

Language for Restorative Land Subcommittee Review

The language below is a summary of the Subcommittee's conversation on Sept. 5, 2025. This language will be discussed at the Sept. 24 meeting, at which point Subcommittee may decide to move some or all of this language into the October 2025 Draft Report.

Proposed Goal 2: Title TBD

Although California entered the U.S. in 1850 as a free state, enslavement already existed in the state and its "early state government protected the institution of enslavement and greatly limited African Americans' civil rights."¹ The California Reparations Report documents centuries of forced and exploited labor, racial terror, incarceration, and other forms of racial injustice that continue to impact Black Californians.

The recommendations in this report are intended to benefit all priority producers and land stewards who have faced exclusion and discrimination; as described in the introductory sections of this report, this has ranged from the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II to the exploited labor of migrant farmworkers who are denied pathways to citizenship.

However, it is also critical to document and address specific historical harms that are the foundation for unique economic, health, and social disparities. This goal is focused on creating pathways for restitution for Black Californians who are ancestors of enslaved individuals and who were subject to racially motivated land takings in California. As with Goal 1, Goal 2 offers a specific pathway by which to address past harms and current disparities through facilitating land access and ownership for agricultural and cultural use.

2.1 Establish a Restorative Land Fund

- a) Develop and fund through continuous appropriation a Restorative Land Fund that is accessible to ancestors of enslaved individuals who were subject to racially motivated land takings in California
 - i) Eligible historical events include, but are not limited to, land taken through eminent domain and land made unusable due to the impacts of infrastructure projects.
- b) Fund the following activities:
 - i) Land acquisition for agricultural use and associated costs
 - ii) Costs associated with starting an agricultural operation, including infrastructure improvements

¹ California Reparations Report, 2023, p. 106. oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/full-ca-reparations.pdf

- iii) Resolving title issues by financing the purchase or consolidation of property interests and financing costs associated with a succession plan, as modeled on the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Heirs Property Relending Program](#)
- iv) Legal and technical assistance for developing cooperative and community land ownership
 - v) Research to document eligibility for the program
 - vi) Capacity building and planning grants for county and city governments to develop local reparations frameworks
- c) Ensure that program outreach is targeted and culturally appropriate
- d) Develop specific evaluation and accountability tools to ensure program is effectively providing pathway for retribution of historically documented harm

2.2 Develop and implement a public education campaign

- a) Fund research to identify instances of racially motivated land takings in California and its impact on individuals, communities, and California's agriculture industry
- b) Fund research to document heirs' property challenges in California
- c) Fund the development and distribution of educational materials that highlight California's unique history of enslavement, racial terror, incarceration, and other racially motivated injustices that shape current inequities