

MAYOR’S OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY

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Mayor’s Office of Racial Equity Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Summary

Budgeting for Racial Equity

For the second year since it was established in April 2021, the Mayor’s Office of Racial Equity (ORE) collaborated with the Office of Budget and Performance Management to advise on the Fiscal Year 2024 budget formulation. Within the context of the budget process, ORE’s goals are to help standardize the use of a racial equity lens¹ across the District Government’s budget discussions and to promote and track investments with the greatest potential to advance racial equity. Please see the [ORE Budget Process Methodology](#) one-pager for more information on the ORE budget review process.

A New Fiscal Climate

The FY 2024 budget was formulated in one of the most challenging financial climates since the Great Recession. Washington DC, like most cities and states nationwide, is facing the triple challenges of high inflation, the long-term impacts of telework, and the end of federal pandemic relief funds. High inflation makes the cost of doing business increasingly expensive. For example, consumer energy services – literally the cost of “keeping the lights on” – is 13 percent more expensive in 2023 than in 2022, on average.² As a result, in FY 2024, a larger proportion of the District’s budget is dedicated to basic operations.

Prioritizing Equity

In the face of a challenging financial forecast, Mayor Muriel Bowser’s FY 2024 budget continued to prioritize racial equity. District agencies widely adopted a racial equity lens in their FY 2024 budget proposals, with more than half of agency enhancements designed to address a known racial inequity. Agencies also prioritized proposal quality through deeper racial equity analyses and rationales; 54 percent of agencies’ proposed enhancements focusing on a racial inequity were recommended by ORE as having a moderate to strong justification for advancing racial equity.

¹ In its simplest form, a racial equity lens is a set of questions we ask in decision-making processes to bring the lived experiences of people who have been impacted by racism and those who will be most affected by the decision into the conversation.

² Unadjusted 12-month US average, ending Feb 2023. “Table A. Percent change in Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. City Average,” US Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 14, 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm>.



Highlights of Mayor Bowser’s FY 2024 Budget Investments in Advancing Racial Equity

Among the deputy mayoral agencies that submitted budget enhancements for FY 2024, 61 percent submitted at least one enhancement with a racial equity focus. Please see the table below for an overview of agencies’ FY 2024 racial equity enhancements by deputy mayoral cluster.

In their budget proposals, District agencies had the opportunity to request enhancements for the following: to restore a previous budget reduction; to maintain an existing program which has increased costs; to improve operations; to expanded high-performing existing programs; or to launch a completely new program or activity. Within these five categories, agencies are required to indicate how the proposed enhancement will impact racial equity in the District. ORE reviews agency enhancement requests to identify proposals with the strongest potential to address known equity gaps. Not all enhancements relate directly to racial equity; for example, given the effects of inflation nationwide, ORE reviewed but did not typically weigh in on FY 2024 enhancements which requested funds to keep up with rising costs, *e.g.*, more expensive postage stamps or electricity costs. The table below shows the percentage of agencies by deputy mayoral cluster which proposed at least one budget enhancement in FY 2024 that addressed a known racial equity gap.

Percent of Agencies with at Least One FY 2024 Racial Equity Enhancement, by Deputy Mayoral Cluster	
Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure	83%
Deputy Mayor for Education	69%
Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services	60%
Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice	60%
Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development	73%
Internal Services and Government Operations	38%
All Mayoral Agencies, on average	61%

The chart above is helpful for understanding that nearly two-thirds of all mayoral agencies proposed a budget enhancement in FY 2024 that addresses a known racial equity gap. However, the strength of the individual proposals is better captured by the chart below. When ORE reviews budget enhancements, it highlights submissions with the greatest potential to address racial equity gaps (*e.g.*, a rating of 3 or 4; please see the [ORE Budget Process Methodology](#) one-pager for more information on the ORE budget review process). ORE identified roughly half of all FY 2024 racial equity enhancements as promising investments. ORE advises District leaders who then use ORE input to inform the final budget formulation.



Percent of FY 2024 Budget Enhancements with a Racial Equity Flag and an ORE Rating of 3 or 4 out of 4	
Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure	48.8%
Deputy Mayor for Education	53.6%
Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services	58.5%
Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice	48.6%
Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development	63.6%
Internal Services and Government Operations	41.2%
All FY 2024 Racial Equity Enhancements with ORE Rating of 3+, on average	53.6%

FY 2024 Budget Investments in Advancing Racial Equity

Below is a selection of FY 2024 investments that ORE considers among the most promising for advancing racial equity in DC. It is important to note this is not an exhaustive list. Investments include enhancements, continuations, and capital investments.³ Enhancements highlighted below were rated by ORE as having a moderate to strong justification for advancing racial equity (please see ORE’s Budget Process Methodology one-pager for more information).

- **Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development**
 - \$31 million to fund the Housing Production Trust Fund at \$100 million.
 - \$8 million to grow the Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) and help close the racial homeownership gap for longtime residents.
 - \$1.5 million to expand the reach of resources to support intergenerational wealth building by helping families keep a property in the family after the death of the original homeowner.
 - \$1 million to expand the Strong Families, Strong Futures pilot which invests in children in families on low incomes in Wards 5, 7, and 8 in their first year of life for healthy child development and lasting family success.

- **Deputy Mayor for Education**
 - \$53.3 million to expand eligibility to help even more DC families access quality, affordable childcare that enables parents to work or study.

³ Agencies request enhancements to fund initiatives which are not included in their baseline budget (or “MARC”). Budget continuations invest in sustaining and growing programs which demonstrate successful outcomes. Capital investments fund durable assets like buildings or roads.



- \$6.4 million to ensure residents who are actively working to overcome barriers to employment earn a living wage as they gain necessary skills and experience through job readiness programs.
 - \$5 million as a downpayment toward accessible, quality afterschool programming in elementary schools across the District through “My Afterschool DC.”
 - \$1.6 million to train future teachers and strengthen the educator workforce pipeline with homegrown talent through the Teacher Apprenticeship Program.
 - \$835,000 to staff new community assets at McMillan Community Center, the Joy Evans Therapeutic Recreation Community Center, and Anacostia Recreation Center.
- **Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure**
 - \$5 million to update DC’s Traffic Safety Input (TSI) system to center resident concerns and prioritize equity when responding to requests for road repairs and traffic safety interventions.
 - \$900,000 to help restore blighted residential and vacant properties to health and safety standards through proactive inspection and nuisance abatement when owners do not have the resources to do so.
 - \$150,000 to three community-based organizations to continue and expand their clean up and preservation work in parks in Wards 7 and 8.
 - \$2 million to begin piloting strategies and ideas from the Mayor’s Task Force on Automated Traffic Enforcement Equity and Safety, which is chaired by the Chief Equity Officer and Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure. The task force began meeting in April 2023 to study and make recommendations to:
 - Maximize the efficacy of the ATE program;
 - Mitigate against the potentially inequitable effects of flat fines on individuals of varying household incomes; and
 - Clarify, simplify, and streamline the payment processes associated with traffic ticket fines and penalties, including delinquent debt, to lessen administrative burdens to the public.
- **Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice**
 - \$1.4 million to hire 6 staff in the Office of the Chief of Police to lead Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and employee wellness initiatives to promote cultural change and help retain officers.
 - \$6.8 million across multiple programs for victims/survivors of sexual assault and other victim services, including crisis intervention, advocacy, case management, trauma-informed mental health services, shelter, and other services to promote healing.



- \$3.8 million to expand the Safe Passage Safe Blocks program so more students and their families can travel safely to and from school.
- **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**
 - \$237,000 for the Close Relative Caregivers Program which enables children who might otherwise enter the foster care system to stay in permanent homes with family members.
 - \$13.5 million to help 600 families thrive long-term by obtaining skills and support to overcome barriers to higher paying jobs via the Career MAP program.
 - \$324,000 to continue popup Joyful Food Markets in 53 elementary schools which bring no-cost access to fresh fruits and vegetables to families at risk of hunger while teaching children simple recipes and fun nutritional lessons.
 - \$900,000 to buy down \$90 million of medical debt for approximately 90,000 District residents who live on low incomes or hold very high levels of medical debt.
 - \$1 million to fund modifications in and around the homes of eligible seniors and residents with disabilities to prevent falls and improve wellbeing through the Safe at Home Program.
 - \$1.7 million to support housing case management services for behavioral health service clients.
 - \$42 million to support families who are experiencing homelessness or at immediate risk of homelessness with rental assistance through the Family Re-Housing Stabilization Program.
- **Government Operations and Internal Services**
 - \$4.5 million to expand the HVAC preventive maintenance program beyond public schools to regularly monitor systems and identify issues before they require larger, more expensive repairs.
 - \$306,000 to support the Mayor's Office of Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing (MODDHH) with full-time interpreters to facilitate MODDHH staff communications with hearing counterparts within District Government and the wider metropolitan region community.

Conclusion

Continued progress towards a racially equitable Washington, DC requires a whole-of-government approach, which is why the District's commitment to advancing racial equity in DC is not limited to the budget process. In November 2022, ORE introduced a draft of the District's first Racial Equity Action Plan which charts a path for the District Government in three-year increments to address racial equity gaps, meaningfully strengthen community partnerships, and



measure progress toward a more equitable DC. A final version of the plan which will incorporate community feedback will be released later this year.

