

June 26, 2025

Subject: Racial Equity Commission June 26, 2025, Meeting Minutes
Prepared By: Toya Davis, Operations Manager, Racial Equity Commission
Reviewed By: TBD

Recommended Action

Approval of the March 20, 2025, Racial Equity Commission Meeting Minutes.

Racial Equity Commission June 2025 - Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Welcome

A. CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Wright called the meeting to order at 9:35 AM. Shared a reminder that the Commission condemns acts of hate and discrimination. Commissioner Wright shared the CA vs Hate resource line. Commissioner Wright noted that Commissioner Bowles, Commissioner Onodera, Commissioner Richardson and Commissioner Salas and Commissioner would be participating virtually. Commissioner Onodera and Commissioner Salas were allowed to participate

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

C. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA

D. REMARKS FROM DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Commissioner Matthews welcomed any distinguished guests in the room to address the Commission. Javier Gomes with the office of Supervisor Luis A. Alejo for the 1st district of the County of Monterey brought remarks. Gilbert Ramos, on behalf of Speaker Robert Rivas.

E. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM: Quorum was met; 7/11 Commissioners Present (two remote participants were allowed to participate remotely due to a physical disability).

Commissioners Present:

1. Commissioner Candis Bowles (Virtually)
2. Commissioner Virginia Hedrick
3. Commissioner John Kim (Virtually)
4. Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado
5. Commissioner Traco Matthews
6. Commissioner Jolie Onodera (Virtually)
7. Commissioner Yolanda Richardson (Virtually)
8. Commissioner Simboa Wright
9. Commissioner Angelica Sales

F. PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS**No Public Comments****Consideration of Remote Participation Request**

Action: First and second motion for the consideration of remote participation. Commissioners Onodera and Richardson did not participate in the vote since it was about them. Vote was 7-0 in favor and the motion passed.

Public Comment

Public Comment was made by Louise Miranda Ramirez.

Agenda Item #2: Officer Nomination and Election

Action: Commissioner Gabe Maldonado nominated Commissioner Matthews as Chair for the Racial Equity Commission. Commissioner John Kim seconded the motion. Roll call vote. Motion passed with a unanimous vote, 8-0 vote, with Commissioner Traco Matthews abstaining.

Agenda Item #3: Public Comment on matters not on the agenda

No public comments.

Agenda Item #4: Consent Agenda

Action: Motion to approve the December 19, 2024. Commission meeting minutes and the March 20, 2025, Commission Meeting minutes was made by Commissioner Hedrick and seconded by Commissioner Maldonado. Motion passed 9-0.

No public comments were made.

Agenda Item #5: Executive Directors Report

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Dr. Larissa Estes shared there will be an additional analyst and intern to further allow the staff to focus on drafting the framework.

Dr. Larissa Estes shared updates on the Summer Roadshow, where the Commission and staff will revisit communities throughout July and August to build trust, share framework updates, reflect on statewide input, and show how community feedback is shaping the Commissions work. A virtual presentation will be available for communities not visited in person.

Dr. Estes recognized the Directors Report contains a list of action items that the Racial Equity Commission team is actively working through to ensure all items are addressed.

Dr. Estes read the Community Acknowledgment Statement, drafted by Senior Analyst Dyllyn Turner-Kenner. The Commission voted on using the statement at future meetings in order to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices of all Californians. Commissioner Maldonado recognized both Commissioner Salas and Commissioner Hedrick for their work that they are doing in the community.

Public comment was received by Kenneth Woodrow.

Action: Commissioner Wright made the motion to approve the Community Acknowledgment Statement and Commissioner Wright seconded the motion. Motion passes 8-0.

Note: Commissioner Kim stepped away from the meeting prior to the vote.

Agenda Item #6: Defining our Audience-Action Item

Joyce Chiao, Facilitator, Abundance

Joyce Chiao presented on defining who our audience is for the Racial Equity Framework. She led a discussion on framing.

The Commissioners discussed the staff recommendation where the framework audience is accessible to individuals, communities, and organizations beyond state government.

Hedrick: Yes, wants the audience to be broader, but also doesn't want the framework to lose potential call to action for state government –currently there is a mandate which is to call state government in.

Dr. Estes: Wouldn't be an issue, different levels of engagement that can contribute to the implementation of the framework – where the push for state agencies and department boards and commissions to do the work but we want a framework that can be designed so everybody could actually take it and apply it.

Hedrick: There's an executive order in California that requires state government to have official formal tribal consultation, hopefully the framework will also give guidance for community and how they can engage state government with clear steps.

Richardson: Would this undermine our charge from the executive order in terms of our ability to deliver the framework and its intended purpose?

Dr. Estes: The charge would be welcomed and not undermined.

Onodera: Supports the staff recommendation and likes that it is not specific and leaves it rather open-ended.

Maldonado: As stated in the executive order, state government is the audience. Things like toolkits and other supportive tools should be written in a way where communities can use it as public policy and advocacy tools, but still the overall audience is the state government.

Bowles: Agrees that the framework should speak very clearly to government agencies. The inclusion of community and people with lived experience and including the ability to hold agencies accountable should be a separate section.

Salas: Affirming that the framework is intended for state government and the need to be very clear on what its purpose is etc. We will make this framework accessible to individuals, communities, and organizations, so affirming it in the purpose instead of provided separately or at the end. You present the framework and then state accessibility – while affirming that we are trying to ensure that state government is more responsive to our communities on these issues.

Wright: Agreed with Commissioner Salas.

Hedrick: What does it mean to be accessible?

Dr. Estes: Plain language, translations, making public, -- clear and grounded in.

Hedrick: agreed on plain language and clearly lays out the proper steps to get involvement. There is a distinction between audience and accessibility.

Richardson: Audience and accessibility agreement.

Onodera: Agree what accessibility and audience means.

Dr. Estes: restates the recommendation – based on the discussion the frameworks audience will be state agencies and departments and the framework itself will need to ensure accessibility to all individuals communities and organizations beyond state government so they may be able to receive and use the document as well

Maldonado: Prefers the usage of ‘state government’ over ‘state agencies’ or needs to specify both. For accessibility, braille copies and audible access to truly make it accessible.

The framework audience is state government, inclusive of agencies, the legislature, and judicial, with support and technical assistance for other governmental entities.

Motion to approve the proposed framework audience was made by Commissioner Maldonado with a second by Commissioner Salas. Motion passed 8-0. (Commissioner Kim stepped away for vote)

Public Comment

Public Comment was made by Louise Miranda Ramirez, Maria Barakat, Elena Santamaria, Kenneth Woodrow

5-Minute Recess

Chair Matthews called for a 5-minute recess at 11:15 AM ; the meeting was called back to order at 11:22 AM.

Following the five-minute recess, Joyce Chiao continued the conversation regarding a tool that helps consider audience needs.

How would our key audience learn about the framework?

Where would they access it?

What might they be seeking from this framework?

What would prompt them to use it?

Salas: Emphasized the importance of integrating the framework into employee onboarding so that staff understands its relevance to their work from the outset. Noted the need to make the framework easily accessible and to encourage its consistent use by linking it to community engagement, analysis, and implementation practices.

Maldonado: Recommended prioritizing three key groups for dissemination of the framework: (1) Community organizations, promoters, and advocacy coalitions: who regularly engage and should be empowered with their knowledge of the tools from the kit because they are going to be the vehicles in the future for community; (2) state agencies, through their external affairs liaisons who coordinate via the Governor's External Affairs team; (3) legislators, by leveraging district director calls and working with legislative consultants and caucuses to equip both members and the communities they serve.

Wright: Broad access to the framework across multiple levels. For state and local government staff, suggesting integration into orientation sessions or regular touchpoints like safety meetings. Emphasized the importance of making the framework available online through public facing channels- whether via state, county, or municipal platforms. For community-based organizations, many of whom are already deeply engaged in this work, providing direct access to the framework would support their role in effectively sharing it with the communities they serve.

Hedrick: For the framework to drive real impact, it must be paired with clear expectations and accountability mechanisms. This could take the form of a legislative or Governor's mandate, ensuring that state government is held responsible for implementation. It's important to share the framework in a way that not only informs the audience but also compels them to be responsive and accountable. Richardson: Echoed what all the commissioners have stated.

Onodera: Our communities are wonderful messengers as well understanding the importance of state agencies needing the training

Matthews: Emphasized the importance of a high-profile, statewide rollout. Such as a press release, a formal announcement from the Governor, or a compelling video that reinforces the “why” behind the work. Noted in today’s political climate, where there is increasing resistance to equity efforts, state-level support provides necessary cover for local leaders and community-based organizations, especially in regions where these conversations are less common. Drawing on experience in Kern County, top-down endorsement would make it easier for local governments to adopt the framework, and help advocates hold systems accountable. External communications should clearly articulate the purpose and intended impact of the framework, particularly as many may be seeking clarity and reaffirmation of the state’s commitment to this work.

Maldonado: Clarity with specificity. Being a part of a lot different frameworks at different kinds of institutions, oftentimes frustration comes with the use of a lot of intellectual language and talks generally about what we’re trying to pursue but it doesn't have the specificity. This is a framework so we don’t want it to encroach upon implementations for agencies, but if you do use this framework intervention this is the intended outcome you should have. Having clarity in the intended outcome is important.

Modality recommendation of an introductory webinar, where the Governor does an opening guest appearance, disseminated for everyone that walks people through the specificities of the framework.

Richardson: Support Governor’s involvement, formally recommended staff get started now in conversations with the Governor’s office to ensure recommendation can be seen through.

Dr. Estes: If this is a formal recommendation from the commission the staff is happy to take that forward.

Matthews: Formal recommendation from me.

Public Comment

Public Comment was made by Christina Oldini (member of the public), Vicente Laura and Maria Barakat.

Agenda Item #7: Model for Transformation

Motion to table Item seven by Commissioner Hedrick and seconded by Commissioner Maldonado. Motion passed 9-0.

Lunch Recess

Chair Matthews called for a lunch recess at 11:54 AM to reconvene at 1:00 PM; the meeting was called back to order at 1:00 PM.

Agenda Item #8: Draft Framework Outline, Defining Terms and Discussion

Executive Director, Dr. Estes and Joyce Chaio, Facilitator, Abundance led a discussion regarding the Draft Framework Outline, Defining Terms and Discussion. Dr. Estes led the discussion on the draft Framework Outline.

Public Comment

Public Comment was made by Alejandra Ponce de Leon and Maria Barakat.

Action- Motion by Chair Matthews and seconded by Commissioner Onodera to approve moving forward with the proposed updates as stated by the Commissioners. Motion passed 9-0.

Agenda Item #9: Next Steps for Staff Action

Dr. Estes stated the need to add Item seven back to the September Commission meeting. Accessibility of the information needs to be made for community. Clearly stating Staff access. Moving the Office of Racial Equity as the core content and tracking of spending to core content. Including examples where content of strategies has been implemented. Include places where this work has been working and include information of where State Agencies have started this work and meeting them where they are at this time.

Policies of Systems Change and the underlying importance of serving people equitably and offering the framework as a tool and guide on how to better serve the public. The sense of urgency needs to be included.

Commissioner Maldonado wants to ensure that our deadline is met but also ensuring we produce a document that “gets it right” versus meeting the deadline.

Commissioner Kim indicated the need to include the improvements on what needs to be changed versus the draft that was presented. Also, engaging in a route so that September is not the next meeting.

Dr. Estes further stated there is no other way to “workshop” the document other than via public meeting. She did offer the option for Commissioners to email her or staff individually.

Chair Matthews stated that if Commissioners has recommendations, email Dr. Estes individually and to be mindful of the recommendations as they can be impactful.

Commissioner Salas stated we need to make recommendations for “all people” of California.

Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by common consent at 2:56 PM.