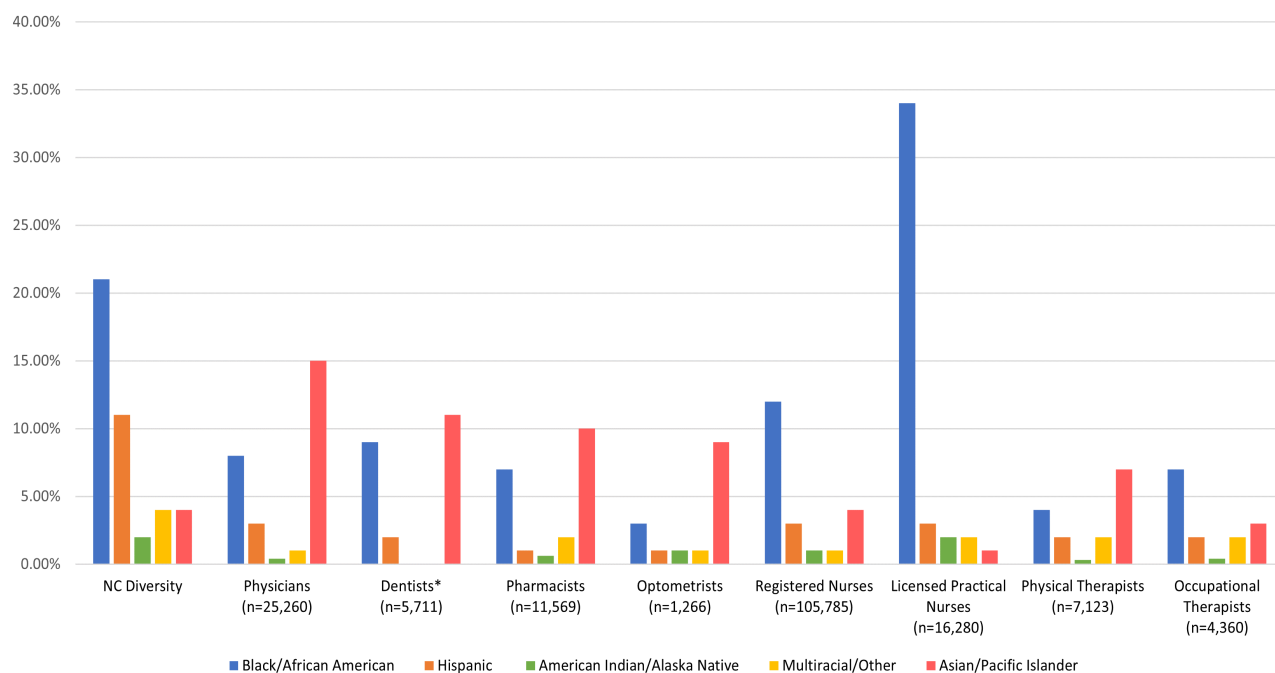
Background: The subcommittee conducted research on North Carolina’s representation in the health care workforce and effective evidence-based best practices for increasing representation.

Sheps Health Workforce NC in partnership with NC Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) conducted research on trends in the racial and ethnic diversity of health care professions. The purpose of the research was to examine how diversity in North Carolina’s four health professions (physicians, dentists, pharmacists, and optometrists) changed over time between 2009 and 2022. They found that each profession experienced an increase in the proportion of practitioners in at least two racial/ethnic categories between 2009 and 2022, but there were minimal increases in the racial/ethnic diversity of NC health care professionals between 2009 and 2022.⁷

In addition, Sheps used North Carolina state licensure data from the Health Professions Data System (HPDS) to explore the racial/ethnic diversity of selected health professions (physicians, dentists, pharmacists, optometrists, registered nurses [RNs], licensed practical nurses [LPNs], physical therapists [PTs], occupational therapists [OTs]) in North Carolina and examined how the racial/ethnic diversity of each licensed profession in 2022 compares to the state population in 2022.

⁷ Lombardi, B., Simons, H., Sullivan, C., Galloway, E., & Fraher, E. (2024, May 27). *NC Health Workforce—How does the racial and ethnic diversity of NC health professionals compare to the racial and ethnic diversity of the state population?* Sheps Health Workforce NC.

https://nchealthworkforce.unc.edu/blog/race_ethnicity_health_professionals/



Source: Population census data and estimates are downloaded from the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management County/State Population Projections: Hispanic Origin by Race (2010-2050) and Sex, Race, Age Groups (2000-2050). Professions data are produced by the North Carolina Health Professions Data System with data derived from North Carolina licensing boards, 2022. Figures include licensed, active, in-state non-federal, non-resident-in-training physicians, dentists, pharmacists, optometrists, registered nurses, licenses practical nurses, physical therapists, and occupational therapists as of October 31, 2022. This data examines the practitioners who reported race/ethnicity data to their respective North Carolina state board. * The North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners does not collect data on the American Indian/Alaska Native racial/ethnic category.

Though the North Carolina population is increasingly racially/ethnically diverse, most of the NC health professions included in the findings were not representative of the State population as shown in the graph above.⁸

Despite these demographic gaps in North Carolina, research supports that a racially/ethnically diverse health workforce being more demographically representative of the community they serve improves health outcomes.⁹ Diversity creates richer educational experiences, amplifies cultural competencies, and strengthens professionalism.¹⁰

A scoping literature review from the Council of Residency Directors in Emergency Medicine found the most frequent approaches to increase minority representation in the medical workforce were pipeline/pathway programs (PPs) (43%), changes in affirmative action laws

⁸ (Lombardi et al., 2024)

⁹ (Jetty et al., 2022)

¹⁰ Kelly-Blake, K., Garrison, N. A., Fletcher, F. E., Ajegba, B., Smith, N., Brafford, M., & Bogdan-Lovis, E. (2018). Rationales for expanding minority physician representation in the workforce: A scoping review. *Medical Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.13618>

(23%), and changes in admission policies (21%).¹¹ Pipeline/pathway terminologies are often used interchangeably to describe programs created to increase minority matriculation into medical schools and healthcare workforce diversity. Starting as early as elementary school, these programs offer mentorship to students, providing opportunities to identify and support future diverse medical students.¹² In conclusion to reviews on evidence-based best practices to increasing physician diversity, pathway/pipeline programs proved critical to increasing diversity within medical schools. Increasing diversity in medical schools is critical to increasing diversity in emergency medicine and other healthcare fields.¹³

The subcommittee connected with Ed2NC, AHEC, and the Office of Strategic Partnerships to identify what pipeline work was underway in North Carolina. Alevtina Newman, an intern for the NC Office of State Budget and Management, helped to conduct a scan of all pipeline initiatives in North Carolina using the [NC AHEC pipeline database](#) as a starting point to see what efforts were underway.

Synthesizing research found above; the subcommittee recommends the below:

Recommendation 5: The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Office of State Human Resources, other state and local government stakeholders in partnership with public and private higher institutions of education including, Historically Minority Serving Institutions(HMSIs)/Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), community colleges, Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), and other relevant health care partners should recommend strategies to increase the accessibility and affordability of educational opportunities to improve diversity and economic stability across the health care workforce. Strategies should include (1) offering resources and support for students applying to college who intend on taking health-related courses to advance their career or major in a health-related program, (2) expanding access to tuition assistance and paid internships, and (3) elevating existing opportunities focused on increasing diversity.

Recommendation 6: The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services should develop a statewide coordination system for health care, behavioral health, and human services pipeline/pathway programs, including a tracking system to assist in evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the programs in improving the diversity and economic stability across the health care, behavioral health, and human services workforce. The statewide coordination effort should provide outreach and engagement opportunities that promote evidence-based pipeline programs designed to increase diversity across the health care, behavioral health and human services workforce.

¹¹ (Kelly-Blake et al., 2018)

¹² Vick, A. D., Baugh, A., Lambert, J., Vanderbilt, A. A., Ingram, E., Garcia, R., & Baugh, R. F. (2018). Levers of change: A review of contemporary interventions to enhance diversity in medical schools in the USA. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*, 9, 53-61. <https://doi.org/10.2147/AMEP.S147950>

¹³ Parsons, M., Caldwell, M. T., Alvarez, A., Davenport, D., Gallegos, M., Landry, A., Gottlieb, M., & Natesan, S. (2022). Physician Pipeline and Pathway Programs: An Evidence-based Guide to Best Practices for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion from the Council of Residency Directors in Emergency Medicine. *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 23(4), 514-524. <https://doi.org/10.5811/westjem.2022.2.54875>

Recommendation 7: The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and other Department HMSI/HBCU internship programs will provide a written report outlining strengths and opportunities for increasing HMSI/HBCU internship opportunities, supporting the goal of building a strong and inclusive healthcare and human services workforce to increase diversity and economic stability across the healthcare workforce.

Status: DHHS is in the process of developing a report focused on HMSI/HBCU internship program opportunities. AHEC met with the subcommittee and are now beginning to expand evaluation of pipeline programs in gathering more demographic data.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

Members and agency liaisons focused on the importance of DEI work and discussed the meaning of their charge:

Advancing equitable practices within state agencies that are inclusive of the lived experience of all North Carolinians.

Serve as a forum for equity matters by engaging state agencies' DEI and public engagement leadership to seek input from community stakeholders and foster stronger relationships between state government and the people of North Carolina.

The subcommittee focused on the below issues to guide recommendations:

- Increased attention to dedicated resources for rural and marginalized communities
- Increasing access to information and specifically ACCURATE information
- Communication Strategy (multi-communication channels)
- Succession planning for communities
- Childcare crisis (childcare deserts, affordability, quality)
- More equitable allocation of grants and funding
- Increase dedicated public engagement positions at state agencies

The subcommittee was guided by the following core principles in developing recommendations:

- **Implementation:** Promoting solutions that are feasible for agencies and communities to execute.
- **Collaboration:** Bringing together existing resources and initiatives to maximize impact.
- **Long-Term Outcomes:** Solutions benefit communities over time.
- **Rural Communities:** Addressing inequities in the most remote and underfunded areas in North Carolina.

Goal 1: Ensuring engagement and participation through trusted partners and innovative communication approaches via an integrated people/place focused community partnership model.

Background: The integrated action plan frames a movement for social change. It is the work of people in the community from different walks of life who form a strong partnership through their efforts to plan for combined action. Together, stakeholders can review their community's trajectory of success and failure to understand the key points for intervention.

Using data as a tool to drive change and continuous improvement, the integrated action plan will:

1. Describe how communities currently experience the areas of focus.
2. Define how communities will engage in learning and take actions to influence and improve residents' experiences in the areas of focus.
3. Determine how to organize communities to accomplish goals.

Recommendation 1: Using agency public participation plans, establish integrated community-based partnerships that will help communities deepen, accelerate, and align strategic investments for systemic change that position residents for economic success in several areas in which equity can be strengthened.

Recommendation 2: Encourage North Carolina communities and local municipalities to develop an integrated action plan that covers the following areas of focus:

- Childcare Crisis (Childcare deserts, affordability, quality)
- Rural Communities (Increase attention to dedicated resources for rural and marginalized communities)
- Public Information & Public Engagement (Increase access to information, specifically accurate information and expansion of dedicated public engagement positions at state agencies)
- Quality of Life
- Succession Planning
- Education and Workforce
- Equitable Allocation of Funding
- Mental Health

Status: The sub-committee drafted the following guiding questions for Integrated Community-Based Partnerships:

1. **Vision:** What is the community's vision for ultimate success? What will be different in the community because of this work?
2. **Assets:** What strengths will the community tap into to achieve success? How is the team more effective and stronger working together than singularly?
3. **Problem Identification:** What has caused problems in the areas of focus? What helpful programs and/or policies now exist or have been put in place in the community in the past? What lessons have been learned from these efforts?
4. **Intervention:** What are the community's strategies to influence change in the areas of focus? How will the team engage diverse stakeholders in the design and implementation of activities?

- 5. Role Identification:** What tasks will team members and organizations take to pursue the community's vision?
- 6. Measuring Progress:** How will the team assess its progress toward the goals? What changes in practice or policy will indicate that you are headed in the right direction?
- 7. Resources:** What fiscal resources are currently allocated to support the areas of focus? How much funding is needed to execute the plan and what is the team's plan to identify needed funding? What non-monetary resources are available to pursue the community's vision?
- 8. Existing Partnerships:** What partnerships already exist?
- 9. Implementation:** How do we guide communities to operationalize these partnerships and strategies?

Recommendation 3: Through the Governor's Hometown Strong Initiative, promote and support the integration of existing initiatives supporting Community-Based Integrative Partnerships such as UNC Whole Community Health Childcare Initiative, NC Impact, and [Building Brighter Futures: NC Apprenticeships in Early Childhood](#).

Status: The subcommittee discussed the potential for cross-site learning. Deep engagement across several communities may allow for cross-site learning that could include learning events to cultivate a culture of cross-site knowledge sharing, prepare stakeholders to guide local planning activities, and provide technical assistance for the communities to create a strategic vision and supporting strategies with performance metrics.

Goal 2: Build trust by ensuring equitable outreach and education for funding opportunities among diverse communities. Providing a communication channel from government entities to communities that is accurate, timely, and from trusted messengers.

Recommendation 4: Ensure existing public participation plans incorporate equitable engagement practices and engage Public Information locally.

Recommendation 5: With partnerships such as Hometown Strong or the Office of Strategic Partnerships, educate and assist community organizations and local businesses in writing and applying for grants. Identify ways state agencies can better communicate grant funding opportunities to all communities. Create grant-specific positions within state agencies to unload the burden of applying to funding opportunities, or to assist partners when they are unable to apply due to lack of staff resources.

Recommendation 6: Advocate for legislative funding for investment in human capital and childcare initiatives.

Goal 3: Job readiness of underrepresented women and North Carolina residents

Recommendation 7: Strengthen the job readiness of underrepresented women and North Carolina residents looking to reenter the workforce through collaboration of relevant partners to share resources and best practices and the promotion of continuing education opportunities.

Status: The subcommittee has researched the reasons for opportunity gaps in diverse communities and has identified ways in which state agencies can better communicate grant funding opportunities. They plan to establish language on how to bridge the existing gaps in state funding and provide support to local businesses who are interested in grant writing. The subcommittee also learned about integrated community-based partnerships and identified focus areas that these plans will cover for local communities. Next, they will identify how specifically to promote this model within North Carolina communities. The subcommittee has identified the below partners for collaboration:

- Hometown Strong
- UNC Whole Community Childcare Initiative
- Building Brighter Futures
- NC Community Colleges
- Office of Digital Equity
- Milken Institute
- DHHS Medicaid Outreach Strategy
- NC Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions

Task Force Conclusion

As the final iteration of the Task Force sunsets, we thank everyone who shared knowledge, expertise, and lived experience to help create these recommendations to develop sustainable practices across North Carolina to support underserved residents. The remaining recommendations from this Task Force are now in the capable hands of various state agencies and partners for implementation and can be used as support for legislative action.

As attacks on DEI efforts continue nationally, we remain firm in the principle that we have a responsibility to all, especially our underserved communities. These were the principles that guided Dr. Andrea Harris, and they continue to inspire all of us. It is now on all of us to fulfill her mission in our daily work and advocate for the needs of all communities in North Carolina. DEI, economic development, and health equity remain a priority for the Governor, and state agencies will continue to address these issues on behalf of the people of North Carolina.

About Dr. Andrea Harris

"We need to make sure we always have people at the table who are most affected."

–Andrea Harris (2019)



The Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force and the Andrea Harris Equity Task Force are named in honor of the late Andrea Harris. A native North Carolinian and daughter of Dr. Andrew L. Harris Sr. and Geneva Smith Harris, Andrea Harris was a trailblazer for minority businesses and communities.

Harris graduated from Bennett College and became one of the youngest community agency directors in the nation, helping fight poverty across three rural North Carolina communities. With an unwavering passion for helping others in need, she co-founded the National Institute of Minority Economic Development, formerly the NC Institute of Minority Economic Development (The Institute) in 1986, where she served as its first president for 30 years. Located in the heart of Durham, NC, The Institute exists to strengthen the asset base of diverse populations through policy, education, and technical assistance, while providing economic opportunities to diverse businesses, advocating for affordable housing, and supporting initiatives at Community Development Corporations and Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Harris was named the Lifetime Achievement Winner in Triangle Business Journal's Leaders in Diversity Awards in 2014 and retired from The Institute that same year. After retiring from The Institute, Harris continued to serve on several boards, including the State's Advisory Council for Historically Underutilized Businesses, where she was appointed in 2017. She is a recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest award for state service granted by the Office of the Governor, as well as an honorary doctorate from her alma mater, Bennett College. A segment of Interstate 85 in Warren and Vance counties was named December 2023 for Dr. Andrea Harris. The stretch of I-85 from Exit 220 to the Vance-Warren line is now known as the Andrea L. Harris Highway.

Appendix A

Mentor-Protégé Program

Memorandum of Understanding

Diverse businesses add value to the state of North Carolina with their innovation and fresh ideas. When we work with diverse businesses, we help make them stronger, too, so they may continue to thrive, grow, and create jobs in our communities.

The state of North Carolina is dedicated to forging effective working relationships between minority, women, service-disabled veteran owned businesses and LGBT owned businesses and the state's large businesses. The North Carolina Dept of Administration is initiating outreach to these parties on matters relating to reporting, measuring, and assessing the development of these relationships.

We seek to promote a Mentor-Protégé Program to serve as a vehicle to support business development programs and "best practices" to enrich both companies and the attainment of mutual goals. We are committed to enhancing supplier diversity among North Carolina companies, resulting in the development of a strong economy and a productive environment for the growth of business throughout the state.

COMMITMENT

The Governor's Mentor Protégé Program will focus beyond traditional spend goals and measurement; the Program will measure accomplishments and success to include:

- NC HUB Office Reporting of Direct Supplier Spend and Utilization
- Partner commitment to establish and/or expand Supplier Diversity participation with suppliers.
- Measurement of Job Creation and Force Impact: How Corporate spend with diverse businesses helps to create new jobs.
- Partner Advocacy and Outreach: Support the diverse business community by supporting business fostering programs, enhance supplier advocacy, outreach and training

Attainment Targets

Mentors participating in The Governor's Mentor Protégé Program commit to emphasize and report diversity and inclusion in all organizational planning processes, including supply chain with procurement. The corporation will establish an initial expenditure goals (based on total purchases).

MENTOR/PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM

The Governor's Mentor Protégé Program is a state-operated program designed to increase the success of diverse small businesses through building relationships with established firms and corporations. A corporate mentoring relationship is developed when the Protégé (State of North Carolina small diverse business) is matched with a Mentor (North Carolina Prime Contractor). The Governor's Mentor Protégé Program is a division of the North Carolina Department of Administration Office of Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB).

This memorandum aims to define an effective business relationship between the undersigned Mentor and Protégé companies and the Program for a twelve-month period. This agreement is effective ____ until _____.

Release

The Governor's Mentor Protégé Program and the Mentor will not have a financial obligation to the Protégé. Likewise, the Program and the Protégé will not have a financial obligation to the Mentor.

Communication

The Governor's Mentor Protégé Program, the Mentor and the Protégé will establish consistent mutual contact through meetings, telecommunication and written communication.

Reporting

The Mentor and Protégé will be subject to reporting procedures as established by the Program. Additionally, the Mentor and Protégé will provide accurate reports of meetings, joint business activities and relevant accomplishments as directed. Reporting sessions will be held on a quarterly basis. Attendance at reporting sessions is mandatory and should be treated as such.

Confidentiality

The Mentor and Protégé will agree mutually to maintain confidentiality of information learned about the other's firm. The Program will treat all team information as proprietary and confidential.

Media Inquiries

All broadcast and print media inquiries relative to the Program should be referred to the Program Manager for management and execution.

Participation

The Mentor and Protégé will attend relevant meetings, seminars and conferences that are established by the Governor's Mentor Protégé Program. Failure to attend mandatory meetings and related activities may result in removal from the Governor's Mentor Protégé Program.

Protégés must graduate at the conclusion of the twelve-month cycle. The growth of the graduate Protégé firm may result in the future participation of that firm in a Mentor capacity.

Mentors participating in the Governor's Mentor Protégé Program will partner with Protégés certified in the following categories of business:

- Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs)
- Women Business Enterprises (WBEs)
- Service-Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (SDVBEs) and Veteran Business Enterprises
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered (LGBT)

The Mentor and Protégé will make a concerted effort to establish a positive business relationship with each other and the Governor's Mentor Protégé Program. The Program Manager will oversee the Mentor-Protégé relationship and report the findings to the Director of the NC HUB Office.

Solicitation

The Governor's Mentor Protégé Program adheres to a strict policy of no solicitation. The Protégé should not expect nor ask for a contract - in any form or for any service, function, purchase, or present or future commitment - from his/her Mentor through the Governor's Mentor Protégé Program. If such an incident occurs, a warning will be issued by the Program Manager. If the warning is not heeded, The Governor's Mentor Protégé Program reserves the right to remove a protégé from the program.

However, there may be viable opportunities for contract solicitation by the mentors when mentors put protégés into their RFQ process and contracts may be awarded. This is acceptable.

The undersigned parties have fully reviewed this agreement and hereby affirm the terms and conditions outlined above. The Governor's Mentor Protégé Program reserves the right to terminate either party if the intent and/or guidelines of the Program are not followed.

Company

Company

Printed Name

Printed Name

Title

Title

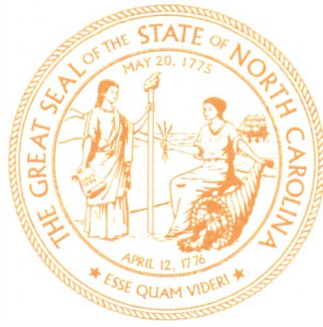
Signature

Signature

Date

Date

Program Manager
Governor's Mentor Protégé Program
North Carolina Department of Administration



State of North Carolina

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

LEADERS IN EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MONTH

2024

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, equitable economic development can help all North Carolina communities thrive by making sure resources for economic success are widely available and opportunities are accessible for all; and

WHEREAS, government-sponsored urban renewal purposefully dismantled Black economic centers in urban areas throughout the state; today, historic neighborhoods that were the epicenter of Black commerce, including Krankies Block and Depot Street of Winston-Salem, Second Ward of Charlotte, and Parrish Street of Durham, are rebuilding and thriving, growing equity and prosperity in communities; and

WHEREAS, the NC Department of Commerce, the State's lead economic development agency, is promoting supply chain and vendor opportunities for small businesses, minority- and women-owned firms, and entrepreneurs, as recommended by the State's *First in Talent* strategic economic development plan; and

WHEREAS, minority-owned small businesses play a critical role in the state's economic development and sustainment; North Carolina's small businesses, including Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs), have received support through the State's HUB Office, the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, RETOOLNC, and Small Business Enterprise programs; and

WHEREAS, organizations with minority- and women-focused business and economic development programs, including Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development associations, and local, state, and federal government programs, work with communities of color to promote increased access to economic and workforce opportunities and provide necessary resources for commercial success throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, trailblazers like the late Andrea Harris, one of the youngest community agency directors in the nation, have uplifted North Carolina communities, helping to fight poverty and increase equitable economic development across rural North Carolina communities; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the State of North Carolina to continue gauging the needs of HUBs and to support them with new business creation, supplier diversity, and workforce development and training; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina will continue to recognize and uplift community organizations and leaders focused on equitable economic development with consistent support and expansion through initiatives like Minority Enterprise Development Month; continued collaboration with The Institute, founded by the late Andrea Harris; and the establishment of the Andrea Harris Equity Task Force, charged with continuing the mission of the Task Force's namesake;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROY COOPER, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim August, 2024, as "LEADERS IN EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MONTH" in North Carolina, and commend its observance to all citizens.



Roy Cooper
Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this seventh day of August in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-four and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-ninth.

END OF REPORT