



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

JB Pritzker, Governor

Task Force on Opportunities for At-Risk Women
Meeting Minutes *(to be approved at the Q4 2024 meeting)*
Wednesday, August 28, 2024

Meeting: Q3 2024 Task Force on Opportunities for At-Risk Women meeting

Date/Time: Wednesday August 28, 2024 | 1:00-3:00 pm

Location: Virtual meeting via Cisco Webex

Appointed Members Present: State Senator Terri Bryant, Kathy Daniher, Millicent Lewis-McCoy, Ph.D., Carrie Thomas, and Interim Task Force Chair Michelle Lura White

Appointed Member Excused: State Senator Doris Turner

Appointed Members Absent: Sheleda Doss, Sarah Littrell, and State Representative Amy Grant

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Staff Present: OMEE Deputy Director Rebecca Estrada, Women's Business Development Manager Michelle Lura White *(Michelle is also DCEO's designee to the Task Force and is the Task Force Interim Chair)*, and Legislative Affairs Deputy Director G. Tito Quiñones

Call to Order: Interim Chair Michelle Lura White called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

Roll Call: OMEE Deputy Director Rebecca Estrada conducted roll call in which five (5) members were present at the meeting. Quorum was met.

Introductory remarks and introduction of members: All Task Force members introduced themselves.

Objective of Task Force: Interim Chair Michelle Lura White shared the Task Force's objective. As taken from [\(20 ILCS 5075/\)](#) Opportunities for At-Risk Women Act, the Task Force shall strategize and design a plan for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to partner and outsource with State and local governmental agencies, companies, and organizations that aid in helping at-risk women and their families become successful productive citizens. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) shall provide administrative support, technical assistance, meeting space, and funding to the Task Force.

Mission of the Task Force on Opportunities for At-Risk Women: An overview of the Task Force’s mission, including the definition of at-risk women, which are stated in the Illinois Statue, the [\(20 ILCS 5075/\)](#) Opportunities for At-Risk Women Act, was provided by Interim Chair Michelle Lura White.

Next Steps and Deliverables: Interim Chair Michelle Lura White provided a brief overview of the Task Force’s next steps and deliverables.

- **Adoption of Bylaws:** Interim Chair Michelle Lura White shared that a bylaws draft that DCEO’s Legal Counsel’s team provided, will be sent to the Task Force for their review. If any Task Force members have any questions regarding the bylaws, please contact Michelle. At the next Task Force meeting in Q4 2024, the Task Force will hold a discussion on the bylaws and vote on adopting them if there is quorum.
- **Subcommittee of Research proposal:** Interim Chair Michelle Lura White provided a brief overview of the recommendation of creating a Subcommittee of Research in which this committee conducts research and asset mapping of the work being done for at-risk women throughout the state in different ecosystems. State Senator Terri Bryant shared in the meeting that there was a report of resources and/or recommendations from the Task Force that the then members of the Task Force including her, sent to the then Speaker of the House’s Office for their review. As this report was sent about four-five years ago, Senator Bryant added that the report may be helpful as part of our research and analysis of what’s being done for at-risk women in different ecosystems. Interim Chair Michelle Lura White thanked Senator Bryant for the historical information and said we will look for the report. Dr. Millicent Lewis-McCoy followed-up and shared at the meeting that the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) has a research article “Employment of Individuals After Release from Illinois Prisons: Employee Characteristics, Occupations, and Wages” which we should include in our research. Dr. McCoy shared that the article does not center on a specific gender; however, it does provide a breakdown of data in the tables. This breakdown may be advantageous for analyzing employment characteristics following release. Interim Chair Michelle Lura White thanked Dr. McCoy for that information as well which will be included in our research.

Interim Chair Michelle Lura White asked if there was a motion to approve the creation of a Subcommittee of Research. Carrie Thomas made motion to approve, with Millicent Lewis-McCoy, Ph.D. seconding the motion, with all five Task Force present voting yes in approving the creation of the Subcommittee of Research.

Next, Interim Chair White asked if there was a motion to elect a chair of the Subcommittee of Research. Carrie Thomas asked if we could place that motion on hold till the subcommittee met, which Interim Chair White agreed.

Inquiring if there were two (2) Task Force members interested in being part of the Subcommittee of Research in addition to Interim Chair Michelle Lura White, was presented. Carrie Thomas and Millicent Lewis-McCoy, Ph.D. volunteered to join. No vote was needed to approve and accept volunteers.

- **Election of Officers:** Interim Chair White shared the recommendation of three (3) Task Force officer roles:
 - Task Force Chair (presiding officer facilitating the meeting),
 - Vice-Chair (presides in absence of Chair) and
 - Secretary (helps with agenda, notes and minutes).

If there is quorum at the next Task Force meeting in Q4 2024, we'll elect officers.

- If you would like to nominate yourself for one of the officer roles and/or if you would like to nominate a fellow Task Force member, please email your interest to Interim Chair Michelle Lura White at michelle.white@illinois.gov.
- Candidates' names will be included in the Q4 2024 meeting agenda.
- If you have any questions regarding the officer roles, please contact Interim Chair Michelle Lura White.

Public Comment: NA as there were no members from the public attending the virtual meeting

Adjournment: Carrie Thomas made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and State Senator Terri Bryant seconded it, with all five (5) members in favor of the adjournment. The Task Force Q3 2024 meeting ended at 1:36 p.m.

Next Task Force virtual meeting:

- Interim Chair Michelle Lura White will follow-up with all Task Force members in identifying a date for the Q4 2024 meeting; she will send a survey poll with a few dates.