



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

July 26, 2022

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-08
FY23 Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service, Emergency Service Transporter
Supplemental Payment Program

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #23-08 FY23 *Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), Emergency Service Transporter Supplemental Payment Program (ESPP)* has the potential to advance equitable outcomes for residents of the County who are at greatest risk of experiencing disparate outcomes—specifically for those who are Medicaid recipients as ESPP prioritizes serving beneficiaries of the program who, due to eligibility rules, are more likely to be low-income. Based on available information, it is unclear to what extent activities under this supplemental appropriation will advance equitable outcomes for County Medicaid recipients and as such, ORESJ recommends prioritizing this community in the distribution of funds over intended administrative use.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The Purpose of Supplemental Appropriation #23-08 FY23 MCFRS, ESPP is to:
- upgrade a position added in the FY23 approved budget from firefighter to lieutenant to provide adequate supervision at Sandy Spring Fire Station 40;
 - enhance funding for the Emergency Medical Service Quality Assurance Battalion Chief position approved in the FY23 Budget to allow service to begin at the start of the fiscal year prior to recruit graduation; and

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- support delivery of an Emergency Medical Technician Cadet Program in partnership with MCPS in the 2022-2023 school year.

ORESJ has previously documented, in the following Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIA), MCFRS's ability to advance equitable outcomes for communities in Montgomery County that identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income by examining their experiences through the lens of racial equity and subsequently prioritizing their needs:

1. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-69 Senator A moss Fire and Rescue Services Grant
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-69.pdf>
2. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-87 Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service Heart Monitor/Defibrillator Replacement
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-87.pdf>
3. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-88 Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service Gude Drive Community Services Building
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-88.pdf>
4. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-90 Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service, Emergency Service Transporter Supplemental Payment Program
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-90.pdf>

An assessment of the supplemental appropriation by MCFRS finds that the funds provided by ESPP would:

- Ensure the proper allocation of supervision and oversight at Sandy Spring Fire Station 40 in the form of a Lieutenant position, which they believe will have no impact on advancing racial equity and social justice in the County as this is meant to address an administrative shortfall;
- Adjust the start date of the Emergency Medical Services Battalion Chief was who, in an effort to mitigate health disparities amongst low-income and BIPOC County residents, will work with the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Public Health, the Montgomery County Planning Department and others to develop common understanding around health-centered inequities; and
- Provide support for the Cadet Program – a partnership between MCFRS and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) – which has the ability to diversify MCFRS should the program include a pathway to employment from the diverse MCPS system.

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As previously mentioned in ORESJ's REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-90, qualifications for supplemental payments provided by ESPP align with ORESJ priority areas in that providers receiving these funds must meet requirements¹ stipulating that they serve Medicaid recipients. The Medicaid program is a major source of coverage for low-income and BIPOC communities, ensuring them access to care and providing financial protection from health care costs.² This is true for Medicaid recipients in Montgomery County, who primarily identify as BIPOC.³ ORESJ recommends prioritizing these communities in the distribution of ESPP funds as they serve to mitigate gaps for communities in greatest need.

Current planned activities do not explicitly intend to serve low-income and BIPOC communities and instead will be used for more administrative tasks such as filling vacant positions and funding a Cadet Program. As such, ORESJ recommends MCFRS to consider the following for future use of ESPP funds:

1. No policy, program, or practice is race neutral. While the Lieutenant position will work with County department heads to mitigate health disparities in communities, this should be a consideration of all positions.
2. Seek efforts to engage with the community more, particularly Medicaid recipients. Working with community not only helps to foster trust with members who are historically distrusting of systems, but also provides insight that only a person with lived experience can give.
3. While the Cadet Program will work with the diverse MCPS student population, it is imperative that a pathway to career be prioritized in the program in order to diversify MCFRS staff. Training should not be limited to entry level positions but should also outline opportunities for career advancement as well to diversify MCFRS leadership.

cc: Scott Goldstein, Chief, Fire and Rescue Services
Ken Hartman, Director, Office of Strategic Partnership, Office of the County Executive

¹ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/spa/downloads/MD-20-0010.pdf>

² <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-and-racial-health-equity/>

³ https://www.marylandhbe.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Executive-Report_08312021.pdf