



Race Equity Advisory Council

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026

Time: 6–8 p.m.

Location: NorthPoint Conference Center

Council members present: Catherine Bouie, Jacqueline Lee, Erikka Ryan, Heidi Garrido, Lindsay Pluger, Nathaly Maldonado, Anita Urvina Davis, Cresston Gackle, Josephine Thao, Alejandra Medina, Michiah VanSyckel, Farhio Khalif, Shanessa (Saint) Saice (virtually), Hol Flor (virtually), and Ibrahim Owolabi.

Council members not present: Ralph Yehle, Amber Shannon, Natalie Kirk, Nathania Amenuvor, Ocho Smith, and Calandra Revering.

Count Staff: Letty Rogers, Sheng Khang, Vernona Boswell, Commissioner Irene Fernanado

Minutes

Approval of May 2026 Agenda

Motion: Placed Motion: Seconded

All in favor – motion passed unanimously

Approval of March 2026 and April 2026 Meeting Notes

Motion: Placed Motion: Seconded

All in favor – motion passed unanimously

Welcome and Introductions

- Commissioner appointed new REAC member, Jaqueline Lee.
- Members opened the meeting with personal introductions and an overview of the ongoing work of the Racial Equity Advisory Council (REAC).

Priorities and Strategic Focus

Council members discussed priorities and guiding questions for the upcoming year, including:

- Defining and expressing the Council's values and leadership.
- Using data to inform recommendations and decision-making.
- Identifying who is being served by policies and programs.
- Examining who may be negatively impacted and understanding potential harms.
- Clarifying desired outcomes and determining why Hennepin County should intervene.

- Recognizing differences in legal authority between city and county governments.
- Reviewing progress through annual reports and mid-year check-ins.

Future Speaker Opportunities

- The Council discussed inviting Irene to a future meeting to speak about running for public office or other civic leadership opportunities.

Committee Participation

- Members were reminded that missing a committee meeting does not prevent continued participation in that committee.
- Members are encouraged to stay engaged and communicate with committee leads.

Committee Updates

Housing, Income, and Reparations Committee

Lead: Catherine

- The committee is focused on organization and alignment around key focus areas.
- Beginning next month, members will conduct research and engage with community partners to gather data.
- Ten topics have been assigned for research.
- The committee is working to identify problems, potential solutions, and gaps that can inform future recommendations.
- Meetings are held bi-weekly on Mondays at 6:00 PM.

Immigration Committee

Lead: Alejandra

- A new committee has been established.
- Initial discussions focused on defining priorities and next steps.

Mental Health and Wellness Committee

Lead: Michiah

- The committee met this week.
- Members plan to meet again on June 10th to discuss research findings and proposed ideas.
- Each member is researching topics of interest and potential recommendations.

Juvenile Justice Committee

Lead: Erikka

- The committee is researching domestic violence and gun violence issues.
- Members will conduct individual research and identify additional speakers, resources, or information needed.

Speaker Requests and Information Gathering

- When requesting speakers, members should provide a broad range of available dates and times to improve scheduling flexibility.
- Members were encouraged to reread the Council's annual report and consider feedback received from the previous year.
- Data requests may be a faster alternative to inviting speakers and can provide valuable information for committee work.
- Members may submit recommendations for inclusion in the annual report even if a formal committee has not been created for that topic.

Communication

- Members were encouraged to use Microsoft Teams for committee communication and collaboration.

Elections

The following officers were elected:

- **Chair:** Saint
- **Vice Chair:** Erikka
- **Secretary:** Lindsey

Adjourn: Motion Placed Motion: Seconded

All in favor – motion passed unanimously