

Race Equity Advisory Council

Date: Thursday, March 19, 2026

Time: 6-8 p.m.

Location: NorthPoint Conference Center

Council members present: Farhio Khalif, Amber Shannon, Cedric Dildy, Erikka Ryan, Catherine Bouie, Alejandra Medina, Josephine “Josie” Thao, Raquel Jarabek, Angela Cuellar, Saint Saice, Michiah Van Syckle,

Council members present online: ocho smith, Nathaly Maldonado, Heidi Garrido, Hol Flor, Tai Giwa

Council members not present: Kandis York, Ralphe Yehle, Nathania Amenuvor, Adjoa Kusi- Appiah, Nat Kirk

County Staff: Letty Rogers, Vernona Boswell, Sheng Khang, Mary Ellen Heng (CJCC)

Minutes/Notes:

Approved current month’s agenda: ***April***

Motion: Placed Motion: Seconded

All in favor – motion passed unanimously

Approved previous month’s meeting notes: ***March***

Motion: Placed Motion: Seconded

All in favor – motion passed unanimously

Welcome and introductions

- Members opened the meeting with personal introductions and an overview of the ongoing work of the Racial Equity Advisory Council (REAC).
- Mary Ellen Heng, Director of Corrections, introduced herself and provided a high-level overview of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee (CJCC) and its advisory structure. She expressed a strong interest in establishing a formal partnership with REAC to address and potentially eliminate disparities within the judicial system. Her proposal included designating one REAC member to serve in a dual-role capacity on both bodies to strengthen communication, alignment, and accountability.
 - REAC members affirmed their willingness to collaborate, emphasizing the importance of meaningful engagement and assurance that their recommendations will be integrated into CJCC efforts. The group agreed that CJCC leadership will attend a REAC meeting annually, prior to new representatives assuming dual-role responsibilities. The REAC Co-Chairs will determine which member serves during each cycle.
 - For the first collaboration cycle beginning in 2026, member Michiah Van Syckle will serve as REAC's representative to CJCC. Michiah will report back to the full REAC membership at least twice annually to share progress, insights, and systemic changes emerging from CJCC.

Member Recognition

- Several members completed their two-year term and participated in their final meeting. They were formally recognized and thanked for their service by Hennepin County staff and REAC Co-Chairs and celebrated with acknowledgment and cake.
- Departing members were briefed on the implementation plan for the Reparative Task Force and were invited to remain connected through that work, ensuring continuity of experience and perspective.

Updates and Planning for New Member Integration

- Co-Chairs Erikka and Catherine provided updates regarding incoming REAC members and outlined the onboarding plan for the upcoming cycle.

- Orientation will include:
 - An overview of REAC's mission, roles, and responsibilities.
 - Introduction to ongoing priorities and opportunities for new members to join subcommittees.
 - Alignment on expectations for participation, advisory processes, and communication channels.

Committee Discussion/ Updates:

- Standing committees shared updates on current workstreams, including progress made during the current term and key items requiring transition to incoming members. Each subcommittee reviewed priorities, outstanding tasks, and recommendations to ensure smooth continuity as new members join, and existing members complete their terms.

Adjourn: Motion Placed Motion: Seconded

All in favor – motion passed unanimously