



Frequently Asked Questions for Executive Order No. 143 June 4, 2020

This Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQ”) document provides guidance for the implementation of Executive Order No. 143 (“Order”). Acknowledging that systemic inequities contribute to higher rates of COVID-19 infection in communities of color, this Order addresses the social, environmental, economic, and health disparities in communities of color that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and provides targeted measures to help communities of color recover from the pandemic.

What does the Order do?

The Order does the following:

- Establishes the Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force to focus on economic stability, health disparities, and environmental justice in North Carolina;
- Tasks the North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office to ensure the equitable distribution of pandemic relief funds;
- Directs the Historically Underutilized Business Office to provide small historically underutilized businesses with access to opportunities, tools, and resources that promote equitable economic recovery and procurement of State contracts;
- Directs the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to ensure all communities have access to COVID-19 testing and related health care;
- Tasks the Office of Public Engagement to increase awareness about COVID-19, COVID-19 relief services and resources, and provide education on eliminating disparities;
- Directs the Division of Emergency Management to continue coordinating efforts to protect the food supply chain and support feeding operations at food banks and school systems;
- Directs the North Carolina National Guard to provide planning and logistical support and personnel where feasible to support mass testing of food processing plant workers in impacted communities and migrant farm workers; and
- Tasks the Department of Environmental Quality to create a common discourse on environmental justice and coordinate with state executive agencies on the integration of environmental justice considerations into current and future policies, programs, and procedures.

How are the topics in this Order related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

COVID-19 disproportionately affects communities of color for several reasons, including existing social, environmental, and health inequities. To make sure all North Carolinians can recover physically and economically from the COVID-19 pandemic, this Order identifies specific actions North Carolina departments and agencies must take to eliminate disparities across sectors.

What does the data show about health disparities in communities of color?

As of June 1, 2020, African Americans account for 30% of COVID-19 confirmed cases, in cases where race or ethnicity is known, despite only making up 22% of the population in North Carolina. Similarly, Hispanics account for 39% of confirmed COVID-19 cases, in cases where race or ethnicity is known, despite only making up about 10% of the population in North Carolina.

What is the Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force?

The Task Force will identify best practices to create economic stability, eliminate health disparities, and achieve environmental justice in North Carolina. The Task Force will focus on the following areas:

- Access to healthcare;
- Patient engagement in healthcare settings;
- Economic opportunities in business development and employment;
- Environmental justice and inclusion; and
- Education.

The Task Force must produce a report for the Governor every six months with recommendations on how to address these issues, with the first report due by December 1, 2020.

How long will the Task Force operate?

The Task Force will remain in effect for two years after the effective date of the Order unless the Order is repealed, replaced, or rescinded.

Who will be on the Task Force?

The Task Force will consist of experts on healthcare, economic opportunities, and environmental justice, as well as state agency leaders and leaders from communities of color. Members will be named after the announcement of the Order.

How is the North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office involved?

Governor Cooper has established the North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office (“NCPRO”) that is specifically designated to help North Carolina recover from the pandemic. In this Order, NCPRO has been tasked to work with each state agency to ensure COVID-19 related stimulus funds and resources are delivered equitably; to work with the Historically Underutilized Business program (“HUB”) and advocate for the economic recovery of minority-owned businesses in the state; and to work with the Department of Commerce to guarantee the equitable distribution of Community Development Block Grants.

What is a Historically Underutilized Business?

A certified historically underutilized business is a business that is 51% owned by, and the day-to-day management and daily business operations are controlled by a person of color, woman, disabled, or socially and economically disadvantaged individual. The state HUB office works with historically underutilized businesses to eliminate barriers that reduce participation of HUB firms in the marketplace and in state government procurement and contracting; develops policy and guidelines; provides resources and education to HUB firms; trains purchasing professionals and capital project coordinators across the state to enhance and grow a diverse supply chain; works to increase the amount of goods and services state agencies acquire from HUB firms; and provides compliance of policies.

How does the Order help Historically Underutilized Businesses?

The Order tasks the HUB office with developing and implementing a plan that stimulates economic recovery for small, historically underutilized businesses. The HUB office is directed to:

- Streamline the certification of small, historically underutilized businesses;
- Work with the State Construction Office and State Purchasing Office to identify contracts by state agencies that are below \$250,000 to increase opportunities for minority-owned small businesses; and
- Partner with the NCPRO to identify strategies to address economic recovery for minority-owned businesses; and
- Partner with the Golden Leaf Foundation and the North Carolina Institute for Minority Economic Development to develop a consolidated listing of certified small, historically underutilized businesses.

How will the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services make sure COVID-19 testing and health services are available to underserved communities?

The Order requires the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) to use funding from the COVID-19 Recovery Act for the provision of COVID-19 related health services to uninsured North Carolinians during this public health emergency. This will include health services provided by community health centers, local health departments, rural health centers, and clinics. NC DHHS is also tasked with reporting racial and ethnic demographic data; providing testing supplies and PPE to community health centers and nonprofit providers that service vulnerable communities; and partnering with community organizations to establish testing sites that communities of color can easily access.

What is “environmental justice”?

Environmental justice refers to the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

The Task Force will advance environmental justice and inclusion by enhancing public engagement and increasing public participation by low-income, minority communities in Department decisions and actions; quantifying health and welfare benefits of pollution reduction; advancing climate justice by prioritizing actions that equitably reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase community resilience to the impacts of climate change; and by encouraging and enhancing environmental justice, inclusion and equity education.

NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will coordinate with Executive Agencies on how to integrate environmental justice considerations into existing and future policies, programs, and procedures and will create institutional structures for agencies to address equality, equity, and justice for all North Carolinians.