



Transmittal Letter

December 1, 2025

Dear California,

It's always best to start with gratitude. The Racial Equity Commission was established by Executive Order N-16-22 to fortify the work of creating a more equitable state for all California residents. We are grateful to Governor Newsom for his vision and courage. We also acknowledge that we stand on the shoulders of giants. This work is simply a continuation of efforts championed by equity warriors like Dolores Huerta, Angela Davis, Cesar Chavez, Fred Korematsu, Harvey Milk, Larry Itliong, California Assemblymember James Ramos, Marsha P. Johnson, Bobby Seale, and thousands of others who have courageously fought for the rights of African Americans, Latinos, Filipinos, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, and Japanese Americans for decades. It also represents the start of a new chapter, a model Racial Equity Framework (Framework) upon which new houses of equitable success might be built, in every state government entity, for future generations of state legislators, within local municipalities, and across the private and nonprofit sectors.

We are excited to present to you this Framework, which is a culmination of almost two years of meetings and travels to hear stories from residents ranging from the Yurok Reservation in Klamath to the Border in El Centro. The Commission heard from subject matter experts, Californians with lived experience, and equity leaders on the tools, best practices, and approaches necessary to advance racial equity and address structural racism in our systems. In a time and space that is anti-diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), anti-Black, anti-immigrant, and anti-trans, it is imperative that we present a Framework that is flexible, in alignment with current state and federal laws, and grounded in community.

Meeting The Moment

While we look to the past for lessons learned, the Commission would be remiss if we did not speak to the monumental challenges we face in our nation today. Immigrant populations who have contributed to the wealth, success, and social and cultural fabric of our state and country live in terror of being targeted. Victories achieved during the Civil Rights Movement are being rolled back. Cruel, reckless raids by the federal agents continue to tear apart families throughout the state, with no concern for human dignity or resolution.

National attacks on voting rights, fear-mongering tactics, and targeted silencing of marginalized communities in other states combine to diminish the voices, votes, security and health of every Californian. A disproportionate rate of mortality in birth rates correlated with race endures, where Black mothers and children perish at an inexcusable rate. The proliferation of limited access to health care through reductions in coverage and providers, triggers longer waiting times, decreased services, and increased costs for those who already struggled to access basic health needs. Historic and lingering disparities in homeownership drive prolific homelessness in too many cities and expand inequitable wealth gaps that already placed undue burdens on communities of color. Broad, continuing disparities in treatment of historically marginalized communities at the hands of the criminal justice system persist at an alarming rate, years after George Floyd and promises of change. Black and brown residents constitute over 80% of incarcerated Californians. Despite those known realities, the devastating “school-to-prison” pipeline continues to disparately impact Native American, Black, Latino, and foster youth. Media deserts persist across our nation and state. Economic resources, designed and intended to reach historically marginalized communities, are often intercepted, colonized, and “trickled down” at a pace too sluggish to reach those in greatest need. Government engagement with marginalized communities often feels extractive, inauthentic, and performative.

The forementioned issues, as well as many others, have a devastating impact on communities’ trust in government, at national, state, and local levels, especially within communities of color. Headwinds are strong. Hardships distress families. Hope is diminutive. Yet, our state remains committed to meeting the moment in history with courage, fortitude, and strength.

Forging a California for All

We are committed to actualizing a California for All. The Commission embraced this work passionately, boldly, because we believe that California is special, and its residents deserve every single opportunity to thrive. In our state, we still believe that all humans are created equal, and that they are endowed with certain inalienable human rights. We still believe in opportunities for all, that no population is too small to count, and that it’s still important to look out for all our neighbors. California has always led the nation, and we will continue to lead courageously, in the face of adversity. We will lead by repairing the harm of the past. We will lead by ensuring maximum participation by communities in our government systems. We will lead by anticipating future disparities and working to proactively mitigate damages.

This Framework will serve as a guide for those aspirations. We acknowledge that this is only a starting point – there is much more to be done. We call upon the Governor and the California Legislature to understand the need for stronger accountability and the Commission’s intent to continue to research how an Office of Racial Equity can support accountability and the institutionalization of racial equity in state government. We encourage state government entities to embrace the framework and to evolve the recommendations that best fit the needs of the people within their care. We implore local municipalities to proactively look for ways to maximize accessibility to their budget processes and data. We trust all interested parties to continue the perpetual dialogue with historically marginalized communities, and for government entities to make substantive changes based on their ongoing feedback and engagement.

The Commission looks forward to continuing to implement its charge outlined in Executive Order N-16-22 and the Framework with courageous partners around the state. The work of the Commission does not end with the publication of the Framework. To keep this work at the forefront of California’s story of success, we will produce an annual report with new/updated tools and approaches, reflections of ongoing dialogues with community, and data that supports our state’s monitoring of its efforts to advance equity. State government, local municipalities, and other interested parties are cordially invited to continue to share stories and best practices as they implement the Framework. These actions will demonstrate our collective commitment to creating a more equitable homeland, a California for All, where every person in the state can receive the same high-quality services and resources without fear.

California has always charted our own course of greatness. We own our rich destiny today. We stand firmly on the values that have made us a golden opportunity for people throughout the nation and across the globe. The Framework is just the beginning. We shall still – overcome.

With Trust and Respect,



Traco Matthews, Chair

On behalf of the State of California Racial Equity Commission