

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



RACIAL EQUITY BUDGET TOOL

2026 BUDGET CYCLE



revised 10/20

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

MILWAUKEE COUNTY VISION STATEMENT

Overview

Racism has been and is a public health crisis in Milwaukee County. According to the County Health Rankings, Milwaukee County is, and has consistently been, one of the lowest-ranked counties for health in Wisconsin and, according to Federal Reserve Economic Data, Milwaukee County is one of our nation's most racially segregated areas.

According to 2019 statistics, a white person lives, on average, nearly 14 years longer than a black person and the infant mortality rate is nearly three (3) times higher for black infants compared to white infants. Race is a social construction with no biologic basis, yet racism may produce an assigned societal value based on the way a person looks that has resulted in race being a consistent predictor of a person's quality and length of life.

The Racial Equity Budget Tool (REBT) is a structured racial equity lens for departments to use to critically assess the impacts of budget decisions on communities of color. The tool is structured around Milwaukee County's strategic focus areas to help departments and decision makers better understand the pain points and opportunities to advancing the County's vision.

Milwaukee County's Racial Equity Budget Tool (REBT) is designed to:

Make intentional connections between the strategic plan and the budget.

Use racial equity as the key guiding principle for important decisions regarding investments or disinvestments.

Initiate conversations on topics related to the three-year strategic objectives among department leaders and employees.

Provide baseline data on departmental efforts to inform enterprise-wide decisions.

Milwaukee County Strategic Focus Areas

In 2019, Milwaukee County launched its first strategic plan in 20 years. This plan explicitly recognizes that racism is a public health crisis and leads with the vision that: **By achieving racial equity, Milwaukee is the healthiest county in Wisconsin.**

As part of the strategic plan, Milwaukee County leaders have committed to use a racial equity budget tool to ensure resource allocations advance the strategic focus areas and vision. The questions in this budget tool were guided by the strategic plan and were informed by best practices from other jurisdictions and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).

1. Create Intentional Inclusion

- Reflect the full diversity of Milwaukee County at every level of County government.
- Create and nurture an inclusive culture across the Milwaukee County government.
- Increase the number of Milwaukee County contracts awarded to minority- and women-owned business.

2. Bridge the Gap

- Determine what, where, and how we deliver services based on the resolution of health disparities.
- Break down silos across Milwaukee County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered.
- Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.

3. Invest in Equity

- Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities.
- Enhance Milwaukee County’s fiscal health and sustainability.
- Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.

Instructions

1. Submit only one REBT per department.

The REBT should reflect an analysis of the suite of budget decisions per department. Within answers to each question, **details may be provided at the division level**, as determined appropriate. Decision points should be analyzed as part of the comprehensive effort that your department is undertaking in addressing racial equity in programs, plans, policies, and power structures. Since departments are often tasked with cutting their budgets to reflect a reduction from their previous fiscal year's budget, a REBT should also include an analysis of how proposed reductions may or may not burden Black and Brown individuals and communities.

2. Keep the focus on the analysis of departments' improvements, reductions, and overall budget.

The REBT will focus on a racial equity analysis of decisions for new policies, programs, and plans under consideration, and the department's ongoing commitment to racial equity.

3. Use demographic data to help your department determine benefits and burdens of new decisions and overall budget.

State and federally collected demographic data resources are provided in [Appendix C](#). Departments are encouraged to

use any data they collect on their service users throughout the completion of the REBT. Data from other relevant and credible sources a department may have is also acceptable.

4. REBT technical assistance information and opportunities.

If you have questions related to the 2025 REBT, please attend one of the Strategy, Budget and Performance Open Office hours and bring the questions. All persons who may be expected to assist the department director in completing the REBT will be encouraged to participate.

- If you understand the question, but have difficulty determining how to answer a question, please contact your Budget Analyst for assistance.
- The Office of Equity should only be contacted on questions related to the racial equity components (glossary, concepts, etc..) that are unclear and cannot be addressed by your Budget Analyst. Send correspondence via email to equityoffice@miwlaukeecountywi.gov.



RACIAL EQUITY BUDGET TOOL

Date Submitted: 7/15/2026

Department: Milwaukee County Zoo

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 Zoo continues to recruit, retain, and develop a diverse and inclusive workforce through targeted partnerships, paid career pathways, inclusive hiring practices, employee engagement, and Culture Committee initiatives.

The Zoo partners with the Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM), Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, Harold S. Vincent High School Agricultural Program, and Project SEARCH to provide internships, job training, and career exploration opportunities for students, including youth from underrepresented communities and individuals with disabilities. The ZSM Education Department also recruits summer educators through outreach to diverse schools and introduces thousands of students annually to careers in conservation and animal care.

The 2027 budget continues funding for paid Animal Care Internships at \$64,842 annually, removing financial barriers to entering the profession and expanding opportunities for candidates from diverse backgrounds. The budget also continues \$76,616 in Seasonal Zookeeper hours, strengthening the career pathway from intern to seasonal employee to full-time Zookeeper.

Recruitment is further supported through participation in community events, including the Milwaukee County Youth Commission, Puerto Rican Fest, Powwow: Honoring the Heartbeat, Juneteenth, Pride, Sherman Park Harvest Fest, and partnerships such as the Forest County Potawatomi Tribal Nation.

Employee retention is supported through structured interview guides, diverse interview panels, flexible scheduling when possible, participation in Milwaukee County Network Resource Groups, and the coalition-wide Culture Committee. The Culture Committee, representing the Zoo, Zoological Society of Milwaukee, and SSA, coordinates monthly meetings, cultural heritage celebrations, guest speakers, inclusion training, staff engagement surveys, and employee feedback opportunities to promote an inclusive workplace and align organizational culture with Milwaukee County and AZA values. The committee also supports expanded community accessibility initiatives, including the Access MKE Zoo program.

Beyond the \$64,842 annual investment in paid Animal Care Internships and \$76,616 in seasonal Zookeeper funding, these activities are supported through existing operating budgets and staff resources.

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 Zoo promotes equity in its workforce by providing employees at all levels with access to professional development, skill-building, and advancement opportunities that support career growth and prepare employees for future leadership roles.

Employees are encouraged to utilize Milwaukee County's Dayforce Learning and Development platform and, with supervisor approval, participate in external training, conferences, and industry organizations. Professional development opportunities

include participation in organizations such as the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, American Association of Zookeepers, Visitor Studies Association, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association, and the Governor's Conference on Tourism.

To support equitable access to professional development resources, the Animal Management and Health Division uses a transparent annual proposal process for training requests and Leave with Approval for Professional Development (LAP). Requests are evaluated based on alignment with Zoo priorities, organizational benefit, and whether an employee has previously received funding or professional development support. This approach helps provide opportunities across the workforce and ensures resources are distributed fairly.

The Zoo also supports advancement through structured on-the-job learning. Within the Facilities Division, full-time and seasonal employees receive progressive training that allows them to build skills, take on increased responsibilities, and advance within the organization. Internship and seasonal employment pathways further support career development by creating opportunities for employees to gain experience and pursue long-term careers with the Zoo.

In addition, the Zoo offers lunchtime learning sessions for staff and volunteers. These sessions provide ongoing education, encourage knowledge-sharing from employees who have completed professional development opportunities, and support a culture of continuous learning. Topics include wildlife conservation, inclusion, communication, and other areas that strengthen employee skills and engagement.

Professional development is supported through Milwaukee County's Dayforce Learning platform, departmental training budgets, Zoo-funded conferences and training opportunities, LAP time, internal learning programs, and career development opportunities within Zoo operations.

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. The Zoo actively engages frontline employees from all divisions in the annual budget development process to identify operational improvements, cost-saving opportunities, revenue-generating ideas, and investments that best support animal care, employee safety, and the guest experience.

Input is gathered through bi-monthly all-staff meetings, bi-monthly supervisor meetings, division meetings, one-on-one discussions, and the Zoo Buzz Microsoft Teams site, where employees can submit ideas throughout the year. Zoo, Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM), and SSA staff are encouraged to share budget recommendations and operational improvements with their supervisors and division leadership.

Division staff play an important role in shaping budget priorities. Marketing and Communications staff regularly evaluate attendance trends, promotional strategies, and revenue-generating opportunities with the Administration and Finance Division. Animal Management and Health staff develop ideas to expand conservation fundraising and enhance wildlife conservation efforts. Across all divisions, managers seek frontline employee input on equipment needs, process improvements, and safety enhancements that improve efficiency, reduce labor demands, and create a safer workplace.

Employee engagement also played a significant role in developing the Zoo's Strategic and Master Plan. Through surveys, focus groups, all-staff meetings, and dedicated frontline employee representatives, staff provided ideas and feedback that helped establish long-term priorities for guest experience, conservation, operational efficiency, and workforce development. These priorities continue to guide annual budget decisions and future capital investments.

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

Yes, the Zoo tracks contracts with minority and women-owned businesses. In 2025, the Zoo awarded 45% of time-and-material contracts to Targeted Business Enterprises (TBE), exceeding the County's goal of 22%.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2: BRIDGE THE GAP

5. How and when have service users, in diverse and inclusive communities, and other key stakeholders been engaged to inform decisions about changes in funding levels for services provided in your requested budget (who was involved, what was the forum, what were the results)?

The Zoo and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM) engage a broad range of stakeholders, including visitors, members, schools, community organizations, conservation partners, and local businesses to help inform funding priorities, program improvements, and service delivery.

Visitor and program participant feedback is collected throughout the year using culturally responsive evaluation practices. The Zoo conducts an annual exit survey of at least 300 visitors, gathering demographic information and feedback on guest experiences, exhibits, animal encounters, and special events. Survey results are used to identify underserved audiences, improve programming, guide marketing and engagement strategies, and prioritize investments that enhance the guest experience. Additional evaluation of conservation initiatives, such as the No Mow May campaign, helps identify participation barriers and opportunities for future program growth.

The Zoo and ZSM also collaborate with community partners to co-design and evaluate educational programming. Through the Partner Engagement Plan of Work (PEPOW), organizations including Milwaukee Public Schools, Indian Community School, and La Causa Charter School help shape culturally responsive curriculum, educational resources, and community events. Feedback from these partnerships has informed the development of initiatives such as an Animal Empathy Kit for Milwaukee Public Schools, Día de los Muertos programming with La Causa, and Native Language Day programming with Indian Community School. Program outcomes are evaluated and shared with grant funders and other stakeholders to demonstrate impact and guide future investments.

Data from online ticket sales, memberships, school groups, and program participation are also analyzed throughout the year to better understand who is accessing Zoo services and where additional outreach or accessibility efforts may be needed. The Zoo's internal evaluators, Community Engagement Coordinator, and coalition-wide Culture Committee work together to ensure evaluation methods reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and support continuous improvement.

For facilities and capital projects, the Zoo engages diverse business stakeholders by utilizing Milwaukee County's Office of Equity preferred TBE-certified vendor directory and participating annually in the Small Business Development Conference. These efforts expand relationships with qualified small and diverse businesses, strengthen opportunities for TBE participation, and support more inclusive procurement practices for future Zoo programs.

6. Describe ways in which demographic and economic data were used to prioritize resource distribution. (Data can include sources found in the resources section of this tool, department collected data, or any other relevant data from other sources.)

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

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

The Zoo uses demographic, economic, and visitor data to guide marketing investments, educational programming, and accessibility initiatives, ensuring resources are directed toward communities that have historically been underrepresented in Zoo attendance and programming.

Marketing and Communications analyzes visitor surveys, ZIP code data, and demographic information to identify underserved audiences and inform advertising and promotional budgets. For example, exit survey data indicated that visitation from the Latino community was below expectations. In response, dedicated marketing funds were allocated beginning in 2023 to increase outreach to Latino audiences. Subsequent summer exit surveys showed an increase in first-time Latino visitors, indicating that the targeted marketing strategy was effective.

The Zoo and Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM) also use demographic and economic data to support equitable access. As part of the 2022-2023 strategic and business planning process with Canopy Strategic Partners, visitor household income data derived from mobile device analytics was compared with U.S. Census data for the regional market. The analysis showed that Zoo visitors include a higher proportion of lower-income households than the surrounding market. These findings reinforced the importance of maintaining affordable access through initiatives such as Flex Pricing, which allows guests to select lower-cost admission dates based on their budget and schedule.

Demographic data also informs the distribution of grant-funded educational programming. The Zoological Society of

Milwaukee prioritizes programs serving Milwaukee Public Schools and other underserved communities through initiatives such as Nature Play, Kohl's Wild Theater, Animal Ambassador, and Animal Connections Continuum.

The Zoo's 2027 Marketing Strategy continues to prioritize outreach to diverse and underrepresented audiences by directing 20% of advertising impressions to diverse audiences and 15% to new audiences, while expanding engagement with Native American, Hmong, and Hispanic/Latine communities.

While the Zoo collects substantial visitor, demographic, ZIP code, and program participation data, opportunities remain to better understand barriers to participation among communities that visit less frequently or do not visit at all. Expanding community engagement, improving demographic data collection, and continuing culturally responsive evaluation efforts will help identify disparities and better inform future resource allocation and service delivery.

7. a. How does your budget reflect efforts to work across departments to break down silos to maximize access to and quality of services offered?

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

The Zoo's budget reflects a commitment to collaboration across Milwaukee County departments to improve services, maximize resources, and enhance the guest experience. By leveraging shared expertise, contracts, and services, the Zoo reduces costs while increasing operational efficiency and public access.

Examples include partnering with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to share the Everbridge emergency communication system, provide on-site paramedic services during peak operations, and deliver First Aid/CPR/AED and emergency preparedness training for Zoo staff. The Zoo also partners with the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office for public safety services and active shooter preparedness training. The Marketing and Communications Division collaborates with communications staff across County departments to coordinate messaging, share best practices, and support County-wide initiatives through the Zoo's communication channels and social media platforms.

The Zoo also works with Milwaukee County Parks to jointly lease golf carts, increasing purchasing power and reducing costs through shared procurement. Additional partnerships include donating unclaimed lost-and-found items to the Department of Health and Human Services' Community Days and supporting County initiatives such as Take a Child to Work Day by providing staff, equipment, and educational experiences.

These cross-department collaborations improve operational efficiency, expand access to County services, strengthen public safety, and increase opportunities for community engagement. By sharing resources and expertise, the Zoo helps advance Milwaukee County's vision of achieving equity by improving access to services, reducing barriers, and ensuring public resources are used effectively to benefit residents and visitors throughout the community.

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?

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

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

The Zoo's 2027 budget is designed to maintain broad public access while supporting long-term financial sustainability. Budget decisions prioritize affordable experiences, educational programming, and accessibility initiatives that benefit low- and moderate-income households and historically underserved communities.

A key analysis used to evaluate potential impacts is visitor demographic data, ZIP code analysis, attendance trends, and guest surveys, which help identify communities that may face barriers to participation. These data have informed marketing strategies, accessibility programming, and pricing decisions. The Zoo also reviews participation in educational programs, Free Days, and accessibility initiatives to understand who is being served and where additional outreach is needed.

The primary potential unintended consequence of revenue-generating strategies, such as admission and parking fee

adjustments, is that they may create additional financial barriers for some families. To mitigate these impacts, the Zoo continues to utilize Flex Pricing, which offers lower admission prices on select days and rewards guests who purchase tickets in advance online. The Zoo also maintains discounted school group admission rates and continues to offer Free Days, helping ensure that cost does not prevent access to educational and recreational opportunities.

In partnership with the Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM), the Zoo continues to expand accessibility initiatives through Access MKE Zoo. The program is being developed to provide broader financial assistance for memberships, admissions, educational programs, and special events for individuals and families facing financial barriers. The Zoo is actively pursuing sponsorships and philanthropic support to sustain these efforts and is exploring reduced-cost admission and membership opportunities for participants in public assistance programs.

The Zoo also continues to invest in accessibility programming. In 2025, the Zoo hosted 119 accessibility days and 34 accessibility programs, serving approximately 14% of all Zoo visitors and providing an estimated community value of more than \$1.34 million. Together, these strategies help ensure that the Zoo's budget decisions support Milwaukee County's goals of advancing equity, expanding access, and improving the quality of life for all residents.

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?

Additional Zoo Worker funds would help in the recruitment and retention of seasonal staff. This aligns with the objectives in the County's strategic plan in the following ways:

The Human Resources Compensation Study did not include raises for the skilled trades positions. The Zoo is requesting \$97,566 to match 96% of the union wages for skilled trade positions at the Zoo.

1A: Reflect the full diversity of Milwaukee County at every level of county government: The proposed compensation adjustments for skilled trades positions advance Milwaukee County's commitment to reflecting the diversity of the community, applying a racial equity lens to decision-making, and strengthening the County's ability to deliver high-quality services.

2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity: Competitive compensation supports the County's ability to recruit and retain skilled trades employees needed to maintain safe, reliable, and accessible public facilities. Stable staffing levels allow for more proactive maintenance and timely repairs, reducing service disruptions and ensuring that residents across all communities including those who rely most on County facilities and public spaces have equitable access to safe environments.

2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions: The proposed adjustments address compensation disparities by aligning skilled trades salaries with prevailing union market rates. Maintaining competitive wages supports a more inclusive workforce by improving recruitment and retention opportunities for qualified candidates, including individuals from historically underrepresented groups in the skilled trades. A stronger, more diverse workforce enhances the County's ability to serve a diverse community.

3A: Invest "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities: Reducing employee turnover, vacancies, and workplace strain supports employee well-being and creates more stable operations. Investing in employees through competitive compensation helps build a healthier workplace, improves job satisfaction, and strengthens the continuity of services provided to residents.

3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability: Addressing compensation gaps supports long-term fiscal sustainability by reducing costly turnover, recruitment challenges, overtime pressures, and reliance on contracted services. Maintaining a stable skilled trades workforce allows the County to complete maintenance work more efficiently and reduce the risk of deferred maintenance and larger future repair costs.

3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities: Competitive, skilled trades compensation expands access to family-supporting careers that offer strong wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. By strengthening recruitment and retention efforts, the County can continue building a workforce that reflects the diversity of Milwaukee County while ensuring that all residents benefit from safe, well-maintained public facilities.

Overall, this investment supports workforce equity, improves operational stability, and strengthens the County's ability to provide reliable services to residents throughout Milwaukee County.

The HR Compensation Study did include the review of seasonal and hourly positions, but did not include the funding for it in the 2027 budget. The Zoo is requesting \$94,000 to fund the seasonal raises:

1A: Reflect the full diversity of Milwaukee County at every level of county government: Providing equitable and competitive compensation helps eliminate barriers to employment and supports a more inclusive recruitment strategy.

2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity: Offering a higher wage expands opportunities for those who may rely on their income to support themselves or family members. Many seasonal employees are entering the workforce for the first time, and competitive pay can foster longer-term interest in zoo-related careers.

2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions: Raising wages helps dismantle structural pay inequities and expands access to seasonal employment for underrepresented communities.

3A: Invest "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities: Reducing staff turnover and workplace strain through better compensation supports employee well-being and more stable operations.

3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability: Investing in competitive wages reduces the cost of turnover, minimizes disruption, and improves service quality, thereby strengthening the Zoo's revenue-generating capacity.

3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities: Addressing compensation disparities removes a key barrier to employment, helping residents envision a future with the Zoo and within County government.

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

The Zoo continues to identify and remove barriers to ensure all guests can access, experience, and benefit from Zoo programs and services. Efforts focus on improving physical accessibility, supporting guests with disabilities, expanding multilingual communication, and creating a more inclusive guest experience.

To improve accessibility for guests with disabilities, the Zoo installed a Universal Changing Station in 2023 and will continue evaluating opportunities to incorporate additional family restrooms and adult changing areas into future capital projects. The Zoo also provides three Mamava nursing stations throughout the grounds, offering private spaces for guests and employees who need to nurse or pump. In 2026, as part of the Front Entrance Project, two restrooms facing the parking lots were converted into Family Restrooms.

The Zoo continues to support guests with sensory needs through its sixth consecutive year as a KultureCity Sensory Inclusive Location. More than 50% of Zoo staff, revenue partners, and volunteers complete annual training to better assist guests with sensory needs. The Zoo also provides a Social Story through its website and the KultureCity app to help visitors prepare for their experience. In addition, the Zoo provides free admission annually to approved special needs organizations, allowing clients and chaperones greater access to Zoo experiences. In 2025, 1,995 individuals participated in this program, representing a community value of \$31,798.

The Zoo continues to address language and communication barriers by providing directional maps in Spanish, Hmong, and German, incorporating Spanish into wayfinding signage, and ensuring the Zoo website meets ADA accessibility standards. Additional guest resources, including Group Sales brochures and attraction instructions for Skyglide and the Carousel, have been translated into Spanish. The annual guest exit survey is also available in Spanish, allowing more visitors to provide feedback and help inform future improvements. The Zoological Society of Milwaukee has expanded language access by offering Zoo classes taught in Spanish.

Marketing and outreach efforts continue to expand engagement with diverse communities through targeted campaigns, including Spanish-language advertising and interviews with Telemundo. The Zoological Society of Milwaukee Creative team is also exploring new interpretive graphic designs that can be translated through smartphones and Google Translate, potentially expanding access to educational content in nearly 100 languages.

The Zoo further supports accessibility by providing wheelchair and electric scooter rentals and ensuring attractions such as the Carousel and Zoo Expeditions include accessibility options for wheelchair users. These ongoing efforts reflect the Zoo's commitment to creating an inclusive environment where all members of Milwaukee County can participate and feel welcomed.



Appendices

Appendix A:
Glossary

Appendix B:
Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix C:
Resources by Strategic Focus Area

Appendix D:
Public Participation Model

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Communities of color: In the context of the Milwaukee County Racial Equity Budget Tool, the term communities of color is interchangeable with Black and Brown communities and inclusive of all non-white populations of color.

Disadvantaged communities: A collective term for referencing communities that have historically experienced inequities where they learn, live, and work that were/are not optimal due to disenfranchisement, disinvestment, marginalization, racism, and other systems of oppression.

Diversity: Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term “diversity” is used — but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

Diverse group: As it relates to question 5, an intentional effort to include individuals from different racial, ethnic, gender, and social backgrounds proportionate to the diversity of the department.

Economic data: Numerical data collected based on service delivery criteria determined by departments.

Equity: The just, fair, and impartial treatment, acceptance, or behavior of people without favoritism or discrimination. Equity means righting wrongs, doing what's right, and giving people what they need to thrive, which is different from equality, which means everyone gets the same thing regardless of circumstance or need.

Frontline employees: A grouping of Milwaukee County employees that serves as the initial point of contact for service users or a range of employees from all levels of the workforce with emphasis on the inclusion of direct service rendering staff.

Inclusion: Assurance that the culture, values, and opinions of individuals and groups are represented in the decision-making processes.

Inclusive workforce: A workplace environment that recognizes the contributions of all employees, while valuing their social status, race, gender, or other demographic classifications.

Key stakeholders: Both internal and external individuals, agencies, or organizations who participate in the planning, development, implementation and decision-making process of an activity, process, or service delivery. (AMOP: Key stakeholders are service users, the workforce, partners, governing boards, donors, suppliers, taxpayers, regulatory bodies, policy makers, funders, and local and professional communities.)

Multilingual needs: The ability of Milwaukee County departments to address linguistic needs for all service users through staffing, documentation, and other communication platforms.

Professional advancement: Opportunities for staff to build their capacity and ascend or pursue lateral movement to further advance their career trajectory.

Racial data: Demographic data collected by Milwaukee County departments that identifies the race/ethnicity of service recipients.

Racial equity: The just and fair inclusion of all people in society, regardless of their race/ethnicity, with unfettered ability to participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Racial equity is achieved when race no longer determines one's health and socioeconomic outcomes and when everyone has what they need to thrive and decide what's best for themselves, their families, and their communities, no matter where they live.

Service user: Current or potential user of Milwaukee County services.

Unintended consequences: Outcomes of a purposeful action that are not intended or foreseen.

APPENDIX B

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PURPOSE

annual budget of over \$1 billion. Whether the County is

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

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 questions in the tool, which will differ from department to department. Likely people to include are department leaders, fiscal staff, and administrative staff.

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

APPENDIX B

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

8) Is this tool supposed to imply that we should be taking actions on each of these items? Are the questions meant to be directives to departments?

The REBT will focus on an equity analysis of decisions for

A budget is a reflection of priorities. Ultimately, Milwaukee County's budget should reflect our values and advance our vision and strategic plan. However, we acknowledge our organization is on a journey to continuously improve our efforts toward health and racial equity. The REBT is meant to spur conversations among department leaders and staff about what they are and are not able to do in a given budget year to advance the vision. To that end, the tool is not an absolute directive to departments. We fully expect that some departments' answers to some of the questions will be that they are not doing anything this year with an explanation about why that is the case. Looking ahead to future years, departments will be expected to show how their budgets help Milwaukee County make progress toward its vision.

9) How do I use this when my work is statutorily required?

What services Milwaukee County provides is often statutorily required. However, how we do our work usually is not a directive. This tool is meant to challenge us all to think about how to do the enormous part of our work that is within our discretion and control.

10) Is there a standard approach all departments are expected to take to answer the questions?

No. Answer the questions based on the approach your department currently takes on these items.

11) What type of analysis is expected for each of the questions?

It depends on what your department is currently doing in each area. Please use the diverse expertise and experiences of staff in your department to determine the most appropriate way for your department to answer the questions.

12) What part of the budget is this tool being applied to?

new policies, programs, and plans under consideration, and the department's ongoing commitment to equity. Your department is asked to identify what considerations are considered in the overall budget to maximize equitable outcomes.

office, the Office of Equity, the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget and the County Board.

USING THE DATA

13) Who will receive the data departments provide in the REBT? Who will be expected to answer questions about the information provided?

Responses to the REBT will be publicly available and will be presented to the County Board. If any decision-makers (e.g., County Executive, County Board Supervisors, department directors) have questions about the information provided in the REBT, the department should be prepared to answer them. We are all partners in Milwaukee County's strategic planning effort to achieve racial equity, and the budget tool is in-part meant to inform and focus conversations around strategic priorities, understanding that not all questions have known answers or solutions.

14) What if someone questions the analysis, conclusions, or recommendations made in the budget tool?

Like all research and analysis, there will be questions and critiques and we should embrace these important conversations. The work presented in the budget tool should be defensible, but most of these questions do not have a clear right or wrong answer. If someone finds something wrong in the analysis, then we need to fix it. However, if it is a question about the interpretation and meaning of the analysis, then we can make space for different perspectives to find the best path forward with the information we have available.

14) Will the budget tool submissions be scored?

No, the REBT submissions will not be scored. However, they will be made available to the public and reviewed by the County Executive's

APPENDIX B

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(CONTINUED)

LOGISTICS

16) When will the budget tool be due?

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

17) Where do I go if I have questions?

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

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

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

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 ACD/BE/DBE/SBE Directory and the Milwaukee County approved DBE/SBE vendors (training available on using system).

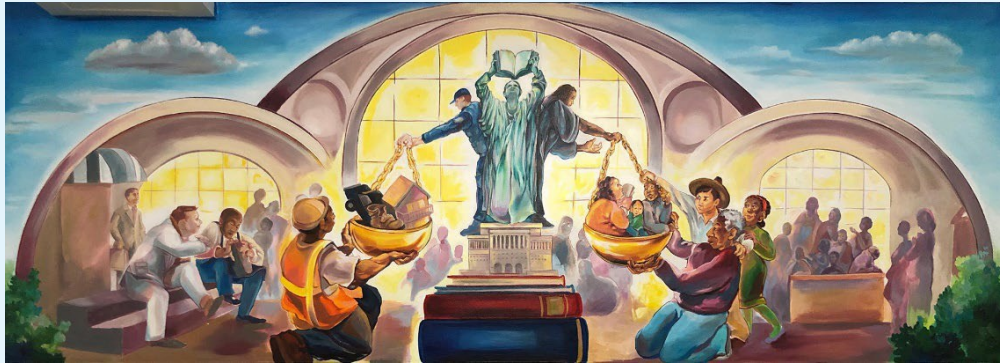
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3: **Invest in Equity**

- [Public Participation Model](#)

Additional County Resources

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

ON THE COVER



“WELCOME TO THE PEOPLE’S HOUSE ”

Artist: Tia Richardson

Commissioned in 2020. Used with permission of the artist.



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
HEALTH &
RACIAL EQUITY

ONE COUNTY
ONE VISION

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

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