



RACIAL EQUITY



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.

Commented [SC1]: This language was added to address concerns of some electeds about why we are not also focusing on other dimensions of identity (i.e. disability, gender, etc.) There is confusion between structural oppression and identity.

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 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.



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?

OEM promotes diversity and inclusion in recruitment and retention by incorporating equity-focused language in job postings, conducting outreach to underrepresented communities, and collaborating with Milwaukee County Human Resources and the Office of Equity. OEM fosters an inclusive work environment through mentorship, flexible scheduling, and access to wellness and development resources. In 2026, several internal candidates were promoted into leadership roles, demonstrating the effectiveness of OEM's internal talent development pipeline. These activities are integrated into existing personnel and training budgets.

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?

OEM's strategic focus on building organizational strength is reflected in its commitment to employee development and advancement. Staff are encouraged to pursue formal academic degrees and professional certifications in public safety, health, and leadership-related fields. OEM supports this through flexible scheduling, internal mentoring, and access to nationally recognized training programs, including those offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). These efforts ensure all employees have equitable access to growth opportunities, with resources drawn from internal time allocations, leadership coaching, and County-supported programs.

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?

Yes. OEM actively engaged a diverse range of frontline employees during the development of the 2027 budget. Feedback was gathered through division-specific meetings, shift briefings, one-on-one conversations, and informal suggestion opportunities. Employees across Emergency Medical Services (EMS), 911 Communications, Emergency Management, Radio Services, and the Director's Office contributed input that shaped funding priorities. For example, staff emphasized the need for continued investment in learning management systems, dispatch technology enhancements, and expanded development opportunities. OEM also noted a significant increase in employee participation in the biannual engagement survey, reflecting improved trust, morale, and willingness to provide feedback. The department used this input to ensure that the proposed budget directly supports staff capacity, well-being, and service effectiveness.

Commented [PR2]: @Kinnyetta Patterson @Dan Pojar Do either of you have promotions or other examples to include as retaining employees?

Commented [KP3R2]: none

Commented [DP4R2]: @Paul Riegel Expansion of staffing (MIH) including MIH Captain, promotion of Jeff Trudell to Ops Manager, lead roles assigned to FT instructors.

Since 2020:

QA

Linda Maltrisch promoted from QA Supervisor to QA Manager
Bill Soderbeck promoted to Lead QA Coordinator

Data

Becky Funk promoted to Data Systems Coordinator from Health Information Specialist

Shannon Gramman and Michelle Anderson both promoted to IMSD leadership positions after a tenure with OEM.

Education

Jeff Matcha promoted from EMS Instructor to Education Manager
Shane Hughes promoted from EMS Instructor to Education Manager

Ops

Lindsay Whitaker, Allyson Flanagan, Megan Tugel, all promoted from EMT to Paramedic

Paramedic to Lieutenant promotions: Jeremy Fronczak, Ed Schmidt, Matt Bryant, Justin Schock, Steve Bartlein, Mike Landgraf, Glen McCoy, Jeremy Tietyen, Mike Olson, Ryan Porter,
Paramedic to Captain promotion: Kurt Egner
Paramedic to EMS Operations Manager: Jeff Trudell

Admin

Pojar promoted to Division Director from Education Manager

Positions added since 2020:

Data Systems Coordinator
Data Analytics Coordinator
Harm Reduction Educator
Data Analytics Manager
Communications Coordinator

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

Yes. OEM tracks contracts with certified Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) through Milwaukee County's procurement system.

OEM faces challenges increasing MWBE utilization due to the specialized nature of many core services. Public safety radio systems, specialized EMS equipment, and other mission-critical technologies are often provided by sole-source or multinational vendors that are not DBE-certified.

Despite these limitations, OEM remains committed to identifying new opportunities for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) engagement and continues to work closely with County Procurement to support equitable contracting practices.

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)?

Throughout 2026, OEM engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including municipal partners, community-based organizations, trauma centers, and fire departments, to inform the 2027 budget. EMS worked with hospital and field partners to expand the whole blood program and develop Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) teams. Emergency Management conducted a countywide survey to gather feedback from municipalities and key stakeholders that drives the 2027 outlook. Forums included joint planning meetings, workshops, surveys, and after-action reviews. These engagements directly shaped funding priorities around outreach staffing, trauma-informed care, and readiness in socially vulnerable areas.

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.

OEM used multiple data sources to guide equitable resource distribution across its divisions. The EMS Division leverages a full-time data analytics team dedicated to data quality, analysis, cleansing, and modeling. OEM created the Evaluating Vulnerability and Equity (EVE) Model in 2022 to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic with an intentional lens toward equity; it was published in the American Journal of Public Health as a best practice. In 2024, all fire departments consolidated onto a single patient care report, significantly improving data quality and uniform data collection standards. This effort, in combination with other data layers such as the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), continues to provide a comprehensive and equitable approach to deploying prehospital blood coolers, ensuring life-saving interventions are strategically placed in communities with the greatest need and highest risk of traumatic injury.

Starting in 2027, health systems will begin automatically sharing outcome data with OEM to better understand the impact and design of the EMS system. The data analytics team has created 12 EMS dashboards, 7 of which are public-facing, and EMS is among the first County divisions with access to the new IMSD data lake, allowing OEM to combine EMS, hospital, medical device, and climate data to analyze events and trends. Milwaukee County EMS also has a storied history of prehospital research that advanced EMS medicine worldwide, including deploying AEDs in public settings and pioneering field 12-lead analysis for suspected heart attacks; both are now the gold standard of care.

The 911 Communications Division relied on call volume and transfer rate data by ZIP code to inform staffing and technology decisions. The Emergency Management Division applied the CDC Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) to prioritize disaster preparedness outreach and shelter planning for high-risk populations. The importance of this approach was underscored by recent events: many of the same high-SVI communities that experienced the most severe impacts of the historic August 2025 flooding were struck again by the April 2026 storms and flash flooding, before many households had fully recovered. These

repeated impacts compound damage for residents with the fewest resources to recover and reinforce OEM's use of SVI data to drive preparedness outreach, damage assessment, and recovery coordination in the communities at greatest risk.

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

OEM is working to establish bi-directional data sharing with healthcare systems to collect patient outcome data, which will improve the department's ability to assess the equity of EMS service delivery and recovery outcomes as well as create a safer, more reliable EMS system. The EMS Division has implemented a 5-year strategic plan with the fire departments to improve documentation as well as create a seamlessly integrated environment where referrals and follow-up can be accomplished. Additionally, OEM is exploring new ways to engage stakeholders to ensure future budget and program decisions are informed not only by quantitative data but also by lived experience and community voice.

Commented [PR5]: @Dan Pojar Still true?

Commented [DP6R5]: @Paul Riegel yes, edited and added more context.

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?

OEM collaborates with several Milwaukee County departments, including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Housing Division, Behavioral Health Services, and County Parks, to provide coordinated services during emergencies. These partnerships are reflected in joint planning for mass sheltering, behavioral crisis response, and mobile-integrated healthcare. Shared tools, such as the numerous countywide dashboards and integrated radio and communications platforms, facilitate real-time coordination and enhance the effectiveness of public service delivery. Additionally, OEM works with all county departments in times of emergencies to gather real-time situational awareness to inform county leadership decisions.

Beginning in 2026, OEM 911 Division began answering 911 calls and dispatching for the Milwaukee County Airport Fire Department who provides services to Mitchell International Airport and Timmerman Airport. This represents a collaboration that provides further operational efficiencies and reducing silos between County entities.

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

These cross-departmental efforts reduce service fragmentation and ensure that emergency resources are accessible, timely, and culturally responsive. This model helps address the root causes of inequity by meeting people where they are; especially those most impacted by poverty, health disparities, and systemic barriers. By providing accurate, real-time information to county leadership, it allows them to make informed decisions that have direct impacts on the wellbeing of residents and employees. In doing so, OEM supports Milwaukee County's overarching vision of achieving racial equity and becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

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

The 2027 OEM budget is expected to improve outcomes for disadvantaged communities through expanded access to trauma care, improved 911 and radio systems, and increased outreach and preparedness efforts. Potential unintended consequences include barriers for smaller municipalities and non-English-speaking residents in adapting to new technologies.

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

OEM used opioid overdose dashboards, 911 call data by ZIP code, and Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) mapping to identify service gaps. Stakeholder input from EMS partners, shelter providers, and community groups also informed funding priorities and risk identification. Damage assessments from the August 2025 and April 2026 flooding events confirmed that high-SVI communities bore repeated, disproportionate impacts, further validating the use of SVI mapping in this analysis.

Commented [DP7]: Mention dashboards and other analytical tools here such as continuum and biospatial

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

changes?

OEM will pursue grant funding, provide technical assistance and training to partner agencies, and explore platforms that include multilingual support, accessibility and inclusive design. Ongoing stakeholder engagement will guide adjustments as needed.

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

OEM does not directly assess fines or fees to Milwaukee County residents. EMS billing is handled by municipal partners. OEM encourages equitable, transparent billing practices that avoid undue burden on low-income or underserved communities.

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?

OEM is submitting a consolidated supplemental request totaling **\$247,200.00** that supports multiple divisions and aligns with strategic goals to enhance equity, service delivery, and system resilience.

Commented [DP8]: Double check this calc is correct

Emergency Management Division (\$95,000)

OEM is requesting funding for a Community Outreach Coordinator, a position the department has requested every budget cycle since 2024. Recent events have demonstrated that the need has only grown more urgent. The historic August 2025 floods and the April 2026 storms and flash flooding struck many of the same high-SVI communities twice in eight months, before many households had recovered from the first event. In both disasters, the residents hit hardest were those least connected to preparedness resources, damage reporting systems, and recovery assistance. OEM currently has no dedicated staff to perform this outreach; it is absorbed by existing personnel during response operations, when capacity is most strained. A Community Outreach Coordinator would build relationships with socially vulnerable communities before disasters strike, improve public preparedness, expand multilingual education, and coordinate damage assessment and recovery navigation afterward, directly reducing the disproportionate burden repeated disasters place on Black and Brown communities.

EMS Division (\$104,959)

This request supports a significant need for a Public Information Officer. The Public Information Officer supports the development, dissemination, and tracking of internal and external communications for the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). This role ensures clear, accurate, and engaging communication across multiple platforms, including patient care guidelines, social media, annual reports, surveys, and multilingual materials. The incumbent works closely with leadership and subject matter experts. The cost for this position including salary and fringe is \$104,959.00.

Commented [PR9]: @Dan Pojar Do you have any supplemental requests?

Commented [DP10R9]: @Paul Riegel PIO

Equity Impact

These requests directly support OEM's strategic plan and Milwaukee County's equity vision. They address access barriers, enhance public safety system performance, and ensure that all communities, especially those most underserved, receive timely, coordinated, and culturally responsive emergency services and informed communications.

10. What is your department doing to dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities, including meeting multilingual needs, accessibility barriers, food apartheid, financial empowerment or other factors that impact the stability and wellbeing of people in Milwaukee County?

OEM ensures accessibility through key services. The 911 Communications and EMS Division offers a language line for real-time interpretation and supports text-to-911 for individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or unable to speak. OEM also maintains publicly accessible dashboards which are screen reader compatible and available

in Spanish with plans to add more data products as more information becomes available.

EMS data also directly informs deployment of the County's whole blood program, ensuring life-saving interventions are strategically placed in areas with the greatest need. Since implementation, the program has administered blood more than 70 times, with approximately **77% of recipients surviving** their injury or illness as a result of rapid prehospital intervention. OEM routinely receives feedback through the Milwaukee County EMS Council and other stakeholder committees to identify opportunities for improvement. In 2027, OEM will continue to expand its ADA-compliant tools and multilingual public education initiatives to serve Milwaukee County's diverse communities better.



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.*

APPENDIX B

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PURPOSE

1) What is the purpose of using this tool?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Milwaukee County's structural deficit and budget challenges

are no secret. However, Milwaukee County still has an annual budget of over \$1 billion. Whether the County is making disinvestments or investments, those decisions must be made with racial equity at the forefront of decision-makers' minds. Departments should think critically about their current assumptions and spending versus shifting investments to address root-causes of inequities.

COMPLETING THE TOOL

4) Are there right answers to the questions?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

department leaders, fiscal staff, and administrative staff.

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.

Commented [SC11]: Update with 2027 Budget Due Date

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](#)

APPENDIX D

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.

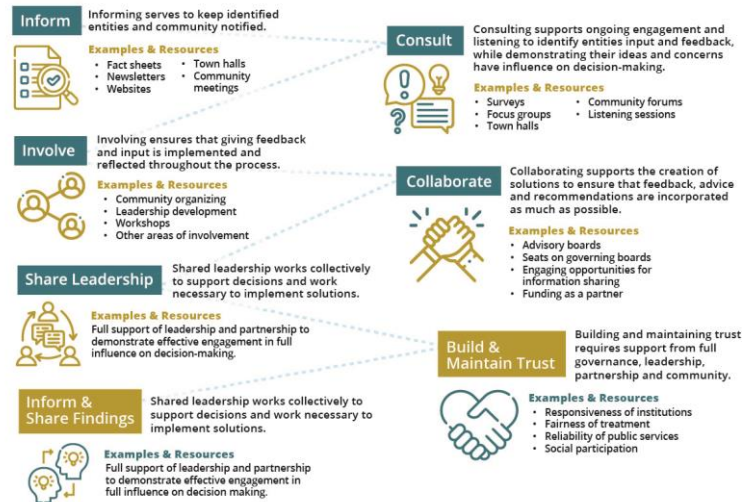
Summary of the Community Engagement Frameworks

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.

Community Engagement Continuum



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.



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HEALTH & RACIAL EQUITY

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*By achieving racial equity, Milwaukee
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