



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Hall
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Legislation Text

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Receive an Update on the Racial Equity Assessment of the Human Services Program.

Staff:

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Department:

Affordable Housing and Community Connections

Overview: Consistent with the One Orange Countywide Racial Equity Framework, the Towns committed to again re-assessing the Human Services Program to center racial equity. Chapel Hill Affordable Housing and Community Connections staff, in conjunction with colleagues from the Town of Carrboro, completed a racial equity assessment. Short- and long-term implementation steps have been identified to continue centering racial equity in the funding process.



Recommendation(s):

That the Council receive this update on the Racial Equity Assessment of the Human Services Program.

Background on the Human Services Program

Since the 1970's, the Town of Chapel Hill has supported nonprofit organizations that deliver vital community programs and services through a coordinated Human Services Program with the Town of Carrboro and Orange County. Each jurisdiction allocates funding for the program in their annual budgets and receives proposals through an application process. The program's overarching goal is to achieve economic and social wellbeing for all residents, particularly those who are low-income or otherwise disenfranchised.

In December of 2017, there was an ongoing interest from the Town Council and staff to refine the Human Services funding process to be streamlined and results oriented. Following robust community engagement and data analysis in 2018, the funding process was refined to become more results driven, with clearly defined funding priority areas and goals. Council adopted a new [Results Framework](https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=41019) [\(<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=41019>](https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=41019) focused on three main areas: Education, Livelihood Security, and Health. During the Outside Agency Application process nonprofit agencies are asked to align with at least one of the Strategic Objectives.

Centering Racial Equity in the Human Services Program

Consistent with Council's goals and direction and the One Orange Racial Equity Framework, Town staff have taken concrete steps to further center racial equity in the Human Services Funding Program. With the support of the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(GARE\)](https://www.racialequityalliance.org/) [<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/>](https://www.racialequityalliance.org/) and input from the Town's DEI Office, staff members have expanded their understanding of the process of dismantling structural racism, including how to change the policies and institutional norms that cause and drive inequities through training, peer learning, and support provided through the Town's Equity Lab.

Further, in collaboration with the Town of Carrboro, Town staff conducted a Racial Equity Assessment of the Human Services Program using the Racial Equity Assessment Lens, which is a practical tool that is part of the adopted [One Orange Countywide Racial Equity Framework](https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5390141&GUID=E4E7D69C-ABDA-4398-8CC3-) [<https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5390141&GUID=E4E7D69C-ABDA-4398-8CC3-](https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5390141&GUID=E4E7D69C-ABDA-4398-8CC3-)

[5DA89ED1E78F&Options=ID|Text|&Search=%22one+orange%22>](#). It lays out a set of questions to examine policies, practices, and procedures to identify racial inequities and it maps out a process to address/redress institutional racism. Through the Assessment (attached), staff:

- analyzed the relevant data
- determined who received benefit and experienced burden
- identified opportunities to create greater equity or minimize harm in the human services process.

Staff identified several short-term changes that are being implemented this fiscal year, which build off those changes which were implemented last year, as highlighted below. With guidance from the joint Human Services Board/Commission and Equity Lab (and Carrboro Racial Equity Commission and CORE team), staff will continue to work on identified long-term policy changes.

Key Findings

Below are the key findings from our racial equity assessment of the Human Services Program:

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.
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.
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.
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.

Implementation Steps

Changes Implemented in Fiscal Year 2022:

Last year, the Town implemented the following changes to the Human Services program to begin further centering racial equity in the Program:

- ✓ Added Racial Equity questions to the funding Application.
- ✓ Conducted Government Alliance on Race and Equity <<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/>> (GARE) training for Human Services Boards and Commissions.
- ✓ Offered Racial Equity Institute <<https://racialequityinstitute.org/>> Training for Staff and non-profit organizations.
- ✓ Program staff participate in the Town's Equity Lab, a cross-departmental team focused on learning and leading on equity issues across the Town.

Changes to be Implemented in Fiscal Year 2023 and Beyond:

Staff adjusted the upcoming application and process as indicated by the results of the racial equity assessment and recommended by the advisory board members and racial equity teams. These changes include:

- ✓ Conducted a Plain Language review, made subsequent edits, and reformatted the application.
- ✓ Translated the application into Spanish.
- ✓ Enhance ongoing technical assistance to the organizations to support those who need assistance with the application process, reporting, and monitoring - building off the Towns' success with workshops on performance.
- ✓ Enhance outreach efforts to small and/or new organizations that may not be aware of the program.
- ✓ Continue to advocate for diverse representation especially at the leadership level of nonprofits and offer racial equity training to nonprofits' staff and board members.
- ✓ Eliminate the informal practice of not funding new organizations the first year that they apply for funding, which disproportionately impacts small, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) organizations.
- ✓ Explore increased engagement of program participants.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Continue to increase the Human Services Budget annually to respond to community needs more adequately.

Next Steps

Staff will work on future implementation action steps, as outlined in the attached racial equity assessment.

This report includes the full Racial Equity Assessment Lens (REAL) Tool and the Racial Equity Assessment Lens (REAL) Tool Summary.



Attachments:

- Racial Equity Assessment (REAL) Tool
- Racial Equity Assessment Lens (REAL) Tool Summary

The Agenda will reflect the text below and/or the motion text will be used during the meeting.

By accepting the report, the Council acknowledges receipt of the racial equity assessment of the Human Services Program.