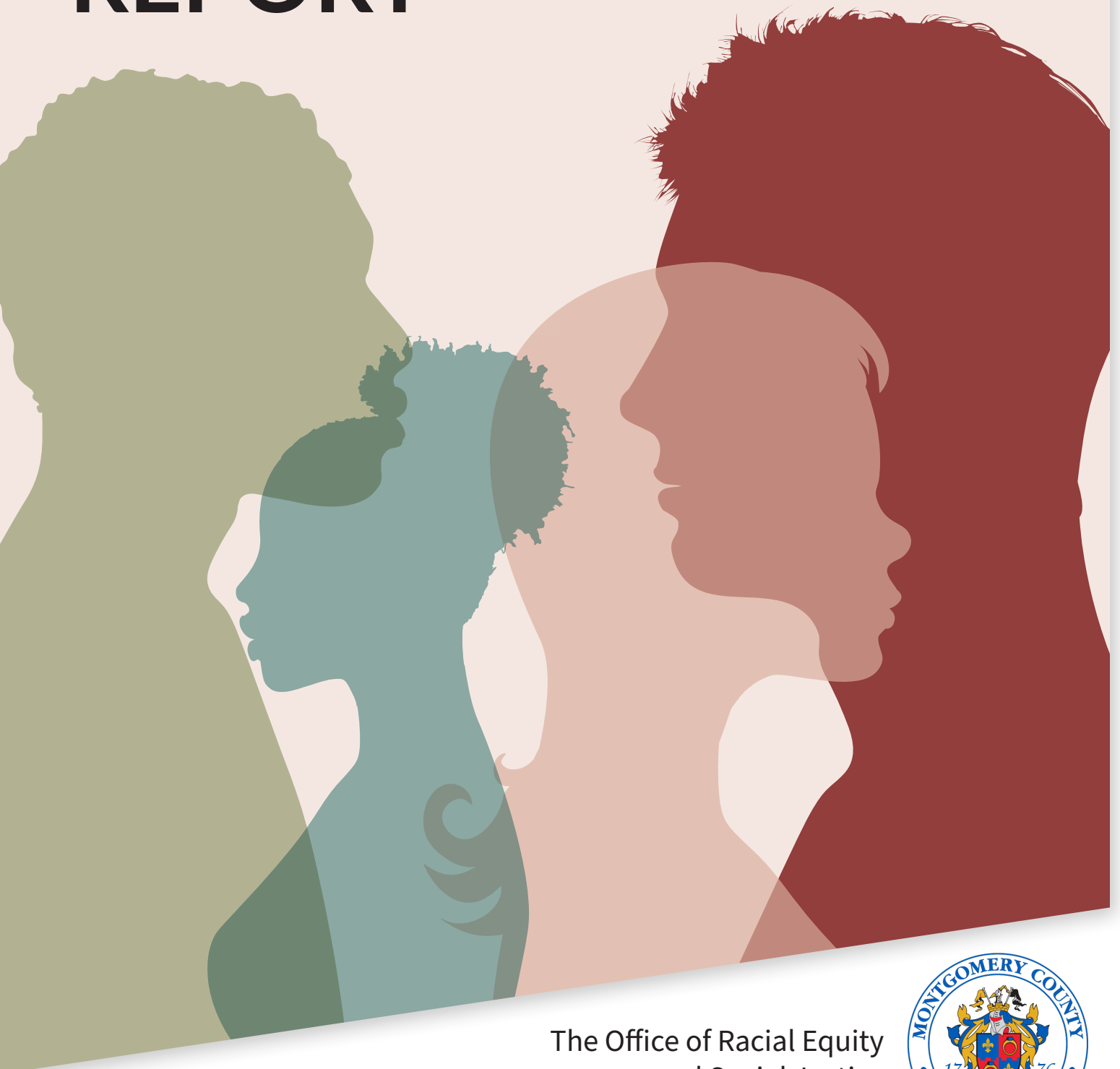


JULY 2021 - JUNE 2022

ANNUAL REPORT



The Office of Racial Equity
and Social Justice





Marc Elrich
County Executive

**OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Tiffany Ward
Chief Equity Officer

Dear County Executive Elrich and Council President Albornozy,

It is my pleasure to present the 2021-2022 Annual Report for the Montgomery County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ). This past year we helped the county deepen its understanding and practice of racial equity. We continue to use the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) framework of normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing to help us embed racial equity into the County's culture and decision-making processes. This year county employees and leaders became more comfortable and knowledgeable in the language and skills necessary to ensure racial equity is central to resource allocation and programmatic decisions. Evidence of this can be seen in more skilled use of racial equity tools, more employees attending RESJ trainings, and continued learning outside of the trainings offered by ORESJ.

Capacity building continues to be the focus of our training program, as building the skills and knowledge of all county employees is essential for creating equitable outcomes for Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) in Montgomery County. Staff from almost all departments across the county government have participated in racial equity and social justice (RESJ) trainings. In some departments, up to 90% of their staff have participated in RESJ trainings, demonstrating their commitment to the racial equity initiative and continued learning.

The work of our policy team continues to support the county in operationalizing racial equity. We developed updated racial equity tools for the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and Operating budget processes. These tools help departments and decision-makers think about how resource and programmatic decisions impact BIPOC communities now and in the future. Our Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIA) continue to be a source of critical analysis and guidance on supplemental appropriation budget decisions. They are a much-needed guide on using a racial equity lens that centers on history, data, and desired outcomes.

This past year, in addition to our training and policy development work the Office of Racial Equity wrote regulations that support the implementation of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act. The regulations provide detailed guidelines on training, developing racial equity action plans, and community engagement. We continue to drive home the need to partner with BIPOC communities to develop racially equitable processes and outcomes. Centering the voices of communities of color is essential to achieving racial equity.

The body of this report will provide more details of our work and accomplishments this year, but it is important to recognize that our ultimate goal is to keep the lives and life outcomes of BIPOC communities at the forefront of our minds when making decisions. The tools, trainings, and strategies outlined in the report are just some of the ways we can accomplish that.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tiffany Ward".

Director and Chief Equity Officer

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MEET OUR STAFF

Tiffany Ward, Director, and Chief Equity Officer

Tiffany Ward is currently the Chief Equity Officer in Montgomery County, MD. As the Chief Equity Officer, she is charged with training county staff on the core tenets of racial equity and examining county policies and practices for their short and long-term effects on racial disparities. Tiffany has dedicated her 20-plus-year career to creating a fairer and more equitable world for people of color. During her 15-year career in local government, she has focused on education, health, and human services, and housing policy. She spent the early years of her career working with youth-serving organizations to bring resources and opportunities to young people who were capable and talented but who lacked the financial resources needed to create good lives for themselves. Before her career in local government, she worked in the labor movement on voting rights issues, including felon re-enfranchisement and voter protection campaigns. Throughout her life the values of justice, fairness, and community building have been her guide. Tiffany is a graduate of Tufts University.

Sarah Alvarez, Program Manager, Policy Analyst

Sarah Alvarez is a Program Manager of Policy Analysis in the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. In this role, Sarah works with ORESJ and county leaders to develop and assess departmental policies, procedures, and practices with a racial equity lens. Prior to joining the County, Sarah was a Senior Program Associate at the Aspen Institute, working for six years at the

intersection of racial equity and economic opportunity. She is a skilled researcher, analyst, and facilitator, with experience developing and managing applied research projects and facilitating peer-learning experiences focused on advancing equitable outcomes for workers, job seekers, and entrepreneurs facing structural barriers to opportunity. Sarah holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs from the University of Mary Washington. Outside of work, Sarah teaches Zumba and is developing a regular yoga practice—helping to balance her love of baking and baked goods!

Rhiannon Reeves, Program Manager, Policy Analyst

Rhiannon Reeves provides support to the Montgomery County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice as a Program Manager, Policy Analysis. In her role, she works to advance Montgomery County's policy of reducing and ultimately eliminating racial disparities and inequities by working with ORESJ staff as well as departmental leaders to develop and assess departmental policies, procedures, and practices through the lens of racial equity. Prior to joining ORESJ, Rhiannon served as; a Program Manager for the New Jersey Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services; a Policy Analyst at the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP); a Research Assistant at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP); and Membership Program Assistant and Membership and Advocacy Coordinator at Sister Song. As a result of these previously held positions, Rhiannon is equipped to advance equitable outcomes through

public policy—particularly for those facing the greatest systemic barriers to success. Rhianon is a graduate of both Georgia State University (B.A. in African American Studies with a minor in Sociology) and the Columbia University School of Social Work (MSSW with a policy concentration and children and families focus). Outside of work she enjoys cooking comforting meals for her family and taking long scenic walks.

Jeanette Rojas, Training Manager

Jeanette Rojas is a Program Manager for Training in the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. Jeanette has over 20 years of experience in education program management and social justice advocacy that began in her role as one of the founders of the first Latina Sorority at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). After receiving her bachelor's degree in psychology from UMCP she worked in advocacy organizations such as the National Council of La Raza (now known as Unidos Us) as a senior resource development specialist, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute as a programs manager, and the Parent Institute for Quality Education as the director. After receiving her master's degree in education and human development from George Washington University she became passionate about working with

first-generation college graduates at Montgomery College. During her time at Montgomery College, she created the Social Justice Inclusive Leadership Institute (SJILI) which helped students understand the foundations of social justice work while also receiving a stipend and a micro-credential. Working in the fields of education and advocacy has helped her understand the importance of racial equity and inclusion not only in educational institutions but in all facets of the community. During her free time, she enjoys biking, meditating, and spending time with her family.

Andrea Gardner, Administrative Specialist

Andrea Gardner is the Administrative Specialist for the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. She has extensive experience in the Montgomery County government, having provided support to DTS (now TEBS), DOCR, DGS, CEX, and now ORESJ. Andrea is a seasoned administrative professional and provides expert coordination and planning across the Office's portfolio of projects, in addition to supporting Director Tiffany Ward. Her dedication to service is integral to maintaining the Office's operational effectiveness. In her free time, Andrea enjoys singing and being a grandmother to her two-year-old granddaughter, vacationing by the water, and tending to her many orchids.



TRAINING

OVERVIEW


The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) trainings are integral to Montgomery County's racial equity journey. The ORESJ training program is essential to building staff capacity as we work to create equitable outcomes for county residents. Our nation and County have experienced events that make talking about race more important than ever. Each day we hear about racist incidents across our communities. Navigating difficult conversations around race can be intimidating and often brings up strong emotions. People look to our office for guidance.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This past year 754 employees across 37 departments, completed 'Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government' and 'The Groundwater Approach: Building a Practical Understanding of Structural Racism' training. Each employee that attends and completes an ORESJ training learns terminology, history, and actionable steps they can take to demonstrate their commitment to ending systemic racism and cultivating a culture of inclusion. Normalizing conversations around racial equity is a process that takes time because trust must be built. Creating safe spaces that foster transformative dialogues is an ongoing process.

Our trainings meet this need and not only help participants develop an awareness of the history of racist systems but also provides tools for dismantling these systems. This approach is central to our office's mission and is essential to creating equitable outcomes for communities of color.

We are committed to offering training that is accessible, engaging, and transformative. Our training continues to be delivered virtually and will soon be available through self-guided modules.



Participating in the County's RESJ training has helped staff have a common language, an understanding of RESJ issues, and a framework from which to initiate conversations and the work needed to address issues of inequality within the department.

Ana Arrianza,
Equity Lead, DEP

GENERAL STAFF TRAININGS

ORESJ continues the Racial Equity Learning Labs for Staff – a training series for all staff who seek to learn, engage, and deepen their understanding of systemic racism – historically and currently. ‘Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government’, was offered almost every month.

The ‘Advancing Racial Equity’ workshop is a 4-hour training facilitated by ORESJ staff

‘The Groundwater Approach: Building a Practical Understanding of Structural Racism’ is a 3-hour session taught by facilitators from the Racial Equity Institute (REI).

Now is always the time to: normalize the conversation and analysis about race; organize the infrastructure and platform for change; operationalize the tools, data, and strategies for the greatest good. Thank you all, ORESJ, GARE, Race Forward, and many more for helping me learn today’s language and tools to race forward in the struggle for life, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness with hope anew.’

Linda Curvey-Brown, Equity Lead, LIB



SUMMARY OF TRAININGS

Below are descriptions and summaries of participation for each training.


Training Title	Description	Dates	Staff Participation at the End of Calendar Year 2021 and 2022
Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government	In this engaging workshop, participants examine the system of racism, and the role government has historically played in creating and upholding racial inequities.	2021 7/28, 8/25, 9/29, 10/27, 12/1	350
		2022 1/19, 2/24, 3/24, 4/21, 5/26, 6/23	
The Groundwater Approach: Building a Practical Understanding of Structural Racism	Racial Equity Institute organizers use stories and data to present a perspective that racism is fundamentally structural in nature. By examining characteristics of modern-day racial inequity, the presentation introduces participants to an analysis that most find immediately helpful and relevant.	2021 8/24, 9/15, 10/7, 10/20, 11/5	404
		2022 1/12, 2/17, 3/15, 4/28, 5/24	

SUMMARY OF FUTURE OUTLOOK

Our goal is to train all county employees on the tenets of racial equity and social justice. To advance towards this goal, we are creating self-guided modules as an enhancement to our current training program. Self-guide modules will give employees the flexibility to engage with training curriculum whenever it is most practical and convenient for them. These modules will be interactive in addition to providing the latest information related to racial equity and social justice in our County and in the country. We want to ensure that all the training provided by ORESJ is accessible to all.


We are currently delivering a train-the-trainer cohort focused on training volunteer employee facilitators to deliver the 'Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government' which is currently only delivered by ORESJ staff. Once volunteer facilitators are trained, we will offer 'Advancing Racial Equity: The Role in Government' twice a month, enabling more county employees to be trained every year.

Our 'Lunch and Learn' series will highlight heritage celebrations, the intersection of race and other areas of marginalization, and current events that are relevant to racial equity and social justice.



I enjoyed this webinar very much. I found that it was insightful and really opened my eyes. I would recommend it to colleagues. The presentations were engaging and the tools used in the presentation were as well. Thank you very much for having this webinar!

A participant in the Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government



I now have a better understanding of the roots and implications of the racial problem in the US.

Participant in the Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government

CORE TEAMS AND RACIAL EQUITY LEADS

ORGANIZING FOR RACIAL EQUITY

For the past year, Racial Equity Leads have been the driving force of racial equity and social justice within their departments. Racial Equity Leads convene their colleagues and CORE Team members around discussions of race, policy, and culture. They facilitate conversations and book discussions on microaggressions, bias, and racial equity at the intersection of their department's focus, i.e.: transportation, health, and the environment. Racial Equity Leads are essential partners in the quest to imbed racial equity in county decision-making. They organize staff within their department and bring critical insights from their trainings and networks back to their departments to support staff and leaders in using a racial equity lens in their work.

The training was excellent! Everyone in the County should take it.

Participant in the Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government

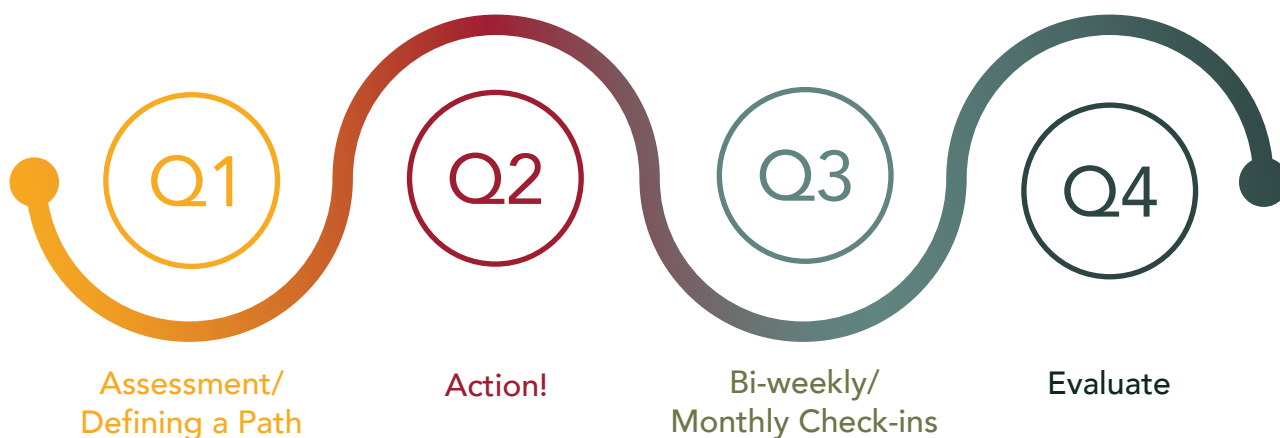
Racial Equity Leads receive one-on-one coaching from the Chief Equity Officer and/or the Training Program Manager in addition to having quarterly meetings with other Racial Equity Leads. They are also afforded outside training opportunities through GARE, Leadership Montgomery, and the Racial Equity Institute.

Over the last year or so we have attended quite a few trainings and conferences. These educational programs have been extremely informative and useful. These trainings have added to my leadership skills in general. They have also given me extensive knowledge which helps me lead some tough conversations with my coworkers. I was also able to participate in a year-long equity training led by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (G.A.R.E.) that included quite a few government agencies from all over the DMV. Because of that DMV Cohort, we created my department's (ABS) Racial Equity Action Plan, I also gained relationships with people all over the DMV that can assist me with the various roadblocks I may come across

Preston James, Store Manager & Racial Equity Lead, ABS

CORE Teams are an important organizing force within departments. They provide department-level expertise and help identify opportunities for imbedding racially equitable processes into department-level work. ORESJ continues to support CORE teams with trainings, working sessions, and one-on-one coaching sessions.

Moving forward, CORE teams will support one another in addition to receiving professional development opportunities from ORESJ. Our approach to creating this mentorship opportunity will include assessment/defining a path of success, actionable and measurable goals, bi-weekly/monthly check-ins, and evaluations of what is and isn't working.



Government Alliance on Race and Equity (G.A.R.E.)

This past year Racial Equity Leads from Montgomery County Public Libraries, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Transportation, Alcohol Beverage Services, and Department of Recreation participated in a year-long, cross-jurisdiction learning cohort led by GARE. Racial Equity Leads gained a better understanding of institutional and structural racism through root cause analysis and organizational change theory. They also learned about using racial equity tools to transform organizational culture, incorporate inclusive engagement practices, and develop policies and practices that advance racial equity. This cohort continues to work with the ORESJ as they start to develop department-level equity action plans.

2022 GARE Annual Meeting

Racial Equity Leads have benefitted greatly from GARE's resources and professional development opportunities. Like Racial Equity Leads, every County employee has access to GARE trainings, meetings, conferences, and other resources. GARE offers an orientation on a regular basis for new members in addition to providing events such as film screenings and panel discussions on important matters that directly impact race and equity in government.

[Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(racialequityalliance.org\)](https://racialequityalliance.org)

A team of approximately 20 department Racial Equity Leads and CORE team members participated virtually in the 3-day (April 19 – 21) 2022 GARE Annual Membership meeting. Their participation was

subsidized by ORESJ. This year's meeting focused on reimagining government for racial equity and justice.

The Department of Transportation further demonstrated its commitment to racial equity by sending a host of its department staff to this meeting.

POLICY ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) supports the County in applying a racial equity lens to its policies, practices, and procedures, with the end goal of reducing and eliminating racial disparities and inequities in the County. Using a racial equity lens brings conscious attention to potential racial equity impacts of government decisions by providing insights into historical and current structural inequities that are likely to produce disparate or disproportionate racialized outcomes. Oftentimes, we describe the use of a racial equity lens as the “how?” of intentionally centering the experiences of BIPOC residents and other groups facing systemic oppression in policy and decision-making spaces.

ORESJ uses a racial equity lens in its analysis of Supplemental and Special Appropriations and in the analysis of Capital and Operating Budgets. ORESJ also recognizes the critical role data analysis plays in identifying and redressing racial disparities and inequities and hosted a program in October 2021 (Quarterly Leadership Forum: Data and Racial Equity) to help county leaders learn about data sources and practical techniques for analyzing data with a racial equity lens. The following sections describe ORESJ's work using and supporting others in using a racial equity lens to reduce and eliminate racial disparities and inequities in the County.

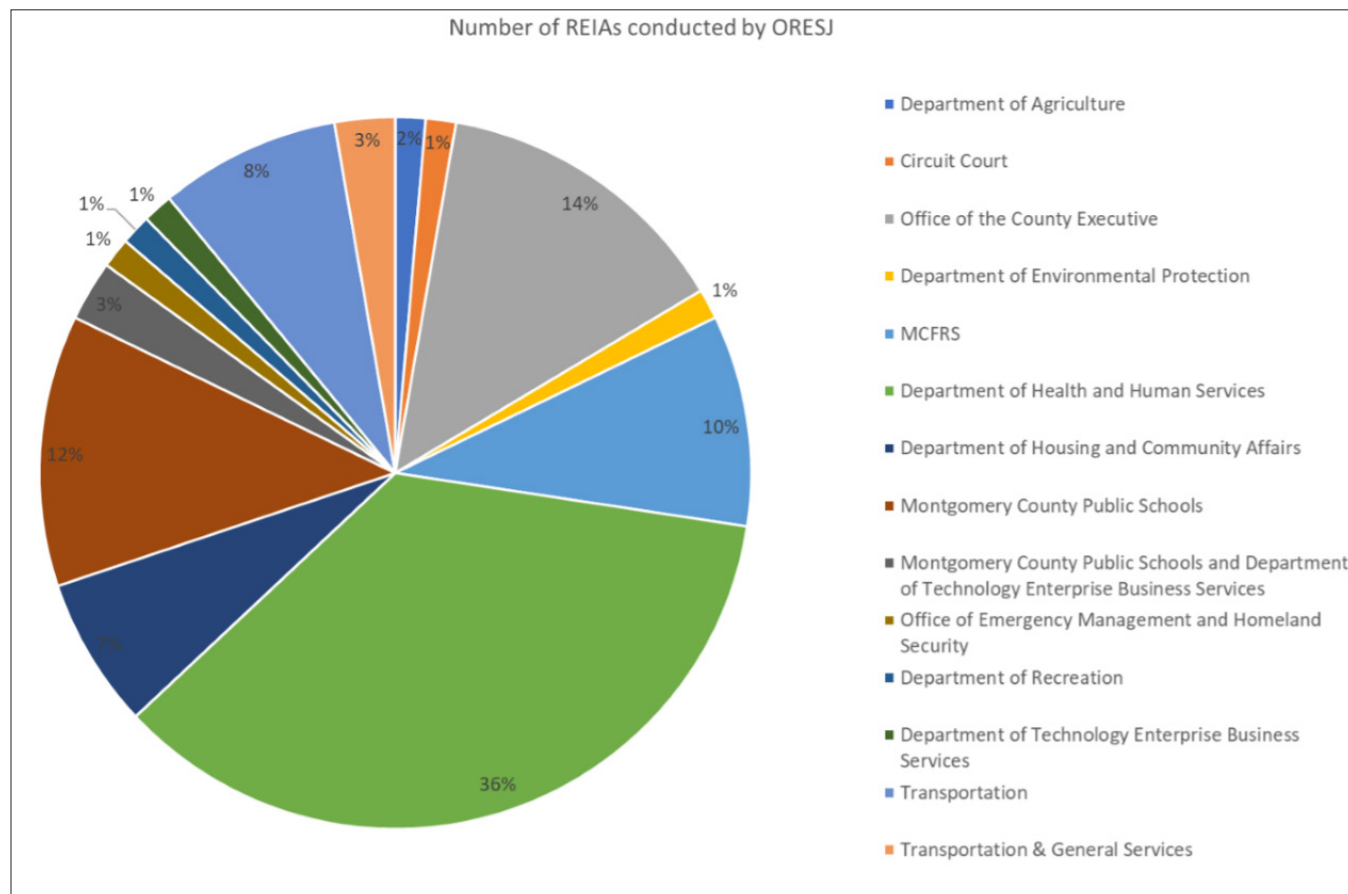
RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

ORESJ supports the County's use of a racial equity lens in the review and analysis of supplemental and special appropriations. Since March 2021, The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, in accordance with Bill #44-20, has reviewed supplemental/special appropriation requests with a racial equity lens. The product of each review is a Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) sent to the County Council for consideration. REIAs are used in several jurisdictions to evaluate the current or predicted impact of policies, programs, and budget

decisions on racial disparities similar to how environmental impact statements or health impact assessments are used in their respective fields to provide decision-makers with a uniform structure for looking critically at data in light of current and historical conditions and desired goals. REIAs enable decision-makers to mitigate harmful unintended consequences and get ahead of what Terry Keleher of Race Forward calls “rapidly replicating racism”¹. In addition to producing insights about anticipated racial equity impacts, REIAs also encourage

the adoption of an analytical process that proactively includes community engagement and input from communities impacted by racial disparities and other inequities. REIAs encourage policymakers to test assumptions, validate quantitative analysis with qualitative data and community input and ground findings in a historical analysis of

race and racism in the US. Taking these steps generates more comprehensive, nuanced, and actionable findings. As a product and process, REIAs promote transparency, accountability, and the use of a racial equity lens before decisions are made—all practices that support the County's effort to advance racial equity and social justice.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Between July 2021 and June 2022, ORESJ has conducted 73 Racial Equity Impact Assessments on Supplemental Appropriations generated by 13 different departments and agencies.

For comparison, between July 2020 and June 2021, ORESJ conducted 20 REIAs. The full list of REIAs is available here: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/appr.html

¹ racc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/An-Introduction-to-Racial-Equity-Assessment-Tools.pdf

NUMBER OF REIAs CONDUCTED BY ORESJ - SPOTLIGHT

This past year, ORESJ continued to utilize REIAs to bring to light potential racial equity impacts (that benefit and/or burden BIPOC residents of the County)—particularly related to the County’s use of targeted funds. Two supplemental appropriations exemplify these efforts: Supplemental Appropriation #22-67 Public Arts Trust (No. 729658) and Supplemental Appropriation #23-09 Assistance to Access Abortion, Reproductive Health, and Related Services. These REIAs offer examples of a department aiming to codify a racial equity lens within their work and a grant opportunity aligned with county priorities to protect women and their providers in the wake of the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* Supreme Court decision.

The REIA for Supplemental Appropriation #22-67 showcases how the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) is working to embed a racial equity strategy into their work to advance equitable outcomes for BIPOC artists who are often underrepresented in funding opportunities that enable them to profit from the sales of their art. As noted in [REIA Supplemental Appropriation: Department of Recreation Public Arts Trust \(No. 729658\)](#), the purpose of the request was to fund payments to Public Arts Trust project vendors as a part of the County’s existing public arts program. To assess the likelihood of the supplemental request’s ability to advance racial equity and social justice in the County, ORESJ reviewed:

- publicly available information about the organization managing the vendor payments involved with the request—the AHCMC,

- data about the vendor demographics and payments involved with this funding, and
- racial inequities affecting Public Arts Trusts in other jurisdictions.

Publicly available information³ suggests that AHCMC recognizes and is committed to addressing questions of racial equity and access, particularly in the recruitment and selection of artists. The Council’s grantmaking statement affirms – in part – the following:

With the acknowledgment and understanding that access to resources has been historically limited for certain groups of people, AHCMC is committed to cultural equity within all funding activities and to serving communities that have been traditionally underrepresented in mainstream funding, discourse, leadership, and resource allocation including, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, Native American, Latinx, Chicanx, Arab, MENASA (Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian), Asian, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color, socio-economically disadvantaged communities, differently abled individuals and/or people with disabilities, and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual constituents. AHCMC recognizes that language is fluid, and the intersectional justice movement is redefining terminology regularly. This list is not exhaustive and will be updated periodically as the language continues to shift over time.

The REIA for Supplemental Appropriation #23-09 provided an assessment – through an intersectional lens of race, gender, economic status, and citizenship status – of

the County's proposed fund for Assistance to Access Abortion, Reproductive Health, and Related Services. The proposed fund directly emanated from the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision and the County Executive's desire to provide resources to those seeking abortion services as well as their providers. The **REIA for Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-09 FY23 Operating Budget Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistance to Access Abortion, Reproductive Health, and Related Services** found that the requested funds have the ability to advance racial equity and social justice for a limited number of low-income women who identify as BIPOC as well as undocumented women contingent on the strategies employed by grantees. ORESJ offered several recommendations to be considered during the award and distribution of the funds.

- Amount of funding available;
- Location of grantees and providers;
- Availability of emergency contraceptives;
- Acceptance of vouchers by grantees to be reimbursed by the County in a timely fashion;
- Ensuring that newly enacted Medicaid coverage until 12 months postpartum is implemented regardless of how a pregnancy ends; and
- Solutions that address the systemic factors that often push women and their families into seeking abortions.

A number of ORESJ's recommendations ultimately ended up in the final iteration of

Resolution 19-1357, which provides grant awards from \$50,000 to a maximum of \$500,000 for an up to one year (12-month) performance period for the County's FY 2023 Abortion, Reproductive Health, and Related Services Access (ARHRSA) grants program⁴. Grantees must be able to address at least two of the following funding areas⁵:

- Assisting with wraparound services to those who are accessing abortion services;
- Providing grants to organizations in the County that provide abortion services, or that refer patients to abortion services as part of comprehensive family planning and reproductive health education;
- Providing aid to organizations that are fighting legal battles on behalf of those seeking access to abortion services;
- Security for providers who offer direct abortion services or referral to abortion services. Providers may require increased safety or security measures as a result of heightened tensions in the political and civic environment;
- Support for organizations and providers who offer direct abortion services or refer to abortion services to begin practicing in Montgomery County. Examples include assistance with relocation costs, training costs for new providers, or other startup costs; and
- Grants to facilitate providers of abortion services to offer reduced cost, low cost, or no cost abortion services to women who have financial hardships, to ensure equitable access to abortion services.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Over the past year, ORESJ has identified opportunities for strengthening REIAs and their use in decision-making. We are currently reviewing processes, tools, written products, and communications associated with conducting REIAs. Early in 2023, ORESJ hopes to launch a revised REIA tool and guidance for departments initiating

supplemental/special appropriation requests. ORESJ anticipates that the tool updates and guidance, along with other communications, will encourage departments, Council, and residents to use REIAs in their ongoing racial equity and social justice education as well as in their formulation of policies, programs, and procedures.

BUDGET EQUITY TOOLS

Budget Equity Tools are one of many racial equity tools—analytical approaches or structured sets of questions and guidance—that support users in applying a racial equity lens at various decision points. In the case of budget development and decision-making, budget equity tools prompt departments to consider the relationship between proposed budget items and historical and current racial disparities and inequities. In alignment with the county's goal of reducing and eliminating racial disparities and inequities, budget equity tools help departments gather

and analyze information that brings a race-conscious (not color blind) context to their budget development and decision-making.

To support departments in gathering and analyzing information, ORESJ highlighted a number of data sources that provide insights about racial disparities or inequities present across a range of indicators of well-being. In addition to the relevant program and administrative data, ORESJ suggested departments consult the following data sources:

SAMPLE DATA SOURCES

National Equity Atlas:

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.: nationalequityatlas.org/indicators

Health in Montgomery in Montgomery County 2010-2019 A Surveillance Report on Population Health:

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: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/Health%20in%20Montgomery%20County%202010-19.pdf

The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center:

KIDS COUNT® is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and a premier source of data on children and families. Each year, the Foundation produces a comprehensive report — **the KIDS COUNT Data Book** — that assesses child well-being in the United States: datacenter.kidscount.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2022, ORESJ refined the Budget Equity Tool (BET)s it developed and piloted in 2021. Based on supplemental research, observations from departments' completion of BETs from the FY23 Operating Budget and FY 23-28 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Budget, and additional experience with the County's budgeting processes, ORESJ revised questions, provided additional written guidance, and delivered more in-depth training and technical assistance sessions for the FY24 CIP. The product of these efforts can be found on the ORESJ website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/bettool.html

SPOTLIGHT

During the FY24 CIP, ORESJ offered training and technical assistance to departments on how to use the CIP BET, in particular how to apply a racial equity lens to project and budget development. The training was attended by 103 county staff and covered the following key topics:

- Racial equity and social justice definitions
- The importance of leading with race
- Using a racial equity lens
- Data sources and racial equity analysis
- CIP BET rating scale and decision-making
- Sample CIP BET responses and ratings

Departments contacted ORESJ throughout the CIP budget development process to schedule one-on-one technical assistance sessions. ORESJ met with managers, analysts, and leadership from four departments. During these sessions, we discussed how to apply a racial equity lens to existing projects, including what data sources to use and how to connect insights from the data to their project development. ORESJ also posed questions around process, prioritization, and eligibility criteria to make concepts like equitable access, disparate outcomes, and disproportionate burden more concrete. Oftentimes in these sessions and afterward, ORESJ shared resources—case studies, evaluations, applied research, and relevant Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIAs)—to help departments see their policies and programs in the context of racial equity. The following is a sampling of the resources ORESJ shared with departments:

Sample Resources

Resources	Description
Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board CIP Allocation and Criteria Based System for MPRB Capital and Rehabilitation Project Scheduling	Highlights prioritization and site selection criteria based on community characteristics (racially concentrated areas of poverty, youth population, population density, and neighborhood safety) and park characteristics (park asset lifespan, park asset condition, and proportion of value).
The Urban Institute. "Five Ways to Center Equity in Park and Recreation Spending That Can Help New Funding Go Further"	Describes concrete strategies for centering equity in the field of Parks and Recreation
TransitCenter Equity Dashboard	Explains metrics and supporting methodology that helps measure and track transit equity
Tools for Equitable Mobility	Provides research and best practices for centering equity in issues of transit and mobility.
Racial Inequality and Potholes	Highlights how the City of Oakland centered equity to update its criteria for street resurfacing and repairs

FUTURE OUTLOOK

In the coming months, ORESJ will review and score CIP BET submissions and launch the FY24 Operating Budget BET. ORESJ anticipates providing an analysis and recommendations to departments and county leadership about the CIP projects and Operating Budget proposals with the greatest likelihood of supporting the County's goals of reducing and eliminating racial disparities and inequities. ORESJ's analysis will also draw attention to any

CIP projects warranting further review to mitigate unintended consequences that may disproportionately burden Black, Indigenous, People of Color and low-income communities. ORESJ's overarching goal—throughout its involvement in the County's budget decision-making—is to help departments and the County allocate resources in ways that strengthen the County's commitment to and actions towards advancing racial equity and social justice.

DATA ANALYSIS WITH A RACIAL EQUITY LENS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY QUARTERLY LEADERSHIP FORUM

On October 28, 2021, ORESJ, in collaboration with the Montgomery County Quarterly Leadership Forum, hosted Abbie Langston, PolicyLink and Shena Ashley, (formerly) the Urban Institute Racial Equity Analytics Lab for a discussion about principles and practical techniques for applying a racial equity lens throughout the data lifecycle—planning, data collection, data access, data analysis, and reporting and dissemination. Speakers described how to translate racial equity principles into action:

- centering people at the heart of the issue being considered (communities that are most burdened by racial disparities and inequities),
- disaggregating data to derive insights,
- leveraging qualitative data and deep community engagement to make meaning of the data.

Abbie explained the importance of disaggregating data and demonstrated how to access Montgomery County specific disaggregated data on a range of indicators

of well-being using the National Equity Atlas. Shena described the power of imputing data and other techniques for filling data gaps (for example, the absence of race or ethnicity data). She also highlighted the following data equity principles:

- Communities that are most impacted should have a say in what data is collected and how it is used
- Use data that expands narratives, reduces stigma, and does not perpetuate bias in its interpretation
- Focus on structures and systems—structural racism often gets individualized, putting both blame and the burden of improvement on individuals rather than on the structures holding inequities in place.

ORESJ frequently references the National Equity Atlas and the data equity principles shared during the event in its analysis of Racial Equity Impact Assessments and in its technical assistance sessions with departments.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

In June 2019, the Office of Legislative Oversight released OLO Report 2019-7 Montgomery County Racial Equity Profile, a compilation of datapoints and analysis from 2007-2018 prepared by Jupiter Independent Research Group. The data highlighted consistent racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes across several policy areas. ORESJ uses the data—which established a

baseline about inequities county residents experience—in its analysis of supplemental appropriations, budgets, and other policy analysis activities. In 2022, ORESJ expects to release an updated racial equity profile, using data from 2019 (for most indicators). The updated racial equity profile will help ORESJ, and others continue using a racial equity lens in data and policy analysis.

RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice continues to provide support to the Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee (RESJAC). Notable accomplishments of the committee are listed below:

- Hosted a Virtual Community Forum on Reparations featuring Sandy Darity and Kirsten Mullen authors of 'From here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-first Century';
- Advocated for the inclusion of Native American data amongst all disaggregated COVID-19 data; and
- Advocated for a full racial equity analysis of the Thrive50 plan.

Further details of the work of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee will be presented in their Annual Report which is scheduled to be released on December 1, 2022.





The Office of Racial Equity
and Social Justice

