

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



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.



RACIAL EQUITY BUDGET TOOL

Date Submitted: July 2024

Department: Transportation – Director’s Office & Fleet Management

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?

DIRECTOR’S OFFICE

For 2026, the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) continues to prioritize the attraction and retention of a diverse and inclusive workforce as a core strategic objective. With one of the largest operating budgets in the County, MCDOT leverages both centralized and division-specific initiatives to ensure equitable hiring and representation across all departments.

All MCDOT divisions, except for the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS), receives direct support from Milwaukee County’s Human Resources Recruitment Division to fill vacancies when they arise.

Recruitment efforts include distributing job announcements through targeted online platforms, social media channels, and professional associations that support diversity in the transportation and public service sectors. As part of a continuous improvement process, job descriptions and postings are regularly reviewed to identify and remove potential barriers that may discourage applicants from underrepresented groups. When applicants reach the interview stage of the hiring process, interview panels are intentionally composed of diverse staff to foster equitable candidate evaluations and minimize bias in the selection processes.

The Director’s Office continues to lead department-wide diversity outreach by encouraging divisions to highlight their workforce’s diversity through various communication channels, including community events, media campaigns, and digital engagement. A Public Relations and Marketing position, established in 2025, is now fully operational and plays a key role in advancing MCDOT’s inclusion and visibility initiatives.

Associated costs for these activities are absorbed within each division’s operating budget. Expenses include fees for job postings, memberships in professional diversity organizations, targeted messaging campaigns, and community outreach materials. These investments are essential to ensuring MCDOT remains a competitive and inclusive employer within Milwaukee County.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

In recent years, Fleet Management has adopted a strategic approach to workforce development by hiring less experienced candidates—many of whom come from minority backgrounds—into assistant mechanic positions. These individuals are trained in-house through mentorship that pairs them with our seasoned lead mechanics, enabling hands-on learning and skill development.

Building on this initiative, in 2025 Fleet Management began partnering with local high schools to introduce students to potential career opportunities. These outreach efforts have been met with enthusiastic responses from students and educators alike. Given their success, these school visits will continue into 2026 as part of our broader commitment to community engagement and talent pipeline development.

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?

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

In 2026, the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) remains committed to promoting workforce equity through robust professional development and advancement opportunities. Although the Director's Office staff is small, it actively pursues training and skill-building initiatives to support continuous learning and growth. Staff regularly utilize Milwaukee County's Learning Management System (LMS), along with state and federal training platforms, to access development resources that align with their roles and long-term career goals.

The Director's Office continues to champion division-specific training opportunities that address unique operational and regulatory needs. Divisions are encouraged to engage with industry trade associations, attend professional conferences, and participate in targeted training programs—locally, regionally, and nationally. A notable example includes staff responsible for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) compliance, who attend specialized training at the FTA's regional office in Illinois to remain current with federal program requirements.

MCDOT places strong emphasis on internal career mobility as a key component of its equity strategy. The Director's Office leads by example in ensuring that promotional opportunities are equitably assessed and prioritized internally before recruiting externally. This approach fosters a culture of retention, recognizes institutional knowledge, and provides clear pathways for professional advancement within the department.

Resources used to support these efforts include division-level operating budgets, County-sponsored professional development platforms, memberships in trade and professional organizations, and occasional grant-funded training initiatives. These investments are essential in cultivating a diverse, skilled, and future-ready workforce that reflects the values and priorities of Milwaukee County.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

Fleet Management is committed to supporting the success and productivity of our mechanics and assistant mechanics. To help reduce out-of-pocket expenses for employees, we invest in shared shop tools at our locations. This approach not only lowers the financial barrier to entering the field but also enhances overall efficiency and job readiness.

Additionally, we actively encourage our staff to take advantage of free training opportunities offered through Milwaukee County and our industry partners. These programs provide valuable skill development and contribute to a more knowledgeable and capable workforce.

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?

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

In 2026, MCDOT continues to recognize the critical value of engaging a diverse group of frontline employees to inform decision-making, particularly regarding proposed budget changes and operational improvements. The Director's Office encourages each division to design and participate in program-level activities that respond to the unique needs of their work areas and promote the professional advancement of their workforces.

Within the Director's Office, weekly team meetings serve as a platform to review initiatives, share project updates, and coordinate deliverables. In parallel, senior department leadership convenes on a bi-monthly basis to align division-level planning with broader departmental goals and County priorities, including budget development.

Recognizing the diversity of roles and responsibilities across MCDOT, the Director's Office empowers divisions to organize smaller, cross-functional staff groups to gather direct input from frontline employees. These group sessions provide leadership with critical insights into what is working well, where improvements are needed, and what resources are required. This feedback is then incorporated into the budgeting process throughout the year, ensuring that operational needs and workforce perspectives are reflected in funding decisions.

To enhance communication and engagement, the Director's Office launched an internal, employee-centered newsletter in the first quarter of 2025. The newsletter continues in 2026 as a key tool for increasing transparency, highlighting staff contributions across divisions, sharing County-wide resources, and soliciting ongoing input from employees. It is distributed both electronically and can easily be made available in print to ensure accessibility for all staff, regardless of work location or schedule.

These initiatives reinforce MCDOT's commitment to inclusive and informed decision-making, grounded in the perspectives and experiences of the employees who directly deliver services to the community.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

Fleet Management's budget is closely aligned with the operational needs of the user departments we support. As such, there is limited discretion in how resources are allocated, as funding is primarily driven by the specific service requirements and priorities of those departments.

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

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

All divisions within the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) actively support the tracking of contracts awarded to minority-owned and women-owned businesses. This effort is conducted in partnership with Milwaukee County's Office of Economic Inclusion (OEI), which centrally collects and monitors data on Disadvantaged and Targeted Business Enterprise (DBE/TBE) participation. DBE/TBE categories include disadvantaged, minority-owned, and women-owned firms, in alignment with both County and federal equity standards.

As a recipient of federal transportation funding, MCDOT and its divisions are also subject to the U.S. Department of Transportation's DBE program requirements. These include mandatory reporting on both race-conscious and race-neutral participation in contracts, purchases, and federally assisted projects.

The Director's Office provides oversight and ensures compliance across applicable divisions by monitoring progress toward established goals and validating documentation of good faith efforts where specific participation targets are not met. While OEI maintains the official data and reporting responsibilities, MCDOT works collaboratively to ensure transparency and accountability in the procurement process.

At this time, contract participation percentages by business category are tracked and published by OEI. The Director's Office defers to OEI for the most current and detailed reporting figures.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

Fleet Management does not directly administer any contracts. All procurement activities are handled through formal processes, including sealed bids, Requests for Proposals (RFPs), or sourcing through joint purchasing agreements. This ensures compliance with procurement regulations and promotes transparency and cost-effectiveness.

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)?

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

The MCDOT remains committed to engaging diverse service users and key stakeholders to inform decisions about changes in funding levels for transportation-related services. Staff from the Director's Office, along with leadership from all divisions, regularly participate in public meetings, town halls, and community forums held in collaboration with the Office of the County Executive and the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. These meetings are hosted in various municipalities across the county to ensure broad geographic and demographic representation.

During these forums, MCDOT staff respond to community questions and concerns related to planned infrastructure projects, transportation access and equity, safety, and overall service quality. These conversations offer valuable insights into residents' experiences and expectations, particularly in historically underserved neighborhoods. Community input gathered during these engagements directly informs departmental priorities and supports data-driven decision-making related to budget requests and service funding allocations.

A key area of ongoing focus for the Director's Office is the countywide Complete Communities Transportation Planning Project, which addresses reckless driving and unsafe multimodal transportation practices across all 19 municipalities. Public input has played a critical role in identifying high-risk areas, informing targeted strategies around infrastructure improvements, enforcement, education, and equity-driven investments.

To ensure engagement is not limited to one-time events, MCDOT views community dialogue as an ongoing process. In 2026, MCDOT continues to expand outreach methods to ensure the inclusion of diverse voices—especially from communities most affected by transportation challenges—and to maintain transparency around how community feedback shapes funding and service delivery decisions.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

Fleet Management's budget is closely aligned with the operational needs of the user departments we support. Accordingly, there is limited discretion in how resources are allocated, since funding levels are largely determined by the specific service requirements and priorities communicated by these departments.

While Fleet Management does not directly engage with the broader public or service users in diverse communities, we do maintain regular communication and collaboration with key departmental stakeholders throughout the budget development process. These discussions typically occur during internal planning meetings, operational reviews, and interdepartmental coordination sessions. Input from these user departments—who in turn represent the needs of the communities they serve—informs decisions regarding service levels, fleet needs, and associated budgetary requirements.

Since the division operates as a support function, any changes in funding levels are primarily driven by the evolving operational demands of the departments served, rather than direct community input to Fleet Management itself.

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.

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

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

MCDOT) continues to apply demographic and economic data to guide equitable resource distribution and inform strategic funding decisions. The department relies on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), and internally collected datasets to assess the potential benefits and impacts of projects and services on low-income, minority, and underserved populations across the County.

MCTS, as part of its Title VI compliance under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), uses census tract-level data—including racial composition, income levels, and population density—to conduct equity analyses on all service and fare changes. For instance, in 2025, MCTS evaluated proposed changes to its bus network and found that several routes primarily served low-income and minority riders. As a result, service adjustments were made to preserve access to employment hubs, medical centers, and educational institutions in these communities, ensuring that transit-dependent populations were not disproportionately affected.

The Highway Maintenance Division uses demographic data to guide recruitment strategies aimed at communities with high unemployment and underrepresentation in public-sector employment. This data also informs the distribution of maintenance resources and equipment, prioritizing areas with infrastructure deficits and limited transportation access.

The Director's Office plays an oversight role in ensuring that racial equity remains central to departmental policy. This includes monitoring the implementation of Title VI analysis for fare and service adjustments, using data such as residential and employment density, route-level ridership, and transit access by census tract. For example, when evaluating fare structure changes, this information helps ensure that low-income riders would not be disproportionately impacted by any increases, preserving affordability and access to essential services.

Despite these advances, MCDOT recognizes several ongoing data gaps that must be addressed to deepen its equity impact. More granular and real-time demographic data—particularly regarding disability status, limited English proficiency, and neighborhood-level income—would enhance the precision of equity assessments. In addition, there is a need for more systematic collection and integration of qualitative data, such as community feedback and lived experiences, which provide critical context not always captured by quantitative measures. Data on non-motorized modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, also remains limited, creating challenges in understanding multimodal equity across the County. Furthermore, disparities sometimes occur within or between census tracts, making it difficult to target resources precisely using current geographic data structures.

MCDOT remains committed to closing these data gaps in partnership with the Office of Economic Inclusion (OEI), SEWRPC, and community-based organizations. By continuing to integrate diverse data sources and community voices into its decision-making processes, MCDOT is working to ensure that transportation investments across Milwaukee County reflect the principles of equity, accessibility, and inclusion.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

While Fleet Management does not independently allocate resources, it does align services with the needs of user departments, many of which use demographic and economic data to guide their priorities.

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?

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

MCDOT continues to prioritize cross-departmental and intergovernmental collaboration as a core element of its operational and budgetary approach. By intentionally working beyond traditional departmental boundaries, MCDOT is better positioned to enhance access to transportation services, address public safety challenges, and deliver equitable infrastructure improvements to all Milwaukee County residents.

One highlight of MCDOT's collaborative work in 2026 is the continued advancement of the Complete Communities Transportation Planning Project, which focuses on combating reckless driving and improving multimodal safety across all 19 municipalities within Milwaukee County. The Director's Office convenes and coordinates with municipal public works and planning departments, local law enforcement agencies, elected officials, and community stakeholders to identify high-risk areas, share data, align funding strategies, and implement evidence-based safety improvements. These coordinated efforts support a shared goal of creating safer, more accessible roadways—especially in communities disproportionately impacted by traffic violence and infrastructure disinvestment.

In addition to Complete Communities coordination, MCDOT works closely with the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to provide transportation support for the Housing First initiative, enabling access to emergency housing for vulnerable populations. The department also partners with the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to support emergency response operations, including the maintenance of critical fleet vehicles and equipment that contribute to public safety countywide.

Beyond internal County partnerships, MCDOT regularly collaborates with regional agencies, local municipalities, and state and federal partners on the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects. These efforts include initiatives that strengthen regional mobility and equity. By leveraging shared resources and aligning objectives, MCDOT is able to advance high-impact projects that serve diverse communities while avoiding duplication of efforts.

Transportation is deeply interconnected with housing stability, economic mobility, healthcare access, and overall well-being. MCDOT's work to make streets safer—especially in communities where reckless driving has disproportionately harmed residents—directly supports this vision. Whether through infrastructure improvements, equitable service delivery, or data-informed safety strategies, these partnerships allow MCDOT to deploy resources where they are needed most.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

Fleet Management collaborates closely with all user departments to optimize fleet size and reduce operating costs. By right-sizing fleets and improving vehicle utilization, Fleet Management help departments lower their expenses, allowing them to redirect resources toward improving service quality and expanding public access. These efforts support more efficient, coordinated service delivery across County operations.

- 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?**
 - b. What will your department do to mitigate unintended consequences resulting from your proposed budget changes?**
 - c. What are the demographic impacts of any fines and fees assessed by your department? Are there disproportionate impacts on any particular groups?**

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

The Director's Office oversees administrative functions, transportation planning, and the implementation of various state and federally supported programs. For 2026, the Director's Office budget remains stable, with no direct impact on the County's tax levy. This is largely maintained through the continued management of the freeway towing services contract and division cross-charges. However, external fiscal pressures pose potential risks to transportation services, particularly those relied upon by disadvantaged communities.

One of the most serious concerns is the potential long-term sustainability of MCTS. In 2028 the agency is projected to hit a fiscal cliff. MCDOT acknowledges that diminished or unstable support for transit services may pose a significant burden on transit-dependent populations, many of whom are low-income, elderly, disabled, or residents of communities of color.

To understand and prepare for these potential impacts, the Director's Office conducts ongoing analysis using demographic, ridership, and community engagement data. Focus is placed on assessing how service reductions, fare adjustments, or deferred infrastructure improvements may affect access to employment, education, and healthcare for disadvantaged populations. This analysis is informed by census tract-level data, MCTS ridership studies, and feedback from ongoing outreach with residents and community partners.

In summary, while the Director's Office budget remains steady in 2026, potential funding shifts at the federal and state level present risks that could have disproportionate impacts on Milwaukee County's most vulnerable residents. MCDOT's mitigation strategy centers on proactive advocacy, targeted outreach, and prioritization of equity in service delivery. The Director's Office is committed to working with regional and state policymakers to advocate for dedicated, stable transit funding that does not place additional strain on disadvantaged communities. In parallel, applicable divisions within the department will continue to engage residents directly—particularly those from underserved neighborhoods—when identifying areas in need of infrastructure investment, safety improvements, and transit accessibility enhancements.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

Fleet Management operates as an internal service department and does not provide direct services to the public. As such, budget changes are not expected to have direct demographic impacts on disadvantaged communities.

The division focuses on helping user departments reduce fleet-related costs through optimization and efficiency. This indirectly benefits the public—especially disadvantaged communities—by enabling departments to reallocate savings toward frontline services. No formal demographic analysis was conducted, but departmental feedback is relied upon to assess impact.

To prevent service disruptions, Fleet Management collaborates closely with departments during the fleet process to ensure vehicle availability meets operational needs. We also maintain flexible scheduling and maintenance to minimize downtime.

[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?

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

If additional funding were allocated to MCDOT, the Director's Office would prioritize initiatives aimed at community outreach, education, and relationship-building as central strategies for addressing equity and inclusion. The Director's Office recognizes that meaningful engagement with diverse community stakeholders is essential for ensuring that transportation planning and services reflect the needs of all Milwaukee County residents, particularly those from historically underserved populations.

The proposed project would involve expanding outreach efforts to include a broader range of municipalities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, educational institutions, religious organizations, and other community groups with a vested interest in transportation issues. This outreach would be designed to facilitate two-way communication, gather community input, and increase awareness of available resources and services within the County's transportation system. Additionally, this initiative would help to inform residents about key transportation planning processes, safety initiatives, and available transit services.

The cost for this initiative would vary based on the level of funding and scope of activities but is estimated to range from several thousand dollars for smaller outreach efforts (e.g., digital materials and events) to approximately \$100,000 for larger-scale initiatives involving dedicated staffing, comprehensive engagement efforts, and the production of educational resources.

The intended outcome of this investment would be a more inclusive and informed community, where residents—especially those from disadvantaged or marginalized groups—are actively involved in transportation planning processes and have improved access to information about the County's services. This, in turn, would contribute to better service delivery, increased trust in County transportation programs, and more equitable outcomes for all residents.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

If additional funding were provided to address equity, Fleet Management would prioritize creating a paid internship program targeting mechanics, welders, and body shop technicians. This program would provide hands-on training and mentorship while supplying all necessary tools, lowering financial barriers to entry for underrepresented and economically disadvantaged individuals.

Estimated costs would be approximately \$20,000 per intern annually, covering wages, tools, and training materials.

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

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

The Director's Office emphasizes accessibility for individuals with disabilities, particularly exceeding the minimum standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The department ensures that transportation services and infrastructure are fully accessible to individuals with mobility impairments, visual or hearing disabilities, and other accessibility needs. This includes ensuring ADA-compliant facilities, transit vehicles, and accessible routes, as well as increased outreach to underserved communities through community events.

To address multilingual needs, the Director's Office ensures that communication efforts, including public notices, service updates, and outreach materials, are made available in a variety of languages to accommodate the linguistic diversity of the County. This includes not only written translations but also the provision of interpreters at public meetings and events when needed and possible. Additionally, the department works closely with community organizations and advocacy groups to ensure that multilingual residents have equal access to information about transportation services, safety initiatives, and public engagement opportunities.

By incorporating these strategies, the Director's Office aims to reduce communication and accessibility barriers, allowing all residents—regardless of language, ability, or background—to engage meaningfully with Milwaukee County's transportation system.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

Fleet Management actively works to remove barriers by prioritizing the hiring and in-house training of less experienced and minority candidates. Additionally, outreach to local high schools, including those serving diverse communities, aims to broaden career awareness and access to skilled trades.

While Fleet Management does not directly provide multilingual services to the public, it does collaborate with user departments that do, ensuring effective communication and accessibility through their established channels



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 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.

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 Performance, Strategy and Budget and the County Board.

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.

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](#)

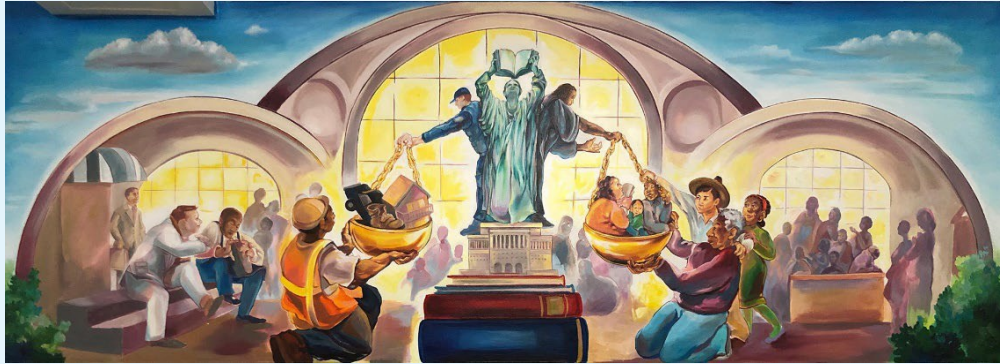
APPENDIX D

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