

# Multicultural Subcommittee of the COVID-19 COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

## Meeting Minutes

Friday, July 31, 2020 | 3:00 - 4:00 P.M.

Google Meet | Online

**Members:** Chair Nubia Peña, Co-Chair Byron Russell, Jess Anderson, Dr. Marc Babitz, Silvia Castro, Rebecca Chavez-Houck, Dulce Díez, Emma E. Houston, Dustin Jansen, Mikelle Moore, Dr. Len Novilla, Asha Parekh, Tami Pyfer, Ming Wang

**Absent:** Co-Chair Ze Min Xiao, Aden Batar, Juan Becerra, Mayra Cedano, Neelam Chand, Jake Fitisemanu Jr., Mike Haddon, Deneiva Knight, Celina Milner,

**Guests:** Ramy Ahmed, Joél Arvizo-Zavala, Maegan Castleton, Gina Cornia, Jenny Hor, Claudia Loayza, Jill Love, Nate McDonald, Antonella Packard, Angelo Papastamos, Katherine Potter, Jeremy Taylor, Taysha Tiatia, Oreta Tupola, Megan Waters

**Unknown Call-in Number:** 801-\*\*\*-\*\*46

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### Moment of Acknowledgment - Byron Russell, Co-Chair

The meeting opened up with a tribute to Judge Michael Kwan who recently passed away. Kwan was one of the five founding members of OCA Asian Pacific Islander American Advocates for Utah in 1998 and served as OCA National President subsequently. Byron highlighted Kwan's monumental work as it lives on to this day; leaders like this pave the way for the committee to continue to do the hard, but meaningful work they do.

### Updates – Byron Russell, Co-Chair and Nubia Peña, Chair

The Leavitt Partners and government staff are reviewing the draft for Racial Equity work. The draft or “white papers” will help move initiatives and policies forward for greater equity. This draft will allow the committee to advocate racial and social inequities to a wider audience. Updates will be provided once it is approved. On a related note, Nubia shared an update on modeling inclusion. The Utah League of Cities and Towns reached out to the committee on how they could distribute their CARES Act funding in an equitable way. The committee's work is inspiring models of inclusion among the Utah community (as seen with the Utah League of Cities and Towns). And lastly, the COVID-19 Racial Equity and Inclusion grant is now open for applications. This is a one million dollar grant available for organizations that are meeting basic needs.

### Food Security – Gina Cornia, Utahns Against Hunger (UAH)

Gina shared that SNAP recipients and households that received free or reduced school meals will be eligible for pandemic EBT. Applications for that benefit open on August 1st. There will also be a FAQ in ten different languages for applicants to access on their website: [pebtutah.org](http://pebtutah.org). These benefits are targeted to be released on Tuesday, August 5th. Since these applications will close out at midnight on Monday August 31st, it is imperative to get this information out to the 77,000 eligible households.

To advertise this resource, billboards will be distributed across the state, a monthly focus on the Wasatch Front will be released, digital campaigns will launch in targeted zip codes, and Governor Herbert's PSA will be posted on Facebook and Instagram. Gina and Megan Waters are also planning to partner with UTA to add additional advertising on public transportation. This will help increase visibility of the applications to families in rural areas. If the committee wants to further distribute outreach materials, contact Alex Cragun at [cragun@uah.org](mailto:cragun@uah.org). Flyers will be available in Spanish and English, and any other language included on [pebtutah.org](http://pebtutah.org). UAH has also sent out emails to over 200 public information officers and are actively working with emergency food pantries to spread this information.

Since the applications are online, there is a large barrier regarding the digital divide. For families without the internet, UAH is gathering a list of places and communities by county where families can apply. At designated locations, UAH staff members and volunteers will be available to assist in the application process. Fortunately, the application consists of seven questions for families to answer simplifying the process for families.

In addition to the digital divide, Angelo Papastamos highlighted the ongoing issue of food deserts in marginalized communities. Gina then discussed current healthy food efforts made through SNAP and EBT. SNAP, pandemic EBT and the Verizon card are available to use at farmers markets. In addition, vendors at farmers markets can match up to \$30. Not only is this an incentive for families to eat organic, healthy food, but also an incentive to help stimulate the local economy.

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## COVID-19 COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

### Reopening of Schools – Tami Pyfer, Governor’s Education Advisor

School districts and charters have put together reopening plans for fall of 2020. The State Board of Education has provided requirements and recommendations for school districts and charter schools to follow as they formulate reopening templates. Ultimately, it is up to the local school boards and charter schools to approve these plans. This is a concern many people have, for they believe the Governor and Department of Health should have more control. An effort the Department of Health has implemented to regulate these plans are strict guidelines of case numbers in schools. If a school has a certain number of outbreaks in its classrooms or overall population, they will have to transition to distance learning. With the ongoing conversation, changes are still being implemented to both support and protect underserved and high-risk communities. To highlight their voices, the State Board of Education is encouraging families and teachers to work with school boards since they are the bodies being affected. Any suggestions from the community or committee members can be shared with Tami to help contribute effective solutions.

**Other Business** – Jess Anderson, Commissioner of Department of Public Safety, Dr. Marc Babitz, Deputy Director of Department of Health, and Ming Wang, Program Administrator at Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Jess Anderson provided updates from the Department of Public Safety in regards to supporting schools reopening and case counts in Utah. Currently, the department is pushing broadband and network connection to underserved communities. This will allow greater accessibility for families who choose distance learning for their children. In regards to case counts, Utah has hit below 500 cases per day before the Governor’s initial goal date of August 1st. Jess also shared that a vaccination of COVID-19 is on track for the end of October or beginning of November. Hopefully, this release can be distributed to the state of Utah soon after the vaccination’s release. Dr. Marc Babitz also contributed his support to Tami in the efforts that are being made upon the schools reopening. He shared that from a health point of view the balance of safety and support of schools reopening is occurring correctly. It is important to provide underserved families the resources schools provide such as food and child care. Ming Wang also contributed her words of appreciation to the committee and their hard work. She also noted that the committee’s diverse opinions and thoughts are always encouraged and respected. And lastly, Nubia shared an update from the Language Accessibility workgroup that the funding for a PIO will transition to the Department of Heritage and Arts. This will be a Spanish-speaking PIO role to help support immediate outreach. Once the job description is finalized, the job position will be distributed.

### Action Items

- Email Alex Cragun for outreach materials on pandemic EBT [Cragun@uah.org](mailto:Cragun@uah.org).
- Gina Cornia and Megan Waters will update next Thursday via email about UTA advertising.
- Email Nubia youth voices who want to contribute to the dialogue of police reform with the Department of Public Safety.
- The Multicultural Subcommittee Racial Equity and Inclusion fund training tutorial/town hall will occur on August 7th.

### Next Meeting

Friday, August 7, 2020 from 3:00–4:00 P.M. through Google Meet with updates from:

- Communications
- Digital Equity
- Health Equity