

# FY 2025-2026 Contra Costa County Budget Equity Tool

## Shared Definition of Equity

Equity means that each and every person receives what they need to achieve positive health and well-being and nurture their full economic and social potential. We apply equity in our work when those most impacted by structural inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.

Different from equality, equity accounts for the unique identities, circumstances, and histories of different people, as well as the different and uneven experiences with institutions and systems, and considers those factors when determining how resources are allocated and distributed.

## Purpose of the Budget Equity Tool

The overall purpose of Contra Costa County's budget equity tool is to offer clarity and focus on how your department's budget investments will impact equity throughout Contra Costa County and achieve more equitable outcomes for the communities you serve. When done thoughtfully and intentionally, the process of developing a budget statement can help department leaders and team members reflect on the extent to which their resources and activities affect equity, whether it be within a single initiative or across their entire budget. The tools are intended to produce reliable information that can be understood and evaluated by the general public and policymakers.

## Racial Equity and Social Justice in Contra Costa County

In October 2022, the Board of Supervisors received and accepted a historic and monumental report from the Core Committee, a group of community advocates, resident leaders and non-profit leadership, which summarized the two-year community engagement process to establish the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ). The purpose and goals of the ORESJ are grounded in those recommendations.

ORESJ supports the County's efforts to strengthen and expand equity, access and inclusion for all county residents and communities, especially those most impacted by racial and socioeconomic disparities. The vision of ORESJ is that all Contra Costa County residents achieve positive health and well-being and are able to access the resources they need to thrive.

ORESJ's aim is two-fold:

- Assess, support, and coordinate the County's work of advancing equity through close partnership and collaboration with County departments and divisions, and develop and sustain countywide principles, policies, practices, and investments that are racially just and produce equitable outcomes.

- Actively engage county residents, particularly those most vulnerable and marginalized due to structural inequities, along with community organizations, advocates and leaders, and nurture avenues for their meaningful participation in County processes aimed at increasing access to resources and opportunities.

The Budget Equity Tool is one piece of Contra Costa County's racial equity strategic work, and over time will become integrated in the county-wide Racial Equity Action Plan.

*As you reflect and prepare responses to the following series of questions, it may be helpful to refer to any racial equity plans, data sets or program descriptions your department has created.*

## Internal Reflections

1. What persistent funding gaps or limitations in your overall budget could inhibit your department's ability to advance racial equity and social justice? These might include the funding constraints outside of your control, time limitations, or inadequate funding to address the needs of the most vulnerable community members you serve.
2. Given the above, what strategies does your department recommend/implement to reduce the impact of barriers to (or changes in) services for low-income and communities of color? Examples could include services to improve or ensure access, such as transportation or translation and interpretation services.

## Internal and External Reflections

3. How has your department used or plan to use racial/ethnic and economic data to develop and prioritize criteria for resource distribution? What are some service disparities or gaps your department has identified, and how does your overall budget and/or new funding requests address them? Identify specific programs, policies, practices, and structures that are intended to address historical and/or ongoing racial injustice and harm.
4. What additional disaggregated demographic data will your department collect, track, and analyze to assess equity impacts in the community moving forward and for future budget decisions?
5. In what ways will your department use the budgeting process to advance equity? Examples could include adding staff dedicated to equity initiatives, providing staff with racial equity training opportunities, or investing in data collection or analysis tools to illuminate relevant outcomes.
6. How will your department use targeted data to help inform recruitment, retention, and promotion for staff of color, including executive, supervisory, entry-level, part-time, and field staff? Reference your department's Equal Opportunity Plan ([add link](#))

## External Reflections

7. Describe how your department engages with community members, particularly those identified as impacted by service gaps and disparities, in the budget development and evaluation process. Discuss communication and outreach strategies, evaluation of impact, accountability measures, assessment of engagement, and how community engagement drives resource allocations and aligns with equity outcomes.