

Sec. X. 3 V.S.A. § 5003 is amended to read:

§ 5003. DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RACIAL EQUITY

(a) The Executive Director of Racial Equity (Director) shall work with the agencies and departments to implement a program of continuing coordination and improvement of activities in State government in order to combat systemic racial disparities and measure progress toward fair and impartial governance, including:

(1) overseeing a comprehensive organizational review to identify systemic racism in each of the three branches of State government and inventory systems in place that engender racial disparities;

(2) managing and overseeing the statewide collection of race-based data to determine the nature and scope of racial discrimination within all systems of State government; and

(3) developing a model fairness and diversity policy and reviewing and making recommendations regarding the fairness and diversity policies held by all State government systems; ~~and~~

~~(4) temporarily overseeing the establishment of the Health Equity Advisory Commission established pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 252 until the Office of Health Equity is established.~~

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Sec. Y. 18 V.S.A. § 252 is amended to read:

§ 252. HEALTH EQUITY ADVISORY COMMISSION

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(c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Commission shall:

(1) provide guidance on the development of the Office of Health Equity, ~~which shall be established based on the Advisory Commission's recommendations not later than January 1, 2023,~~ including on:

(A) the structure, responsibilities, and jurisdiction of the Office;

(B) whether the Office shall be independent and, if not, in which State agency or department it shall be situated;

(C) how the Office shall be staffed;

(D) the populations served and specific issues addressed by the Office; and

(E) the duties of the Office, including how grant funds shall be managed and distributed; ~~and~~

~~(F) the time frame and necessary steps to establish the Office;~~

(2) provide advice and make recommendations to the Office of Health Equity, Commissioner, and General Assembly once established, including input on:

(A) any rules or policies proposed by the Office or Department of Health;

(B) the awarding of grants and the development of programs and services;

(C) the needs, priorities, programs, and policies relating to the health of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities; and

(D) any other issue on which the Office of Health Equity, Department of Health, or General Assembly requests assistance from the Advisory Commission;

(3) review, monitor, and advise all State agencies regarding the impact of current and emerging State policies, procedures, practices, laws, and rules on the health of individuals who

are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities;

(4) identify and examine the limitations and problems associated with existing laws, rules, programs, and services related to the health status of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities;

(5) advise the Department of Health and the General Assembly on any funding decisions relating to eliminating health disparities and promoting health equity, including the distribution of federal monies related to COVID-19;

(6) to the extent funds are available for the purpose, distribute grants that stimulate the development of community-based and neighborhood-based projects that will improve the health outcomes of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities; and

(7) advise the General Assembly on efforts to improve cultural competency, cultural humility, and antiracism in the health care system through training and continuing education requirements for health care providers and other clinical professionals.

(d) Assistance. The Advisory Commission shall have the administrative, legal, and technical assistance of the ~~Agency of Administration at the request of the Executive Director of Racial Equity~~ Department of Health.

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(f) Meetings.

(1) ~~The Executive Director of Racial Equity or designee shall call the first meeting of the Advisory Commission to occur on or before September 1, 2021.~~

(2) The Advisory Commission shall select a chair and vice chair at its first meeting and annually thereafter.

(3)(2) The Advisory Commission shall adopt procedures to govern its proceedings, including voting procedures and how the staggered terms shall be apportioned among members.

(4)(3) All meetings of the Advisory Commission and any subcommittees of the Advisory Commission shall be open to the public with opportunities for public comment provided on a regular basis.

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(h) Compensation and reimbursement. Appointed members of the Advisory Commission shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for meetings ~~as deemed appropriate by the Advisory Commission within the appropriation provided.~~ These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the ~~Agency of Administration~~ Department of Health.

Sec. Z. 18 V.S.A. § 254 is added to read:

§ 254. OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY

(a) There is established the Office of Health Equity within the Department of Health for the purpose of eliminating avoidable and unjust disparities in health among Vermonters. The Office shall use a systemic and comprehensive approach that addresses those social, economic, and environmental factors that influence health outcomes.

(b) The Office of Health Equity shall be directed by an Executive Director, an individual who shall be qualified by reason of education, expertise, and experience and who may have a professional degree in public health, social or environmental justice, or a related field. The Executive Director shall serve on a full-time basis and shall be exempt from classified service.

Sec. C.106 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.103, as amended by the fiscal year 2025 budget adjustment act, is further amended to read:

Sec. D.103 RESERVES

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025, the following reserve transactions shall be implemented for the funds provided:

(1) General Fund.

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(D) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 308c(a), up to ~~\$133,500,000~~ \$136,000,000 otherwise subject to the requirements of this provision shall, instead, be reserved for permanent housing, property tax relief, and any other uses determined to be in the best interests of the public in the subsequent fiscal year. The requirements of this subdivision (D) shall extend past July 1 of the subsequent fiscal year and expire upon completion of the current fiscal year's accounting closure period.

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Sec. B.1101 FISCAL YEAR 2025 CLOSEOUT

(a) As part of the fiscal year 2025 closeout, the Department of Finance and Management shall execute the requirements of 32 V.S.A. § 308 and any reserve requirements pursuant to 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.103. If any balance remains after meeting these requirements, then, notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 308c, the Department of Finance and Management shall reserve the remaining funds for future appropriations to address potential federal funding shortfalls.

(b) In fiscal year 2026, while the General Assembly is not in session, the Joint Fiscal Committee may make recommendations to the Emergency Board on the transfer of funds reserved following the execution of the requirements of 32 V.S.A. § 308 and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.103 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. The Emergency Board is authorized to transfer funds to achieve the purposes of Joint Fiscal Committee recommendations made pursuant to this subsection.