



Racial Equity & Social Justice

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) is to reduce and eliminate racial disparities and inequities in Montgomery County. See Chapter 42 for a full description of ORESJ's mission.

COUNTY PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- A Greener County
- A Growing Economy
- An Affordable Welcoming County for a Lifetime
- Easier Commutes
- Effective, Sustainable Government
- Safe Neighborhoods
- Thriving Youth and Families

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Tiffany Ward, Director, and Sarah Alvarez, Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ), at 240-777-5334 and Kasonde Chisaka of the Office of Management and Budget at 240-777-7777 for more information regarding this initiative's operating budget.

OVERVIEW

One aspect of advancing this work involves analyzing resource allocations that form the structures programs, policies, practices, and procedures - that can either worsen or improve racially disparate outcomes across the County. The office's goal is to identify these disparities, reduce them, and ultimately create structures that eliminate their existence and prevent disparities from emerging in the future.

To this end, and in accordance with Bill 27-19, Administration - Human Rights - Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice - Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee Established, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) developed a Budget Equity Tool to support departments and decision makers in applying a racial equity lens to the development of the County Executive's FY26 Recommended Operating Budget. This tool, related trainings, and reports, have helped to assess the strength of the County's commitment to and implementation of its guiding racial equity framework, adapted from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), to normalize, organize, and operationalize for racial equity and social justice. This framework guides jurisdictions across the country in navigating the changes required to advance racial equity and social justice.



ORESJ highlighted with its structured analysis areas of strength and opportunity related to how the FY27 Recommended Operating Budget enables the County's commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice. FY27 resources continue to help the County build its racial equity and social justice infrastructure, with departments across the County targeting resources towards:

- Allocating or supporting the use of staff time for capacity building activities such as Racial Equity Core Team meetings and ORESJ-led convenings;
- Allocating resources for relevant professional development, including department-specific training;
- Designating staff resources to organize and lead the department's commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice;
- Identifying areas of strength and opportunity in recruiting, retaining, and advancement of a diverse and representative workforce; and
- Using or creating department-specific racial equity tools or maps

These targeted investments mean that while the County continues to carry out its core business, it will strengthen staff knowledge and capacity to apply a racial equity lens to program design, collecting and analyzing data, utilizing best practices and research, and involving the community in program development. With this growing capacity, County government will also be able to reflect on areas of opportunity, where changes to policy or process can help remove barriers, enable greater transparency and accountability, and drive more equitable outcomes for communities most burdened by structural racism and other inequities.

Overall, this budget provides resources for the County to expand its commitments to and implementation of the RESJ Act. It supports County government in building the skills and competencies necessary to identify and address racial and ethnic disparities across issue areas, at the same time providing resources for programs that help to fill gaps created by structural inequities.

FY27 APPROVED BUDGET

Some departments and non-departmental accounts (NDAs) have not been reviewed by ORESJ but have the potential to advance racial equity and social justice:

Office of Food System Resilience

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- In FY23, established the Office of Food System Resilience to coordinate food resilience efforts with community partners, government agencies, and regional partners to develop and implement interagency budgetary, regulatory, and operational strategies to build a more equitable, efficient, resilient, and sustainable food system in Montgomery County.

Department of Health and Human Services

- Include one-time funding of \$2.0 million for the Short-term Housing and Resolution Program (SHARP).
- Allocate more than \$1.96 million in one-time funding for overflow emergency shelter support for families at a reduced level of motel room usage.
- Include more than \$2.56 million in ongoing funding to continue in Children, Youth, and Family Services originally funded with Lighthouse. In addition, provide almost \$4.6 million in funding to continue the Lighthouse initiative as a three-year grant program.
- Include \$160,000 in funding for two contractors to provide Montgomery County Public School protective service clearances.
- Open the Behavioral Health Stabilization room.
- Support Montgomery Cares, Developmental Disability, and Adult Medical Day Care service providers.
- Replace funding to maintain service levels despite grant reductions.

Department of Housing and Community Affairs

- Continue to leverage Federal grants including the Community Development Block Grant, the HOME Investment Partnership Grant, and the Emergency Solutions Grant to provide affordable housing, housing rehabilitation, commercial revitalization, focused neighborhood assistance, public services, and prevent homelessness.
- Provide over \$158.6 million to expand the preservation and production of affordable housing for the County's most economically burdened residents, including new funding of \$106.3 million for four Capital Improvements Program (CIP) projects and \$52.3 million in the Housing Initiative Fund (HIF) to continue various programs and projects dedicated to creating and preserving affordable housing and related services.
- Add an additional \$1.5 million to provide more resources to support first-time homebuyers with downpayment assistance and counseling services through Homeownership Assistance programs.
- Continue funding support for the Rent Stabilization Program, which implements legislative mandates and maximum allowable rent increases to stabilize rents in the County.
- Continue to actively underwrite affordable housing loans to preserve and produce affordable housing.
- Thirty multi-family developments have already been identified for potential funding in FY27. These developments would preserve or produce 2,421 units.

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