



**FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022**

## **OVERSIGHT THROUGH A RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE LENS**

### **A RESOURCE FOR COUNCILMEMBERS AND STAFF**

### **As a legislator, how can I embed racial equity into the oversight process?**

In the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget, the Council made a deep commitment and investment in racial equity.<sup>1</sup> Part of that commitment means intentionally applying a racial equity lens throughout each phase of the Council's oversight processes. This commitment is particularly critical this year, as agencies are expected to be under immense budget constraints and considering even deeper cuts.

At the same time, applying an *explicit* racial equity lens to oversight—while overdue—is in many ways a new endeavor for the District Government as a whole. Because this approach will be new for many agencies, our aim is to provide questions that will establish a contextual baseline. This baseline will be the foundation for tracking and measuring the District's progress towards achieving racial equity. Therefore, CORE has designed this oversight toolkit for members and staff to:

- 1) Establish an “on the record” racial equity baseline for each agency;
- 2) Illuminate any legal barriers to: a) Tracking data by race or b) Advancing racial equity to inform potential Council action;
- 3) Allow agencies who have considered racial equity to share those efforts; and
- 4) Encourage agencies who have not considered racial equity to think through how their agency could begin those efforts.<sup>2</sup>

### **KEY DEFINITIONS**

#### **RACIAL INEQUITY**

is when race can be used to predict life outcomes, e.g., disproportionality in education (high school graduation rates), jobs (unemployment rate), criminal justice (arrest and incarceration rates), and other key economic and social indicators.

#### **RACIAL EQUITY**

means the elimination of racial disparities such that race no longer predicts opportunities, outcomes, or the distribution of resources for residents of the District, particularly for persons of color and Black residents.

#### **RACIAL JUSTICE**

is the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts, and outcomes for all.

For more definitions, visit [dcraciaequity.org/equity-term-glossary](https://dcraciaequity.org/equity-term-glossary).

<sup>1</sup> See the [FY 2021 Local Budget Act of 2020 Summary](#), July 7, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Special thanks to the city of San Antonio who provided insight and allowed us to adopt [their Budget Equity Tool](#) to meet the needs of the District and to the City of Indianapolis who shared their budget equity tools with us.

## How can my Committee or Office use this tool to advance racial equity?

The following questions assess how an agency's programs, policies, and decisions may benefit and/or burden communities, specifically communities of color and low-income communities. The questions can be provided to the agency before performance and budget oversight hearings and/or during oversight hearings.

For this oversight season, we encourage framing racial equity as both an agency's responsibility and opportunity. If you add additional questions to this list, consider following the format of, "How would you...How can your agency...Have you given any thought to..." This approach will motivate agencies to see the opportunities they have to advance racial equity for residents and prompt them to tell you about any legal barriers they face to advancing racial equity or increasing their understanding of racial inequity.

The CORE team is available to work with each Committee throughout the oversight process to identify opportunities for advancing racial equity in the District of Columbia. For easy reference, our contact information and Committee assignments are below.

### DR. BRIAN McCLURE

[bmcclure@dccouncil.us](mailto:bmcclure@dccouncil.us)

Committee of the Whole, Business and Economic Development, Government Operations and Facilities

### MELVIN CLAYTON

[mclayton@dccouncil.us](mailto:mclayton@dccouncil.us)

Education (Committee of the Whole), Recreation, Libraries, and Youth Affairs, Human Services

### NAMITA MODY

[nmody@dccouncil.us](mailto:nmody@dccouncil.us)

Housing and Executive Administration, Judiciary and Public Safety, Labor and Workforce Development

### MILIKA ROBBINS

[mrobbins@dccouncil.us](mailto:mrobbins@dccouncil.us)

Transportation and the Environment, Health

**FOR THIS OVERSIGHT SEASON,  
WE ENCOURAGE FRAMING  
RACIAL EQUITY AS BOTH AN  
AGENCY'S RESPONSIBILITY  
AND OPPORTUNITY.**

## FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

### OVERSIGHT THROUGH A RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE LENS

	PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT	BUDGET OVERSIGHT
EXAMINE THE PRESENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the context of your agency and its mission, what are three areas, programs, or initiatives where you see the most opportunity to address racial inequity?</li> <li>Do you think there are any areas/programs where your department has had some success in building racial equity over the past year? Which areas/programs?</li> <li>Consider the demographic data your department collects, tracks, and evaluates as part of its operations. Do you collect information on race and geographic area? If not, why not?</li> <li>Consider the data your department collects, tracks, and evaluates as part of your performance plan. Do you collect information on race and geographic area? If not, why not?</li> <li>What legal barriers (if any) do you face as an agency to advancing racial equity or better understanding racial inequity?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In your proposed FY22 budget, are there specific programs or allocations that are specifically designed to address racial or economic inequities faced by District residents? In detail, please describe how these efforts address those inequities.</li> <li>In your proposed FY22 budget, which reductions may burden certain communities more than others? If applicable, what strategies has your department taken to mitigate any potential adverse impacts?</li> </ul>
PLAN THE PATH FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider one operational data point and one performance data point where you collect race information or could collect race information. How could your department use this data to inform future programmatic decisions?</li> <li>What are two areas/programs where your department has significant potential to succeed in building racial equity? Please elaborate on why you chose those areas.</li> <li>Consider what a racially equitable District of Columbia would look like. What are three ways your agency's operations would reflect this achievement?</li> <li>What are three metrics that your agency could use to measure progress toward racial equity? These could be metrics you currently track or new metrics. (Examples include: licenses or permits issued/denied, professional development or advancement opportunities granted/denied, fine or fee enforcement/forgiveness, etc.,—all by race and/or geographic areas).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider one operational data point and one performance data point where your agency collects information by race or could collect information by race. How could your department use this data to inform future budget decisions?</li> <li>How could your agency's spending address existing inequities (grant disbursement, procurement/contracting, etc.)?</li> <li>As part of the next budget season, how could community members, especially communities of color and low-income communities, be engaged or consulted to identify programming and/or service needs for your department?</li> </ul>