Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
            Wally Bobkiewicz, City Manager

From: Dr. Patricia A. Efiom, Equity and Empowerment Coordinator

Subject: Budget Reduction Impact Report

Date: October 12, 2018

Why Consider Equity in budgeting?

About 15 years ago, Seattle Washington became the first city to tackle the issue of Institutional Racism through budgeting. They were able to do it through a systematic process that was data-driven and supported from the top down. Equity means equal access to opportunities and equal benefits for all people regardless of race/ethnicity, sex, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, immigrant status, veteran status, language and/or socio-economic status.

Budgets are often places where there are hidden barriers to equitable programs, projects and services. This Budget Equity Assessment tool is designed to help eradicate any potential barriers. The global and consistent use of this tool will result in budget decisions that have deep and sustainable impact on how the City of Evanston does business. This systematic approach to budget development will:

- Assess the equity and social impacts of budget requests and decisions to reduce disparities and promote service level equity.
- Advance the equity agenda
- Provide a lens through which staff will be able to apply to other processes and decisions.
- Track and provide data on service levels and investments by ward and potentially population.

The process, guided by a set of questions, leads to the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity. This six-step process is:

1. Setting Outcomes,
2. Involving Stakeholders and Analyzing Data,
3. Determining the Benefit and/or Burdens
4. Advancing Opportunity or Minimizing Harm,
5. Evaluating, Raising Racial Awareness, Being Accountable, and
6. Reporting Back.

Austin, Texas established and followed a very similar process. Each department in the City is required to use the process to analyze a minimum of four projects each year to guide policy, program, and budget decisions.

To facilitate the process, Seattle's used groups of employees to advocate for Race and Social Justice Initiative programs and lead and participate in discussions on race, racism, and strategies to overcome institutional barriers to racial and social equity.

The City Manager requires department staff and the budget team to use the process to review every budget proposal. The process helps analyze the race and social justice impact of policy and program decisions. This ongoing review has resulted in hundreds of changes that are aimed at achieving racial equity.

Each department is held accountable by being required to report on the progress of their annual equity goals and Initiative.

How will Evanston benefit from the equity budget lens?

The tool will give us the data that we need to know where our inequities or barriers are. We will no longer have to guess or consider one time application of a tool. We will have a set of lens embedded in our processes and procedures.

The process provides the launching point from which we can begin discussing and more deeply understanding the impact of racial inequities in Evanston and begin to work across City agencies and community partners to align budget and fiscal policies with the desired outcome of eliminated racial inequities.

What equitable outcomes are most pressing in Evanston?

1. Are there specific neighborhoods in Evanston where racial inequities are especially pronounced? Who are the most important stakeholders in those neighborhoods?
2. How can we engage community stakeholders in informing budget decisions that have an impact on racial equity?
3. How do specific current initiatives and policies in Evanston increase or decrease racial equity?

4. Are there specific and actionable steps departments can take to address racial inequities in our office culture and processes?
5. What are the root causes of racial inequities in Evanston?
6. How do we hold the City and community partners accountable for dismantling institutional racism?