



Washington State Comprehensive Statewide After Action Review Task Force Description and Charter

As of 02-24-22

Background

Section 36 of ESSB 5092.SL (an act of the Washington State Legislature) passed during the 2021-2022 session providing for a general fund-state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2023 to the military department to facilitate a Task Force to conduct a comprehensive after-action review (AAR) of the statewide pandemic response and recovery. The Task Force is chaired by the Military Department and the Department of Health and will be facilitated by faculty and staff from the William D. Ruckelshaus Center and the Washington State University Division of Governmental Studies and Services (WSU facilitators). The Task Force will report its initial findings and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by June 30, 2022, and its final findings and recommendations by June 30, 2023.

Focus and Purpose of the AAR

AARs typically review an event retrospectively. Given the unique and on-going duration, complexity, and impact of the pandemic, it is important to note that this AAR will be reflective of lessons that continue to be learned, as the pandemic persists. The AAR will consider lessons that continue to emerge from on-going adjustments and changes in policies, operations, and communications. Response and recovery are interlinked so it will be important to consider lessons and recommendations holistically.

The purpose of the AAR is to:

- Meet the legislature's proviso language intent to demonstrate lessons learned and provide recommendations related to the outlined focus areas
- Identify lessons being learned from the state's responses to COVID-19, to provide state decision-makers and implementers with information and recommendations to improve future response to and recovery efforts from pandemics and other emergency events
- Identify adaptations and innovations that provide opportunities for new approaches that stimulate systemic changes
- Provide recommendations to address equity, disparity, and discrimination in future emergency response and recovery efforts
- Identify the intersections and interconnections between what is being learned in and across state responses, as well as between the public and private sectors



The pandemic has impacted all sectors of society and the state's response to the pandemic has required action that impacts all sectors. The AAR will identify and elevate some of the most essential lessons being learned by state agencies and will provide recommendations to inform how state government agencies respond to future pandemics and other emergency events. Section 36 of ESSB 5092.SL has identified several topics of interest to the legislature. In addition to these topical areas, the Task Force will provide input on other key areas of interest based on reviews that will be shared by state agencies and others. At a minimum, the Task Force is responsible for identifying lessons learned and making recommendations that include the following:

- (A) Aspects of the COVID-19 response that may inform future pandemic and all-hazards responses
- (B) Emergency responses that would benefit the business community and workers during a pandemic
- (C) Standards regarding flexible rent and repayment plans for residential and commercial tenants during a pandemic
- (D) Whether establishing regional emergency management agencies would benefit Washington state emergency response to future pandemics
- (E) Gaps and needs for volunteers to support medical professionals in performing their pandemic emergency response functions within Washington state
- (F) Gaps and needs for tools to measure the scale of an impact caused by a pandemic and tailoring the pandemic response to affected regions based on the scale of the impact in those regions
- (G) Gaps and needs in health care system capacity and case tracking, monitoring, control, isolation, and quarantine, and deploying medical supplies and personnel and
- (H) Implementing guidelines for school closures during a pandemic.

Elements of the AAR

In order to identify key lessons learned, the AAR will be comprised of several elements that will provide the foundation for information sharing and the development of recommendations. As information becomes available, the Task Force may ask for additional reflections from state agencies and others on emergent topics. Although important, some topics that emerge may be better dealt with through other processes, for example legislative policy initiatives and internal agency reviews. Elements of the AAR will potentially include:

- Input and recommendations from proviso-based topic specific workgroups and other approaches to proviso-based topics (see Appendix A)
- State agency reviews and conversations to identify key issues, trends, and recommendations in response and recovery actions
- Analysis and synthesis of information gathered by the Military Department and Department of Health staff assigned to the AAR process
- Consideration of other relevant COVID response review initiatives
- AAR Task Force discussion, guidance, and recommendations
- Other elements that are identified during the review process



Roles and Responsibilities

AAR Co-chairs: Military Department and Department of Health

- Be the spokespersons for legislative, governor, and media inquiries related to the Task Force.
- Be accountable for Task Force meetings, reporting timelines and reports.
- Communicate with Task Force members, when needed.
- Submit the required reports
- Provide briefings and answer questions on the process and reports, where needed.

AAR Steering Committee

The Military Department in partnership with the Department of Health has established an AAR Steering Committee comprised of staff from both departments and WSU facilitators. The AAR Steering Committee will:

- Design and steward the overall approach for the AAR including:
 - establish workgroups and their membership, where appropriate, to focus on specific elements of the AAR.
 - determine additional topics to be addressed beyond those specifically identified in the legislation with input from the Task Force.
 - Guide and review internal analysis and synthesis of agency reviews and other information by Military Department and DOH staff.
 - Work with the Governor's office on Task Force representation.
- Develop meeting agendas with input from Task Force members.
- Work with the project team to develop information, written materials, and presentations that support the Task Force conversations.
- Utilize guidance and recommendations from the Task Force in developing the reports, including any prioritization of recommendations.
- Draft and revise the two reports, based on Task Force members' direction and feedback.
- Ensure equity, disparity, and discrimination are considered in the AAR.

WSU Facilitators

The AAR Task Force facilitators are third party conveners. The WSU facilitators are impartial and nonpartisan and will provide this AAR with experienced facilitative and process design skills to help participants reach the AAR goals. The WSU facilitators will:

- Ensure that each Task Force member has a meaningful opportunity to participate in discussions, regardless of whether they are in-person or online.
- Provide impartial facilitation for the Task Force.
- Work with individual Task Force members and the project team to address barriers to meaningful participation—such as language and interpretation needs, broadband and device access, or other barriers.
- Provide intervention when appropriate.
- Invite and encourage Task Force member feedback on meetings, meeting materials, and the process.



- Review the Task Force progress and recommend adjustments to course as needed.
- Distribute meeting agendas and background materials at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting.
- Summarize the outcomes of the Task Force meetings in meeting summaries.
- Assist with overall approach to the AAR
- Ensure equity, disparity, and discrimination are considered during Task Force discussions.

Purpose and Role of the AAR Task Force

The function of the task force is advisory. The purpose of the AAR task force is to:

- Provide input and additional guidance to state agencies/others as they review lessons being learned and potential recommendations for change
- Review agency/other's lessons and identify themes and intersections between agencies reviews
- Consider issues of equity, disparity, and discrimination in its work and review of workgroup progress
- Provide guidance to workgroups that address proviso specific topics, and review workgroup progress and recommendations
- Provide guidance to help determine key areas of focus for recommendations
- Provide input into all elements of the AAR, including reports' and helping to prioritize key recommendations from the AAR

Task Force members will:

- Participate in Task Force meetings through June 2023
- Review background materials in advance of meetings
- Treat all Task Force members and staff with dignity
- Engage in positive, productive, and respectful communication with other Task Force members, the Co-Chairs, and project staff
- Share perspectives, based on lived and/or work experience(s) with different aspects of the pandemic response and recovery
- Listen to and seek out each other's diverse perspectives during Task Force meetings
- Review and provide comments on two draft reports
- Help contribute to and support a cycle of continuous improvement by providing feedback on Task Force meetings, meeting materials, and other aspects of the process to the Co-Chairs and project staff

Individuals with broad and diverse professional and lived experiences have been chosen to participate on the Task Force. Each member has valuable input and insights to share. The Task Force is an advisory body. The final AAR report will be a comprehensive document which will include the range of perspectives of those entities represented in the development of the guidance and recommendations, as well as reflect any areas of broad agreement.

AAR Task Force Membership

ESSB 5092.SL directs that the Task Force be composed of the following members:



The Adjutant General, or the Adjutant General's designee, and the Secretary of the Department of Health, or the Secretary's designee, shall co-chair the Task Force and convene its initial meeting.

- One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate
- One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives
- The Secretary of the Department of Health, or the Secretary's designee
- The Adjutant General of the Military Department, or the Adjutant General's designee
- The Commissioner of the Employment Security Department, or the Commissioner's designee
- The Director of the Department of Financial Institutions, or the Director's designee
- The Insurance Commissioner, or the Commissioner's designee
- The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, or the Secretary's designee
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the Superintendent's designee
- The Director of the Department of Labor and Industries, or the Director's designee
- The Director of the Department of Commerce, or Director's designee
- The Director of the Department of Enterprise Services, or the Director's designee
- The Secretary of the Department of Transportation, or the Secretary's designee
- The Director of the Department of Licensing, or the Director's designee
- The Director of the Office of Financial Management, or the Director's designee
- The Director of the Health Care Authority, or the Director's designee
- The executive director of the Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission, or the executive director's designee
- One member representing the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs
- One member representing the Association of Washington Businesses; and
- One member representing the Office of the Governor
- One member representing the Association of Washington Cities
- One member representing the Washington State Association of Counties
- One member representing emergency and transitional housing providers
- One member representing a statewide association representing physicians
- One member representing a statewide association representing nurses
- One member representing a statewide association representing hospitals
- One member representing community health centers
- Two members representing local public health officials
- Two members representing local emergency management agencies, one member located west of the crest of the Cascade mountains and one member located east of the crest of the Cascade mountains
- At least one member representing federally recognized tribes
- Up to 10 members representing demographic groups that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, that include, but are not limited to, individuals of different race, class, gender, ethnicity, and immigration status
- One member representing leisure and hospitality industries



- One member representing education services; and
- One member representing manufacturing and trade industries.

The success of the Task Force depends on building and sustaining collaborative relationships over time and ensuring that each participating Task Force member maintains a baseline understanding of and context for the evolving issues under discussion. Consequently, absences from meetings will be addressed according to the following process:

- There will be no formal alternates for Task Force members.
- If a Task Force member needs to miss a meeting, they should alert the WSU facilitators as soon as possible. They should review the meeting materials, recording, and written meeting summary.
- If a Task Force member misses more than two meetings in a row, the project team will reach out to the member to understand any issues that make that member's participation a challenge.
- If a Task Force member needs to step down from their role, they should notify the co-chairs as soon as possible. The process for replacing the member will vary depending on their position, but will follow the initial selection process. For example, if a legislator needs to be replaced, the Senate President or House Speaker will select the replacement. Similarly, if a member with lived experience needs to step down from their role, ORP will request and review applications and select the replacement. Members will not select their own replacement.

AAR Task Force Meeting Guidelines

Meetings will begin and end on time. At the meetings, Task Force members will:

- Show up on time.
- Focus and participate to the fullest of one's ability - to achieve the agenda and meeting objectives. A significant portion of the Task Force meetings is expected to occur in smaller 'break-out' groups, with participatory work requesting all to contribute.
- Listen actively and participate in good faith – respect others when they are talking.
- Respectfully challenge one another by asking questions but refrain from personal attacks-focus on ideas.
- The goal is not to agree – it is to share and learn from a deeper understanding of multiple perspectives and experiences.
- Avoid interrupting when others are speaking and wait until breaks to attend to non- Task Force business.
- Attack the problem, not the person. Task Force members will respectfully challenge ideas, not the individual.
- Respect and empathize with other's lived experiences.
- Silence cell phones.
- In virtual meetings, leave cameras on (unless there are technical reasons requiring the member to leave their camera off) and microphone muted, unless called upon to speak. Use the "Raise Your Hand" function to indicate when ready to make a comment or ask a question.



Task Force Meeting Logistics

Due to the ongoing public health emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Task Force meetings will be held online using the Zoom platform. In person meetings may be considered when it is safe from a public health perspective to do so.

The Task Force is not considered a decision-making body; therefore, the Task Force is not subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. To provide opportunity for the public to engage with the work of the Task Force a public AAR website will be created. Task Force meetings will be recorded and made available to the public on the AAR website. Written public comment opportunities will also be available to the public through the AAR website. The project team will prepare a written summary of the discussion and comments following each meeting.

- Meeting summaries will include topics of conversations and viewpoints shared during the meetings.
- The meeting summaries will strive to summarize points of view clearly and fairly. Meeting summaries will not be a transcript/minutes of the proceedings.
- The WSU facilitators will send meeting summaries to the Steering Committee for their review prior to their distribution.
- Meeting summaries will be electronically sent to all Task Force members and be posted on the AAR website.

To streamline communications, the WSU facilitators will communicate directly with the Task Force members. If a Task Force member would like to communicate with the rest of the Task Force, they can forward to the WSU facilitators an email for distribution to the full Task Force. The WSU facilitators may choose to bundle this email with other emails to the Task Force.

Participants of the Task Force should not represent themselves as speaking on behalf of the Task Force unless directed to do so. This in no way restricts individual participants, in their capacity as residents, from interacting with elected officials, the media, or community organizations.



APPENDIX A

Workgroups

Initial approaches to the proviso-based topics will be developed by the Steering Committee with input from the Task Force and others (e.g., state agencies), where appropriate. For some topics, separate workgroups, with participants who have content specific expertise, will be convened. These workgroups may include members of the Task Force but will likely include non-Task Force members. The Task Force will provide guidance to the workgroups and will review and incorporate the findings and recommendations of the workgroups into their discussions.

Topic Specific Workgroup Meeting Principles

Regardless of the topic, workgroups are to consider equity, disparity, and discrimination in their review of lessons and recommendations.

General guidance for workgroup meetings includes:

- Set clear goals and objectives, based on AAR timelines; respect everyone's time
- Value individual perspectives, and seek out diverse opinions, including those from marginalized communities and with lived experience
- Provide for balanced conversation/equity in speaking, listening, and responding
- Stay present and engaged
- Treat meetings as a group learning session; story-sharing is often a good beginning approach!
- Document discussion points and workgroup progress
- Avoid 'hidden agendas', cynicism and sarcasm.
- Put political or positional differences into a 'parking lot' for the Task Force to acknowledge
- Preserve time in meetings for reflection (self and group)
- Share responsibility and accountability
- Document consensus and differences – celebrate both as group strengths!
- Seek process guidance from the WSU facilitators, when needed
- Bring unresolved issues in a timely manner to the Steering Committee