To: California Racial Equity Commissioners

From: Racial Equity Commission Staff

Re: Data Committee Report to the Commission – July 17, 2024

Commissioners in attendance:
Traco Matthews, Manuel Pastor, Yolanda Richardson

Committee Recap:
- Commissioner Pastor was elected as committee lead.
- Commissioners heard from Dr. John Dobard (Catalyst California), Jason Lally (Office of Data and Innovation), Edward-Michael Muna (USC Equity Research Institute), and Dr. Ninez Ponce (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research) about data considerations and opportunities to advance racial equity.

Key Takeaways:
The panel was asked questions around common mishaps on using data to reinforce or produce racial inequity, the impact on invisible or undercounted communities, data visualization and accessibility, and the importance of data disaggregation.

- Leveraging trusted messengers and resourcing communities to engage and participate in data collection, management and evaluation (e.g. Census). We must understand what communities want to see in terms of data and then build data visualization based on their needs, train them on how to use data.
- Discussing, confronting, and addressing structural racism is the hard work. As systems we must keep the accessibility of data and visualization easy.
- It is important to consider geographical variability in racial equity data as well as narrative framing. For example, political conditions may impact how data is collected, used, and interpreted.
- Agencies should start with inclusion and work in partnership with community and others to ensure accountability is built into our data systems. The state has an opportunity to provide more guidance around how to balance considerations around privacy and disaggregation.

The panel advised the Committee on the following key data practices to advance racial equity:

- Standardize universal data collection around race, and measure racism.
- Examine what communities need to be engaged and part of data collection. This includes building capacity and engagement, as well as centering small evolving populations with limited capacity.
- Explore what continuous improvement looks like in practice with community.
- Funding is necessary to implement standards and engage community, as well as incentivize compliance and accountability among agencies.
- Elevate best practices in disaggregation so populations are not made invisible. Disaggregation exposes the truth of identities that are hidden, if there is not data it insinuates that there is no problem and thus no policy solution. This results in the needs of marginalized populations, especially smaller populations, goes unaddressed.

Disaggregation also supports better service delivery and community empowerment through inclusion.
- Be attentive to root cases and the systems accountable for producing inequities.

Next steps:
- Staff will work with consultants, the framework development and other commission committees to explore how to frame outcomes.

Intersection with the Framework and Commission Strategy:
- Consider outlining framework on the concept of population, process, and policy measures to drive equity outcomes.
- Policy is an articulated statement of values and should be included as data.