

2024

FY26 Operating Budget Equity Tool Guidance Manual

THE OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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Important Updates for the FY26 Operating Budget Equity Tool

Each department is required to respond to department-level OBET questions. There is a character minimum for each required response (you will not be able to skip required questions). ***The result of ORESJ’s department-level analysis will be an Assessment of Strengths and Opportunities¹; there will be no numerical “rating”, or “score” given for department-level responses.***

Like last year, not all departments are required to answer program-level OBET questions. Only the following departments are required to submit program-level responses:

Alcohol Beverage Services
Correction and Rehabilitation
Environmental Protection
Fire and Rescue Service
Health and Human Services
Housing and Community Affairs
Police
Recreation
Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions
Transportation

The three bolded departments are required to choose one program per division. The remaining departments above are required to submit a program-level response for one program. The result of ORESJ’s program-level analysis will be a ratings and narrative justification which will be used throughout the development of the County Executive’s proposed FY26 budget.

Introduction

In accordance with [Bill #27-19](#), The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) develops racial equity tools and processes to help county employees apply a racial equity lens to budget development and decision-making. The FY26 Operating Budget Equity Tool (OBET) is designed to help departments articulate the ways in which their proposed budget supports their commitments to advancing racial equity and social justice, while providing decisionmakers with insights regarding the racial equity and social justice impacts of the proposed budget.

¹ The Assessment of Strengths and Opportunities will follow an adapted Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) framework. ORESJ will emphasize the department’s areas of strengths and opportunities where the department could make changes that enhance its commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice.

This guide provides departments with information about the FY26 OBET and process. The subsequent sections will explain:

- what the OBET is;
- how it advances the County’s goal of reducing and eliminating racial disparities and inequities;
- how it should be completed and by whom; and
- how responses to the tool will be assessed and used in decision-making processes.

What is the FY26 Operating Budget Equity Tool (OBET) and why is it important?

The OBET is both a **product** and a **process** that encourages departments and decision-makers to consider the impacts of their department-level resources, proposed program² (service/initiative) enhancements, reductions, and overall budget decisions on racial disparities and inequities in the County.

As a process, this tool prompts users to collaborate with stakeholders across their department and to center historical and current racial disparities throughout budget development. The information gathering and analysis required to complete this tool will help users determine whether their proposed budget helps to reduce or widen gaps in outcomes. In this process, the use of disaggregated data and community engagement is key. Over the years, we’ve found that the following practices are helpful for successfully completing the OBET:

- Assigning a departmental point-person to coordinate OBET response drafts, reviews, and approvals
- Ensuring that relevant staff (including but not limited to CORE teams and team leads, program staff, and community outreach staff) receive this guidance manual and other OBET-related communications.
- Attending ORESJ provided office hours prepared with relevant department-specific questions.

² Throughout the Guidance Manual and OBET, we refer to “program” which encompasses programs, services, activities, and initiatives.

As a product, the tool helps users produce information that brings attention to the systemic inequities that create racial disparities, barriers to access, and inequitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income communities. The information that the tool generates draws attention to opportunities where changing the planning, design, or other aspects of a program (including resource allocations) is likely to lead to more equitable outcomes.

Why lead with Race?

The Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE)—of which Montgomery County is a member—calls its more than 400 member jurisdictions to center race in their pursuit of equity and justice for all. We, along with others, lead with race for several reasons:

- The creation and perpetuation of advantage and disadvantage based on race (and other racialized identities) is baked into the history and structures of US government policies, practices, and procedures.
- Racial inequities exist across all dimensions of success and well-being; these inequities are deep and pervasive and are compounded by other forms of oppression including those based on gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, nativity, and age, to name a few.
- Focusing on racial equity is an opportunity to introduce a framework, tools, and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization. Therefore, leading with race is a strategy to help achieve equity and justice for all, not an attempt to rank oppressions based on severity.

How will responses to the OBET be used?

Responses to the tool will be analyzed by ORESJ, resulting in a department-level **Assessment of Strengths and Opportunities and (for relevant departments) a program-level numerical rating and analysis.** ORESJ will provide a summary of its department-level assessment findings and program-level ratings to departments and decisionmakers, along with recommendations related to which budgets (based on available information) are likely to advance equitable access or outcomes for communities identifying as BIPOC and low-income. In addition, ORESJ will identify budgets that demand additional attention to mitigate unintended consequences disproportionately burdening BIPOC and low-income communities.

Department-level analysis

ORESJ will analyze department-level OBET responses and identify areas of strength and opportunity in how the department's proposed FY26 resources will enable or weaken its commitments to advancing racial equity and social justice. The result of the analysis will be an Assessment of Strengths and Opportunities that summarizes ORESJ's findings (there will be no

department-level numerical rating or score), which will be shared with OMB and the County Executive, and transmitted to the Montgomery County Council along with the proposed FY26 budget.

Program-level analysis

ORESJ will analyze department-identified programs and the extent to which they target resources towards reducing racial disparities and inequities. ORESJ may also identify programs that demand additional attention towards mitigating unintended consequences. The result of the analysis will be a numerical score and narrative justification, both of which will be used throughout the development of the County Executive’s proposed budget.

More information about the rating rubric and ORESJ’s analysis can be found in the OBET Scoring Rubric section of the guide.

The FY26 OBET

Below is the list of questions and prompts that make up the FY26 OBET. Like last year, each department will be asked a series of Department-level questions regarding their proposed FY26 budget. Each required response must be a minimum of 50 characters and will ideally be 4-5 sentences of narrative and include details about how FY26 resources will support the department across each area of the GARE framework.



Tip: Read through the entirety of the FY26 OBET prior to formulating your response.



Tip: To complete the FY26 OBET, engage relevant staff (CORE Team members and Leads) early and often.

Only ten departments are required to respond to the OBET program-level questions. Those required to submit program-level responses must do so for one program of their choice. This program can be new or include an enhancement and/or reduction.

Please keep in mind that the OBET is both a process and a product. Use the OBET prompts throughout budget development. Keep in mind that as a product, your responses to OBET questions are the primary source of information for ORESJ's analysis and assessment. The rating and narrative justification will be used by various decision-makers in the budget deliberation process.

Tool Questions

Department-level question

1. **(Required)** How will your overall FY26 budget request support the department’s commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice?

Instructions:

Please describe how your overall FY26 budget request will target resources toward normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing for racial equity in the County. More information about the GARE framework is below and [here](#). Your explanations should demonstrate what specifically you intend to do, how you intend to do it, and why it will help advance your department’s FY26 commitment to and infrastructure for racial equity and social justice.

The Government Alliance on Race and Equity ([GARE](#)) recommends the normalize, organize, operationalize theory of change to guide jurisdictions in planning for and making changes that reduce and eliminate racial disparities, inequities, and improve outcomes for all. Please indicate which activities (and how) your proposed budget will support the department’s FY26 commitments to advancing racial equity and social justice.

- *Normalize—Establish racial equity as a key value by developing a shared understanding of key concepts across the department and create a sense of urgency to make changes*
- *Organize—Build staff and organizational capacity, skills, and competencies through training while also building infrastructure to support the work, like internal organizational change teams and external partnerships with other institutions and community*
- *Operationalize—Put theory into action by implementing new tools for decision-making, measurement, and accountability like a [Racial Equity Tool](#) and developing a [Racial Equity Action Plan](#)*

Normalize

Normalize—Establish racial equity as a key value by developing a shared understanding of key concepts across the department and create a sense of urgency to make changes.

- How will your FY26 budget request support sustained CORE team activities? (i.e. staff time, contractual support, budgetary resources)?

50 character minimum

- What other “Normalizing” activities will your FY26 budget request enable? (If your FY26 budget request will not enable other “Normalizing” activities, beyond those mentioned in the previous question, please respond N/A).

Two character minimum

Organize

Organize—Build staff and organizational capacity, skills, and competencies through training while also building infrastructure to support the work, like internal organizational change teams and external partnerships with other institutions and community.

- How will your FY26 budget request enable sustained leadership for racial equity and social justice in your department? (i.e. a designated FTE, updated job descriptions, allocated staff time within employees’ portfolio/work plan, reporting structures that enable accountability for racial equity and social justice)?

50 character minimum

- How will your FY26 budget request support department-specific RESJ professional development for staff and leadership (not including the County’s eight-hour RESJ training requirement)?

50 character minimum

- How will your FY26 budget request build your department’s capacity to engage with or support colleagues/partners in engaging with BIPOC, low-income communities, and other historically marginalized groups?

50 character minimum

- What other “Organizing” activities will your FY26 budget request enable? (If your FY26 budget request will not enable other “Organizing” activities, beyond those mentioned in the previous question, please respond N/A).

Two character minimum

Operationalize

Operationalize—Put theory into action by implementing new tools for decision-making, measurement, and accountability like a Racial Equity Tool and developing a Racial Equity Action Plan.

- How will your FY26 budget request support the department in identifying areas of strength and opportunity in organizational culture and recruiting, retaining, and advancement of a diverse and representative workforce? (examples might include: targeted resources for fielding a staff survey, conducting a focus group, or carrying out a project, initiative or other intentional effort)

50 character minimum

- How will your FY26 budget request support the department in tracking program access and service outcomes by race, ethnicity, and other relevant demographic or socioeconomic characteristics? (please include any data points or metrics you are proposing to track in FY26 that will help your department advance equitable access and outcomes in your service area?) *If proposed FY26 resources are unlikely to enable this activity, please describe how your budget request will support the department in **taking steps** to meaningfully collect, disaggregate, analyze, and utilize performance and outcomes data?*

50 character minimum

- What other “Operationalizing” activities will your FY26 budget request enable? (If your FY26 budget request will not enable other “Operationalizing” activities, beyond those mentioned in the previous question, please respond N/A).

Two character minimum

2. **(Required)** Please describe the process by which your department will approach meeting the required reduction request for FY26. Specifically, please detail any undue burden on BIPOC, low-income, or historically marginalized groups that may occur as a result of the budget reduction. How will your department work to mitigate any harm these burdens may cause?

50 character minimum

3. **(Optional)** Is there anything you’d like to share about how your department is “operationalizing” racial equity and social justice? If so, please use the space below to share an example/story about how your department has successfully used racial equity tools, maps, equitable community engagement, or other practices to support analysis and decision-making that advances racial equity and social justice?
4. **(Optional)** Advancing racial equity and social justice in any organization requires supportive systems and structures. We would like to understand how the County’s systems and structures affect your ability to implement the GARE Framework (normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing).

What persistent gaps or limitations could inhibit your department’s ability to advance racial equity and social justice? (Potential challenges include but are not limited to: deficiencies in the on-going funding of your base budget that inhibit your department’s racial equity and social justice efforts;

staffing shortages (vacancies, retention issues, retirements, etc.); leadership gaps (absence of departmental or agency leadership staff); siloed workflows (organizational structures that inhibit collaboration and communication); bureaucratic burdens (delays, inefficiencies, challenges stemming from other areas of local government); State/Federal regulations/laws).

By describing persistent gaps or limitations, ORESJ can raise awareness of structural or systemic issues impeding the advancement of racial equity and social justice in the County. Please use the text box to describe any gaps or limitations impeding your ability to implement the GARE framework (normalizing, organizing, operationalizing).

Program-level questions

1. **(Required)** What is the purpose of this program (this may also be a service, initiative, activity)? In your response, please list the outputs, outcomes, and strategic program goals as well as who the target or primary beneficiaries are (this includes providing demographic information such as race, ethnicity, immigration or refugee status, age, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, location, etc..)

50 character minimum

2. **(Required)** Identify specific disparities and/or inequities that are targeted by your program budget proposal. Please refer to the [2023 Updated Baseline Study](#) and related [Racial Equity Impact Assessments](#) and [Racial Equity and Social Justice Impacts Statements](#). Include any qualitative and quantitative data to support your answer.

50 character minimum

3. **(Required)** How will this program impact the people most negatively affected/harmed by the challenges this program addresses? (think about how the program impacts marginalized groups or communities. Example communities include (but are not limited to) Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities, low-income individuals/households, immigrants or refugees, communities that have historically experienced disinvestment in physical environments, justice-involved youth, or people with disabilities.

50 character minimum

4. **(Required)** Describe how the needs of a specific community or stakeholder informed development of the program, its goals and requested budget. How is that information reflected in the budget proposal?

50 character minimum

5. **(Optional)** Which of the CE's priority initiatives does this request *most* relate to (use the priority list below and descriptions offered [here](#)), please select one.
 - a. Thriving Youth and Families
 - b. A Growing Economy
 - c. A Greener County
 - d. Easier Commutes
 - e. A More Affordable and Welcoming County for a Lifetime

- f. Safe Neighborhoods
- g. Effective Sustainable Government

For program requests involving reductions, please respond to the following questions. If your program request does not involve reductions, please respond N/A.

- 6. **(Required)** How will reductions to this program affect the users of the program, specifically those most negatively impacted by the challenges this program addresses?
- 7. **(Required)** What steps have you taken to mitigate against the creation or worsening of racial disparities or inequities that may result from the proposed program reduction?

General FY26 OBET questions

Please answer the following questions regarding overall completion of the FY26 OBET

1. **(Required)** Who and what resources did you consult in the preparation of this Budget Equity Tool response? *Please use the prompts below to describe your research and process of completing this tool.*
 - a. Have you consulted with your Racial Equity CORE Team or CORE Team Lead? (If yes, please provide their name(s).)
 - b. Have you consulted with the Montgomery County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice? (Names of ORESJ staff that you consulted with and dates, and/or resources shared by ORESJ.)
 - c. Have you reviewed any Racial Equity Impact Assessments (or other related equity analyses) related?

2. **(Required)** Please provide the name(s) of those involved in the completion of this assessment. *Please use the prompts below to describe your research and process of completing this tool.* (required 10 character minimum)
 - a. Assessment completed by: (Name(s), Title(s), Department)
 - b. If different from above, Departmental Director: (Name)

3. Please upload any documents that will aid in the explanation of how the proposed budget aligns with the County's policy of reducing and eliminating racial disparities and inequities.

Who should complete the OBET?

Completing the OBET will likely require input from multiple stakeholders. It's important to bring different perspectives to budget development, as well as the underlying analysis of problems the budget seeks to address—analysis of data, assessment of regulatory or funding context, and feedback from residents. Budget stakeholders include, but are not limited to, department Racial Equity CORE Team members and Team Leads, staff or nonprofit partners working directly with residents, and residents (particularly prospective clients or beneficiaries). The final tab of the OBET will ask you to list the names of stakeholders who contributed to department's response.

What data sources should be used?

To support the use of a racial equity lens, we have provided the below list of data sources as a starting point. We also expect that each department will have relevant administrative and

program data that it regularly analyzes and consults in its decision-making processes. When looking at this data, some questions and practices³ to consider when applying a racial equity lens are:

- Disaggregating data, which gives insights into the particular experience and circumstances of specific population groups (by race, ethnicity, nativity, gender, disability, etc.). Disaggregating data can help in identifying and unpacking dimensions of a specific inequity or inequitable outcome. When data is not disaggregated and viewed in its aggregate form, it can mask inequities.
- Use qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, narrative, longform surveys) to provide needed context to quantitative analysis.
- What is the role of historical or current policies in the outcome you're observing?
- Once you've analyzed your data, who is looking at and making sense of it? It's important to bring multiple perspectives to the interpretation of your analysis.



Tip: Leverage the County's resources:

- ✓ ORESJ's library of [Racial Equity Impact Assessments](#) and The Office of Legislative Oversight's collection of [Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statements](#), can help you learn about the intersection of racial equity and the policy or issue area you work in.
- ✓ Utilize resources available on the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(GARE\)](#) portal.

In addition, as you reference previous budget years and/or program decisions that inform your current budget requests, please look for and include information about the data and processes used to formulate those requests (Is this request required by statute or policy change? Does it involve grant funding and eligibility criteria tied to that funding? Etc.) As you explain the background of the program or proposed change, please include to what extent impacted community members were engaged. Provide details regarding outreach strategies, other implementation partners, demographic characteristics of attendees, and any community feedback received.

Please note that the presence of a program or project in an Equity Emphasis Area or other such designated "Equity" areas is not sufficient evidence that a program is likely to reduce disparities or inequities. While geographic location and census tract demographics are critical pieces of data, without analysis, these factors alone do not indicate that a specific disparity or inequity is likely to be reduced or eliminated by the presence of the program.

³ This list of practices is adapted from research done by Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania. Suggested Citation: Hawn Nelson, A., Jenkins, D., Zanti, S., Katz, M., Berkowitz, E., et al. (2020). A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration. Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania. Available at https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AISP-Toolkit_5.27.20.pdf

The sources listed below can give you insights into the circumstances and experiences of communities identifying as BIPOC and low-income in the County (and nationally). Disaggregating data (as the sources below do) is critical in understanding and redressing racial inequities. As practitioners from the USC Center for Urban Education explain, “disaggregated data can spark critical awareness of racialized outcomes and patterns, catalyze deep reflection about taken-for-granted assumptions, and establish racial equity as an ongoing process of organizational learning and change.”⁴

1. **Montgomery County Racial Equity Profile Update (2023):** This profile, a publication of the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, prepared by Jupiter Independent Research Group, summarizes data points across several indicators of well-being to offer a snapshot of racial inequities and disparities across the community:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/JUPITERRACIALEQUITYPROFILE.pdf>
2. **National Equity Atlas:** Developed by PolicyLink and PERE, the National Equity Atlas includes national, state, regional, and county-level data disaggregated by race and income. Examples of available equity indicators include homeownership, wages, unemployment, disconnected youth, school poverty, air pollution, education levels and job requirements, housing burden, car access, neighborhood poverty, asthma, diabetes, etc.:
<http://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators>
3. **Statistical Atlas:** A comprehensive atlas produced by the Census Bureau, and a source for disparity data: <https://statisticalatlas.com/county/Maryland/Montgomery-County/Overview>
4. **The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIAs) of Special/Supplemental Appropriations:** ORESJ has conducted more than 150 REIAs on a range of topics that offer analysis and context about racial disparities and inequities in the County and the kinds of programs, practices, or activities that respond to and/or shift structures creating these inequities.
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/appr.html>

The Power of Qualitative Data
To contextualize data, and derive meaningful insights for equity analyses, it is important to seek out sources of qualitative data to answer questions like: Why does this disparity exist? What policies or practices create barriers or inequitable access? Sources of qualitative data include, but are not limited to, feedback from community engagement surveys, focus groups, meetings, and related public policy research.

⁴ Center for Urban Education. (2020). Equity-minded inquiry series: Data Tools. Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California. Pg. 5. Available at:

5. **CountyStat Community Explorer:** CountyStat developed this Explorer tool to help educate stakeholders on the shifting characteristics of Montgomery County neighborhoods and inform relevant discussion and policymaking.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/countystat/explorer.html>

6. **Health in Montgomery County 2010-2019: A Surveillance Report on Population Health:** This report provides data points disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and age for eight health related topics: demographics, social determinants of health, and healthcare access; vital statistics; maternal and infant health; chronic diseases; infectious diseases; behavioral health; injuries; and environmental health:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/Health%20in%20Montgomery%20County%202010-19.pdf>

7. **The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center:** KIDS COUNT® is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and a premier source of data on children and families. Each year, the Foundation produces a comprehensive report — the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* — that assesses child well-being in the United States:

<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>



Tip: When it comes to data analysis, check in with your Racial Equity Core Team Lead, who may be able to direct you to department-specific racial equity tools or maps.

8. **Tableau Racial Equity Data Hub:** The platform provides access to relevant data, analyses, and resources to advance data work in the racial, equity, and justice space. <https://www.tableau.com/foundation/data-equity>

9. **ESRI Racial Equity GIS Hub:** The hub is an ongoing and continuously expanding resource to assist organizations working to address racial inequities. It includes data layers, maps, applications, user examples, training resources, articles on best practices, solutions, and other resources. <https://gis-for-raciaequity.hub.arcgis.com/>

10. **Justice40 Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool:** The tool is a geospatial mapping tool designed to identify disadvantaged communities that are marginalized and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment. The tool has an interactive map and uses datasets that are indicators of burdens in eight categories: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development. Census tracts that are overburdened and underserved are highlighted as being disadvantaged on the map. <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/>

Sample responses to the FY26 OBET

Sample Department-Level Response

The following is a sample department-level response. The sample is based on a fictitious department but based on ORESJ’s knowledge of departments’ current commitments and capacities; we believe these responses may be aspirational for some but are nonetheless realistic. The format of the response will look different in BASIS, but for the purposes of this manual, we have abbreviated the questions and used a table to display the sample content:

SAMPLE RESPONSE QUESTION 1 (Required)

...Please describe how your overall FY26 budget request will target resources toward normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing for racial equity in the County. More information about the GARE framework is below and [here](#). Your explanations should demonstrate what specifically you intend to do, how you intend to do it, and why it will help advance your department’s FY26 commitment to and infrastructure for racial equity and social justice...

Normalize	
How will your FY26 budget request support sustained CORE team activities? (i.e. staff time, contractual support, budgetary resources)?	We plan on reestablishing our CORE team by encouraging participation across all divisions, and ensuring supervisors of CORE team members understand the centrality of CORE team participation in moving the department’s Equity Vision forward. To that end, we plan on tracking the number of CORE team members, the number of members from each division, members job titles, and the number of CORE team meetings that are held in FY26. Tracking these metrics will help us identify challenges to sustaining our CORE team’s membership.
What other “Normalizing” activities will your FY26 budget request enable? (If your FY26 budget request will not enable other “Normalizing” activities, beyond those mentioned in the previous question, please respond N/A).	Our FY26 budget request will enable us to develop supplementary on-boarding materials that help new employees understand the requirements of the RESJ Act, performance measures they will be evaluated on, and an introduction to ORESJ and GARE offerings to build their knowledge of the link between our service area and racial equity and social justice.
Organize	
How will your FY26 budget request enable sustained leadership for racial equity and social justice in your department? (i.e. a designated FTE, updated job descriptions, allocated staff time within employees’ portfolio/work plan, reporting structures	Our FY26 budget will not enable us to hire a designated FTE for leading the department’s racial equity and social justice work. However, our department plans on working with the CORE team lead to revise their job description to better encompass their CORE team lead responsibilities. The department also plans to find ways to publicly

that enable accountability for racial equity and social justice)?	recognize the CORE team lead and support their professional development.
How will your FY26 budget request support department-specific RESJ professional development for staff and leadership (not including the County’s eight-hour RESJ training requirement)?	Working with our CORE team, our department will identify previous GARE webinars and resources in the GARE Network Library that focus on our service-area and share them with staff in relevant divisions. We will then host a lunch and learn to discuss the webinar and resources. We plan on requesting one hour of training approval from ORESJ for this professional development approach.
How will your FY26 budget request build your department’s capacity to engage with or support colleagues/partners in engaging with BIPOC, low-income communities, and other historically marginalized groups?	Our FY26 budget includes a half-day retreat for front-line staff to explore community engagement practices. We plan on implementing an organizational assessment during this half-day retreat which we hope will highlight areas of need and opportunity in our community engagement efforts.
What other “Organizing” activities will your FY26 budget request enable? (If your FY26 budget request will not enable other “Organizing” activities, beyond those mentioned in the previous question, please respond N/A).	New in FY26, anyone hired on or after July 1, 2025, will be required within the first 90 days of employment to have completed or enrolled in “Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government”.
Operationalize	
How will your FY26 budget request support the department in identifying areas of strength and opportunity in organizational culture and recruiting, retaining, and advancement of a diverse and representative workforce? (examples might include: targeted resources for fielding a staff survey, conducting a focus group, or carrying out a project, initiative or other intentional effort)	In FY26, we plan to assess and revise our recruitment and sourcing practices and produce a Workforce Equity check-list. The checklist will help us ensure that all hiring managers across the department have a shared understanding of how best to expand and target recruitment to address gaps in race and gender representation in our workforce.
How will your FY26 budget request support the department in tracking program access and service outcomes by race, ethnicity, and other relevant demographic or socioeconomic characteristics? (please include any data points or metrics you are proposing to track in FY26 that will help your department advance equitable access and outcomes in your service area?) <i>If</i>	We are unsure of how best to approach the collection of demographic data in some areas of our work, specifically in program monitoring. In FY26, we will seek out guidance from experts in the field, including GARE’s Racial Equity Legal Initiative to help us develop a standard set of practices to incorporate into our various program applications.

<p><i>proposed FY26 resources are unlikely to enable this activity, please describe how your budget request will support the department in taking steps to meaningfully collect, disaggregate, analyze, and utilize performance and outcomes data?</i></p>	
<p>What other “Operationalizing” activities will your FY26 budget request enable? (If your FY26 budget request will not enable other “Operationalizing” activities, beyond those mentioned in the previous question, please respond N/A).</p>	<p>In FY26, we also anticipate reviewing our procurement practices and disaggregating our spend data where possible. This will help us to identify whether there are areas where we can strengthen our outreach and communication with businesses owned by underrepresented groups (women, minority, veteran, disabled).</p>

SAMPLE RESPONSE QUESTION 2 (Required)

...Please describe the process by which your department will approach meeting the required reduction request for FY26...

In anticipation of a reduction, we’ve mapped our client population for our three largest programs to determine where there are concentrations of BIPOC and low-income clients. While we shift resources, we will ensure there is sufficient coverage in these core areas as these locations are where residents are most likely experiencing racial disparities in income and housing cost-burden, and as a result have the greatest need with fewer alternatives. We’ll develop communications materials to ensure all clients know that if their closest facility is closed, they can access services at core sites accessible via public transportation. We hope that this approach will minimize disruption of service in areas where clients are experiencing the greatest need.

SAMPLE RESPONSE QUESTION 3 (Optional)

Is there anything you’d like to share about how your department is “operationalizing” racial equity and social justice?...

We’re pleased to share that the percentage of department employees who have completed the mandatory RESJ training increased by 5% in FY24 and 12% in FY25. We believe this is the result of increased marketing about available trainings. For example, when we receive the OHR newsletter, we send targeted messaging to divisions where the training completion rate is lower, and we reach out to division leaders to see what barriers employees are encountering. We believe that this enhanced communication is helping to drive improvements in the percentage of employees who have completed mandatory RESJ trainings; we plan to continue this targeted communication in FY26. It is our hope that with more trained employees, we will be able to better assess our current operations and make changes to improve equitable outcomes in the community.

SAMPLE RESPONSE QUESTION 4 (Optional)

.... Please use the text box to describe any gaps or limitations impeding your ability to implement the GARE framework (normalizing, organizing, operationalizing).

The Department is currently experiencing challenges hiring and retaining a diverse and representative workforce. We know that having a diverse staff at all levels of the department, including in senior leadership, will strengthen our ability to plan, deliver, and evaluate programs with a racial equity lens. Unfortunately, challenges across the government have caused delays in recruitment and hiring. We've also had retention issues among our mid-level managers which is currently comprised of 65% people of color and women staff. We think this challenge stems from low morale and a lack of career pathways within our department and across government. Exit interviews have revealed that mid-level managers are seeking employment with agencies that have more well-defined career pathways and advancement opportunities. Additionally, staff have reported that complex siloes and hierarchies outside of our department cause inefficiencies and stymie innovation. If there were ways to strengthen cross-department workflows and build career ladders, we think our mid-level managers would be more inclined to stay. Retaining this segment of our workforce is particularly important for our ability to apply a racial equity lens to our work.

Sample Program-Level Response

Remember! Only one-program level response is required for departments (and select department's divisions) listed at the beginning of this guide

The following is a sample program-level response. The sample is based on an adaptation of the Montgomery Connects - Computer for You program – which is managed and operated by the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS), Office of Broadband Programs (OBP). Responses have been modified to fit the purposes of this example but are nonetheless realistic.

1. **(Required)** What is the purpose of this program (this may also be a service, initiative, activity)? In your response, please list the outputs, outcomes, and strategic program goals as well as who the target or primary beneficiaries are (this includes providing demographic information such as race, ethnicity, immigration or refugee status, age, gender, socioeconomic status, location, etc..)

The purpose of the Montgomery Connects – Computer For You program is to continue providing low-income residents without access to a computer with a Chromebook—specifically school-aged children who identify as BIPOC and those whose primary language is not English. Montgomery County, in partnership with Montgomery County Public Libraries, received a federal Emergency Connectivity Fund to purchase 40,000 computers. The Emergency Connectivity Fund is a federal grant, issued in response to COVID-19, which built upon the federal E-rate program. It provides funding to schools and libraries for internet, equipment, and computers, by providing funding for students and library patrons to receive computers for use at home. This was imperative during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic as school and library Wi-Fi and computers could not be accessed as a result of mandatory closures. The goal of this COVID-19 relief is to help close the Homework Gap for students who currently lack access to the internet or the devices they need to connect to the classroom.

The goal of the County is to promote the program and prioritize distribution to low-income residents who are receiving COVID assistance or food assistance, enrolled in benefit programs, live in low-income areas, or live in areas where there are disproportionately higher numbers of Black and Latino households without home computers or home broadband. The grant funds up to \$400 per computer and specifically prohibits the County from using grant funds to purchase software, cases, and other peripherals.

2. **(Required)** Identify specific disparities and/or inequities that are targeted by your program budget proposal. Please refer to the 2023 Updated Baseline Study and related Racial Equity Impact Assessments and Racial Equity and Social Justice Impacts Statements. Include any qualitative and quantitative data to support your answer.

By examining current data and research on the Homework Gap and the digital divide, our department designed the program to address the needs of those experiencing the greatest

barriers—low-income children and families as well as Black and Latino children and families. The Homework Gap describes an aspect of the digital divide specifically related to a household’s lack of home internet or hardware necessary to support online learning. Prior to the pandemic, data suggests that as many as 17 million children under the age of 18 in the US were affected by this issue—disproportionately impacting low-income households and households of color; specifically, those identifying as Black, Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native. The data reveals larger percentages of Black, Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native households – compared to White and Asian households – do not have access to high-speed internet or a computer at home. The data also shows that nationwide 23% of households do not have access to high-speed internet at home, while 10% of households do not have access to a computer at home. Those percentages are almost double for households making less than \$25,000 a year.

The program was also reviewed by ORESJ in the development of a Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation #22-94.

3. **(Required)** How will this program impact the people most negatively affected/harmed by the challenges this program addresses? (Think about how the program impacts marginalized groups or communities. Example communities include (but are not limited to) Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities, low-income individuals/households, immigrants or refugees, communities that have historically experienced disinvestment in physical environments, justice-involved youth, or people with disabilities.

To reach populations most negatively impacted by the Homework Gap, we are using GIS to identify schools with large percentages of FARMS-eligible students; we are then convening principals, parents, teachers, and student councils of those schools to determine what their greatest needs are with regard to digital connectivity. We will also conduct targeted outreach and strategic communications working with trusted partners, co-locating enrollment for services (including broadband), and expanding language access.

4. **(Required)** Describe how the needs of a specific community or stakeholder informed development of the program, its goals and requested budget. How is that information reflected in the budget proposal?

The County collects demographic data to understand which communities are receiving computers, where there is need, and to have race, age, and income statistics to apply for future grants. Results highlight a program with the potential to shrink the Homework gap and reduce the digital divide in the County.

- 55% of recipients earn less than \$25,000 per year and 35% earn between \$25,001 and \$50,000 per year.
- 54% of recipients are Black or African American, and 31% are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.
- 85% of recipients responding to our survey stated they have a smartphone, but only 11% had a computer and most existing computers were more than 9 years old.

- **A combined 56% of recipients and events were in Upcounty (37%) and Eastern Montgomery (19%).**

For program requests involving reductions, please respond to the following questions. If your program request does not involve reductions, please respond N/A.

5. **(Required)** How will reductions to this program affect the users of the program, specifically for those most negatively impacted by the challenges this program addresses?

As resources provided by the federal Emergency Connectivity Fund have been encumbered, eligibility standards have now been put in place as the new source of funds for the program (the state Maryland Connected Devices program) are not as robust as the previously provided federal funds. As such, those experiencing the greatest barriers in accessing a device or internet will be prioritized. Specifically, Montgomery County residents, age 7 or older, who have not previously received a computer from the County, will be prioritized for distribution efforts. Additionally, in order to receive a Chromebook, these children must be from households that are eligible for the ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program) internet discount program, either by income or enrollment in a benefit program. As a result, while children in families with the greatest expressed needs will be prioritized for resource distribution, those barely making ends meet – households whose incomes are over 200% of the federal poverty level (or \$39,440 for 2 people) – may be excluded from opportunities to receive a device or internet access.

6. **(Required)** What steps have you taken to mitigate against the creation or worsening of racial disparities or inequities that may result from the proposed program reduction?

As previously stated, new eligibility standards have now been put in place that prioritize those experiencing the greatest barriers in accessing devices and internet. In an effort to track and measure service outcomes as well as the additional need for groups who fall outside of the eligibility thresholds – particularly for low-income children of color – the program will continue ongoing engagement efforts that include surveys, focus groups, and other means of follow-up. As trends begin to reveal themselves, the program will revisit its eligibility requirements to ensure that the needs of school-aged children are met.

How will the OBET responses be analyzed?

ORESJ's analysis of department-level OBET responses will result in an Assessment of Strengths and Opportunities (Assessment), not a numerical rating or score. In its analysis, ORESJ will review departments' narrative explanations and examine how the department intends to target resources towards activities across all three areas of the GARE framework, while also mitigating any harmful impacts resulting from any potential budget reductions. ORESJ's analysis will focus on the strength of the department's commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice, as described in the GARE framework (normalizing, organizing, operationalizing for racial equity). ORESJ will communicate the findings from its analysis in the Assessment. The Assessment will highlight strengths in the departments' overall FY26 budget request, and how that budget request enables its commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice in the County. The Assessment will also highlight where the department's commitment could be clarified or strengthened.

For program-level budgets, the ORESJ's analysis and ratings take into consideration the identification of specific racial disparities and inequities in the County; the use of data, supplemental research, and community engagement in the analysis of those disparities and the formulation of the budget; and the strength of the connection between the budget and its ability to advance racial equity and social justice in the County. If a program demonstrates a strong likelihood to reduce and eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in the County, the response will receive a total score of 4. Like the department-level Assessment, program-level ratings will also consider narrative explanations as well and any additional actions towards advancing equitable outcomes.

ORESJ will provide a department-level Assessment of Strengths and Opportunities in addition to ratings and summative justification of the Program-level responses. Both items will be provided to departments, the Office of Management and Budget, the County Executive (in alignment with OMB's Operating Budget deliberation process), as well as the County Council. **ORESJ's department-level Assessment and program rating will not change once they are transmitted.** The information we provide will help decisionmakers understand which budgets have the greatest potential of advancing racial equity and social justice in the County and which budgets may require additional attention to address unintended consequences. OBET analysis—Assessment and program-level rating—will be used as one of several criteria informing the County Executive's recommended FY26 Operating Budget.

OBET Rubric

Department-Level Assessment

Departments will receive an Assessment of Strengths and Opportunities of their FY26 OBET response. This Assessment will highlight strengths and opportunities in each area of the GARE framework along with a summary and overarching recommendations. **Departments will NOT receive a numerical**

rating or score. The department-level Assessment of Strengths and Opportunities will be shared with department directors, OMB, the County Executive, and the County Council.

<u>Summary</u>		
<i>ORESJ will provide a summary of its findings here. The summary will include information about how the department’s overall FY26 proposed budget supports its commitments to advancing racial equity and social justice. The summary will highlight areas of strength, opportunities for improvement, and questions and recommendations that may be useful for departments and decision-makers to consider.</i>		
GARE Framework Category	Example Strengths	Example Opportunities
<p><u>Normalize</u> The goal of normalizing is to establish racial equity as a key value by developing a shared understanding of key concepts across the department and create a sense of urgency to make changes.</p>	<p><i>FY26 Resource allocations are linked to specific activities that establish RESJ as a key value in the department, for example creating and sustaining an active CORE team or including RESJ topics (and allocating time) in department-wide planning meetings or communications.</i></p> <p><i>Evidence that FY26 resources will be used to support CORE team members and their work.</i></p> <p><i>Resource allocations reflect the urgency and prioritization of RESJ as an overarching department value, principle, or mission.</i></p>	<p><i>Lack of specificity/clarity/evidence to support how the FY26 budget will enable activities/actions in this area of the GARE framework</i></p> <p><i>Comments about what the department can do to strengthen their commitment or make it more clear</i></p>
<p><u>Organize</u> The goal of organizing is to build staff and organizational capacity, skills, and competencies through training while also building infrastructure to support the work, like internal organizational change teams and external partnerships with other</p>	<p><i>Evidence for how FY26 resources will support sustained leadership for RESJ in your department.</i></p> <p><i>Evidence of how department-specific RESJ professional development for staff and leadership (not including the County’s eight-hour RESJ training requirement) will be supported with FY26 resources.</i></p>	<p><i>Lack of specificity/clarity/evidence to support how the FY26 budget will enable activities/actions in this area of the GARE framework</i></p> <p><i>Comments about what the department can do to strengthen their commitment or make it more clear</i></p>

institutions and community.		
<p><u>Operationalize</u></p> <p>The goal of operationalizing is to put theory into action by implementing new tools for decision-making, measurement, and accountability like a Racial Equity Tool and developing a Racial Equity Action Plan.</p>	<p><i>Evidence of how the FY26 budget will enable the development of an organizational culture that supports workforce equity initiatives, including but not limited to: recruitment, retention, and advancement of a diverse and representative workforce.</i></p> <p><i>Evidence of how the FY26 budget request will enable the department to track program access and service outcomes by race, ethnicity, and other relevant demographic or socioeconomic characteristics.</i></p>	<p><i>Lack of specificity/clarity/evidence to support how the FY26 budget enables activities/actions in this area of the GARE framework</i></p> <p><i>Comments about what the department can do to strengthen their commitment or make it more clear</i></p>

Program-Level Rubric

Assessment	Rating	Explanation
<i>Does Not</i> reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in Montgomery County	0	The program <u>as described</u> does not reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities or advance equitable outcomes for members of the community.
<i>Unlikely</i> to reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in Montgomery County	1	The program <u>as described</u> is unlikely to reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in the County as the response does not demonstrate a link between racial disparities and how the program will address them.
<i>Potential</i> to reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in Montgomery County	2	The program <u>as described</u> maintains current levels of operation and outcomes. While there is a potential to reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in the County, there is insufficient evidence linking the program to more equitable outcomes.

<p>Likely to reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in Montgomery County</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>The program <u>as described</u> is likely to reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in the County in that the response demonstrates a link between racial inequities and the program’s need. However, the analysis—use of data, community engagement, and research—could be strengthened to make the link between racial inequities and the program’s need clearer.</p>
<p>Strong Likelihood to reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in Montgomery County</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>There is a strong likelihood that the program will reduce and/or eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in the County as the response demonstrates—with the use of data, community engagement, and research—a clear correlation between racial inequities and the program’s need. This program is therefore likely to advance equitable outcomes for those identifying as BIPOC and/or low-income.</p>

Program-level Narrative Justification

ORESJ will provide a brief justification in narrative form based on the following considerations:

1. The level of detail and clarity about how budgets target resources towards various activities and/or programs that demonstrate commitment to and action towards advancing racial equity and social justice.
2. The use of data, community engagement, research on racial disparities and inequities, and best practices for advancing racial equity to make decisions about how resources should be targeted and/or how programs should be designed to advance racial equity and social justice.
3. The resources—CORE Team leads, ORESJ, or outside experts—that were consulted during budget development.

Sample OBET assessment and justification

The following are sample ratings based on the [sample OBET responses](#) used in this manual.

Sample Department-level Assessment of Strengths and Opportunities

<u>Summary</u>		
<p><i>The department’s FY26 operating budget request demonstrates strengths across all areas of the GARE framework. These strengths are focused on building RESJ skills and competencies across the department, including during new hire onboarding and the 90-day probationary period, targeted support for the CORE team lead, and focused skill-building opportunities in community engagement as well as collecting and disaggregating demographic data. The department outlined how FY26 funding would support these activities, including plans for how it would leverage resources such as GARE and other networks to gain additional expertise and support for its vision. The department also described how it would use existing resources (in its base budget) to develop an internal checklist for increasing racial and gender diversity in recruitment.</i></p>		
<p><i>While the FY26 emphasis on knowledge and skill-building was clear, it was less clear to what extent existing organizational structures and norms within the department could effectively support this work. To ensure sustainability for its commitments, it will be important for employees across all-levels of seniority and authority to engage and partner on these activities. This is especially true because the department’s FY26 budget request does not include a designated FTE to lead the department’s RESJ work. Ongoing partnership between leadership and staff, and a willingness to adapt to feedback from CORE team members and lead can help to ensure sustainability of the department’s commitments to advancing racial equity and social justice.</i></p>		
GARE Framework Category	Example Strengths	Example Opportunities
<p><u>Normalize</u> The goal of normalizing is to establish racial equity as a key value by developing a shared understanding of key concepts across the department and create a sense</p>	<p><i>The department’s effort to better track CORE team participation in FY26 will help identify challenges in sustaining CORE team membership. Better understanding and addressing challenges will help the department’s CORE team and ongoing normalizing activities.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the department’s plan to develop supplementary RESJ onboarding materials for new employees demonstrates the department’s</i></p>	<p><i>In tracking CORE team participation, how will senior leadership partner with staff to overcome challenges?</i></p> <p><i>The department could also consider disseminating the supplementary RESJ onboarding materials to staff, once a year, before performance appraisals begin. Doing so, will help</i></p>

<p>of urgency to make changes.</p>	<p><i>commitment to establishing RESJ as a key value.</i></p>	<p><i>remind staff that RESJ is a core department value.</i></p>
<p><u>Organize</u></p> <p>The goal of organizing is to build staff and organizational capacity, skills, and competencies through training while also building infrastructure to support the work, like internal organizational change teams and external partnerships with other institutions and community.</p>	<p><i>The department is taking meaningful steps to shore up the department’s RESJ knowledge, skills, and abilities by supporting the professional development of the CORE team lead, hosting department-specific lunch and learns (requesting an ORESJ training approval) and convening a half-day retreat specifically to supporting front-line staff community engagement capacities.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the department is demonstrating the prioritization of RESJ by ensuring completion or enrollment in “Advancing Racial Equity: the Role of Government” within first 90 days of MCG employment.</i></p>	<p><i>In allocating resources for the half-day front-line staff retreat, the department could consider what role direct engagement with community partners will play (and how they will be compensated). The department may also consider partnering with Office of Community Partnerships and other stakeholders in planning this half-day retreat to ensure county resources are well understood as well as best practices for equitable community engagement are included.</i></p> <p><i>The department could also consider, based on its area of work, and emphasis on skill-building in FY26, joining the GARE Network group focused on the department’s public policy area and or tapping into a local network of RESJ facilitators who specialize in building core RESJ competencies in the department’s field of practice.</i></p>

<p><u>Operationalize</u></p> <p>The goal of operationalizing is to put theory into action by implementing new tools for decision-making, measurement, and accountability like a Racial Equity Tool and developing a Racial Equity Action Plan.</p>	<p><i>The department is taking steps in FY26 to institute recruiting and sourcing practices that expand its pool of candidates, which will help to address a lack of gender and racial diversity in its workforce.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to a FY26 focus on recruitment and sourcing, the department is also seeking outside expertise from GARE and other practitioners to establish practices for collecting data and disaggregating demographic data as well as including this type of data and analysis in the department's review of small-dollar procurements</i></p>	<p><i>As the department takes steps in FY26 to diversify recruiting, it could also consider best practices in retention and advancement. As the department seeks outside expertise, it could consider seeking out the expertise of jurisdictional partners who have successfully applied racial equity and social justice practices to their field of practice.</i></p>
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Sample Program-level rating (based on sample program-level response)

Score	Narrative Justification
<p>4</p> <p>Strong Likelihood to reduce and eliminate racial disparities and other inequities in Montgomery County</p>	<p>The program as described demonstrates a strong likelihood of advancing equitable outcomes as it utilizes collected demographic data (in addition to national research and data) to target resources towards children and communities of color—groups with an expressed need—in accessing devices to help mitigate the Homework Gap. The department has utilized resources provided by ORESJ to help inform their work and has also conducted outside research, being informed by experts in both their relevant field as well as racial equity.</p>

Glossary

- **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)** is a term referring to “Black and/or Indigenous People of Color.” While “POC” or People of Color is often used as well, BIPOC explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities, which helps to counter anti-Black racism and Native erasure.
- **Capital Improvements Program Budget Equity Tool (CBET)** is both a product and a process that encourages departments and decisionmakers to consider the impacts of their proposed projects, project amendments, and budget decisions on racial disparities and inequities in the County.
- **Disaggregated data** is information—quantitative or qualitative—that gives insights into the particular experience and circumstances of specific population groups (by race, ethnicity, nativity, gender, disability, etc.). Disaggregating data can help in identifying and unpacking dimensions of a specific inequity or inequitable outcome. When data is not disaggregated and viewed in its aggregate form, it can mask inequities.
- **Ethnicity** refers to a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, history, and customs. Throughout US history different ethnic groups, as described above in the definition of “race”, have been racialized as non-white and therefore ethnicity within this context is commonly used in conjunction with race or is implied when describing disparities, disproportionalities, and other inequities.
- **Equity** is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations, and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.
- **Marginalized communities** are communities that have not had equal access to opportunity due to exclusion or harmful policies or practices, including discrimination or disinvestment, which have produced inequities by race and ethnicity and its intersection with gender, nativity, disability, and other identity groups. Terms like “underserved communities”, “disinvested communities”, “underrepresented communities”, and “disadvantaged communities” are similar and depending on the context may more appropriately describe communities that have historically and currently experienced inequities.
- **People of Color** refers to the political or social (not biological) identity among and across groups of people that are racialized as non-White. The term “people of color” is used to acknowledge that many races experience racism in the U.S., and the term includes but is

not synonymous with, Black people. Increasingly, the term BIPOC is used in place of “people of color”.

- **Race** is a social and political construction—with no inherent genetic or biological basis—used by institutions to arbitrarily categorize and divide groups of individuals based on physical appearance (particularly skin color), ancestry, cultural history, and ethnic classification. The concept has been, and still is, used to justify the domination, exploitation, and violence against people who are racialized as non-White. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.
- **Racial equity** is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicts one's life outcomes. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address the root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.
- **Racial disparity** is an unequal outcome one or more racial or ethnic groups experience as compared to the outcome for another racial or ethnic group and their population relative overall population.
- **Racial disproportionality** is the underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group at a particular decision point, event, or circumstance, in comparison to the group's percentage in the total population.
- **Racial Equity Impact Assessment** is a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision.
- **Racial inequity** Race is the number one predictor of life outcomes, e.g., disproportionality in education (high school graduation rates), jobs (unemployment rate), criminal justice (arrest and incarceration rates), life expectancy, etc.
- **Race Equity Lens** is the process of paying disciplined attention to race and ethnicity while analyzing problems, looking for solutions, and defining success. A race equity lens critiques a “color blind” approach, arguing that color blindness perpetuates systems of disadvantage in that it prevents structural racism from being acknowledged. The application of a race equity lens helps to illuminate disparate outcomes, patterns of disadvantage, and root causes.
- **Systems thinking** can help people understand why changes in multiple sectors are necessary to make genuinely sustainable progress towards racial equity in particular spheres such as education, health, or economic security. It can thus help identify both entry points for change and links among those entry points.

- **Unintended Consequences** are the outcomes of an action that are not anticipated. These occur when the intended goals or outcomes of a particular action or intervention are not fully realized or when unanticipated side effects emerge.

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12. The City of Portland Budget Equity Assessment Tool: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/707806>
13. The City of San Antonio Budget Equity Tool: <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Equity/Initiatives/BudgetEquityTool>
14. Washington DC Office of Racial Equity Budget Equity Tool: <https://ore.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ore/publication/attachments/Racial%20Equity%20Budget%20Tool%2010.14.21.pdf>