

Final Report



Race and racism as a public health issue

A joint study completed by volunteers from the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission and the Olmsted County Public Health Services Advisory Board.

October 2022



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For questions regarding this report, please contact Olmsted County Administration (507) 328-6000.



Executive summary

Situation

The Olmsted County Board of Commissioners recognized the inequities and disparities associated with 'race and racism as a public health issue.' In August 2020, the Olmsted County Board passed a resolution (Resolution No. 20-153) asking two of its volunteer advisory groups – the Olmsted County Public Health Services Advisory Board (PHSAB) and the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission (HRC) – to jointly study and investigate racial disparities that result from systemic racism.

See appendix 3e for complete County Board resolution document.

Background

Systemic, or structural, racism is not something you can touch, but exists in our foundation, and has been a part of our systems starting hundreds of years ago. Olmsted County acknowledges the impacts of systemic racism are real and that it is essential to understand, identify, and address institutional and systemic barriers.

Assessment

Each identified Focus Area depicts:

- initial relevant population and programmatic data focused on racial disparities,
- lists draft recommendations,
- and presents qualitative and quantitative data from community engagement sessions.

Recommendation

After the culmination of several months of research, analysis, community engagement, and discussion, the volunteer subgroup has finalized 42 recommendations across 10 focus areas* for the County Board.

*NOTE: Two focus areas have joint recommendations.

Joint study: Race and racism as a public health issue

final recommendations

Accountability:

1. Ensure accountability for monitoring progress of racism as a public health issue.

Advisory boards:

2. Reduce barriers to participate in Olmsted County advisory boards in order to increase black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) representation and voices of lived experiences.
3. Remove or change state statutes that inhibit participation on county boards.

Criminal justice:

4. Work with community partners to ensure free expungement processes are readily available to people who have committed minor offenses.
5. Work to ensure people with criminal records have access to housing options.
6. Evaluate how effectively law enforcement and co-responders de-escalate and respond to people in mental health crisis.
7. Work with community partners and BIPOC community members to learn how to navigate interactions with law enforcement.
8. Work with community partners to support people in reexamining settled cases for the potential to re-open and review cases where errors have occurred.

Customer service:

9. Gather input from persons being served to improve delivery of human-centered services in Olmsted County.
10. Assess all county services for awareness of and accessibility to BIPOC residents and persons served in the approach of 'No Wrong Door.' Take action accordingly.
11. Add additional Guiding Partners to Solutions (GPS) navigators, that are culturally responsive, to advocate for persons being served.
12. Implement 'Participatory Budgeting' practices, meaning Olmsted County leadership listens to and implements community member input on how public funds are allocated.

Data collection and use:

13. Invest in infrastructure for secure data systems within Olmsted County agencies, to capture and organize data already regularly collected on persons served, so that the county can assess the quality and impact of programs and services. Systems should be efficient, interoperable, and timely across departments.
14. Building from above, work with the state of Minnesota to integrate Olmsted County data systems to efficiently report on needed data in a timely way to foster collaboration and benchmarking.
15. Olmsted County staff should use existing information to continuously improve disparate outcomes across race, ethnicity, etc.
16. Work alongside BIPOC communities being served to understand how data gathering methods resonate within their communities to inform and improve culturally responsive data gathering methods.

Financial health:

17. Provide for continuous evaluation of the system for providing emergency assistance to ensure community members in need are not falling through the cracks.
18. Apply Pathways to Prosperity and Wellbeing (PTPW) as an organizational model and use this to implement a fully funded guaranteed basic income program for families / individuals experiencing poverty and to address problems with the benefits cliff.
19. Work with community partners to facilitate connections between community members and financial institutions to ensure culturally relevant financial education and reduce predatory practices.
20. Find ways to mitigate the negative impacts of the federal benefits cliff.

Housing (homelessness, rental assistance, home ownership):

21. Expand emergency shelter options for families and youth.
22. Increase public and community partners' awareness and coordination of available housing programs and services.
23. Improve the systemic process to house people across the housing continuum.
24. Continue to assess whether the level of chronic homelessness in the county is declining and invest in stable housing to address the issue where needed.
25. Increase the number of affordable subsidized and rental options in Olmsted County for families below the 200% poverty line.
26. Provide direct financial assistance to support BIPOC individuals and families in securing rental housing.
27. Support passage of state anti-discrimination in housing legislation.
28. Given the history of red-lining and racial covenants, develop a comprehensive system alongside multi-sector partners to increase BIPOC home ownership with a focus on shifting BIPOC renters to owners.
29. Increase affordable home-buying options.

Organizational culture and systems:

30. Strengthen organizational culture with strategies to support the five basic human needs (belonging, respect, choice, physical and psychological safety, and joy).
31. Each department creates DEI goals that must include increasing BIPOC Olmsted County staff and increasing multi-lingual Olmsted County staff.
32. Increase BIPOC leadership at the highest pay levels.
33. Increase DEI-focused FTE to lead efforts across the organization.
34. Establish, through One Olmsted*, shared DEI definitions across Olmsted County.
35. Increase resources and funding for interpreters and translators.
36. Implement anti-racism training for Olmsted County Board of Commissioners, Olmsted County Department Leadership, and advisory board members.

**See page 11 for greater description of One Olmsted.*

Mental health and substance use:

37. Inventory and expand mental health and substance use services for adults and youth to ensure strong mental well-being for all, including resiliency and coping skills and leveraging of peer support models.
38. Facilitate a community culture of safety, belonging, and connectedness to combat social isolation, particularly experienced by communities of color.
39. Support community organizations to embed harm reduction principles in mental health and substance use programming.
40. Inventory and expand access to culturally relevant mental health and substance use services.
41. Facilitate use of and access to Medication-Assisted Treatment for community members.
42. Facilitate system-wide changes that impact access to mental health and substance use services.

Situation

Situation statement:

After passing a county resolution declaring racism as a public health issue, the Olmsted County Board of Commissioners asked two of its volunteer advisory groups to study and investigate this issue and its impact across Olmsted County. After the culmination of several months of research, analysis, and discussion, the volunteer subgroup has finalized 42 recommendations for the county board to accept and begin implementation planning.

Impacts of systemic racism

The impacts of systemic (structural) racism, which according to GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Ethnicity), are policies or practices that work better for white people than for people of color, often occur unintentionally or inadvertently. This has led to a history and current reality of systems that negatively impact communities of color. Systemic racism impacts all parts of a person's life, including where they live, work, worship, and play. It creates inequities in access to social and economic benefits, like housing, education, wealth, and employment. These conditions – referred to as social determinants of health by the Center for Disease Control (CDC)– are key drivers of health inequities in communities of color, placing those within these populations at greater risk for poor health outcomes. These disparate systems will remain in place until jurisdictions take intentional steps to create new, inclusive communities.

County board resolution

The Olmsted County Board of Commissioners has recognized the inequities and disparities associated with 'race and racism as a public health issue.' In August 2020, the Olmsted County Board passed a resolution (Resolution No. 20-153) directing two of its volunteer advisory groups – the Olmsted County Public Health Services Advisory Board (PHSAB) and the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission (HRC) – to jointly study and investigate racial disparities that result from systemic racism. The county has placed a significant effort to focus on assessing and addressing the ways the health of our residents is negatively impacted by different county systems and structures.

Joint study

Olmsted County is not unique in passing a resolution such as this. According to the American Public Health Association, as of August 2022, 256 entities across the United States have declared racism as a public health issue. In Minnesota, the Minnesota House of Representatives, Olmsted and Hennepin counties, and the cities of Bloomington, Red Wing, and Minneapolis have passed declarations. Although not unique in passing a resolution, Olmsted County is novel in the approach it has taken with the 'Joint Study' by having community members lead the development of organizational recommendations.

Racism defined

Institutional racism

occurs within institutions and organizations such as schools, businesses, and government agencies that adopt and maintain policies that routinely produce inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people.

Structural racism

refers to the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institution and policies that work together to perpetuate inequity.

~ Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)



Background

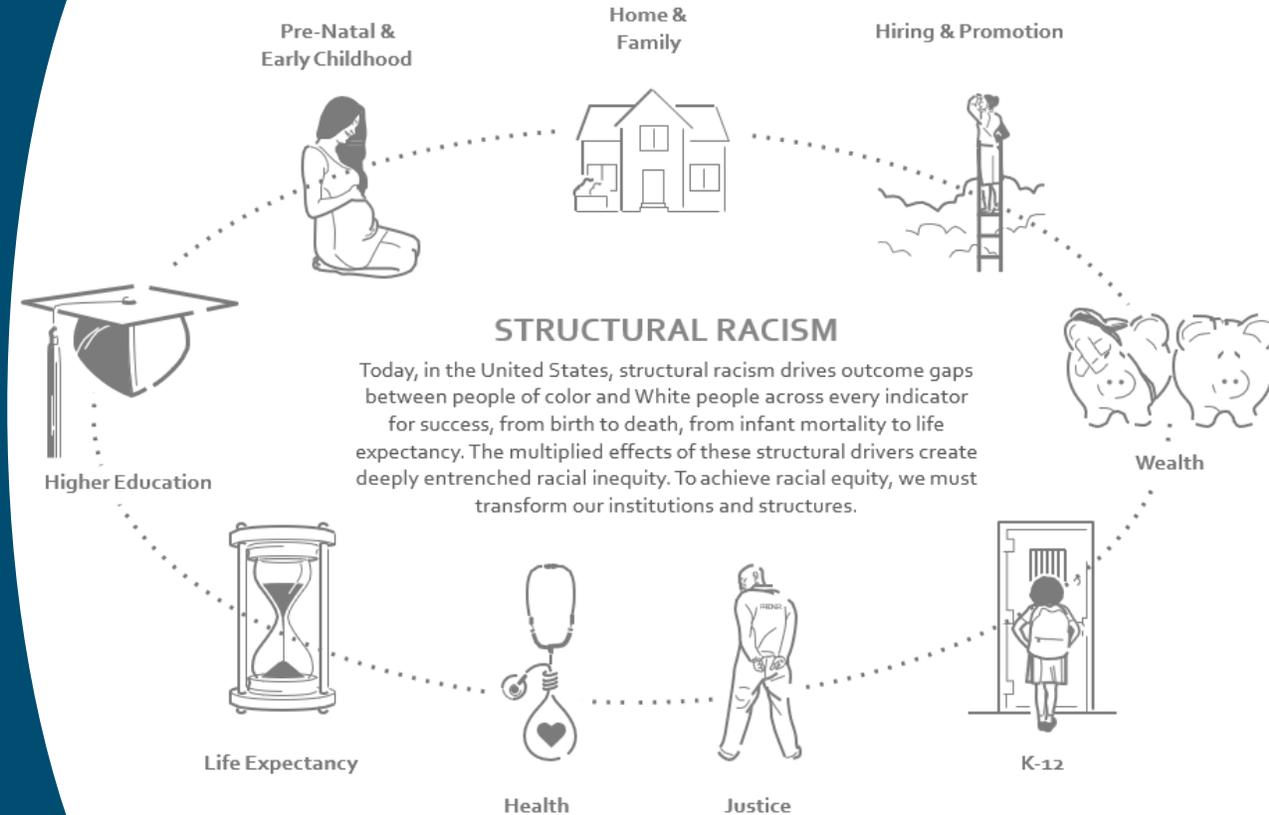
Historical context - Housing

Systemic, or structural, racism is not something you can touch, but it's something that exists in our foundation, and something that has been a part of our systems starting hundreds of years ago. Research shows centuries of racism in America have had a negative impact on communities of color. It impacts all parts of a person's life and creates inequities in access to social and economic benefits.

Many examples illustrate how systemic racism practices have shaped the systems and foundations we operate in today. One of those examples is found in discriminatory practices such as redlining in the area of housing.

In 1940, the federal government's Homeowners' Loan Corporation assigned grades to residential neighborhoods that reflected their "mortgage security". The neighborhoods that were assigned "A" were minimal risks for mortgage lenders, and those with "D"s were "hazardous". Quality of housing and racial and ethnic identity of residents were taken into account when assigning grades. This put housing into a white perspective and devalued other racial groups. This redlining became an obstacle against minorities who wanted to become homeowners and made inter-generational wealth building more challenging and contributes to current wealth inequalities.

Source: Med City Beat. Rochester adopts initiative aimed at ridding city of racially-restrictive covenants.



Background

Fast forward eight decades and the year 2020 begins.

With the new decade, also comes a new virus that has surfaced called novel coronavirus or COVID-19. It would spread across the globe and cause a global pandemic, disrupting our economy and way of life; our healthcare systems were inundated with sick people. As of early August 2022, per the CDC's COVID Data Tracker, there have been over one million COVID deaths in the United States.

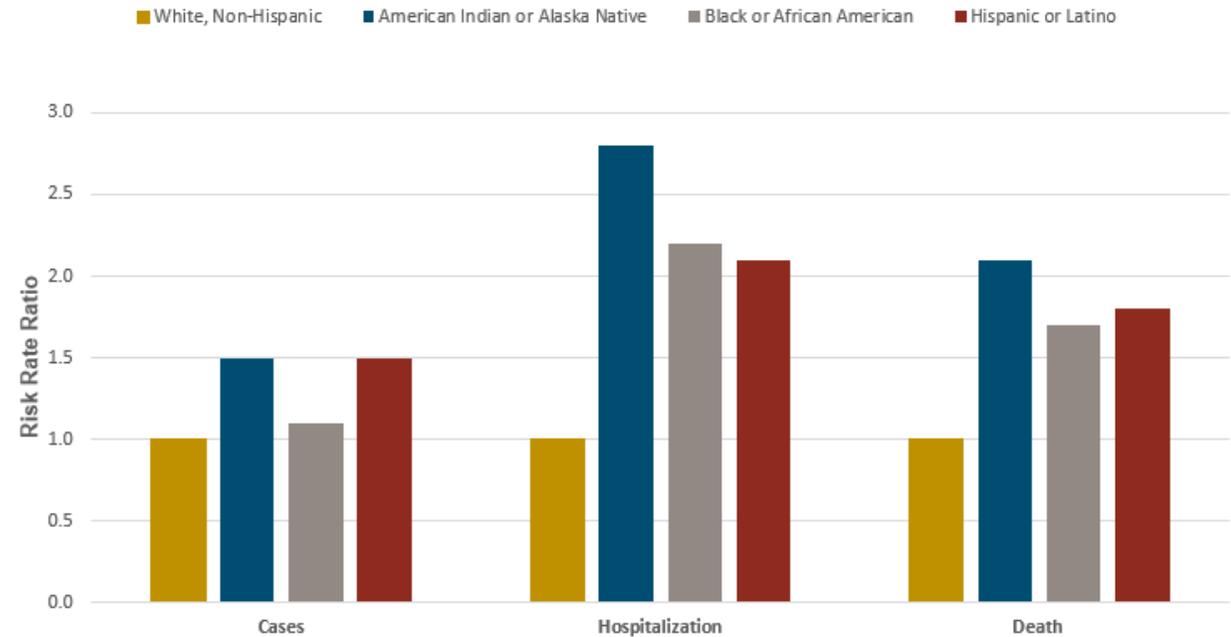
Widespread disparities

The COVID-19 pandemic has also revealed widespread and fundamental disparities across the United States for both exposure and severe outcomes associated with an individual's race and ethnicity.

Race and ethnicity are risk factors for other underlying conditions (i.e., socioeconomic status, access to health care) that affect overall health. Risk for COVID infection, hospitalization and death drastically differ by an individual's race and ethnicity, with minorities bearing much of the burden.

As of July 28, 2022, case infection, hospitalization, and death risk rate ratios continue to be the highest among American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black or African American, and Hispanic or Latino persons compared to White, non-Hispanic persons.

Risk for COVID-19 by Race and Ethnicity
as of July 2022



Source: (CDC, COVID-NET, and National Center for Health Statistics)

The COVID-19 disparities seen nationally are also evident in Olmsted County. From the initial Olmsted County COVID-19 dashboard (summer 2020), the disproportionality seen amongst Black and other minority residents was highlighted:

- In Olmsted County, Black residents account for approximately 7% of the total population; however, Black individuals accounted for approximately 35% of the confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- Olmsted County residents that identify as Black are more than five times as likely to acquire infection than those that identify as white.
- Olmsted County residents that identify as Hispanic have more than four times the risk for exposure compared to those that identify as white.

Background

Significant national racial health disparities

Beyond COVID-19 and racial profiling, significant racial disparities in health and other outcomes are evident nationally, with multiple sources shining a light on the issue. Data show that racial and ethnic minority groups throughout the United States experience higher rates of illness and death across a wide range of health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and heart disease, when compared to their white counterparts. Disparities are also seen across criminal justice, education, and social welfare outcomes.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women (CDC).
- African American adult men are 5.9 times as likely to be incarcerated than whites; Hispanics are 3.1 times as likely (US Bureau of Justice Statistics).
- One in six children in the United States live in poverty; unfortunately, this rises to one in every three Black children (2020 State of America's Children by the Children's Defense Fund).
- One in every 2.5 Black adults (or 40%), were unemployed or temporarily furloughed in April of 2020 (US Census Labor Force Statistics).
- One in nine Black children will enter foster care at some point before they turn 18 (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System).

Significant local racial health disparities

Olmsted County is no different when comparing health outcomes of racial and ethnic minority residents to white residents.

Olmsted County's 2018-2020 Community Health Needs Assessment has identified disparities that are connected to gender, race, and ethnicity regarding graduation rates, financial stress, homelessness, and drug and tobacco use.

Data obtained from the most recent American Community Survey shows Olmsted County has one of the highest racial disproportional gaps seen across poverty rates:

- Black poverty rate is 39.1%
- White poverty rate is 5.7%
- Nearing a seven-fold disparity rate in Olmsted County

Further examples specific to Olmsted County's inequities include:

- 31.3% of white residents report being financially stressed vs. 53.9% of non-white residents are financially stressed (2018-2020 CHNA).
- 97.1% of white residents have at least a high school degree vs. 77.4% of Black residents (2021 Olmsted Community Indicators; 2019 American Community Survey).
- The unemployment rate was six times higher for Black or African American individuals in Olmsted County than for white individuals (13% vs. 2%, respectively) (2021 Olmsted Community Indicators; 2019 American Community Survey).

Background

Olmsted County values and prioritizes health!

Health is not just about the food we eat or the exercise we get – it is also about where we live and work, our access to recreation, clean air and water, and our opportunities for success. It is also known that many parts of our lives that we don't have control over impact our overall health. Community health relies on the health of everyone, and public health issues such as racism create disparate health outcomes, which ultimately bring down the health of an entire community.

As a governing body, the Olmsted County Board of Commissioners acknowledge the impacts of systemic racism are real and are essential to understand, identify, and address institutional and systemic barriers. Olmsted County leadership realizes it is essential that we work to continue to understand, identify, and address institutional and systemic barriers; barriers that may impede access to opportunities for successful community health.

The current internal commitments outlined here, along with all 42 final Joint Study recommendations are essential for empowering staff and the whole organization to create an environment and culture of welcoming and belonging – for both employees and community members. This in turn will help build trust, as employees are the liaisons and messengers to the community; between communities of color and local government.



DIVERSITY



EQUITY



INCLUSION



Recent and current organizational commitments include:

- Creation of One Olmsted.
 - One Olmsted is Olmsted County's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative that is charged with using a health, social, and racial equity lens to build a vibrant and opportunity-rich society for all.
- Support of Olmsted County Public Health Services' mission to 'protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Olmsted County.'
- Creation of Departmental Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals.
- DEI education opportunities for all employees.
- 2022 County Board priority identified as, "Address race and racism as a public health issue and elimination of inequities in our community by implementing results of the Racism as a Public Health Issue study".

High level methodology

Board resolution and project planning

Immediately after the county board passed the resolution, staff began project planning. This included working with an independent facilitator to define the next layer of the work with the assigned advisory boards.

Shortly after the consultant work, a subgroup of community volunteers from the Human Rights Commission and the Public Health Services Advisory Board was created. Initial actions of the subgroup included identifying their tasks and work plan, identifying data that was needed to assess the current situation and formation of the subgroup's charter.

Joint study subgroup

Over several months (March – September 2021), the subgroup heard presentations from County staff related to population and programmatic data that focused on racial disparities and inequities across the community.

In the Fall of 2021, subgroup members then drafted recommendations for Olmsted County.

OLMSTED COUNTY
**HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION**



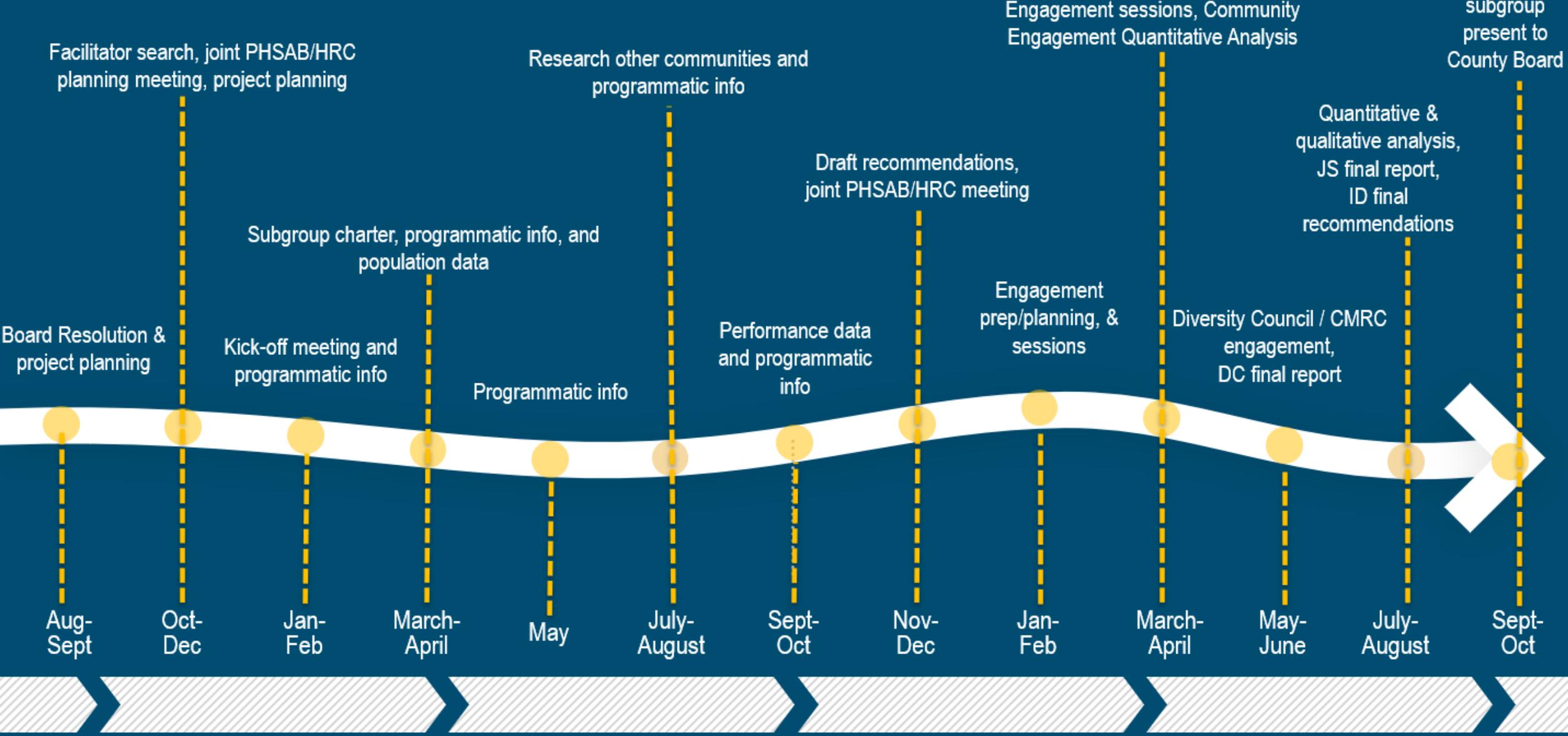
Public Health
Olmsted County

Supporting rights. Changing communities

Community engagement sessions

As 2022 began, project staff started planning community engagement sessions in which feedback would be gathered on the draft recommendations. Engagement was held with Olmsted County staff, community organizations and partners, minority groups with lived experience (BIPOC), and the general public via an online survey. Engagement results – both quantitative and qualitative – were then analyzed and shared with the subgroup members in support of finalizing recommendations.

Joint Study Timeline



2020

2021

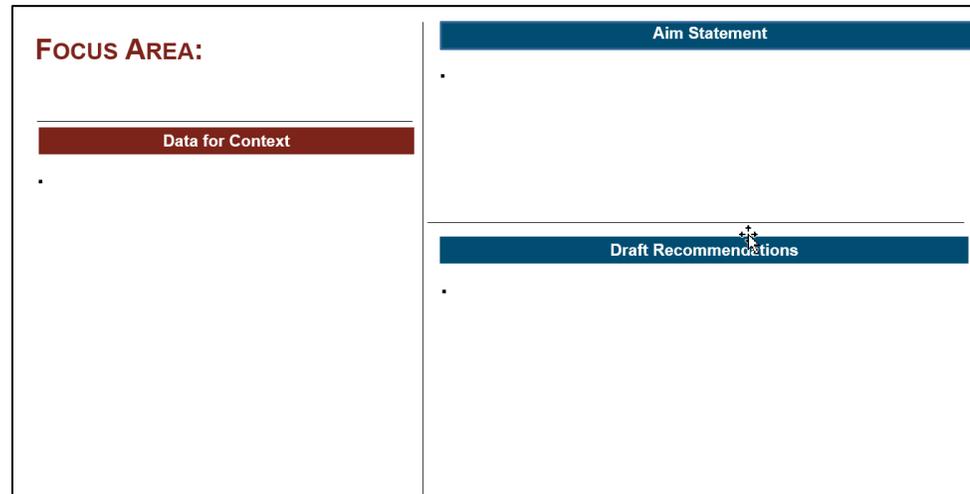
*Subgroup did not meet in June 2021

2022

Assessment and recommendations



Focus area format and layout



Olmsted County's joint study: race and racism as a public health issue final report document encompasses 10 focus areas. Each focus area has a devoted 'assessment and recommendation' section; to keep the document user-friendly and maintain consistency, every focus area follows an identical format and layout. Each focus area has three pages* devoted to describing initial relevant data, listing draft recommendations, presenting qualitative and quantitative data from community engagement sessions, and sharing final recommendations^.

**NOTE: The focus areas of Housing and Substance Use have subsections that replicate the 3-page layout.*

^NOTE: The focus areas of Mental Health and Substance Use have joint recommendations

The following are explanations detailing the focus area format and layout sections:

Aim statement

A summary describing what the recommendations in each focus area are about and defining relevant high-level strategies.

Data for context

Joint study subgroup members were presented data and information related to all 10 focus areas. Data for context includes county-wide (population) and/or organizational (programmatic) data that supported development of the draft recommendations.

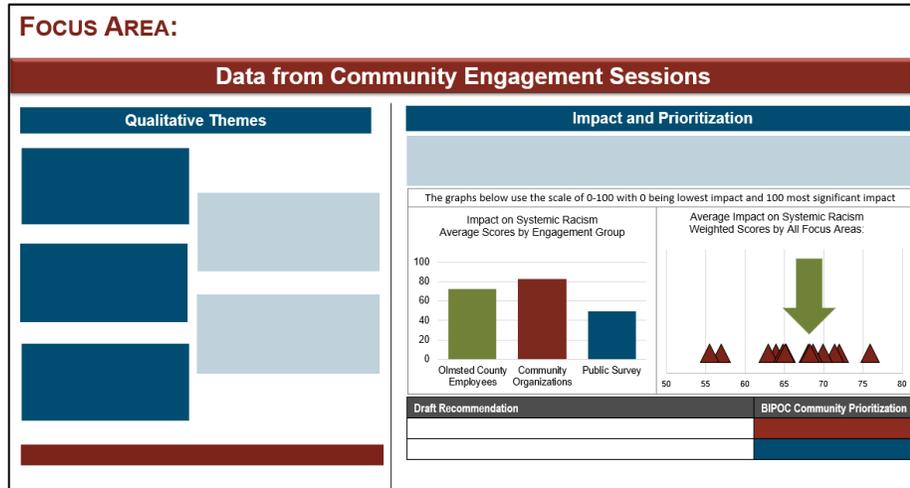
For a complete list of data sources, refer to Appendix 2c & 3.

Draft recommendations & word cloud

The joint study subgroup created preliminary (draft) recommendations that span all 10 focus areas.

For a comprehensive overview of draft recommendation methodology, refer to Appendix 2d.

Focus area format and layout



Data from community engagement sessions

One full page is devoted to qualitative and quantitative data synthesis from multiple community engagement sessions. Sessions were held with Olmsted County staff, Olmsted County community organizations and partners, minority groups with lived experience (BIPOC community), and the general public via an online survey. Engagement results were analyzed and shared with the subgroup members in support of finalizing the recommendations.

For an overview of the community engagement session methodology, refer to Appendix 2e.

Qualitative themes & quote

Thematic coding provided high-level themes from the community engagement sessions. Overall themes are presented in the dark blue boxes, where BIPOC-specific themes are presented in the gradient / lighter color. Relevant quotes from the sessions are placed in the maroon box.

For qualitative analysis methodology, complete data, and results, refer to Appendix 2e.

Impact and prioritization

The Average Impact Scores, both by engagement group and overall weighted, show where each Focus Area falls on impacting systemic racism on a scale of 0-100, with 0 being low impact and 100 being significant impact. The scores are the aggregate average across the three Engagement Groups in the first graph and an overall score where each group is weighted equally on the second graph. The BIPOC Community Prioritization shows the aggregate average ranking of recommendations within the Focus Area; BIPOC community session participants were asked to rank order draft recommendations from highest to lowest.

For quantitative analysis methodology, complete data, and results, refer to Appendix 2e.

Final recommendations

The volunteer subgroup used the feedback provided by the community engagement sessions to adjust and refine their draft work to finalize all recommendations.

For a description of the methodology to finalize recommendations, refer to Appendix 2f. For a comprehensive justification for recommendations changes, refer to Appendix 2f.

FOCUS AREA: ACCOUNTABILITY

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Importance of feedback loop

Tracking and measuring impact

Role and impact of the board

How are we measuring progress “from where to where” (who determines this)

Progress monitoring is important because it allows for frequent follow up

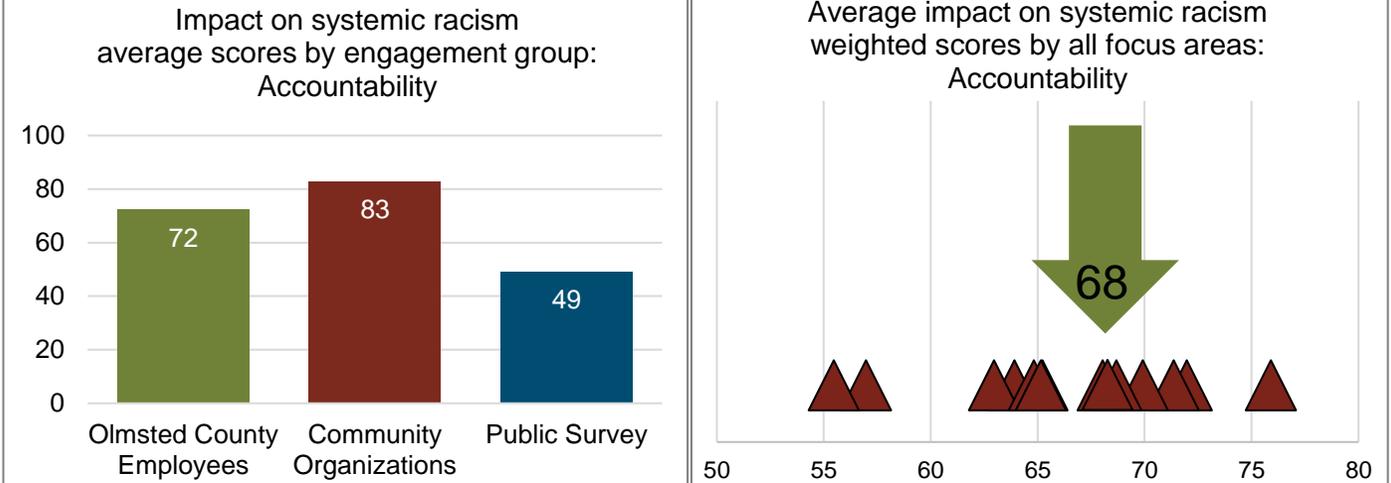
“The impact would really depend on how residents were engaged and how much genuine power-sharing was happening. As well as the amount/degree of lived experience on the board.”

-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Accountability average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 68. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Accountability score ranks in the top half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks seven out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation

BIPOC community prioritization

Develop evaluation metrics for implemented recommendations...

Low

Establish an accountability advisory board [...] to monitor progress.

High



1

Ensure accountability for monitoring the progress of race and racism as a public health issue by:

- Creating an accountability board through One Olmsted, ensuring the involvement of community members served by Olmsted County programs, as well as community organizations and county staff;
- Creating, through the accountability board, a process for providing feedback to county departments and programs to monitor progress and identify areas of opportunity and improvement;
- Establishing a mechanism for reporting progress to the county board and the community on an annual basis;
- Periodically examining the metrics and targets to ensure that they are community-centric and relevant.

FOCUS AREA: ADVISORY BOARDS



Data for Context

- Currently, most Olmsted County advisory boards do not have diversity requirements for board membership in their by-laws or statements regarding valuing diversity of membership. As a result, there is often a lack of diversity amongst members; this includes a lack of diversity in terms of race and ethnicity, place of residence in the county, and place of employment. Ideally, advisory boards should have membership that is reflective of Olmsted County as a whole.
- “Organizations that reflect the communities most impacted by inequities are better equipped to understand and respond to community experiences” (MN Dept of Health, Cultivating a Health Equity ecosystem report).
- Changing requirements to allow for virtual attendance, and other such current requirements for advisory boards, would help increase participation from a more diverse cross section of the county’s population.

Aim Statement

Support practices that ensure Olmsted County advisory board membership is representative of the Olmsted County community.

Draft Recommendations

- First step: Review and restructure advisory boards, including recruitment, membership, processes (meeting format), board functions/responsibilities to the community, relationship with the commissioners to support increasing BIPOC representation of the community.
- Second step: Increase BIPOC representation on advisory boards and increase relevance of advisory boards to BIPOC communities.
- State legislative agenda: Recommend changes to open meeting laws based on limitations to equitable participation.



FOCUS AREA: ADVISORY BOARDS

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Removal of barriers to participation

Having BIPOC representation on advisory boards through legislation will pave the way to preserve seats and encourage participation

Representation

Incentivize participation

Opportunity to collaborate with community organization for recruitment

Power of the board

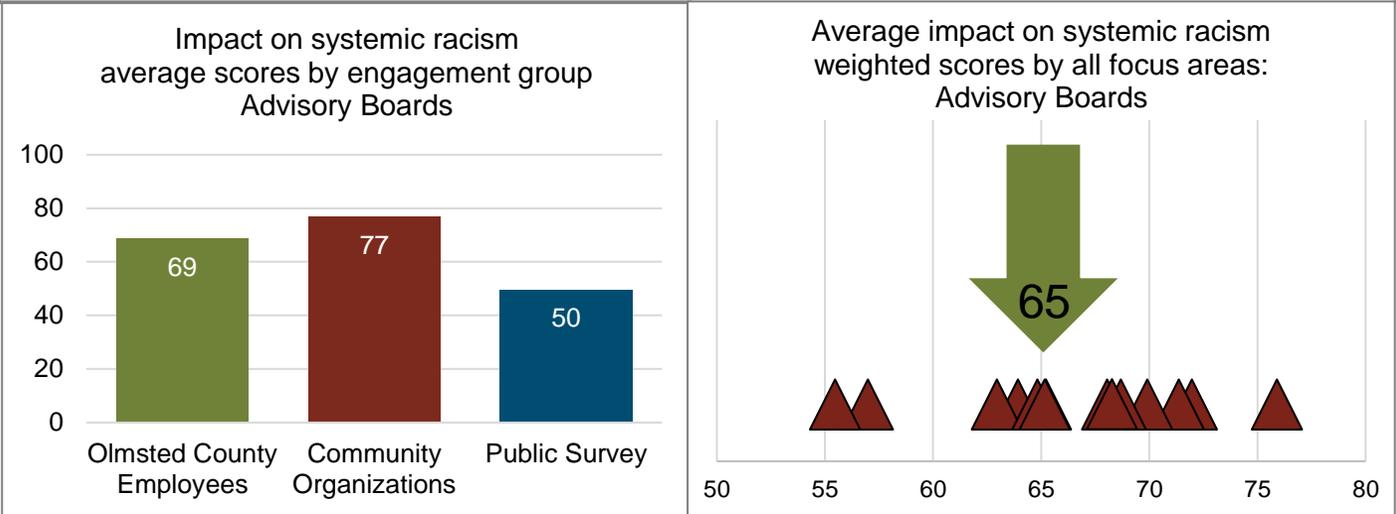
Need to review ALL county advisory boards for proper representation

“Changing the structure would be an opportunity for more authentic resident engagement.”
-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Advisory Boards average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 65. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Advisory Boards score ranks in the bottom half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks 10 out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation	BIPOC community prioritization
First step: Review and restructure advisory boards...	Medium to High
Second step: Increase BIPOC representation on advisory boards...	Medium to High
State legislative agenda: Recommend changes to open meeting laws...	Low to Medium



- 2** Reduce barriers to participate in Olmsted County Advisory Boards to increase BIPOC representation and voices of lived experiences.
- 3** *Legislative agenda item.* Remove or change state statutes that inhibit participation on county boards (e.g., enable remote-based participation on county boards).

FOCUS AREA: CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Importance of de-escalation

Education for law enforcement but also education for the community on how to interact with law enforcement

Promoting opportunities for formally incarcerated individuals

Opportunity to work with other community collaboratives

Divided on efficacy of expungement

Housing issues need to be addressed for those with a criminal record

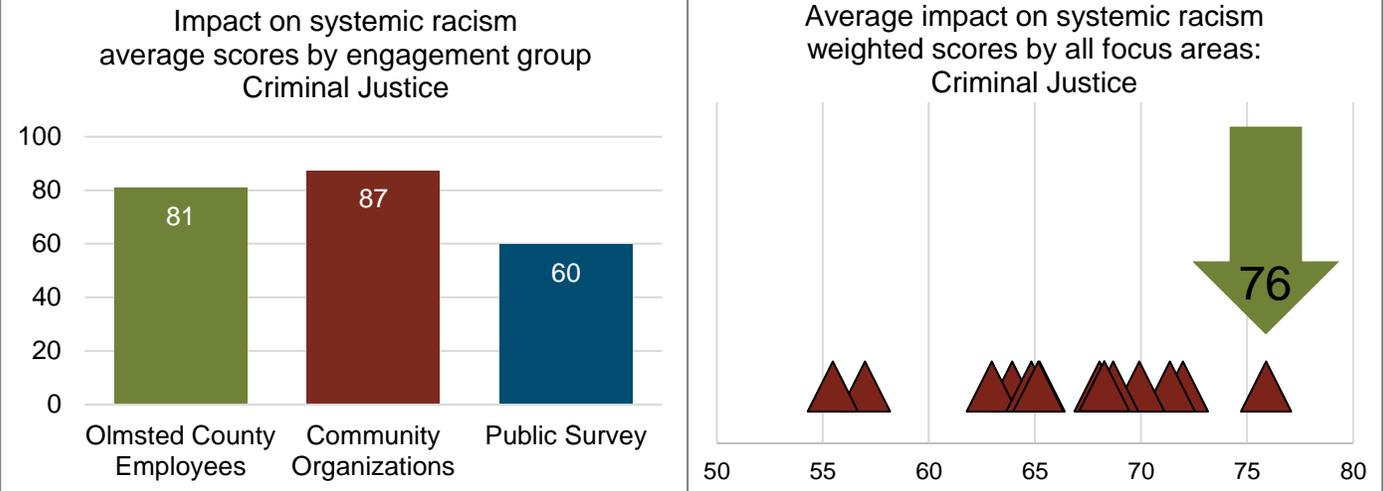
“Removing barrier is critical piece of the process. There are multiple factors contributing to health and financial crisis of community members. . The recommended practice not only address issues as they occur but also allow early intervention.”

-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Criminal Justice average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group is shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 76. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Criminal Justice score ranks as the number one score of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks one out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation

BIPOC community prioritization

Work with community partners to ensure free expungement...

Medium to High

Work to ensure people with criminal records have access to...

Medium

Add additional co-responders to the DFO...

Medium

Require continuing education (16 hours recommended)...

Medium to High

24



4

Work with community partners to ensure free expungement processes are readily available to people who have committed minor offenses to remove barriers to housing, employment, etc.

Note that other counties are successfully doing this work.

5

Work to ensure people with criminal records have access to housing options.

6

Evaluate how effectively law enforcement and co-responders de-escalate and respond to people in a mental health crisis, including reviewing the success and cultural responsiveness of current mandated de-escalation/crisis response training and co-responder models. Invest in best practices.

7

Work with community partners and BIPOC community members to learn how to navigate interactions with law enforcement.

8

Work with community partners to support people in reexamining settled cases for the potential to re-open and review cases where errors have occurred.

FOCUS AREA: CUSTOMER SERVICE

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Navigators

Need to address language barriers, not just interpretation and translation

How will customer service be measured?

Navigators could play a crucial role but be careful of silos

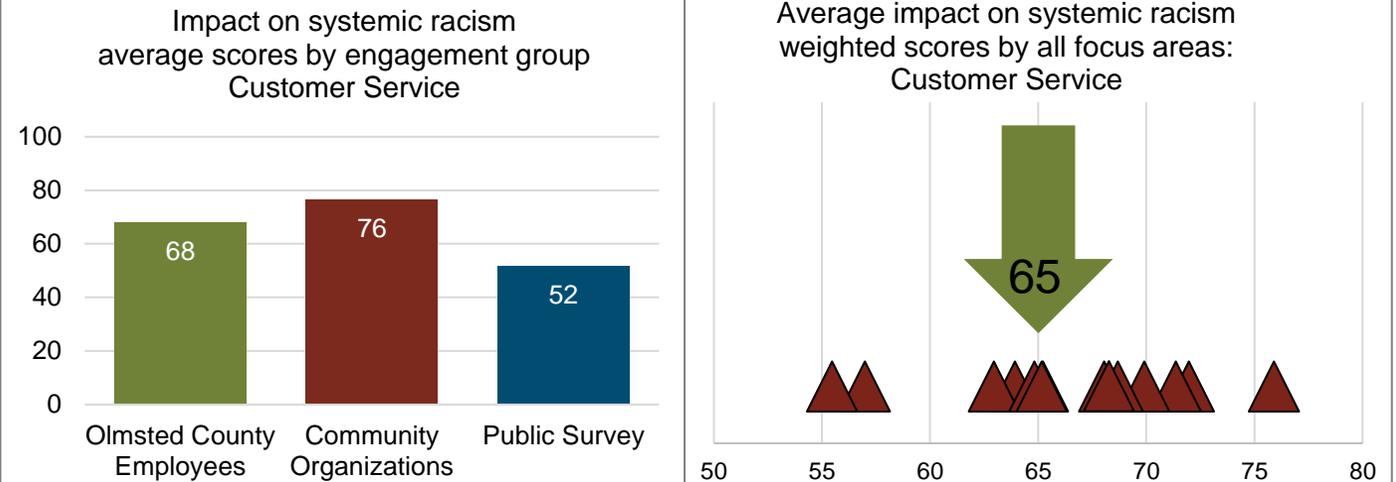
Participatory budgeting

“Participatory budgeting may be one of the most innovative strategies OC can invest in. Involve the public in deciding how public dollars are invested.”
-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Customer Service average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 65. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Customer Service score ranks in the bottom half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks nine out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation	BIPOC community prioritization
Gather input from service beneficiaries on satisfaction...	Medium
Assess all county services for awareness of and accessibility...	Medium to High
Add additional GPS navigators...	High
Implement participatory budgeting practices...	Medium 27



9

Gather input from persons being served to improve delivery of human-centered services* in Olmsted County.

10

Assess all county services for awareness of and accessibility to BIPOC residents and persons served in the approach of “No Wrong Door.”** Take action accordingly.

11

Add additional GPS navigators that are culturally responsive to advocate for persons being served.

12

Implement “Participatory Budgeting” practices, meaning Olmsted County leadership listens to and implements community member input on how public funds are allocated.***

* The aim of human-centered system design is to transform services so that individuals have a voice in how they live, public resources are used to help individuals have the life they want, and individuals have access to supports they need.

** No Wrong Door means that regardless of a person’s initial contact point with Olmsted County, they can access any service (for which they qualify).

*** Please note, Olmsted County Board of Commissioners (elected officials) have the final authority to make budget decisions.

FOCUS AREA: DATA COLLECTION AND USE

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Actionable

Investing in data infrastructure will benefit everyone

Data sharing

Need to make sure any “system” works for those who don’t speak English

Ethical considerations

Data disaggregation important

Collection and analysis ideas

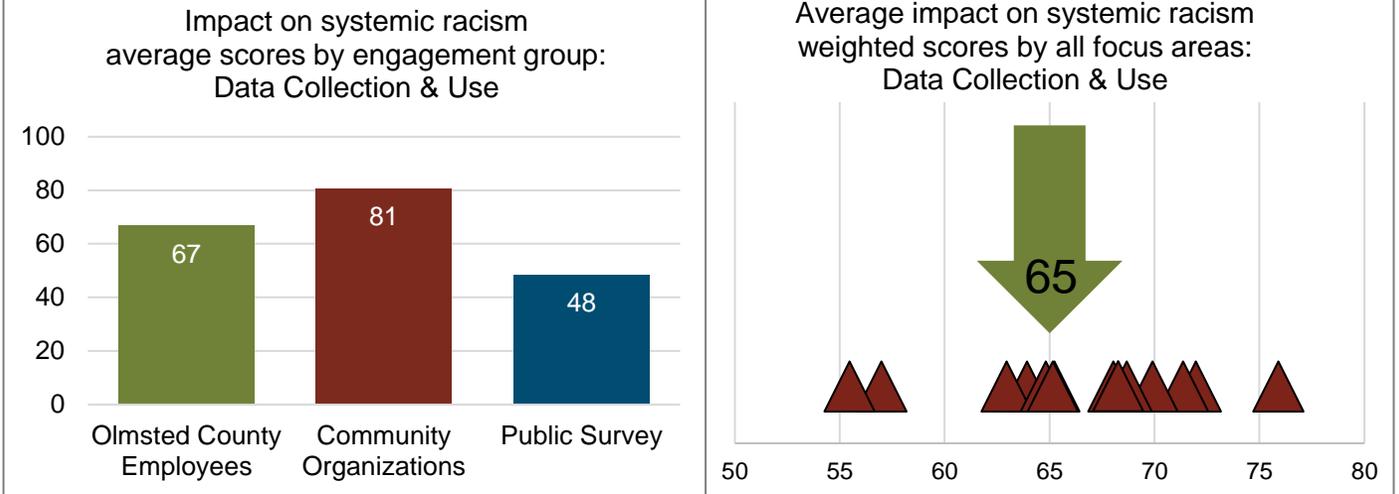
Increased awareness of how and why data is important

“Having efficient and interoperable data systems is crucial for moving the needle to better outcomes.”
-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Data Collection and Use average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 65. This score is shown below on the right and is noted by the green arrow. The Data Collection and Use score ranks in the bottom half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks eight out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation	BIPOC community prioritization
Invest in infrastructure for data systems ...	Medium to High
Foster efficient and interoperable data systems...	Medium to High
Track outcome data of clients that are disaggregated by race & ethnicity...	Medium
State Legislative Agenda: Foster efficient and interoperable data ...	Low to Medium 30



- 13** Invest in infrastructure for secure data systems within Olmsted County agencies, to capture and organize data already regularly collected on persons served, so that the county can assess the quality and impact of programs and services. Systems should be efficient, interoperable, and timely across departments.
- 14** Building from recommendation 13, work with the State to integrate Olmsted County data systems to efficiently report on needed data in a timely way to foster collaboration and benchmarking (comparing Olmsted County to Minnesota and other counties).
- 15** Olmsted County staff should use existing information to continuously improve disparate outcomes across race, ethnicity, etc.
- 16** Work alongside BIPOC communities being served to understand how data gathering methods resonate within their communities to inform and improve culturally responsive data gathering methods.

FOCUS AREA: FINANCIAL HEALTH

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Universal based income

Financial institutions could play an important role

Impact of flexible benefit

Need to revise/expand eligibility requirements

Eligibility

Financial institutions role

Emergency funds could be very beneficial

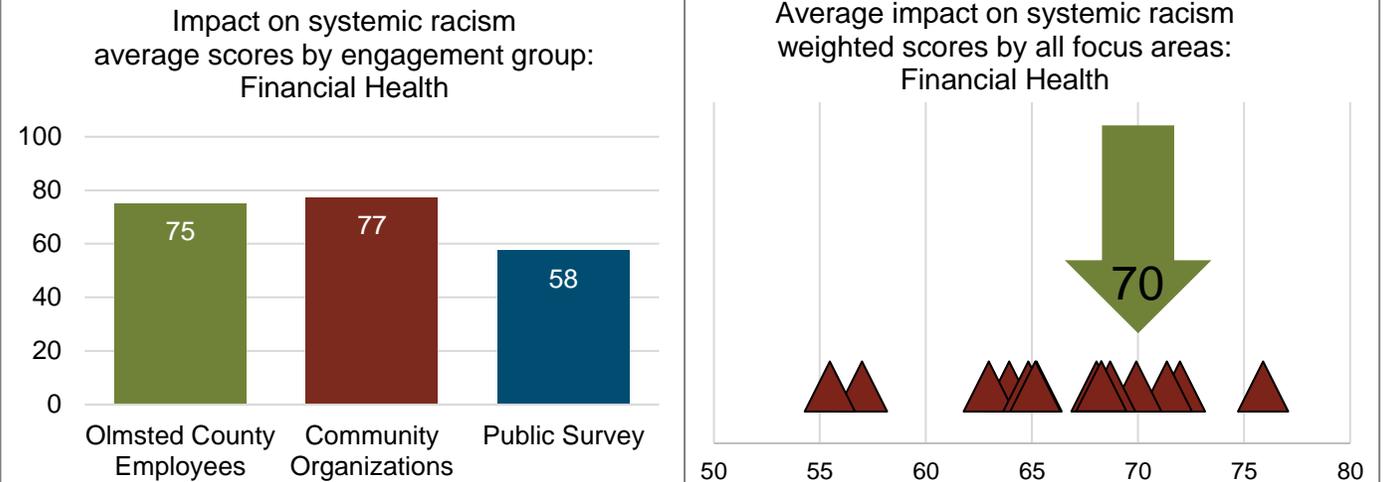
Training and education

“The criteria and guidelines to access financial assistance often create barriers from serving people who truly need help because they are not eligible.”
-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Financial Health average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 70. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Financial Health score ranks in the top half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks four out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation	BIPOC community prioritization
Expand emergency assistance funding and eligibility...	Medium to High
Find strategies to fix benefits cliff...	Medium
Pilot universal basic income program for families/individuals...	Medium
Encourage new bank accounts when enrolling recipients...	Medium
State legislative agenda: Change eligibility requirements...	Low to Medium 33



17

Provide for continuous evaluation of the system for providing emergency assistance (including eligibility, funding, and barriers) to ensure community members in need are not falling through the cracks.

18

Apply Pathways to Prosperity and Well-Being (PTPW) as an organizational practice model and use this to implement a fully funded guaranteed basic income program for families/individuals experiencing poverty and to address problems with the benefits cliff.

19

Work with community partners to facilitate connections between community members and financial institutions to ensure culturally relevant financial education and reduce predatory practices.

20

Legislative agenda item. Find ways to mitigate the negative impacts of the federal benefits cliff*.

**The point at which a family's net income will decrease if they have a wage increase, due to a greater loss in benefits than the wage increase compensates for.*

FOCUS AREA: HOUSING - HOMELESSNESS

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Coordinated entry needs to be evaluated

More emergency shelter and permanent housing options needed

Strong connections between substance use and mental health

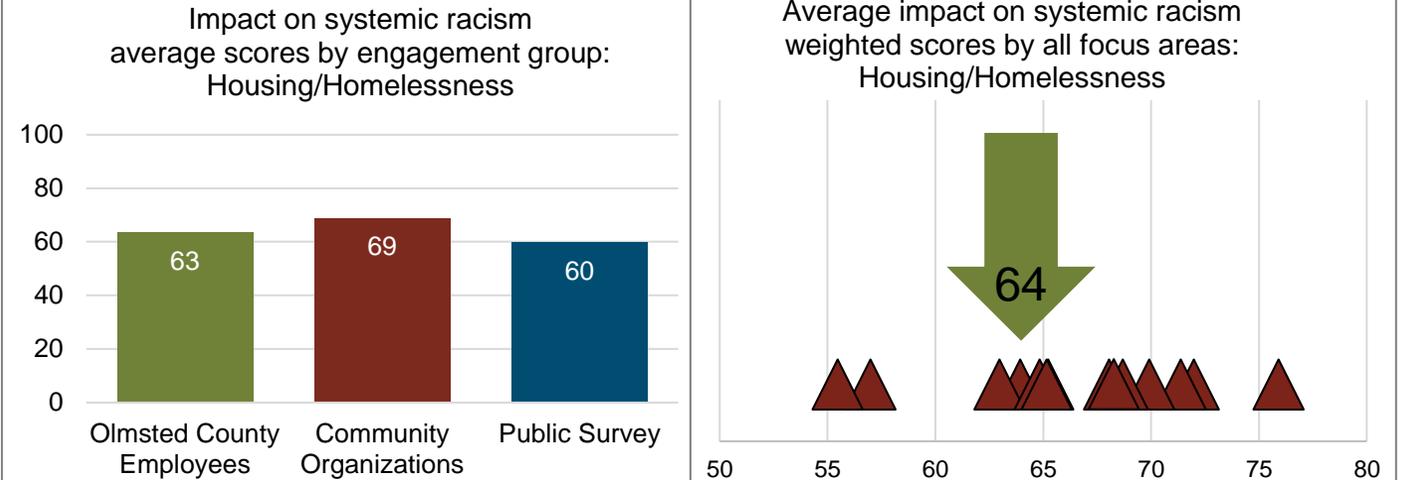
Opportunity for non-profits and financial institutions to collaborate

“Top for me is reviewing coordinated entry. I think this has significant opportunity for bias and racism to be embedded in process and decision making.”
-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Housing/Homelessness average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 64. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Housing/Homelessness score ranks in the bottom half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks 11 out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation

BIPOC community prioritization

Expand emergency shelter for families...

Medium to High

Examine how effective coordinated entry is at addressing emergency...

Medium

Consider investment in permanent housing for the chronically ...

Medium to High

Pilot prevention opportunities aimed at different populations at risk...

Medium 36



- 21** Expand emergency shelter options for families and youth.
- 22** Increase public and community partner awareness and coordination of available housing programs and services.
- 23** Improve the systemic process to house people (e.g., coordinated entry) across the housing continuum (i.e., emergency shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing, subsidized affordable housing, and affordable market rate housing).
- 24** Continue to assess whether the level of chronic homelessness in the county is declining and invest in stable housing to address the issue where needed.

FOCUS AREA: HOUSING - RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

The need to provide support and education to landlords

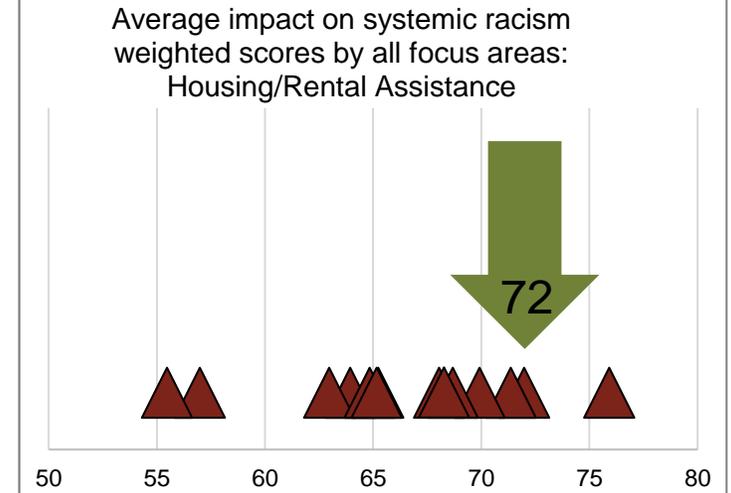
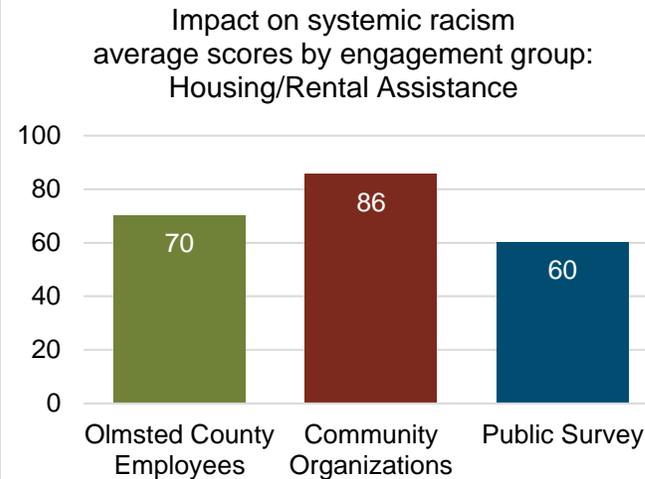
Vouchers need to be increased (monetary and number)

Opportunities for policy changes such as income guidelines and zoning

Impact and prioritization

The Housing/Rental Assistance average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 72. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Housing/Rental Assistance score ranks in the top half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks two out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation

BIPOC community prioritization

Identify/build more affordable subsidized and rental options...

High

Increase the number of housing vouchers using local funds...

Medium



25 Increase the number of affordable subsidized and rental options in Olmsted County for families below the 200% poverty line. For example, convert some existing rentals at market rate to be subsidized using tax incentives.

26 Provide direct financial assistance to support BIPOC individuals and families in securing rental housing.

FOCUS AREA: HOUSING - HOME OWNERSHIP

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Acknowledge how discriminatory policies have played role

Look into renting to home ownership pathway

Many factors contributing to the lack of affordable housing

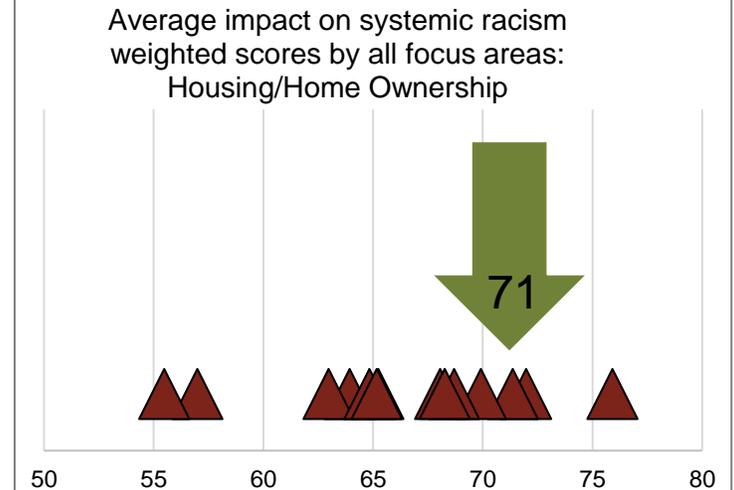
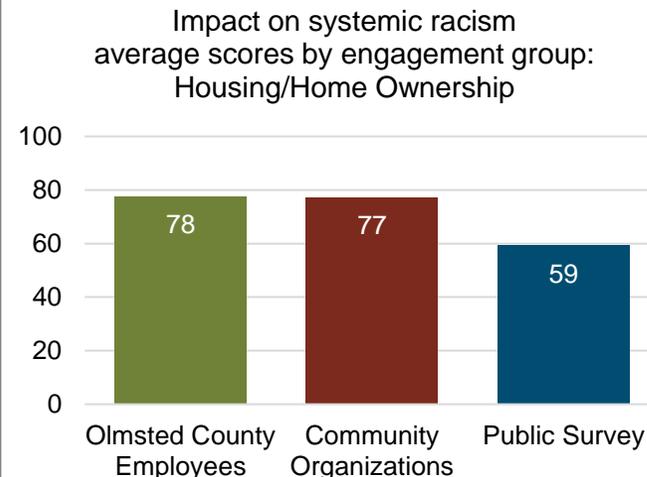
“Home ownership is key to growing generational wealth, and there have been so many practices and policies in the not-so-distant past that have excluded individuals of color from home ownership.”

-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Housing/Home Ownership average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 71. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Housing/Home Ownership score ranks in the top half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks three out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation

BIPOC community prioritization

Develop programs to increase home ownership within the BIPOC community...

Medium

Increase affordable home ownership options for people at 50% AMI...

Medium

Work with partners to lower the cost of home buying...

Medium to High

The county should support local nonprofit and mortgage lenders...

Low to Medium

Given current and growing need, identify additional resources...

Low to Medium 42



- 27 *Legislative agenda item.* Support passage of state anti-discrimination in housing legislation.
- 28 Given the history of red-lining and racial covenants, develop a comprehensive system alongside multi-sector partners* to increase BIPOC home ownership with a focus on shifting BIPOC renters to owners.
- 29 Increase affordable** home-buying options.

*Include local non-profits and mortgage lenders to get people mortgage ready.

**Affordable is 30% of income, and should be targeted to persons at living wage or below (using the MIT calculator).

FOCUS AREA: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND SYSTEMS

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Organizational culture

These recommendations should already be in place

Training

More representative leadership

Hiring and retention

Need to hire more bilingual staff

Community involvement

Terminology

Training is crucial

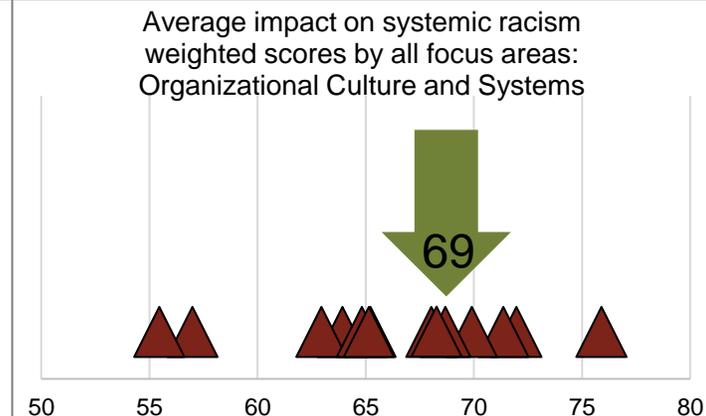
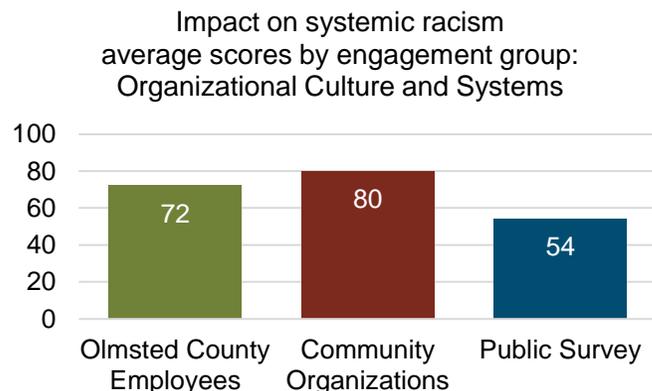
“Those dedicated to this effort are never short on motivation and commitment. But this work needs to spread beyond this inner circle. If others don’t join in and take responsibility for this too, it will not move.”

-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Organizational Culture and Systems average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 69. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Organizational Culture and Systems score ranks in the top half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks five out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation	BIPOC community prioritization
Assess organizational culture and come up with strategies (retention plan)...	High
Each department creates DEI goals...	Medium to High
DEI goals to include increasing representation of BIPOC Olmsted County staff...	Medium
DEI goals to include increase BIPOC leadership at the highest pay levels...	Medium to High
Increase DEI focused FTE to lead efforts across organization...	Medium
Establish shared DEI terminology across organization...	Medium
Increase interpreters and bi-lingual staff...	Medium
DEI Training for Olmsted County Board of Commissioners and Olmsted County leaders...	Medium 45



30

Strengthen organizational culture with strategies to support the five basic human needs: belonging, respect, choice, physical and psychological safety, and joy.

31

Each department creates DEI goals that must include:

- Increasing BIPOC Olmsted County staff.
- Increasing multi-lingual Olmsted County staff.

32

Increase BIPOC leadership at the highest pay levels.

33

Increase DEI-focused FTE to lead efforts across the organization.

34

Establish, through One Olmsted, shared DEI definitions across Olmsted County.

35

Increase resources and funding for interpreters and translators.

36

Implement anti-racism training for Olmsted County Board of Commissioners, Olmsted County department leadership, and advisory board members.

FOCUS AREA: MENTAL HEALTH

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Affordability and accessibility

Stigma plays a significant role in why people do not talk about mental health or seek care

Cultural sensitivity

Create a network of providers that are sensitive to social stigmas with all cultures

Connection to substance use

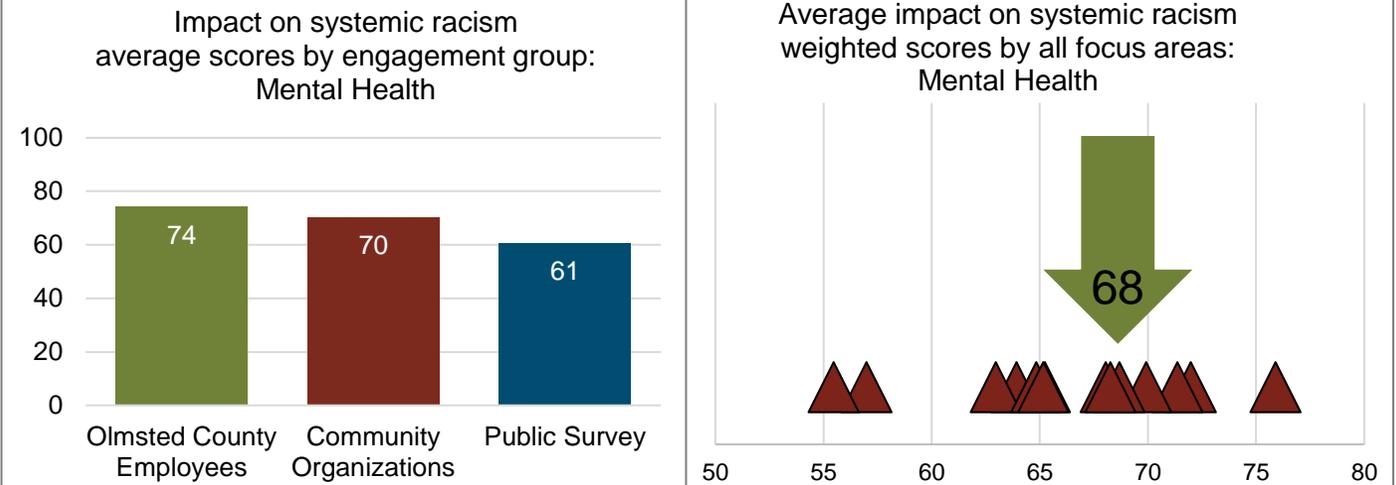
More education and awareness around services and mental health

“Quality of care should not be dependent upon cost of care.”
-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Mental Health average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 68. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Mental Health score ranks in the top half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks six out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation	BIPOC community prioritization
Promote public awareness/education and address culturally specific stigma...	Medium to High
Promote social connection/social connectedness; work on eliminating social ...	Medium
Enable and expand access to current mental health programs...	Medium
Facilitate a network of mental health providers that can match patient...	Medium to High
Decrease barriers to access mental health professionals...	Not Prioritized 48

FOCUS AREA: SUBSTANCE USE - PREVENTION AND RESILIENCY

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Affordability and accessibility

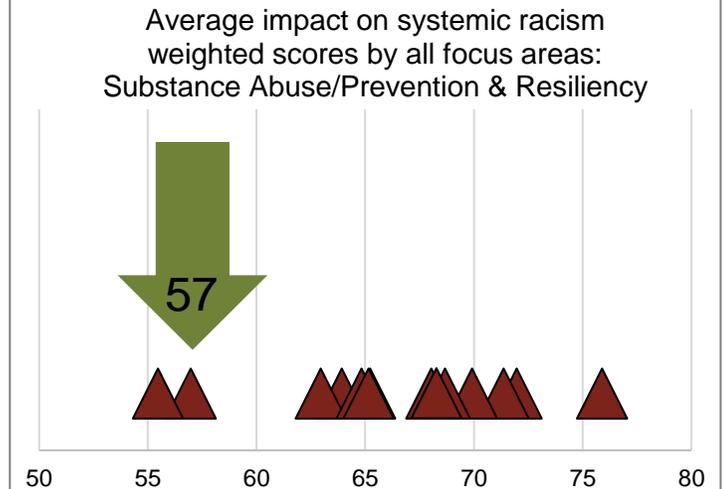
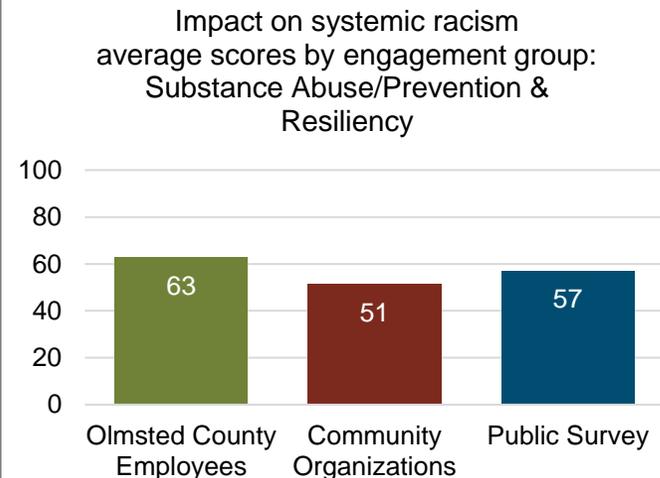
Need to remove barriers to treatment and recovery programs

“Important to focus on these barriers to access because it doesn't matter how good a program is if participants can't get to them in an uncomplicated way.”
-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Substance Abuse/Prevention and Resiliency average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 57. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Substance Abuse/Prevention and Resiliency score ranks in the bottom half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks 13 out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft Recommendation

BIPOC Community Prioritization

Further education and outreach/marketing of substance use recovery...

Medium

Provide substance use prevention education in elementary schools...

Medium to High

Explore opportunities to support youth mentorship within existing programs...

Medium to High

Support youth resiliency skill development efforts in existing programs...

Medium

Explore ways to increase substance free events for the broader community...

Low

50

FOCUS AREA: SUBSTANCE USE - HARM REDUCTION

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Importance of culturally tailored treatment and education

Mentorship with youth could have a big impact

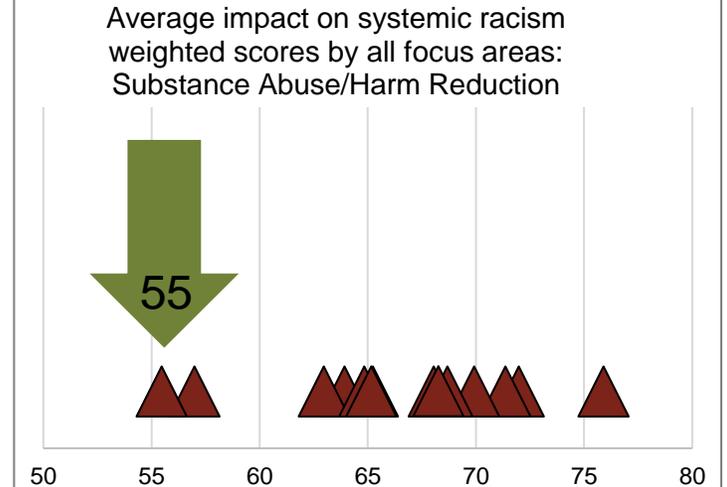
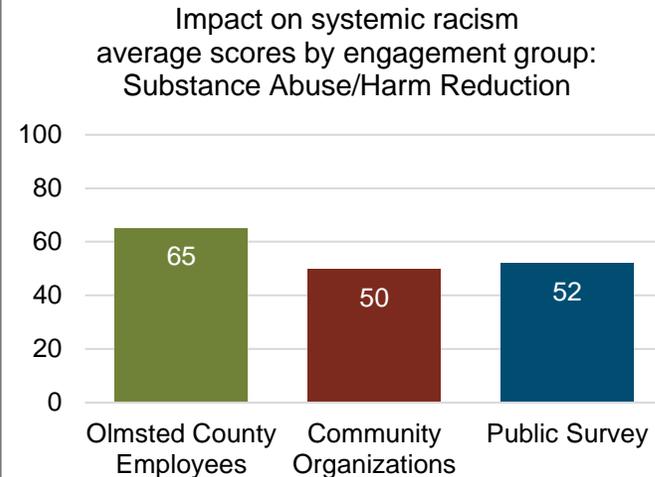
Opportunity to collaborate with community organizations

“If we learn coping skills when we are young and get a foundation to build upon, I would think we have a lesser chance of handing adversity in what could be a destructive manner.”
-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Substance Abuse/Harm Reduction average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 55. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Substance Abuse/Harm Reduction score ranks in the bottom half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks 14 out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation

Create programs focused on substance use and harm reduction...

Evaluate current substance use and harm reduction programs...

BIPOC community prioritization

Medium to High

Medium to High

FOCUS AREA: SUBSTANCE USE - RECOVERY

Data from community engagement sessions

Qualitative themes

Supportive services after treatment

Need for substance-free activities and events

Substance use education

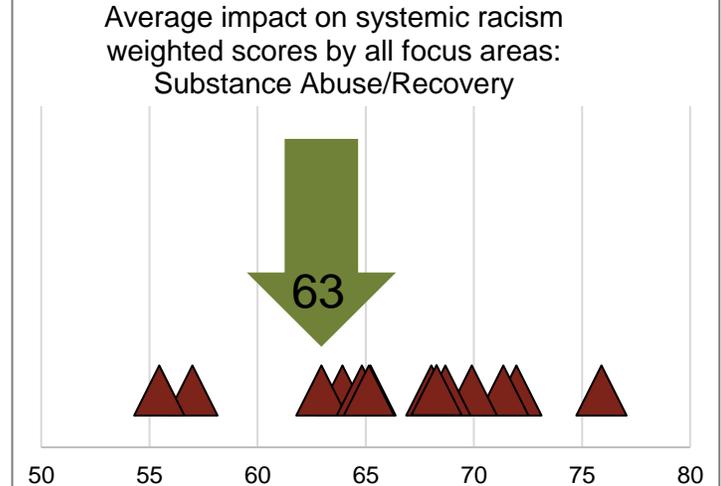
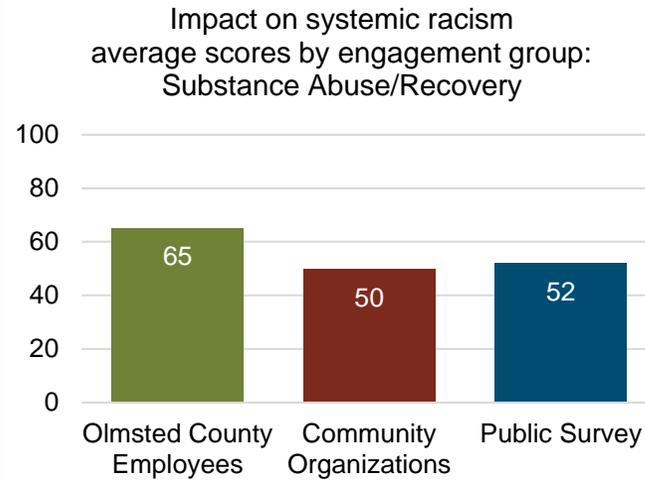
Unsure what is the right age to start substance use education, but it is important

“Strategies/programming needs to be culturally responsive. There is a strong need for decolonized substance use programming.”
-Community engagement participant

Impact and prioritization

The Substance Abuse/Recovery average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 63. This score is shown below on the right and noted by the green arrow. The Substance Abuse/Recovery score ranks in the bottom half of the 14-focus area overall weighted scores; it ranks 12 out of 14 where one is the highest ranking.

The graphs below use the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 most significant impact.



Draft recommendation

BIPOC community prioritization

Increase access to lower-cost substance use treatment/peer support...

High

Inventory and expand medication-supported substance use treatment...

Medium to High

FOCUS AREA: SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH*

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS



37

Inventory and expand mental health and substance use services for adults and youth to ensure strong mental well-being for all, including resiliency and coping skills and the leveraging of peer support models.

38

Facilitate a community culture of safety, belonging, and connectedness to combat social isolation, particularly experienced by communities of color.

39

Support community organizations to embed harm reduction** principles in mental health and substance use programming.

40

Inventory and expand access to culturally relevant mental health and substance use services. For example, offer education to the current pool of providers to enhance awareness of and training to ensure culturally relevant service provision.

41

Facilitate use of and access to Medication-Assisted Treatment for community members.

42

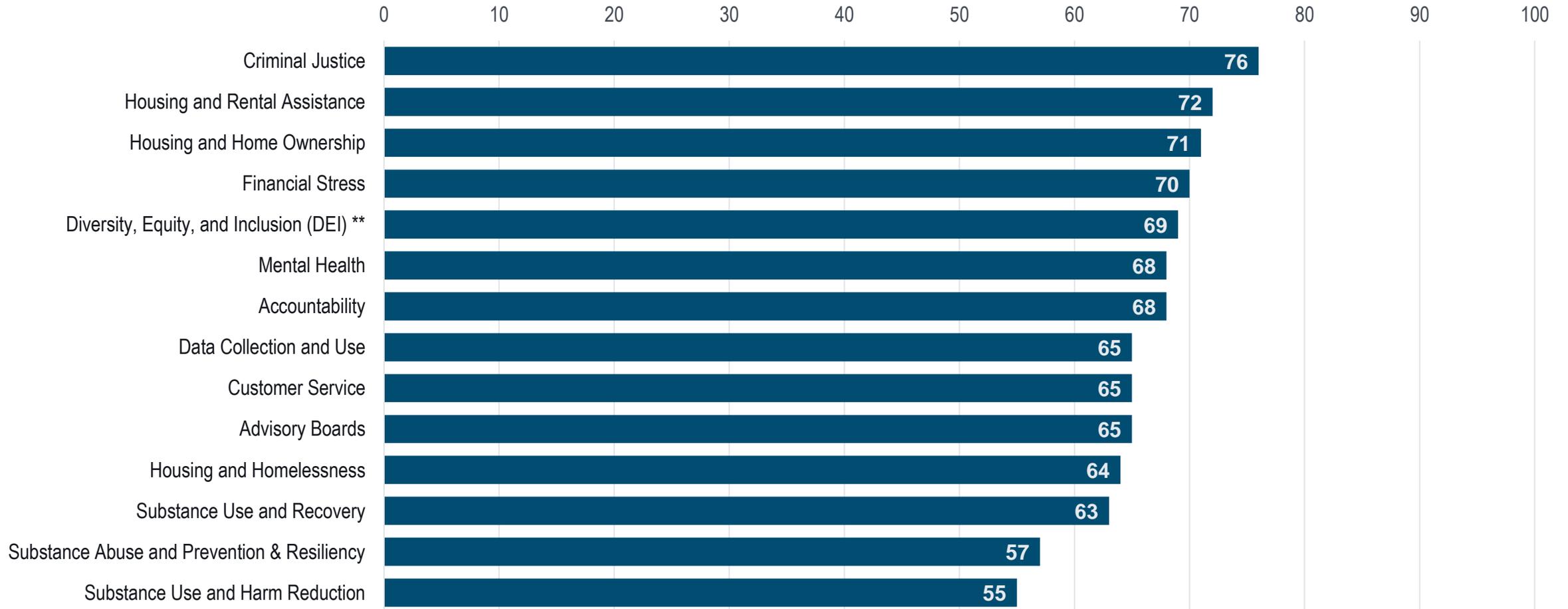
Facilitate system-wide changes that impact access to mental health and substance use services (i.e., transportation, childcare, financial support, remote-based services).

*Substance Use and Mental Health have joint recommendations.

**Harm Reduction is defined as: an approach that emphasizes engaging directly with people who use drugs to prevent overdose and infections disease transmission, improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of those served, and offer low-threshold options for accessing substance use disorder treatment and other health care services (samhsa.gov).

Summary

Impact of draft recommendations on systemic racism average weighted scores by focus area Ordered from highest to lowest average weighted score*



*NOTE: The graph uses the scale of 0-100 with 0 being lowest impact and 100 being most significant impact.

**The DEI focus area was renamed to Organizational Culture and Systems during finalization process.

Next steps and thank you

The Olmsted County Board of Commissioners is scheduled to receive this report and final recommendations on October 4, 2022. Olmsted County Administration is prepared to move forward with implementation planning at the Board's direction. We know decades of racism and its impacts can't be fully understood or solved overnight. It will take the support and involvement of the community to make all aspects of public health more equitable for everyone in Olmsted County.

The continued work on this study could not be possible without the time and energy devoted by the volunteer subgroup from the Public Health Services Advisory Board and the Human Rights Commission. We thank them for their dedication to this important board initiative.



Supporting rights. Changing communities