

NYS Community Commission on Reparations Remedies

Public Comment Policy

Purpose

NYS Community Commission on Reparations Remedies is committed to fostering transparent, inclusive, and equitable engagement with the public. This policy outlines the rules and procedures for public comment during Commission meetings to ensure that all voices are heard and considered.

In-Person Public Comment

1. **Eligibility:** If the Commission has opened the meeting for public comment, a brief period will be designated for this purpose. The Commission will accept as many in-person comments as possible for the meeting, ensuring that the meeting does not exceed its scheduled duration.
2. **Time Limit:** In-person comments are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes per individual. The time limit will be strictly enforced to maximize participation.
3. **Sign-Up Procedure:**
 - Individuals wishing to provide in-person comments must sign up. The Chair will inform the public 30-minutes in advance that the public comment sign-up period is closing.
 - Sign-up sheets will be available at the entrance to the meeting room and online through the Commission's website. Commenters are asked to include their name and email address on the sign-up sheet.
 - Individuals will be called to speak in the order in which they signed up.
4. **Conduct:**
 - Public participation at regular meetings of the Commission will be limited to the public comment period and the question and answer period, if they are included in the agenda
 - Any individual wishing to speak during the question and answer portion must raise their hand. When recognized by the Chair, the individual must use a microphone to respectfully address the Commission or presenter.
 - The Chair may call on a member of the audience when deemed necessary. The response shall be limited to comment regarding that specific question only.

- Those wishing to provide testimony will register their interest by registering their intent with the Commission via written registration at public hearings. The Commission will receive testimony in an orderly and respectful manner.
- Those members of the general public who wish to provide testimony relevant to the purpose and mission of the Commission will be offered an uninterrupted opportunity to present testimony within prescribed timeframe (usually three minutes). These minutes may not be traded, or given away to another speaker, nor may they be reserved for later use.
- The Chair or designee will serve as timekeeper for the public hearing.
- Members of the general public attending public hearings of the commission will refrain from disrupting and/or interrupting commission members, those providing testimony, and as well as all other presenters. Speaking loudly while in the audience, interrupting another attendee during that person's speaking time, or addressing the Commissioners outside of the public comment period, unless called upon by the Chair, will not be tolerated and may result in removal from the meeting room or building.
- The Commission expects all participants in all meetings of the Commission to act with decorum and respect for all people present.
- The use of profane, vulgar, inflammatory, threatening, abusive, or disparaging language or racial, ethnic, or other slurs will not be tolerated. Personal, impertinent, or slanderous attacks are also prohibited. Any such behavior will result in removal from the meeting room or building.
- Banners, flyers, and other public displays that are profane or offensive are inappropriate and cannot be tolerated.
- Cell phones must be silenced by all those attending any meeting of the Commission. Cell phone conversations are not allowed by participants during any meeting of the Commission.
- Those attendees wishing to have conversations with others will do so outside of the hearing or meeting room so as not to disrupt the meeting. Attendees leaving the Commission meetings before adjournment must leave in a quiet and orderly manner.
- Any person found to violate this Code of Conduct will be required to leave the meeting room or building.

5. **Response to Comments:** The Commission may, at its discretion, provide brief responses to public comments during the meeting. Extended discussions or actions

related to public comments may be deferred to a later time or a future meeting agenda.

Written Public Comment

1. **Submission Method:** Written comments may be submitted through the Commission's website via the "Contact Us" section or by emailing (ReparationsCommission@reparations.ny.gov) the designated reparations email address at any time.
2. **Content:** Written comments may address any issues relevant to the Commission's work. Unlike in-person comments, there is no limit on the length of written submissions.
3. **Review Process:**
 - All written comments will be reviewed by the Commission and included in the official record of the meeting.
 - Commissioners may consider written comments submitted by the public during discussions and decision-making processes.
4. **Acknowledgment:** The Commission will acknowledge receipt of written comments via email or another appropriate method, though individual responses may not be provided.

General Provisions

1. **Meeting Decorum:** The Commission reserves the right to remove individuals who disrupt the meeting or fail to adhere to this policy.
2. **Public Records:** All comments, both in-person and written, will become part of the public record and may be accessible under public records laws.
3. **Amendments:** This policy may be amended by a majority vote of the Commission members during a regularly scheduled meeting.

Effective Date

This Code of Conduct will take effect immediately after the adoption of this resolution on _____.