



Human Services Program

Racial Equity Assessment Lens (REAL) Tool Summary



Program Overview

- Since the 1970s, the Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro have supported nonprofit organizations that deliver vital community programs and services through their coordinated [Human Services Program](#).
- The program's overarching goal is to **achieve economic and social well-being and opportunities to thrive for all residents, particularly those who are low-income or otherwise disenfranchised**. The program funds nonprofit organizations that work to improve education, livelihood security, and health outcomes.
- Each of the Towns allocate funding for the program in their annual budgets and proposals are received through an application process. Their respective advisory boards review proposals, invite applicants to present their applications in a joint public hearing, and make funding recommendations to their respective Town Councils.
- In 2018, following an extensive process of community engagement and data analysis, the Towns adopted a new [Results Framework](#) for the Human Services Program. Adoption of the Results Framework reflects the Towns' interest in further focusing the program on results and deepening the program's impact to address the community's greatest challenges.
- In 2019, staff from both Towns participated in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) year-long learning cohort, joining a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.
- Following the adoption of the [One Orange Countywide Racial Equity Framework](#) in 2022, the Towns committed to again re-assessing the Human Services Program to center racial equity.

Racial Equity Assessment

The Racial Equity Assessment Lens is a practical tool that is part of the One Orange Framework. It lays out a set of questions to examine policies, practices, and procedures in order to identify racial inequities and maps out a process to address/redress institutional racism. It involves the following steps:

1. **Analyze the relevant data**
2. **Determine who receives benefit and who is burdened**
3. **Identify opportunities to create greater equity or minimize harm**

The following summarizes what the Towns learned from their racial equity assessment of the Human Services Program over the last year and proposes recommendations for changes to address racial inequities.

Racial equity means that we no longer see disparities based on race and we improve results for all.

Program Objectives & Select Data

Numbers shown below are not deduplicated. Please reference discussion of data in the full assessment.

Strategic Objective 1: Children improve their education outcomes



All children improve their education outcomes through this initiative's support of nonprofit organization programs that provide access to early childhood development opportunities and help children exhibit new grade-level appropriate skills that afford them the opportunity to be "College and Career Ready."

18 nonprofit programs funded

10,424 individuals served

70% youth ages 6–18

30% African American

23% Hispanic

Strategic Objective 2: Residents increase their livelihood security



Low-income or disenfranchised residents increase their livelihood security through this initiative's support of programs that address food and housing insecurities by providing social safety net services and programs that increase job skills.

29 nonprofit programs funded

39,895 individuals served

23% adults ages 19–50

13% African American

11% Hispanic

Strategic Objective 3: Residents improve their health outcomes



Residents improve their health outcomes by having greater access to, and higher quality, healthcare.

24 nonprofit programs funded

34,954 individuals served

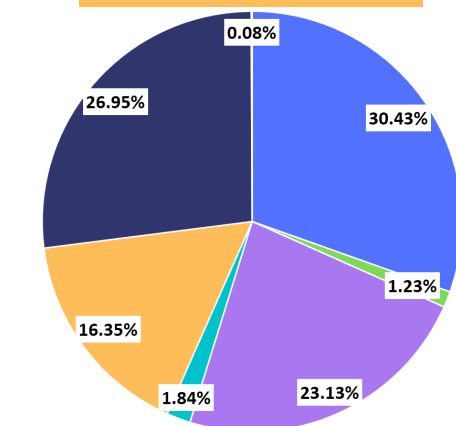
32% youth ages 6–18

28% African American

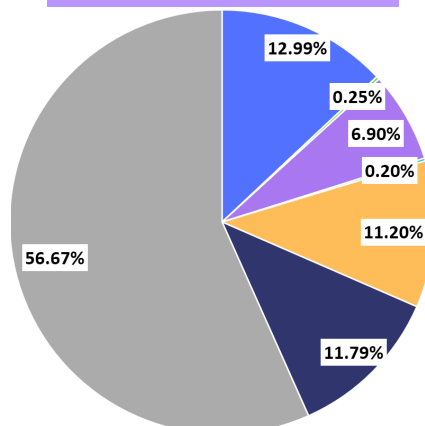
28% Hispanic

People Served by Objective

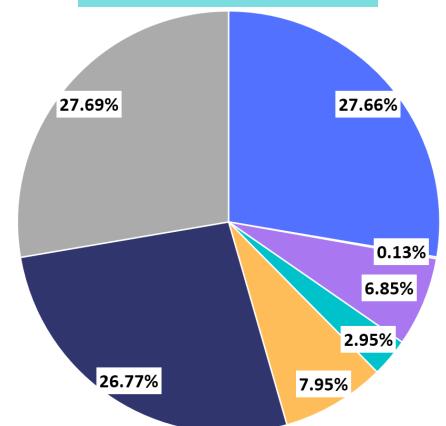
Objective 1: Education



Objective 2: Livelihood



Objective 3: Health



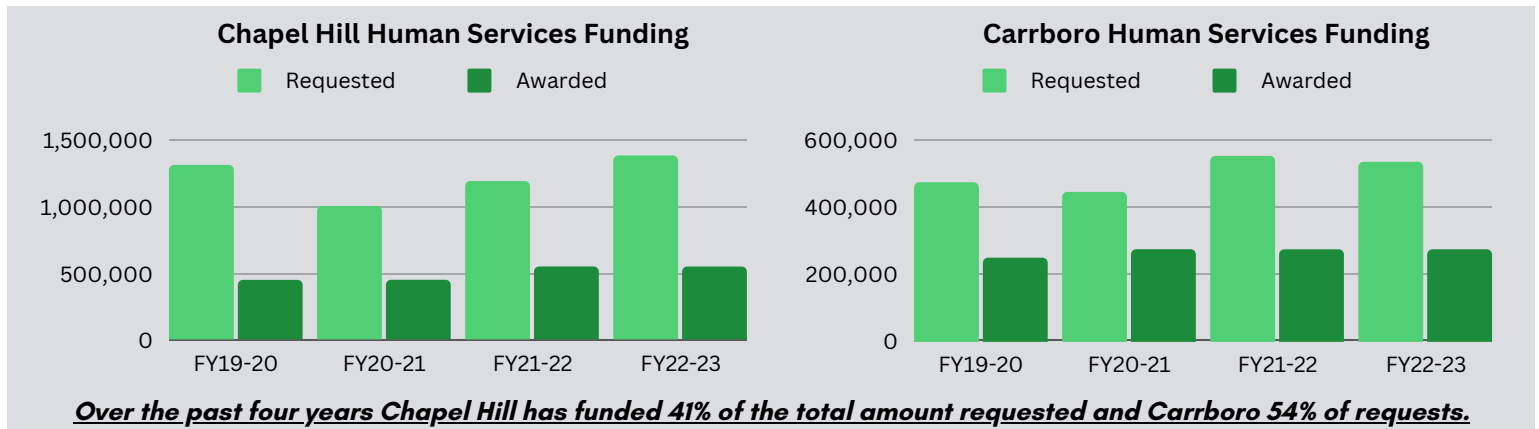
■ African American ■ Amer. Indian / Alaska Native ■ Asian ■ Ntv Hawaiian / Pacific Islander ■ Other Race ■ White ■ Unknown

Key Findings and Recommendations

The assessment revealed that communities of color in Chapel Hill and Carrboro experience overall lower levels of wellbeing across all indicators. Changing results is a bigger responsibility than any one organization can accomplish and will require a collaborative approach among institutional, organizational, and community partners to achieve racial equity goals.

Funding

1. Current funding levels are not adequately addressing community needs. Annually, the total amount requested is approximately double the amount available. As disparities continue to widen and the cost of living continues to increase, it is anticipated that community needs will grow.
2. The Towns historically have provided a majority of the funding to established organizations.



Recommendations & Action Steps:

- ✓ Continue to increase the Human Services Budget annually to more adequately respond to community needs.
- ✓ Enhance outreach efforts to small and/or new organizations that may not be aware of the program.

Application Process

3. Some of the application requirements may create barriers for organizations that do not have access to resources, technology, or staff capacity to track organization data.
4. The nature of the work of some organizations may not be conducive to data gathering and can create a barrier for residents accessing needed services (i.e. organizations that assist survivors of domestic violence).
5. In tracking demographics, there is not currently a way to de-duplicate individuals served by multiple organizations.

Recommendations & Action Steps:





- ✓ Explore implementing an online grant portal to alleviate staff and organization burdens.
- ✓ Conduct plain language review and make application available in multiple languages.
- ✓ Enhance ongoing technical assistance to organizations to support those who need assistance with the application process, reporting, and monitoring – building off the Towns' successes with workshops on performance measures.
- ✓ Reduce reporting requirements, which are burdensome especially for small organizations.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Decision Making

6. Chapel Hill uses a basic scoring rubric to evaluate funding applications. Carrboro does not currently have a rubric in place. The rubric used by Chapel Hill does not include racial equity criteria.





Recommendations & Action Steps:

-  ◦ Implement a detailed scoring rubric (for both Carrboro and Chapel Hill) and use the scoring rubric as the basis for the advisory board recommendations to limit subjectivity of funding.
-  ◦ Eliminate the informal practice of not funding new organizations the first year that they apply for funding, which disproportionately impacts small, BIPOC organizations.
-  ◦ Consider making funding awards up-front rather than on a reimbursement basis for smaller awards, which would allow for smaller organizations with less operating reserve to be eligible for funding.
-  ◦ The Towns need to consult with their attorneys to see how race can be used as a factor in decision making.

Training and Data Collection

7. Although some organizations have diverse staff and board members, this is currently not a requested data point. Representation in leadership and decision making is important.
8. Additional information is needed from applicants to assess racial equity, in the organizations and their programs. Regular review of local data (such as a community needs assessment) is necessary in order to determine how the programs strategic objectives align with current needs and disparities.
9. The Towns do not receive feedback from residents who are beneficiaries of the Program to assess the quality of the services provided by funded programs. Nonprofits provide some information in progress reports.


Recommendations & Action Steps:

-  ◦ Continue to advocate for diverse representation, especially at the leadership level of nonprofits. Offer racial equity training to nonprofit staff and board members.
-  ◦ Explore increased engagement of program participants, bearing in mind the potential creation of additional staff burden, anonymity impact, or personal comfort levels.
-  ◦ Regularly review data on community needs and program demographics and amend the program results framework based on the data.
-  ◦ Gather feedback on the process and program from organizations as part of the regular reporting, such as requiring the nonprofits to annually survey their program participants.

Recommendation Progress Indicators

 = in discussion with stakeholders and participants

 = in progress for Fiscal Year 23

 = requires further analysis/council action