

Durham City-County Racial Equity Commission By-Laws

Section 1. Purpose, Organization and Operation

The purpose of the Durham City-County Racial Equity Commission is to examine, enhance recommend, and advocate for policies and legislation to eliminate the burden of systemic and institutional inequities and racism in Durham County. The Commission has been formed upon the authority vested in the County Board of Commissioners and City Council.

The primary functions of the Commission:

- To advise the City and County regarding the implementation of the City-County specific recommendations from the City of Durham Racial Equity Taskforce Report.
- To advise the City and County regarding the implementation of the City and County's racial equity action plans, developed in tandem with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity national framework, to encourage progress on equitable outcomes that might disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and other POC as well as low-income residents.
- To establish communication with community residents, relay progress on plan implementation and prioritize community interests to integrate into racial equity initiatives.
- To serve in an advisory capacity to racial equity staff of the City, County and educational entities in Durham to advance racial equity.
- To advise racial equity staff of the City, County and educational entities in Durham in the development and implementation of a racial equity evaluation based on Task Force report and jurisdictional racial equity action plan recommendations.
- To review plans and reports of equity staff and encourage public input on racial equity action plans.
- To pursue data, research, and policy recommendations to advance racial equity.
- To uphold government accountability towards achieving racial equity and promoting anti-racism practices.

As the Commission is representative of the community, it will also function primarily in service to the community. Engaging the broader community in the Commission's activities, initiatives, and processes will be important and central to the overall function of the Commission. Community engagement will be an active component and requirement for all decision-making.

The Commission shall be non-political and shall not support any political party or candidate for public office. The organization shall not directly or indirectly participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Section 2. Membership

The Commission is a seventeen-member advisory group made up of fifteen residents appointed by the County Board of Commissioners and City Council. The Board of Commissioners and City Council shall appoint seven (7) members each to the Commission. City Council and the Board of Commissioners shall appoint one youth each age 16-24. One additional youth enrolled in Durham Public Schools shall be selected by Durham Public Schools and/or the Durham Office on Youth.

Members should represent diverse social, economic, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religious affiliation, age, and racial and ethnic composition of the County. Eight (8) members shall identify as leaders and/or organizers of community-rooted organizations. All members shall be residents of Durham County. All three City Council wards of Durham shall be represented.

Racial equity lead staff for Durham County, City of Durham, and Durham Public Schools, as determined

by the vested authorities are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commission.

Section 3. Leadership

Two co-chairs with equal authority will be designated among the Commission membership. Co-chairs shall represent the diverse racial and ethnic composition of the County. The Commission will vote to determine its co-chairs annually.

The co-chairs will alternately call and preside over meetings ensuring that inclusive discussion/dialogue and antiracist principles and practices are followed at meetings. Co-chairs shall engage the full Commission and vote on the decision to establish any ad-hoc committees to pursue specific areas of interest as deemed necessary and appropriate for advancing racial equity.

All Commission members will undergo racial equity training to establish common language and a shared framework for understanding the historical and contemporary dynamics of race, racism and racial equity. Members will also participate in an annual retreat to share their knowledge, experiences and their commitments to eliminating racism which will help foster mutual trust and understanding within the Commission.

Section 4. Meetings

Regular Meetings: Regular meetings shall be held once per month unless voted on by the membership. The Commission may meet more frequently.

Quorum: Quorum shall consist of a simple majority (51% or more) of currently active Commission membership.

Voting: All decisions of the Commission will be made by simple majority if the meeting has a quorum. In the event of no quorum, decisions must be postponed. Leading up to a vote, there will be extensive consideration for consensus building that allows for differences to be explored and deeper understandings and greater unity to be achieved. This consensus building and generation process will be determined and coincide with the community vetting process that will be used in advance of all voting decisions.

Open Meetings: Members will receive the agenda via e-mail, prior to the monthly meeting. All meetings will be open to the public and will be pre-announced through the County Clerk's Office. Individuals wishing to be heard may do so and the amount of time each individual will be allotted will depend on the number of persons wishing to be heard at any given meeting.

Section 5. Term limits

The term of office for each member is three years. Members serve at the pleasure of City Council and the Board of County Commissioners and each body reserves the right to remove and/or replace any member that it appoints.

Section 6. Reporting

The Commission is required to submit an annual written report to the Board of County Commissioners, City Council and Board of Education. Report shall include data, accomplishments, ad-hoc committee reports, and objectives for the upcoming year, and annual attendance of membership.

Section 7. Attendance

It is expected that members appointed to the Commission will regularly attend its meetings. Members shall attend at least 50% of the meetings in a calendar year and cannot exceed 3 consecutive unexcused absences or 5 consecutive excused absences. When a member has missed three consecutive meetings, the Chair and each Governing Body will be notified.

Section 8. Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Commission by a two-thirds vote of those members present, providing that a notice of the proposed amendment shall be distributed to all members at least ten days prior to the meeting. All bylaw amendments shall be subject to the approval of the Board of County Commissioners and City Council.