



RACIAL EQUITY



REPRODUCED
10/2020

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. 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?

The MCDOT Transportation Services Division maintains a workforce that reflects a broad range of racial, cultural, and professional backgrounds, which supports and fosters Milwaukee County's commitment to racial equity. The Transportation Services Division works closely with Human Resources to expand job postings beyond the Milwaukee County website by advertising through targeted job boards and professional organizations; including the National Society of Black Engineers, Society of Women Engineers, and Institute of Transportation Engineers. Depending on the number of platforms utilized, advertising costs typically range from \$300 to \$1,000 per position. In addition, the Division promotes diverse interview panels and broadens opportunities for qualified candidates to advance through the hiring process rather than being screened out prematurely. These efforts have contributed to building a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Division staff meet regularly to foster an inclusive workplace culture, encourage collaboration, and learn from one another's experiences and perspectives. These ongoing efforts help employees feel valued, included, and connected as members of a cohesive team.

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?

At MCDOT Transportation Services Division, professional development, career advancement, and internal promotion opportunities are key components of building and sustaining a skilled, well-rounded workforce. The Division actively encourages engineers and support staff to be part of professional organizations that will provide them with the tools and services they need to be better informed and better connected within their professional communities. The Division is committed to equitable advancement practices and gives strong consideration to qualified internal candidates when filling positions. During each budget year, under the operating budget the Division allocates funding for professional development and training.

Staff members also have opportunities to showcase their work and expertise, both within our team and through presentations to peers, at professional organizations and to the public. For example, one of our Traffic Engineering Managers recently gave a well-received presentation on the completed Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing Assessment at a meeting hosted by a professional association of which we are members.

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?

MCDOT Transportation Services Division values the involvement of all employees in the budget development process,

recognizing that diverse perspectives, experiences, and ideas contribute to more informed and effective decision-making. The Division is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every team member, regardless of role or position, can provide input and share their insights. Encouraging open communication and meaningful staff engagement supports continuous improvement, strengthens collaboration, and helps create a positive workplace culture. This inclusive approach has improved communication across the Division and contributed to a stronger, more cohesive team.

A dedicated group of local volunteers from a local engineering firm partnered with the Transportation Services division to clean up portions of County Trunk Highway. This type of collaboration with our contractors has fostered hands-on community service along with the support on keeping County roadsides clean and safe.

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

Many transportation improvement projects undertaken by MCDOT Transportation Services Division serve neighborhoods with residents who speak a variety of languages. The Division strives to prioritize projects that address the needs of multilingual communities and ensure that transportation investments provide equitable benefits across all Milwaukee County neighborhoods. To enhance accessibility and communication, the Division plans to implement a Spanish-language version of the department's website in the coming years to better serve Spanish-speaking residents. In addition, the Division actively engages with diverse communities and stakeholders throughout project development to ensure a broad range of perspectives and needs are reflected in planning and decision-making processes.

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)?

MCDOT Transportation Services Division conducts public involvement meetings to provide residents, service users, and key stakeholders with opportunities to share feedback, concerns, and perspectives on community improvement projects. Public input is carefully considered and incorporated into project planning and implementation whenever feasible. The Division's staff actively participate in these meetings, helping to communicate project and budget-related information while fostering meaningful community engagement. To further expand access to information, the Division regularly updates the Milwaukee County website with project materials and updates, ensuring that individuals who are unable to attend meetings in person can remain informed and engaged throughout the process.

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.

In previous Capital Budget cycles, MCDOT Transportation Services Division has incorporated racial equity as a key factor in evaluating and prioritizing transportation improvement projects. Demographic and economic characteristics of the communities impacted by proposed projects are considered as part of the decision-making process, helping to ensure that investments are directed in a manner that promotes equitable outcomes and addresses community needs.

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

The use of racial and economic data helps MCDOT Transportation Services Division better assess how effectively transportation investments and services are reaching historically underserved and economically disadvantaged communities. This information informs decisions on whether project priorities should be adjusted or whether additional improvement projects should be included in the Capital Budget to better address identified needs. The Division relies on available federal census and demographic data to support this analysis and is not currently aware of any significant data discrepancies affecting the evaluation process.

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?

MCDOT Transportation Services Division collaborates closely with other Milwaukee County departments and divisions to improve service delivery, increase efficiency, and enhance the quality of services provided to residents. For example, the Division performs bridge inspection services for the Parks, Zoo, Airport, and Highway Maintenance divisions,

promoting consistency in service standards while generating cost savings. MCDOT-Transportation Services helped the Parks Department by obtaining Federal funding and completing a Parks Bridge rehabilitation (Mason St Bridge over Lincoln Memorial) project and safety improvement project at intersections along Lincoln Memorial Dr.

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

These partnerships help maximize resources and support coordinated decision-making across County operations. Continuing to strengthen interdepartmental collaboration is critical to advancing equity, improving community outcomes, and ensuring that County services are delivered effectively and inclusively.

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?

The anticipated benefits include increasing access to transportation and infrastructure improvements for residents in historically underserved and disadvantaged Milwaukee County communities. By directing investments toward areas with the greatest needs, this initiative advances Milwaukee County's commitment to racial equity, promotes more equitable outcomes, and helps strengthen community trust and confidence in County services.

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

MCDOT Transportation Services Division will continue to prioritize feedback from historically underserved and disadvantaged communities when evaluating and selecting improvement projects. Public information meetings, community engagement events, and town halls will remain important avenues for residents and stakeholders to provide input on project priorities and the allocation of County resources, helping to ensure that investments are distributed equitably. The Division also seeks to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new collaborations with communities, municipalities, and organizations to advance equitable outcomes, improve quality of life, and support the overall health and well-being of Milwaukee County residents.

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

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?

MCDOT Transportation Services Division would dedicate additional resources to advancing racial equity through community outreach and workforce development initiatives designed to increase awareness of engineering and construction career opportunities among young people. This includes expanding programs such as the Civil Engineering Internship Program and other efforts that help develop a diverse pipeline of future professionals. Additional funding would support appropriate staffing levels to effectively administer these programs, provide mentorship and training opportunities, and strengthen outreach efforts within the community.

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?

Many transportation improvement projects undertaken by MCDOT Transportation Services Division serve neighborhoods with residents who speak a variety of languages. The Division strives to include projects in the budget that address the needs of multilingual communities, helping to ensure that transportation investments provide equitable benefits across all Milwaukee County neighborhoods. To further improve accessibility and communication, the Division plans to implement a Spanish-language version of the department's website in the coming years to better serve Spanish-speaking residents. Additionally, the Division actively seeks input from diverse and inclusive communities throughout project development to ensure that community perspectives and needs are considered in the planning and decision-making process.



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

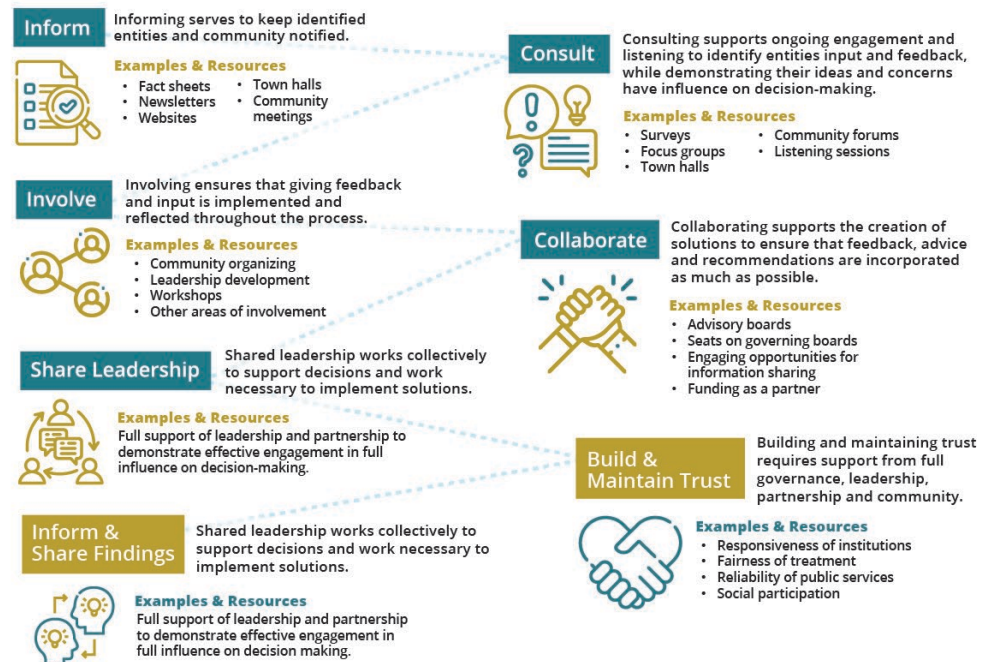
These frameworks help guide users of the REBT tool to think critically about how budget decisions align with the strategic plan and advance racial equity. By applying the continuum, staff can assess whether their fiscal choices reflect appropriate levels of community involvement, ensure that decisions 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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