



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director & Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

July 14, 2023

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

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

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Special Appropriation (SA) #24-2 FY24
Operating Budget of Montgomery County Government:
County Executive, \$198,594
Community Use of Public Facilities, \$60,000
And Department of Health and Human Services, \$20,00
Summer and After School Youth Safety Program (\$278,594)

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that *Special Appropriation #24-2 FY24 Operating Budget Montgomery County Government (MCG) Summer and After School Youth Safety Program* has the ability to advance equitable outcomes for youth identified as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) at greatest risk of experiencing community violence and resulting traumas. Specifically, Black and Latinx youth living in under-resourced areas of the County that experience disproportionately higher rates of crime and poverty (and their resulting consequences) stand to benefit greatly from this special appropriation request. This is as a result of identifying service providers who primarily operate within the communities in which these youth live to be the intended recipients of the funds—organizations that have an established rapport with these youth.

- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of *Special Appropriation #24-2 FY24 Operating Budget MCG Summer and After School Youth Safety Program* is to provide community-based summer and after school social service, recreational, arts, academic support, and workforce readiness programs to enhance youth safety through the Office of the County Executive, Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF), and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Through these three MCG offices/departments, 15 identified service providers will be given funds to either enhance or expand their current programming to provide

services to BIPOC youth between the ages of 13 to 25 to address issue areas such as substance use, mental health, and violence (as participants or targets of violence). The funds will also subsidize facility, field, and recreation costs for these programs.

Awarded by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services¹ through the Safe Summer initiative², the funds aim to meet Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Miller’s new vision for public safety in Maryland—which in part includes investing in the state’s youth. Directing more resources to Prince George’s, Montgomery, Anne Arundel, and Baltimore Counties, as well as Baltimore City (the five jurisdictions that account for 75% of youth violence referrals in Maryland), the Safe Summer initiative prioritizes early intervention strategies in an effort to build a more effective, less expensive, and better long-term approach to improving public safety and bolstering opportunity for youth involved in Maryland’s juvenile justice system.

III. **ANALYSIS:** Much like national statistics, youth of color in Montgomery County – particularly Black and Latinx youth – are represented in intervening public systems such as juvenile justice at rates disproportionately higher than their White peers. While Black children and Latinx children accounted for 19.8% and 25.9% (respectively) of the total child population in Montgomery County in 2021³, that same year, Black and Latinx children represented 46.1% and 34% of juvenile intake in the County⁴. By comparison, White children represented 33.5%⁵ of the total child population in Montgomery County in 2021 and were 19.9%⁶ of those who experienced juvenile intake during that same year. Once youth come in contact with the juvenile system, clear instances of differential treatment are present amongst Black and White youth with Black youth being more likely to be arrested and detained upon their arrest while also continually being treated more harshly as they move through the system when compared to their White peers.⁷ Additionally, upon arrest, White youth are more likely to be diverted from formal system involvement and when found delinquent, are more likely to receive probation or informal sanctions whereas Black

¹ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. Available at: <https://djs.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

² The Office of Governor Wes Moore. *Press Release: Governor Moore Announces New Vision to Address Public Safety in Maryland*. 2023. Available at: <https://governor.maryland.gov/news/press/pages/governor-moore-announces-new-vision-to-address-public-safety-in-maryland.aspx>

³ Kids Count Data Center. *Child Population by Race/Ethnicity in Montgomery*. 2022. Available at: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/6949-child-population-by-race-ethnicity?loc=22&loct=5#detailed/5/3315/false/2048/4406,3303,3304,2161,3305,3306,3307,3301,2796/14060,14061>

⁴ Jupiter Independent Research Group. *Racial Equity Profile Update*. 2023. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/JUPITERRACIALEQUITYPROFILE.pdf>

⁵ Kids Count Data Center. *Child Population by Race/Ethnicity in Montgomery*. 2022. Available at: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/6949-child-population-by-race-ethnicity?loc=22&loct=5#detailed/5/3315/false/2048/4406,3303,3304,2161,3305,3306,3307,3301,2796/14060,14061>

⁶ Jupiter Independent Research Group. *Racial Equity Profile Update*. 2023. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/JUPITERRACIALEQUITYPROFILE.pdf>

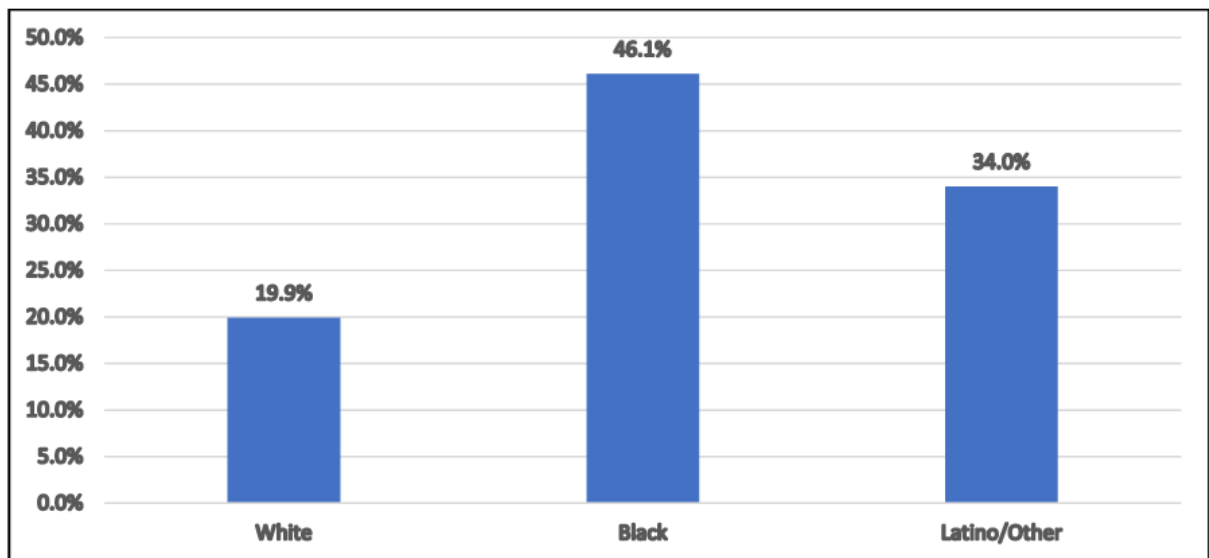
⁷ Rovner, J. *Youth Justice by the Numbers*. 2023. Available at: <https://www.sentencingproject.org/policy-brief/youth-justice-by-the-numbers/>

youth are more likely to be incarcerated.⁸

JUVENILE INTAKE

| Year | Racial/Ethnic Group | Montgomery County | Maryland | United States |
|------|---------------------|-------------------|----------|---------------|
| 2021 | White | 19.9% | 33.1% | N/A |
| | Black | 46.1% | 57.9% | N/A |
| | Latino/Other | 34.0% | 9.1% | N/A |

Note: N/A based solely on state and county data



*Jupiter Independent Research Group. *Racial Equity Profile Update*. 2023. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ORE/Resources/Files/JUPITERRACIALEQUITYPROFILE.pdf>

As previously stated, efforts such as the *Summer and After School Youth Safety Program* made even more robust through funding from the Safe Summer initiative have the ability to advance equitable outcomes for Black and Latinx youth in Montgomery County. Supplemental information accompanying this funding request states that the County’s Safe Youth Initiative specifically identified ongoing summer youth programs primarily serving BIPOC communities in geographic areas of the County that have been historically disenfranchised—resulting in disparities in employment, housing, transportation, education, and health and well-being outcomes. These disparities are especially prevalent in the areas of Wheaton/Glenmont/Aspen Hill; Silver Spring; White Oak; Montgomery Village/Gaithersburg; and Germantown. Youth living in these communities have historically faced the greatest systemic barriers in accessing the kinds of preventative

⁸ Ibid.

programming the 15 service providers offer. As such, these youth will have the opportunity to access resources that lend themselves to positive well-being outcomes in familiar spaces with providers who have established relationships within these specific communities.

Moving forward, ORESJ suggests the following considerations be made with funding requests such as these:

1. Over the past year, the country (and subsequently state and local jurisdictions) has returned to pre-pandemic benefit levels for vital programs that families grew to depend on such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), while simultaneously ending pandemic-era rental assistance payments, continuous Medicaid eligibility, and the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) – programs with a demonstrated ability to lend themselves to proven stability outcomes for families often struggling to make ends meet. And while recent gains have been made as inflation begins to cool and employment rates rise, racial inequities continue to persist as BIPOC individuals continue to experience higher rates of unemployment and disparities in pay – issues exacerbating the racial wealth gap – as well as other negative well-being outcomes. As such, a cross-governmental systems approach must be deployed to address these issues. While the funding made available through this request does not seek to address overall systemic factors that lend themselves to negative well-being outcomes that ultimately impact youth, ORESJ strongly recommends funding intersectional, systems-level efforts as they are better suited to address root causes of issues such as youth violence as opposed to the proposed funding approach which untimely only addresses the symptoms of historical disenfranchisement.
2. Recently, a cross-departmental group of MCG employees representing DHHS, the Office of Innovation, and ORESJ participated in a 15-week cohort program through the Centre for Public Impact’s Earning Trust to Build Equitable and Healthy Societies (ET4HS) program⁹ in which participants sought to address issues related to youth violence in Montgomery County. This unique opportunity allowed the cohort to engage in community listening sessions (CLS’) with a county youth as well as providers serving youth in the county. What became apparent even within the short duration of the program was a continued need for authentic youth and community engagement that would extend beyond the work of the cohort. This would include conducting additional CLS’ with a broader range of county stakeholders (particularly the youth themselves) involved in this issue to think through not only symptoms and root causes of youth violence, but tangible solutions lending themselves to positive youth outcomes.

⁹ Centre for Public Impact. *Earning Trust to Build Equitable and Healthy Societies: Helping U.S. local governments support health and wellbeing for all*. 2023. Available at: <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/north-america/earning-trust-to-build-equitable-and-healthy-societies>

Drawing on the work of the program, ORESJ advises MCG to continue these efforts – consulting with participants of the cohort – to conduct additional CLS’ with the goal of authentically engaging and supporting youth and their communities in developing programming, policies, and ultimately solutions to issues that directly impact them. These youth and communities are acutely aware of the barriers in which they face. MCG should aim to provide, them with (not dictate) resources needed to address these issues—allowing them to be the drivers of meaningful change. While the 15 identified providers have developed longstanding relationships within the communities they serve, it is unclear if BIPOC youth or their communities were consulted in the selection of these organizations and programs.

3. Regarding the selection of service providers moving forward, ORESJ suggests a more transparent process that is made apparent as it relates to organizations who stand to be recipients of funds distributed by the County. ORESJ has previously touched on this issue as it relates to the County’s current grant mechanism for distributing funds in the [REIA for Supplemental Appropriation #22-44 Office of Grants Management](#). While the County has since established its Office of Grants Management¹⁰ since the publishing of the above-mentioned REIA, insights can still be gleaned, particularly from the below excerpt.

“...resources [in the County] continu[e] to be concentrated in financially established nonprofits outside of the communities most impacted by the very challenges nonprofits are intended to address. The result is a diminished number and quality of opportunities for the best-positioned organizations to develop effective solutions with and from within communities.”

While the 15 service providers identified for the Safe Summer Program do have established relationships within the communities they serve, it is unclear if other community organizations that could have been better suited to serve these youth were identified and provided with an opportunity to compete for these available funds. Additionally, while most of the service providers will be funded at the same levels, there are a few funded slightly above or below the average amount. It is unclear how these funding amounts were determined. ORESJ again would emphasize a more transparent process that allows for smaller organizations who provide innovative and needed services who have not previously contracted with the County or been recipients of County funds be considered in these funding opportunities where processes are made clear regarding selection criteria as well as

¹⁰ Montgomery County Office of Grants Management. *Montgomery County Office of Grants Management - Grants Application Platform*. 2023. Available at: <https://mcmdgrants.smapply.org/>

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resource distribution.

cc: Sonia Mora, Assistant CAO, Office of the County Executive
Dr. James Bridgers, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Ken Hartman, Director, Office of Strategic Partnership, Office of the County Executive