



2021-2022

# TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY BLACK COLLECTIVE

*Working Until Equity, Inclusion  
and Fairness are a Reality*

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# THE HISTORY BEHIND THE BLACK COLLECTIVE

## History

Arising out of Tacoma, Washington's civil rights struggle in the 1960s, the Black Collective is a volunteer leadership organization engaged in addressing issues affecting the black community of Tacoma and Pierce County. The Black Collective began as the Concerned Black Citizens in the immediate aftermath of the Mother's Day Disturbance of May 11, 1969.

Inflamed by rancorously divided city politics, violence broke out that night in the Hilltop neighborhood, home to Tacoma's largest black population. Several black leaders, including Thomas Dixon, Executive Director of the Tacoma Urban League; Harold Moss, then a leader in the Tacoma chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); James L. Walton, student president of the Obi Society at Tacoma Community College; and pastors Reverend Earnest S. Brazill and Joseph A. Boles, both leaders in the Ministerial Alliance, stepped in to help quell the outbreak.

In the days following, they negotiated successfully with the City Council to win black representation on the police force and some, although limited, improved services to the Hilltop. These leaders decided to continue meeting and expanded to include others of color, becoming the Minority Concerns

Task Force. By 1970, however, they resumed their focus on issues specific to the black community. Since then, the Black Collective has met each Saturday morning, 52 weeks a year.

Harold Moss, Tacoma's first black city council member (1970), mayor (1994) and Pierce County council member (1997), in describing the organization in 2008 said, "The great strength, endurance, and influence of the Black Collective is not its structure or lack thereof, but it is in its autonomy and commitment to the mission of empowering and bettering the conditions of the black community."



*Former Mayor Harold Moss (1929-2020)*

# ABOUT THE TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY BLACK COLLECTIVE

## About Us

The Tacoma-Pierce County Black Collective is a community of Black people dedicated to civic engagement through volunteer service. Since 1968, the organization meets every Saturday, at the City Association of Colored Women's Clubhouse from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings are conducted virtually.

**Membership is exclusively for individuals who are black.**

## Mission

To promote the interests of Black people.

## Objectives

- To advance the political interests of Black people.
- To improve the educational outcomes of Black students.
- To provide social justice advocacy to Black individuals and communities.
- To increase Black economic development.
- To encourage activities that result in better health outcomes for Black individuals and communities



*A Black Collective meeting at the Colored Womens Clubhouse*



# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## Leadership

Chair: Lyle Quasim  
Co-Chair: *Pending*

## Meeting Chair and Co-Chair Responsibilities for the Black Collective:

- To manage the deliberative activities of the Black Collective.
- To serve as primary spokespersons for the Black Collective.
- To sign documents on behalf of the Black Collective.
- To recruit volunteers for various activities.

## Meeting Facilitators

Lyle Quasim, Ellen Smith,  
Christina Blocker & Korbett Mosesly

## Functional Responsibilities:

**Finance:** Gail Alexis Ray, Shirley Payne

**Opening:** James Walton

**Greetings:** Ellen Smith

**Black History Month:** Wayne Williams

**Technology:** Christina Blocker, Korbett Mosesly

**Scheduling:** Lyle Quasim, Shirley Payne, Karen Robinson



*A 2011 photo after a Black Collective meeting*

# THE WORK OF THE BLACK COLLECTIVE

## Operating Principles for General Membership and Committee Meetings

- Ensure efforts align with the Black Collective's mission and objectives
- Identify one or more goals for the committee
- Promote an environment to express a variety of opinions
- Facilitate solutions and outcome-based discussion beyond problem identification
- Encourage systemic data collection and analysis
- Emphasize collaboration
- Consistently meet commitments
- The committees make quarterly presentations





A professional office setting with a woman in the foreground and a man in the background. The woman, who is Black, has short dark hair, wears glasses, and a dark blue polka-dot shirt. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The man, who is Black, is bald, wears glasses, a white shirt, a blue striped tie, and a dark blue suit jacket. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. They are in a modern office with large windows in the background. In the foreground, there is a desk with a tablet, some colorful sticky notes, and a blue folder.

# **THE STRATEGIC COMMITTEES**



# POLITICAL COMMITTEE

## Committee Goal:

- To advance the political interests of black people, by focusing on:
  - Establishing political priorities of the Black Collective
  - Interviewing political candidates to determine alignment with Black Collective Priorities
  - Making candidate recommendations to the Black Collective
  - Reviewing legislation and initiatives, and make recommendations to the Black Collective

## Leadership:

Chair: Chana Lawson Co-Chair: Nick Brooks

Members: Karen Robinson, Sherrilla Bivens, Von-Na Chism, Candice Wheeler, Ralette Churchwell, Alisha Agee- Cooper, Marsha Mutisi, Paula Sardinas, James Koroma, LaTasha Wortham, Damita O'Dell, Cardell Morgan, and Yolanda Brooks.

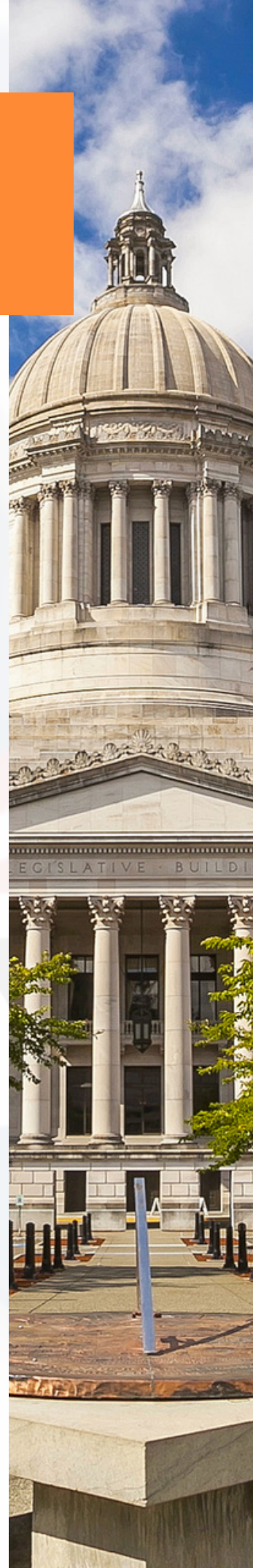
## Political Focus:

- To ensure that there is a fair and equitable process of determining the best candidates to address issues in the Black Community.
- To evaluate initiatives and proposed legislation that impact the Black Community.
- To develop follow up engagement with elected officials.

**Community Partners:** Political Destiny PAC, Black Women's Caucus, NAACP, Commission on African American Affairs, Tacoma Urban League, Ministerial Alliance, APRI Tacoma Chapter

**Collaborators:** Pierce County Democrats, ACLU, League of Women Voters, and Archway Consulting Group.

**Outcomes:** The Political Committee establishes an equitable process for non-partisan political recommendations and endorsements. The committee collaborates with other committees for interview questions during its endorsement recommendation process. The also committee provides assistance in the preparation for African American Legislative Day / Legislative Session.





# EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## Committee Goal:

- The Education Committee aims to establish strategic direction for the educational priorities of the Black Collective by focusing on:
  - Teacher effectiveness
  - Local school boards
  - Superintendent effectiveness
  - Institutional responsiveness
  - Parental engagement
  - Community support
  - Student academic achievement and readiness

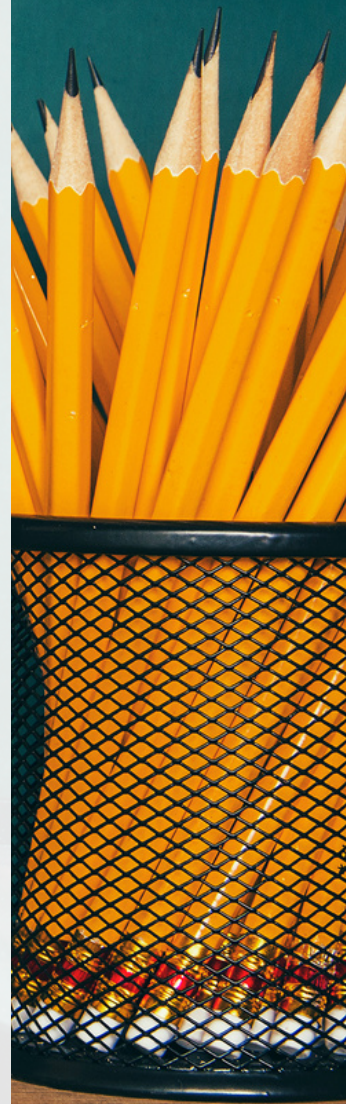
## Leadership:

Chair: David Scott, Co-Chair: pending

Members: Lyle Quasim, Wayne Williams, Jonathan Johnson, Hannigan Pitre, James Koroma, Pamela Ferguson, Les Pogue Jr., Yolanda Brooks, Ellis Westbrooks, Steve Smith, Al Herron, Jackie Hooks-Jones, Darlene Conley, Marsha Mutisi, Betty Howse, Vonda McElroy, Paul Jackson, leesha Irving, Will Johnson.

**Community Partners:** NAACP, Vibrant Schools, Black Education Strategy Round Table, Tacoma Ministerial Alliance, Tacoma Urban League, Greek Fraternal Organizations, Elizabeth Wesley Youth Merit Incentive Program, Buffalo Soldiers Museum.

**Collaborators:** Tacoma School District, University Place School District, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Puyallup, Franklin-Pierce, Clover Park, Steilacoom and Bethel School Districts, Clover Park Technical, Bates Technical and Tacoma Community Colleges, Tacoma Arts Live, University of Washington Tacoma, University of Puget Sound, Pacific Lutheran University.





# HEALTH COMMITTEE

## Committee Goal:

- To act as a catalyst to inform the Black community about individual and public health topics.

## Leadership:

Chair: Pamala Sacks-Lawlar, Co-Chair: Eula Ramroop

Members: Colette DeMonte, Jeannie Scipio-Dickens, Dr. John Vassall, Regina Glenn, Dionne Bonner, Sebrena Chambers, Tory Green, Versa Alexander

## **Health of the Black Population in the United States**

*Health of Blacks is influenced by various social determinants, such as poverty, lack of access to high-quality education, unemployment, unhealthy housing, unsafe neighborhoods, and other cultural barriers.*

*Social determinants of health are economic and physical conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcome and risks. Blacks have higher rates of mortality than any other racial or ethnic group for 8 of the top 10 causes of death.*

*(Source: Kelly RL. 2015 Kelly report: Health Disparities in America)*

**Community Partners:** Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, MultiCare, Franciscan Healthcare, Kaiser Permanente, School Districts, NAACP, Tacoma Urban League, Nursing and Behavior Education Programs, Faith-based Community, Fire Department, Equity Network, Women's health programs, Fraternity and Sororities, Youth programs.

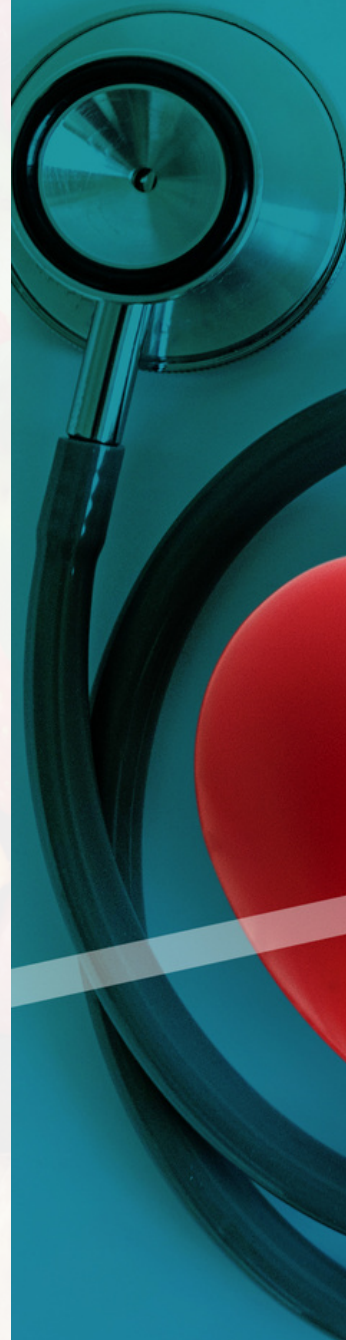
## **Recommended Prioritization Areas**

*(Note: Preventative Health will be encompassed in each priority area)*

- COVID-19
- Behavioral Health (Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder)
- Racism as a Public Health Epidemic

## **Proposed Strategies:**

- Create a framework that identifies the Biopsychosocial Health Disparities, services gaps and their impacts within the Black community.
- Provide recommendations for addressing service gaps and provision of culturally competent services.
- Coordinate with community groups and service providers.





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

## **Committee Goal:**

- To promote sustainable growth strategies that maximize economic opportunities for black residents of Tacoma/Pierce County.

## **Leadership:**

Chair: Bill Dickens, Co-Chairs: Christina Blocker & Jesse Miller

Members: Keith Armstrong, Eu-Wanda Banks, Dalton Gittens, Linda Ishem, Cassandra Williams, Cassandra Mitchell, Eddie Rye, Nate Miles, Jasmyn Jefferson, James Walton, Yolanda Brooks, Michael Jordan, Jessie Baines, Gustavus “Gus” Lawler, Lyle Quasim, Wayne Williams, Ellen Smith

**Community Partners:** Port of Tacoma, Tacoma Chamber of Commerce, Tacoma Urban League, Tabor 100, Washington Department of Commerce, Tacoma Department of Community Economic Development, United Way, Forterra

**Collaborators:** Tacoma School District, City of Tacoma Government, Pierce County Government, Sound Transit, State of Washington Department of Enterprise Service, OWMBE, Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department, Washington State Department of Transportation, Economic Development Board, Key Bank, Columbia Bank

## **Prospects for 2021-2021:**

- Annual Economic State of Black Tacoma Report
- Economic Information Sharing: Provide data on the level of economic activity in the state of Washington and provide commentaries about the implications for black Tacoma businesses and black Tacoma consumers. Promote contracting opportunities. Promote employment opportunities
- Black Economic Power and Wealth Building – (Long Term)
- Analysis of Economic Issues impacting black people: Review and make recommendations of key Washington State, county, and local legislation and referendums that economically affect black people.
- Encourage and contribute to partner initiatives that address training and development needs
- Enrich business and financial management skills and the ability to secure resources that support black owned business sustainability and resiliency, including access to Collective member experiences and expertise.

# SOCIAL AND LEGAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

## Committee Goal:

- To provide social justice advocacy to black individuals and communities by focusing on:
  - Providing a forum for black persons, organizations and communities to discuss and resolve issues related to social justice.
  - Legal Justice
  - Collecting information and making referrals to social justice advocacy individuals and agencies.
  - Establishing leadership within the community to advocate for policy change that addresses the social justice issues.
  - Identify methods to advocate for everyone to have equal access to human services.
  - Accessing and supporting the current work being done by our community partners.
  - Reaching out to businesses and department heads within our community and accessing their efforts.
  - Establishing a curriculum to break down the construct of “whiteness” and its effect on the black community.

## Leadership:

Chair: Lester Pogue Jr., Co-Chair: Sherrilla Bivens, Secretary: Karen Stringer, Members: Cinnamon Brown, Tory Green, Tanisha Roberts, Dona Ponепinto, Sebrana Chambers, Damita O'Dell, Lesa Porter, Gail Alexis Ray, Karen Robinson, Darrell Edmonds, David Boyd.

**Community Partners:** NAACP, Ministerial Alliance, A. Philip Randoff – Tacoma, Tacoma Urban League, Black Parents Alliance, Legally Black, United Way

**Collaborators:** Tacoma Arts Alive, Tacoma School District, American Leadership Forum, Tacoma Pro Bono, Department of Social and Health Services, Tacoma Human Rights Commission, Department of Corrections, University of Puget Sound, University of Washington, American Leadership Forum