



# **MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

## **Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee (RESJAC)**

### **2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

**MISSION:** The RESJAC advises the County Council, the County Executive, and County agencies about racial equity and social justice in the County and recommends policies, programs, legislation, or regulations necessary to reduce racial and social justice inequity; develops and distributes information and promotes educational activities and recommends strategies.

**Created by:  
Mo. Co. Code Section 27-83**

**December 1, 2023**

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## LETTER FROM THE RESJAC

December 1, 2023

Dear Montgomery County Executive and County Council:

In December 2019, the County Council voted unanimously to create the RESJAC as part of its. The committee's most critical duties include (1) developing and distributing information about racial equity and social justice in the County, (2) promoting educational activities that increase the understanding of racial equity and social justice in the County, and (3) advising the Council, the County Executive, and County agencies about racial equity and social justice in the County, and recommending policies, programs, legislation, regulations or strategies to reduce racial and social justice inequity.

As we embark on our fourth year as a body serving the County, we aim to maintain the momentum established in 2020. This report details work we're all very proud of, yet we know there's more work left to do. As we continue to mature our approach as a committee, it will be critically important for our group to identify areas where we can make the strongest contributions out of the over 90 boards, committees, and commissions (BCCs) within the County. Focusing our efforts will allow us to lead more boldly and better support and amplify the other BCCs that are leading efforts that intersect with our remit.

In this next year, we aim to compare the past three years of accomplishments with a review of the work across other BCCs within the County that also contribute to the work of racial equity and social justice. With a County as complex as ours, we understand that a robust and sustainable change strategy that aims to move the needle on racial equity and social justice necessitates a multi-pronged and collaborative strategy. We look forward to joining together with other BCCs, nonprofits, businesses, community members, and agencies.

We remain steadfast in applying a lens that acknowledges certain groups may experience unique forms of inequity due to how they experience institutional and systemic racism, not just in isolation but as overlapping phenomena with other social identities creating unique outcomes. We believe in the spirit of the "curb cut effect" that posits by designing interventions for the most vulnerable members of our community, we can craft solutions that benefit everyone and promote greater safety, social cohesion, and a deeper sense of belonging for all who call Montgomery County home.

The attached report is a summary of our work since 2020, when this body was first convened.

Sincerely,  
Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee

## RESJAC COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

### Community Members

**Shane Lloyd, CHAIR**  
Silver Spring

**Jared Hautamaki, VICE CHAIR**  
Silver Spring

**Sonia Canzater**  
Derwood

**Isaac Cudjoe**  
Clarksburg

**Pat Grant**  
Silver Spring

**Shuo Huang (Jim)**  
Silver Spring

**Tasnuva Khan**  
Olney

**Gustavo Torres**  
Silver Spring

*Community Member (vacant)*

*Community Member (vacant)*

### County Staff Members

**Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.**  
**PARLIAMENTARIAN**  
Racial Equity Manager  
Montgomery County Council

**Sylvia Hernandez**  
Correctional Specialist  
Montgomery County Dept. of Corrections

**Betty Lam**  
Chief, Office of Community Affairs  
Montgomery County Dept. of  
Health and Human Services

**Willie Parker-Loan**  
Assistant Chief of Police  
Montgomery County Police Department

**James Stowe**  
Director  
Office of Human Rights

**Anthony R. Alston**  
Montgomery County Public Schools

*Member (vacant)*  
Montgomery County Planning Board

#### Former Committee Members:

Partap Verma, Planning Board Rep (Nov. '20 - Jun. '22)

John Landesman, MoCo Public Schools Rep (Jun. '22 - Oct. '22)

Gerald Cichy, Planning Board Rep (Jul. '22 - Oct. '22)

Jordan Neal, Community Member (Nov. '22 - Sep. '23)

Khalid Afzal, Planning Board Rep (Mar. '23 - Nov. '23)

Zola Shaw, Community Member (Nov. '20 - Nov. '23)

## **COMMITTEE INFORMATION**

### **TERM OF SERVICE**

There are seventeen voting members of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee (RESJAC), including ten community members who serve with compensation - \$2,000 annually and seven government members who serve without compensation. All community members reside in Montgomery County and have experience redressing disparate impacts based on race and social justice issues. Government representatives on the committee include the County Office of Human Rights, a designee of the County Council, an employee of the County Department of Health and Human Services, an employee of the County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, an officer of the County Police Department, and a designee of the Chair of the County Planning Board. Each member serves a 3-year term and cannot serve more than two consecutive full terms. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy serves the rest of the unexpired term, and members continue in office until their successors are appointed and qualified.

### **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

RESJAC is required to meet at least six times a year; however, RESJAC holds monthly meetings, and all meetings are open to the public. The committee recessed for the month of August.

### **LEADERSHIP**

The RESJAC Chair, Vice Chair, and Parliamentarian are elected by members via majority vote and serve a one-year term. The election for 2023 was postponed, and the leadership bench for the committee will be updated by the end of January 2024 at the latest.

## **DUTIES OF RESJAC**

- Develop and distribute information about racial equity and social justice in the County;
- Promote educational activities that increase the understanding of racial equity and social justice in the County;
- Recommend coordinated strategies for reducing racial and social justice inequity in the County;
- Advise the Council, the Executive, and County agencies about racial equity and social justice in the County and recommend policies, programs, legislation, or regulations necessary to reduce racial and social justice inequity;
- Meet periodically with the racial equity and social justice lead for each department and office and;
- Submit an annual report by December 1 of each year to the Executive and Council on the activities of the Committee.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE**

### **December 2022 - March 2023**

- On December 7, RESJAC discussed how to measure the success of RESJAC's efforts year over year.
- On December 7, RESJAC evaluated the committee's success in achieving the duties enumerated in the legislation. See **Appendices A and B** for additional details.
- On January 18, Selena Mendy Singleton provided an overview of the process that resulted in the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act (ACT) (Bill 27-19), the amendments (Bill 44-20), and Executive Regulation 15-21, and a summary of each round of revisions.
- On January 18, Pat Grant led a discussion about whether the definition of "racial equity" should be included in the Act along with the definitions of "social justice" and "racial equity and social justice." The committee opted to apply an operational definition of racial equity derived from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) that also aligned with the operational definition leveraged by the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice for the County.
- On February 15, the committee discussed the Effective Law Enforcement for All Review of the Montgomery County Police Department.
- On February 15, Shane Lloyd introduced a new process for meeting facilitation, agenda preparation, and note-taking.
- On February 15, the Communications and Outreach Committee shared talking points on the work of RESJAC.

- On March 15, RESJAC spoke with Councilmember Will Jawando about the Police - Traffic Stops Safety and Traffic Equity Policing (STEP) Act (Bill 12-23) and the Landlord-Tenants – Rent Stabilization Act (The Home Act) (Bill 16-23).
- On March 15, Gustavo Torres organized a set of speakers from CASA to give voice to the experiences of Afro-Latino immigrants.
- On March 15, RESJAC heard from Rafael Lopez, the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Human Services, to learn more about his vision for his role and the priorities over the coming year.
- On March 15, Khalid Afzal of the Maryland National Capital Park Commission joined the committee as the appointed representative for the Montgomery Planning Board.

### **April 2023 - July 2023**

- On April 19, Dr. Kisha Davis, MD, MPH, FAFP, talked about her family's documentary film, Finding Fellowship, and the social determinants of health in Montgomery County.
- On April 19, Selena Mendy Singleton shared that Rule 4. (b) of the Council Rules of Procedure public hearing notice requirements were changed, resulting in the reduction of the number of days between the introduction and public hearing of a bill.
- On April 19, Zola Shaw facilitated a review of the Issue Identification Letter related to the Rent Stabilization Act (Bill 16-23).
- On May 19, RESJAC discussed initiatives that could be funded through RESJAC's operating budget.
- On June 21, RESJAC reviewed the updated Office of Legislative Oversight Racial Equity Action Plan that incorporated feedback from RESJAC.
- On July 19, RESJAC heard from Governor Wes Moore's transition team leadership, Cleo Hirsch and Tisha Edwards, on how the campaign engaged diverse constituents across Maryland.
- On July 19, RESJAC heard from the new Director of the Montgomery County Department of Corrections, Ben Stevenson.
- On July 19, Laura Sivels and Douglas Weisburger, leaders from the Department of Environmental Protection, led a session on community engagement leveraging the work of the Co-Creation Community Academy.

### **September 2023 - December 2023**

- On September 20, RESJAC generated a list of community organizations to collaborate with on programs and other activities.
- On September 20, RESJAC members participated in an exercise to categorize the committee's relationships with different groups along a community engagement continuum.
- On October 31st, RESJAC members sent a letter to the County Council to express concern related to the proposed changes related to the advance notice for public hearings and the negative impact those changes would have on community participation in the legislative process.
- On November 15, Pat Grant, PhD, coordinated a meeting for RESJAC with Maryland State Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield, James Bridgers, MD, and Rolando Santiago, MD. Maryland State Delegate Crutchfield explained why the decriminalization of cannabis is an important racial equity topic. Dr. Bridgers, the Director of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and Dr. Santiago, Chief of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Behavioral and Mental Health Services, shared what DHHS is doing to address the long-term health impacts associated with the usage of recreational cannabis.

### **2024 VISION**

RESJAC is committed to effectuating change in 2024 as our County continues to pursue an equitable recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic and works to address the longstanding structural and systemic inequities. In addition to continuing our critical role to advise the Council, the Executive, and County agencies, RESJAC also envisions increased efforts in the following areas:

- Community engagement and outreach efforts focused on all residents, with a particular focus on youth;
- Engagement with nonprofit and business leaders who wish to work across industries to achieve the aims of the committee and;
- Coordinated strategies to reduce racial inequities and social injustices.



## Appendix A: RESJAC Framework Exercise Narrative

### Background

To ensure that the Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee can meet the duties outlined in the enabling legislation, it's important to align on a shared framework by which to evaluate our efforts as a committee.

On Wednesday, January 18, 2023, RESJAC discussed the eight duties in the enabling legislation and discussed how to align what success would look like for each duty. Committee members were asked to rate from (1) Not at all to (5) All of the time how often we accomplished each duty. Results are noted below.

### Summary of Insights

RESJAC members were aligned on two out of the eight duties, which were **Duty #2** (keep a record of its activities and minutes of all meetings) and **Duty #8** (submit an annual report by December 1 of each year to the Executive and Council on the activities of the committee. For all other duties, there was a wide range of views as to whether the committee was effectively addressing those duties.

A majority of members agreed that RESJAC was not achieving **Duty #4** (promote educational activities that increase understanding of racial equity and social justice in the County) beyond inviting speakers to the RESJAC meetings for the edification of committee members and **Duty #7** (Meet periodically with racial equity and social justice lead for each department and office).

A majority of members agreed that RESJAC consistently addressed **Duty #1** (adopt rules and procedures as necessary to perform its duties) and **Duty #6** (advise the Council, the Executive, and the County, and recommend policies, programs, legislation or regulations necessary to reduce racial and social justice inequity).

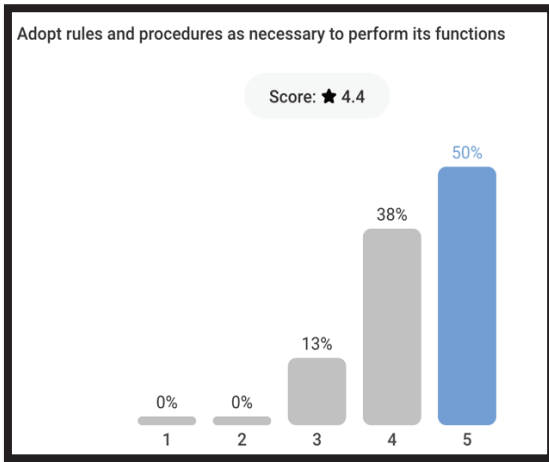
RESJAC members were unsure that the committee consistently addressed **Duty #3** (develop and distribute information about racial equity and social justice in the County) and **Duty #5** (Recommend coordinated strategies for reducing racial and social injustice in the County).

The most robust conversation focused on **Duty #6** and **Duty #7**. Related to **Duty #6**, RESJAC members did not have a shared understanding or common language about what constitutes “advising” of the Executive, the Council, and the County agencies. Some members believed that the committee’s advocacy, community engagement, and development activities effectively addressed the duty. One or two committee members believed that our committee would need more direct and regular engagement with the County Executive and Council Members on a two-way basis, meaning RESJAC invites them to meet, and they proactively reach out to RESJAC. Related to **Duty #7**, the issue of practicality came up in that there are about 80 departments of varying staff sizes, and the people tasked with serving as racial equity and social justice leads did not have the time, competency, or hierarchical authority to advance racial equity and social justice work. Additionally, there were concerns about the feasibility of meeting with all of these leads. Beyond the number of people in lead roles, a number of departments lost leads or CORE team member support during the COVID-19 pandemic or due to retirements and resignations.

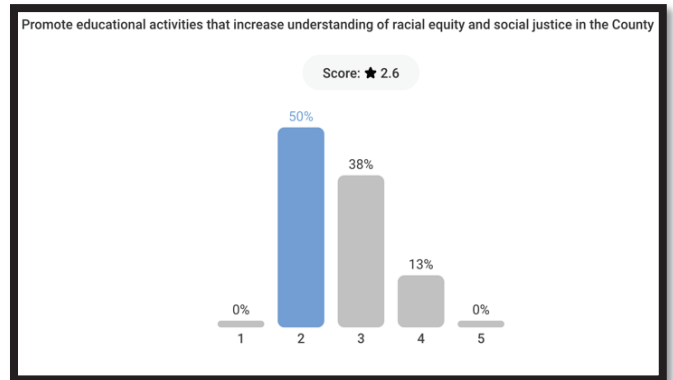
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## Appendix B: RESJAC Framework Exercise Narrative

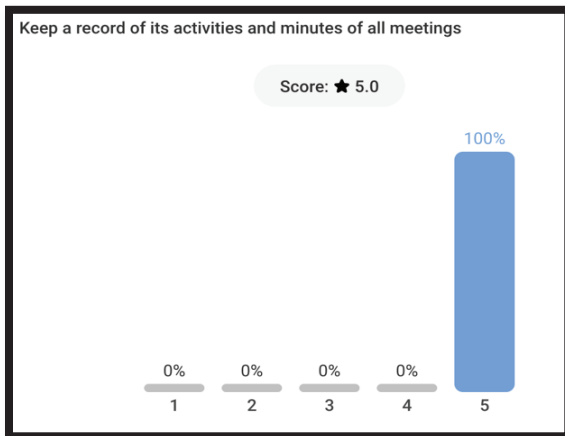
### Duty #1



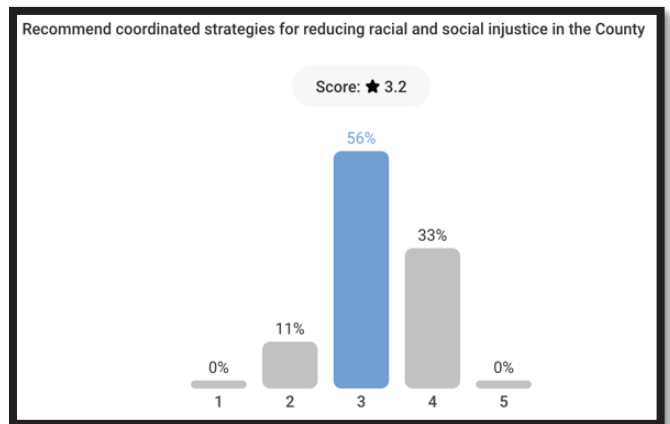
### Duty #4



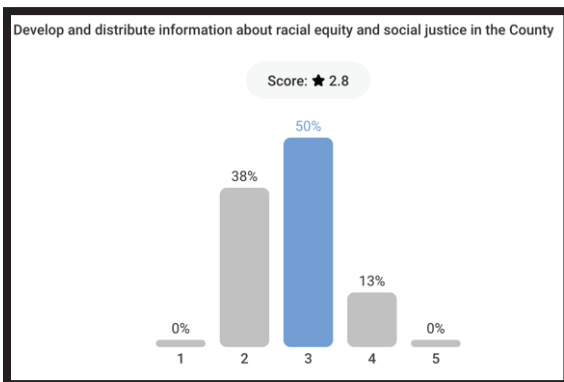
### Duty #2



### Duty #5



### Duty #3



### Duty #6

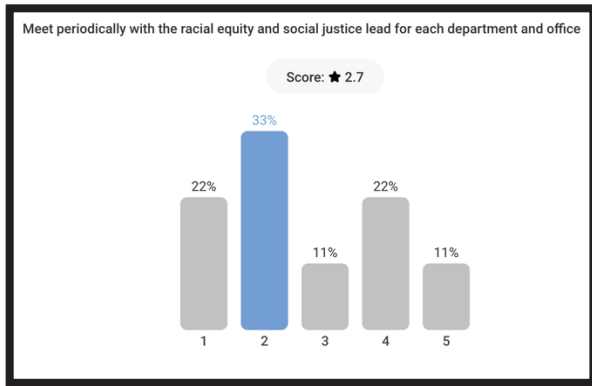


## Framework Alignment Results

Prepared by Shane Lloyd

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### Duty #7



### Duty #8

Submit an annual report on the activities of the Committee to the County Executive and County Council by December 1 of each year.



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GOVERNMENT RACIAL EQUITY  
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY  
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