

Minutes - Health Equity Commission Meeting

Meeting Details:

Date & Time Aug 19, 2025 ; 3:00 - 5:00 pm

Location Zoom

[Public webpage and materials](#)

Join by Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89146930915?pwd=V3YxRkNoNzk2MUlwTDdyWHFpTIJXUT09>

Meeting ID: 891 4693 0915; **Passcode:** health2025

Join by phone: 719-359-4580; **Meeting ID:** 891 4693 0915; **Passcode:** 5453817885

Commissioners: *Community (10):* Detra Duncan (*absent*), Dindi Gaines, Tina Gonzales, Oswaldo Grenardo, Seyanna Hitt, Ola Kukoyi, Sky Patron, Jacquelyn Stanton, Shawn Turk (co-chair), Melanie Wasserman; *State agencies (12):* Sara Blumenthal, Aaron Green, Sena Harjo (co-chair), Sandy Ho, Tracy Marshall, Gillian McKnight-Tutein, Lacy Monday, Marsha Nelson, Allison Rosenthal, Aisha Rousseau (*absent*), Jill Hunsaker Ryan (ex-officio), Kristin Toombs (*absent*); *Legislative (2):* Rep. Lorena Garcia; Sen. Iman Jodeh.

Recruitment Subcommittee Commissioners: Sara Blumenthal, Jacqueline Stanton, Dindi Gaines, Seyanna Hitt.

Grants Subcommittee Commissioners: Sena Harjo, Shawn Turk, Ola Kukoyi, Gillian McKnight-Tutein, Detra Duncan (*absent*).

CDPHE Staff: Arlen Zamula, Anne Hill, Beck Furniss, Cyril Bennouna, Dorah Labatte, Jesus Rodriguez-Serrano, Lynda Saignaphone, Phuonglan Nguyen, Megan Comer, Meredith Davis, Rachel Bryan-Auker, Dr. Ned Calonge, Emily Roozen, Meghan Guvera.

Guests: Sara Gallo, Rhea Mech, Alexis Harper (CDPS).

Interpreters: Elijah Ayers (ASL/CDPHE), Glory Hawkins (ASL/Linguabee), Tonya Johnson (Spanish/CDPHE), Diego Pons (Spanish/CLC).

I. HEC Subcommittee: Member recruitment (3:00 - 3:30 PM)

Commissioner Stanton shared info about upcoming recruitment cycles in December 2025 and April 2026. The current method is to review applications (submitted via the website) every quarter. However, given that the HEC does not have any current spots open, does the HEC want to review applications quarterly, or is there a better frequency?

Commissioner Blumenthal reviewed the current application questions with the group and asked for feedback on whether a question needs to change and, if so, what it should change to. Another aspect of the application that could change is to require applicants to answer all or some of the questions.

- What unique skills and perspective would you bring to the Health Equity Commission and/or the Data Advisory Work Group?
- How would you use your personal experience and community connections to connect the Office of Health Equity with the community?
- What would you like to achieve through serving on the Health Equity Commission?
- Describe your experience in addressing anti-oppression, systemic and structural racism, and explicit/implicit bias?

Feedback and discussion notes:

- (Hitt) Suggested asking applicants what they hope to learn/gain by being a part of HEC. Currently, the application asks for what they hope to achieve.
- (Stanton et al) Discussed and clarified the intention of the current application process. The standard application asks applicants to share their perspective on the 4 questions as a whole. Applicants may share their thoughts on some, all, or none of the questions. Clarification was provided that these questions are on the applications only. The interview questions are shared in advance.
- Director Zamula confirmed the application will continue to ask those 4 questions, and applicants will continue to have the option to answer some, all, or none of them when submitting their application.

Commissioner Stanton thanked the subcommittee for their feedback, which will be incorporated into the HEC work plan. Additionally, the current HEC work plan includes developing a member handbook to integrate results and decisions made during the June 2025 retreat, including setting term limits for the DAWG, and adding standard operations for when the bylaws are violated. Any changes to HEC operations (and renaming and repurposing the subcommittee to “Member Recruitment and Operations” will need full HEC approval.

Feedback and discussion notes:

- (Stanton) Concerned that this change will add more work to the subcommittee. However, with OHE staff support, it is possible.
- (Gaines) Has this been done before? How much more time for additional work? Answer: Not done before. Since co-chairs wouldn't have to conduct new member application reviews and interviews anymore, this would be a shift in responsibility. Subcommittee work can be split up and spread out. Priorities would be the HEC job description and handbook by 12/31. The

member survey can be a task for the calendar year 2026. (Gaines) Is each member responsible for 1 task? Answer: Members can identify their area of interest and be assigned accordingly. Some tasks, such as developing the HEC job description, will have a deadline for completion.

- (Hitt) Same points raised re time commitment, OHE support, deadlines and timeframe for task completion.
- (Blumenthal) Concerned about capacity and time commitment.
- Note: The subcommittee is encouraged to review the HEC work plan to assess workload. Reminder: OHE staff will provide the draft documents. The subcommittee's responsibility is only to advise on and edit the content.

Commissioner Blumenthal adjourned the subcommittee meeting at 3:30 pm.

II. HEC Subcommittee: Grants (3:30 - 4:00 PM)

Jesus Rodriguez-Serrano, manager of the Health Disparities and Community Grant Program, shared the activities and timeline for the upcoming RFA process, including:

- Grant cycle begins July 1, 2027.
- HEC is invited to get involved early to guide the scoring process and criteria, develop reviewer instructions, help recruit reviewers, champion the review process, and make funding decisions. Options for involvement include:
 - Participate in planning discussions.
 - Provide input on scoring criteria, reviewer guidance, and other areas.
 - Recruit diverse reviewers.
 - Outreach to community organizations that are good candidates for the HDCGP.
 - Appoint reviewers for the PAR-RFA and RFA.
 - Champion the review committee.
 - Deliberate on the top applications.
 - Provide final funding recommendations to CDPHE's BOH.

Feedback and discussion notes:

- (Harjo) Does the HEC have any guidance on appointing reviewers for the RFA applications? Answer: A grant reviewer guideline will be developed and shared with HEC for input.
- (Turk) Are there statutory requirements for reviewers? Answer: HEC bylaws only require reviewers to be approved/appointed by the full HEC.
- (Harjo) Can reviewers from past cycles serve as reviewers again? Answer: A few experienced CDPHE staff and HEC members will be invited to serve as reviewers again. Involving

community reviewers in the grant review process is more complicated, involving issues such as conflict of interest.

Commissioner/co-chair Harjo adjourned the subcommittee meeting at 4:00 pm.

III. HEC General Meeting (4:00 - 5:00 PM)

A. Opening and operations

CDPHE Executive Director and HEC ex officio commissioner, Jill Hunsaker Ryan thanked the HEC and OHE staff for continuing to produce high-quality work. She looks forward to working with new community commissioners. Acknowledging there are state budget challenges, Dir. Ryan assured that any impact to the grant program or program adjustments will continue to be communicated to grantees and HEC. Dir. Ryan is committed to not asking grantees to do more work for less funding. So far, the funding from federal grant awards received by CDPHE has been steady.

B. Welcoming new community commissioners

Commissioner/co-chair Turk welcomed four new community commissioners and asked them to introduce themselves to the full HEC.

- Sky Patron (they/them): Health Equity Manager of One Colorado, the state's leading LGBTQ+ advocacy organization. They are a registered nurse and are currently finishing a degree in Nurse Practitioner. They're also the co-chair of the DAWG subcommittee.
- Dindi Gaines (all pronouns): Housing Stability Coordinator with Adams County State Government. She was raised in Montbello (Denver) and has extensive experience in fair housing policy.
- Seyanna Hitt (she/her): She serves as development director and outreach coordinator for the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition. She brings experience in disability advocacy as well as a background in domestic violence and sexual violence prevention. She is a Colorado native and an "Army brat" who's lived in many different communities.
- Detra Duncan (she/her): Absent today.

Commissioner Marshall advises new members to give themselves grace to get through the learning curve. Commissioner Nelson appreciates being on the HEC and working across transportation and equity.

C. Work plan and subcommittee updates

1. Grants subcommittee updates (Harjo):

- The next RFA cycle starts on 7/1/2027 for both A35 and SB181 funding streams. The funding period will be 7/1/27 - 6/31/30. See the presentation for a timeline table.
- 2-part process: PAR-RFA and full RFA for top-scoring applications in PAR process.
- April-Dec 2025: Program planning with input from HEC.
- Jan-Jun 2026: RFA programmatic and application design.

- Jul-Aug 2026: PAR-RFA released (6 weeks), HEC reviewers appointed.
- Aug-Oct 2026: PAR-RFA review and scoring (15 days).
- Oct-Nov 2026: RFA opens (Oct) and closes (Nov) - Only top-scoring PAR-RFA applicants will be invited to apply.
- Nov 2026 - Feb 2027: HEC reviewers appointed (Nov), application review, scoring, and deliberations (Jan); HEC recommendations (Jan) for BOH approvals (Feb).
- Mar-Jun 2027: Contract negotiations and work plans finalized.
- Jul 1, 2027: Work begins.
- Questions/comments from HEC:
 - (Rosenthal) How much is available for the next funding cycle and how might it compare to current levels? Answer: SB 181 funds are in law so it's expected to be steady. A35 funding from tax revenue can be more variable.
 - Reminder: There are no statutory requirements for the selection of reviewers. Review criteria will be developed and communicated in advance. Each application will be evaluated by multiple reviewers.

2. Member recruitment subcommittee updates (Stanton):

- With the HEC seats all filled, the subcommittee recommends shifting the subcommittee's work toward HEC operations.
- The full HEC will vote to approve the shift of the subcommittee work to "HEC Member Recruitment and Operations" during the Sept meeting. The new operational tasks under consideration are:
 - Update the HEC new member application and review process.
 - Revise the HEC member handbook.
 - Develop a job description.
 - Develop a member survey.
- Questions/comments from HEC:
 - (Harjo) Are there any jazzy ideas for a new subcommittee name?
 - (Blumenthal): possibly the ROC - Recruitment and Operations Committee

3. Data advisory work group (DAWG) subcommittee updates (Zamula/Dr. Calonge):

- The DAWG has been working with the Disease Control and Public Health Response Division in CDPHE to add new data elements to the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS), including sexual orientation/gender identity, disability, and race/ethnicity. This work was funded partly through HB22-1157.
- The Division has been working with data vendors to implement technical changes to CIIS and update data interfaces for approximately 1.5 years.
- The next step in DAWG work includes prioritizing other CDPHE data systems for integration of the new demographic data elements. CDPHE is also working on a data privacy statement and a charter for the DAWG to ensure statutory requirements are met.

- HEC will also be invited by Dr. Ned Calonge, CDPHE's Chief Medical Officer, to participate in a data conference in the fall in partnership with the Colorado School of Public Health. More information to come.
- Dr. Calonge shared the importance of identifying ways to capture demographic information that address the limitations of inferential statistics and statistical significance, especially when working with small population numbers.
- Questions/comments from HEC: None.

4. Health equity (SB181) report subcommittee (Rosenthal):

- Feedback on the policy analysis draft for the rural report is completed. Feedback on the qualitative analysis draft will be completed in September. Groundswell for Good will present findings during the November HEC meeting.
- Commissioner/co-chair Harjo and Director Zamula will present on the rural report at a symposium in early September convened by the Colorado School of Public Health.
- A request by the El Pomar Foundation to present on data equity is under consideration by CDPHE and OHE. There are 3 sessions specific to "priority" populations on 10/29, 11/4, and 11/12. More details will be provided by early September. Please let Dorah.Labatte@state.co.us know if you're interested in co-presenting.
- Questions/comments from HEC: None.

5. SB-181 subcommittee (Marshall)

- CDOT will present on its agency plan to close out all agency presentations to HEC.
- The website for the state agency plans is up and live. Currently working with state agencies to identify how to promote the plans and work. So far, CDEC, CDLE, CDHS, and CDHE have expressed interest in incorporating the site into individual agency websites.
- Working with OHE to write a manuscript on the CO state agency equity strategic plan process. Initial approval from CDPHE leadership is in progress.
- Since this work is wrapping up, should this subcommittee be sunsetted? Ongoing promotion can be a task for the full HEC. A final decision can be made at a later time.
- Questions/comments from HEC: None.

D. Public comment - None.

Action Items

Action: Next meeting: Sep 16th. The DAWG subcommittee will meet 3:00-4:00 pm, followed by the full HEC meeting at 4:00-5:00 pm. The meeting is adjourned at 5:00 pm.



Next Meeting Date Sep 16, 2025