

To: California Racial Equity Commissioners

From: Racial Equity Commission Staff

Re: Framework Development Committee Meeting Report – March 20, 2025

Commissioners in Attendance: Dr. Manuel Pastor and Yolanda R. Richardson (virtual)

Committee Recap

- Commissioner Dr. Pastor facilitated the Framework Committee meeting.
- Commissioners heard from Stephen Menendian, Assistant Director from the Othering and Belonging Institute from UC Berkeley.

Key Takeaways

The Framework Development Committee heard from guest presenter Stephen Menendian on communications and best practices for implementing racial equity strategies.

- The four elements of belonging: agency, connection, recognition, and inclusion
- Discussed legal parameters including Prop 209, Equal Protections Clause, Title VI, and Title VII
 - Prop 209: state shall not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of race, sex color, nationality, in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting (Legislative Analyst's Office, Proposition 209 1996).
 - Equal Protections Clause of U.S. Constitution: requires states to practice equal protections, to govern impartially (National Archives, 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Civil Rights 1868).
 - Title VI: Prohibits discrimination on the basis of color and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance (Civil Rights Division U.S. Department of Justice, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act 1964).
 - Title VII: Protects employees as applicants from employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act 1964).
- Race conscious policies are broadly permitted under the law as long as it's race neutral, does not give preferential treatment based on race. Race can be part of a goal, or a factor considered but not at the individual level.

Design Principles

- Design principles of the "positive sum" not "zero sum" in other words, when one option gains the other option loses. However, many policies and programs are aimed at racial inequality can benefit or serve a larger population, positive sum.

- The focus on systems and structures rather than people produces a better fit between the problem and solution. Targeted Universalism is a policy and program design process that sets universal goals but establishes implementation strategies aimed at different groups or communities. It rejects a one-size-fits-all approach in terms of implementation and helping groups reach the universal goal.

Next Steps

- Staff will further expand and build upon elements of initial Framework outline including structural elements, legal outlines or references made to existing systems to ensure the framework can be effectively implemented and withstand an evolving environment. In addition, the framework should focus less on process and more on impact and outcomes, use plain language and integrate lived experiences, and include an explanation of how all people can benefit (positive sum and targeted universalism).

Intersection with the Framework and Commission Strategy

- Considerations for the framework include identifying and incorporating key elements of current structural and legal parameters, emphasis for use of plain language and lived experiences, references of targeted universalism, and additional research on best practices on advancing equity.

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