



Racial Equity Commission Meeting Minutes – March 2026

March 18, 2026

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Agenda Item #1: Welcome

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Traco Matthews called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He confirmed that quorum was not met, with five of eight commissioners present, and noted that no formal votes or actions could take place. Chair Matthews provided a statement condemning acts of hate and discrimination and shared information about the CA vs Hate reporting line. He also provided an overview of meeting logistics, including instructions for public comment.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMMUNITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

C. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA

D. REMARKS FROM DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

E. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Five commissioners were virtually present: Traco Matthews, Gabriel Maldonado, Dr. Manuel Pastor, Amy Tong, and Simboa Wright. Commissioners not in attendance were: Virginia Hedrick, Yolanda Richardson, and Angelica Salas. Because fewer than a quorum was present, no formal votes or actions could be taken during this meeting.

Commissioners present:

1. Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado
2. Commissioner Traco Matthews
3. Commissioner Dr. Manuel Pastor
4. Commissioner Simboa Wright
5. Commissioner Amy Tong

F. PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

No public comments on Agenda Item #1.

Agenda Item #2: Public Comment on Matters Not on the Agenda

No public comment on Agenda Item #2.

Agenda Item #3: Consent Agenda

No Action: The consent agenda included the approval of October 14, 2025, and December 17, 2025, meeting minutes, and consideration of proposed bylaws and committee appointments. Due to the lack of quorum, no vote was taken on the consent agenda.

Agenda Item #4: Budget Equity Committee Report

Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado, Committee Lead

Commissioner Maldonado highlighted three areas in accordance with the executive order, for the Department of Finance to consider further engagement of technical assistance: Transparency, an establishment of a public facing digital dashboard that shows allocations of expenditures including disaggregated data and summaries of the budget to educate the public. Effectiveness: strengthening the process of community input and engagement due to their expertise from lived experience and insightful strategies implemented at local levels can be a part of the budget planning process. Budget Equity Index: Consider race, quality of life, and health indicators that direct where disparities are present to establish an accurate tool for how funding can be allocated. Commissioner Pastor expressed how community cares about transparency of how money is spent and accountability, this is how racial equity gets achieved by state agencies.

Agenda Item #5: Update on the Memo on an Office of Racial Equity

Manpreet Dhillon Bhar, Senior Researcher, Vital Research

Manpreet Dhillon Bhar presented a memo exploring the potential of established an office of racial equity in California to help sustain the Commission's work to be longstanding after its sunset. Vital Research met with key individuals, conducted a review of relevant policy and practice-based gray literature. The brief was built on prior policy memos that have been presented by various entities and highlighted key considerations to the Commissioners for long-term sustainability. This included the benefits and challenges of an office of racial equity, potential roles of the office, and their importance. The memo also included references to other states that provide high-level funding considerations and concluded with recommended next steps. The recommendations included the importance of shared governance and community engagement so racial equity can be operationalized in government decisions. Although a question to explore is whether an Office of Racial Equity that is designed with community input can help sustain the Commission's legacy and maintain racial equity at the center of California's state government for the future.

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Commissioner Dr. Pastor asked about anticipated issues that could come up and if there were city or state models to draw from?

Manpreet: Acknowledged one of the biggest issues is the process of establishing an office and where the office would be housed. The memo includes examples from other states, local jurisdictions, and case studies approaches.

Agenda Item #6: Chairman's Report

Traco Matthews, Chair, Racial Equity Commission

Chair Matthews provided updates regarding Commission operations and ongoing projects, and introduced newly appointed Commissioner Amy Tong, highlighting her extensive experience in government operations and equity work, having served as Secretary of California Government Operations and Senior Counselor to the Governor of California. Commissioner Tong said that she was "excited to join the Commission." All commissioners present welcomed Commissioner Tong to the Commission.

Chair Matthews also introduced Adrianna Brooks, the Commission's new Program Manager, and her role in "leading the staff, planning and execution of programming in alignment with the framework, including technical assistance and evaluation."

Chair Matthews acknowledged the departure of former Executive Director Dr. Larissa Estes, highlighting her leadership's role in the foundation for the Racial Equity Framework, which is continuously being implemented. Chair Matthews, along with Commissioners Pastor, Wright, and Maldonado, expressed their gratitude to Dr. Estes for her work with the Commission and beyond.

Agenda Item #7: Community Engagement

Community Engagement Update:

Dylyn Turner-Keener, Program Analyst, presented the Community Collaborative Conference model, which will convene stakeholders across sectors to foster dialogue, share best practices, and support implementation of the Racial Equity Framework. The approach emphasizes trust-building, particularly in historically underrepresented and underserved communities. The Community Collaborative Conference Goals included:

- Facilitating meaningful networking between community members, changemakers, advocates, and local government stakeholders
- Creating opportunities for resource sharing and collective problem-solving across regions in support of the Racial Equity Framework
- Cultivating a collaborative space that encourages connection, partnership, and coordinated action as a form of community engagement

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Budget and Funding

The Racial Equity Commission staff is currently utilizing a budget of \$27,000 for community engagement in 2026. While funding constraints limit the expansion of outreach, staff are exploring strategies to leverage philanthropy and internal resources to maximize impact.

2026 Engagement Locations

Proposed meeting locations include Central Valley, San Diego, San Bernardino, the Central Coast, and Sonoma. Focus groups are planned for areas east of the Sierra, the South Bay, Shasta and Siskiyou counties, and Bishop. Financial costs for Klamath and Bishop Meet-n-Greets are anticipated to be higher due to challenges of network inconsistencies, and limitations on physical outreach, and the locations being in rural areas.

2026 Community Outreach Proposed Strategy:

Senior Program and Grant Administrator at Global Urban Strategies, Domonique Dunnick, presented a data informed Community Outreach Plan, that highlighted a coordinated approach to statewide engagement focused on equity, accessibility, and regional inclusion. The strategy was designed to strengthen relationships between communities, advocacy organizations, and government agencies through intentional, place-based engagement.

The strategy includes six key components:

1. Multimodal access (digital, low-tech, and in-person).
2. Co-implementation efforts: Partnerships with government agencies, schools, libraries, clinics, transit agencies, and tribal programs.
3. Language access and accessibility as core requirements.
4. Early activation and support of trusted messengers (standardized toolkits and stipends if possible).
5. Participation supports things such as childcare, transportation, and flexible meeting options.
6. A consistent messaging framework with a clear purpose, call to action, and follow-up.

Community Outreach Plans uses an engagement life cycle for consistency it guides Commission staff logistical planning for before, during, and after engagement sessions. Before events, staff confirm partners, localize materials, and launch outreach early.

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During events, they prioritize listening, accessibility, and multiple ways to provide input. Afterward, they share summaries, debrief with partners, and identify lessons learned. It also includes repeatable tools such as trusted messenger toolkits, FAQs, outreach templates, accessibility checklists, neighborhood targeting guides, event readiness checklists

Domonique stated that the strategy is “designed to support statewide participation while allowing the Commission to adapt it to local conditions.”

The outreach plan incorporates both urban and rural engagement, with tailored strategies to address geographic and demographic differences. Efforts will include partnerships with local organizations, targeted outreach in priority regions, and the integration of multilingual resources to ensure broad participation. Lastly, success is measured using both quantitative metrics (reach, attendance, participation) and qualitative feedback from partners and communities.

Commissioners expressed concerns about the funding support, the use of local unions to help increase attendance for engagement sessions and acknowledged the need for trauma informed safety considerations.

Agenda Item # 8: Next Steps for Staff Action

Staff will:

- Refine Community Engagement Strategy
- Receive updates from Vital Research

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by common consent at 11:50 AM.