



Racial Equity & Social Justice

One aspect of advancing this work involves analyzing resource allocations that form the structures-programs, policies, practices, and procedures-that can either worsen or improve racially disparate outcomes across the County. Our goal is to identify these disparities, reduce them, and ultimately create structures that eliminate their existence and prevent disparities from emerging in the future.

To this end, and in accordance with Bill 27-19, Administration - Human Rights - Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice - Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee Established, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) developed a Budget Equity Tool to support departments and decision makers in applying a racial equity lens to the development of the County Executive's FY24 Recommended Operating Budget. This tool, related trainings, and reports, have helped to assess the strength of the County's commitment to and implementation of its guiding racial equity framework, adapted from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), to normalize, organize, and operationalize for racial equity and social justice. This framework guides jurisdictions across the country in navigating the changes required to advance racial equity and social justice.



ORESJ highlighted-with its structured analysis-areas of strength and opportunity related to how the FY24 recommended operating budget enables the County's commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice. FY24 resources continue to help the County build its racial equity and social justice infrastructure, with departments across the County targeting resources towards:

- **Allocating or supporting the use of staff time for capacity building activities**
- **Implementing a policy or plan to complete required racial equity and social justice trainings**
- **Using or creating department-specific racial equity tools or maps**

These targeted investments mean that while the County continues to carry out its core business it will strengthen staff knowledge and capacity to apply a racial equity lens to program design, collecting and analyzing data, utilizing best practices and research, and involving the community in program development. With this growing capacity, County Government will also be able to reflect on areas of opportunity, where changes to policy or process can help remove barriers, enable greater transparency and accountability, and drive more equitable outcomes for communities most burdened by structural racism and

other inequities.

While many programs in the County help to fill gaps created by structural inequities, a few programs stand out for taking concrete steps to reduce racial disparities:

- The **Office of Grants Management** - *Grants Management* which strengthens the office's operations, capacity, and capabilities to develop and implement ORESJ policies, practices, and procedures within and across the Office's major functions.
- The **Office of Consumer Protection** - *Consumer Protection* which enables targeted outreach and will help implement a minority homebuilder mentorship program primarily aimed at serving Black and Latino high school job seekers.
- The **Department of Recreation** - *Excel Beyond the Bell Sites* would expand to two new elementary schools, providing program participants with comprehensive, high-quality after-school programming providing opportunities for academic and recreational enrichment.
- The **Department of Recreation** - *TeenWorks Programming* will provide continued mentorship and job readiness training to Montgomery County teens as they navigate through their first job while earning a minimum wage.
- The **Department of Recreation** - *IT Enhancements for Hardware and Software* will lessen administrative burdens incurred during camp and field trips through the transition of paper to electronic health records management.

Overall, this budget provides resources for the County to expand its commitment to and implementation of the RESJ Act. It supports County Government in building the skills and competencies necessary to identify and address racial and ethnic disparities across issue areas, at the same time providing resources for programs that help to fill gaps created by structural inequities.

FY24 Recommended Budget includes:

Departments and Non-Departmental Accounts (NDAs)

Community Engagement Cluster

- Funding to expand translations services with a part-time Spanish Translation Specialist position

Office of Food System Resilience

- In FY23, established the Office of Food System Resilience to coordinate food resilience efforts with community partners, government agencies, and regional partners to develop and implement interagency budgetary, regulatory, and operational strategies to build a more equitable, efficient, resilient, and sustainable food system in Montgomery County.
- Funds are added to support the farm to food bank program, the Montgomery County Food Council, market money grants that allow farmers markets to match Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funding for individuals, and community gardening and local resilience grants.

Department of Health and Human Services

- Expand funding for the Asian American Health Initiative, Latino Health Initiative, African American Health Programs
- Fund \$3.0 million to continue services that was previously funded by ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) for Service Consolidation Hubs
- Include \$3.0 million in funding to address overflow sheltering in hotels
- Subsidize rent funding to keep pace with rent increases for Housing Initiative Program
- Funding \$6 million to expand Children Youth and Families - Newcomers' Program
- Continue eviction prevention services that was previously funded by ARPA

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- Allocate \$6.1 million in resources for the Food Staples program

Department of Housing and Community Affairs

- Continue to leverage Federal grants including the Community Development Block Grant, the HOME Investment Partnership Grant, and the Emergency Solutions Grant to provide affordable housing, housing rehabilitation, commercial revitalization, focused neighborhood assistance, public services, and prevent homelessness.
- Continue to actively underwrite affordable housing loans to preserve and produce affordable housing. Three developments for multi-family projects have already been identified for potential funding in FY24. These developments would preserve or produce a total of 590 units, including 412 affordable units.

Fire and Rescue Service

- Funding for a civilian Diversity Equity Inclusion Officer to support efforts to normalize conversations on equity and operationalize new equity centered practices, policies, and procedures in the Fire and Rescue Service.

Office of Grants Management

- Funding for Outgoing Grants Compliance Program Manager to allow for a quicker, more intensive integration of RESJ considerations into County grants management practices. Specifically, the additional training and support provided by this position will allow greater flexibility and support to both departments and community partners who utilize grants agreements. This flexibility and support will allow departments to make County awards more accessible to smaller, less establishing organizations, who are often based in underserved communities.
- This Office will develop, manage, advertise, and apply a racial equity lens into the application and awarding processes for grant programs offered by the County. This Office will develop and support best practices for grants management throughout Montgomery County Government that are consistent with racial equity and social justice goals. In addition, the Office serves as a central point of contact regarding grants that the County receives or awards; provides technical assistance regarding grants management to Executive Branch departments and principal offices; and searches out and identifies Federal and State grant opportunities to Executive Branch departments and principal offices.

Legislative Branch Communications Outreach (Non-Departmental Account)

- Funding to enhance translation services and culturally competent advertising and support to the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

Office of Human Rights

- Include funding for the County's Juneteenth celebration.
- Add funding for the Remembrance and Reconciliation Commission to support the planning and execution of educational programming, training for Commission members, and annual observances in connection with lynching sites in Montgomery County (Lynching Memorial Project).

Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

- Provide funding for increased staffing to support the mission of the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice.

Transit Services (Department of Transportation)

- Provide financial support through a co-payment subsidy from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund to provide affordable transportation for the lowest income residents.

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