Capital Improvements Program

Budget Equity Tool
Guidance Manual

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
RACIAL EQUITY
& SOCIAL JUSTICE

FY 2027-2032

July 2025

Contents

Introduction

In accordance with [Bill #44-20](#), the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) develops racial equity tools and processes to help County employees apply a racial equity lens to budget development and decisions. The FY27 Capital Improvements Budget Equity Tool (CBET) is designed to help departments and decisionmakers consider the racial equity and social justice impacts of their budgets.

This guide provides departments with information about the FY27 CBET and process. The subsequent sections will explain:

> **Please note that in FY27-32, not all CIP projects are required to respond to the CBET. Please refer to correspondence from ORESJ regarding which of your department's projects need to complete the CBET.**

- what the CBET is;
- how its advances the County's goal of reducing and eliminating racial disparities and inequities;
- how it should be completed and by whom; and
- how responses to the tool will be assessed and used in decision-making processes

We recommend that you read this guide in its entirety, share it with relevant stakeholders, and refer to it as you develop your CBET responses and prepare your technical assistance requests.

Why lead with Race?

The Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE)—of which Montgomery County is a member—calls its more than 400 member jurisdictions to center race in their pursuit of equity and justice for all. We, along with others, lead with race for several reasons:

- The creation and perpetuation of advantage and disadvantage based on race (and other racialized identities) is baked into the history and structures of US government policies, practices, and procedures.
- Racial inequities exist across all dimensions of success and well-being; these inequities are deep and pervasive and are compounded by other forms of oppression including based on gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, nativity, and age, to name a few.
- Focusing on racial equity is an opportunity to introduce a framework, tools and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization. Therefore, leading with race is a strategy to help achieve equity and justice for all, not an attempt to rank oppressions based on severity.

What is the FY27 CIP Budget Equity Tool (CBET) and why is it important?

The CBET is both a product and a process that encourages departments and decisionmakers to consider the impacts of their proposed Capital Improvements Program (CIP) projects on racial disparities and inequities in the County. This tool makes applying a racial equity lens concrete by providing a structured approach for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting data about historical and current racial disparities and inequities in the County. This structured approach brings conscious attention to the systemic inequities that produce racial disparities, barriers to access, and inequitable outcomes for communities that identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income communities. With this information, departments can adjust their project planning, design, or outreach efforts – with the intention of leading to outcomes that more closely align with the County's goals – while also supporting decisionmakers in assessing budgets based on their ability to advance priority initiatives such as racial equity and social justice.

How will responses to the CBET be used?

Responses to the CBET will be analyzed by ORESJ and result in a summative *Finding Statement* about the project's impact on advancing equitable outcomes. Notably, ORESJ's CBET assessment will focus on **project impact** instead of CBET response quality. ORESJ will provide one of the following Finding Statements to departments and decisionmakers, along with recommendations related to which projects (based on available information) are likely to advance equitable access or outcomes for communities identifying as BIPOC and low-income.

- Advances Equitable Outcomes
- Maintains Status Quo
- Exacerbates Inequities

In addition, ORESJ will identify projects that demand additional attention to mitigate unintended consequences likely to disproportionately burden BIPOC and low-income communities. More information about ORESJ's analysis and project assessment can be found in the "How will the CBET responses be scored" Section of the Guide.

The FY27-32 CBET

Below is the list of questions and prompts that make up the FY27 CBET. Each step in the tool builds toward

Tip: **Read through the entirety of the FY27-32 CBET prior to formulating your response.**

Tip: **To complete the FY27-32 CBET, engage relevant staff (CORE Team members and Leads) early and often.**

demonstrating how the project responds to racial disparities, inequities, and unintended consequences. The full CBET will be available for

projects consisting of seven questions. Not all projects will need to complete a CBET. More information on which projects require a CBET can be found in the "Who should complete the CBET?" Section of the Guide. **Responses must be at least 50 characters in length** and ideally should be approximately 4-5 sentences of narrative including details that provide context, clarity about project beneficiaries, and evidence demonstrating the extent to which the project reduces racial disparities and inequities in the County.

Please keep in mind that your responses to these questions are the primary source of information for ORESJ's assessment and that the result of the assessment is a Finding Statement (that will not be changed after submission), and which will be used by various decisionmakers in the budget deliberation process.

A Special Note on CBET Submission

In order to submit your department's CIP Budget (on or before September 5ᵗʰ), you will—for each required project—be asked to provide a minimum of a 50-character response for each CBET question. **Please note, you will not be able to submit your department's CIP Budget unless you respond to all CBET questions meeting the character minimum for each.** As in previous years, once ORESJ conducts its assessment, the Finding Statement will not change, though decisionmakers may request the department's response to areas of concern raised in the narrative explanation that accompanies the Finding Statement.

In accordance with the County's Generative Artificial Intelligence Guidelines Summary, **please disclose the use of AI in each individual CBET response**. A sample disclosure may include information on when the content was generated, what AI tool was used, and if it was reviewed such as: "This content was generated in part by Generative Artificial Intelligence and was reviewed by County staff."

Tool Questions

STEP 1: Establish the context and **need** for the project		STEP 2: **Apply a Racial Equity Lens** to the problem or issues the project seeks to address		STEP 3: Explain how the project **responds to** the information generated from using **a racial equity lens**
1. What need does this project fulfil and what benefit (or outcome) does this project seek to create in the community? (50 character minimum) 2. What informed the project request—how did you learn about this need? (50 character minimum)		3. What does data, community feedback, and broader research (historical and/or current) tell you about who is *most impacted/burdened* by what this project seeks to address? (50 character minimum) 4. What unintended consequences does this project have the potential to create **(at any point in the lifespan of the project)** for communities of color and other marginalized groups? (50 character minimum)		5. What racial disparities or inequities will this project impact if implemented /and/or completed? (50 character minimum) 6. Based on your previous response, how will the adoption of the project help to reduce/widen/maintain racial disparities and inequities? (50 character minimum) 7. How will you mitigate any unintended consequences, for communities of color and other marginalized groups, resulting from the development, construction, or implementation of the project? (50 character minimum)
= What the project seeks to address		**= What a racial equity lens says about who is most impacted by what the project seeks to address**		**= How the project responds to the information generated by using a racial equity lens**

General OBET questions

Please answer the following questions regarding overall completion of the FY27 CBET. ORESJ will use your response to these questions in our Finding Statement transmittal and any follow up throughout the CBET process.

1. Who and what resources did you consult in the preparation of this Budget Equity Tool response? *Please use the prompts below to describe your research and process of completing this tool.*

    a. Have you consulted with your Racial Equity CORE Team or CORE Team Lead? (If yes, please provide their name(s).)
    b. Have you consulted with the Montgomery County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice? (Names of ORESJ staff that you consulted with and dates, and/or resources shared by ORESJ.)
    c. Have you reviewed any Racial Equity Impact Assessments (or other related equity analyses)?

2. Please provide the name(s) of those involved in the completion of the CBET. *Please use the prompts below to describe your research and process of completing this tool. (*25 character minimum)

    a. Assessment completed by: (Name(s), Title(s), Department)
    b. If different from above, Departmental Director: (Name)

3. Please upload any documents that will aid in the explanation of how the proposed budget aligns with the County's policy of reducing and eliminating racial disparities and inequities.

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Who should be involved in completing the CBET?

Completion of the CBET will require input from multiple stakeholders as it's important to bring different perspectives to budget development, as well as the underlying analysis of problems the budget seeks to address—analysis of data, assessment of regulatory or funding context, and feedback from residents. CBET stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- budget analysts,
- program and project managers,
- department Racial Equity CORE Team members and Team Leads,
- staff or nonprofit partners working directly with residents, and
- residents (particularly prospective clients or beneficiaries).

The final tab of the CBET will ask you to list the names of stakeholders who contributed to the department's response.

What data sources should be used?

To support the use of a racial equity lens, we have provided a list of data sources as a starting point. We also expect that each department will have relevant administrative and program data that it regularly analyzes and consults in its decision-making processes.

When looking at this data, some questions and practices[1] to consider when applying a racial equity lens are:

> **Tip: Leverage the County's resources:**
> ✓ ORESJ's library of <u>Racial Equity Impact Assessments</u> and The Office of Legislative Oversight's collection of <u>Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statements,</u> which can help you learn about the intersection of racial equity and the policy or issue area you work in.
> ✓ Utilize resources available on the <u>Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)</u> portal.

- Disaggregating data, which gives insights into the particular experience and circumstances of specific population groups (by race, ethnicity, nativity, gender, disability, etc.). Disaggregating data can help in identifying and unpacking dimensions of a specific inequity or inequitable outcome. When data is not disaggregated and viewed in its aggregate form, it can mask inequities.
- Use qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, narrative, longform surveys) to provide needed context to quantitative analysis.
- What is the role of historical or current policies or practices in the outcome you're observing?
- Once you've analyzed your data, who is looking at and making sense of it? It's important to bring multiple perspectives to the interpretation of your analysis.

In addition, as you reference planning or other historical documents that form the basis for your project request, please identify and include information about the data and processes used to formulate these plans, to what extent impacted community members were engaged, and how the plans align with the County's current goals of reducing and eliminating racial disparities and inequities

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[1] This list of practices is adapted from research done by Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania. Suggested Citation: Hawn Nelson, A., Jenkins, D., Zanti, S., Katz, M., Berkowitz, E., et al. (2020). A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration. Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania. Available at <u>https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AISP-Toolkit_5.27.20.pdf</u>

The sources listed below can give you insights into the circumstances and experiences of communities identifying as BIPOC and low-income in the County (and nationally). Disaggregating data (as the sources below do) is critical in understanding and redressing racial inequities. As practitioners from the USC Center for Urban Education explain, "disaggregated data can spark critical awareness of racialized outcomes and patterns, catalyze deep reflection about taken-for-granted assumptions, and establish racial equity as an ongoing process of organizational learning and change."[2]

> ### The Power of Qualitative Data
> **To contextualize data, and derive meaningful insights for equity analyses, it is important to seek out sources of qualitative data to answer questions like: Why does this disparity exist? What policies or practices create barriers or inequitable access? Sources of qualitative data include, but are not limited to, feedback from community engagement surveys, focus groups, or meetings and related public policy research.**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY-SPECIFIC DATA RESOURCES

- **Montgomery County Racial Equity Profile Update** (www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/JUPITERRACIALEQUITYPROFILE.pdf) This profile, a publication of the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, prepared by Jupiter Independent Research Group, summarizes data points across several indicators of well-being to offer a snapshot of racial inequities and disparities across the community.
- **Statistical Atlas** (www.statisticalatlas.com/county/Maryland/Montgomery-County/Overview) A comprehensive atlas produced by the Census Bureau, and a source for disparity data.
- **The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice Racial Equity Impact Assessments** (REIAs) of Special/Supplemental Appropriations (www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/appr.html) ORESJ has conducted more than 150 REIAs on a range of topics that offer analysis and context about racial disparities and inequities in the County and the kinds of programs, practices, or activities that respond to and/or shift structures creating these inequities.
- **CountyStat Community Explorer** (www.montgomerycountymd.gov/countystat/explorer.html) CountyStat developed this Explorer tool to help educate stakeholders on the shifting characteristics of Montgomery County neighborhoods and inform relevant discussion and policymaking.
- **Health in Montgomery County 2010-2019: A Surveillance Report on Population Health** (www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/Health%20in%20Montgom

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[2] Center for Urban Education. (2020). Equity-minded inquiry series: Data Tools. Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California. Pg. 5. Available at:

ery%20County%202010-19.pdf) This report provides data points disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and age for eight health related topics: demographics, social determinants of health, and healthcare access; vital statistics; maternal and infant health; chronic diseases; infectious diseases; behavioral health; injuries; and environmental health.

- **Health in Montgomery County 2013-2022: A Surveillance Report on Population Health**
(www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/Health%20in%20Montgomery%20County%202013-22_Final.pdf) This updated report compares Montgomery County's health outcomes to those of the State and the nation. Additionally, the report draws on findings from the "Health Equity Report 2013-2021" to show trends in health disparities across different racial, ethnic and geographic groups. The report also includes more detailed data on health risk and disease rates at a local level, such as by zip code or census tract, using information from surveys like the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and the U.S. Census American Community Survey.

- **Health Equity in Montgomery County, MD. Healthy Montgomery Core Indicators 2013-2021**
(www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/Reports/Health%20Equity%20Report_HM%20Core%20Measures%202013-2021.pdf) Findings of this report serve as a source of knowledge, bring attention to areas of success and weakness, and will serve as a basis for further multi-layered analysis by stakeholders to understand what specific factors are driving sustained gaps in outcomes, and to aid in designing appropriate programming and interventions to address these disparities.

- **Community Health Needs Assessment 2023**
(www.montgomerycountymd.gov/healthymontgomery/Resources/Files/HM-Resources/Publications/Montgomery-County-2023-CHNA.pdf) This CHNA report details the health and socioeconomic needs of the Montgomery County community as shared from the perspectives of community members and stakeholders.

COMPREHENSIVE DATA PLATFORMS
- **National Equity Atlas** (www.nationalequityatlas.org/indicators) Developed by PolicyLink and PERE, the National Equity Atlas includes national, state, regional, and county-level data disaggregated by race and income. Examples of available equity indicators include homeownership, wages, unemployment, disconnected youth, school poverty, air pollution, education levels and job requirements, housing burden, car access, neighborhood poverty, asthma, diabetes, etc.

- **U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey** (www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.html) provides social, economic, housing, and demographic data for a single geographic area.

- **Urban Institute Data Hub** (datacatalog.urban.org) Extensive research and data on housing, criminal justice, education, and economic mobility with racial breakdowns.
- **Opportunity Atlas** (opportunityatlas.org) Opportunity Insights at Harvard University and U.S. Census Bureau collaboration showing economic outcomes by race and neighborhood.
- **Diversity Data Kids** (diversitydatakids.org) Child-focused equity data with innovative measures of segregation and opportunity, including the Child Opportunity Index.
- **Kids Count Data Center** (https://datacenter.aecf.org/) High-quality data and trend analysis tracking the well-being of children in the United States at the local, state, and national levels.
- **Tableau Racial Equity Data Hub** (www.tableau.com/foundation/data-equity) The platform provides access to relevant data, analyses, and resources to advance data work in the racial, equity, and justice space:
- **ESRI Racial Equity GIS Hub** (www.gis-for-racialequity.hub.arcgis.com) The hub is an ongoing and continuously expanding resource to assist organizations working to address racial inequities. It includes data layers, maps, applications, user examples, training resources, articles on best practices, solutions, and other resources
- **Race Counts** (racecounts.org) California-focused but includes comprehensive racial equity indicators across multiple domains.

RESOURCES BY BUDGET AREA
Economic Development And Workforce
- Economic Policy Institute State of Working America Data Library (www.data.epi.org/)
- Results for America - The Economic Mobility Catalog (www.catalog.results4america.org/)
- Urban Institute Upward Mobility Dashboard (www.upward-mobility.urban.org/dashboard)

General Government
- ADA National Network – Compliance and Data Resources (www.adata.org)
- U.S. Access Board (www.access-board.gov)
- International Code Council – Building Equity Resources (www.iccsafe.org)

Public Safety And Criminal Justice
- Prison Policy Initiative (www.prisonpolicy.org/data)
- Vera Institute's In Our Backyards tool (www.vera.org/solutions-research)
- Campaign Zero Police Scorecard (www.policescorecard.org)

Health And Human Services
- CDC Health Equity Data Portal - Social determinants of health data by race/ethnicity (www.cdc.gov/dnpao-state-local-programs/php/data-statistics/health-equity.html)
- County Health Rankings (countyhealthrankings.org)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Data Hub (www.rwjf.org/en/our-vision/focus-areas/Features/better-data-for-better-health.html)
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center (www.datacenter.kidscount.org)

Culture And Recreation
- **Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board CIP Allocation** www.minneapolisparks.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=4bf83201e604494c8587e7832898ae42 and Criteria Based System for MPRB Capital and Rehabilitation Project Scheduling www.minneapolisparks.org/_asset/zvw35c/Equity-Based-Criteria-for-Neighborhood-CIP_050416-highlight.pdf
- **The Urban Institute**. "Five Ways to Center Equity in Park and Recreation Spending That Can Help New Funding Go Further": www.urban.org/urban-wire/five-ways-center-equity-park-and-recreation-spending-can-help-new-funding-go-further
- Trust for Public Land ParkScore (www.tpl.org/parkscore)

Education
- EdBuild (www.funded.edbuild.org/)
- Education Opportunity Program and Stanford Education Data Archive (www.edopportunity.org/)

Community Development And Housing
- Housing Opportunity Index (howhousingmatters.org)
- Eviction Lab (evictionlab.org)
- National Low Income Housing Coalition Research Portal (www.nlihc.org/explore-issues/publications-research/research)

Transportation
- TransitCenter Equity Dashboard (www.dashboard.transitcenter.org/methodology)
- Tools for Equitable Mobility (www.search.issuelab.org/resource/tools-for-equitable-mobility.html)
- Racial Inequality and Potholes (www.marketplace.org/2019/05/15/one-way-oakland-is-fighting-racial-inequality-by-fixing-potholes/)

Conservation Of Natural Resources
- Trust for Public Land Climate – Decision Support Tools Gallery (www.web.tplgis.org/decision_support)

Recycling And Resource Management
- EPA Waste Management Data (www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/methodology-epas-facts-and-figures-materials)

How will your CIP Project be assessed?

In FY27, ORESJ's CBET assessment focus solely on **project impact** instead of CBET response quality. ORESJ will analyze CBET responses and assess the extent to which the project is likely to:

- Advance Equitable Outcomes
- Maintain Status Quo
- Exacerbate Inequities

The result of ORESJ's assessment is a **"Finding Statement"** and narrative explanation of that Finding Statement; responses to individual CBET questions will not receive numerical ratings and there will be no summative score.

ORESJ Framework for Analyzing CBET responses

Much like how ORESJ conducts Racial Equity Impact Statements, it will assess a number of factors in its analysis of CBET responses. Factors ORESJ will consider in its assessment of project impact include:

- the identification of specific racial disparities and inequities in the County;
- the use of data, supplemental research, and community engagement in the analysis of those disparities; and
- the formulation of the project; and the strength of the connection between the project and its ability to advance equitable outcomes in the County.

What is the result of ORESJ's analysis?

A Finding Statement and Narrative Justification will be provided to departments, the Office of Management and Budget, and the County Executive in October 2025 (in alignment with OMB's CIP deliberation process). Finding Statements will be used to help decisionmakers understand which projects have the greatest potential of advancing equitable outcomes in the County and which projects may require additional attention to address unintended consequences. Finding Statements will not change once they are transmitted, but project revisions that result from ORESJ's analysis may be considered by decisionmakers. The Finding Statement will be used as one of several criteria informing the County Executive's recommended CIP budget.

Finding Statement

Your project will receive one of the following Finding Statements:

- **Advances Equitable Outcomes** – The project is designed to reduce existing racial disparities and inequities. It prioritizes and centers the needs and experiences of BIPOC and low-income communities. Disaggregated data, research, and community outreach informed the planning and design of the project and steps for mitigating unintended consequences were articulated.
- **Maintains Status Quo** – The project largely continues current policies, practices, and resource allocations that maintain existing inequities rather than proactively working to reduce them. Projects that "Maintain Status Quo" may exist in areas where BIPOC and low-income communities reside, however the project plan, design, or intended use lacks an intentional and comprehensive approach to addressing specific racial disparities and advancing racial equity.
- **Exacerbates Inequities** – Analysis shows the project risks worsening racial disparities or creating new inequities through its design, planning, construction, or operations. The project does not adequately identify and mitigate potential unintended negative consequences for BIPOC and low-income communities. Resources may be allocated in a way that disadvantages or overlooks BIPOC and low-income communities.
- **More Information Needed** – More information is needed – this CBET response did not meet the minimum standard for evaluation by ORESJ. There is insufficient data, analysis or evidence provided to fully evaluate the project's impact on advancing equitable outcomes, either positive or negative. More information is required to determine how the project advances, maintains, or exacerbates equitable outcomes. *It is important to note that the provision of additional information would not inherently result in a project producing more equitable outcomes nor a project exacerbating inequities. At this time, ORESJ will not be providing a resubmittal period.*

Narrative Justification

Along with the Finding Statement, ORESJ will provide a brief justification in narrative form based on the following considerations:

1. Examination of who benefits from, or is potentially harmed by, the implementation or absence of this project.
2. The level of detail and clarity about the project, project context and goals.
3. The depth of supporting evidence, including the use of disaggregated data, community engagement, research on racial disparities and inequities, and best practices for advancing racial equity to make decisions about the project—its planning and/or implementation.

4. The resources—CORE Team leads, ORESJ, or outside experts—that were consulted during budget development. As well as supplemental documentation and resources that further justify the necessity of the project and its ability to address racial disparities and other inequities in the County.

Sample CBET response

STEP 1: ESTABLISH THE CONTEXT AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT = WHAT THE PROJECT SEEKS TO ADDRESS

1. What need does this project fulfil and what benefit (or outcome) does this project seek to create in the community?

The purpose of the project is to create a center to serve the artistically varied and active arts community and to cultivate the diversity of the arts in Wheaton by enhancing the cultural and educational opportunities for community participation in the arts.

The structural concept of the center is an arts incubator model—a public-private partnership in which the County owns and maintains the facility while a facility operator is selected to operate the building and provide program content to for the Wheaton area arts community to include:
professional development, central services, and administrative support.

The operator will develop a facility rental program designed to provide access to community users. The incubator concept is designed to increase capacity of artists and arts organizations so they can grow artistically and professionally. The concept is envisioned to include a performance space, studio space, classrooms, gallery spaces, and administrative spaces.

2. What informed the project request—how did you learn about this need?

In 2018, a consultant for the County prepared an Arts & Cultural Facilities Feasibility Study (Feasibility Study). The Feasibility Study noted that Wheaton, with its 50,000 residents, is ethnically rich and diverse and is a central transportation hub. The Feasibility Study found that while Montgomery County has many arts venues offering a variety of programming and facilities, there is no dedicated space for arts and cultural activity or performances with consistent programming accessible to the public in Wheaton. One of the conclusions of the analysis was that affordable access to a variety of arts spaces is key among the community needs.

STEP 2: APPLY A RACIAL EQUITY LENS TO THE PROBLEM OR ISSUES THE PROJECT SEEKS TO ADDRESS = WHAT A RACIAL EQUITY LENS SAYS ABOUT WHO IS MOST IMPACTED BY WHAT THE PROJECT SEEKS TO ADDRESS

3. What does data, community feedback, and broader research (historical and/or current) tell you about who is most impacted/burdened by what this project seeks to address?

As described in the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice's (ORESJ) <u>Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation #22-67 Public Arts Trust (No. 729658)</u>:

Research suggests that a lack of artists of color working in public art is the result of multiple inequities, including in public education – particularly in access to Art Schools – and across the economy more generally. These inequities have resulted in stark disparities in who is able to make a living from their art; in the US an estimated 77% of artists making a living from their art are White.[3] The Office of Arts and Culture in Seattle, Washington identified two categories of barriers contributing to similar disparities in their jurisdiction[4]: 1) requirements of public artists to have previous experience making permanent artwork and managing budgets of a certain size and 2) skills in project management (that often require previous experience or additional education to be able to demonstrate). For both types of barriers, a systemic lack of resources and opportunities has created additional disadvantages for artists of color. To address these systemic issues, research suggests a focus on empowering oppressed groups and redistributing resources has the greatest potential of advancing racial equity[5].

Additionally, the consultants of the 2018 Feasibility Study conducted community engagement including one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, town hall meetings, e-surveys, arts organization engagement and site visits. Spanish language interpreters were present at community meetings. The surveys for both the arts community and the public were available in English and Spanish. The results of the process indicated a need for arts facilities, a need to professionally develop artists and arts organizations, and a need for studio space, performance space, creative space and a place where the community can gather and participate in the arts. A need for family programming was identified, and programming for children, teens and young adults.

4. What unintended consequences does this project have the potential to create (at any point in the lifespan of the project) for communities of color and other marginalized groups?
The successful implementation of the facility would not burden any group. The new arts and cultural center would expand opportunities for affordable access to arts and culture in a part of the County that has a disproportionate number of lower income Latino residents. The Wheaton area is currently underserved by arts facilities. As noted by the County's

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[3] The Office of Arts and Culture. Seattle, Washington. Capacity Building for Racial Equity in Public Art. September 2018. http://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Arts/Downloads/Reports/2018_9-WHITEPAPER-PublicArtBootCamp-SCREEN.pdf
[4] The Office of Arts and Culture. Seattle, Washington. https://www.seattle.gov/arts
[5] Kristen Day. Public Art and the Promotion of Racial Equity. 2012. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270761704_Public_art_and_the_promotion_of_racial_equity

consultant for the project, one of the challenges will be to create an equitable and inclusive use policy that will allow access for a diversity of users. The consultant stated that the process to create the policy should be fully aligned with the mission of the Arts Incubator.

STEP 3: EXPLAIN HOW THE PROJECT RESPONDS TO THE INFORMATION GENERATED FROM USING A RACIAL EQUITY LENS = HOW THE PROJECT RESPONDS TO THE INFORMATION GENERATED BY USING A RACIAL EQUITY LENS

5. What racial disparities or inequities will this project impact if implemented /and/or completed? (50 character minimum)

As part of the 2018 Feasibility Study, the County's consultant provided data on demographics. The report stated that Wheaton and the surrounding area is highly diverse with a Hispanic or Latino population of 46%, greater than all other races and ethnicities in the area. The proportion of non-White populations is increasing while the White population is declining. The report recommended that the "ethnic diversity of Wheaton should influence programming and program partnerships." The diversity is also apparent in languages spoken at home. In Wheaton, Spanish is spoken at home by 43% of the population, compared to 39% for English. The report notes that this is a significantly higher rate than the surrounding areas and the US in general, and that "a new facility in Wheaton must take into consideration its Spanish-speaking population and explore opportunities for reaching a diverse audience base when developing new programming."

Income disparities are evident in Wheaton. The Feasibility Study noted that "Household income in the 40 to 60-minute drive time radii shows a greater range of income distribution, including a higher rate of households earning $100,000-$150,000 annually; whereas a majority of those living within Wheaton (68%) and the surrounding 20-minute drive time radius of Wheaton (61%) are earning less than $75,000." The consultant further explained that "Household income is linked to arts participation levels and, more generally, available discretionary money. With knowledge of the disparity in income, subsidy programs can be established to bridge the gap between what audiences can afford to pay and the cost of arts activities."

Overall, this project will impact inequities in access to arts activities resulting from racial disparities in income (and other related economic outcomes such as rent-burden, employment, and business revenues). The Plan states that Wheaton has a higher proportion of low-income residents than the County as a whole, and a much higher proportion that use transit rather than driving.

6. Based on your previous response, how will the adoption of the project help to reduce/widen/maintain racial disparities and inequities? (50 character minimum)

The adoption of this project will reduce racial disparities and inequities as it specifically targets inequities in access to arts opportunities. The addition of this facility in Wheaton will decrease racial inequities in the County as it will increase access to arts and culture in an area with a higher proportion of low-income people and people of color.

7. How will you mitigate any unintended consequences, for communities of color and other marginalized groups, resulting from the development, construction, or implementation of the project?

The facility planning work that has been completed for the Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center found that there is no dedicated space for publicly accessible arts and cultural activity or performances with consistent programming, and that a key need of the community is affordable access to a variety of arts spaces. The facility will be located within a community that is disproportionately impacted by racial disparities and inequities. It is important to continue the work in process so that the vision is achieved to offer affordable access to arts and cultural activity. If this vision is not continuously prioritized, it is possible that a lack of sufficient funding could result in higher costs for the public, thereby excluding local residents who have lower incomes compared to the County as a whole. Furthermore, as the project progresses, the facility must consider Wheaton's Spanish-Speaking population, and explore opportunities for reaching a diverse audience base when developing new programming, as recommended by the consultant. This will be critical in ensuring that the facility programs are available to its targeted audience, and that the facility has the potential to reduce racial disparities in access to arts and cultural programming.

Sample Finding Statement & Narrative Explanation

The following are sample ratings based on the CBET responses used in this manual.

Finding Statement	Narrative Justification
Advances Equitable Outcomes The project is designed to reduce existing and documented racial disparities and inequities. It prioritizes and centers the needs of underserved communities of color. Data, research, and community outreach informed the planning and design of the project and consideration was given to mitigate unintended consequences resulting from implementation of the project.	The Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center advances equitable outcomes in the arts and cultural sector—particularly for low-income Latinx and immigrant residents of the Wheaton community. The use of supporting evidence including a robust community engagement effort, data, and research (mostly compiled by an outside consultant) in addition to referencing previous REIAs from ORESJ clearly explains the needs and benefits of such a project. It is even more clear that the project will provide equitable access to a public good that is enjoyed in other (wealthier and Whiter) parts of the County while seeking to mitigate any potential harms with thoughtful implementation efforts that include policy initiatives that work to advance the goals of the project.

Where can I find help?

ORESJ will provide a training that will be recorded and shared with department users in July 2025. Because **Finding Statements will not be changed after they are transmitted**, ORESJ strongly recommends taking advantage of the July training opportunity and August technical assistance. ORESJ also recommends consulting the following:

- ORESJ's library of [Racial Equity Impact Assessments](#) and The Office of Legislative Oversight's collection of [Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statements](#) which can help you learn about the intersection of racial equity and the policy or issue area you work in.
- Resources available on the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)](#) portal.

Glossary

- **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color** (BIPOC) is a term referring to "Black and/or Indigenous People of Color." While "POC" or People of Color is often used as well, BIPOC explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities, which helps to counter anti-Black racism and Native erasure.
- **Capital Improvements Program Budget Equity Tool** (CBET) is both a product and a process that encourages departments and decisionmakers to consider the impacts of their proposed projects, project amendments, and budget decisions on racial disparities and inequities in the County
- **Disaggregated data** is information—quantitative or qualitative—that gives insights into the particular experience and circumstances of specific population groups (by race, ethnicity, nativity, gender, disability, etc.). Disaggregating data can help in identifying and unpacking dimensions of a specific inequity or inequitable outcome. When data is not disaggregated and viewed in its aggregate form, it can mask inequities.
- **Ethnicity** refers to a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, history and customs. Throughout US history different ethnic groups, as described above in the definition of "race", have been racialized as non-white and therefore ethnicity within this context is commonly used in conjunction with race or is implied when describing disparities, disproportionalities, and other inequities.
- **Equity** is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations, and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.
- **Marginalized communities** are communities that have not had equal access to opportunity due to exclusion or harmful policies or practices, including

discrimination or disinvestment, which have produced inequities by race and ethnicity and its intersection with gender, nativity, disability, and other identity groups. Terms like "underserved communities", "disinvested communities", "underrepresented communities", and disadvantaged communities" are similar and depending on the context may more appropriately describe communities that have historically and currently experienced inequities.

- **People of Color** refers to the political or social (not biological) identity among and across groups of people that are racialized as non-White. The term "people of color" is used to acknowledge that many races experience racism in the U.S, and the term includes, but is not synonymous with, Black people. Increasingly, the term BIPOC is used in place of "people of color".

- **Race** is a social and political construction—with no inherent genetic or biological basis—used by institutions to arbitrarily categorize and divide groups of individuals based on physical appearance (particularly skin color), ancestry, cultural history, and ethnic classification. The concept has been, and still is, used to justify the domination, exploitation, and violence against people who are racialized as non-White. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.

- **Racial equity** is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicts one's life outcomes. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

- **Racial disparity** is an unequal outcome one or more racial or ethnic group experiences as compared to the outcome for another racial or ethnic group and their population relative overall population.

- **Racial disproportionality i**s the underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group at a particular decision point, event, or circumstance, in comparison to the group's percentage in the total population.

- **Racial Equity Impact Assessmen**t is a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision.

- **Racial inequity** Race as the number one predictor of life outcomes, e.g., disproportionality in education (high school graduation rates), jobs (unemployment rate), criminal justice (arrest and incarceration rates), life expectancy, etc.

- **Race Equity Lens** is the process of paying disciplined attention to race and ethnicity while analyzing problems, looking for solutions, and defining success. A race equity lens critiques a "color blind" approach, arguing that color blindness perpetuates systems of disadvantage in that it prevents structural racism from being acknowledged. Application of a race equity lens helps to illuminate disparate outcomes, patterns of disadvantage, and root cause.

- **Systems-thinking** can help people understand why changes in multiple sectors are necessary to make genuinely sustainable progress towards racial equity in particular spheres such as education, health, or economic security. It can thus help identify both entry points for change and links among those entry points.
- **Unintended Consequence** are the outcomes of an action that are not anticipated. These occur when the intended goals or outcomes of a particular action or intervention are not fully realized or when unanticipated side effects emerge.

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