

Resolution No.: 18-1095
Introduced: April 17, 2018
Adopted: April 24, 2018

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsors: Council Vice President Navarro and Councilmember Elrich
Cosponsors: Councilmembers Floreen, Leventhal, Katz, Berliner, Council President Riemer,
Hucker, and Rice

SUBJECT: Resolution to Develop an Equity Policy Framework in County Government

Background

1. Montgomery County is a community with a strong economy and public services that embraces its residents and the future. Our strong public services include awarding-winning public schools, community college, and park systems, vibrant performing and fine arts, and essential safety net programs in housing, public health, and other social services.
2. Montgomery County is a diverse and welcoming community. No one race or origin is a majority of Montgomery County's population. Almost one-third of the population is foreign-born. Our diversity is our strength and is key to our continued success as a community.
3. While we embrace our diversity, disparities exist by ethnicity, income, disability, gender, sexual identity, and other factors that can impede our future prosperity. These disparities in education, employment, health, and housing result from institutional and individual biases that undermine opportunities for vital members of our community.
4. Furthermore, the aforementioned disparities can be exacerbated by **racial** and **linguistic diversity** that intersect with and compound the effects of additional disparities and inequities based on racial background and limited English language proficiency.
5. Eliminating disparities by promoting equity - the fair treatment of individuals and diverse groups - is an economic imperative. The Urban Institute's *Racial Inequities in Montgomery County, 2011-15* report shows that a more equitable Montgomery County would increase the number of immigrants, Latinos, African Americans, and Asians with some college education, and would also increase employment and homeownership rates among people of color. A more equitable Montgomery County would enhance opportunities for all residents, thereby improving the economy.

6. The Montgomery County Government is responsible for all of its residents, and is in a position to address both unconscious and overt bias, to advance equity, and to address disparities based on race, ethnicity, national origin, English language proficiency, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, differing abilities, and income.
7. As part of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a growing number of jurisdictions are undertaking the work needed to operationalize equity, and integrate it into the decision-making process. These include the use of an “equity lens” to determine who benefits from public policies, regulations and practices and the development of equity tools and plans to inform local decision-making.
8. It is time for Montgomery County to move beyond disjointed efforts to reduce disparities, and commit to advancing the actions necessary to intentionally develop strong equity policies and create a strategic plan.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following action:


The Council is committed to examining the data needed to develop an equity policy framework that would require the County to question how budget and policy decisions impact equity.

This effort must be a partnership between the County Council, County Executive, County Government, county agencies, institutions, and our community. The County Government must challenge itself to bring new and different partners to the table. Partnering with other jurisdictions as members of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) will also enhance the County’s effort and commitment to fostering equity.

Equity analyses should be part of capital and operating budget reviews, appropriation requests, and legislation. Program and process oversight should be undertaken viewing programs and processes through an equity lens. Equity targets and measures of progress must be put in place.

The Council will provide additional FY19 Operating Budget resources for the Office of Legislative Oversight to develop a baseline report describing current disparities in education, employment, housing, health, employment, land use, and other measures of opportunity by May 31, 2019. Following the transmittal of the baseline report, the Council will introduce legislation for the County to develop an equity policy framework to inform the delivery of all County services.

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Megan Davey Limarzi, Esq.
Clerk of the Council