

Racial Equity in Montgomery County

Presentation Outcomes

- Understand why Montgomery County has decided to use a racial equity framework to close gaps and eliminate disparities
- To understand departments' role in this racial equity journey

Advancing Racial Equity

- **RACIAL EQUITY MEANS ... Closing the gaps so that race does not predict one's success, while also improving outcomes for all.**
- **TO CLOSE THE GAPS ... we center communities of color to target improvements for those most burdened by racial inequity**
- **MOVING BEYOND "SERVICES" to transform policies, institutions, and structures (i.e. systems)**

National Best Practice

- A shared analysis and definitions
- Urgency / prioritize

Visualize

Operationalize

- Racial equity tools
- Data to develop strategies and drive results

Organize

- Internal infrastructure
- Partnerships

DRIVING TOWARD EQUITY



DIVERSITY → INCLUSION → EQUITY

An effort to include people of color on staff (e.g. in meetings) but there is limited effort to include them proportionally or in decision-making. These efforts can lead to tokenism. Having a representative number of people of color is critical, but not enough.

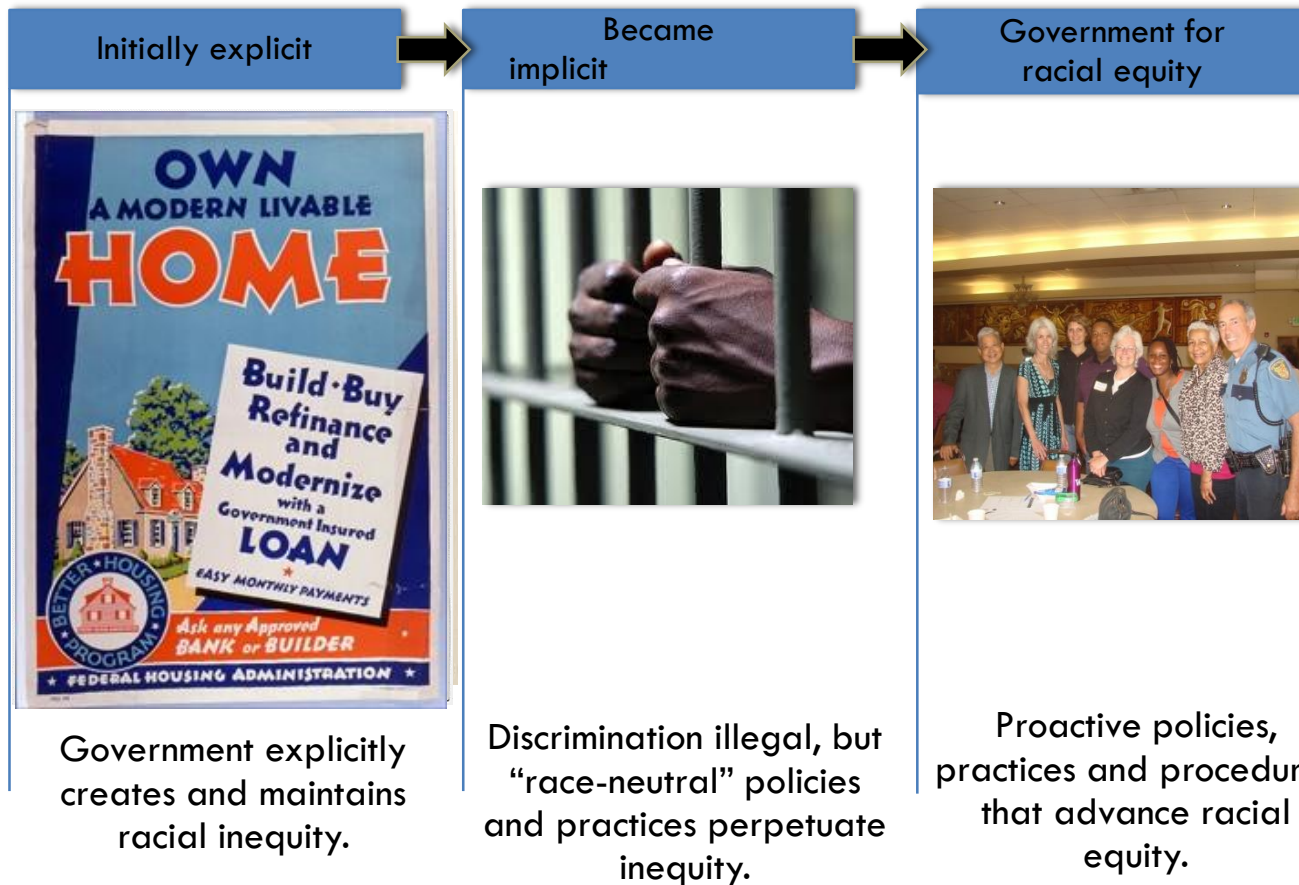
People of color are included in discussion to provide input, but do not hold significant levels of decision-making power. The number and percent of people of color increases, at times leading to increased power.

Driven by a relentless focus on conditions in the community, recognizing that we must develop and implement policies and practices that eliminate racial inequities and increase success for all groups.

3 Key Facts

- **Race is a construct** and is not biologically determined. Race is a modern idea.
- **Policy drives the social construction of race** and has contributed to changing ideas and definitions of race over time
- **We did not choose this system** but we have a responsibility to address it.

History of government and race



Why Lead with Race

- Racial inequities are deep and pervasive
- Racial anxiety on the rise – race is often an elephant in the room
- Learning an institutional and structural approach can be used with other areas of marginalization
- Specificity matters!

When leading with Race we are...

- ...**Race *explicit*, not exclusive** always bring an “intersectional” analysis
- Race *and*
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - Disability status
 - Income / class
 - Religion
 - Sexual orientation

EQUITY vs. EQUALITY

The difference between "equity" and "equality" is core to our approach. A rich dialogue exists in the larger racial equity community about the best ways to illustrate this distinction. Here are our best practices.

EQUALITY

Treating everyone the same, no matter where they're starting or whether outcomes remain unequal.

"Equality" typically means equal resources.

EQUITY

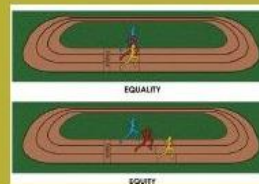
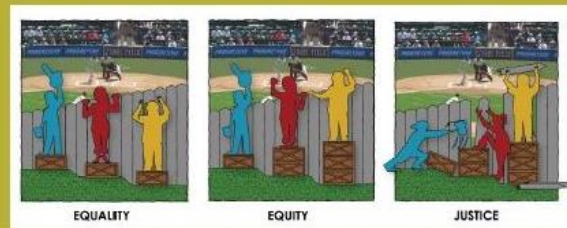
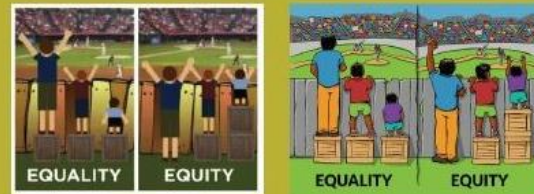
Acknowledging that different people start in different places due to racist historical context and giving everyone what they need to succeed equally.

"Equity" is about equal outcomes.

TIPS FOR TALKING ABOUT THIS DIFFERENCE

- Use examples
- Remind people that "equality" doesn't actually work — outcomes stagnate or outcome gaps grow
- lean on shared values of justice and fairness to explain our equity approach

ONGOING DIALOGUE



<http://culturalorganizing.org/the-problem-with-that-equity-vs-equality-graphic/>
<http://interactioninstitute.org/using-the4thbox-play-and-political-imagination/>

The Racial Equity and Social Justice Law

What the law requires

- 1. Establishes an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ)**
- 2. Requires that all employees receive Racial Equity training**
- 3. Requires each Department and Office to establish a RESJ Action Plan**
- 4. Requires the Office of Legislative Oversight(Council) to submit a RESJ impact statement for each bill**
- 5. Establishes a Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee**
- 6. Requires that each department appoint a Racial Equity and Social Justice point person/lead**

System Analysis

- Analyzes problems holistically to identify root causes and contributing factors
- Generates an array of possible solutions and strategic interventions aimed at fundamental and lasting change

Building Systemic Equity

- To achieve systemic equity new rules and activities need to be institutionalized.
- Just as racism operates structurally, so too must racial equity to supplant racism.

What is the role of the RESJ Dept

- **Training and Facilitation:** RESJ will provide racial equity training for employees using various formats and mediums. Eventually creating a train the trainer curriculum that enables us to increase our training capacity.
- **Provide Technical Assistance:** RESJ department will assist departments in analyzing policies, procedures or protocols that eliminate or mitigate racial disparities or gaps
- **Provide opportunities to work across departments.** RESJ will provide opportunities for departments to share their processes and remedies with one another and perhaps to work across department on particular policy or process.
- **Report annually on challenges and successes.** RESJ will produce an annual report on its efforts and outcomes across county government
- **RESJ is NOT a compliance office we don't handle discrimination complaints from employees or residents. Our Human Rights Office or our Equal Employment Office handles those tasks.**