

A Journey to Repair



Guidelines to an Effective Harm Report

Prepared for

Alameda County Reparations Commission



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“ A People without a Knowledge
of their Past History is Like a
Tree without Roots ”
— Marcus Garvey

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I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to my project sponsors, the Alameda County Reparations Commission and the Black Reparations Project, for entrusting me to conduct research on your behalf. Your confidence in me to handle such culturally significant work is an honor I do not take lightly.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge the organizations, frameworks, and toolkits that served as key references and sources of inspiration for this report:

FirstRepair

National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC)

National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA)

Shorefront Legacy Center

Osiris Group

Liberation Ventures

Movement for Black Lives

African American Redress Network

Reparations United

Your leadership and published work have paved the way for reparative efforts across the country and directly informed the development of this report.

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Executive Summary

Harm emerges within a discriminatory community system and is further reinforced by municipal and governmental structures, perpetuating disparities that disproportionately impact Black individuals. These Harms incurred are often a result of anti-Black policies that arguably systematically obstruct economic mobility, limit access to education, deny equal healthcare, and expose Black communities to environmental and public safety risks. By analyzing Harm Reports we see that the legacies of redlining, urban renewal, disinvestment, criminalization, and cultural erasure are not simply historical facts, but are active forces influencing the present¹.

This report elevates the Harm Report as the foundational document in any local reparations process. It is not only a historical tool but a legislative instrument that is vital for building the evidentiary basis for repair and for justifying funding allocations. At its core, the Harm Report is also a response to cultural erasure: a means of preserving Black history and reframing narratives that have long been distorted or ignored. In this report, I argue the institutional legitimacy and policy value of the Harm Report as a pathway to tangible redress.

Structured in three chapters, the report builds a conceptual and practical understanding of Harm Reports in the context of local reparations.

Chapter 1 outlines the historical and structural role of Harm Reports and defines the elements that make them effective. It introduces a community-led framework supported by supplemental documents such as disparity reports, impact assessments, and public records and identifies key themes including community authorship, political buy-in, and institutional uptake.

Chapter 2 details the evaluation strategy used to assess Harm Report effectiveness, including literature review, comparative case study analysis, and qualitative interviews with movement leaders. Findings are measured against indicators such as resonance with impacted communities, institutional traction, and policy outcomes through a comparative analysis of seven Harm Reports across the U.S., this report found that community authorship, political will, and institutional uptake are the strongest indicators of report effectiveness. Reports that were co-developed with impacted communities had greater legitimacy and public trust. Meanwhile, reports with strong design but limited community voice struggled to move beyond documentation.

Chapter 3 applies this framework to Alameda County, providing recommendations tailored to its historical and political realities. The chapter outlines actionable strategies to guide the Reparations Commission in evaluating harm and developing repair pathways that are context-specific and community-informed.

As cities and counties across the country begin or advance reparations efforts in the absence of federal leadership, local jurisdictions play a critical role in legitimizing the need for repair. A clearly defined and methodologically sound Harm Report provides the foundation for accountability, narrative accuracy, and political momentum. This report is offered as both a roadmap and a call to action, encouraging collaboration, alignment, and long-term investment across jurisdictions.

¹ Davies, Jackson, and Knight, "Limited Scopes of Repair."

How to Engage this Report

This report is primarily intended for the Alameda County Reparations Commission, the Ad Hoc Reparations Committee, and the Full Board of Supervisors. However, it is also designed to serve a broader audience, including policymakers, government staff, community organizers, scholars, and advocates, who seek to understand or implement local reparations frameworks.

Whether your goal is to comprehend the foundational purpose of a Harm Report, learn how to structure one effectively, or examine how other jurisdictions have documented Harm through a reparative lens, this report is structured to meet your needs.

It is important to recognize that in this report a Harm Report represents one essential, but not singular component of the broader reparative process. It serves as the foundation upon which credible, just, and actionable repair is built at the municipal level. To reflect that role, this analysis is organized into three chapters, each highlighting how a Harm Report supports and aligns with long-term reparations planning.

Chapter 1 establishes the historical context of Harm and defines what makes a Harm Report effective. It also offers a framework for identifying and applying strategies that reflect both accuracy and community resonance. The Chapter is rounded out by placing the Harm Report within a broader restorative justice and reparations framework. Drawing from national and California-specific examples, this chapter illustrates how to embed the findings of a Harm Report into a larger process of healing and redress.

Chapter 2 outlines the methodology used to assess the effectiveness of Harm Reports, employing a mixed-methods approach that includes literature review, comparative case study analysis, and qualitative semi-structured interviews with movement leaders and practitioners. The chapter presents key findings from this analysis and explains how effectiveness was evaluated across multiple jurisdictions and models.

Chapter 3 focuses directly on Alameda County, offering a tailored set of recommendations based on historical, political, and institutional realities. It guides the Commission in evaluating repair pathways and selecting strategies that align with the community's lived experience and local governance structures.

Use this roadmap to jump to the sections most relevant to you:



Chapter 1
*What is an Effective Harm Report
Effectiveness Framework
Justification of Effectiveness
Local Reparative Models*



Chapter 2
*Key Indicators of an Effective Harm
Report.*



Chapter 3
*Approaching Harm in Alameda County
Recommendations for Local Implementation*

Positionality

I am Elycia Knight, a Black woman from Oakland, California. I am a Master of Public Affairs candidate studying at the University of California, Berkeley, and hold a Bachelor of Arts degree from California State University, Dominguez Hills. As a current student researcher, I experience this research as an investigator, an academic, and a direct member of the Black community. By way of my standing, I get to engage our participants with the authenticity of a Black person within the impacted community and the institutional authority (sometimes fraught history) of a Berkeley researcher seeking to understand, assist in addressing, and repair historical and systemic discrimination affecting Black communities across Alameda County. As an Alameda County resident, my family was likely directly impacted by the historical Harm done to the Black community. Through lineage, my relationship to research findings will not be surface-level and can draw on past traumas, deep-seated emotions, and bias.

As a research fellow with the Black Reparations Project (BRP) at Mills College at Northeastern University, I will hold internal power differentials in the reparations community. Although neutral, my relationship to BRP may unintentionally signal alignment to a position or political beliefs of preferred reparative methods (e.g., descendants or specific Harm, cash aid, or restorative policy).

My research will draw on discriminatory anti-Black policies that systematically create and sustain inequities, impacting economic mobility, wealth accumulation, educational access, healthcare equality, and environmental conditions, sociological and racial discrimination that continue to impact me, my friends, and family in the present day. As an insider within the Black community, I bring lived experience to the work and recognize the sensitivity of reparations, which could cause division within the Black community.

I reject the notion of technically trained research experts. I will rely on a collective community voice to represent the historic, race-based, and specific Harms while acknowledging the sensitivities of reparative measures. I do not hold lightly the possibility of insulting Black Americans, my community, by putting a price on the suffering of their ancestors, possibly turning reparations into a transaction as a part of my research. Thus, I will attune my recommendations as such.

The Case for Harm Report Guidelines

The call for reparations is often dismissed under the false premise that the anti-Black harms and discrimination belong to the past. Critics argue that addressing those historical injustices is no longer relevant, ignoring the deep and ongoing structural impacts that continue to shape the lives of Black Communities today. This sentiment reflects a broader resistance to reparations that mischaracterizes the scope of historical **Harm**² and overlooks how that Harm is reproduced through present-day systems, policies, and outcomes³. Anti-Black harms are embedded in our institutions, policies, and daily life. Repair is not just appropriate – it is necessary and can be most effective at the municipal and regional levels.

“ *Rather than focusing on the needs of the past, we need to focus on the needs of the present, which include all vulnerable people in our city, whatever their color or ethnicity, not just a select group which has already received compensation and recognition many times over.* ”

— City of Hayward Community Member

Since the racial reckoning of 2020, various U.S. states and localities have initiated reparations efforts, creating Harm Reports that detail specific injustices and justify reparative actions⁴. However, there is a lack of established guidelines that outline, identify, and address how to structure trauma-informed Harm Reports, particularly for anti-Black harms at regional and municipal levels.

This prompts an important question: *What is a Harm Report, and why are clear guidelines necessary?*

Harm Reports serve as the foundation for reparative actions within a seven-step process for local reparations informed by movement leaders across the nation.⁵ They are historical documents that detail what happened to whom and are time-bound to assist in calculating the impact, loss, theft, or crime.⁶ While communities may share similar injustices experienced by Black residents, the origins of these injustices can vary, but many anti-Black policies were enacted or enforced by state and local governments, and as a result, they have a responsibility to repair those Harms.⁷

“ *The goal of local reparations is to target resources toward specific areas of injury that can assist in community survivability until greater resources can come. Those resources would come either through local Equity legislation or a federal reparations plan* ”

— Kamm Howard

Creating an effective Harm Report will promote commonality across various local reparative approaches and reinforce the necessity of reparations at both the state and federal levels by establishing a local reparative structure. Additionally, successful Harm Reports are a continuum that requires an interactive approach and prioritizing community voices to amplify the community narrative by uncovering specific areas of Harm. These elements can facilitate more accelerated repair efforts at the municipal and local levels. It is important to

acknowledge that not all experts support the creation of Harm Reports. Some argue that the Harms are already well-documented and that producing new reports may serve as a delay tactic, postponing

² Harm is defined as: Formal legislative practices and informal, unwritten policies and laws that vary by time period and geographic region, but share a common purpose of limiting Black social, political, and economic advancement and have historically shaped community experiences.

³ “The-Harm-Is-To-Our-Genes-Full-Report-RU.Pdf.”

⁴ Chang, “Summer Of Racial Reckoning.”

⁵ “RESOURCE GUIDE.”

⁶ “Robin Rue Simmons, Interview, EKnight, Fri, April 11, 2025_otter_ai.Docx.”

⁷ “RESOURCE GUIDE.”

urgently needed repair. For example, the Governor of Maryland recently vetoed legislation that would have established a commission to study slavery reparations in the state, stating that the issue has already been sufficiently studied and the focus should not be on the study, but rather on the redress itself.⁸ This approach minimizes the historical value of the Harm Report and its connection to historiography and truth-telling specifically for Harms done at the municipal level..

Background

On January 20, 2021, President Biden signed an executive order directing the United States to document the history of disenfranchisement from the era of slavery through Jim Crow, the "separate but equal" doctrine, and redlining to present-day systemic disinvestment in African American communities⁹. In response, the California Reparations Task Force, established by the California Secretary of State under Assembly Bill 3121, produced a report addressing anti-Black policies throughout California's history. This report included over 100 policy recommendations, some of which have been enacted into law.¹⁰

In light of the executive order and the efforts of the California Task Force, in 2023, the Alameda Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Committee on Reparations assembled a 15-member body, the Alameda County Reparations Commission (ACRC). The Board of Supervisors tasked them with formulating a draft action plan aimed at making significant and lasting progress toward addressing public and private systemic discrimination and historical Harms inflicted upon the Black community in Alameda County in the form of reparations.¹¹

Alameda County's jurisdictional authority includes 14 incorporated cities and six unincorporated communities.¹² Thus, ACRC will be the first county agency to advocate for reparations by influencing jurisdictions not directly within their governing structure. This task will be arduous for ACRC because a Harm Report is unique to a community's history and county resources, and it should withstand governance changes for the beneficiaries of this process.¹³

This report aims to understand how other communities document Harm, measure what is relevant and impactful and ensure that the approach is community-driven, along with exploring any potential policy implications at the regional level.

Project Objectives

- Establish a conceptual framework for documenting racially driven Harms based on community input.
- Identify best practices and critical elements necessary for producing impactful Harm Reports.
- Create a step-by-step guide for developing trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and actionable Harm Reports. This guide will include critical questions, suggested research methods, and an analysis of resources utilized for Harm Reports (such as budget ranges, sponsoring entities, and collaborators).
- Examine how various communities approach reparations and offer recommendations on framing these measures in alignment with local goals and legal frameworks.

⁸ "Maryland Gov. Wes Moore Vetoes Slavery Reparations Study, Citing Need for 'the Work Itself.'"

⁹ "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government."

¹⁰ Finney, "Reparations Efforts in Alameda County Stumble and Try to Pick Themselves Up | KQED."

¹¹ "Rep_Commission_background_info_1_10_24.Pdf."

¹² "About Us | Alameda County."

¹³ "THE-BIG-PAYBACK-FirstRepair-Toolkit-.Pdf."

Research Strategy

This project utilizes a mixed methods approach to examine the structure and efficacy of anti-Black harm documentation efforts related to historical discrimination and reparative justice.

This research aims to explore the types of indicator data most compelling in cases of historical Harm and assess how this data is framed and utilized to support reparative action. Specifically, it aims to understand the defining characteristics of effective Harm documentation and develop guidelines for constructing impactful, evidence-based narratives.

While primarily qualitative, the approach includes data synthesis of literature and document review, comparative case selection, and qualitative semi-structured interviews to ensure a multidimensional interpretation of Harm documentation across contexts as outlined below.

Project Methods

Literature and Document Review

An extensive review of Harm Reports, reparations frameworks, and redress proposal documents was conducted to identify recurring themes, data types, narrative styles, and structural components. The sample includes seven reports from across the nation focusing on municipal, state, and community-driven efforts across the United States. Each report was coded using inductive thematic analysis, drawing from a grounded theory framework to surface organically recurring patterns.

Comparative Case Analysis

A set of 7 case studies were selected to reflect geographic, political, and demographic diversity. Each case was analyzed against a criteria framework developed from the literature review, focusing on:

- Use of qualitative data
- Engagement with impacted communities
- Legal positioning and narrative framing
- Policy outcomes and implementation status

Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured 60 min interviews were conducted with eight movement partners, including movement leaders, reparations practitioners, community historians, and legal experts. These interviews provided deeper insight into how Harm is contextualized and the factors influencing a report's credibility, uptake, and longevity. Interviews were coded thematically and cross-referenced with document findings to identify areas of alignment and divergence.

Data Synthesis

All data sources, such as documents, case studies, and interviews, were unilaterally analyzed to surface defining characteristics of effective Harm documentation. All audio recordings were generated using [Otter.ai](#), an online artificial intelligence software to draft the preliminary transcripts. The preliminary transcripts were then uploaded to Word to clean the transcripts and ultimately ensure that the audio files were accurately documented.

Effectiveness was “broadly” measured using the following criterion.

Effectiveness Measurement Criteria included:

- The strategic use of localized data and historical evidence
- The role of community voice and storytelling
- The importance of documenting Harm as a continuum over time¹⁴
- Use of legal language that anticipates governmental or judicial scrutiny

Research questions

What are the forms/methods of reparation being used?

What is the instrument, program, or report being used to implement and who is developing the report?

What are the short and long-term outcomes and how can they be measured?

Were they successful and how can they be improved upon?

How can these processes foster inclusive dialogue and be community-informed?

What are the legal and political constraints? (highs and lows of political battles).

Outcomes:

Findings from this research will inform the development of a guideline framework for Harm documentation. This framework is intended to support municipalities, community organizations, and policy advocates in creating impactful, data-driven reports that honor the lived experiences of harmed Black populations across Alameda County.

Stakeholders

The following were identified as stakeholders with standing within the reparations' community, both inside and outside of Alameda County.

- AC Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Reparations Committee
- Alameda County Reparations Commission (ACRC)
- Alameda County and the associated departments
- Municipal Agencies within Alameda County (e.g., City of Oakland staff)
- Black Reparations Project (BRP)
- Movement Leaders
- Black Community is a necessary and contested term (defining the Black community cannot be assumed and should not be an excuse to derail the process).
 - Impacted Community (Unincorporated/City)

Qualitative interviews were conducted, both within and outside of Alameda County, with eight movement leaders, practitioners, and policy makers to provide in-depth insights. Select representatives will reflect a sample that fits the research scope. These representatives will be diverse in interests, values, and motivations.

¹⁴ “THE-BIG-PAYBACK-FirstRepair-Toolkit-.Pdf.”

Interview Participants

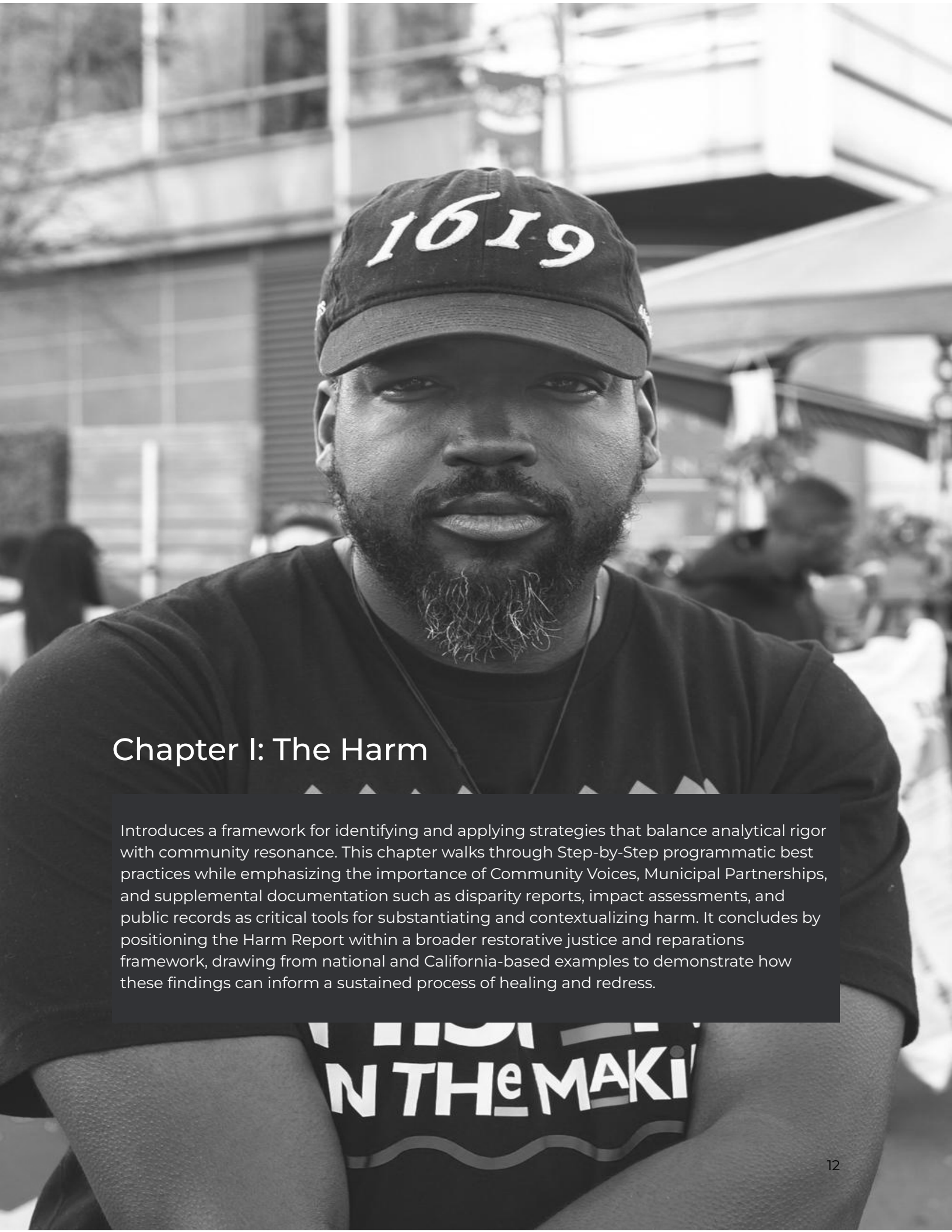
Movement Leaders

- Dreisen Heath, Public Policy Strategist | Social Impact Leader | Community-Builder | Racial Justice & Reparative Justice Expert
- Kerby Lynch, PhD, Policy Consultant and Humanities Researcher
- Areva Martin, Esq, Civil Rights Attorney
- Vikas Maturi, Director of Grantmaking Strategy and Research, Liberation Ventures
- Robin Rue Simmons, Executive Director, FirstRepair
- Dino “Morris” Robinson, Founder, Shorefront Legacy Center
- Eric McDonnell, Chair, African American Reparations Advisory Committee
- Linda J. Mann, PhD, African American Redress Network and Fulbright-Schuman European Union Affairs Awardee, 2024-2025

Historian and Academics

- Deb Sica, Acting County Librarian | Library Administration





Chapter I: The Harm

Introduces a framework for identifying and applying strategies that balance analytical rigor with community resonance. This chapter walks through Step-by-Step programmatic best practices while emphasizing the importance of Community Voices, Municipal Partnerships, and supplemental documentation such as disparity reports, impact assessments, and public records as critical tools for substantiating and contextualizing harm. It concludes by positioning the Harm Report within a broader restorative justice and reparations framework, drawing from national and California-based examples to demonstrate how these findings can inform a sustained process of healing and redress.



Section One: What is an Effective Harm Report?

The Harm Report can be viewed as a form of storytelling, though it remains an underdeveloped field of study. There is no standard theory, model, methodology, or approach, so I developed my own approach to analyze them, extracting themes and best practices from comparisons of different reports. The Harm Report is vital for preserving Black history that might otherwise be lost or misrepresented by those outside the Black community.

“On a qualitative level, from a research perspective, we haven't even done longitudinal studies or multi-site analysis to even declare what's more effective for America”. Further analysis will need to be conducted to determine the true impact of reparations and redress at the municipal level.”

— Kerby Lynch.

Theory of an Effective Harm Report

A Harm Report is a foundational document for proposing reparative recommendations and is critical for advancing legislative repair. It presents compelling evidentiary materials that support public education, inform interpretation of historical harms, and guide future municipal, state, and federal policymaking. Once completed, a Harm Report becomes part of the legislative record and plays an essential role in justifying governmental actions, both legislative and budgetary, aimed at addressing violations under the Fifth Amendment.

The purpose of creating a Harm Report can vary based on its intended use, and may include:

- Agitating for the formation of a commission or securing funding.
- Advocating for specific actions, such as the development of reparations recommendations.
- Developing clear and defensible eligibility criteria legally positioned for individuals or groups Harmed.
- Identifying and proposing narrowly tailored remedies to meet the compelling governmental interest of rectifying historical injustices.¹⁵

Objectives of an Effective Harm Report

Research shows that the true potential of an effective Harm Report lies in its ability to:

Establish a Historiography Report¹⁶ the bases of a Harm Report

Documenting Harm is essential for protecting public memory and empowering future generations. A Historiography Report focused on anti-Black Harm enables Black communities to assert control over their narratives, directly addressing the persistent impacts of slavery that continue to shape social, economic, and political realities today.

When the historical experiences of Black communities are distorted, omitted, or overlooked, the consequences are profound. Gaps in public memory can hinder awareness, limit mobilization efforts for

¹⁵ “Legislative Toolkit.Pdf.”

¹⁶ “Historiography | Definition, History, Branches, & Methodology | Britannica.”

change, and obscure the continuing legacies of injustice¹⁷. Even though many administrations undervalue historical documentation, recording harm is vital to combat the erasure of Black history.

The Harm Report should be understood as a comprehensive catalog of historical harms, grounded in precise, fact-based evidence relevant to a defined target area, ethnicity, or cultural group. It will include an articulated timeline and identify specific targets, such as individuals, landmarks, communities, policies, and practices impacted by discriminatory actions.

The research process will draw upon a variety of sources, including:

- Oral histories
- Public records data
- Census records
- Newspaper articles
- Periodicals
- Plantation documents (as appropriate to jurisdiction)
- Personal family histories
- Institutional records (national and local legislation contributing to systemic inequities)

This assemblage of evidence will help produce an interim Harm Report, which will serve as a working draft. Community feedback will be gathered throughout the research process, allowing for meaningful revisions before finalizing the document.

It is important to note that, although the primary focus of the Harm Report is historical, harms should be traced to the present day to accurately capture the enduring impacts and ongoing consequences Black communities face.¹⁸

Build Municipal Partnerships and County-wide Influence

Building municipal partnerships and county-wide influence will establish political will. Cultivating political will is essential and must be approached as a requisite endeavor. This involves a strategic sales and educational campaign to ensure that all stakeholders comprehend the urgency and significance of their involvement in this process.¹⁹

Leveraging the Board of Supervisors' leadership and influence can achieve the educational campaign. The members of the Board of Supervisors possess considerable authority, and their leadership is integral to the success of reparations policies. Their endorsement and guidance can significantly shape the outcome of these initiatives.

Lastly, there must be a balance between how harms ought to be repaired at the municipal level with county influence. Municipal accountability is foundational in legitimizing community claims. The Municipality must accept and acknowledge responsibility for addressing and rectifying these harms. This requires municipal agencies to examine their entire ecosystem of departments, such as the Health Department, Office of Economic Workforce Development, etc., to identify specific opportunities for implementing reparative measures.²⁰

¹⁷ "There Are New Suns - Building a Transformative Narrative.Pdf."

¹⁸ Davies, Jackson, and Knight, "Limited Scopes of Repair."

¹⁹ "Eric McDonnell, Interview, Eknigh, Mon, Apr 14th, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

²⁰ "Eric McDonnell, Interview, Eknigh, Mon, Apr 14th, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

Establish the Harm Report as a Tool for Municipal, Policy, and State Action

A formal, comprehensive record of a city, county, or state's discrimination provides evidence of the Harm inflicted on Black communities. A Harm Report will equip legislative bodies or communities with data, establish a historical and legal basis for developing a reparations policy, and assist policymakers in determining where, how, and to whom the most Harm occurred to create a narrowly tailored remedy for an eligible population.²¹

While a Harm Report serves to memorialize truth and frame collective memory, its strategic function is equally vital. At the municipal level, the Harm Report can serve as a fiscal tool, offering a defensible rationale for future reparative investments. By identifying specific Harms, mapping them to policies, and estimating their impacts, the report creates the evidentiary base needed to justify targeted budget allocations. When tied to measurable outcomes such as educational access, health equity, or housing stability, a Harm Report makes a moral argument for repair and strengthens its budgetary legitimacy. Policymakers can use this document to identify funding priorities, evaluate trade-offs, and advocate for reparations within broader fiscal planning processes.

Approach to an Effective Harm Report

Written as a Continuum

The Harm Report results from extensive research conducted by its authors over many years. It provides valuable insights into the policies and practices that have significantly affected Black residents of Alameda County over the decades.²² This report is not a static document but an iterative working document that will be continually updated and refined throughout its development alongside community engagement.

Led by Community Voices

Ensuring that the community fully participates in shaping the final recommendations is essential. Deep community engagement will determine where the most concentrated areas of Harm were done. Community perception of the repair is required because they are not just the sources of testimony, but also the lived experience. Their insight will determine the narrative framing, the prioritization of harms, and the appropriateness of proposed interventions. Without this grounding, any resulting recommendations risk being misaligned, incomplete, or even retraumatizing.

Interim Harm Report (effectiveness)

An interim Harm Report acts as a strategic pulse check, gauging both political will and institutional appetite for committing to proposed reparative policies and financial investments. Surfacing early insights provides a low-risk opportunity to refine recommendations, test narrative resonance, and identify champions across governing bodies. Interim reporting strengthens the Harm Report's value as a municipal tool by embedding it into the policymaking and budgeting cycle. It also helps build institutional memory, maintain momentum through shifting budget priorities, and establish credibility with communities and decision-makers. Most critically, interim findings can be used to justify preparatory line items in upcoming budgets, ensuring that fiscal scaffolding is in place well before final recommendations are adopted.²³

²¹ "Legislative Toolkit.Pdf."

²² "Legislative Toolkit.Pdf."

²³ "THE-BIG-PAYBACK-FirstRepair-Toolkit-.Pdf."

Methodology for an Effective Harm Report

Research Framework and Approach

The Harm Report employs a historical-analytical framework to document and categorize Harms experienced by Black residents of Alameda County. The methodology is rooted in two central pillars: establishing a historical timeline of Harm and identifying specific individuals or groups affected by discriminatory policies and practices.

As you conduct research for the Harm Report and work with the Community, clearly defined and distinct periods and eras of Harm will emerge, providing historical context for enacting policies and practices contributing to systemic racial inequities. These periods will be mapped to help the governing body categorize Harms into identifiable groups based on the nature and scope of impact. For example, individuals Harmed by education or housing discrimination will be separately categorized with the understanding that most Harm will have overlapping dimensions. Those directly impacted will be documented individually, while relatives and descendants may also be included where harm was inherited or compounded.²⁴ An example is referencing the impact report written for the San Francisco Human Rights Commission by Stanford Law School Law and Policy Practicum and the Martin Daniel Gould Center for Conflict Resolution.²⁵ The findings of this report were considered instrumental in the Harm Report for San Francisco's African American Reparations Advisory Committee.

Data Collection and Analysis

The Harm Report will develop a comprehensive overview by analyzing formal legislative practices and informal, unwritten policies that have historically shaped community experiences. In particular, the research will examine laws that sanctioned racial segregation, economic exclusion, and educational inequities while also investigating practices that were socially enforced but never codified in law.²⁶

The analysis will be grounded in:

- Legislative and historical document review (ordinances, policies, and statutes)
- Archival research (unwritten customs, community practices, oral histories)
- Identification of Harmed individuals and families based on public records and community input

Special attention should be paid to significant forms of structural discrimination, including but not limited to redlining, racially restrictive covenants, Black Codes, and Jim Crow-era legislation. Though these laws vary by time period and geographic region, they share a common purpose of limiting Black social, political, and economic advancement.²⁷

Terminology and Addressing Data Gaps

Given that the terminology around racial Harm and reparations has evolved, the research team will adopt a flexible but consistent coding structure. Recognizing gaps in the historical record, the research will prioritize inclusivity in sourcing, utilizing all available documentation, including oral histories and nontraditional records, to reconstruct an accurate account of Harm.²⁸

²⁴ "Legislative Toolkit.Pdf."

²⁵ "Pages From AARAC_Disinvestment of San Francisco's African American Community 1970 -2022 .Pdf."

²⁶ "Legislative Toolkit.Pdf."

²⁷ "Eric McDonnell, Interview, Eknight, Mon, Apr 14th, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

²⁸ "AA_Reparations_Advisory_Committee_-_December_2021_Update_FINAL.Pdf."

Guiding Research Principles and Key Considerations

As part of the methodology for developing a comprehensive Harm Report, several guiding questions must be considered to ensure the process remains community-centered, transparent, and strategically valuable. Is the community both well-informed and actively engaged in the process? Engagement should not be symbolic; the community must be meaningfully involved in shaping the narrative, identifying Harm, and validating findings.

Establish a Timeline:

Define key periods of Harm and related historical events influencing policy and practice.

Identify Targets:

Document individuals, families, or community groups impacted by systemic discrimination, with special attention to direct and intergenerational effects.

Has progress become stagnant, or are we simply capturing headlines?

It is important to critically assess whether the work advances toward substantive outcomes or merely generates public attention without meaningful impact.

What is the intrinsic value of a Harm Report?

Understanding the tangible costs and the broader societal benefits of producing a Harm Report is vital for informed decision-making. The report must serve as a tool for action, not just documentation.

Can supplemental reports or analyses strengthen the Harm Report within the jurisdiction?

Consider reviewing and integrating findings from:

- **Impact Reports:** an evaluation tool used to study the social, environmental or economic outcomes of your efforts.
- **Disparity Reports:** a tool used to determine whether a government entity, either in the past or currently, engages in exclusionary practices.
- **Economic Analyses:** a study of an economy or group of economies.
- **Program Utilization Rate Study:** an evaluation tool used to measure how extensively and effectively a public program or service is being used by its target population.²⁹
- **Socio-Spatial Analyses:** Socio-spatial analysis is an interdisciplinary method used to examine the interplay between social phenomena and physical spaces. It investigates how societal behaviors, interactions, and structures influence, and are influenced by, the spatial environments in which they occur.³⁰

Incorporating these supplemental materials into your Harm Report can enhance the depth, rigor, and defensibility of the Harm Report, ensuring that it is anchored in a wide range of evidence and reflective of multidimensional community experiences.³¹

²⁹ "Costs and Utilization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program."

³⁰ Jalaladdini and Oktay, "Urban Public Spaces and Vitality."

³¹ "Kerby Lynch, PhD, Interview, Eknight, Fri, Mar 21, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

Development of an Effective Harm Report

A strong Harm Report must be carefully constructed to ensure precision, community relevance, and credibility. The following components are essential:

Core Elements

Identification of Parties Harmed

Specify the individuals, families, or groups directly Harmed by specific policies and practices.

Timeframe of Harm

Define the period during which the Harm occurred, providing historical context and anchoring the analysis within a specific era or sequence of events.

Avoid Conflating Harm

Focus solely on Harms directly caused by specific policies, laws, or practices. Broadening the scope to include general hardships weakens the specificity of the argument and risks diluting the purpose of the report. Only policies and practices that demonstrably Harmed Black communities should be referenced.

The Power of In-Text Citations

In-text citations strengthen the report's credibility and help anchor findings in historical documentation. They also provide a direct connection to community voices and narratives.

Targeting the Audience

This is an iterative process that must remain disciplined. Avoid overloading the report with Harm that falls outside the jurisdiction of the governing body authoring the report (e.g., local versus state-level issues), as doing so may dilute the strength and focus of the reparative argument.

Moments and Images

Begin the process of gathering archival materials and documentation. However, prioritize community input on where research efforts should be concentrated to ensure that the final report reflects lived experiences and community memory.



Section Two: Strategic Foundations for Writing an Effective Harm Report

The following framework has been

developed as a programmatic best practice guide for cities or counties initiating an effective Harm Report through the synthesis of data from multiple Harm reports, comparative case selection, and insights gathered from movement leaders through qualitative interviews.

“My concept is, sometimes you do the report and do the repair at the same time, because you don't know if you're on the right path until you implement it. The Wright brothers did not, drop a plan [to build] an airplane, build it, and fly it [all on] the first day.”

— Dino Robinson

For this report, Effectiveness refers to the degree to which a Harm Report clearly articulates Harm's nature and impact, meaningfully contributing to acknowledgment, discourse, or further action by both institutions and impacted communities. A report is considered effective when it demonstrates a coherent and credible account of Harm, reflects community voice and priorities, and is recognized, formally or informally, as a legitimate foundation for reparative response. While it may not directly implement policy, a Harm Report is typically used to catalyze action, serving as a critical step in advancing institutional accountability and long-term repair.

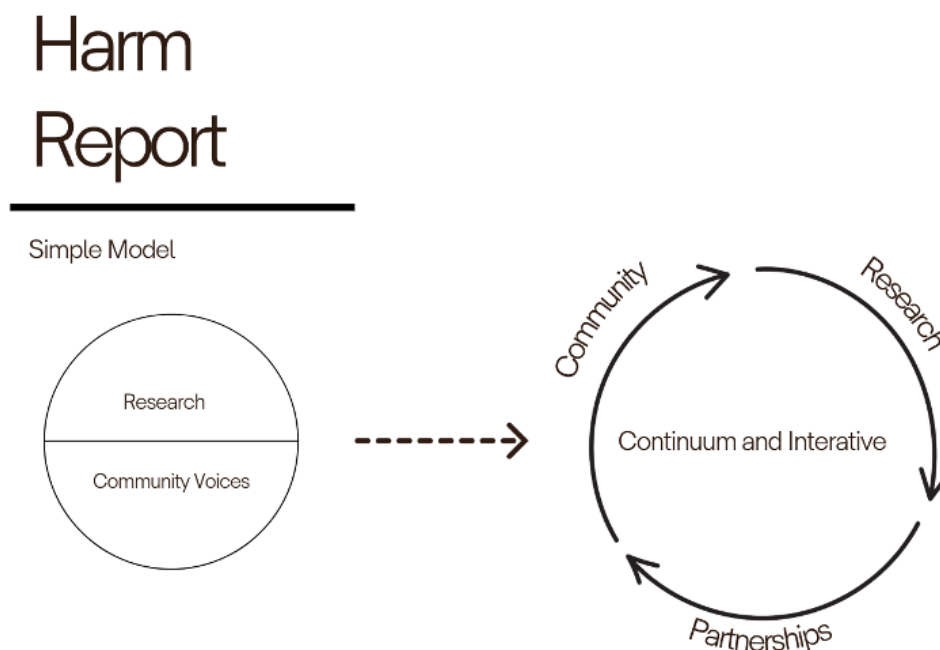
In this section, we will explore the importance of setting expectations within the commission and across the community; the foundational role of the Harm Report and its connection to historiography and truth-telling; the significance of community engagement in knowledge production; the role of community voices in shaping research narratives; and the need to acknowledge the emotional challenges faced by descendant communities. These elements together establish a comprehensive and community-centered approach to reparative research.

Clarifying Intentions, Aligning Expectations for an Effective Harm Report

Before the work begins, it is critical to establish a shared understanding of why this work is being undertaken and what it hopes to achieve. Setting clear intentions and expectations helps ensure the process is grounded in integrity, accountability, and alignment with the values of those most impacted. This work must be rooted in transparency, a key element in building trust and confidence in the process. The community shapes it, not simply in representation but in leadership and authorship. We build a foundation for trust, rigor, and long-term legitimacy by articulating the purpose and setting clear expectations from the outset. Administration will likely change during the course of your research, it is important to create guiding principles that are shared with partners that can serve as a baseline to ensure the work is progressing in an impactful manner.

Figure 1 below shows the process of how research should be approached. Research is iterative and will be documented as a continuum. The Harm Report is a live document rooting historical and present day harms as they arise.

Figure 1. Framework for Repair Process as a Continuum



Pre-Research for an Effective Harm Report

Before conducting research, it's essential to acknowledge that this work is a continuum and should be conducted strategically. Start by identifying existing community organizations and partners in the reparative process.³² This can be accomplished by conducting a stakeholder analysis and creating a comprehensive list of all the organizations essential for support. Equally important is to determine the appropriate language and framing for reparations. This includes considering the language narrative, such as restorative justice or equity justice, to ensure the research is sensitive to the Community's needs and the social-political context. Securing adequate funding and resources for the research and community engagement efforts is also crucial. Once these elements are in place, the following framework establishes guidelines for structuring a trauma-informed Harm Report.

Foundation of an Effective Harm Report

Mining for Historical Facts

An effective Harm Report begins by situating Harm within its historical context and analyzing how government agencies contributed to that Harm through policies and practices. To build a comprehensive and credible narrative, the research must evolve over time and be shaped through ongoing partnerships with Black-led organizations, local historical societies, and affected community members.³³ This collaborative approach is essential to ensure factual accuracy and build trust, increase community buy-in, and elevate the likelihood of stakeholder and political support.

In some cases, municipal departments may also serve as critical sources of data and institutional memory. However, not all data dashboards are publicly accessible, and the accuracy of the data can vary. Researchers must approach these systems with care and diplomacy, engaging directly with

³² "THE-BIG-PAYBACK-FirstRepair-Toolkit-.Pdf."

³³ "Linda J, Mann, PhD, Interview, Eknights, Wed, Apr 23, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

program managers and quality assurance staff to ensure the integrity and transparency of the information collected.³⁴

Primary source material can be challenging to locate, especially when records are fragmented, unpublished, or stored outside traditional academic institutions. Historical research is a process of discovery that requires patience, creativity, and attentive listening, not only to what scholars and journalists have written, but to the original sources themselves. A practical approach is to begin with existing literature, trace the author's references through bibliographies and indexes, and investigate whether the cited materials are original or derivative. Critical sources may reside in lesser-known collections such as family archives, local churches, or oral history projects and should be cataloged for ongoing exploration.³⁵

Equally important is how Harm is framed. Reports should account not only for direct Harm inflicted but also for deliberately denied opportunities. This dual framework, Harm done and potential prosperity withheld, allows policymakers to assess the full weight of systemic injustice. Asking "What if" Black communities had not been excluded from homeownership, higher education, or political participation helps clarify the generational impacts of these denials. By doing so, the report can more accurately inform repair strategies that reflect the injury scale and the scope of redress.

Finally, Harm Reports should be recognized as more than static records, they are dynamic tools for movement-building and institutional accountability. Their long-term value depends on several critical factors such as the extent to which the report reflects the lived experiences, leadership, and values of the impacted community, the likelihood of adoption or acknowledgment by institutional actors, including governing bodies and political stakeholders and the degree to which the report catalyzes formal next steps, such as reparative policy development, commissions, or legislative action.

A relevant historical example is *The Other America* by Michael Harrington. Though initially dismissed, the book later shaped President Kennedy's civil rights agenda, demonstrating how documentation can catalyze transformative change, even when not immediately acted upon.³⁶ Similarly, today's Harm Reports are crucial in preserving truth, legitimizing community claims, and laying the groundwork for future reparations and redress.

Community as the Source of Truth

The community is the true producer of knowledge in reparative work. Their voices should inform the narrative and guide the research itself. Engaging community members consistently ensures that final recommendations reflect their lived experience and leadership.³⁷

However, it is critical to recognize the emotional labor involved. Recalling traumatic histories is often exhausting and painful for descendants of Harmed communities. Many grow weary of the continual need to prove what they already know true. Unlike past eras, when reports were created within trusted community spaces like churches and local organizations, today's research is often initiated by government bodies. While this shift can feel frustrating or even retraumatizing, it is important to affirm that documenting these histories serves a necessary and long-term purpose.³⁸

To mitigate Harm, it is best practice to consult professionals trained in trauma-informed care when working with individuals discussing emotionally triggering topics.³⁹

³⁴ "Kerby Lynch, PhD, Interview, Eknigh, Fri, Mar 21, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

³⁵ "Dino Robinson, Interview, EKnigh, Fri, Apr 04, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

³⁶ "Linda J, Mann, PhD, Interview, Eknigh, Wed, Apr 23, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

³⁷ "Linda J, Mann, PhD, Interview, Eknigh, Wed, Apr 23, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

³⁸ "Linda J, Mann, PhD, Interview, Eknigh, Wed, Apr 23, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

³⁹ "Linda J, Mann, PhD, Interview, Eknigh, Wed, Apr 23, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

Reparations are not a single act, like issuing a large check overnight, but a long-term process of generational repair. They involve small, meaningful steps toward restoring community wholeness and supporting wealth-building across generations. The message to the community must be clear, the goal is not just present-day benefit, but legacy. As Morris “Dino” Robinson of Shorefront Legacy, and author of the Evanston, IL Harm Report, notes: “We must ask, ‘How will this investment serve children, grandchildren, and those yet to come?’”

Practitioners should ask about migration patterns, family names, adolescent experiences, and local organizations when conducting oral histories.⁴⁰ These details can open new avenues of inquiry. Establishing a framework to validate oral history without dismissing lived truth is equally important. For instance, in Evanston, Dino Morris implemented a guideline requiring three community members to confirm a claim.

Still, not every memory will align with archival records. That is where the role of the historian and archivist becomes critical: synthesizing oral testimony with documentary evidence, distinguishing between personal memory and verifiable fact, and ensuring the final narrative can withstand public scrutiny. As Morris explains, this process involves sifting through potential inaccuracies to locate historically grounded truths and making them both searchable and discoverable.⁴¹

Building Political Will through an Interim Harm Report

By following the approach outlined above, communities can lead the process of identifying the most prevalent areas of Harm based on their lived experiences. This initiative's outcomes should be shaped through a combination of direct community feedback, historical analysis, and expert, evidence-based assessments to evaluate whether proposed repairs are truly reparative in both intention and effect.

A critical element of this work lies in the power of community partnerships. As Linda Mann of the African American Redress Network points out, numerous examples exist, particularly in the South of communities achieving meaningful repair without formal government backing. These communities often rely on the support of respected external organizations such as UNESCO, the National Park Service, or World Heritage programs. With these institutions standing behind them, local efforts have successfully advanced reparative policies, demonstrating the potential of strategic alliances to legitimize and propel community-driven work.⁴²

Using San Francisco as a case example, we observe the importance of building multiracial, multiethnic coalitions. These diverse coalitions, composed of community leaders, organizations, and individual advocates, can act as the political engine that advances reparative policies, particularly when public agencies hesitate or stall. As Eric McDonnell, Chair of the San Francisco and African American Reparations advisory committee, has noted, coalition-building is critical for momentum and political survival in climates where government leadership may shift or public trust may be fragile.⁴³

Harm Report initiatives must prioritize transparency, consistency, and community involvement to address historic skepticism toward government initiatives, especially within Black communities with a fraught history with the government. An interim Harm Report can be a critical tool for establishing trust and strengthening budgetary legitimacy. This draft-stage report allows stakeholders to assess how the findings are received across constituencies; within the affected community, among municipal partners, and most importantly, by the governing body itself. It serves as a pulse check, measuring appetite and political will to commit to the proposed policies or financial investments.

⁴⁰ “Dino Robinson, Interview, EKnigh, Fri, Apr 04, 2025_otter_ai.Docx.”

⁴¹ “Dino Robinson, Interview, EKnigh, Fri, Apr 04, 2025_otter_ai.Docx.”

⁴² “Linda J, Mann, PhD, Interview, Eknigh, Wed, Apr 23, 2025_otter_ai.Docx.”

⁴³ “Eric McDonnell, Interview, Eknigh, Mon, Apr 14th, 2025_otter_ai.Docx.”

Even amid fiscal constraints, interim reporting can help identify champions on bodies such as Boards of Supervisors, keeping momentum alive through challenges such as uncertain budget cycles⁴⁴. It also provides a mechanism to vet potential roadblocks early, refine messaging, and build institutional support for the final recommendations.

Ultimately, community engagement is not a checkbox—it is the engine that drives redress. The Harmed community must be centered as the reparative process's prescriber, informant, and director. Community feedback forums, combined with rigorous archival research, should be synthesized into focused thematic groupings that help define the primary Dimensions of Harm. To operationalize this work, a strategic legislative thinker, in partnership with attorneys and historians, can help weave legal, historical, and community-informed frameworks into a cohesive, actionable plan. Be sure to identify the appropriate level of legal counsel required and remember that the role of regional counsel is to protect the agency's interests.

Language Matters: Framing Reparative Policy for Impact

Advocates should thoughtfully consider how reparative policies are framed, particularly in legislative or public-facing documents. In some contexts, explicitly using the term "reparations" may provoke resistance or hinder policy success. Instead, framing the policy as a remedy for government negligence, deliberate indifference, or the unlawful loss of property or civil rights may be more effective.

This framing may not significantly affect feasibility in states like California with broader political support for reparative efforts. However, precise, outcome-oriented language is critical even in more progressive environments. Broad or aspirational statements should be avoided in favor of clear policy objectives⁴⁵. Wherever possible, advocates should also incorporate the "right to truth", a concept recognized in international human rights law either directly or by implication.⁴⁶ Language should be carefully vetted to withstand legal and governmental scrutiny and to avoid further polarization, particularly in politically conservative or skeptical legislative environments.

Effective advocacy should focus on what is necessary to pass legislation, avoiding extraneous detail or abstract theory. The narrative must remain grounded in the lived experience of the affected community. It should reflect the tone, urgency, and spirit of the moment, not the style of an academic paper. For example, incorporating period-specific materials like newspaper clippings or public statements can bring a voice to those who demanded redress in real time. These individuals often speak not only from personal experience but also on behalf of their ancestors and the accumulated effects of generational Harm, now better understood through the lens of transgenerational epigenetics.⁴⁷

As Robin Rue-Simmons, Founder and Executive Director of FirstRepair, explains, the language should not cater to scholarly audiences. However, it must instead center the Community's truth and be tailored to the audience the policy seeks to persuade.⁴⁸

Cosmetic and Structural Considerations of an Effective Harm Report

Examine the continuum of racial Harms from the post-slavery era to the present, while clearly defining the specific time frame for analysis⁴⁹. It is essential to focus on Harms caused or perpetuated by local governance, rather than those falling exclusively under federal jurisdiction. For instance, the City of

⁴⁴ "Eric McDonnell, Interview, Eknight, Mon, Apr 14th, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

⁴⁵ "Legislative Toolkit.Pdf."

⁴⁶ "Linda J, Mann, PhD, Interview, Eknight, Wed, Apr 23, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

⁴⁷ "Robin Rue Simmons, Interview, Eknight, Fri, April 11, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

⁴⁸ "Robin Rue Simmons, Interview, Eknight, Fri, April 11, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

⁴⁹ "THE-BIG-PAYBACK-FirstRepair-Toolkit-.Pdf."

Evanston, established in 1863 and located in a non-slave state, deliberately excluded the institution of slavery from its Harm Report. Instead, the report concentrated on locally administered policies such as housing discrimination and zoning practices that directly impacted Black residents. Including slavery as a focal point, in this context, was viewed as a potential distraction that could dilute the argument and reduce support among skeptical stakeholders⁵⁰. As the public conversation continues to evolve, staying anchored in locally actionable Harms ensures focus and strategic impact.⁵¹

- Use in-text citations and direct quotations to enhance credibility, transparency, and traceability. Citing all references within the body of the text allows readers to follow the evidence base and builds trust in the document's integrity.
- Incorporate visual materials thoughtfully, such as newspaper clippings, archival photographs, maps, and images. These materials should enhance the report's emotional and historical resonance while minimizing Harm and avoiding retraumatization. Visuals should be contextually relevant and ethically sourced.
- Prioritize community-centered language. When describing Harms, use terminology and framing that reflect how the community articulates its own experiences. Avoid academic jargon that may obscure meaning or alienate readers. Community voices should be elevated throughout.
- Define the community included in the Harm analysis. Clearly articulate who the impacted community is, including criteria such as lineage, geography, residency, or cultural affiliation. This ensures clarity about who the report speaks for and about.
- Evaluate governmental Harms within a defined scope. Anchor the report within a specific timeframe and examine the impacts of policies, practices, or governance structures relevant to that period. Temporal boundaries strengthen analytical clarity and legal defensibility.
- Ensure formatting supports accessibility. Use clear section headings, consistent citation formats, legible fonts, and simple layouts to make the report accessible to various audiences, including community members, policymakers, and legal advocates.
- As mentioned in the previous section, consider using supplemental documents such as impact and disparity reports, parcel value and economic analysis and program utilization rates.

Defining, Documenting, and Narrowing Harm

As previously stated, this work should be led and articulated by community leaders, stakeholders, archivists, activists, and community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), historical societies, museums, libraries or academic partners.

Key Focus Areas for Research and Structure to define, document and narrow Harm::

- Based on community voices, narrow and focus the scope on a specific dimension of Harm (e.g., housing, education, health).
- Clearly define the timeframe of Harm, specifying the historical period under review.

⁵⁰ "Legislative Toolkit.Pdf."

⁵¹ "Legislative Toolkit.Pdf."

- Locate for analysis any primary source documentation from the perspective of individuals who were directly impacted by the events at the time they occurred.
- Examine relevant state and municipal laws that contributed to or perpetuated Harm.
- Analyze lingering adverse effects stemming from specific dimensions of institutional Harm, such as loss of generational wealth, loss of land, access to higher education, and health disparities.

Key Research Methods:

- Oral histories
- Public records data
- Census records
- Newspaper articles and periodicals
- Plantation documents (with careful attention to jurisdictional relevance—e.g., if the governing body is municipal and the region was not a slaveholding state, limit the scope accordingly)
- Personal family histories
- Institutional records (e.g., national and local legislation contributing to inequities)

An Effective Harm Report is Not

The final Harm Report should not include budget timelines, eligibility criteria, funding sources, or proposed compensation measures. These components belong in a separate Repair Report or set of Recommendations. While related, the Harm Report and the recommendations for redress serve distinct purposes and require different areas of expertise. The historian or researcher responsible for documenting Harm is not the same practitioner who should design financial remedies or policy interventions.

It's also essential to consider the intended audience. Repair Reports are written for policymakers, not historians or economists. When overloaded with technical detail or policy proposals, the Harm Report can become overwhelming and lose its focus by diminishing its impact and clarity. As Rue mentions in the quote below, when Harm Reports are diluted, they can be interpreted as great pieces of scholarship and as a result become shelved by decision makers.

At its core, the Harm Report should function as a historical and evidentiary document. It should clearly establish what happened, to whom, and how, quantifying the resulting loss, theft, impact, or injury. Conflating this role with the task of designing reparative solutions risks both analytical confusion and operational missteps. Keeping these reports distinct helps preserve the integrity and utility of both.⁵²

“So what I did differently, which I think more should do, is [get] a commitment of a budget on the front end, so that we didn't present Harm Report recommendations, a history of everything that happened to us Black [folks] in the last 500 years, and no clear idea on how to fund it. [Harm Reports] are getting to the diocese, and it's just like, Okay, thank you for this great piece of scholarship.”

— Robin Rue Simmons

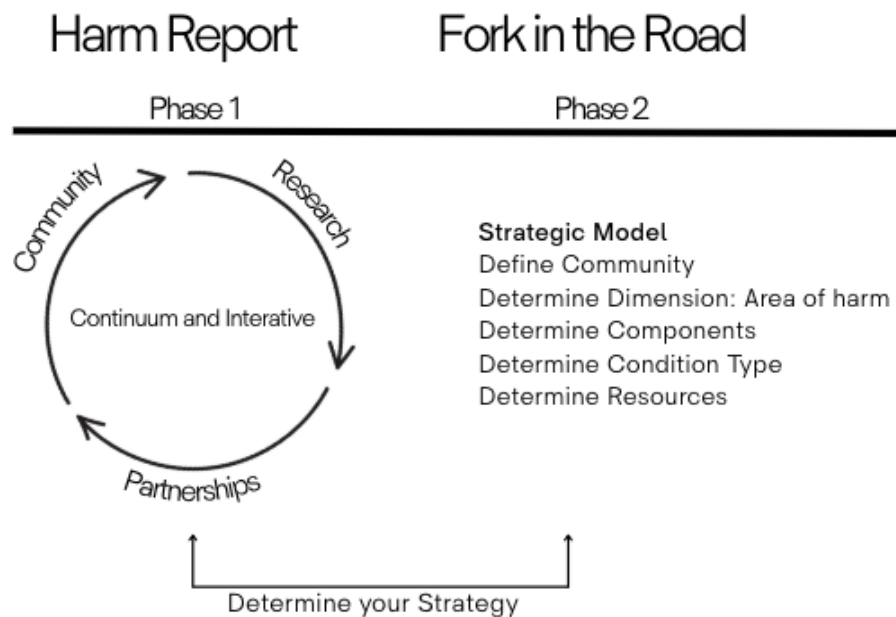
⁵² “Robin Rue Simmons, Interview, EKnighT, Fri, April 11, 2025_otter_ai.Docx.”



Section Three: How the Harm Reports Fit into the Process to Repair

To clarify the intent and purpose behind creating a Harm Report, this section serves as a guide for aligning with local reparative strategy models. As illustrated in Figure 2, Phase 1 (Harm Report) and Phase 2 (The Fork in the Road) operate as part of a continuous feedback loop. As the historiography is developed in collaboration with the Community, archivists, and strategic partners, practitioners should regularly revisit the Local Repair Strategy Models. Through ongoing community outreach, qualitative data, and research gathered during the Harm Report process, communities will identify their specific reparative needs. The selected reparative strategies model will then serve as the analytical frame and guiding lens to ensure the Harms identified remain uniform, community-informed, and consistent with larger movements, while also positioning the initiative to receive future federal or state resources.⁵³

Figure 2. The Fork in the Road: Anchoring Harm in a Cohesive Framework for Repair



Reminder: The purpose of creating a Harm Report can vary based on its intended use, and may include⁵⁴:

- Agitating for the formation of a commission or securing funding.
- Advocating for specific actions, such as the development of reparations recommendations.
- Developing clear and defensible eligibility criteria for individuals or groups Harmed.
- Identifying and proposing narrowly tailored remedies to meet the compelling governmental interest of rectifying historical injustices.⁵⁵

⁵³ Howard, *Laying the Foundation For Local Reparations*.

⁵⁴ Howard.

⁵⁵ "Legislative Toolkit.Pdf."

Please reference **Table 1**, which outlines four distinct models, each with benefits depending on the reparative strategy. These models will help determine how to properly narrow and frame the Harm and political framing when garnering political will. A version of this model was first introduced by Kamm Howard, Commissioner of the National African American Reparations Commission and HR 40 co-author, in his book *Laying the Foundation for Local Reparations*.

* Model is not referenced to show which model is 'best' but rather, to showcase the clarity of how the Harm Report directly impacts what comes next in the overall process whether that's litigation, policy, or commission-led repair.

Local Reparations Strategy Models			
Model 1: HR 40	Model 2: Evanston, IL	Model 3: Asheville & Buncombe County, NC	Model 4: Palm Springs, CA
Commission-Based	Commission-Based	NGO (Grass Roots Community)	No Commission Required (Litigation)
Harm Report	Harm Report	Establish Funding	Harm Report (Specific Harm)
Repair Report	Establish Funding	Harm Report	Establish Funding
Establish Funding	Repair Report	Repair Report	Repair Report
Goal of Harm Report Elements: <i>Identifying and proposing remedies that are narrowly tailored to meet the compelling governmental interest of rectifying historical injustices</i>	Goal of Harm Report Elements: <i>Advocating for specific actions, such as the development of reparations recommendations</i>	Goal of Harm Report Elements: <i>Agitating for the formation of a commission or securing funding</i>	Goal of Harm Report Elements: <i>Developing clear and defensible eligibility criteria for individuals or groups Harmed</i>

Table 1. Table of Local Strategy Models) *Kamm Howard Inspired ⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Howard, *Laying the Foundation For Local Reparations*.

Model 1. House Resolution 40 (HR 40), an Act of Congress: Commission-Led, Harm-Informed

The HR40 model is structured around establishing a federal reparations Commission through an act of Congress, signed into law by the President. Once convened, this commission is tasked with developing a set of remedies to address the Harms rooted in colonial and post-colonial American history, continuing to the present day. After completing its analysis, the Commission delivers its findings and recommendations to Congress, which must allocate funding and legislative resources to implement the proposed reparative policies.⁵⁷

This model follows a linear framework: Congress authorizes the commission, the commission develops policies, and federal funding is subsequently directed toward those policies. State-level proposals modeled on HR40 differ primarily in the specific periods of Harm they seek to address. It is important to note that HR40 has yet to be signed into law. In 1989, United States House Representative John Conyers first introduced House Resolution 40 (HR 40), which would acknowledge the “fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States. The 1989 bill failed to pass, but Representative Conyers reintroduced the legislation into Congress every year until he died in 2019.¹³ In 2021, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and 195 other representatives reintroduced HR 40, which was heard in committee.⁵⁸

The HR40 approach is particularly well-suited to large-scale populations such as those exceeding 100,000 residents because it allows for developing a comprehensive and unified reparations strategy. I offer this model as an example of ensuring uniformity for reparative action when federal and state resources are directed at reparations. Without guaranteed funding from Congress, even the most carefully designed reparatory plans risk remaining aspirational rather than actionable.⁵⁹

Model 2. Evanston, Illinois: Commission-Led, Harm-Informed, Funding-Followed

Evanston, Illinois is widely regarded as a national leader in municipal reparations. Following the sequencing—Commission → Harm Report → funding → intervention—demonstrates a methodical and locally appropriate reparations framework that centers documentation and participatory governance while grounding policy in financial feasibility. The program formally began in 2019 when the City Council passed Resolution 126-R-19, establishing the Evanston Reparations Committee and pledging an initial \$10 million in funding, drawn from a 3% tax on adult-use cannabis sales.⁶⁰ This financial commitment was coupled with a mandate to redress harms experienced by Black residents due to discriminatory housing policies between 1919 and 1969. The reparations process was grounded in public testimony and historical documentation, making Evanston one of the first U.S. cities to connect funding to a harm-based, community-driven initiative.⁶¹

The Evanston Reparations Stakeholder Authority helped guide the rollout of the program. In March 2021, the first reparative grants were distributed: \$25,000 payments to support mortgage relief, down payments, or home repairs for eligible recipients. Initially, only 16 people received funding, due to limited cannabis revenue and a cautious, phased rollout approach.⁶² By August 2023, 98 people including 76

⁵⁷ Heath, “Submitted to the US House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.”

⁵⁸ “Local Reparations for a Just World FINAL (1) - Adobe Cloud Storage.”

⁵⁹ Howard, *Laying the Foundation For Local Reparations*.

⁶⁰ “Evanston Local Reparations | City of Evanston.”

⁶¹ Howard, *Laying the Foundation For Local Reparations*.

⁶² Harris and Kerr, “COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:”

qualifying “ancestors” and 22 direct descendants received funding. As of March 2025, the city had disbursed over \$5 million to 212 recipients, signaling ongoing operational expansion despite early constraints.⁶³

Facing slower-than-anticipated cannabis sales, Evanston augmented its funding strategy in December 2022 by introducing a Real Estate Transfer Tax (RTT) on high-value property transactions. This additional stream was intended to stabilize long-term revenue and support future grant cycles.⁶⁴ Combined, these revenue sources sustained the initiative as the program expanded to include unconditional cash transfers and guaranteed income pilots—illustrating a shift from housing-only assistance to broader reparative tools.⁶⁵

Throughout this evolution, public support has remained strong. A 2023 survey by NORC and Northwestern University found that 70% of white residents and more than 64% of Black, Latino, and Asian residents viewed Evanston’s program as sound public policy.⁶⁶ Community trust in city government also increased following the passage of reparations legislation.⁶⁷

Despite its success, the program has faced legal and operational challenges. In 2024, a lawsuit alleged that Evanston’s reparations violated constitutional protections by prioritizing race.⁶⁸ Separately, critics pointed to limited renter inclusion and slow administrative processing. The city responded by refining eligibility criteria and scaling outreach to ensure broader access. The Reparations Committee continues to meet regularly, adjusting program elements in line with fiscal data and community input.

Evanston’s reparations effort remains a pioneering model of iterative, municipally driven redress allowing the reparations commission to revisit and refine recommendations over time based on ongoing community engagement. By aligning commission leadership, historical analysis, targeted funding, and phased implementation, the city has built a scalable, legally tested framework for local reparative justice. Its approach underscores the importance of grounding policy in lived experience while remaining adaptable to evolving community needs.

Model 3: Asheville & Buncombe County, North Carolina – Funding-Led, Commission-Facilitated, Harm-Informed

Asheville and Buncombe County offer a compelling model for local reparations, structured as a Funding-Led, Commission-Facilitated, Harm-Informed approach. The process began in July 2020 when Asheville’s City Council passed Resolution 20-128 issuing a formal apology for the city’s role in slavery and racial discrimination and pledged to establish a reparations program for Black residents⁶⁹ Buncombe County followed with a parallel commitment and initial funding, bringing the total early investment to approximately \$2.1 million.⁷⁰ Notably, these financial commitments were made prior to

⁶³ city and Nia, “Low Marijuana Sales Hinder Evanston Reparations Distribution.”

⁶⁴ Editor and Pink, “City Council Approves Real Estate Transfer Tax Funds for Reparations.”

⁶⁵ Davies, Jackson, and Knight, “Limited Scopes of Repair.”

⁶⁶ “Evanston’s Reparations Program Receives Strong Community Support According to NORC Survey | NORC at the University of Chicago.”

⁶⁷ “Overwhelming Support for Evanston Reparations Program, Survey Finds.”

⁶⁸ “Flinn v. City of Evanston 1:24-Cv-04269 (N.D. Ill.) | Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse.”

⁶⁹ “Local Reparations Process in Asheville and Buncombe County.”

⁷⁰ “Support Reparations for Black People Resolution (Final).Pdf.”

forming a reparations commission or conducting a harm assessment, signaling serious institutional intent.⁷¹

The Community Reparations Commission was formed in April 2022 as a 25-member body representing historically Black neighborhoods, educational institutions, public agencies, and local organizations.⁷² Charged with guiding policy development and community engagement, the Commission quickly prioritized the creation of a comprehensive Harm Report. In August 2023, they authorized the “Cease the Harm” audit, which was completed in early 2024 at a cost of approximately \$174,000.⁷³ The report documented systemic harms ranging from slavery and segregation to urban renewal displacement and mass incarceration and presented 108 actionable recommendations across housing, education, health, criminal justice, and economic development.⁷⁴

Early implementation has already begun. The city hired a dedicated Reparations Project Manager to coordinate across departments,⁷⁵ and funding was allocated to pilot programs, including home repairs for displaced Black elders,⁷⁶ a Guaranteed Income pilot, an Economic Development Center, and a neighborhood grant initiative. The Commission also hosted public listening sessions to refine program design and began integrating audit findings into Buncombe County’s Strategic Plan 2030.⁷⁷

The Asheville model highlights the advantages and challenges of initiating reparations with funding. Early investment established momentum and credibility, but it also required careful alignment with evolving community priorities and the findings of the harm audit. Throughout, political champions within city and county government have played a vital role in maintaining transparency and continuity, while maintaining partnerships within the jurisdictional level of authority. In this case, Buncombe County partnered with Asheville City to influence reparations across the region. As a County, it was important to survey the political climate and determine where allyship can be fostered and built to initiate a greater impact.

In the absence of federal mandates, Asheville and Buncombe County demonstrate how local governments can act decisively on reparations by front-loading financial commitment, centering community governance, and grounding strategy in data and public accountability.⁷⁸

Model 4. Section 14; Palm Springs, California (Litigation-Informed, No Commission Required)

The Palm Springs model reflects a litigation-informed approach to reparations and does not require the establishment of a formal commission. Instead, this model begins by identifying the conditions and dimensions of Harm, often in partnership with legal teams, community advocates, and impacted descendants such as those tied to Section 14, where hundreds of Black families were forcibly evicted and their homes destroyed by city action in the 1950s and 1960s.⁷⁹

⁷¹ “Support Reparations for Black People Resolution (Final).Pdf.”

⁷² “City of Asheville, Community Reparations Commission.”

⁷³ Carolina, “Cease Harm Comprehensive Assessment Impacting the African American Community.”

⁷⁴ Carolina.

⁷⁵ “City of Asheville, Community Reparations Commission.”

⁷⁶ “The Citizen-Times, Asheville.”

⁷⁷ “Community Engagement (CED).”

⁷⁸ “Report-National Reparations Funding Landscape_062124.Pdf.”

⁷⁹ “Section 14 Archived Documents | City of Palm Springs.”

Rather than forming a commission, city officials acknowledge the Harm, identify funding sources, and develop targeted policy remedies based on a Harm Report, legal vulnerability, documentation, and historical records. Legal pressure and community organizing can prompt local governments to act to avoid liability or proactively address potential litigation outcomes. In this model, policy proposals and compensation efforts are pursued in parallel with legal strategy.

The litigation-informed model offers speed and clarity, particularly when historical harms are well-documented and confined to specific events or communities. However, it can also limit the breadth of community engagement and narrow the focus of reparations to avoid legal exposure, rather than embracing a broad, justice-driven framework. Still, it proves effective for cases with well-established Harm where local governments are motivated by legal risk, public scrutiny, or political urgency. This model can be especially viable when there is no political will to establish a commission, yet local leadership is compelled to act.

Importantly, a cost-benefit analysis can help guide the decision to adopt this model. Jurisdictions should compare the potential financial, social, and reputational costs of litigation to the cost of incremental repair developed through a formal commission and community process. When weighed carefully, Model 4 can be a powerful and efficient approach, particularly when immediate Harm redress is politically or legally necessary. However, it must be implemented thoughtfully to avoid bypassing community trust-building and long-term legitimacy.

“ Keeping in mind, the ultimate goal of reparations in community wholeness ”
— Kamm Howard

*These model examples are included to demonstrate how the strength and clarity of a harm report can shape or constrain the path to reparations. I reference these models not to evaluate their outcomes, but to close the loop on the Harm Report's role in the overall process. When a harm report is specific, credible, and community-driven, it gives any reparative model a stronger foundation.

Building Local Frameworks to Influence Broader Action

Local reparations must be narrowly tailored to address each Community's specific histories, policies, and harms. While many municipalities share common impacts on Black residents, the origins and local context of those harms vary significantly, sometimes requiring place-based strategies to meet the compelling interest of the local government.⁸⁰

A Harm Report serves as the critical foundation for repair. It enables jurisdictions to identify community-specific injuries, prioritize interventions, assess feasibility, and prepare for implementation, even without immediate action. As Howard notes in his book *Laying the Foundation for Local Reparations*, establishing structures and documentation in advance positions localities to act swiftly when federal or state reparations policy emerges. A completed Harm Report holds intrinsic value even if shelved: it affirms local recognition of Harm and readiness for future redress.⁸¹

Importantly, the Harm Report is also pivotal in shaping budget decisions. In addition to serving as a historical and evidentiary foundation, it functions as a fiscal tool, offering the documentation necessary to justify reparations-related budget allocations. By linking identified harms to specific areas of need,

⁸⁰ “THE-BIG-PAYBACK-FirstRepair-Toolkit-.Pdf.”

⁸¹ Howard, *Laying the Foundation For Local Reparations*.

jurisdictions can more confidently direct funds, defend decisions in public discourse, and align resource use with measurable community impact.

Alameda County offers a compelling example of jurisdictional influence, especially over its unincorporated areas. Its ability to codify racial equity within county systems, while influencing surrounding municipal jurisdictions, makes it a potential incubator for regional reparations models.⁸² Aligning with existing federal investment priorities, such as those targeting low-income communities and eliminating blight, can further strengthen local reparative action's legal and fiscal rationale.⁸³

The experience of Asheville and Buncombe County demonstrates how local and County partnerships can build early momentum. In 2020, both passed reparations resolutions acknowledging historic disinvestment in Black communities and committing to a structured process for repair.⁸⁴ Buncombe County, with its six municipalities and 20 townships, offers a model for coordinated governance across diverse jurisdictions.

By 2022, Asheville hired a consulting firm to support the formation of a 25-member Community Reparations Commission (CRC), with 15 members selected by impacted neighborhoods (Local Reparations Process in Asheville and Buncombe County, n.d.). The CRC commissioned an independent audit to examine disparities in five critical areas: education, housing, law enforcement, courts, and healthcare.⁸⁵

As Linda Mann of the African American Redress Network emphasizes, conducting a landscape analysis in politically complex environments, where counties hold influence but not direct jurisdiction over municipalities, as seen in places like Asheville, can be a powerful strategy for building the political will needed for implementation. This approach allows communities to assess readiness, maintain momentum, and pursue incremental forms of repair without overextending limited resources.

Aligning Local Efforts with Federal Full Repair

While local reparations efforts serve as vital foundations for community-specific repair, they are not substitutes for the comprehensive redress envisioned by national advocates. As the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA) outlines, full repair must address the totality of Harm, spanning federal, state, and local responsibility.⁸⁶ Thus, local initiatives should be designed to meet immediate needs and align with and inform broader federal and state reparations strategies to ensure that local harms are not siloed or left unresolved within a fragmented redress system.

To support the local reparations movement, Kamm Howard developed a "Guide for Providing National Symmetry for Local Reparations Efforts," which offers centralized guidance on navigating the policy development process. It details the process from building a compelling case to using the 10-Point Reparations Program as a framework for aligning municipal action with national goals, including support for HR 40.

HR 40, first introduced in 1989 by Congressman John Conyers and reintroduced in 2017, calls for establishing a federal commission to study and develop reparations proposals for African Americans. Its

⁸² "ReparationsRecommendationsReport_FINAL.Pdf."

⁸³ Howard, *Laying the Foundation For Local Reparations*.

⁸⁴ "Report-National Reparations Funding Landscape_062124.Pdf."

⁸⁵ "Report-National Reparations Funding Landscape_062124.Pdf."

⁸⁶ "What Is NAARC?"

goals include cataloguing the harms of slavery and systemic racism, crafting remedies, and determining appropriate compensation mechanisms.⁸⁷

The legislation outlines specific recommendations for:

- Aligning with international human rights standards.
- Issuing a formal U.S. government apology for slavery and its legacies.
- Eliminating laws and policies that continue to harm African Americans.
- Calculating and disbursing compensation.
- Developing rehabilitative and restorative policies.⁸⁸

In line with the continuity of proposals, it should be noted that within California, Dr. Shirley Weber, when introducing AB 3121, used HR 40's Findings and Purpose and Establishment and Duties, which constitute approximately 80% of the legislation, word-for-word, adding only a California-specific preamble.⁸⁹

As Kamm Howard emphasizes, aligning local reparations initiatives with HR 40 ensures consistency, defensibility, and moral clarity. Understanding and incorporating federal frameworks into local action strengthens the argument for redress and helps build the political will necessary to implement reparative justice at every level of governance.

⁸⁷ Howard, *Laying the Foundation For Local Reparations*.

⁸⁸ Lee and Coleman, "IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES."

⁸⁹ "AB 3121- CHAPTERED."



Chapter II: Identifying Key Indicators and Findings

Presents the evaluation strategy used to assess the effectiveness of Harm Reports, drawing on literature review, case studies, and interviews. It outlines key findings and criteria for assessing real-world impact across jurisdictions.

Insights from the Field

Since a Harm Report is typically used to catalyze action rather than implement policy directly, it is important to acknowledge that this report does not measure the implementation of the recommendations but rather the uptake and legitimization of the report itself by impacted community members, institutions, and decision-makers.

“ In 1963, many of our families did not have a voice ”

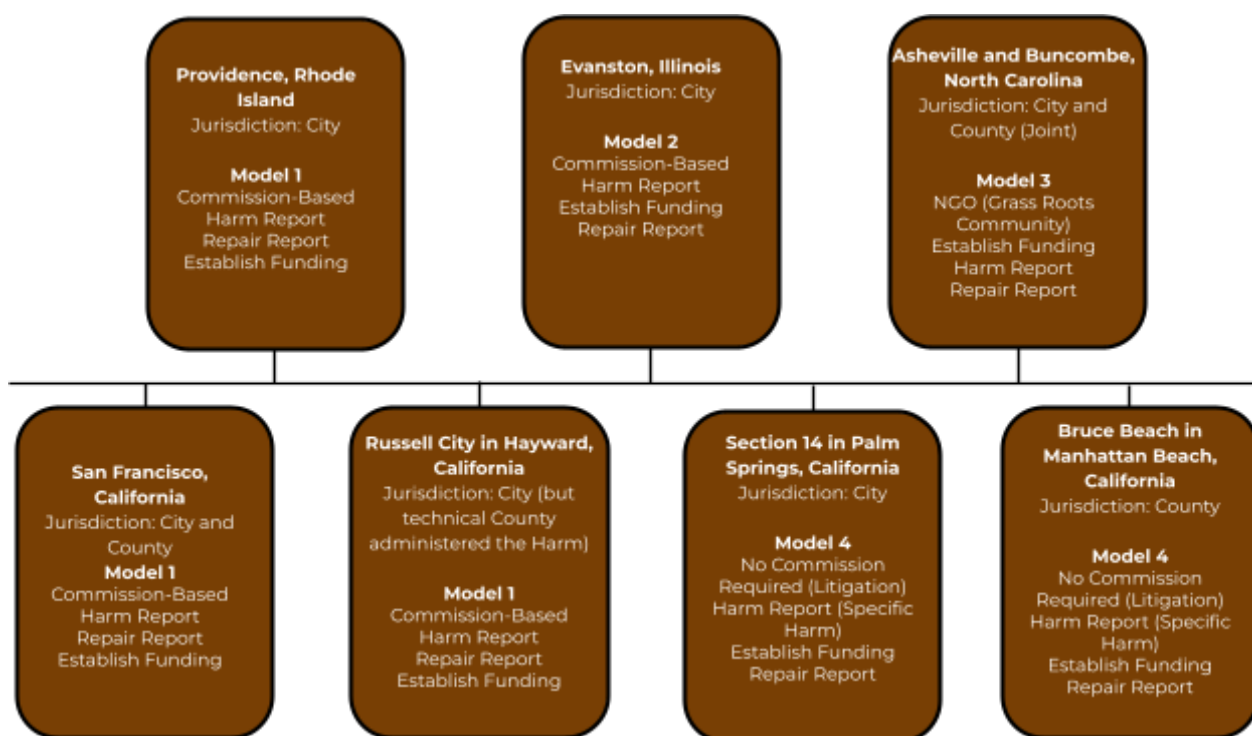
— Aisha Knowles

The following case studies were analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of Harm Reports using a combination of literature review, case study analysis, and qualitative semi-structured interviews. Each case represents a distinct approach to local reparations, reflecting variation in governance structure, strategy, and progress toward implementation.

Figure 3 below organizes the selected cases by geographic location and governing jurisdiction, and assigns each to one of the local reparations strategic models outlined in Section 2 of Chapter 1. The top row features cases from outside California. Notably, while each jurisdiction has approached the documentation of Harm differently, they are all at varying stages of the repair process. Evanston, Providence, and Asheville, in particular, have identified funding sources and either issued reparations recommendations or are actively in the process of doing so.

Among the California examples, two cases follow Model 4 (litigation-based repair), which is typically pursued in response to specific, legally actionable Harms. Three of the case studies fall under county jurisdictions; however, it is important to note distinctions in governance—San Francisco functions as both a city and county, and Asheville and Buncombe County maintain separate governing bodies but are jointly advancing a shared reparations process.

Figure 3. Case Study Introduction



Criteria for measuring Effectiveness of the Harms Report:

Each case was evaluated using a traditional evaluative framework, measuring Harm Reports according to Effectiveness, Cost to the Community, Political Feasibility, and Implementation Robustness. These criteria were selected to align with standard policy analysis approaches and to provide a structured foundation for comparison. However, as the research progressed, including document reviews, comparative case studies, and stakeholder interviews, it became clear that these measures did not fully capture the values and priorities emphasized by impacted communities. In particular, the themes of **Community input, Community buy-in, and representational accuracy emerged** repeatedly as essential indicators of a report's legitimacy and perceived success. In response, the evaluative framework was adapted to reflect these community-centered criteria. To better reflect the role of a Harm Report as a foundational tool, the more appropriate measure is institutional uptake and endorsement rather than implementation robustness, the degree to which the report is formally recognized, acted upon, or used to guide the next phase of the reparative process. This shift ensures that the analysis is grounded in policy convention and the lived experiences, expectations, and insights of those most affected by historical Harm. By centering community-defined measures of Effectiveness, the analysis advances a more equitable and contextually responsive understanding of what makes a Harm Report meaningful and actionable.

Effectiveness

Defined as the success or failure of how well Harm is articulated in the report. The documents should effectively define Harm and influence the acceptance and accountability on behalf of the municipality/regional authority. It is the degree to which the Harm Report meaningfully informs action, shapes discourse, or contributes to tangible next steps. This can be achieved by defining baseline characteristics and minimum standards of effective Harm Report documents from other jurisdictions, and highlighting common pitfalls to avoid.

Cost of Harm to the Community

Considering both the financial burden and the social cost of excluding community voices. Specifically, it is important to know whether the report resonates with and is endorsed by impacted communities. It includes the social and procedural costs that communities bear when they are excluded from the development and authorship of Harm documentation. The criteria measurement will analyze the research data alongside key focus areas and specific Dimensions of Harm within the County. If a report is shelved, it still has intrinsic value by having harm documented, prepared, and accepted by the municipality for when federal policy or law is passed to implement repair of the impacts of discriminatory policy.

Political Feasibility / Acceptability

Assesses the likelihood that decision-makers will adopt, justify, and implement a given recommendation within the Harms Report. In the current political climate, any proposed framework for defining effective harm must be palatable and realistic for policymakers at both the state and local levels. This will include political acceptance and tolerance from the Community at large. This criterion will measure the extent to which local government officials and stakeholders are motivated to support the policy recommendations, including their willingness to allocate resources and defend the policy in public forums. Since securing budgetary and operational backing can take months, political feasibility will also consider the urgency of acceptance and implementation and the broader political landscape influencing decision-making (e.g., Evanston, the first city in the country to distribute reparations, is

being sued. The criterion will assess the potential for backlash and highlight the Harm that links directly to policy designs to repair that Harm.

Institutional Update and Endorsement

Assess the degree to which the Harm Report is acknowledged, adopted, or used to initiate formal next steps by governing bodies.

Effectiveness Scale

The following Effectiveness scale was used to measure the quality outcomes of the report based on narrative evaluation.

Table 2. Effectiveness Scale

Criterion	Definition	Low Score (1)	Medium Score (2)	High Score (3)
Effectiveness	Degree to which the Harm Report meaningfully informs action, shapes discourse, or contributes to tangible next steps	Minimal or no influence; disconnected from decision-making processes	Some influence on awareness or discourse; limited impact on policy or institutional response	High relevance and utility; informs recommendations or structural action
Cost to the Community	Financial, emotional, and social burden on the community from exclusion, re-traumatization, or symbolic engagement	High social cost; excludes or tokenizes community; creates disillusionment	Partial inclusion or uneven engagement; burden shared unequally	Process honors community voice, reduces Harm, and builds trust through inclusive engagement
Political Feasibility & Acceptability	Likelihood of gaining political and stakeholder support, including both institutional actors and community members	Likely to provoke opposition or indifference; lacks champions	Politically viable but lacks full community or institutional buy-in	Strong support from electeds, staff, and community; broad appeal across sectors
Institutional Uptake and Endorsement	Degree to which the Harm Report is acknowledged, adopted, or used to initiate formal next steps by governing bodies	No formal response; no institutional traction	Symbolic acknowledgment; unclear or limited institutional follow-through	Official endorsement or integration; report informs next-phase structures (e.g., task force, resolution)
Community Input, Buy-in & Representation	Extent to which the report reflects the lived experience, leadership, and values of the affected community	Minimal community input; written without community voice or oversight	Community consulted but not central to authorship or recommendations	Community co-authored or directed; reflects language, goals, and vision of those most impacted
Key Indicators:	Identifications Of Parties Harmed, Timeframe Of Harm, Moments And Images, Targeting The Audience, The Power Of In-Text Quotes And Citations, Avoid Conflating Harm.			

Findings

These six core elements are the key indicators to assess whether a Harm Report reflects the foundational principles of a legitimate, community-anchored, and action-oriented document. They were derived from comparative analysis, stakeholder interviews, and grounded theory insights.

Map Key Indicators to Evaluation Criteria

Each structural element was linked to one or more evaluative criteria. This step created a structure-to-outcome crosswalk, clarifying how each indicator contributes to meaningful impact. See Figure 4.

Key Indicators of Effectiveness which details the relation between each element and the key indicator identified.

- Effectiveness
- Community Input, Buy-In & Representation
- Political Feasibility & Acceptability
- Institutional Uptake & Endorsement
- Cost to the Community

Each structural element was mapped to one or more evaluation criteria, creating a structure-to-outcome crosswalk that clarified how each key indicator contributes to meaningful impact. These criteria included Effectiveness, Community Input, Buy-In and representation, Political Feasibility and Acceptance, Institutional Uptake and endorsement, and Cost to the Community (see Fig 5. below).

Figure 4. Key Indicators of Effectiveness

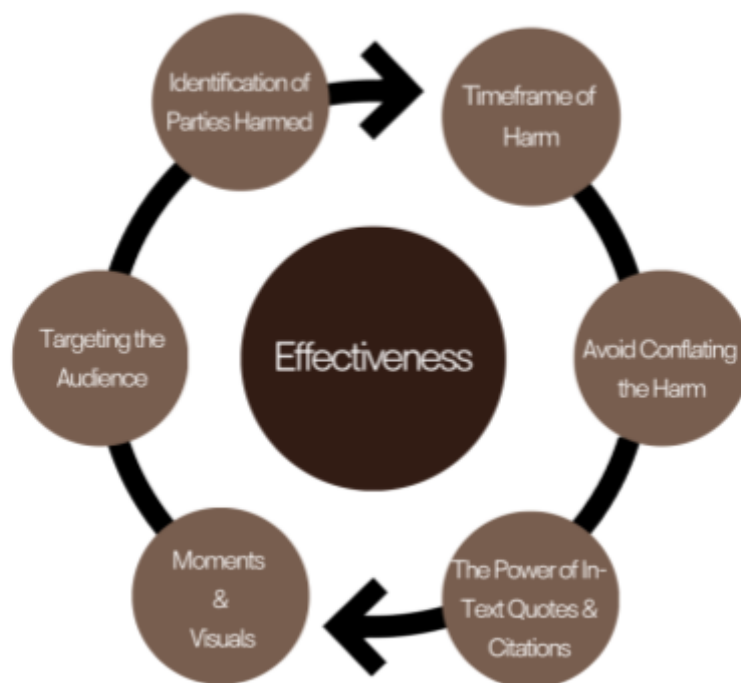
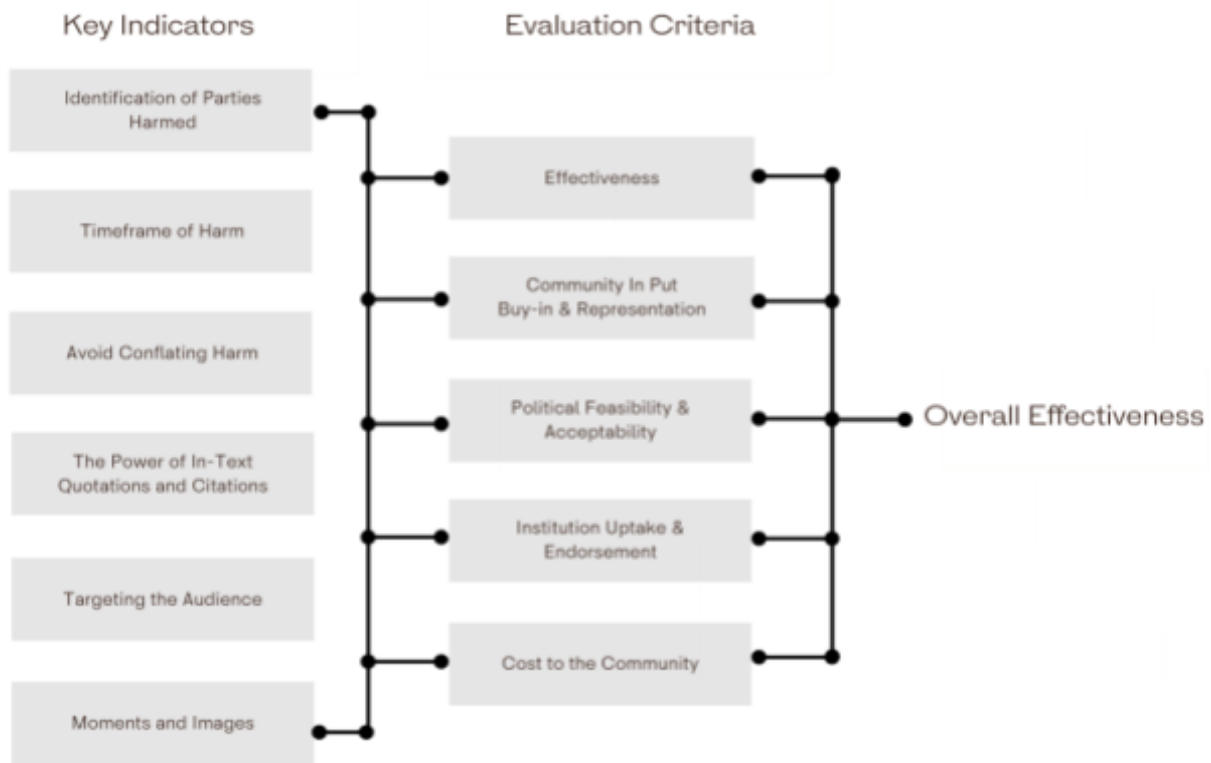


Figure 5. Thematic Elements of Effectiveness



Each Harm Report was then assessed using a binary matrix that captured the presence or absence of structural elements. The crosswalk translated these structural indicators into quantitative scores for each evaluation criterion. For example, if a report included three elements that supported Effectiveness, it received a score of three (3) in that category.

These structural scores were then compared against rubric-based judgments of effectiveness, which reflected each report's real-world influence and community legitimacy. This dual analysis surfaced key insights, spotting gaps where structurally strong reports lacked practical impact and validating strengths where Structure and lived experience were aligned. The most meaningful reports were those that clearly articulated harm, were rooted in community-authored narratives, and achieved some form of institutional acknowledgment or endorsement.

Effectiveness Analysis: Key Indicators Across Harm Reports

Several shared indicators emerged across the seven Harm Reports reviewed that help define what makes such documents effective in real-world applications. The first finding is that **Community Authorship** matters more than presentation. Reports co-created with impacted communities had greater legitimacy and staying power, even when they lacked professional formatting. Authenticity proved more valuable than aesthetics.

Second, **Political Buy-in** serves as a critical catalyst. Even the most thoroughly researched and well-written Harm Report will struggle to move forward without institutional champions. In jurisdictions like Evanston and Palm Springs, meaningful progress occurred because of report design and because local leaders were willing to support and act on the findings.

Third, **Institutional Uptake** marks the turning point from documentation to action. The true goal of a Harm Report is not just to document injustice but to make the truth actionable. Reports reached peak effectiveness when adopted by commissions, codified into policy, or cited in legal proceedings. The most important insight is that Structure alone does not guarantee success. Some reports scored well on formal evaluation metrics but failed to resonate with community members or inspire policy follow-through. This disconnect highlights the importance of blending Structure with narrative, balancing empirical data with community voice.

Reports that achieved the highest effectiveness levels were methodologically sound, deeply anchored in community experience, and supported by political will. This balanced formula will protect the integrity and impact of Alameda County's own Harm Report as it moves forward in its reparative journey.

Figure 6. Effectiveness Key Indicators Thematic Analysis Across Harm Reports.

Effectiveness Overall

■ Effectiveness (Structural Score) ■ Cost to the Community ■ Community Input
 ■ Political Feasibility ■ Institutional Uptake ■ Effectiveness (Rubric)
 Evanston

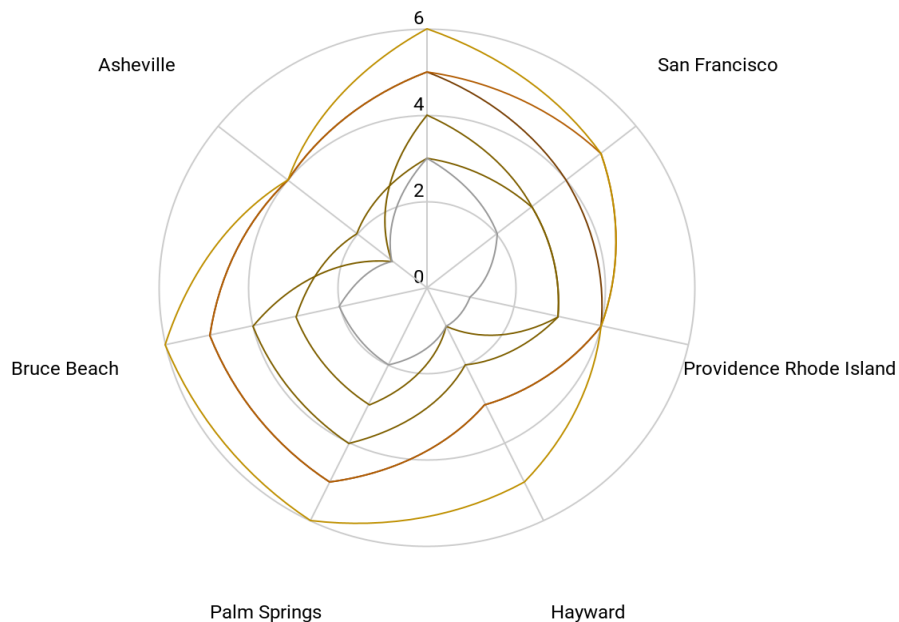


Figure 6. Radar Chart highlights the Key Takeaways and gaps between structure and real-world outcomes.

- Evanston and Palm Springs score high in feasibility and uptake, but differ in community input.
- Hayward and Asheville show lower rubric effectiveness, despite structured approaches.
- Bruce Beach shows strong performance across categories but limited in implementation rubric.

Thematic Analysis of Dimensions of Harm

After thoroughly reviewing all seven Harm Reports and paying close attention to their theoretical frameworks, structural approaches, and core components, I became interested in identifying potential patterns and recurring dimensions of Harm across different regions. It quickly became apparent that many of these reports explicitly employed common themes to account for the Harm experienced by Black communities nationwide.

Stepping back to consider the broader arc of Black American history spanning slavery, Black Codes, Jim Crow laws, segregation, and more recently, the War on Drugs, it became clear that a significant portion of Harm Reports focused on the dispossession of housing and land ownership among African Americans. This repeated emphasis suggested a deeper, systemic trend worthy of further analysis.

With that insight, a secondary thematic analysis was conducted across three of the seven reviewed Harm Reports. To avoid saturation and ensure a robust foundation for the Dimension of Harm thematic analysis, I focused on narrowly examining three reports selected for their diverse approach. These reports were intentionally chosen to capture variation in structure, strategy and authorship, allowing for a broader range of themes to emerge from the coding process. As detailed in **Table 3.** below, the following themes were identified as three overarching conceptual Dimensions of Harm:

- Housing Discrimination & Spatial Segregation
- Cultural Erasure & Historical Revisionism
- Education Inequities & Cultural Suppression

Each of these dimensions incorporates multiple indicators, including impacts on family structure, social cohesion, cultural practices, environmental access, public space utilization, and experiences of discrimination and violence. Together, they form a cohesive framework for understanding how historical and contemporary Harms intersect and persist across time and geography.

Table 3. Top Harm Dimensions by Frequency

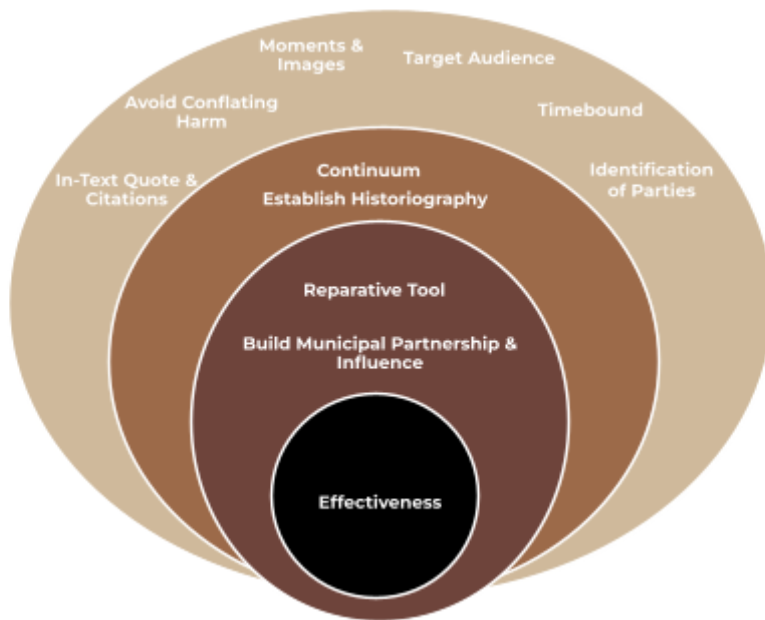
Theme	Description
Housing Discrimination & Spatial Segregation	Redlining practices
Cultural Erasure & Historical Revisionism	Misrepresentation in public narratives or monuments
Education Inequities & Cultural Suppression	Segregated and underfunded schools

Thematic analysis can serve as a valuable tool to justify which areas and Dimensions of Harm should be prioritized during the research and discovery. It can also be used to identify prevailing themes that form the foundation of an effective Harm Report, ensuring that the report is both targeted and reflective of broader historical patterns.

Getting It Right: Avoiding Misalignment and Preparing for the Three Phases of Repair

A Harm Report is not just a policy document but a historical, political, and communal artifact. It risks ineffectiveness and active Harm when developed without intentional alignment to core principles, such as truth-telling, community leadership, and iterative feedback. Below are key areas within the effectiveness framework where misalignment can result in serious consequences.

Figure 7. Key Framework Areas



Example of Evanston's Iterative Process

After deep research and feasibility studies, Former Interim City Manager Kimberly Richardson delved into the possibilities of designing a housing program that redressed past harm. Richardson also stated that in a discussion with another city employee they looked at a redlining map of Evanston and its census tract. Richardson recounted the conversation: “[She said,] ‘Take a look at the redlining map and look at the census tract. What do you see overlap?’ And when she sat there I was like, holy sh–t. It’s almost consistent to our U.S. census tract of where our low-income families still reside. It is almost identical to the redline[d] map. And I said, ‘Oh my goodness . . . I was like, I think we have a path now. I can see it. It’s housing, it’s related to this.’”⁹⁰

The Cost of Misalignment and the Importance of Consistency

The social and political consequences of misalignment in the Harm Report process are significant and far-reaching. When transparency and community inclusion are lacking, trust in public institutions quickly erodes. Requiring community members to recount traumatic histories without granting them meaningful influence over the narrative or resulting recommendations can lead to re-traumatization and emotional fatigue. A report that fails to reflect the voices, priorities, or lived experiences of the impacted community risks losing legitimacy entirely. This can delay implementation or generate resistance, especially from stakeholders not engaged meaningfully during development.

⁹⁰ Davies, Jackson, and Knight, “Limited Scopes of Repair.”

The Value of Partnership

Equally critical is the recognition that even a well-developed report will falter without the political infrastructure to carry it forward. Much of the implementation of Harm Report recommendations sits squarely within the domains of public policy, legislative reform, and budgetary decision-making. Success, therefore, depends on identifying and cultivating champions within governing bodies, such as members of the Board of Supervisors, who can shepherd proposals through institutional channels.

One key indicator identified was the need to build, from the outset, a strong and intentional multi-racial, multiethnic coalition of actors, leaders, organizations, and individuals. This coalition becomes the political wind needed to sustain momentum and drive recommendations through complex, deliberative political processes.⁹¹

On the Politicization of the Black Body

Critics may dismiss the Harm Report as a political tool, but the politicization of the Black body is not new⁹². Every major institution and culture in American history has long politicized Black people's lives, labor, and very existence. A Harm Report rooted in historiography allows the Black Community to reclaim its narrative, establish an evidentiary basis for Harm, and assert the continued relevance of slavery's legacy in shaping modern economic, social, and political conditions.⁹³

When history is omitted or distorted, the consequences are profound. The absence of truthful historical documentation impedes organizing efforts, misguides policy, and deepens community disillusionment. In contrast, a well-structured Harm Report, grounded in community engagement, validated by research, and shaped by those Harmed lived experiences, can be a powerful tool for truth and transformation.

Ultimately, a successful Harm Report is not just a document but a vehicle for collective truth-telling, political action, and long-term community restoration. The next chapter will explore the three phases of repair, providing a unified framework to assess whether identified Harms are being addressed consistently, community-informedly, and aligned with the goals of the broader reparative justice movement.

⁹¹ "Eric McDonnell, Interview, Eknigh, Mon, Apr 14th, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

⁹² "Dino Robinson, Interview, EKnigh, Fri, Apr 04, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."

⁹³ "Linda J, Mann, PhD, Interview, Eknigh, Wed, Apr 23, 2025_otter_ai.Docx."



Chapter III: Approaching Harm in Alameda County

Applies insights to Alameda County, offering recommendations based on its unique historical and institutional context. It provides guidance for selecting repair strategies that are both community-informed and operationally viable.

“Have we become so bound by identity and lived experiences that we can't find intersectionality anymore?”

— Linda Mann

Alameda County stands at a rare intersection of political will, historical awareness, and institutional capacity to lead in reparative justice. As one of the first counties in California to formalize a Reparations Commission, Alameda is uniquely positioned to test and advance models that could inform state and federal policy. This chapter outlines a strategic approach to documenting Harm and institutionalizing the Harm Report as a living, fiscal, and legal instrument for reparative action.

The following framework is not prescriptive. Instead, it offers a strategic lens to guide reparations commissions and policy leaders through Harm Report design and implementation complexities. It is intended to support thoughtful, justice-centered decision-making in a shifting political environment.

Begin with Historical Grounding

- Undertake a systematic archival and historiographic effort to trace Harm across both incorporated and unincorporated areas of Alameda County (est. 1853).
- Prioritize oral histories and community-based storytelling initiatives.

Recommended Sources:

- The Negro Trail Blazers of California by Delilah Beasley
- Sharon McGriff-Payne's works
- California State Library: Alameda Research PDF
- Freedom Archives: Search Results for Alameda County
- The African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO)
- The Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley

Key Partners:

- Historical societies, cultural organizations, community museums, and independent Black archives.
- Black Reparations Project
- Liberations Ventures

**Caution: Avoid reliance on academic institutions as sole gatekeepers of historical narratives.*

Use Defined Dimensions of Harm

The Harm Report should reflect and refine the Commission's established categories of Harm, but the Community will identify the specific areas of Harm most prevalent and relevant within these categories.

- Safety & Criminal Justice
- Economic Harm (housing, small business)

- Health & Education
- Policy Harms (e.g., urban renewal, eminent domain, RDA abuse)

Use state task force indicator data to benchmark local conditions, and ensure that each harm category includes:

- Historical policies (e.g., redlining, RDA takings, segregation-era zoning)
- Geographic specificity (map-based harms)
- Affected populations and place-based patterns

Structural Components of an Effective Harm Report

Required Elements

The following elements are essential to ensure legitimacy, defensibility, and policy relevance:

Table 3. Recommendation of Required Elements of and Effective Harm Report

Component	Description
Historiography ⁹⁴	Grounding in specific local histories, policies, and conditions of harm
Community Engagement	Iterative input through interviews, oral histories, and participatory forums
Defined Community	Clarity around the population considered for redress (confronting trade-offs)
Strategic Municipal Plan	Collaboration between the County and all 14 cities and 9 unincorporated areas
Narrative Framing	Incorporate the "right to truth" and align with international human rights law

“As Linda Mann of the African American Redress Network reminds us, “A shelved Harm Report still has value. But a living, evolving document has power.”

⁹⁴ “Linda J, Mann, PhD, Interview, Eknight, Wed, Apr 23, 2025_otter_ai.Docx.”

Guiding Process Recommendations

Table 4. Guiding Process Recommendation for ACRC Effective Harm Report

Category	Recommendation	Key Notes / Examples
Process & Structure	Adopt an Iterative Approach	Develop and publicly share interim reports to build transparency, community trust, and policy momentum. ⁹⁵ Use interim phases to refine eligibility criteria, gather feedback, and test narratives before final recommendations.
	Follow a Defensible and Universal Framework	Align with UN Principles (Restitution, Rehabilitation, Satisfaction, Non-repetition); adapt political language ⁹⁶ .
Narrative & Messaging	Use Strategic Narrative Tools	Draw from the Reparations Narrative Lab by Liberation Ventures and other storytelling frameworks to frame reparations as ⁹⁷ : • “Cycle-Breaking, World-Making”: A transformative civic project, not just a remedy • “Reparations Unlocking Democracy”: A fulfillment of democratic ideals, not a departure • “Repair In Practice”: A tangible, localized response to specific harms
	Avoid Oversimplified Messaging	Aspirational or overly moral language without policy anchors. Messaging that foregrounds cash payout over structural reforms (see: UC Berkeley IGS poll, 2023). ⁹⁸
Policy Design	Consider Non-Monetary Alternatives	Land return, healthcare access, debt forgiveness, institutional reforms & apologies. Guaranteed community investments (housing, education, infrastructure).
	Adopt a Place-Based, Not Lineage-Based Approach ⁹⁹	Focus on specific harms tied to geography and governance. This approach helps overcome exclusionary tensions associated with ancestry requirements (as seen in the California Task Force’s March 2022 decision).

⁹⁵ “THE-BIG-PAYBACK-FirstRepair-Toolkit-.Pdf.”

⁹⁶ “Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.”

⁹⁷ “Narrative House.”

⁹⁸ DiCamillo, “Release #2023-18.”

⁹⁹ Lewis et al., “California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans FINAL REPORT
Senator Steven Bradford Amos C. Brown, Th.D., Vice Chair Cheryl Grills, Ph.D. Lisa Holder, Esq. Assemblymember Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr.”

Category	Recommendation	Key Notes / Examples
Legal Strategy	Examine Litigation as Complementary ¹⁰⁰	Examine Litigation as a Supporting Strategy. Consider the potential role of legal action, particularly for housing takings, zoning abuses, or RDA-related harms. Prepare for legal opposition citing “equal protection” arguments (e.g., Pacific Legal Foundation critiques).
	Avoid Harm-Reinforcing Policies	<i>Example: Evanston’s hospital land lease in a racially defined zone; avoid symbolic-only initiatives.</i>
Operations & Institutionalization	Leverage Countywide Coordination	Leverage Local Government Coordination. Use ACRC’s countywide position to build bridges with municipalities and successor agencies. Promote uniform data collection and accountability metrics across cities. <i>Example: Asheville, Buncombe, NC partnership and policy audit.¹⁰¹</i>
	Budget for Research, Comms, and Infrastructure ¹⁰²	Avoid concentrating funds solely on program delivery and invest in research capacity, narrative design, and public engagement infrastructure. Explore partnerships with funders like Liberation Ventures and other reparative grant makers.
Harm Report as Fiscal Tool	Use the Harm Report to Justify Budget Allocations	Tie to fiscal planning with jurisdiction-specific, time-bound harm data; support future budget cycles.
	Include Cost of Delay & Sample Budget Projections	Quantify missed opportunities and economic return on reparative investment (e.g., health, housing stability). This will be presented in the repair report.
Stakeholder Strategy	Coordinate Across Institutions	Building long-term momentum will require a multi-tiered strategy that activates and coordinates stakeholders across Alameda County’s 14 cities and 6 unincorporated areas. Involve Board of Supervisors, movement leaders, budget staff, city liaisons, and community historians.
	Ensure Institutional Co-Ownership	Harm Report must be co-owned by implementing bodies, not just representatives of harmed communities. This is essential for implementation.
ACRC Thematic Priorities	Build Durable Research Infrastructure	Establish a timeline for interim updates (e.g., every 2 years). Create a countywide reparations archive. Develop shared protocols for data access, citation, and oral history validation.

¹⁰⁰ Quinio, “Reparations Roundup.”

¹⁰¹ Carolina, “Cease Harm Comprehensive Assessment Impacting the African American Community.”

¹⁰² “VikasMaturi_AlamedaCountyTaskForcePresentation_December2024.Pdf.”

Category	Recommendation	Key Notes / Examples
		Fund trauma-informed oral history collection using trained facilitators.
	Governance & Accountability	Codify the Harm Report as an official municipal planning tool via Board resolution. Create an oversight body for report maintenance and implementation follow-through. Require annual reporting from departments on reparations-aligned work.
	Budgeting & Policy Implementation	Link the report findings to specific budget asks and investment categories (e.g., housing, land trusts, educational access). Conduct a fiscal equity impact analysis for each proposed recommendation.¹⁰³ Develop a public-facing “Reparations Dashboard” to track funding, progress, and accountability. Leverage the Harm Report as part of state and federal grant applications.
Sustaining Impact	Institutionalize the Harm Report	Institutionalizing the Harm Report means more than publishing a final document—it means ensuring that the work lives on. That requires: • Defining a custodian agency (e.g., County Administrator's Office or Office of Equity) • Ensuring updates are budgeted in future years • Embedding the report in legislative triggers (e.g., land use, education, housing)

¹⁰³ “Evanston-Impact-Study.Pdf.”

Conclusion

As this chapter draws to a close, it is important to reflect on what Alameda County's unique position reveals about the opportunities and responsibilities that local governments hold in advancing reparative justice. The recommendations offered here are not intended as a conclusion, but rather a starting point for long-term, community-led implementation.

The Commission now stands at a critical juncture and is tasked not only with acknowledging historical harm, but with transforming that acknowledgment into meaningful structural change. The success of any reparative strategy in Alameda County will depend on the Commission's ability to center community voices, clearly distinguish between harm documentation and remedy design, and adopt a phased, iterative approach to implementation. By grounding its work in credible historical research, maintaining transparency in public engagement, and aligning with legal and fiscal realities, the Commission can lay a foundation for long-term impact. This is not just an opportunity to make history, it is a chance to correct it.

Looking Forward and Projection of Next Steps



Duration: 2 Weeks

Develop a Comprehensive Stakeholder Map:

Identify key players across Alameda County. This should include policymakers, department heads, community leaders, academic institutions, funders, and advocacy groups. Mapping relationships, influence, and alignment will help the Commission understand where momentum already exists and where further engagement is needed.



Duration: 2 Months

Triage and survey the political climate across Jurisdictions (Unincorporated and Municipalities)

Assess the appetite for reparations work across both unincorporated areas and incorporated municipalities. This should include informal interviews, issue mapping, and an environmental scan to better understand which localities have the most aligned leadership, active community movements, or capacity for engagement.



Duration: 3 Months

Build a Strategic Partnership Plan

Begin formal outreach to NGOs, grassroots organizations, historical societies, and community-based institutions. These partnerships are essential not only for legitimacy and access to community trust, but also as a foundation for future funding, communications, and capacity building. This work could evolve into a formal public campaign, an essential step as the Commission looks to secure resources and increase visibility.



Duration: 3 - 6 Months

Identify and Cultivate Municipal Partnerships

Internally, work with departments such as public health, housing, planning, and archives to assess institutional readiness. Externally, develop collaborative relationships with local city governments. Focus first on identifying a pilot site. The pilot site should either be within an incorporated city or in an

unincorporated community, but should demonstrate need and a political environment conducive to experimentation.



Duration: 2 - 4 Months (can vary depending on the geographic area)

Start with a Pilot Community

Select one community where early-phase work can be tested, refined, and scaled. Consider beginning where the community voice is already organized and political leadership is receptive. Decide strategically whether this pilot should take place within a municipality or in an unincorporated area, based on where you see the most immediate potential for progress and support.



Duration: 6 Months - 1 Year (can vary depending on geographic area)

Engage a researcher (Archivist or Historian)

Hire or partner with an archival researcher or historian who can begin gathering records, conducting oral histories, and collecting primary source data. Consider working with an academic institution or historical society to formalize this effort and ensure rigor, credibility, and transparency.



Duration: 2 - 3 weeks

Consider Refining the Language and Messaging

Assess how reparations-related language is resonating in the current political moment. Consider following the example of the California Black Caucus, which strategically shifted terminology toward terms like “equity investment” or “restorative justice initiatives” to gain legislative traction. Framing is not dilution, it’s navigation.



Duration: 1 Year (progressive)

Reignite Momentum in a Quiet Political Climate

Recognize that the current political environment is relatively quiet, but that also presents an opportunity. This is a critical time to regroup, refine your approach, and begin to build the internal and external coalitions that will carry this work forward when the moment for action arrives.

Appendices

- A-1: Putting it all Together
- B-1: Harm Report Catalog
- B-2: Dimension of Harm Thematic Catalog
- C-1: Glossary of Terms

Appendix A-1

The following provides a step-by-step guide to developing an effective Harm Report, synthesizing key insights from the text into a clear and accessible framework.

Putting it all together

1. *Determine the Instrument*
 - a. *Harm Report*
 - i. Impact Report (measurable impacts).
 - ii. Disparity Report
 - iii. Economic analysis
 - iv. Community, Non-Profit /Grassroots Data,
 - b. *Claim Bill*
 - c. *Garner Political support*
 - i. *Municipal Leaders (Board of Sups and City Council Members)*
 - ii. *Multi racial, multiethnic coalition of actors, players, voices and organizations to become the force of the political movement and process.*
2. *Determine Dimension:*
 - a. *Educational Disparities*
 - b. *Discriminatory Policy*
 - c. *Economic Disenfranchisement*
 - d. *Housing Inequality*
 - e. *Healthcare Disparities*
 - f. *Environmental Impacts.*
 - g. *Safety/Criminal Justice*
 - a. *Define Community*
 - i. *Determine the reparative needs of the community site ¹⁰⁴ (**This allows for better prioritization of injuries and to focus on specific healing**).*
 - b. *Determine Condition*
 - i. *Specific*
 - ii. *Lineage*
 - iii. *Place-Based*
 - iv. *Historical*
 - c. *Category of remedy or redress*
 - i. *Full Reparations*
 - ii. *Collective/Community Benefits*
3. *Identify the Component Type: Across 5 areas as defined by the UN*
 - a. *Determine the Framing*
 - i. *Genocide*
 - ii. *Plunder*
 - iii. *Apartheid*
4. *Determine the Approach*

¹⁰⁴ Howard, *Laying the Foundation For Local Reparations*.

- a. **Why Litigation?** *Litigation offers a non-commission mechanism that forces a legal and historical reckoning. While high-risk and resource-intensive, it mandates a fact-finding and discovery process, which can publicly document truth, establish legal responsibility, and create precedent. The legal record produced through litigation can later serve as a foundation for policy-based reparations or federal redress.*¹⁰⁵
 - b. **Why Compensation?** *Compensation must be understood not just as direct payments, but as a reconstruction of economic access, through tax reform, healthcare equity, access to capital, and ownership opportunities. Compensation addresses the material loss and economic exclusion experienced by Black communities. However, it raises complex questions: Is a tax credit a form of reparations? How do Medicare and Medicaid relate to redress? Compensation requires not just cash transfers, but an overhaul of economic policy structures that have historically excluded Black Americans.*¹⁰⁶ *Reference below, Normalizing Reparations: U.S. Precedent, Norms, and Models for Compensating Harms and Implications for Reparations to Black Americans by Linda Blimes and Cornell Williams Brook.*¹⁰⁷
 - c. **Why Satisfaction?** *“Satisfaction” refers to the moral and symbolic dimensions of reparations—truth-telling, public apologies, commemorations, and education. It provides the psychological and communal restoration that accompanies material repair. This is especially relevant where material repair is delayed or partial, and where community trust in institutions must be rebuilt. Satisfaction ensures that reparations are not purely transactional, but transformational addressing the dignity, trauma, and memory of harmed communities.*
 - d. **Why Policy Rehabilitation?** *Policy rehabilitation focuses on dismantling harmful laws and administrative practices that continue to cause injury. This includes repealing or amending policies that uphold structural racism and replacing them with pro-Black policies. Without policy rehabilitation, new reparative programs are undermined by existing discriminatory structures. Long-term repair depends on ending the source of harm, not just addressing its symptoms.*
5. Vet the feasibility of several initiatives.
 6. Make determinations of priority of the initiatives.
 7. Receive and disburse resources.
 8. Deliver repetitive initiatives.

¹⁰⁵ Kelly, “Redress and Reparations for Injurious Wrongs.”

¹⁰⁶ CalMatters, “What To Know About California Reparations.”

¹⁰⁷“Blimes and Brooks - 2024 - Normalizing Reparations U.S. Precedent, Norms, an.Pdf.”

Appendix B-1

Harm Report Catalog

This catalog provides a curated list of Harm Reports reviewed during the research process. It includes brief summaries of each report, the jurisdiction it pertains to, its publication status, and key characteristics such as authorship, focus area, and use of community input. The catalog serves as a reference point for understanding the varied approaches to documenting harm across localities and informs the comparative analysis presented in Chapter II.

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:a6d94873-35da-43fc-9bf4-d2d7c77162d3>

Appendix B-2

Dimension of Harm Thematic Catalog

This appendix outlines the thematic coding framework used to analyze Harm Reports across jurisdictions. The dimensions of harm were identified through qualitative coding of case study content, highlighting recurring patterns such as housing discrimination, cultural erasure, educational inequity, and criminal justice disparities. This analysis provides insight into the most frequently addressed harms and helps inform best practices for structuring future reports.

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:71af7d23-09e3-47c1-9351-0eb32c7dbdd3>

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:73cdaf28-8f5f-498c-b66b-31e0ab2fdf5d>

Appendix C-1

The following glossary defines commonly used terms within the reparations community, as well as key language referenced throughout this report.

Glossary

Understanding these terms will assist the Commission to more clearly follow the centuries of history of evolving languages, phrases, and interpretations, while also directly assisting in aligning past practices outlined in the following report with present day remedies.

- **Ad Hoc:** committee serves as a temporary body that covers tasks outside of regular operations
- **Anti-Blackness** refers to actions or behaviors that minimize, marginalize or devalue the full participation of Black people in life. The spectrum of anti-Black actions and behaviors spans from unconscious bias to motivated acts of prejudice.
- **Category of Repair:** Direct or Community
- **Category of Remedy or Redress:**
 - **Full Repair:** An international law term that indicates the degree in which reparations must redress crimes against humanity “wipe out all consequences of the crime or harm” and fall into the 5 component areas of repair.
 - **Direct Benefits and/or Collective/Community Benefits:**
 - **Direct:** Redress the individuals receive directly
 - **Collective/Community Benefits:** Initiatives that are available collectively to all members of the community with additional qualifying criteria.
- **Chattel Slavery:** classes slaves as chattels (personal property) owned by the enslaver; like livestock, they can be bought and sold at will.
- **Committee:** Permanent or semi-permanent groups within an association that focus on specific areas of governance, responsibility and growth. They are established to develop long-term strategies and manage ongoing functions
- **Commission:** Commissions and task forces are short-term projects established with a defined deadline to issue a report or a study. Public and philanthropic dollars may support some of the costs of research, public hearings and administrative support for the effort.
- **Component Areas of Repair (as defined in the UN Framework):** Satisfaction, Compensation, Restitution, Rehabilitation, Cessation.
 - **Restitution:** whenever possible, restore the victim to the original situation before the gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law occurred.”
 - **Compensation:** providing financial reparations for economic damages or losses resulting from violations of human rights.
 - **Rehabilitation:** should include medical and psychological care as well as legal and social services.
 - **Satisfaction:** the cessation of continuing violations, truth-seeking, public apologies, judicial and administrative sanctions, memorials, and commemorations.
 - **Cessation (Guarantees of non-repetition):** [prevent] future violations of human rights and [reinforce] the rule of law, respect for human rights, and contribute to sustaining peace and development.
- **Condition:** Specific, Place Based, Historical/Ancestral (genetics), Lineage
- **Continuum:** Refers to a gradual, unbroken progression where stages or categories blend into one another without clear dividing lines. In the context of reparations and Harm Reports, a continuum framework recognizes that harm, acknowledgment, and repair are not isolated

events but interconnected phases that evolve over time. This approach underscores the importance of sustained engagement, where truth-telling, historical analysis, policy development, and community healing are seen as part of a continuous process rather than discrete, one-time actions.

- **De facto slavery** describes the conditions of unfree labor and forced labor that most slaves endure.
- **Dimension of Harm:** Category/Area/Type of harm e.g.
 - Educational Disparities
 - Discriminatory Policy
 - Economic Disenfranchisement
 - Housing Inequality
 - Healthcare Disparities
 - Environmental Impacts.
- **Disparity Reports:** a tool used to determine whether a government entity, either in the past or currently, engages in exclusionary practices.
- **Economic Analyses:** a study of an economy or group of economies.
- **Framework:** Structured approach (guide for action or thinking)
- **Harm:** Formal legislative practices and informal, unwritten policies and laws that vary by time period and geographic region, but share a common purpose of limiting Black social, political, and economic advancement and have historically shaped community experiences.
- **Historiography:** the writing of history, based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particular details from the authentic materials in those sources, and the synthesis of those details into a narrative that stands the test of critical examination. The term historiography also refers to the theory and history of historical writing.¹⁰⁸
- **Impact Reports:** an evaluation tool used to study the social, environmental or economic outcomes of your efforts.
- **Instrument:** Type of Report
- **Program Utilization Rate Study:** an evaluation tool used to measure how extensively and effectively a public program or service is being used by its target population.¹⁰⁹
- **Redress (Verb):** remedy or set right (an undesirable or unfair situation): the power to redress the grievances of our citizens.
- **Reparations (Noun):** the making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged: the courts required a convicted offender to make financial reparation to his victim. (New Oxford American Dictionary).
 - 5 Areas of Repair (form of repair):
- **Socio-Spatial Analyses:** Socio-spatial analysis is an interdisciplinary method used to examine the interplay between social phenomena and physical spaces. It investigates how societal behaviors, interactions, and structures influence, and are influenced by, the spatial environments in which they occur.
- **Task Force:** Temporary groups assembled to tackle specific, time-sensitive issues or projects. They are designed to address challenges or opportunities that require concentrated effort and expertise.
- **Tort (Noun) Law:** a wrongful act or an infringement of a right (other than under contract) leading to civil legal liability: public nuisance is a crime as well as a tort | [mass noun] : the law of tort.

¹⁰⁸ "Historiography | Definition, History, Branches, & Methodology | Britannica."

¹⁰⁹ "Costs and Utilization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program."

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