April 17, 2025

Subject:	**Racial Equity Commission February 20, 2025 Budget Equity Committee Meeting Minutes**
Prepared By:	**Joyce Chiao, Consultant, Abundance**
Reviewed By:	**Toya Davis, Operations Manager, Racial Equity Commission**

Recommended Action

Approval of the February 20, 2025, Racial Equity Commission Budget Equity Committee Meeting Minutes.

Racial Equity Commission Budget Equity Committee February 20, 2025 - Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Welcome

A. CALL TO ORDER: Committee Lead Maldonado called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM. Shared a reminder that the Commission condemns acts of hate and discrimination. Committee Lead Maldonado shared the CA vs Hate resource line.

B. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA

C. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM: Quorum Met; 4/4 Commissioners Present

Commissioners Present:

1. Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado, Committee Lead (Virtually)
2. Commissioner Candis Bowles (Virtually)
3. Commissioner John Kim (Virtually)
4. Commissioner Jolie Onodera (Virtually)

D. PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #2: Public Comment on matters not on the agenda

No public comment.

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of May 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado, Committee Lead

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Committee Discussion

No Committee discussion.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Onodera and seconded by Commissioner Kim.

Motion passes (4-0-0*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Agenda Item #4: Overview of the California Budget Process and Committee Discussion

Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado, Committee Lead

Chris Hoene, Executive Director, California Budget & Policy Center

Committee Discussion

Maldonado: Expressed appreciation for Chris Hoene and his presentation.

Bowles: Inquired about the steps required to change the budget process.

Hoene: Shared that changing the budget process happens by ballot process.

Bowles: Asked for information on any groups or papers written on changing the budget process.

Hoene: Noted that resources are not centralized. Offered to share information, including reform recommendations, from the California Budget & Policy Center.

Onodera: Inquired about recommendations for making the budget process more transparent and digestible.

Hoene: Highlighted that budget process became more transparent during COVID-19 as information moved online. Caveated that process became less accessible online again following the pandemic. Noted one opportunity to grow equity in the budget process is to invite more experts to speak on equity and people impacts during budget hearings.

Kim: Asked for Chris Hoene's perspective on strategies to incorporate racial equity framework in budgeting process, whether through the legislature as part of the trailer bill process or focusing on department staff to implement.

Hoene: Shared that the strategy likely requires both paths. Highlighted budget impact statement as one area for the framework to integrate into the budget process. Noted that opportunities may exist with embedding racial equity into the administrative approach.

Kim: Responded with interest in exploring opportunities to bring the racial equity framework into the policy that comes before the budget process.

Maldonado: Provided update as Committee Lead to reduce the scheduled break to five minutes and limit post-break discussion, given the timing of the meeting.

Hoene: Acknowledged that exploring racial equity impacts can be facilitated through the policy process that runs between January through September. Noted that this effort in the policy

process does not necessarily work in administrations that use budget process as a vehicle for the policy process.

Bowles: Asked for insights on whether the current budget process considers need and where the dollars should be allocated based on services that are being funded.

Hoene: Described consideration about need and equity in the process as happening through subcommittee chairs and members of the legislature who think about affected populations. Noted that this process of consideration is currently dependent on those elected. Noted the need for a formal administrative process that ensures a racial equity analysis continues, regardless of the commitment of elected individuals.

Kim: Emphasized the need for a formal process, rather than a case-by-case basis or reliance on specific individuals.

Maldonado: Asked about opportunities to impact racial equity at the administrative agency level, not just by the Legislator and finance.

Hoene: Affirmed that impact can happen at the administrative agency level. Reiterated the need to formalize a process.

Public Comment

Maria Barakat of The Greenlining Institute, Sarah Lamlen of Hayward Recreation and Park District.

Agenda Item #6: 15-Minute Recess

Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado, Committee Lead

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Committee Lead Maldonado called a recess at 11:17 AM.

Committee Lead Malonado called the meeting to order at 11:22 AM.

Committee Lead Maldonado called for a 5-minute recess to adhere to schedule.

Agenda Item #5: Budget Equity Tools

- Returned to Agenda Item #5 after the recess.

Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado, Committee Lead

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Sarah Lawton, Director of the Online Community, Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)

Fireside Chat Discussion

Estes: What are some key components of a budget equity toolkit, and what part of the implementation process are often missed when incorporating an equity lens into the budget?

Lawton: Began by acknowledging the work of the many experts, practitioners, and contributors of the GARE online community. Racial equity tools are both a process and a product. The budgets are some of the most impactful policies that government creates annually. Practicing equity in budgeting is an opportunity to build staff capacity. Budget equity tools have evolved over time to become more embedded components in the budgeting process. GARE utilizes the framework of targeted universalism. Also need targeted strategy, such as including a statement of opportunity for specific communities at the program level. Important to establish goals and indicators of desired results. Build relationships for partnership and community engagement to analyze budget proposals. Address root cause, and prioritize and sequence interventions.

Estes: What types of indicators do we need to understand whether we are moving budget equity forward?

Lawton: Analyze and disaggregate data to understand who is or is not experiencing specific conditions. Enables you to be more directive about strategies. Something that is often missed in the budget process is engaging both departmental expertise and the expertise of those impacted by the process. Dashboards can map areas geographically to better understand what is happening within communities. Can be used internally to understand how to better prioritize funds and externally as an accountability tool for the public. Can use matrices in program evaluation. Can use tools that focus on operating budgets and capital investments. Data can identify communities that have been under-resourced, opportunities for investment, and successes. Think about data as not only to tell the story of fiscal stewardship but also accountability. Discuss impact of programs.

Estes: Are there any other states you are aware of that are making good progress on budget equity? What is contributing to their success, and what are common challenges?

Lawton: There are good efforts happening in different states. However, in terms of a statewide budget equity initiative that brings together departments, California has a real opportunity to lead. Agree with Chris Hoene that connecting budget equity tools with those who are closer to implementation is critical.

Estes: What are your top two takeaways in five words or less?

Lawton: Start where you are. Know your next step. Keep going. Equity work is iterative. Keep normalizing. Operationalizing, visualizing.

Committee Discussion

No Committee discussion.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #7: ACTION: Discussion of Key Considerations and Additional Research

- Due to the limited timing of this agenda item, the Committee agreed that more time for discussion was needed in future meetings. No action was taken for this agenda item.

Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado, Committee Lead

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Joyce Chiao, Consultant, Abundance

Committee Discussion

Maldonado: Four overarching buckets: 1) Prioritization, 2) Transparency, 3) Input, 4) Accountability. Research the differentiation between recommendations impacting the legislative process and administrative and regulatory level.

Kim: First, build a database framework that uplifts the communities' needs by geography and a rubric to allocate funding so that funding is equitably distributed. Second, anticipate budget shortcomings and proactively plan to mitigate the impact of budget gaps on the most vulnerable communities. Third, build a playbook to ensure consistent promotion of engagement and accessibility in the budget process.

Onodera: Agree with the four buckets from Commissioner Malonado. Interested in researching Los Angeles model that Commissioner Kim mentioned.

Maldonado: Interested in understanding whether there are existing tools that are highly-interactive and accessible.

Bowles: Agree with Commissioner Kim. Can be a tool that helps us navigate this moment.

Maldonado: Of the four categories, accessibility is an overarching umbrella. Explore technology and tools that could be useful. Want to understand whether something can be implemented in the long run or is incremental. Important to include protocols in implementation.

Estes: Emphasize developing tools and process changes in sustainable, realistic steps.

Kim: Limited authority as a Commission. Database tool could be a useful resource for legislators to include in their bills. Audience for database could be broad.

Estes: Explore implementation and technical assistance needs of departments to encourage sustained adoption and implementation of the tool.

Maldonado: Directive as Committee Lead to not vote on action item.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #8: Next Steps for Staff Action

Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado, Committee Lead

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Committee Discussion

Bowles: Added recommendation for a ballot measure that requires use of the tool. Use of the tool needs to become part of the budget process, not dependent on department.

Agenda Item #9: Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.