

Task Force on Eliminating Subminimum Wages

Meeting summary for July 11, 2023 (virtual session)

- Participants listed below.
- Go to the [task force webpage](#) and select the meetings tab to review the formal meeting agenda, presentation slides, and any other relevant documents from the meeting, once posted.

Main meeting topic

The task force heard an update on the 2023 legislative session that covered which recommendations were included in the DHS omnibus funding bill, and which were not. With the recommendations and report sent to the Legislature, the task force fulfilled its main duty and heard three different options for continuation through its sunset date of March 31, 2024. The task force voted on those options and concluded the meeting with an appreciation and recognition discussion.

Key agenda items

- Update from legislative session
- Discussion and vote on task force continuation
- Recognize and appreciate task force members

Update from legislative session

Co-chair Jillian Nelson provided an update on the legislative session of 2023. It was an incredibly epic year. Our top five recommendations made it to the Hill in a lot of places. Those priorities included: immediate legislative action to repeal the subminimum wage law, set up a program to collect data and monitor outcomes, create a statewide transition team, increase the engagement, education and support of those earning subminimum wage, and establish a team to support this change. Four of the recommendations were passed. We saw historic investment in employment for people with disabilities. We did not get a sunset date for the last date subminimum wage can be used, but this is still a fantastic outcome. We do expect to see continued legislative movement in the coming session to move toward eliminating subminimum wage. We accomplished a great deal in a short time period. We made life-changing differences.

Task force questions and discussion

Alex asked about having different areas in the state vote on dates for the phase-out. Jillian said we only had authority to make state-wide recommendations, but cities could choose to take actions.

Heidi H. shared how impressive it was to watch Jillian testify. People were really engaged and Jillian did a great job in advocating.

Discussion and vote on task force continuation

The task force fulfilled its legislative responsibilities. The task force report recommended disbanding March 31, 2024. How should the task force continue to function through March 31, 2024? There are two duties the task force could act on, including consulting with and advising the human services commissioner and engaging with employees with disabilities to educate about subminimum wage. Jessica Burke from Management Analysis and Development (MAD) presented three options for continuation. The first option is disbanding. Jessica presented several other options to continue the work outside the task force. The second option is to end scheduled meetings but to continue to provide consultation at the request of DHS. The third option is to continue to have quarterly meetings focused on consultation in implementing recommendations. Leslie and Beth are here from DHS to answer questions.

Task force questions and discussion

Alex favors option 2. Larissa would like to know what DHS might like to know from this group going forward. Leslie suggested that DHS is starting a work and benefits campaign and responding to engagement work. There is also scope for lead agency contracts but we don't have people on this task force from lead agencies. The biggest ask is the data one. Those are the most realistic topics within this time period. Andrea suggested that consultation with DHS might lend itself to having quarterly meetings that could be canceled. Jillian supports what Andrea suggested, and that the questions could be either way, from DHS or from the task force. Larissa agrees, there is a lot of discussion that could be had, especially around the data system.

A vote was held. The decision was made to continue with quarterly meetings.

- Disband (0%)
- End scheduled meetings but continue to be available for consultation from DHS (21%)
- Continue with quarterly meetings (79%)

To review the background information and detailed options for task force continuations, go to the [task force webpage](#), select the meetings tab, and scroll down to find the slides 7-14 for the July 11, 2023, meeting.

Recognize and appreciate task force members

Members were asked to offer recognition and appreciation in round robin format.

- Alex Junge: I hope that by moving forward we can help end subminimum wage for people with disabilities. We should all be treated equally as far as minimum wage goes. I appreciated learning about my rights. I learned about human services. I learned about case workers workload. I learned about disability groups.
- Jillian Nelson: I hope we will build a stronger state, and shift and recenter employment principles on the person-first plan. People can have jobs that suit them not just what can be measured in a time study. It is a chance for real equity for people with disabilities, we can see economic mobility and fiscal stability. I appreciate seeing so many entities and perspectives coming together to work on the same thing and be stronger together. I learned the power of tenacity and perseverance. Things don't get done overnight. The right group of people, a good team can play the long game.
- Amanda Jensen-Stahl: Thank Jillian and Andrea for their leadership, both have done a tremendous job. Overall I appreciated the diversity of this group and the perspectives. This was a lot of time, and there wasn't always agreement, but we came to recommendations we are all proud of. Change can take time. I'm excited to see this play out as we move forward.
- Andrea Zuber: My hopes – a lot of recommendations were funded and put into legislation. I hope that generates movement and interest to eliminate subminimum wage in our state. I hope providers take advantage of the technology and funding available to help them change their business models. I appreciate working with all of you, and working with DHS and MAD staff. You did a phenomenal job keeping us focused and getting us to this point. I had friendships come out of this committee. I learned so much. I was struck with how much people don't understand how we could make this vision a reality, and we have a lot of work to do to show that things will not just be ok, but they will be better.
- Debbie Luther: Appreciated getting to know everyone and all the work being done to improve lives.

- Heidi Hamilton: I was so impressed with how respectful everyone was of everyone's opinions when there was disagreement, and we came to recommendations together. I was impressed by the work of the task force members at the legislature. There were emotional hearings on both sides of the issue. It is impressive how so many of the recommendations passed and a testament to the hard work.
- Heidi Maghan: I hope we will end subminimum wage for good and the jobs will match the people. I appreciate getting to know each and every one of you. I think it's cool that Minnesota brought home three awards related to this work including Jillian. I learned more about how the legislative process really works and what people don't understand about employment and people with disabilities. I look forward to keeping this moving.
- Jon "Alex" Alexander: Recognize the work of former task force member Raquel Sidie-Wagner.
- Kirk Langsjoen: My hope moving forward is that it doesn't stop at just removing subminimum wage. I'd like to see more major strides toward making sure that more people are capable of working. I appreciate and learned that I could fit into and contribute to this task force and this work even though I had concerns about the idea of eliminating subminimum wage. My concerns were an important contribution. I appreciated learning new things.
- Larissa Beck: My hope is for more people to know and understand that subminimum wage is a thing. I appreciated a lot from the task force, getting to know the people and working together toward common goals and creating a doable plan. This was talked about for years. I've learned great things can happen with people who want to make them happen.
- Lori Schluttenhofer: I appreciate Raquel and her contributions, and Ryan. I appreciated that we had such a diverse group of people and priorities and opinions and we came together and come up with a common set of recommendations that everyone could live with. I look forward to seeing fewer barriers so young people come out of secondary education and think about their dreams for a fulfilled life.
- Sara Ellstra: I hope to get to a point where subminimum wage is eliminated. I appreciate the ability of people from different areas to come together to come up with solutions that can be implemented. I appreciated learning from everyone here. Thank you to Andrea and Jillian for leading us.
- Susan Fleurant: I appreciated working with all of you and getting to know you all. I hope the momentum continues and the realization of a more inclusive, equitable, and empowering employment system in Minnesota happens sooner rather than later.
- Alex Junge: I want to thank everybody on this task force for their time and opinions. I'm happy I got to know you all and I appreciate you.
- Jillian Nelson: We are only a couple of months out of legislation and we have preparations to go back. I received a stack of letters from Minnesotans in support of what we are trying to do.

Next task force meeting

Tuesday, Oct. 10, 10-11:30 a.m. on Zoom.

July 11, Task Force participants

Task force members:

- Jon "Alex" Alexander

- Larissa Beck
- Sara Ellstra
- Susan Fleurant
- Heidi Hamilton
- Amanda Jensen-Stahl
- Alex Junge
- Michelle Kamenov
- Kirk Langsjoen
- Debbie Luther
- Heidi Maghan
- Jillian Nelson
- Lori Schluttenhofer
- Andrea Zuber

Others:

- Jessica Burke, MAD
- Erica Klein, MAD
- Josh Hill, MAD
- Lesli Kerkhoff, DHS
- Beth Grube, DHS