

M I L W A U K E E C O U N T Y <sub>f</sub>



# RACIAL EQUITY BUDGET TOOL



INCORPORATED  
1835

2026 BUDGET CYCLE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview .....	3
Milwaukee County Strategic Focus Area .....	4
Instructions .....	5
Racial Equity Budget Tool Questions.....	6
Strategic Focus Area 1: <b>Create Intentional Inclusion</b> .....	6
Strategic Focus Area 2: <b>Bridge the Gap</b> .....	6
Strategic Focus Area 3: <b>Invest in Equity</b> .....	7

## APPENDICES

Appendix A: Glossary .....	8
Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions .....	9
Appendix C: Resources By Strategic Focus Area.....	14
Appendix D: Public Participation Model .....	15

# *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](mailto: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?**

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Public Affairs & Community Engagement (PACE) Unit leads the agency's recruitment strategy, with a concentrated emphasis on engaging and attracting candidates from diverse communities across Milwaukee County. Central to these efforts is the agency's "real-time" hiring event series—a streamlined, on-site recruitment model that enables applicants to complete multiple stages of the hiring process in one visit. These stages include application submission, interviews, preliminary background checks, and the issuance of conditional job offers. To maximize outreach and participation, these events are promoted through an integrated media campaign that leverages both traditional and digital advertising, along with earned media coverage on ethnic and culturally focused broadcast outlets. In addition, the PACE Unit conducts active recruitment at local cultural festivals, regional career fairs, college campuses, and through a formal partnership with the United States Army's career transition program for honorably discharged service members. In support of retention and workplace inclusion, MCSO also operates a comprehensive Peer Support Program. This initiative is designed to promote employee well-being, foster a culture of mutual support, and enhance career development by reinforcing a sense of belonging and encouraging work-life balance.

The annual cost of PACE recruitment activities, particularly advertising, is estimated at \$20,000 to \$25,000—accounting for approximately 40% to 50% of the unit's total annual budget.

**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?**

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) is committed to advancing equity within its workforce through intentional professional development and career advancement initiatives. These efforts aim to ensure that all employees—regardless of background, identity, or role—have access to the tools and opportunities necessary to grow, lead, and succeed within the organization.

**Key Strategies and Practices Include:**

- **Equitable Access to Training:** All staff members have access to ongoing professional development, including leadership training, technical certifications, and specialized law enforcement education. Training opportunities are communicated broadly and proactively to ensure inclusivity and participation from underrepresented groups.

- **Tuition Reimbursement and Educational Support:** Employees are encouraged to pursue higher education through tuition reimbursement programs and partnerships with local colleges and universities. These resources support long-term career advancement and help remove financial barriers to education.
- **Internal Promotion Pathways:** The agency maintains transparent internal hiring and promotion processes, with clear criteria and support for professional growth. Advancement is based on merit, readiness, and leadership potential, and employees are encouraged to pursue new roles through individualized development plans.
- **Inclusive Leadership Development:** Targeted leadership development programs are designed to prepare high-potential employees from all backgrounds for supervisory and management positions. These programs emphasize emotional intelligence, cultural competency, and equity-informed leadership practices.

### Resources Utilized:

- **Budgeted Training Funds:** Allocated annually to support employee participation in workshops, seminars, and certification programs.
- **Human Resources & PACE Unit Support:** These teams help identify, coordinate, and communicate development opportunities across the department.
- **External Partnerships:** Collaborations with academic institutions, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Women in Law Enforcement organizations, and other affinity-based groups support diverse participation in leadership pipelines.

Through these efforts, MCSO works to build an equitable workforce that reflects the community it serves and provides all employees with the opportunity to thrive professionally.

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?**

In the formulation of the MCSO Strategic Plan, which helped develop the agency's 2026 operating and capital budget request, supervisors representing both sworn personnel (deputy sheriffs) and non-sworn staff (correctional officers, civilian, and administrative support) were solicited and encouraged to provide their insights and recommendations. These supervisors contributed perspectives on strategies to promote workforce growth and retention, enhance educational initiatives for staff and the community, and ensure the agency's operations evolve in alignment with the changing needs of the community served. In preparing their responses, supervisors engaged with their respective teams to incorporate a broad range of viewpoints. The outcome was a comprehensive and well-substantiated strategic plan, with goals and objectives that align seamlessly with the overarching equity and diversity objectives of Milwaukee County government.

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

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) collaborates closely with the Milwaukee County Procurement Division and consults with partner agencies to ensure full compliance with procurement equity requirements. MCSO benefits from enhancements made to countywide contract tracking systems, which support greater transparency and accountability. The agency has actively engaged existing vendors to ensure adherence to all applicable regulations. For example, the contract with ICSolutions—MCSO's provider of occupant communication services—includes specific language

requiring all respondents to make active and aggressive efforts to support the participation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) in MCSO procurements.

In addition to major vendors, MCSO contracts with several smaller minority- and women-owned businesses. These include Anthony Holloway, the Jail's barber, as well as external printing and advertising vendors such as Great Impressions and the *Milwaukee Community Journal*, as well as Eulopia Family Services that provides in-person counseling and group counseling Services on site at the Criminal Justice Facility (CJF) to occupants experiencing incarceration for the first time. MCSO is currently in the process of reviewing and renewing multiple contracts approaching expiration to ensure ongoing compliance and alignment with Milwaukee County's equity goals.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2: BRIDGE THE GAP

- 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)?**

The leadership and community engagement staff of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office engage daily with members of our community to determine their expectations and desires related to agency funding. Additionally, the agency fields numerous requests daily from residents and elected officials seeking services within MCSO's patrol jurisdiction, which evidence the need for an appropriately resourced agency. MCSO Sheriff Denita Ball has hosted a town hall meeting "A Year in Review", where she reflected on her first year in office and how MCSO is moving ahead. MCSO makes an annual budget presentation to the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force and receives feedback from participants. MCSO participates in the town hall meeting held by the County Executive and County Supervisors.

- 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.**

Two specific examples would be the MCSO's mental health treatment efforts in the Milwaukee County Jail, and the agency's formation of a neighborhood watch-like program with residents in communities surrounding or adjacent to Milwaukee County parks. In both cases, an examination of data provided by the MCSO's Detention Services, Police Services and Investigative Services bureaus, as well as information shared by NGOs in the Greater Milwaukee Community, the MCSO was compelled to direct limited resources to creating a program that helped first-time incarcerated jail occupants better adapt to incarceration, address their mental and emotional health challenges, and to reduce the likelihood of recidivism among jail occupants. In the case, of county parks, the MCSO used response data and information -both formal and informal- shared by community and neighborhood groups to determine how best to partner with those groups and neighbors to mitigate and reduce incidents of violence in parks. The "tool" by which the MCSO is accomplishing this goal is a neighborhood-watch-like group to which the MCSO can share close-to-real-time updates with community groups and concerned neighborhood leaders about staff deployment, incident responses, and more. The group also allows the MCSO to pre-empt violent incidents by gathering neighborhood leaders and advising them on preventative educational measures.

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

As a law enforcement agency, MCSO's distribution of resources is regulated by state statutory mandates requiring coverage of a specific patrol and security footprint. This footprint has been

supplemented by the County Board through allocations of resources specific to other operating areas, such as the parks and the airport. Additionally, MCSO must provide a consistently high level of service at institutions serving the public, including the Milwaukee County Jail and Milwaukee County Courthouse Complex. MCSO is forbidden by law from differentiating service delivery based on the racial identity or economic status of individuals in the areas we serve. MCSO recognizes the importance of establishing trust, partnership, and communication avenues with communities historically marginalized or mistreated by the criminal justice system. Additionally, MCSO recognizes that communities which have endured racial discrimination have often been disproportionately impacted by public health crises, including our present public health crisis of gun violence. In turn, MCSO has deployed resources in numbers sufficient to maintain an appropriately high and consistent level of service wherever it is most required.

**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?**

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

MCSO is highly cognizant of our role as a partner with Milwaukee County network of social and human services, collectively characterized by their commitment to “no wrong door” for public access. In 2021 MCSO began working with the Behavioral Health Division to establish a Crisis Assessment and Response Team (CART). This team works together to respond to public safety and mental health emergencies in a manner that minimizes that likelihood of an institutional or carceral outcome. This type of team has been adopted with great success at the Milwaukee Police Department and the West Allis Police Department. MCSO also works with DHHS Housing Division to find shelters for housing-insecure individuals whom MCSO works with all agencies within the County in some capacity. MCSO provides security services in the Courthouse Complex, Airport, Zoo, Vel R. Phillips Youth and Family Center, Parks, County Executive, County Supervisors, Courts, etc. MCSO is in constant contact with other departments and adjusts resources as needed by those departments.

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

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

MCSO is a data-driven organization that prioritizes the professional analysis of trends impacting the deployment of agency resources. Accordingly, MCSO participates in public health-centered inter-agency coordinating committees including VR-PHAST, OD-PHAST, the Community Justice Council, and the Milwaukee Police Department weekly non-fatal shooting review to identify resource needs in the communities we serve. Data pertinent to MCSO’s jurisdiction is used to inform operational deployments of resources. It is also used to inform budgetary requests, for positions, equipment, and funding support, that will ensure availability of the resources required to efficiently and effectively meet all needs identified through this analytic process.

MCSO staffs an Office of Public Affairs and Community Engagement (PACE) whose members pursue, maintain, and grow relationships with residents, workers and visitors in/to Milwaukee County –largely through nonprofit, faith-based, and Milwaukee County Parks-affiliated groups– to educate agency stakeholders on the nature and scope of our work, find common ground towards crime reduction, and educate agency members on how to improve services to the community. Additionally, PACE focuses on (and will continue to do so in FY26) improving our partnerships with Community Business Development Partners (CBDP) and the Office of Equity. In summary, MCSO will continue to engage the public for input and, where appropriate, adapt and modify our services accordingly

balance and align with stakeholders' public safety needs and expectations.

The PACE Unit hosted or co-hosted approximately 50 significant community events and maintained its annual practice of participating more broadly in 70-plus community events, typically hosted by municipal governments, the Milwaukee County Parks Department, and NGO community groups.

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

To mitigate unintended consequences, we will work closely with community partners, maintain full engagement in data-based public health strategies that help us identify appropriate prioritization for resource allocation, and monitor and make changes to improve the delivery of our services.

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

MCSO is forbidden by law from differentiating service delivery based on the racial identity or economic status of individuals in the areas we serve. MCSO recognizes the importance of establishing trust, partnership, and communication avenues with communities historically marginalized or mistreated by the criminal justice system. Additionally, MCSO recognizes that communities which have endured racial discrimination have often been disproportionately impacted by public health crises, including our present public health crisis of gun violence. In turn, MCSO has deployed resources in numbers sufficient to maintain an appropriately high and consistent level of service wherever it is most required.

### 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?

Body Scanner, CJF Cell 17 Retrofit, CJF Lighting Renovations and reclassify 6.0 FTE Clerical Assistant to 6.0 FTE Clerical Specialist Sheriff

1. A full body scanner can be used as an important tool to help ensure that heroin and other opioids do not make it into the jail and therefore, avoid drug trafficking, overdose deaths, and other unintended consequences. This project will mitigate the risk of heroin and other opioids getting into the jail which may cause drug trafficking, overdose deaths, violent behavior, medical emergencies, and other unintended consequences. The greatest advantage of body scanning technology is the ability to discover contraband hidden under an individual's clothes and/or concealed in their body cavities without the need for them to undress in front of employees. The body scanner cost is \$310,749.
2. This capital project is for retrofitting existing holding cell #17 in the Booking Room into two suicide watch observation cells. This is a recommendation from the Creative Corrections, Correctional Management Review Milwaukee County Jail dated October 2024 per file # 24-960. Creating observation cells provides a clear view to staff of the occupants in crisis until they can be moved to a safe suicide watch cell. This improves safety and security at the Milwaukee County Jail (MCJ) for the occupants and staff. This would avoid a potential death in custody.

This project will result in cost savings by reducing unscheduled hospital transport that result from self-harming or occupant on occupant assaults, in which deputies and correctional officers must provide escorts. This will minimize and mitigate overtime expenditure. The retrofitting of the holding cell# 17 in the booking room will minimize the County's risk of litigation due to the above-mentioned. (death in custody). The WC030701 CJF -Holding Cell Retrofit cost \$379,980.

3. This capital project is rewiring existing cell lighting to officer 's workstation (current technology). This is a recommendation from the Creative Corrections, Correctional Management Review Milwaukee County Jail dated October 2024 per file # 24-960. This is also a recommendation from the Department of Corrections State Jail Inspector.

The occupants currently control the lighting in their assigned cells, which has prohibited staff from having a clear view of the occupants. Occupants tamper with the light fixtures by sticking metal objects into the fixture, causing circuit breaker issues and resulting in maintenance service calls. Tampering with light fixtures can result in electrocution.

This capital project will remove all light switches from the cells that have the light fixture inside them, which currently provides the occupants full control of their cell lighting and tying into the current computerized door locking system (Master Control for staff control).

The quote for renovating 25 cells from Johnson Control Inc. from February 21, 2025, is \$1,982,130.

4. Reclassify six (6) Clerical Assistant positions to Clerical Specialists. 2.0 FTE in 4082 Traffic and 4.0 FTE

in 4086 Civil Process. Clerical Assistant positions in 4082 Traffic and 4086 Civil Process are positions that takes a high degree of acuity to complete the assigned tasks. It is not a simple data entry position. Skills needed include but are not limited to are cashiering/accounting, money handling, customers service, complex data entry, and problem solving/conflict resolution. We are currently having a very challenging time recruiting new employee's and retaining current employees due to the low pay associated with the Clerical Assistant position. The cost is \$10,765.

5. Add 1.0 FTE CO Captain in 4038 CJF. We are seeking a Security Director similar to the CRC's. This position would be at the captain level, however, instead of a Deputy Director/Assistant Superintendent. The cost is \$108,709.

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

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office is deeply committed to ensuring equity in access to all agency services. MCSO has worked to build out our capacity to provide services in multiple languages. For instance, we employ three deputy sheriffs within a unique employment classification requiring bilingual abilities, to facilitate translation services in the field and assist residents who do not speak English in accessing law enforcement support. More intensive remote interpretive services, including for the jail, are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in 230+ languages through the Certified Languages program. Similarly, MCSO has made all forms available in multiple languages including Spanish and Hmong and has also built out our capacity to provide materials in Braille for the visually impaired members of the public. Externally, the MCSO Public Affairs & Community Engagement Unit deliberately plans and co-hosts community events with culturally diverse stakeholder groups to facilitate stronger working relationships between our agency and the community we serve and to better educate stakeholders in both manners and languages that they are comfortable with about the services this agency is responsible for.



## 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.

# 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 too the 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.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**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](mailto: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

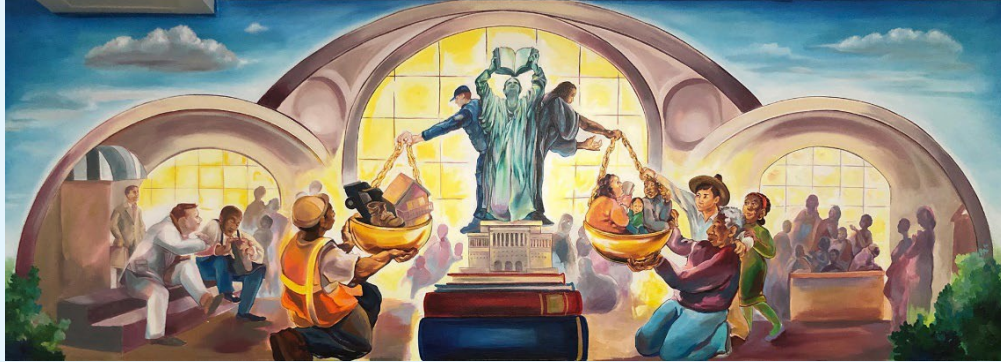
# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MODEL



	<b>INFORM</b> 	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>COLLABORATE</b> 	<b>EMPOWER/LEAD</b> 
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.

© IAP2 International Federation 2018. All rights reserved. 20181112\_v1

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](https://county.milwaukee.gov/vision)