

# Washington County Budget Equity Tool

## FY22-23

### **Our Commitment to Equity**

Washington County made a historic commitment to equity with the passage of the equity, diversity, and inclusion resolution by the Washington County Board of Commissioners in February 2020. It is increasingly being embedded in our core values both strategically and operationally at the County Administrative Office and throughout the County.

Advancing equity in government involves an acknowledgement that institutional and structural factors created and continue to perpetuate inequities or differences in outcomes for different populations. Equity work examines and addresses the role historic and present-day governmental policies play in benefiting some groups and burdening others, most notably Black, Indigenous, Latina/o/x, immigrant and refugee communities. A review of history and data shows us that not all populations have experienced the same access, quality, or outcomes when it comes to government programs and services.

It is our collective responsibility and opportunity as public servants to ensure that we are governing and administering public resources so that all our communities can thrive. Washington County is committed to improving equity, diversity, and inclusion for all, with an intentional and explicit focus on race because it remains the primary predictor of how one fairs across all socio-economic indicators of wellbeing. Inequities in housing, health and human services, education, public safety, and every area of government service are pervasive, especially for Black, Indigenous, Latina/o/x, immigrant and refugee communities.

To realize our equity goals, we need to modify our decision-making processes at Washington County, including our budget processes. Budgets are very important policy documents that reflect our priorities. Budgets have the power to either advance equity or further inequities.

Please note that answers submitted using this form will NOT be accepted. All Budget Equity Tool submissions need to be made using the Budget Equity Tool Microsoft Form, which is located on the Horizons Equity, Diversity and Inclusion page under the [Budget Equity Tool](#) tab.

## Budget Equity Tool Summary and Instructions

### Budget Equity Tool Strategies and Questions

The Washington County's FY 22-23 Budget Equity Tool is a set of several equity-focused strategies and questions used to drive informed and targeted decision-making about the allocation of government resources. Specifically, it is comprised of five (5) strategy areas and associating questions that build equity into County budgeting. The Budget Equity Tool is organized into three (3) parts; Part A, Part B, and Part C. Part A of the Budget Equity Tool is specific to Civil Rights compliance and has to do with access and accommodations. Part B addresses data, community engagement, quality of services, and targeted resources. Part C includes process evaluation questions.

### Budget Equity Tool Instructions

1. All Org Units with Personnel Costs are required to complete Part A and Part C of the Budget Equity Tool.
2. All Org Units with Personnel Costs are strongly encouraged to complete Part B of the Budget Equity Tool. If an Org Unit determines it cannot complete any questions in Part B, it will need to provide a justification as to **why not by email, as soon as possible**, with its Department Director, OEICE and its Assistant County Administrator. If an Org Unit determines it cannot complete some (but not all) questions in Part B, please provide a "not applicable" response to the question(s) you are unable to answer and a justification as to why not in the text boxes below. Your feedback helps us learn and adjust the process going forward.
3. We recommend Department Directors, budget analysts, and others who play a lead role in developing budget proposals complete the tool. Additionally, we suggest that Departments work with imbedded resources such as Equity Leadership Council committee members, LEAP Committee members, dedicated equity and community engagements staff, etc.
4. Please attend one of the scheduled Budget Equity Tool trainings or participate in a recorded one, and utilize the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement (OEICE) for support.
5. Internally facing Org Units and Departments that do not provide direct services to community should respond to questions using staff demographic and other internal data and with the understanding that employees are their clients and/or community. A "not applicable" response and justification will be accepted where there is no supportive data.
6. All submissions must be made using the Budget Equity Tool Microsoft Form.
7. Concise answers are encouraged. Please keep answers to no longer than 400 words in length.

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## **PART A: Required for all Org Units with Personnel Costs**

### ***Ensuring equitable access to programs and services: accommodations, translation and interpretation***

Our communities are entitled to equitable access to our County programs and services, and we must eliminate barriers that prevent or obstruct their access. Many of our community members have physical disabilities and/or speak languages other than English. Per Civil Rights Law, we are required to offer reasonable accommodations, translation and interpretation services at no charge to the client.

Departments should ensure that public documents, policies, plans, meetings, and hearings are readily accessible to the public, which includes proactive translation of **vital** documents into languages spoken by over 1,000 or 5% (whichever is less) of current/potential clients with limited English proficiency, and ensuring interpretation services are available to clients and the public (at service desks, service phone lines, open houses, public meetings, etc.).

(Questions 1-5 in the Budget Equity Tool Microsoft Form are specific to Department/Org information. As such, this word document, which is exclusively intended to support teams working collaboratively on draft responses, starts at Question 6.)

6) What *dollar amount* of your budget is your Org Unit allocating for accommodations, translation and interpretation?

7) What *percent* of your budget is your Org Unit allocating for accommodations, translation and interpretation?

8) What percentage of your clients and/or communities you serve need translation/interpretation services?

9) Do you have designated bilingual positions available to communicate with/serve the public?

10) If you answered "yes" to Question #9 regarding designated bilingual positions, how many do you have and what positions are they in?

11) If you answered "yes" to Question #9 regarding designated bilingual positions, what languages are they in? Please specify number of positions per language.

12) What *number* of your staff receive a bilingual pay differential?

13) What *percentage* of your staff receive a bilingual pay differential?

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## **Part B: Strongly encouraged for all Org Units with Personnel Costs**

All Org Units with personnel costs are strongly encouraged to complete Part B of the Budget Equity Tool. If an Org Unit determines it cannot complete any questions in Part B, it will need to provide a justification as to **why not by email, as soon as possible**, with its Department Director, OEICE and its Assistant County Administrator. If an Org Unit determines it cannot complete some (but not all) questions in Part B, please provide a "not applicable" response to the question(s) you are unable to answer and a justification as to why not in the text boxes below. Your feedback helps us learn and adjust the process going forward.

### ***Strategy 1: Using data to make decisions that advance equity***

Several County Departments collect client demographic data on utilization of several programs and services. Some Departments can analyze census or other community level data to inform community needs and inequities that exist at a community level. This data as well as service quality and outcomes data should be used to inform how we allocate our resources to close the equity gaps in our County programs and services

14) What data on client utilization, quality, and outcomes did you use to develop your proposed budget?

15) What data disaggregated by race/ethnicity/language did you consider?

16) What racial inequities exist in access, quality, and outcomes of your services?

17) How did consideration of this data drive your allocation of resources to address identified racial equity gaps in access, quality, and outcomes?

### ***Strategy 2: Engaging impacted communities in decision-making***

Engaging communities most likely to be adversely impacted by a decision in the actual decision-making process is one of the cornerstones of good governance. Community can share important information about lived experiences, access issues, as well as unmet needs. This critical information should inform budget decision-making.

18) How did you engage Black, Indigenous, Latina/o/x, Asian and Pacific Islander, and immigrant and refugee communities in the development of your proposed budget? (Notes from the County townhall in December are a resource for diverse community input in budget development and refinement.)

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19) What did the communities most impacted by inequities tell you about their priorities and unmet needs?

20) How did you incorporate that community feedback into your proposed budget?

***Strategy 3: Improving equity in the quality of services: culturally specific services***

Equity ensures that each community can expect the highest possible level of access, quality of service, and outcomes. Culturally specific services delivered by culturally specific organizations is one way to assure high quality access, service and outcomes. These organizations are typically best equipped to offer trusted, affirming and tailored services to diverse communities.

21) How are you investing in culturally specific services?

22) Which community-based organizations are you contracting with for the design/delivery of culturally specific services?

23) What *dollar amount* of your Org Unit's budget is allocated for culturally specific services?

24) What *percentage* of your Department's budget is allocated for culturally specific services?

***Strategy 4: Targeting resources***

Input from impacted communities, existing data, and information about accessibility and quality of programs and services is collected and analyzed so that resources may be targeted to advance equity. Given what you have heard from community and analyzed in the client utilization data:

25) How will you target resources in your proposed budget to improve outcomes for Black, Indigenous, Latina/o/x, Asian and Pacific Islander, and immigrant and refugee communities experiencing inequities in access and quality of services?

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26) Beyond direct service delivery, what *dollar amount* of your budget is allocated to culturally specific and equity-focused professional services (i.e. compensation for community engagement, leadership development, professional development, staff training, facilitation, strategic planning, policy analysis, recruitment, mentoring, etc.)?

27) Beyond direct service delivery, what *percent* of your budget is allocated to culturally specific and equity-focused professional services (i.e. compensation for community engagement, leadership development, professional development, staff training, facilitation, strategic planning, policy analysis, recruitment, mentoring, etc.)?

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## **Part C: Required for all Org Units with Personnel Costs**

### ***Process Evaluation***

28) What part of the Budget Equity Tool did your Org Unit complete?

- Part A
- Part A and some of Part B
- Part A and Part B

29) What did your Department/Org Unit accomplish by using this tool and what did you learn about equity in the budget process?

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