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Mission Statement

The Cal ICH Racial Equity Work Group’s (REWG) mission is to develop inclusive, culturally responsive, and equity-driven solutions to prevent and end homelessness in California. Using a Racial Equity and Decolonizing framework, we work to transform statewide policies, programs, and funding strategies to address the root causes and persistent drivers of racial and social inequities for Black, Brown and Indigenous communities and Tribal Nations.

Guiding Principles

We believe in active listening and meaningful partnerships with diverse community voices. **Therefore**, we actively listen to and collaborate with diverse community members to ensure their voices are heard and valued.

We believe that everyone's voice, especially those marginalized by racial inequities, matters. **Therefore**, we actively and respectfully listen, centering the experiences and perspectives of those most impacted by systemic racism.

We believe in inclusive efforts to create lasting change in homelessness and housing systems. **Therefore**, we extend our efforts to work with those experiencing homelessness, government entities, Tribal Nations, and service providers to create visible and impactful changes in the housing and homelessness landscape.

We believe in courageously challenging and transforming the status quo with innovation and courage. **Therefore**, we boldly shift conventional norms and embrace innovation to address racial equity issues in homelessness response systems and housing solutions.

We believe that every contribution, regardless of its source, is invaluable to the collective efforts of this work group. **Therefore**, we wholeheartedly foster a culture of radical inclusion where every individual, irrespective of their background, skills, or status, is not only accepted but also actively encouraged to

contribute their ideas and perspectives. Ensuring every voice and perspective is not just heard, but actively embraced and holds power towards decision-making.

We believe in a systemic analysis towards advancing racial equity. By examining historical contexts, power dynamics, and resource allocation, we seek to understand and dismantle the structures that perpetuate racial disparities, informed by community validated data. **Therefore**, we educate each other and the community through collaborative education to substantially improve the lives of Black, Brown, Indigenous people, and Tribal Nations.

We believe in honoring the inherent dignity of all and recognizing our humanity, that we all deserve to be respected in all we do, including how we speak about, care about, and engage those impacted by racism. **Therefore**, when engaging with system-impacted people, we pledge to hold ourselves accountable to the importance of preserving well-being throughout our interactions, recognizing every individual has the chance to thrive, free from the constraints of identity-based disadvantages.

We value intersectionality, with action that accounts for gender, class, faith, sexuality, and other forms of identity that intersect with race. **Therefore**, we cultivate a culture of profound inclusion that creates collaborative thinking and brings to light a fuller understanding of systemic racial inequities to promote targeted strategies to address these intersectional complexities.

We believe building trust across all communities is the foundation of this work. **Therefore**, we commit to earning trust through transparent decision making, fostering spaces for open dialogue, and upholding a judgment-free climate.

Community Agreements

Understand the problem before proposing solutions. Easy fixes never work, we need to go to the root of the problem, not the symptoms. Work towards understanding the larger historical context from the perspective of the most marginalized, particularly Black & Indigenous people experiencing homelessness.

Instead of centering yourself in the conversation, center those who are most impacted by white supremacy and other systems of domination. In the Americas context, the most impacted include Black & Indigenous people living at the intersection of other areas of marginalization: poverty, patriarchy, homophobia, transphobia, religious intolerance, ableism, ageism, adultism, etc. (non-judgmental)

Consider and understand the specific complaint that is being raised in the conversation. Is the complaint individual, interpersonal, organizational, institutional, or systemic? If it's a systemic complaint, don't get defensive, this is not about you as an individual, this is about a system. Defensiveness is not helpful to advancing understanding, instead seek to understand more about the system, and how you can be part of dismantling it.

Understand how the systemic lie of white superiority and Black inferiority may live in you, at the individual or interpersonal levels. What are the lies that you still believe about Black or Brown people? Interrogate your biases and assumptions. If you are not in relationship with Black or Indigenous people experiencing

homelessness, ask yourself why? If you resist the leadership of Black or Indigenous people and think you have all the answers, ask yourself why?

Be fully present in the conversation. Stay the whole time. Be present in mind, body, heart, and spirit. Be present on camera as much as possible. Be present to another's humanity, and to your own too. Do not multitask while in conversation.

Challenge the idea, not the person. Try not to be judgmental and be willing to actively listen with a curious and compassionate heart that creates both psychological safety and a liberated space to bring whole selves. Consider asking open questions to deepen your understanding and check your understanding (repeat it back to the person) to ensure you got it right before you offer your own perspectives.

Be willing to take responsibility for impact, regardless of intention! They rightly say that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. If you harmed someone, even unintentionally, take responsibility for it, and if needed extend an apology. A good apology includes a statement of how change will happen. If you've apologized before, but did not change your behavior, then the second or third apology carries very little weight. For your apology to be taken seriously, you have to stop the harm and demonstrate different behaviors.

WAIT: Why Am I (Not) Talking? Take responsibility for how much space you take up. If you normally take up a lot of space, allow some time for others to speak. If you take up too little space, challenge yourself to share, so that others may benefit from your perspectives.

Expect and accept non-closure. White supremacy in the Americas has been around for over 600 years. Knowing that we won't fix it all in one day, we need to be committed to long-term relationships that honors everyone's humanity.

Confidentiality: Share the lesson, not the story. If something moved you deeply, and you want to share it, either ask for consent to share it, or share the lesson and not someone else's story.

We embrace Proposal-Based Decision making as our decision-making tool in order that all voices could be heard to reach more impactful solutions that embodies the values Racial Equity and Social Justice.

Cal ICH Action Plan REWG Purpose and Goals

The general purpose of the Racial Equity Working Group is to implement the priority of the State Council, as described in the Action Plan, of advancing racial equity and addressing acute disparities for communities of color who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent inequality in homelessness systems, funding, services, and strategies.

Initial Working Group priorities detailed in the Action Plan include, but are not limited to:

- Expanding the range of strategies and activities being implemented by State agencies;

- Analyzing data and reporting across State programs to assess equity in access, housing interventions, services, and outcomes for Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color;
- Refining procurement processes to ensure more equitable distribution of funds and reach into historically marginalized communities, including Tribal communities;
- Engaging with State agencies' offices of equity and the Department of Fair Employment and Housing more fully;
- Providing guidance to support communities in not implementing inequitable policies and practices, including criminalization measures and enforcement activities; and
- Other strategies and activities to address inequities in homelessness and housing instability determined by the Working Group.



Decision-Making Process

The REWG uses Proposal Based Decision Making process to co-create decisions. Proposal Based Decision Making creates the opportunity for equity by making space for everyone to provide input and is used to get decisions that stick, decisions that everyone can support and that lead to action.

1. Make a proposal:
Take an idea of what you want and use proposal language to make a proposal. Use a calm, constructive tone of voice. "I propose that ... insert a short phrase describing what you want"
2. Add to or propose new:
Explore whether people want to add to your proposal or make new proposals. Consider the proposals as different options or possible decisions the group might make.
3. See where people are – use a show of thumbs:
Ask people to show where they are by a show of thumbs. Do they support a proposal (thumb up), are they not sure (thumb sideways), or do they not support (thumb down)?
4. Build proposals everyone can support:

Ask people whose thumbs are sideways or down (not sure or don't agree) "what will bring their thumb up"? Listen to their issues and encourage proposals to address the issues. Invite everyone to make proposals that everyone can support, ask people to do the work of finding convergence.

5. All thumbs up! Decision made:
A proposal is adopted and becomes a decision when everyone's "thumb is up"; or, when almost everyone's "thumb is up" and the group decides they have enough support to move forward because the people whose "thumb is not up" are okay with the group going forward.
6. Commit to Action:
The group moves to action by deciding who will do what, when to implement the decision.

Make a proposal	Add to or propose new	Show Thumbs 	Build support	Thumbs up! 	Commit to action
<i>I propose that ...</i>	<i>Do you want to add? Make a new proposal?</i>	<i>Where are you? Support? Don't support? Not sure?</i>	<i>What will bring your thumb up?</i>	<i>Proposal adopted!</i>	<i>Who will do what when?</i>



Membership and Terms

Membership: The REWG will be composed of approximately 17 members, including up to 10 members representing State agencies and departments, and up to 7 community members and partners with experience serving historically disenfranchised populations, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, other persons of color and/or persons with lived expertise of homelessness.

The REWG intends to include representatives with a wide range of views, from State agencies and departments, anti-racist organizations, lived experience action boards and advocacy groups, Continuums of Care (CoCs) or organizations that collaborate closely with the CoCs, Tribal Nations and Tribal Housing Entities, homelessness service providers across all special populations, advocacy groups, community-based groups, as well as others focused on the advancement of equity priorities within the State of California.

Membership balance will not be static and may change, depending on the work of the Working Group. This includes identifying and inviting additional CA state agencies/departments, and identifying and inviting additional community members, to bring fair and needed representation to join the Working Group.

Participating CA Departments and Agencies

Department/Agency	Appointee by Cal ICH Council Member
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation	Sarina Calderon, Associate Director
Governor's Office of Emergency Services	Monisha Avery, Chief Equity Officer
Department of Health Care Services	Glenn Tsang, Policy Advisor for Homelessness and Housing
Department of Housing and Community Development	TBD
Department of Public Health	Wendy Kaplan, Community Inclusion and Partnerships Manager- Office of Health Equity
Department of Rehabilitation	Vivian Hernandez-Obaldia, Regional Director
Department of Social Services	Marta Galan, Branch Manager
Department of Veterans Affairs	Xochitl Murillo, Deputy Secretary
Cal Interagency Council on Homelessness	Vevila Blossoming Bear, Tribal Liaison/Staff Services Manager

Health and Human Services Agency

Community Members

Name	Affiliation
Tiffany Duvernay-Smith	Lived Experience Consultant, LE Advisory Group Coordinator, LAHSA
Ingrid Granados	Lived Experience Consultant
LeeAnn Hatton	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me Wuk Indians of California, Community and Social Services Administrator
Veronica Lewis	Director, Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System (HOPICS)
Earl Simms	Lived Experience Consultant, Executive Director, Restorative Community Solutions
Nadeja Steager	Executive Director, Community Health Leadership Council
Vacant	

Terms

REWG membership will be two-year terms. For the first REWG term, Cal ICH staff will plan to stagger membership to ensure continuity across community and state members. In practice, this will mean about half of the members in the initial REWG installed in April 2023 will have a two-year membership (ending in April 2025) while the other half will stay on for a third year (ending in April 2026).

Cal ICH Council Members who have designated an appointee from their department/agency, will have the ability to re-appoint that same staff representative or appoint a new staff representative upon the term completion.

After the initial round of members rotates out, new members will have two-year terms going forward.

Members can renew their two-year term once, up to a total of five consecutive years of service. If a member has served a total of five years and wants to serve again, they must have a one-year period of rotating off the REWG before being appointed or applying to join again.

Timeline

Announcement of Community Nominations and Notices requesting Re-Appointments by State Agency/Department will occur annually in January. Nominations and re-appointments will be due annually in February, with review of community members nominations and State Agency/Department re-appointments in March, and installation of new members will occur annually in April, following the outlined terms, nomination, and reappointment process.

By end of January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Nomination Announcement Released • State Agency/Department Re-Appointment Notices Communicated
By end of February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Nominations Due • Re-Appointments by State Agency/Department Due
By end of March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slate of Community Nominations Reviewed, Scored, and Selected Members Determined by REWG • Re-Appointment by State Agency/Department Reviewed and Confirmed by REWG
By end of April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slate of members selected and confirmed invited to April REWG meeting • Slate of members selected and confirmed installed during April meeting

Vacancies

As situations arise, vacancies may occur such as: being unable to overcome barriers to participation, a member resigning, or change of staffing status with the State of California of their appointment from their agency/department, or other scenarios.

When a vacancy occurs for a State of CA department/agency, the membership spot will be open for appointment by the designated Cal ICH Council Member and should be filled within 30 days of the previous member’s departure.

If a vacancy occurs for a community member position, the REWG will identify potential candidates to extend an invitation from the previous pool of community member applicants. If a candidate is not identified from that pool, then recommendations will be made from the entire REWG to make an invitation for membership, with an opportunity to interview the recommended candidate, before installing them as a member. This process should aim to have it completed within 30 days of being notified of a vacancy.

If a candidate is not identified for either options, of recruiting from the last applicant pool or being extended an invitation based upon a REWG member recommendation, the REWG can then open up a public facing application process to meet the need for having community members represented.

Proxies (Proxy is a person who is given the power or authority to do something (such as to vote) for someone else)

REWG members are able to have a proxy attend on their behalf for monthly meetings. Before a proxy is asked to attend, REWG members would notify Cal ICH staff of that proxy attending. The expectation, before appointing a proxy, is for the REWG member to commit to preparing a proxy with the information they need to fulfill their role at that meeting.

The REWG member is responsible for identifying a proxy that has similar qualifications to them. The member is responsible for ensuring that the proxy is fully briefed and informed of how they are to fulfill their role at that meeting.

A proxy may attend on the behalf of a member no more than twice a year.

A proxy may vote on behalf of the member they are representing.

Membership Responsibilities

Time Commitment

The REWG shall meet at such intervals as are necessary to carry out its duties. It is estimated that the REWG will meet up to 12 times per year (once a month), virtually or in person. Outside of the regular meetings, members are asked to work on special activities that align with their interest and expertise.

Meeting cadence will be 90 minutes every fourth Wednesday of the month, unless otherwise decided upon by the REWG.

REWG members commit to participating in at least 75% of total meetings per year (approximately nine meetings a year, depending on how many meetings happen that year). Members who miss more than 25% of meetings per year (approximately three meetings a year, depending on how many meetings happen that year), or miss two back-to-back meetings, will be consulted to identify barriers to their participation and provide needed support to maintain needed participation. Proxies count towards attendance for that member.

Additionally, the REWG may decide to convene at supplemental times to work on specific topics and allow space to inform, solicit input, facilitate discussion, and nurture relationships among REWG members.

REWG members may also be asked to participate in asynchronous work, for example reviewing information ahead of a meeting to prepare for robust discussion or providing further input on a topic addressed in a previous meeting.

Members with lived experience of homelessness who are not receiving outside compensation for their time (e.g., through their employer), may be eligible for compensation for their meeting attendance and any related travel.

Members of the REWG will be required to adhere to a conflict-of-interest commitment. (conflict of interest needs to be drafted)

Governance Structure

Roles within REWG

Co-Chairs

The REWG will have co-chairs; one community member representative and one CA department/agency member appointee, that co-share responsibilities and hold equal roles. Co-chairs will be responsible for creating a shared agreement on how they will divide up the responsibilities and meet the responsibilities together.

Co-Chair Shared Responsibilities

Discuss and design various aspects of the working group (e.g. priorities, nomination process, community engagement activities, etc.)

- Assist in recruitment of department representatives to be appointed by their appropriate Cal ICH Council member to the REWG
- Assist in the recruitment of community representative members to be nominated to the REWG
- Be deeply familiar with the Cal ICH Action Plan, and understand the activities related to the working group
- Review, craft, and agree upon an agenda in advance of each working group meeting with Cal ICH (and technical assistance). **If Co-Chairs are unable to agree on a meeting agenda, Cal ICH will make the determination on the final agenda items.**
- Share facilitation of meetings, including leading the decision-making proposal process with the REWG in its efforts
- Motivate members to participate and engage in efforts
- Advance action items
- Will represent the REWG with the Cal ICH Council
- Utilize conflict resolutions process when needed
- Will ensure the REWG meets the timelines and tasks requested from Cal ICH Council
- Will support a smooth transition from outgoing to incoming Co-Chairs with Cal ICH, through a transition meeting

Cal ICH will be responsible for transitioning, orienting and onboarding Co-Chairs at the beginning of their term.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution steps between co-chairs should consist of the following:

1. Discuss: Co-chairs openly discuss the disagreement and its causes. Seek to resolve on their own. If no resolution is reached, go to step 2.
2. Explore Solutions: Brainstorm potential solutions together with Cal ICH staff and/or any technical assistance available. Seek consensus by striving to reach agreement through mutual understanding. If no resolution is reached, go to step 3.
3. Refer to REWG: If needed, bring the unresolved issue back to the work group for a collective decision through proposal-based decision making.

Liaisons

Interaction with Cal ICH Advisory Committee and Work Groups

When opportunities arise or as fellow Cal ICH work groups and Advisory Committee request REWG interaction, at least two liaisons will be selected by the co-chairs (nomination process below) to represent the REWG. Liaisons should consist of at least one community representative and one CA department/agency representative, to exchange input to and from the REWG, cross-pollinate thinking on racial equity and infuse REWG perspective.

Members representing as liaisons will be responsible to share back information and action items with the REWG during its subsequent meeting, if items are needed to be addressed. Liaisons may not make decisions to take back to their assigned work group, without the decision being fully approved by the REWG. Liaisons will be responsible to fully communicate the agreed-upon perspective of the REWG back to the assigned work group, and not just their own thinking.

Liaisons will have the ability and responsibility to determine if another REWG member may be a better fit for a specific meeting, based upon the subject and needed effort, and communicate that need to the Co-Chairs. One or more members from the REWG who are not the liaisons to that assigned work group, may self-nominate or be asked to join that liaison team based upon desire and subject matter expertise Co-Chairs will determine any additional liaisons.

Interaction with Cal ICH Council

The REWG, being represented by the Co-Chairs, will provide at least one report¹ per year to the Council on REWG discussions, efforts, and recommendations.

Nomination of Roles Within REWG

The following positions described below can only be filled by REWG members, and will be filled through self-nomination or nominations by current members of the REWG.

¹ Report to Cal ICH Council can be created and shared in a variety of different ways, including but not limited to powerpoint presentations, memos, and summary of efforts.

Co-Chairs - Members interested in becoming a Co-Chair can self-nominate by expressing their interest to the REWG as a whole during the REWG meeting agenda that is actioning towards identifying and nominating Co-Chairs.

The following monthly meeting nominees may be asked to present on their desire to fulfill the role of Co-Chair to the REWG. This allows for open discussion with the REWG, and ensures transparency, fairness, and active involvement of its members in selecting co-chairs.

During this same monthly meeting, the working group collectively votes on the Co-Chair nominees, either through a simple majority or proposal-based decision making process.

Co-Chairs will serve one year terms, with serving no more than two consecutive terms. If a current co-chair seeks another term for the second consecutive term, they still must adhere to the nomination process as stated above. Nominations for Co-Chairs will be made in March of every year, with election occurring in April. The exception to this timeline is dependent on the full adoption of the REWG Charter expected in April 2024.

Liaisons - Members interested in becoming a liaison can self-nominate or be nominated by the co-chairs. Nominees may be asked to present on their desire to fulfill the role of liaison to the co-chairs and/or REWG. Co-Chairs will have the ability to both agree on the selection of the work group member to be a liaison. If the Co-Chairs are unable to come to an agreement, the nomination will then be taken to the REWG to collectively vote on the liaison nominees, either through a simple majority or proposal-based decision making process. Co-Chairs may also serve as liaisons.

Liaisons will be identified and serve for a length of time based upon the request from fellow Cal ICH work groups, as determined by the Co-Chairs.

Communication and Coordination

Cal ICH will be responsible for the following items, in coordination with the Co-Chairs:

Members of the Racial Equity Work Group (REWG) will be provided with timely information to assist them in preparing for upcoming discussions.

Meeting dates and times are set at the beginning of the year for the full calendar year, confirming or amending the fourth Wednesdays of every month for 90 minutes. Meeting topics and any meeting materials will be sent approximately one week ahead of each REWG meeting.

Guidance, recommendations, and input provided by the REWG to the Council, and any of its boards and working groups, are shared with the REWG ahead of those meetings with those specific entities.

Reminders are sent ahead of any deadlines for activities between meetings.

Meeting summaries are provided following each meeting.

Updates are provided between meetings as relevant, sharing progress and addressing topics previously discussed.

Amending the REWG Charter

This Charter may be amended as needed. REWG members may propose Charter additions or modifications at a REWG meeting, by submitting a proposed agenda item for the modification to the Co-Chairs and Cal ICH at least one month prior to the next REWG meeting.