



Budget Equity Tool

Department of Finance

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Equity as a Priority

- Equity was one of two key principles that guided budget considerations for the upcoming fiscal year
- To support these initiatives, the Finance Department's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion created a Budget Equity Tool and Budget Equity 101 training to facilitate the incorporation of an equity-lens into the budget process
- The Budget Equity Tool included guided practices and strategies to assess overall budget allocations and subsequent benefits/burdens for different communities across Nashville

Budget Equity Strategies

1. Adopt an Equity Lens

This first strategy evaluates if budget decisions and modifications anticipate any potential burdens or benefits to historically underserved communities. These communities include populations who share a particular characteristic and geographic communities who have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in any part of our city's economic, social, and civic life. Applying an equity lens to the budget process requires departments to evaluate how specific groups benefit or face burdens based on budget modifications. These changes can affect both the residents who utilize a department's services, the contractors or outside stakeholders departments might work with, or staff within a department. The questions for this strategy will facilitate how to internalize an equity lens into the budget process and department operations.

2. Be Data-driven

When applied through an equity lens, being data-driven specifically refers to using population-level data and demographic and economic indicators to understand how budget decisions impact different parts of the city. Each department will identify the necessary data and plan to collect said data to support your department's equity goals. Disaggregated data (data that looks at separate population groups) and spatial data are the most powerful utilities in understanding which neighborhoods, geographic areas, populations, or employees are most impacted by the budget. The questions here will help departments ensure high-quality and equitable services for all residents.

3. Promote Assessment and Accountability

The final strategy requires departments to develop a way to evaluate if equity goals are met or progress is being made. An attainable equity plan will build off the other two strategies and provide a framework for accurate and manageable assessment. Each department needs to set concrete milestones and measure progress on department equity goals. The budget is an opportunity to state the department's values and priorities. Proper assessment and subsequent accountability will help departments adhere to these values and realize departmental priorities.

Strategy One: Adopt an Equity Lens

1. In what targeted ways will your department use the budgeting process to advance equity? (This can include adjustments in staffing, providing diversity, equity, and inclusion training opportunities for staff, or a commitment to delivering programs, services, research or other actions with a focus on reducing disparities experienced in your department and the services provided to the public.)

Objectives of the BET

- Bring an equity-lens into the budget process at a departmental level
- Improve performance and delivery of Metro services
- Learn about existing practices and operations within Metro that advance equity and could be adapted across departments
- Identify barriers/limitations with Metro that are impacting department's equity initiatives
- Reflect on the successes/shortfalls of the Budget Equity Tool to improve the process for the next fiscal year

Budget Equity Tool Evaluation

- Department Level
 - Each department that submitted a BET received an assessment of the department
- Metro Level
 - 94% completion rate
 - Network and Thematic analysis of submitted BETs