

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Office of Insurance Diversity & Innovation
300 Capitol Mall, Suite 1700 - Sacramento, CA 95814
www.insurance.ca.gov/diversity



Insurance Diversity Task Force – Board Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2026
10:00 – 11:00 AM (PST)

California Department of Insurance (CDI)
CDI Sacramento (Headquarter Office)
300 Capitol Mall, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

1. Meeting Call to Order

Roll Call – Conducted by CDI Staff – Gabriella Coplan

- Committee Members in Attendance, virtually: Annalisa Barrett, Pradip Khemani, Cecil Plummer, Vikita Poindexter, Chandara Phanachone (Insurance Commissioner's Designee)
- Committee Members Absent: Linda Akutagawa, Kelly Huang

Quorum was established. Chandara Phanachone called the Insurance Diversity Task Force Board Diversity Committee meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

2. Introductions

Insurance Diversity Task Force (IDTF) Board Diversity Committee

- Annalisa Barrett, Pradip Khemani, Cecil Plummer, Vikita Poindexter, Chandara Phanachone (Commissioner's Designee)

CDI Staff

- Jennifer Van, Director, Insurance Diversity Program (IDP); An Kim, Diversity Communications & Outreach Manager; Shannon McCollum, Policy & Stakeholder Engagement Manager; Gabriella Coplan, Stakeholder Engagement Analyst; Natalie Brezack-LaMarra, Senior Researcher

3. Public Comment for Items Not on Agenda

No public comments received.

4. Meeting Minutes Review & Approval

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Office of Insurance Diversity & Innovation
300 Capitol Mall, Suite 1700 - Sacramento, CA 95814
www.insurance.ca.gov/diversity



- **Task Force Action:** Cecil Plummer moved to approve November 4, 2025, IDTF Board Diversity Committee Meeting minutes, and Vikita Poindexter seconded the motion.
- **Outcome:** The motion was carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

5. Address the Demand Side for Board Diversity

Chandara Phanachone (Commissioner's Designee) asked the committee to provide their insights and expertise with regards to what it means to address the demand side of board diversity. Discussion and/or ideas for consideration from Task Force members included:

- Cecil Plummer
 - Cecil shared insights based on personal experience as well as input from colleagues. There are numerous programs focused on preparing women and minorities for board positions. In conversations with alumni groups, board seats become available only occasionally, and opportunities remain scarce. Colleagues serving on public and private boards emphasized that recruitment is heavily relationship driven. While the supply side is creating a large reservoir of potential candidates, the demand side is limited. To address this imbalance, Cecil suggested the committee discuss how to stimulate demand for diverse board members.
 - Despite these initiatives, the current political climate appears to have a cooling effect on diversification efforts. Some organizations appear to be moving away from emphasizing diversity in the workforce and supply chain, raising concerns about maintaining progress. Education for the non-government board member pool is happening slowly. The key question is: What can we do to bring those individuals to the table?
 - From experience, gaining access to C-suite leaders often revolves around specialized events that encourage their participation. From his experience, the most effective approach is to put business executives on the agenda—through chats, panels, or interactive roundtables.
 - Proposed Ideas— Consider hosting CDI-led networking event with opportunities for attendees to engage in roundtable discussions with C-suite and board leaders, fostering connections between demand and supply sides of board representation. This could be the start of a recurring series over time, supported by subcommittees, to build relationships and trust.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Office of Insurance Diversity & Innovation
300 Capitol Mall, Suite 1700 - Sacramento, CA 95814
www.insurance.ca.gov/diversity



- Annalisa Barrett
 - Annalisa agreed with Cecil on the importance of networking as a pathway to board placement and suggested creating opportunities for director candidates to gain exposure to nominating governance committee chairs or through educational process on networking. She proposed creating opportunities to meet insurance companies that could help expand connections. While boards remain committed to diverse candidate pools, decisions are increasingly driven by skillsets that emphasize broad expertise over specialized experience.
 - Annalisa spoke on the effectiveness of providing a peer exchange environment for learning and networking, along with tactical, technical, and legal education to attract participation. She shared an event structure idea featuring a 20 to 30-minute keynote followed by roundtable peer exchanges that include corporate officers and secretaries.
- Vikita Poindexter
 - Vikita highlighted challenges such as limited knowledge and opportunities for candidates to get in front of people. The referral process often relies on 'who do you know' and 'who do you trust'. Creating forums to help candidates understand networking beyond just learning requirements—focusing on 'how do you build core relationships?'. She noted that while some groups attempt this, results are minimal because key people are not at the table. With so much backlash on the word "diversity," Vikita suggested reframing from a different perspective. Shift the term to 'impact' and broaden the conversation beyond simply having a diverse board.
 - Vikita also highlighted Chief Human Resources Officers (CHRO) can be valuable resources, however they are inundated with navigating complex, multi-state issues, making board engagement a lower priority. Strategically, conferences and intentional engagement with HR professionals present opportunities to build relationships and strengthen the pipeline.
- Pradip Khemani
 - Pradip noted that CHROs often play a key role in the board placement process. Building connections at that level is critical, as some companies actively seek candidates from the marketplace based on merit and qualifications – not solely on relationships. Pradip emphasized the importance of organizations being intentional in their approach to board recruitment, a practice that is particularly prevalent in healthcare sector.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Office of Insurance Diversity & Innovation
300 Capitol Mall, Suite 1700 - Sacramento, CA 95814
www.insurance.ca.gov/diversity



6. 2024-2026 Strategic Plan – Updates & Discussion

Jennifer Van, Director, Insurance Diversity Program (CDI) presented a progress update on the 2024–2026 Strategic Plan. The plan is structured around four pillars: (1) Communications and Public Relations, (2) Community Engagement, (3) Access to Opportunities, and (4) Recognition and Accountability. All strategic objectives among these four pillars are currently in Phase 3 (Execution), reflecting ongoing implementation of planned objectives.

- **(1) Communications and Public Relations Pillar Updates:**
 - **2026 Supplier Diversity Symposium:** Office of Insurance Diversity & Innovation (OIDI) focused on upcoming 2026 CA Supplier Diversity Symposium including a session geared towards workforce succession planning. Task Force member, Tommy Smith, is leading the session. The session components include succession planning for project equity and national center of employee owner, focus on certifying employee-owned companies from the state perspective, helping businesses think ahead and be prepared. Kaiser Permanente will be on the panel.
 - **Prospective Webinars:** Planning is underway for 2026 Board Diversity Leadership Webinars with prospective organizations.
 - **Prospective Community Engagement:** CDI team will continue engagement via the National Association of Insurance Commissioner (NAIC) national meetings, and CPUC En Banc in October 2026.
 - **Prospective OIDI Integrated Marketing Campaign:** CDI team is working on an integrated marketing campaign focused on updated website, resource documents, toolkit, impact sheets, and tracking outreach success metrics.

Discussion and/or ideas from Task Force members included:

Annalisa Barrett confirmed her intention of introducing OIDI to leaders of the [California Partners Project](#) - a non-profit focused on advancing gender equity in corporate boardrooms of California companies. She also provided insight about Invest Ahead and how it is comprised of institutional investors interested in advancing board diversity as a material aspect of corporate governance.

Chandara Phanachone (Commissioner’s Designee) highlighted OIDI participation in a previous webinar with [Invest Ahead](#), a non-profit focused on advancing board diversity and leadership within the institutional investment community. She shared it was an opportunity for CDI to highlight the work of this Task Force in collaboration with CDI, including the publication of the Insurance Diversity Index. Chandara spoke about the Department’s commitment to this critical work that has sustained through

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Office of Insurance Diversity & Innovation
300 Capitol Mall, Suite 1700 - Sacramento, CA 95814
www.insurance.ca.gov/diversity



the span of the administration of two Insurance Commissioners and former Task Force members for well over a decade. She emphasized the value of creating partnerships with organizations that help amplify and magnify the impact of the work we are doing as part of our mission. In 2025, OIDI released the Economic Impact Report and the Insurance Diversity Index.

- **(2) Community Engagement Pillar Updates:**

- 2026 Supplier Diversity Symposium will be held in Pasadena on March 18, 2026. CDI is partnering with the California Statewide Coalition for Diversity Initiatives.
- Strengthen collaborations with Community and/or Industry Stakeholders on events and programs:
 - i. Board Diversity Webinars
 - ii. 2026 Diversity Dialogue – Corporate Directors Forum (March)
 - iii. Task Force Member interviews/podcasts
 - iv. 2026 WBENC National Conference (June)
 - v. 2026 National Minority Supplier Development Conference (July)
 - vi. 2026 CA Insurance Diversity Summit (October)
- Task Force Interviews/Podcasts
 - i. Goal is to start with three observances: Women’s History Month, Pride Month, and Veterans. The vision is to highlight Task Force members, their stories, and the impact of their work.

Discussion and/or ideas from Task Force members included:

Vikita Poindexter highlighted the Task Force interviews/podcast initiative was a great idea and keeps conversations going with work we are doing. The podcast can expand the reach, help magnify the role and purpose of Task Force does, and open up more opportunities to engage with the community. We can reach people through the broadcast that might not be able to attend events and/or conferences.

Pradip Khemani stated he supports the Task Force interviews/podcast initiative. These are important topics and celebrations. It’s the right direction to go.

- **(3) Access to Opportunities Pillar Updates:**

- LGBTQ Procurement Forum (January 2026) – OIDI will be speaking on a panel, and CDI will host an exhibitor booth in support of the California LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce that will host this event.

Discussion and/or ideas from Task Force members included:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Office of Insurance Diversity & Innovation
300 Capitol Mall, Suite 1700 - Sacramento, CA 95814
www.insurance.ca.gov/diversity



Chandara Phanachone (Commissioner's Designee) explained being intentional about how we connect board candidates to opportunity and provide tools to enhance collaboration with the insurance industry. In response to Cecil's comments, risk works both ways when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. There are risks that emerge when companies retreat from DEI commitments. Chandara highlighted research by the [Meltzer Center](#) for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (at the NYU School of Law) titled [Risks of retreat: the enduring inclusion imperative](#) (Part I, Part II). The report details the different areas of risk that companies face when retracting or retreating from DEI.

Cecil Plummer discussed what he is consistently hearing from employees within companies experiencing difficulties within their organizations. No support for things that have been historically supported. There is an opportunity to help leaders with information, approaches, and strategies around internal education and adoption activities. How can we provide them with tools they can use that would encourage participation? Focus on the benefits while still mitigating the risk and strategies they can use.

- **(4) Recognition and Accountability Pillar Updates:**
 - 2026 CA Insurance Diversity Survey (CAIDS) Administration
 - i. CDI will host two CAIDS informational webinars ([February 10, 2026 & February 18, 2026](#))
 - Insurance Diversity Case Studies
 - i. Purpose: Highlight leading practices among champion companies in supplier diversity and board diversity.
 - ii. Similar to past CDI case studies – [NORCAL Group](#) & [Prudential](#)
 - iii. ODI to provide plan and update at 1st Quarterly Task Force Meeting on March 17, 2026.

7. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Committee did not have future agenda items.

8. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

9. Adjournment

Annalisa Barrett moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried. The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 AM.