

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Community Outreach Subcommittee Meeting Summary: December 13, 2024

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie started the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website.](#)

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Qi Zhou
- Irene de Barraicua
- Nelson Hawkins, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Chair

Members absent:

- Emily Burgueno, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Vice Chair
- Darlene Franco

Quorum was established.

Action: Approval of Past Meeting Summaries

Approval of July 23, 2024, and October 7, 2024, meeting summaries.

Task Force Discussion:

No discussion.

Action:

Member Zhou moved to approve the July and October meeting summaries. Chair Hawkins seconded the motion.

Motion passes (3-0-2*) *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Working Session

Community Outreach Overview

Staff reviewed the Task Force's outreach and engagement efforts, including:

- Project website
- Email list
- Written communication
- Event and conference participation: attended two events; two upcoming conferences include sessions hosted by the Task Force
- Site visits: 13 attended to date
- Guest speakers: 13 hosted to date
- Land Access Experiences Survey, available in English, Spanish, and Chinese
- Community engagement sessions
- Outreach toolkit, which includes: a two-page informational flyer, a fact sheet, QR codes to the website, business cards, and outreach language templates

Member de Barraicua requested that the Central Coast Small Farmer, Rancher, and Fisherfolk Forum that she attended in October of 2024 in Santa Maria, CA also be noted in the tracking of the Task Force's engagement. Staff emphasized their willingness to support members who attend other events or engage in outreach efforts and asked that members share this information, such as through email or a phone call, to help track outreach activities.

Staff reviewed tasks accomplished to date in the community outreach work plan and the proposed plan for 2025, noting that community engagement sessions will occur from April to August. A member asked if surveys will be distributed at site visits. Staff confirmed they can provide hard copies of the survey to serve as engagement tools during site visits. Staff plan to share the survey with past site visit hosts as well. Staff are also developing a compendium of information and insights gathered from site visits.

A member inquired about the possibility of scheduling site visits in between quarterly meetings. Staff noted this is an option and expressed willingness to assist in coordinating these.

Survey

Staff reviewed the survey's context and goals, emphasizing its focus on reaching priority communities identified by the Task Force, specifically those working to steward the land, such as producers and members of Tribal Nations. The survey serves as both a data collection tool to validate ("ground truth") the Task Force's efforts and priorities and as a conversation starter. While aiming to gather as many responses as possible to ensure meaningful insights, the results of this survey will be reported out in tandem with related surveys.

Staff reviewed survey distribution efforts. The survey is available to the public on the Strategic Growth Council's website and has been shared directly with over 100 community-based organizations and advocates. Targeted outreach is ongoing to ensure the survey reaches those the Task Force seeks to engage. Additionally, various agencies have distributed the survey through various channels including the California Department of Food and Agriculture's social media and blog, the California Department of Housing and Community Development's Tribal Affairs email list, the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation program's general listserv, a farmer and rancher listserv associated with California Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Strategic Growth Council's social media.

As of December 12, 25 people had responded to the survey – 23 in English and two in Spanish. More direct engagement with Chinese farmers is underway to ensure their representation in the survey. Member de Barraicua shared an employee of her organization is meeting with farmworkers on the Central Coast and intends to distribute the survey. Members emphasized the importance of engaging the Hmong farming community and farmers who speak Tagalog, suggesting community engagement sessions as a potential strategy.

Members inquired about translating the survey into Vietnamese. Staff explained the survey was not translated into Vietnamese due to limited capacity but noted that support is available for individuals who wish to complete the survey in other languages.

The survey has proven to be a valuable engagement tool. Many respondents indicated interest in receiving a copy of the Task Force’s recommendations and being added to the Task Force’s email list. Many respondents who shared they have received grants and loans indicated their willingness to participate in interviews.

Members asked if the survey would remain open for responses during the forthcoming community engagement sessions, to which staff responded yes.

Community Engagement Sessions

Staff presented the proposed plan for community engagement sessions, highlighting the goal to share drafts of the Task Force’s report and gather iterative community feedback. The sessions will occur from March/April through August 2025 with an anticipated total of eight sessions. Priority will be given to ensuring diversity in language, race and ethnicity, geography, and Tribal Nations.

Staff proposed a general format for these sessions:

- Introduce Task Force
- Present a subset of draft recommendations
- Participant discussion
- Output: summary report of major takeaways

To facilitate these sessions, are considering a collaboration with University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR), leveraging their broad geographic reach and connections to diverse communities. Additionally, staff are working with the members of Tribal Nations on the Task Force to design and host engagement sessions specifically with Tribal Nations.

Members proposed prioritizing geographic diversity when designing these sessions. They inquired why staff aim to partner with UCANR and whether other organizations are being considered. Staff explained this partnership decision is influenced by capacity, conflict-of-interest considerations, and contracting limitations. They also noted that UCANR may subcontract with other organizations to host the sessions, aligning with members’ emphasis on the value of partnering with local community organizations.

Members asked if funding is allocated for these sessions. Staff confirmed that each session has a dedicated budget and that attendees will be compensated for their participation.

Staff sought input on whether the sessions should be exclusive to producers or open to others, such as technical assistance providers. Members supported limiting the sessions to land stewards. Members asked about the expected size of each session. Staff expect around 20 attendees per session. Members asked if the sessions will be advertised and open to the public, to which staff responded no.

Members shared they view these sessions as opportunities for ground truthing, identifying barriers and challenges producers face, along with success stories, to share with the legislature and Governor. A member asked if the sessions would include an educational component, stating that they view these sessions as both a platform to provide information and a space to acquire feedback. Staff encouraged members to consider how the Task Force's recommendations will be incorporated into the sessions.

A member highlighted the importance of hearing from immigrant farmers who have successfully acquired and retained land, noting that these farmers could provide insights into the challenges and barriers they faced and the resources they utilized to overcome them. The member also stressed the need to create safe spaces where farmers feel comfortable to share their experiences. Staff acknowledged this need and shared that the community partner will assist in designing the engagement sessions to ensure they are welcoming and safe for attendees. Staff noted that alternative forms of engagement, like site visits, can be utilized and may be better suited for certain communities.

Staff asked subcommittee members to consider the role of Task Force members in these engagement sessions, including whether they would be willing to co-host. Member de Barraicua expressed willingness to assist with an engagement session on the Central Coast. Chair Hawkins said he could support a session in March or April.

Staff inquired about members' preferences for sharing the information garnered from the listening sessions with the Task Force. Members recommended the information first be shared with the subcommittee before being presented to the broader Task Force at the August meeting. They also requested a discussion during the May meeting to address the format and use of information obtained from these sessions. Members also noted the value of presenting such information in visual formats, such as PowerPoint presentations or videos.

A member asked if interviews will be conducted as part of the listening sessions. Staff clarified that interviews are a separate engagement effort. While some interviews will focus on grant and loan programs, staff noted others could involve technical assistance providers or take place during site visits.

Regarding engagement at conferences and events, a member suggested displaying a QR code on a screen that links to the survey, along with reviewing survey questions to guide conversations. Staff noted their intention to plan discussions with conference and event session co-hosts and indicated that new, event-specific questions can be developed.

Members requested that staff develop a document outlining key talking points for the Task Force members to use when conducting outreach. Staff agreed to draft this resource.

Staff encouraged members to reflect on the Task Force’s outreach thus far and share any feedback or concerns with staff via email or during the next Subcommittee meeting planned for early March. Facilitator Wylie will reach out in January for members’ availability.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

General Public Comment:

No public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.