

M I L W A U K E E C O U N T Y _f



RACIAL EQUITY BUDGET TOOL



INCORPORATED
1835

2026 BUDGET CYCLE

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By achieving racial equity, Milwaukee is the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY VISION STATEMENT

Overview

Racism has been and is a public health crisis in Milwaukee County. According to the County Health Rankings, Milwaukee County is, and has consistently been, one of the lowest-ranked counties for health in Wisconsin and, according to Federal Reserve Economic Data, Milwaukee County is one of our nation's most racially segregated areas.

According to 2019 statistics, a white person lives, on average, nearly 14 years longer than a black person and the infant mortality rate is nearly three (3) times higher for black infants compared to white infants. Race is a social construction with no biologic basis, yet racism may produce an assigned societal value based on the way a person looks that has resulted in race being a consistent predictor of a person's quality and length of life.

The Racial Equity Budget Tool (REBT) is a structured racial equity lens for departments to use to critically assess the impacts of budget decisions on communities of color. The tool is structured around Milwaukee County's strategic focus areas to help departments and decision makers better understand the pain points and opportunities to advancing the County's vision.

Milwaukee County's Racial Equity Budget Tool (REBT) is designed to:

Make intentional connections between the strategic plan and the budget.

Use racial equity as the key guiding principle for important decisions regarding investments or disinvestments.

Initiate conversations on topics related to the three-year strategic objectives among department leaders and employees.

Provide baseline data on departmental efforts to inform enterprise-wide decisions.

Milwaukee County Strategic Focus Areas

In 2019, Milwaukee County launched its first strategic plan in 20 years. This plan explicitly recognizes that racism is a public health crisis and leads with the vision that: **By achieving racial equity, Milwaukee is the healthiest county in Wisconsin.**

As part of the strategic plan, Milwaukee County leaders have committed to use a racial equity budget tool to ensure resource allocations advance the strategic focus areas and vision. The questions in this budget tool were guided by the strategic plan and were informed by best practices from other jurisdictions and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).

1. Create Intentional Inclusion

- Reflect the full diversity of Milwaukee County at every level of County government.
- Create and nurture an inclusive culture across the Milwaukee County government.
- Increase the number of Milwaukee County contracts awarded to minority- and women-owned business.

2. Bridge the Gap

- Determine what, where, and how we deliver services based on the resolution of health disparities.
- Break down silos across Milwaukee County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered.
- Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.

3. Invest in Equity

- Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities.
- Enhance Milwaukee County’s fiscal health and sustainability.
- Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.

Instructions

1. Submit only one REBT per department.

The REBT should reflect an analysis of the suite of budget decisions per department. Within answers to each question, **details may be provided at the division level**, as determined appropriate. Decision points should be analyzed as part of the comprehensive effort that your department is undertaking in addressing racial equity in programs, plans, policies, and power structures. Since departments are often tasked with cutting their budgets to reflect a reduction from their previous fiscal year's budget, a REBT should also include an analysis of how proposed reductions may or may not burden Black and Brown individuals and communities.

2. Keep the focus on the analysis of departments' improvements, reductions, and overall budget.

The REBT will focus on a racial equity analysis of decisions for new policies, programs, and plans under consideration, and the department's ongoing commitment to racial equity.

3. Use demographic data to help your department determine benefits and burdens of new decisions and overall budget.

State and federally collected demographic data resources are provided in [Appendix C](#). Departments are encouraged to

use any data they collect on their service users throughout the completion of the REBT. Data from other relevant and credible sources a department may have is also acceptable.

4. REBT technical assistance information and opportunities.

If you have questions related to the 2025 REBT, please attend one of the Strategy, Budget and Performance Open Office hours and bring the questions. All persons who may be expected to assist the department director in completing the REBT will be encouraged to participate.

- If you understand the question, but have difficulty determining how to answer a question, please contact your Budget Analyst for assistance.
- The Office of Equity should only be contacted on questions related to the racial equity components (glossary, concepts, etc..) that are unclear and cannot be addressed by your Budget Analyst. Send correspondence via email to equityoffice@milwaukeecountywi.gov.



MILWAUKEE COUNTY

RACIAL EQUITY BUDGET TOOL

Date Submitted:

Department:

Please note: each response field below has a 2,500-character limit.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1: CREATE INTENTIONAL INCLUSION

1. What activities are you doing to attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce in your department? What are the associated costs of these activities?

Efforts are made across the department to attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce, primarily with existing staffing resources as the department has a limited operations cost budget. Below are examples across service areas.

The Strategy and Performance Service Area (SPSA) has maximized every opportunity to recruit diverse talent for open positions. In addition to liaising with community partners to broadcast open positions, the team used diverse hiring panels to interview candidates. The only cost of these activities was some additional staff time in terms of the networking and outreach to publicize the positions as well as the interview processes.

The budget office has a diverse staff makeup which brings different backgrounds and perspectives to the table. This is very valuable while making recommendations during each year's annual budget process. When hiring opportunities arise within the Budget Division, SBP encourages our internal staff to apply, to allow for promotions and retention. When positions are available to outside candidates, Budget works with HR partners to ensure that openings are posted in a variety of places to reach a diverse group of candidates.

The Project Management Office (PMO) works to attract new and diverse talent by maintaining networks of government and nonprofit partners and sharing position openings through those groups. This led to the hiring of two individuals in 2025 who stated that the reputation of the PMO is what interested them in working for SBP. We work closely with our Human Resource Business Partner and recruitment team to ensure the job descriptions for positions are clear and free of unnecessary restrictions. There is no additional cost associated with these recruitment activities.

The PMO implements a number of strategies to retain staff and maintain an inclusive work environment. This begins with connecting each position in the PMO with countywide strategic planning and implementation efforts. Each position within the PMO creates staff activities that are aligned with service area goals, PMO annual metrics, and SBP five-year targets which support county strategy. This alignment is reinforced with monthly SBP All Staff Meetings, bi-weekly PMO Collaboration Meetings, one-on-one manager meetings, and skip-level meetings for non-director reports to the PMO Director and Senior Manager. Staff are updated and engaged on major initiatives, collaborative opportunities, strategic planning, etc. through these meeting outlets. The intent is to provide outlets for staff to share their work and interests through these outlets as well, fostering two-way communication within the PMO. The PMO also values ongoing professional development and approve expense requests for staff for professional networks, credentials, trainings, conferences, etc.

Throughout the department, efforts have been made to assess employee classification to ensure that positions are properly classified and compensated, and to provide opportunities for professional growth. In numerous instances, positions have been reclassified to take on new responsibilities and adjustments to pay grades and salary have been made as needed and as appropriate. This supports efforts to retain talented and diverse workforce.

As a department we are preparing to conduct another DISC Assessment workshop with the Department of Human Resources in October 2025 to explore the various professional work styles among the team and conflict management tactics. This minimal investment (\$560) helps remind and level-set the team on preference and tendencies of their coworkers in a proactive manner in a teambuilding environment.

2. How do you use professional development and advancement opportunities to promote equity in your department's workforce? What resources are used to support these opportunities for professional development and advancement?

Staff throughout the department are encouraged to participate in professional development activities, and requests for professional development are approved if they are related to job functions and funding is available to support the trainings.

The Strategy and Performance Service Area (SPSA) has provided numerous professional development opportunities in the past year to its team in areas directly aligned with the County's strategy such as program evaluation, data governance and strategic planning.

The SBP PMO operationalized a request form and encourages staff to seek professional development opportunities as a way to advance skills and diversify knowledge and expertise of the team. Throughout 2024-2025, the PMO invested approximately \$3,300 in opportunities for staff training on our project management platform, participation in leadership networks and book studies, and achieving a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification.

All staff are also given time as needed to attend trainings and professional development opportunities provided by Milwaukee County Human Resources, Office of Equity, and other county/departments and outside entities.

In 2025, all staff completed DISC assessments. A whole department session with HR is planned for October 2025 to better help understand our diverse staff's communication styles, strengths, and how we work best with others. The intended outcome of these assessments is to provide a more positive and productive working environment for all staff.

3. Our employees can be a great resource for innovation and knowing what is working well and what needs work. Have you engaged a diverse group of frontline employees to inform decisions about your proposed budget changes? If yes, how was input solicited, who was involved, and what were the results?

Staff across SBP hold meetings with managers on a routine basis (i.e. weekly, biweekly). During these meetings, staff discuss various topics, including any ideas to improve operations. When positive feedback and/or concerns are raised, this is passed on to Senior leadership in the department. Senior leadership also makes themselves very available to staff if would be more comfortable speaking directly to Senior leadership about any issues or concerns.

As described in more detail below, SPSA has overseen extensive employee, stakeholder and community engagement around the Future State Project to shape the future of Milwaukee County government and the services it provides. These included extensive surveys, interviews and focus groups with employees across County government. This project has also included support from across SBP including the budget office and the PMO.

The SBP PMO developed service area hubs in the subject matter areas of project management, grant development, internal communications, policy strategy, and programs, composed of members of the PMO. These hubs are responsible for annual goal setting and driving capacity building in the PMO and across the county in their content area. These groups drive innovation and work to improve county operations. Hub leaders elevate budget and other resource needs in relation to annual goal setting and as conditions require it. The PMO Director has regular skip-level meetings with frontline staff which is an opportunity for staff to inform the annual budget process.

4. Are you tracking contracts with minority and women-owned business? If yes, please share percentages of each. If no, why not?

The majority of the SBP department budget reflects staffing costs, and there are limited contract services managed by the department. SPSA currently manages one contract, which is for the Future State Project. One of our two partners for this project, Kairo Communications, is a Black-owned business based in the City of Milwaukee. The PMO facilitates a contract with Guidehouse, Inc. for ARPA Evaluation with a TBE/DBE rate of 17%.

5. How and when have service users, in diverse and inclusive communities, and other key stakeholders been engaged to inform decisions about changes in funding levels for services provided in your requested budget (who was involved, what was the forum, what were the results)?

As part of the Future State Project, SPSA has engaged dozens of County residents – with a particular focus on Black & Latino communities – in assessing the current state of Milwaukee County services and envisioning the future of County services. This work has been led by our partners on the Future State Project, and in particular the firm Kairo Communications.

During the 2026 Budget process, the budget office provided training to all departments involved in developing a budget request. Weekly office hours were held in which department staff were able to attend and ask questions, seek additional training, or report issues they were having. Analysts also spend significant time meeting with their departments during the budget process to gain a better understanding of any service, program, or staffing impacts from proposed budget changes. The information gained during these meetings assists with decision-making during the Recommended Budget phase.

The SBP PMO primarily serves as a central resource for Milwaukee County departments in the service areas of project management, continuous improvement, grant development, internal communications, policy strategy, and programs. Feedback and requests for support are provided by County departments, which inform decisions about how and where staff time and resources are deployed.

Through facilitation of ARPA and Opioid Settlement Funds, there were and are elements of community engagement which influenced funding decisions. With ARPA, the PMO sought community priorities for how funds were spent through an online survey. The project funding aligned with those priorities. With Opioid Settlement Funds, Milwaukee County Departments sought community input or used field data to determine which projects were their highest priority for funding.

The internal communications team also continues to focus on web accessibility for all users. Internal SBP PMO resources have been designated to ensure our public website meets a high standard through a vetted rating system. This ensures that stakeholders who need information on county services can access it easily.

6. Describe ways in which demographic and economic data were used to prioritize resource distribution. (Data can include sources found in the resources section of this tool, department collected data, or any other relevant data from other sources.)

a. Please provide specific examples of data and how that influenced decision making.

SPSA facilitates the creation, management and use of dozens of scorecards and dashboards that use demographic and economic data to show disparities across Milwaukee County. The County's co-development of the Housing Dashboard has resulted in concrete policy changes by numerous Milwaukee County suburbs to enable or even finance the construction of affordable housing.

During each budget process, departments are given the option to complete supplemental request forms for potential new programs or services, or to have undesirable budget reductions they were required to make added back to their budget in the Recommended phase. The supplemental forms ask departments to check whether the request is part of their Racial Equity Budget Tool submission. This can then be used as a decision point for the submission and data submitted on the Racial Equity Budget Tool for the department can be utilized to drive this decision-making.

The SBP PMO primarily serves as a central resource for Milwaukee County departments in the service areas of project management, continuous improvement, grant development, internal communications, policy strategy, and programs. We've worked within the ARPA Evaluation project to better understand if the organization served the groups identified for support through project investments, in alignment with County vision. The intent is that the performance measurement and evaluation activities conducted will inform future programmatic investments and prioritization. A logic model for each project has been developed and houses the data being collected. Practices are being replicated for Opioid Settlement Funds as well.

b. Are there gaps in the data that need to be addressed to better understand disparities in equity?

In 2025, several SBP staff attended a training hosted by Results for America on evidence-based budgeting. This training provided step-by-step instruction on how to embed data and evidence into the County budgeting process. There is currently discussion and planning efforts underway on areas where evidence-based budgeting can be incorporated for the 2027 budget process to drive decision-making based on data and evidence tied to the County's strategic priorities. Using existing data from data clearing houses and providing these materials to departments may provide them examples of existing data collection and studies that can drive data collection and decisions for their similar programs and services.

The ARPA Evaluation work uncovered inconsistencies in the way we collect certain data points (i.e. zip codes served, contracts, and even demographic classifications). Being consistent with the way we collect the same data sets across

programs will allow for better analysis to ensure we're having apple-to-apples conversations. Also, setting universal or template evaluation questions for programs and departments to measure against would support our ability as an organization to work towards common goals.

7. a. How does your budget reflect efforts to work across departments to break down silos to maximize access to and quality of services offered?

SPSA's work to advance department's strategic plans, establish robust data governance, and build the County's Future State all directly align to building a stronger, more integrated organization that works across different units to better meet the needs of all of our residents.

The primary users of SBP-Budget services are other County departments. Each year, most budget resources for the budget division are spent on staff time working with departments to make the budget process more efficient and less complicated (as much as possible). This includes group trainings and one on one training opportunities, assistance with the County's budgeting software, and assistance with analyses to determine impacts of budget decisions. SBP Budget works with all county departments to collect and provide data and information that can be shared with other departments as well as the County's decisionmakers.

Projects led by the PMO are implemented through cross-departmental project teams that address county-wide challenges. Solutions are developed and implemented by those teams and are a great example of efforts that break down silos around departments. The PMO is designed to centralize functions that create and support standard operations and effective practices that reduce siloing. The PMO's continuous improvement process supports communication across service area teams in an effort to improve a process for all stakeholders.

After piloting Communities of Practice (CoP) in grant development and project management in 2024 and 2025, CoPs will be operationalized in 2026 using existing PMO resources to further countywide capacity, platforms, and tools. These gatherings bring together individuals from different departments but with similar roles to discuss challenges and share solutions across the organization. This allows departments to build networks with colleagues to reduce siloing. The Policy Strategy Team, MarComm, Opioid Settlement Fund Administration Group, Grant Development CoP, Project Management CoP, and Internal Communications Alignment Group are all groups convened by the PMO in an effort to support collaboration across departments.

The PMO Internal Communications Team has also ramped up the platforms and standards available to internal departments to improve the ways in which information is shared across the organization.

b. How does this help us achieve the vision of achieving equity and health?

Given that the department plans align to the County's overall strategic plan, they therefore advance the County's vision.

Budget staff is responsible for working with our County department partners to collect data and information to assist decisionmakers in their efforts to achieving equity and making Milwaukee County the healthiest county. SBP Budget staff are able to raise issues to leadership to outline negative impacts to county residents based on undesirable budget reductions. They are also able to make recommendations for new or existing programs and services that may be restored due to proven positive outcomes or impacts to the community. Again, this is an area where it is incredibly beneficial to have a diverse staff reviewing the information and making recommendations.

The PMO leads these groups with the Milwaukee County vision and strategy at the forefront. The CoPs are composed of professionals working towards similar outcomes for the organization and community. It furthers the county's vision by expanding the use of successful practices throughout the organization and connects staff with internal resources.

8. What are the expected benefits and potential unintended consequences to disadvantaged communities of your proposed budget changes?

Due to the county fiscal challenges, SBP received a tax levy reduction target in the 2026 budget and was required to identify savings compared to last years budget. This has resulted in the reduction of the Data Governance Coordinator that was initially funded in the 2025 budget. This was a newly created position in 2025 that was never filled. The County has identified gaps in data management which SBP and the County are looking to address through creation of these and other positions. Despite this position reduction, SBP will continue to work with IMSD and other county departments to make further progress towards and improve and expand data management capabilities.

What analysis did you do to determine the expected benefits and potential unintended consequences?

The budget seeks to maintain existing staff and services while meeting the tax levy target that was provided.

a. What will your department do to mitigate unintended consequences resulting from your proposed budget changes?

SBP will continue to work with IMSD and other county departments to make further progress towards and improve and expand data management capabilities. Reduction of a Data Governance Coordinator presents

capacity issues and challenges but does not prevent the department or the County from advancing this workstream.

b. What are the demographic impacts of any fines and fees accessed by your department? Are there disproportionate impacts on any particular groups?

SBP does not charge any fines and fees.

 [GO TO QUESTIONS \(REBT FORM\)](#)

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3: INVEST IN EQUITY

9. If your department were to receive some additional funding for addressing equity, what specific strategic plan priority would you address, what would be the project/activity and intended outcome, and how much would it cost?

- 1) SPSA did not hire the newly created Data Governance Coordinator in 2025 due to budget uncertainty, and the position is reduced from the 2026 budget to meet its tax levy target. If funds were to become available to fill this position, it would improve the speed and quality of data-informed decision-making across Milwaukee County. As it stands currently, there are many more issues that need to be addressed regarding the County's underlying data infrastructure than there are individuals with sufficient capacity and capabilities to address them. The cost of an additional resource on the Data Governance team in SPSA would be approximately \$80,000 in salary plus associated costs for benefits and fringe.
- 2) Project: Strengthening Website Capacity to Advance Digital Accessibility, Equity, and Service Quality. Cost:
1.0 FTE Digital Experience Senior Analyst (\$75,000 annual salary)
Website Contract Service Hours (\$15,000 annually)
Total: \$85,000

Overview: The PMO Digital Experience Manager is currently the only full-time employee dedicated to maintaining and applying strategy centrally to the Milwaukee County public website. This role supports all county departments and website authors to the best of their ability, while working to integrate standards and accessibility upgrades in response to new federal mandates. Web accessibility upgrade efforts have been successful with the influx of one-time funding to hire a part-time contractor to identify accessibility issues, apply solutions, and test fixes to ensure compliance with ADA requirements. This work started as a pilot in 2024 with the Aging and Disability Service Area and has now expanded to the rest of the website, focusing on universal, reoccurring accessibility issues.

Rationale: The County's website is a primary gateway for residents to access critical information about services, programs, and engagement opportunities. For many constituents, particularly those with limited mobility, transportation barriers, or caregiving responsibilities, the website is their first and often only point of contact with the County. Investing in the website is a foundational equity initiative. When online content is not accessible or up to date, it disproportionately excludes residents with disabilities, limited English proficiency, or lower digital literacy. Inaccurate or outdated content can also erode public trust and reduce engagement with government programs designed to serve our most vulnerable populations.

Hiring an additional team member and adding service hours with the website vendor will ensure accessibility standards are maintained and department-level requests are addressed. This additional capacity allows the Digital Experience Manager to develop and implement strategy and systems that improve content control, coordination and training, and mobile and digital experiences. The long-term goal of this team is to increase process digitization and scalability of improvements across departmental pages to ensure constituents can find what they need in an efficient, helpful manner – increasing accessibility of Milwaukee County services to those most in need.

10. What is your department doing to dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities, including meeting multilingual needs and other communication or accessibility barriers?

SPSA has taken at least three actions so far in 2025 to advance this goal:

First, SPSA has continued to build Milwaukee County's capacity to collect, analyze and visualize data on County residents in ways that illuminate the County's health disparities across municipalities and neighborhoods. By encouraging and supporting departments to display data using maps, SPSA continues to spotlight the degree to which geography is too often destiny in regards to individual and family health and well-being.

Secondly, SPSA has collaborated with the Office on Equity to elevate language access and language justice across County departments. SPSA will continue to champion these efforts and work with the Office of Equity to maximize access to all County services and communications across all languages used in Milwaukee County.

Thirdly, SPSA is conducting community engagement as part of the Future State Project in ways that focus disproportionately on communities most impacted by health disparities. This includes both virtual and in-person engagement in numerous languages beyond English.

The 2025 Budget included the introduction of departmental scorecards designed by the SBP-Strategy Division to provide budget readers with a quick, easily digestible overview of the department's progress. This has been expanded in 2026 to include additional departments taking part in scorecard development.

The review/proofreading process for the budget book also seeks to keep language clear and concise to make the document as easy to read as possible for individuals opening the document with different levels of understanding of county government and governmental budgeting. The budget document uses a consistent easy to read font and includes summary sections that provide high-level overviews. The document also allows the reader to use the "read-out-loud" function if that is a better option for them.

The digital experience challenges mentioned above (question #9) include language and translation issues. The PMO internal communications team is working with IMSD and other departments to ensure current resources (i.e. google translate) can be effectively used by community members. Web accessibility and plain language standardization are also ongoing efforts with existing staff capacity, to ensure individuals of all abilities and background can access information needed.



Appendices

Appendix A:
Glossary

Appendix B:
Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix C:
Resources by Strategic Focus Area

Appendix D:
Public Participation Model

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Communities of color: In the context of the Milwaukee County Racial Equity Budget Tool, the term communities of color is interchangeable with Black and Brown communities and inclusive of all non-white populations of color.

Disadvantaged communities: A collective term for referencing communities that have historically experienced inequities where they learn, live, and work that were/are not optimal due to disenfranchisement, disinvestment, marginalization, racism, and other systems of oppression.

Diversity: Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term “diversity” is used — but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

Diverse group: As it relates to question 5, an intentional effort to include individuals from different racial, ethnic, gender, and social backgrounds proportionate to the diversity of the department.

Economic data: Numerical data collected based on service delivery criteria determined by departments.

Equity: The just, fair, and impartial treatment, acceptance, or behavior of people without favoritism or discrimination. Equity means righting wrongs, doing what’s right, and giving people what they need to thrive, which is different from equality, which means everyone gets the same thing regardless of circumstance or need.

Frontline employees: A grouping of Milwaukee County employees that serves as the initial point of contact for service users or a range of employees from all levels of the workforce with emphasis on the inclusion of direct service rendering staff.

Inclusion: Assurance that the culture, values, and opinions of individuals and groups are represented in the decision-making processes.

Inclusive workforce: A workplace environment that recognizes the contributions of all employees, while valuing their social status, race, gender, or other demographic classifications.

Key stakeholders: Both internal and external individuals, agencies, or organizations who participate in the planning, development, implementation and decision-making process of an activity, process, or service delivery. (AMOP: Key stakeholders are service users, the workforce, partners, governing boards, donors, suppliers, taxpayers, regulatory bodies, policy makers, funders, and local and professional communities.)

Multilingual needs: The ability of Milwaukee County departments to address linguistic needs for all service users through staffing, documentation, and other communication platforms.

Professional advancement: Opportunities for staff to build their capacity and ascend or pursue lateral movement to further advance their career trajectory.

Racial data: Demographic data collected by Milwaukee County departments that identifies the race/ethnicity of service recipients.

Racial equity: The just and fair inclusion of all people in society, regardless of their race/ethnicity, with unfettered ability to participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Racial equity is achieved when race no longer determines one’s health and socioeconomic outcomes and when everyone has what they need to thrive and decide what’s best for themselves, their families, and their communities, no matter where they live.

Service user: Current or potential user of Milwaukee County services.

Unintended consequences: Outcomes of a purposeful action that are not intended or foreseen.

APPENDIX B

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PURPOSE

1) What is the purpose of using this tool?

The Racial Equity Budget Tool (REBT) has many intended purposes:

- It is about making an intentional connection between the strategic plan and our budget. We cannot sufficiently change our institution if we do not think critically about how and what we are spending money on.
- Whether we are making investments or disinvestments, we must do so with racial equity as the key guiding principle to those important decisions.
- It is meant to spur conversation on topics related to the strategic focus areas among department leaders and employees so we are all challenging ourselves to think critically about our efforts to advance the vision.
- This tool is an opportunity to baseline departmental efforts to make informed enterprise-wide decisions.

These are only some of the many answers to why we are using a tool to assess budget decisions.

2) What other jurisdictions have used a racial equity budget tool? Where did the budget tool questions come from?

Milwaukee County's REBT builds on the success of other jurisdictions in implementing a budget tool. Jurisdictions Milwaukee County looked to for guidance include the City of Seattle, the City of Portland (Ore.), King County (Wash.), and the City of San Antonio. Resources from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) were also used. The questions are largely framed around Milwaukee County's strategic plan.

3) How does this tool work when departments must make budget cuts year over year? What is the point of doing this when departments don't have a lot of latitude about what disinvestments to make?

Milwaukee County's structural deficit and budget challenges are no secret. However, Milwaukee County still has an annual budget of over \$1 billion. Whether the County is

making disinvestments or investments, those decisions must be made with racial equity at the forefront of decision-makers' minds. Departments should think critically about their current assumptions and spending versus shifting investments to address root-causes of inequities.

COMPLETING THE TOOL

4) Are there right answers to the questions?

Responses to this tool will inform our future action to see where Milwaukee County can improve on the path to health and racial equity. There are no right answers to the questions, and each department is starting in a different place, serves different people with different needs, and faces a different set of barriers and opportunities. While there are no right answers, the information provided in the tool will be used for decision making throughout the budget process and will be available to the public. Therefore, answers should be robust, defensible, and easy to understand. Your department's answer may look very different than another department's answer and that is okay as long as the answers address the question.

5) What if there are inequities to other groups other than racial groups? Should we be talking about those inequities in our analysis?

Yes! Milwaukee County is race forward, but not race exclusive. If there are other inequities identified in your analysis, please include them.

6) Does every department complete one tool, or is it one tool for each division?

Please submit one tool per department. Responses can be broken down at the division level within your department's tool, as appropriate. All questions should be completed.

7) Who is responsible for filling out the budget tool?

The department head is ultimately responsible for the content in the REBT. It is up to department leadership to determine who in their department is most appropriate to be involved in completing questions in the tool, which will differ from department to department. Likely people to include are department leaders, fiscal staff, and administrative staff.

APPENDIX B

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

 [GO TO QUESTIONS \(REBT FORM\)](#)

8) Is this tool supposed to imply that we should be taking actions on each of these items? Are the questions meant to be directives to departments?

The REBT will focus on an equity analysis of decisions for

A budget is a reflection of priorities. Ultimately, Milwaukee County's budget should reflect our values and advance our vision and strategic plan. However, we acknowledge our organization is on a journey to continuously improve our efforts toward health and racial equity. The REBT is meant to spur conversations among department leaders and staff about what they are and are not able to do in a given budget year to advance the vision. To that end, the tool is not an absolute directive to departments. We fully expect that some departments' answers to some of the questions will be that they are not doing anything this year with an explanation about why that is the case. Looking ahead to future years, departments will be expected to show how their budgets help Milwaukee County make progress toward its vision.

9) How do I use this when my work is statutorily required?

What services Milwaukee County provides is often statutorily required. However, how we do our work usually is not a directive. This tool is meant to challenge us all to think about how to do the enormous part of our work that is within our discretion and control.

10) Is there a standard approach all departments are expected to take to answer the questions?

No. Answer the questions based on the approach your department currently takes on these items.

11) What type of analysis is expected for each of the questions?

It depends on what your department is currently doing in each area. Please use the diverse expertise and experiences of staff in your department to determine the most appropriate way for your department to answer the questions.

12) What part of the budget is this tool being applied to?

new policies, programs, and plans under consideration, and the department's ongoing commitment to equity. Your department is asked to identify what considerations are considered in the overall budget to maximize equitable outcomes.

Performance, Strategy and Budget and the County Board.

USING THE DATA

13) Who will receive the data departments provide in the REBT? Who will be expected to answer questions about the information provided?

Responses to the REBT will be publicly available and will be presented to the County Board. If any decision-makers (e.g., County Executive, County Board Supervisors, department directors) have questions about the information provided in the REBT, the department should be prepared to answer them. We are all partners in Milwaukee County's strategic planning effort to achieve racial equity, and the budget tool is in-part meant to inform and focus conversations around strategic priorities, understanding that not all questions have known answers or solutions.

14) What if someone questions the analysis, conclusions, or recommendations made in the budget tool?

Like all research and analysis, there will be questions and critiques and we should embrace these important conversations. The work presented in the budget tool should be defensible, but most of these questions do not have a clear right or wrong answer. If someone finds something wrong in the analysis, then we need to fix it. However, if it is a question about the interpretation and meaning of the analysis, then we can make space for different perspectives to find the best path forward with the information we have available.

14) Will the budget tool submissions be scored?

No, the REBT submissions will not be scored. However, they will be made available to the public and reviewed by the County Executive's office, the Office of Equity, the Office of

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(CONTINUED)

LOGISTICS

16) When will the budget tool be due?

The REBT is due on July 15 — the same due date as the requested budget.

17) Where do I go if I have questions?

If you understand the question, but have difficulty determining how to answer a question, please first try to problem solve within your department by looping in additional experts (e.g., people leaders, frontline staff, etc.).

If you need assistance understanding what the question is asking, contact your Budget Analyst for assistance.

The Office of Equity should only be contacted on questions related to racial equity components (glossary, concepts, etc.) that are unclear and cannot be addressed by your budget analyst. Send correspondence via email to equityoffice@milwaukeecountywi.gov.

APPENDIX C

RESOURCES BY STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1: **Create Intentional Inclusion**

- [2020 Milwaukee County Workforce Audit](#)

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2: **Bridge the Gap**

- [American Community Survey](#) (from US Census Bureau – descriptions below from US Census Bureau)
 - [Data Profiles](#) have the most frequently requested social, economic, housing, and demographic data. Each of these four subject areas is a separate data profile. The data profiles summarize the data for a single geographic area, both numbers and percent, to cover the most basic data on all topics. (Can compare state/County/Municipal data. With some effort, can get zip code level data.)
 - [Narrative Profiles](#) are short, analytic reports derived from the ACS 5-year estimates. Each Narrative Profile covers 15 different topic areas and provides text and bar charts to display highlights of selected social, economic, housing, and demographic estimates for a selected geographic area. (Easy to get zip code level data)
- [Personal Income Data](#) (Bureau of Economic Analysis) Per Capita Personal Income by State/County, 2016 – 2018 for the entire nation.
- Per Capita Income by County
- [Public School Enrollment](#) (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)
- [Private School Enrollment](#) (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)
- [State of Wisconsin WBE/MBE/DVE](#) This provides a list of all Woman/Minority/Disabled Vets Business Enterprise information. You can search by business name, by product/service, and by location.
- [Milwaukee County Diversity and Compliance Website \(B2GNow\)](#) Links to certified lists for the State of Wisconsin ACDBE/DBE/SBE Directory and the Milwaukee County approved DBE/SBE vendors (training available on using system).

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3: **Invest in Equity**

- [Public Participation Model](#)




Additional County Resources

- [Strategic Plan \(Objectives\)](#)
- [Health and Equity Framework](#)

APPENDIX D

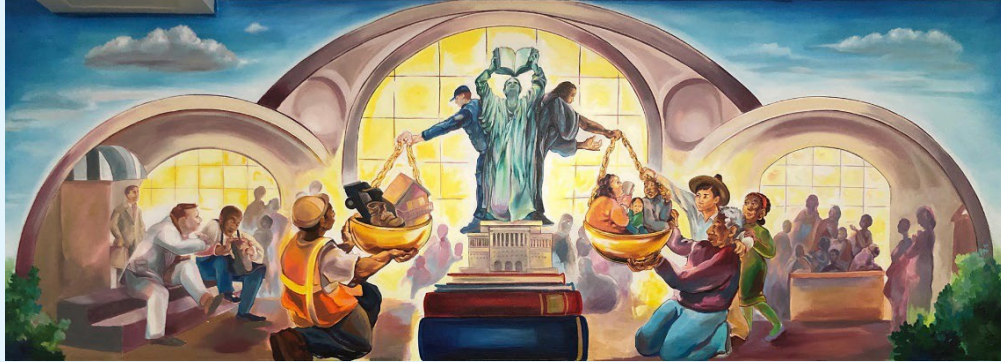
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MODEL



	INFORM 	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE 	EMPOWER/LEAD 
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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ON THE COVER



“WELCOME TO THE PEOPLE’S HOUSE”

Artist: Tia Richardson

Commissioned in 2020. Used with permission of the artist.



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
HEALTH &
RACIAL EQUITY

**ONE COUNTY
ONE VISION**

By achieving racial equity, Milwaukee
is the **healthiest county in Wisconsin.**

county.milwaukee.gov/vision