



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

RACIAL EQUITY



INCORPORATED
1835

BUDGET TOOL

2027 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 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.

Racism (not race) is a leading indicator of health because it structures access to opportunity like housing, education, employment, food, safety, and care. When access to opportunity is structured unequally, health outcomes follow that pattern. Other forms of oppression (i.e., ableism, sexism, etc.) operate through similar pathways, and when they intersect with racism, the impact on health compounds.

When we examine and correct the structural barriers created by racism, such as inequitable housing policy, underinvestment in neighborhoods, food apartheid, or unequal access to capital, we are also strengthening the infrastructure that also affects women, people with disabilities, older adults, Veterans, immigrants, and others who face systemic barriers in Milwaukee County.

The Racial Equity Budget Tool (REBT) enables departments to critically assess the impacts of budget decisions. The tool is structured around Milwaukee County's strategic focus areas to help departments and decision makers be better stewards of public resources.

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. Creating 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 2027 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.



**MILWA
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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 and Community Engagement (PACE) Unit leads the agency's recruitment strategy, with a concentrated emphasis on engaging and attracting candidates from diverse communities throughout Milwaukee County.

Central to these efforts is the agency's recruitment team, which is led by PACE and consists of more than a dozen MCSO members representing the agency's various divisions. This diverse team conducts hands-on recruitment efforts throughout Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest, traveling as far as Illinois and Michigan to represent MCSO at career fairs, hiring events, and other recruitment-related activities.

Closer to home, the MCSO recruitment team actively campaigns on college campuses and at cultural festivals throughout Wisconsin. The team also regularly participates in career fairs and hiring events facilitated by government agencies and public-private partnerships.

Additionally, although to a lesser extent, MCSO's highly regarded "real-time" hiring event series remains an important component of the agency's recruitment efforts. This streamlined, on-site recruitment model allows applicants to complete multiple stages of the hiring process during a single visit and potentially receive a conditional offer of employment. These events bring members of the agency's recruitment team directly into some of Milwaukee County's most diverse residential communities to recruit new employees.

Both the direct, hands-on work of the MCSO recruitment team and the real-time hiring events are promoted through an integrated media campaign that uses traditional and digital advertising, along with earned media coverage.

To support retention and workplace inclusion, MCSO also operates a comprehensive Peer Support Program. This initiative promotes employee well-being, fosters a culture of mutual support, and enhances career development by reinforcing a sense of belonging and encouraging work-life balance.

The annual cost of PACE recruitment activities, including advertising, communications equipment, tangible promotional materials, and the time worked by members of the extended recruitment team, is estimated at \$60,000. Advertising represents a significant portion of this cost. This amount is more than double PACE's 2026 budget, which was reduced by half from approximately \$53,000 to \$55,000 per year allocated to PACE during at least the five preceding years.

Some PACE recruitment costs have been offset by community partners that co-host public-facing events and absorb certain production expenses. However, relying on the continued financial participation of community partners is neither a sound fiscal strategy nor a sustainable budgeting practice.

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 is committed to advancing equity within its workforce through intentional professional development and career advancement initiatives. These efforts are designed to ensure that all employees, regardless of their 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 employees have access to ongoing professional development opportunities, including leadership training, technical certifications, and specialized law enforcement education. Training opportunities are communicated broadly and proactively to encourage inclusive participation, including participation by employees from historically underrepresented groups.

MCSO also supports tuition reimbursement and educational advancement. 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 reduce financial barriers to continuing education.

The agency also maintains transparent internal hiring and promotion pathways with clearly established criteria and support for professional growth. Advancement is based on merit, readiness, and leadership potential. Employees are encouraged to pursue new roles through individualized professional development plans.

In addition, 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 used to support these opportunities include budgeted training funds allocated annually for workshops, seminars, certification programs, and other professional development activities. Human Resources and the PACE Unit also assist with identifying, coordinating, and communicating development opportunities throughout the department.

External partnerships further support these efforts. MCSO works with academic institutions, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), women in law enforcement organizations, and other affinity-based groups to support diverse participation in professional and leadership development pipelines.

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

3. 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?

Development of MCSO's Operating and Capital Budgets is a collaborative process involving the entire agency. Each division prepares and submits its budget requests to Fiscal Operations,

which consolidates the information and forwards a comprehensive budget package to Administration.

Agency leaders maintain offices within their respective budgeted units, enabling consistent interaction with employees and regular feedback regarding operational needs.

MCSO's open-door policy ensures that frontline employees have direct access to leadership to share ideas, raise concerns, and discuss operational challenges. This ongoing communication helps the agency develop a clearer understanding of how personnel and operational costs are distributed throughout the year and how those expenses should be incorporated into the final operating budget request.

The result is a comprehensive and well-substantiated strategic plan that establishes clear goals and objectives aligned with Milwaukee County's broader commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity.

This collaborative and transparent approach supports the development of a strategic framework grounded in frontline experience, responsive to community priorities, and consistent with countywide equity principles.

4. Are you tracking contracts with minority- and women-owned businesses? If yes, please share percentages of each. If not, why not?

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office works closely with the Milwaukee County Procurement Division and consults with partner agencies to ensure compliance with applicable procurement equity requirements.

MCSO benefits from enhancements made to countywide contract-tracking systems, which support increased transparency and accountability. The agency has also actively engaged its existing vendors to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations.

For example, the contract with ICSolutions, MCSO's provider of occupant communication services, includes specific language requiring respondents to make active and aggressive efforts to support the participation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in MCSO procurement opportunities.

In addition to its major vendors, MCSO contracts with several smaller minority- and women-owned businesses. These include Anthony Holloway, the Jail's barber; external printing and advertising vendors such as Great Impressions and the Milwaukee Community Journal; and Eulopia Family Services.

Eulopia Family Services provides on-site individual and group counseling at the Criminal Justice Facility to occupants experiencing incarceration for the first time.

MCSO continually reviews contracts approaching expiration to ensure ongoing compliance with procurement requirements and alignment with Milwaukee County's equity goals.

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?

The leadership and community engagement staff of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office interact daily with community members to better understand their expectations and priorities regarding agency services and funding.

The agency also receives numerous requests from residents and elected officials seeking services within MCSO's patrol jurisdiction. These requests demonstrate the need and urgency for an appropriately resourced Sheriff's Office.

MCSO Sheriff Denita Ball has hosted multiple town hall meetings during which she has discussed the agency's accomplishments and challenges, directly addressed community concerns, and committed to expanding MCSO's collaborative community engagement efforts.

MCSO also makes an annual budget presentation to the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force and receives feedback from its participants.

In addition, MCSO participates in town hall meetings hosted by the County Executive and members of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2: BRIDGE THE GAP

6. Describe ways in which demographic and economic data were used to prioritize resource distribution.

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

Two specific examples include MCSO's mental health treatment efforts within the Milwaukee County Jail and the agency's organized working relationships with more than a dozen grassroots organizations.

These organizations partner with MCSO to monitor public spaces, particularly Milwaukee County parks and the residential streets surrounding those parks. They also help maintain open channels of communication among nongovernmental organizations, residents, and MCSO.

This information helps the agency make more informed enforcement and resource-deployment decisions in those areas.

Based on an examination of data provided by MCSO's Detention Services, Police Services, and Investigative Services bureaus, as well as information shared by nongovernmental organizations throughout the Greater Milwaukee community, MCSO secured Crisis Intervention Partners training for Milwaukee County Jail staff.

The training helped employees learn to more effectively de-escalate situations involving jail occupants experiencing mental or emotional health challenges.

Milwaukee County Jail also collaborated with the Milwaukee Police Department to prioritize individuals entering custody while experiencing a crisis. The booking process was streamlined so these individuals could be seen promptly by medical and mental health professionals, complete the booking process within one hour, be classified, and receive an appropriate housing assignment.

Within Milwaukee County parks, MCSO uses response data and information shared formally and informally by community and neighborhood groups to determine how best to partner with those organizations and nearby residents to mitigate and reduce incidents of violence.

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 governed by state statutory mandates requiring coverage of a specific patrol and security footprint. The Milwaukee County Board has supplemented this footprint by allocating resources to additional operating areas, including the parks and airport.

MCSO must also provide a consistently high level of service at institutions serving the public, including the Milwaukee County Jail and the Milwaukee County Courthouse Complex.

MCSO is prohibited by law from differentiating the delivery of services based on the racial identity or economic status of individuals within the areas it serves.

However, MCSO recognizes the importance of establishing trust, partnerships, and effective channels of communication with communities that have historically been marginalized or mistreated by the criminal justice system.

MCSO also recognizes that communities that have experienced racial discrimination have often been disproportionately affected by public health crises, including the current public health crisis of gun violence.

Accordingly, MCSO deploys sufficient resources to maintain an appropriately high and consistent level of service wherever those resources are most needed.

7. How does your budget reflect efforts to work across departments to break down silos and maximize access to and quality of services offered? How does this help achieve the vision of equity and health?

MCSO remains highly aware of its role as a key partner within Milwaukee County's network of social and human services, all of which share a commitment to providing "no wrong door" access to members of the public.

In 2021, MCSO collaborated with the Behavioral Health Division to establish the Crisis Assessment and Response Team. CART is a co-response model designed to address public safety and mental health emergencies in ways that reduce the likelihood of institutional or carceral outcomes.

Similar models have been successfully implemented by the Milwaukee Police Department and the West Allis Police Department.

MCSO also works closely with the Department of Health and Human Services Housing Division to assist individuals experiencing housing insecurity and maintains ongoing partnerships with County agencies across a broad range of services.

The Sheriff's Office provides security throughout the Courthouse Complex, Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport, Milwaukee County Zoo, Vel R. Phillips Youth and Family Justice Center, Milwaukee County parks, and the offices of the County Executive, County Board of Supervisors, Courts, and Milwaukee County Transit System.

MCSO remains in continuous communication with these departments and adjusts its resources as operational needs evolve.

These partnerships help maximize access to coordinated services, improve the quality of public services, and support Milwaukee County's broader vision of achieving equity and improving community health.

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

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

MCSO is a data-driven organization that prioritizes professional analysis of trends affecting the deployment of agency resources.

Accordingly, MCSO participates in public health-centered interagency coordinating committees, including VR-PHAST, OD-PHAST, the Community Justice Council, and the Milwaukee Police Department's weekly nonfatal shooting review.

These partnerships help identify resource needs within the communities MCSO serves.

Data relevant to MCSO's jurisdiction is used to inform operational resource deployments. It also supports budget requests for positions, equipment, and funding necessary to ensure that the agency has sufficient resources to efficiently and effectively address the needs identified through this analytical process.

MCSO maintains an Office of Public Affairs and Community Engagement whose members establish, maintain, and strengthen relationships with Milwaukee County residents, employees, and visitors.

This work is conducted largely through nonprofit, faith-based, and Milwaukee County Parks-affiliated organizations.

PACE educates agency stakeholders regarding the nature and scope of MCSO's responsibilities, seeks common ground related to crime reduction, and educates agency members about opportunities to improve community services.

PACE also focuses on improving partnerships with Community Business Development Partners and the Office of Equity and will continue these efforts during FY 2027.

MCSO will continue to seek public input and, when appropriate, adapt and modify its services to balance and align them with stakeholders' public safety needs and expectations.

The PACE Unit hosted or co-hosted approximately 50 significant community events and continued its annual practice of participating more broadly in more than 200 community events.

These events are generally hosted by municipal governments, the Milwaukee County Parks Department, and non-governmental community organizations.

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

To mitigate potential unintended consequences, MCSO will work closely with community partners, maintain full participation in data-based public health strategies that help identify appropriate priorities for resource allocation, and continuously monitor and adjust its operations to improve service delivery.

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

MCSO is prohibited by law from differentiating the delivery of services based on the racial identity or economic status of individuals within the areas it serves.

MCSO recognizes the importance of establishing trust, partnerships, and open channels of communication with communities that have historically been marginalized or mistreated by the criminal justice system.

The agency also recognizes that communities that have experienced racial discrimination have often been disproportionately affected by public health crises, including the current public health crisis of gun violence.

Accordingly, MCSO deploys sufficient resources to maintain an appropriately high and consistent level of service wherever those resources are most needed.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3: INVEST IN EQUITY

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

MCSO would continue to prioritize diverse recruitment efforts to achieve staffing levels that more closely reflect the communities the agency serves.

This effort would include more aggressive and visible recruitment-focused community presentations conducted in formal partnership with credible, place-based non-governmental organizations.

Internally, MCSO would evaluate the creation of a cultural education series for existing agency members.

This series would help employees better understand culturally specific concerns, interests, and needs within the diverse communities served by MCSO.

A stronger understanding of these cultural considerations can foster safer, more peaceful, and more effective interactions between law enforcement personnel and community members.

10. What is your department doing to dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities, including multilingual needs, accessibility barriers, food apartheid, financial empowerment, or other factors affecting the stability and well-being of Milwaukee County residents?

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office is deeply committed to ensuring equitable access to all agency services.

MCSO has expanded its capacity to provide services in multiple languages. For example, the agency employs three deputy sheriffs in a specialized employment classification requiring bilingual abilities.

These deputies facilitate translation services in the field and assist residents who do not speak English in accessing law enforcement services.

More extensive remote interpretation services, including services within the Jail, are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in more than 230 languages through the Certified Languages program.

MCSO has also made its forms available in multiple languages, including Spanish and Hmong, and has expanded its ability to provide materials in Braille for members of the public who are visually impaired.

Externally, the MCSO Public Affairs and Community Engagement Unit deliberately plans and co-hosts community events with culturally diverse stakeholder groups.

These activities help strengthen working relationships between the agency and the communities it serves.

They also allow MCSO to educate stakeholders about the services for which the agency is responsible in formats and languages with which community members are comfortable.



Appendices

Appendix A:
Glossary

Appendix B:
Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix C:
Resources by Strategic Focus Area

Appendix D:
Community Engagement Frameworks

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.*

Historically marginalized 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.*

Food Apartheid: *Inequity in the food system on the basis of race, class, and geography that are the result of discriminatory planning and policy decisions.*

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.

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?

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?

The REBT will focus on an equity analysis of decisions for 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.

APPENDIX B

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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.

15) 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.

LOGISTICS

16) When will the budget tool be due?

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

17) Where do I go if I have questions?

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

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

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

APPENDIX C

RESOURCES BY STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1: Create Intentional Inclusion

- [2020 Milwaukee County Workforce Audit](#)

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2: Bridge the Gap

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

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3: Invest in Equity

- [Community Engagement Toolkit](#)

Additional County Resources

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

Disparities in Food Access

- [Food Apartheid](#)
- [Food Access](#)

Community Engagement Frameworks & Guidance

Community Engagement connection to the REBT Tool and Budget Alignment

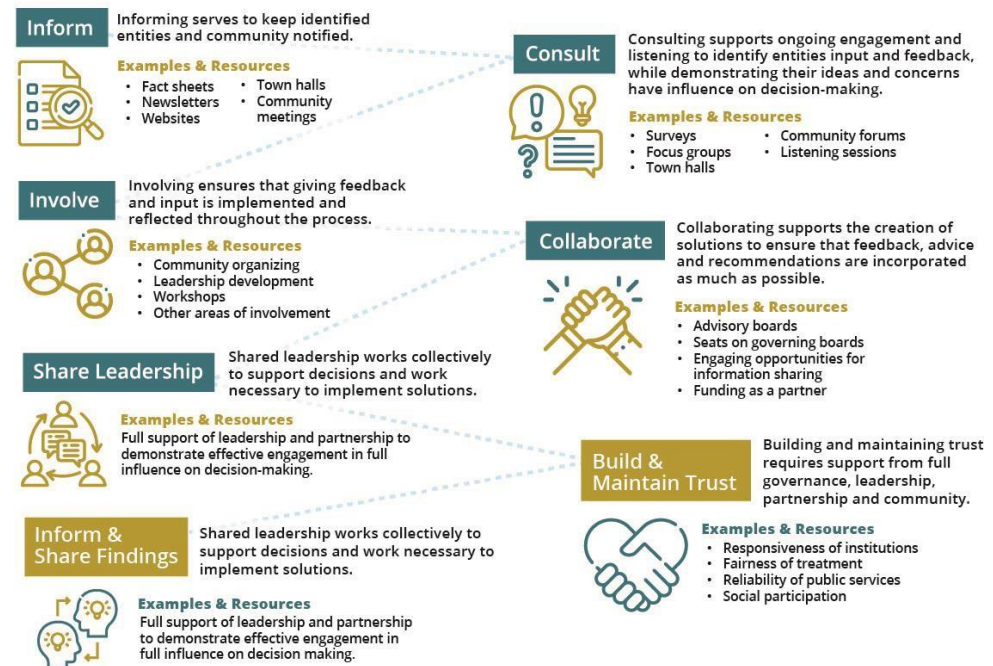
These frameworks help guide users of the REBT tool to think critically about how budget decisions align with the strategic plan and advance racial equity. By applying the continuum, staff can assess whether their fiscal choices reflect appropriate levels of community involvement, ensure that decisions are informed by community priorities, and understand the equity impacts of how resources are allocated. This supports intentional, equity-centered budgeting rooted in community voice and shared responsibility.

Summary of the Community Engagement Frameworks

The Community Engagement Continuum & Breaking Down the Path outlines five levels of engagement—Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Share Leadership, supported by practices that build trust and ensure findings are shared transparently. At the early stages, engagement focuses on providing information and gathering feedback through tools like fact sheets, surveys, and town halls. As engagement deepens, community members help shape decisions, co-create solutions, and participate in shared leadership structures such as advisory boards or governing bodies. Across all stages, trust-building, transparency, responsiveness, and partnership are essential for meaningful and equitable involvement.

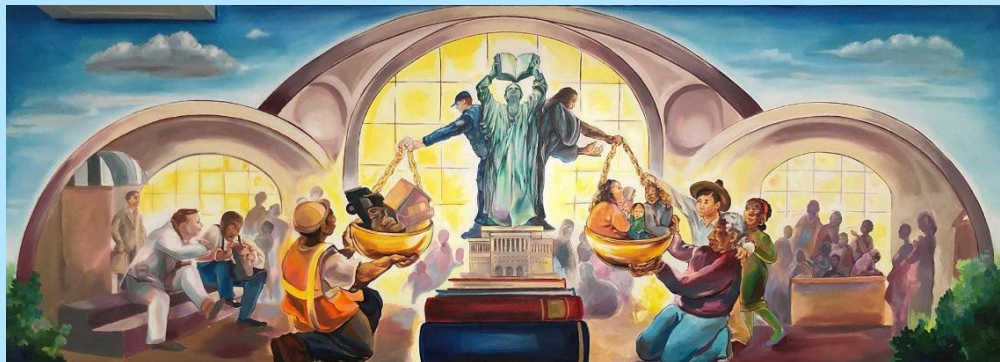


Breaking Down the Path



For future assistance, please access OOE's Technical Assistance program by sending us an email at OOEAssist@milwaukeecountywi.gov For direct self-serving tools around our Community Engagement efforts, please visit the [Office of Equity Community Engagement web page](#)

ON THE COVER



“ WELCOME TO THE PEOPLE’S HOUSE ”

Artist: Tia Richardson

Commissioned in 2020. Used with permission of the artist.



ONE COUNTY ONE VISION

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

County.milwaukee.gov/vision

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