# 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

OLMSTED COUNTY
MINNESOTA

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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

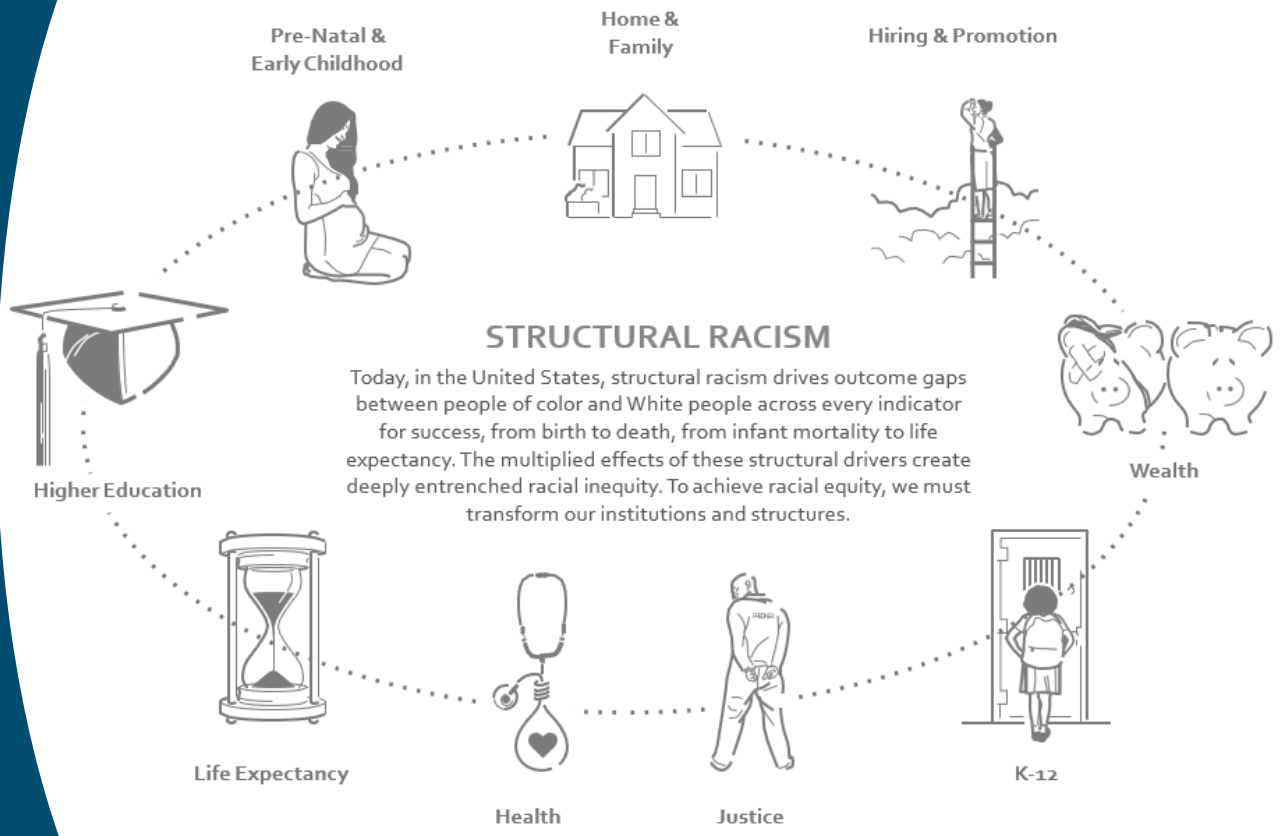
## Historical context - Housing

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.*




GARE Communications Guide May 2018

# Background

**Fast forward eight decades and the year 2020 begins.**

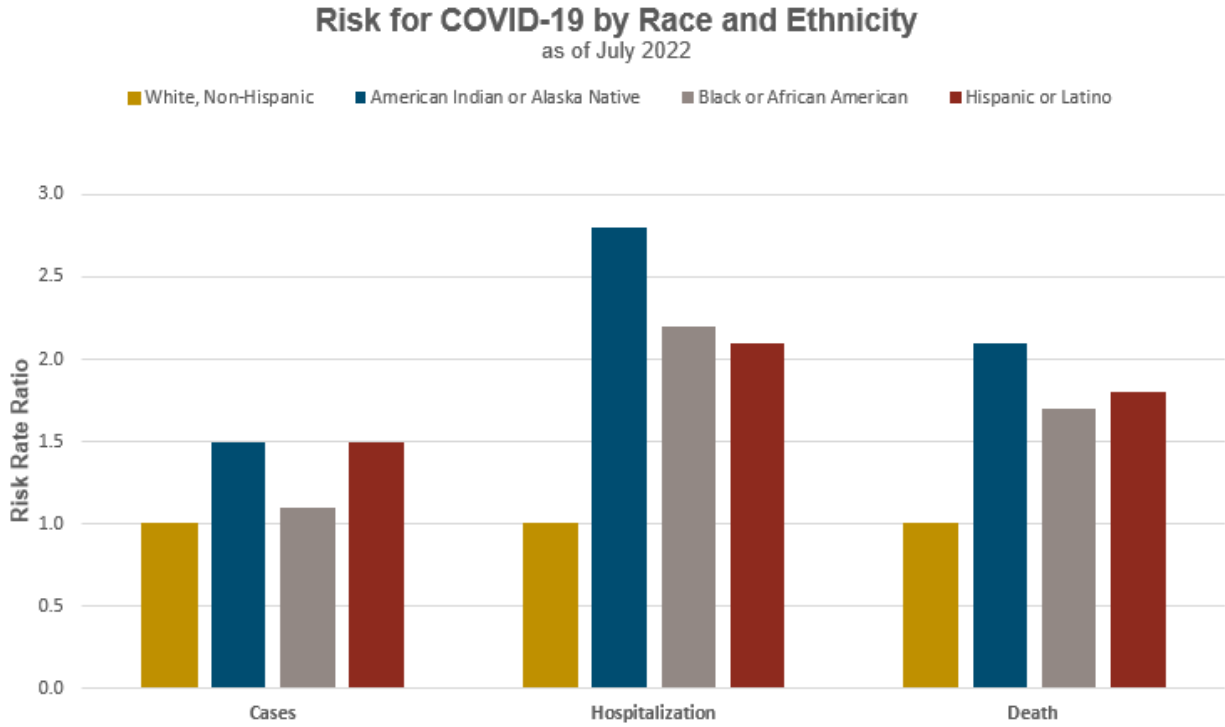
With the new decade, also comes a new virus that has surfaced called novel coronavirus or COVID-19. It would spread across the globe and cause a global pandemic, disrupting our economy and way of life; our healthcare systems were inundated with sick people. As of early August 2022, per the CDC's COVID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




*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

ONE OLMSTED

**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

Supporting rights. Changing communities

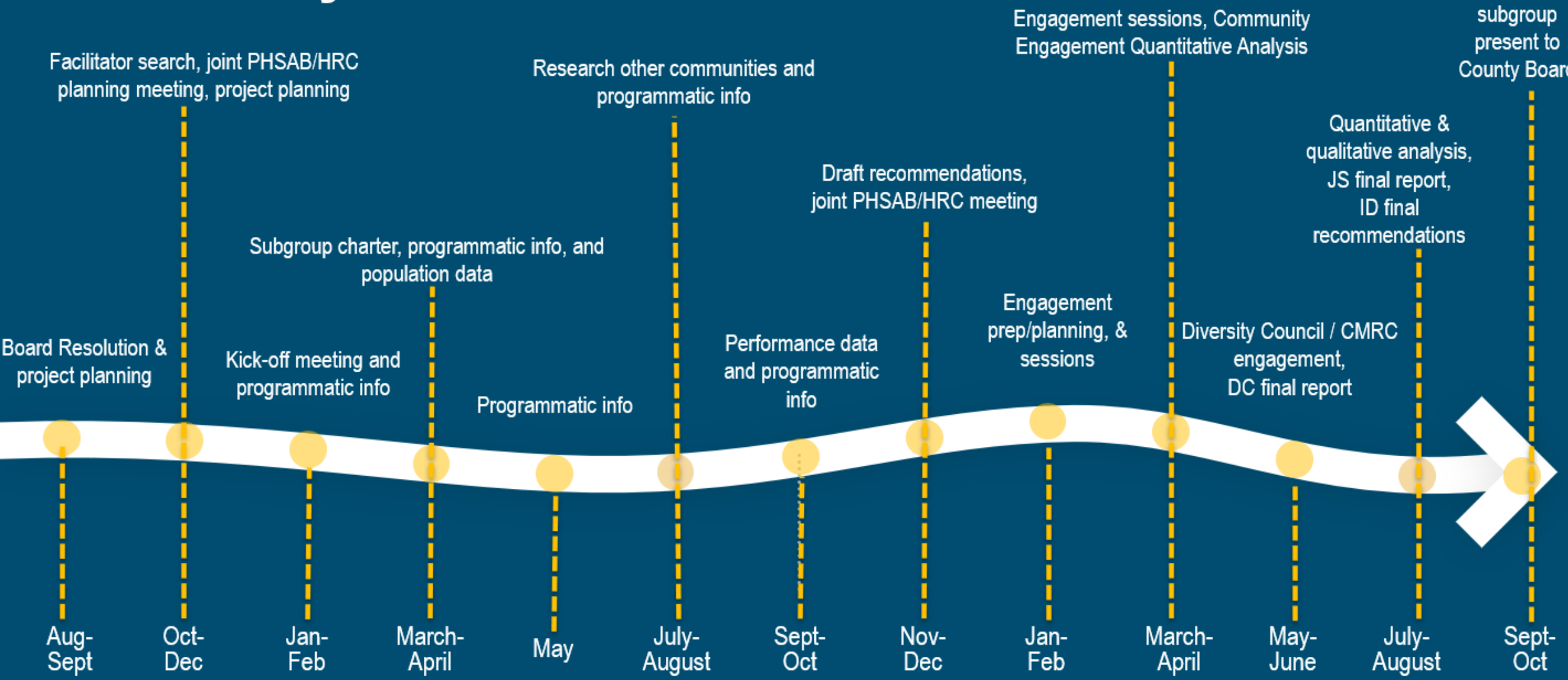
Public Health
Olmsted County

**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.

*For complete methodology descriptions, refer to Appendix 2.*

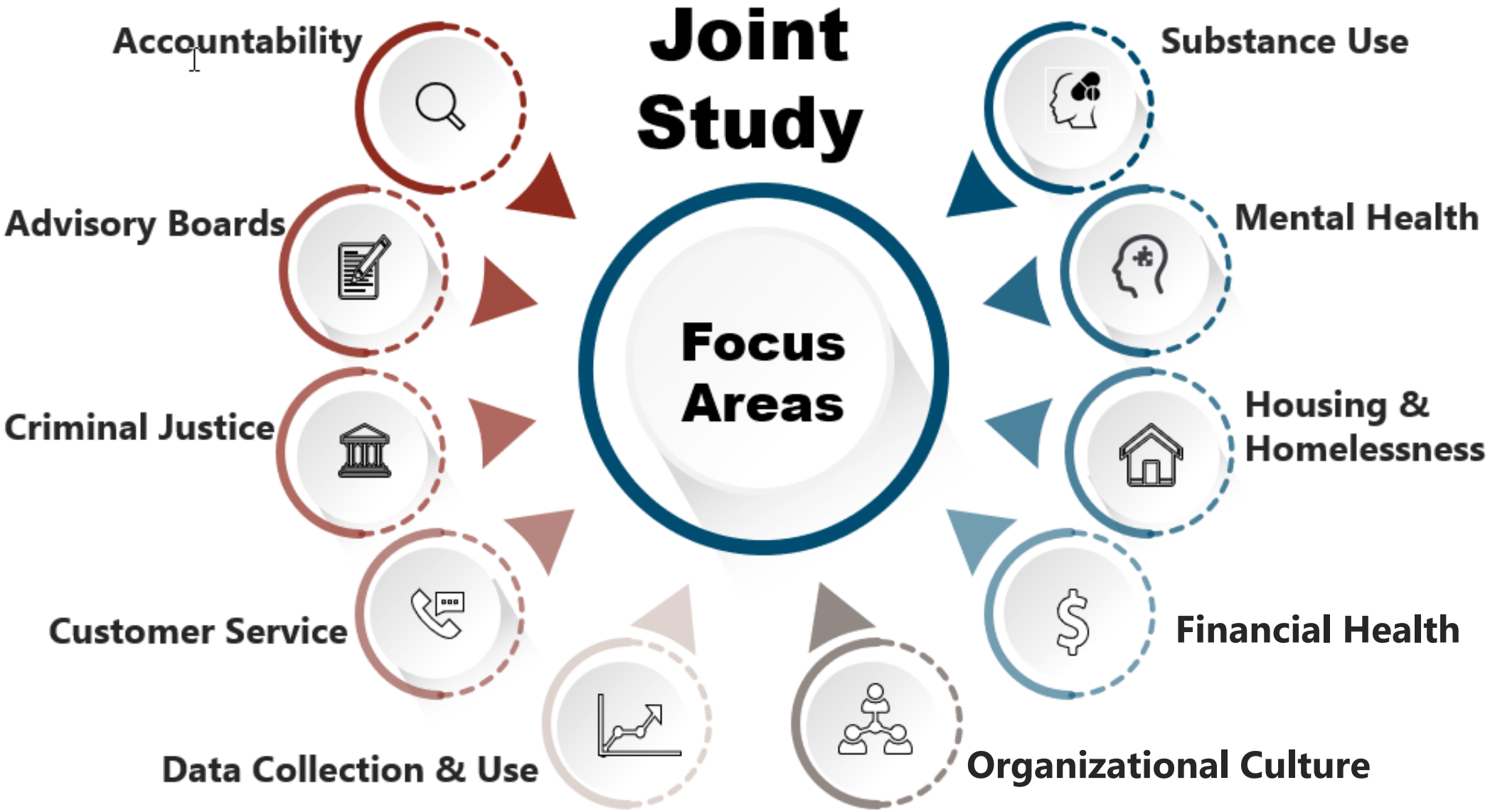
# Joint Study Timeline



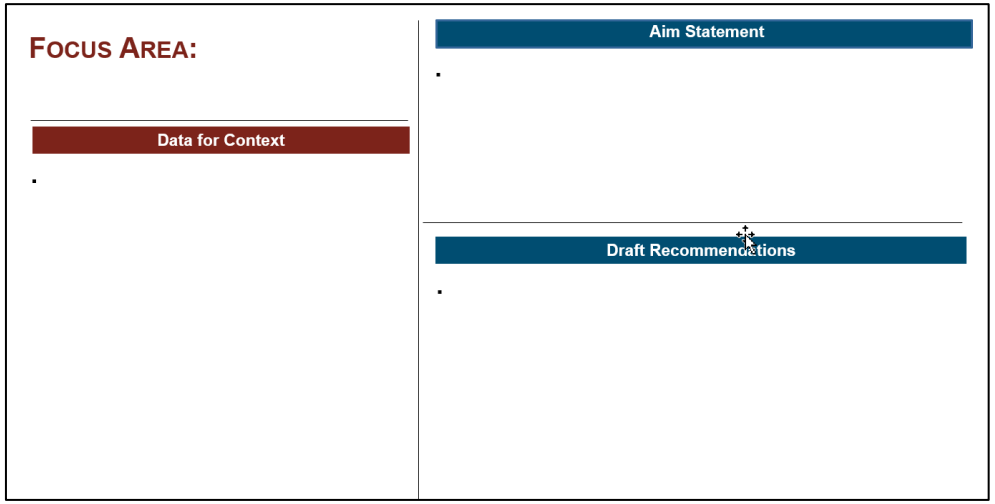

**2020** **2021** **2022**

*Subgroup did not meet in June 2021

# 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.

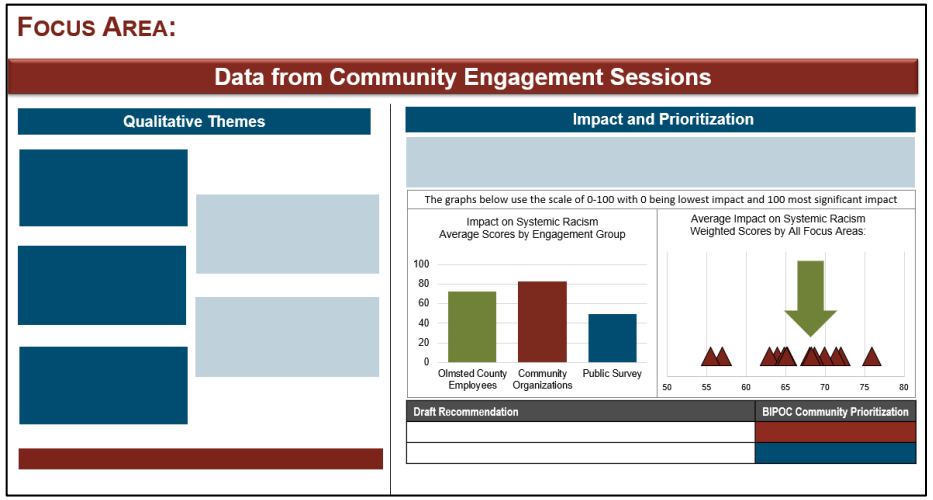
*For a complete list of data sources, refer to Appendix 2c & 3.*

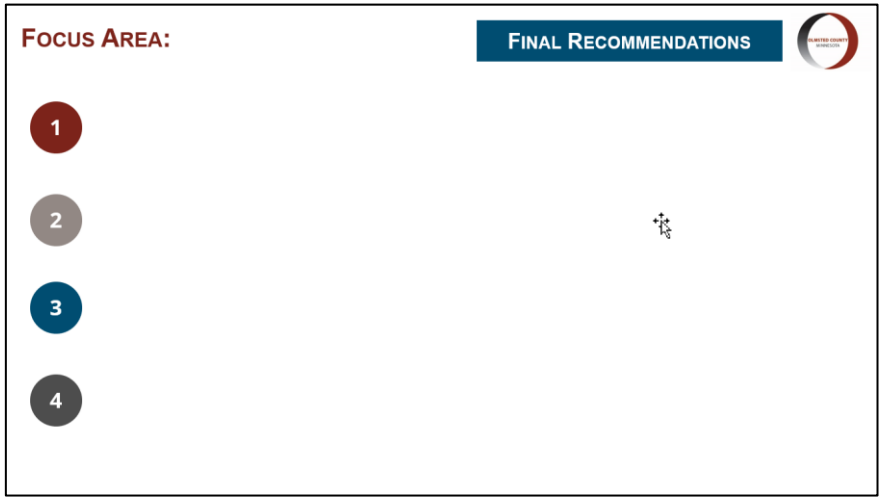
## Draft recommendations & word cloud

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 for context

- Olmsted County staff identified the need to evaluate success by internal benchmarks.
- According to the National Association of Counties, it is important to “build in accountability” for this work.
- Professor David R. Williams, Harvard School of Public Health states, “We must look beyond disparities by income and education between races, and measurement is key – link between health and racism.”

**Work being done in other communities:**

- King County, Washington – Launched a public reporting platform for their Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016-2022 to help monitor, track and share how well they are doing to advance equity and social justice in their community. This is being done by combining stories with data. The goal is to give communities, employees, and the public at large an open, honest, and robust view of actions being taken to achieve important outcomes in equity and social justice.
- Hennepin County, Minnesota – A Race Equity Advisory Council in Hennepin County will report to the County Board annually to report progress and unmet needs in coordination with the County Administrator. The work is also guided by the Racial Equity Impact Tool.

## Aim statement

Ensure there is communication back to community members on the progress of work that resulted from this study.

## Draft recommendations

- Develop evaluation metrics for implemented recommendations.
- Establish an accountability advisory board (made of members of impacted communities) to monitor the progress of recommendations.

# FOCUS AREA: ACCOUNTABILITY

## Data from community engagement sessions

### Qualitative themes

Importance of feedback loop

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

Tracking and measuring impact

Progress monitoring is important because it allows for frequent follow up

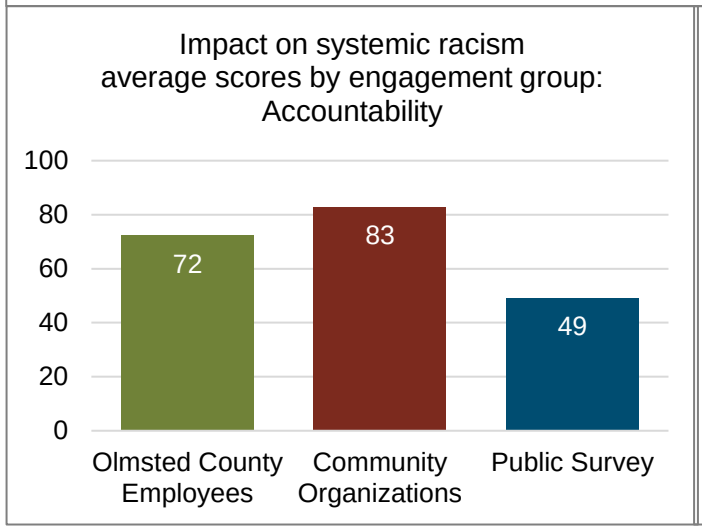
Role and impact of the board

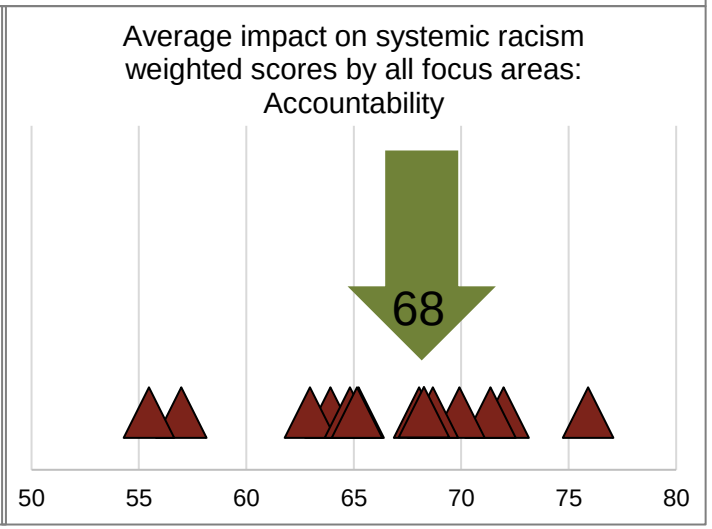
"The impact would really depend on how residents were engaged and how much genuine power-sharing was happening. As well as the amount/degree of lived experience on the board."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: ACCOUNTABILITY

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

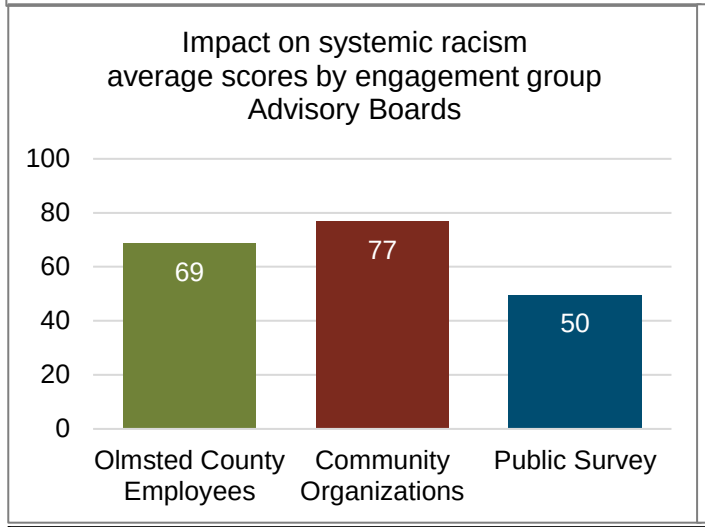
| | |
|---|---|
| Removal of barriers to participation | Having BIPOC representation on advisory boards through legislation will pave the way to preserve seats and encourage participation |
| | Incentivize participation |
| Representation | Opportunity to collaborate with community organization for recruitment |
| Power of the board | Need to review ALL county advisory boards for proper representation |

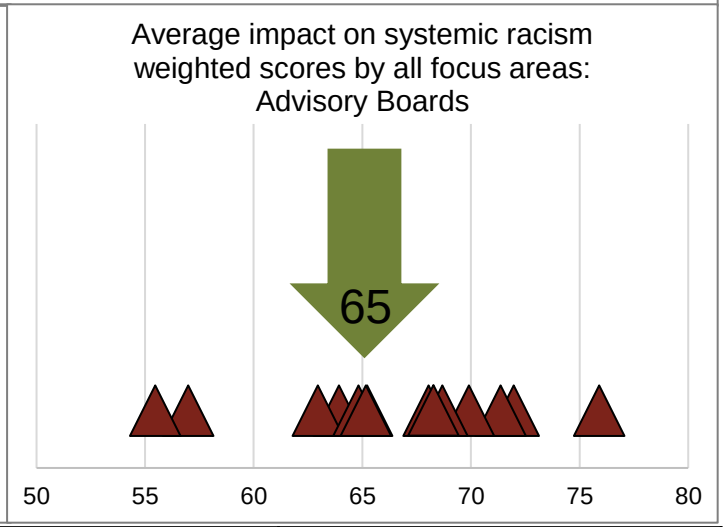
"Changing the structure would be an opportunity for more authentic resident engagement."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: ADVISORY BOARDS

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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 for context

- Dodge-Fillmore-Olmsted (DFO) Community Corrections shared that disparities exist in Minnesota's incarceration rate. Blacks, Latinos, and American Indians are overrepresented in MN prisons and jails.

- DFO Community Corrections' Continuum of Care Model highlights:
  - Goal is to get resources to the individual in crisis.
  - Four community outreach specialists that co-respond with law enforcement.
  - Receive calls for mental illness, chemical dependency, homelessness, and welfare checks.
  - Consult with county partners who work in adult and child family services, behavioral health services, the mobile crisis unit, and homelessness advocates.
  - All have had crisis intervention training.
  - Jail diversion/Pre-trial release has significantly reduced the number of people in custody.
  - Juvenile detention center is closed.
  - Data collected is more precise, specifically differentiates between Black descendants of slaves and African Americans.

- Approximately, 60% of Olmsted County Patrol and Detention Deputies and Rochester Police Officers are certified in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). Emergency dispatchers are also given training around CIT.

## Aim statement

Remove barriers to those currently in crisis and those with a history in criminal justice systems to achieve independent living.

Support Olmsted County staff training in de-escalation practices.

## Draft recommendations

- Work with community partners to ensure free expungement processes are readily available to people to remove barriers to housing, employment, etc.
- Work to ensure people with criminal records have access to housing options.
- Add additional co-responders to the DFO Diversity, Equity and Community Outreach team to continue to address best practices of supporting people in crisis.
- Work with community partners and BIPOC community members to learn how to navigate interactions with law enforcement.
- 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: CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## Data from community engagement sessions

### Qualitative themes

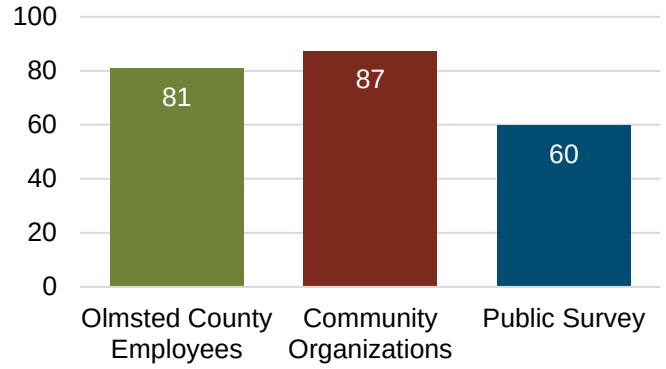
- Importance of de-escalation
- Education for law enforcement but also education for the community on how to interact with law enforcement
- Promoting opportunities for formally incarcerated individuals
- Opportunity to work with other community collaboratives
- Divided on efficacy of expungement
- Housing issues need to be addressed for those with a criminal record

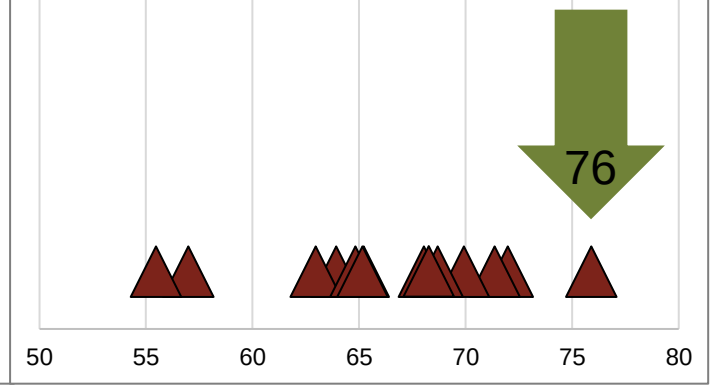
"Removing barrier is critical piece of the process. There are multiple factors contributing to health and financial crisis of community members. . The recommended practice not only address issues as they occur but also allow early intervention."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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 for context

- Residents of color were more likely than their white counterparts to share via the 2019 Residential Survey that “Olmsted County does not care about me.” It is important to understand from a user perspective, what could be streamlined, improved, added, or taken away to ensure their experience is a positive one. This act of asking for feedback and input would both signal that the agency cares about those that it serves and wants to improve outcomes.
- “Ensure our services to residents & customers are equitable, reduce barriers to use and promote inclusiveness” (One Olmsted resolution).
- The Community Health Assessment and Planning process 2020-21 community dialogues had a specific takeaway that, “There is a lack of access and knowledge of available resources.”
- Respondents from the 2019 Residential Survey shared that there is a lack of clear understanding of what resources Olmsted County provides and how that can benefit the average person.
- Feedback from county staff that presented on programs they lead included, “we need more access to data that is meaningful, it helps us understand how we are impacting the people we serve and helps us do better.”

## Aim statement

Support practices that gather the voice of Olmsted County customers and recipients.

## Draft recommendations

- Gather input from service beneficiaries on satisfaction and improvement ideas.
- Assess all county services for awareness of and accessibility to BIPOC residents and clients. Take action accordingly.
- Add additional Guiding Partners to Solutions (GPS) navigators, that are culturally competent, to help clients access county services.
- Implement participatory budgeting practices.

services
getting
customer
access
people
voice
make
results
take
think
important
need
practices
support
input
directly
give
ensure
involved
feel
just
see
good
know
community
looking
culturally
approach
survey
hold
participatory
part
mean
voice
level
data
great
competent
budgeting
work
different
programs
public
trying
centered
sure
phrases
bipoc
help
careful
design
going
place
rather
effectiveness
understand
gather
system
county
process
navigators
assessing
action
answers
resources
accordingly
charge
agree
bring
live
wrong
capturing
one
change
plenty
impact
involved
without
stop
added
dirty
clean
window
better
receiving
education
layer
jumping
advisory
section
area
thing
actually
investment
plan
used
respond
ask
offer
board
closely
moderate
assure
sensible
attends
may
address
come
looking
delivered
activities
correct
person
unmasked
state
legislate
detail
received
contact
experienced
deciding
gps
exists
add
equally
racism
appears
likely
high
move
concerns
groups
recommendations
spend
beneficiaries
particular
explore
already
language
combined
resources
time
certain
government
human
many
idea
even
staff
race
color
wal
equipping
protected
new
benefits
environment
isolated
goal
team
leaders
life
accountability
appreciate
defined
provide
reaching
issues
solve
collect
additional
mindful
separated
country
burdening
avoid
prioritized
numbers
example
charge
accordingly
resources
answers
action
assessing
process
county
navigators
gather
system
recommendations
effectiveness
understand
going
place
rather
design
need
directly
input
support
practices
important
take
think
results
make
voice
mean
part
capturing
agree
bring
live
wrong
one
change
plenty
reaching
issues
defined
provide
gather
system
county
process
navigators
assessing
action
answers
resources
accordingly
charge
numbers
example
recommendations
effectiveness
understand
spend
beneficiaries
particular

# 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

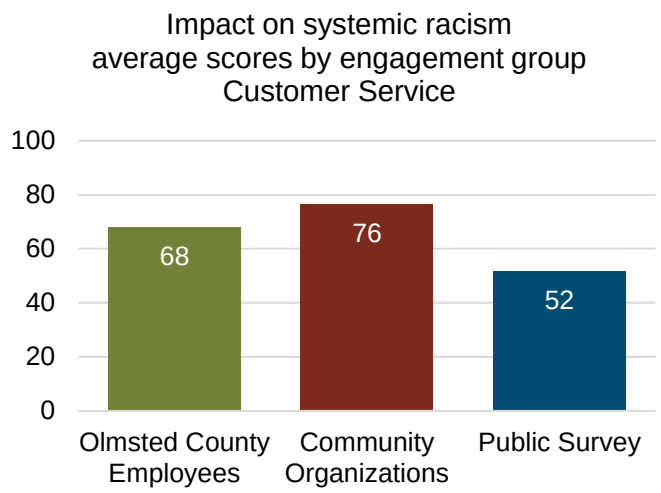
Participatory budgeting

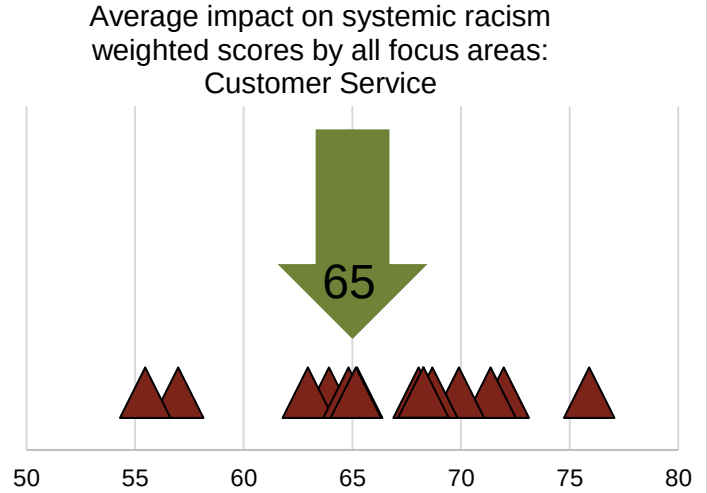
"Participatory budgeting may be one of the most innovative strategies OC can invest in. Involve the public in deciding how public dollars are invested."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: CUSTOMER SERVICE

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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 for context

- Throughout the Joint Study process, many questions were asked of Olmsted County staff regarding specific programmatic data collected. These questions illuminated the theme that data is hard to collect. Without understanding key data about who is being served, how well they are served, etc. Olmsted County will be unable to make meaningful changes that benefit clients.
- Data systems used in the County are not integrated and don't 'talk to each other.' Understanding the entire picture of quantitative data regarding Olmsted County services would allow leadership to see and address gaps.
- Some of Olmsted County's programmatic data is collected in systems that are owned and operated by state agencies. This limits Olmsted County departments from accessing the data and being able to see a true picture of Olmsted County service data.

## Aim statement

Maximize and streamline Olmsted County data systems.

## Draft recommendations

- Invest in infrastructure for data systems (FTE, new programs/systems).
- Foster efficient and interoperable data systems to generate comprehensive, complete (e.g., demographic data), and timely data.
- State legislative agenda: foster efficient and interoperable data systems to generate comprehensive, complete (e.g., demographic data), and timely data.
- Track outcome data of clients that are disaggregated by race and ethnicity.
- 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: 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 |

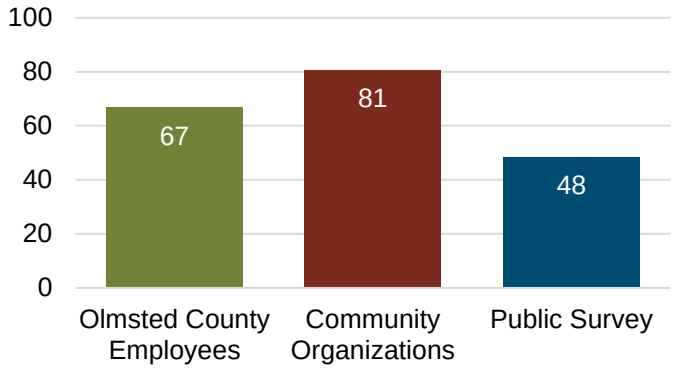
"Having efficient and interoperable data systems is crucial for moving the needle to better outcomes."
-Community engagement participant

### Impact and prioritization

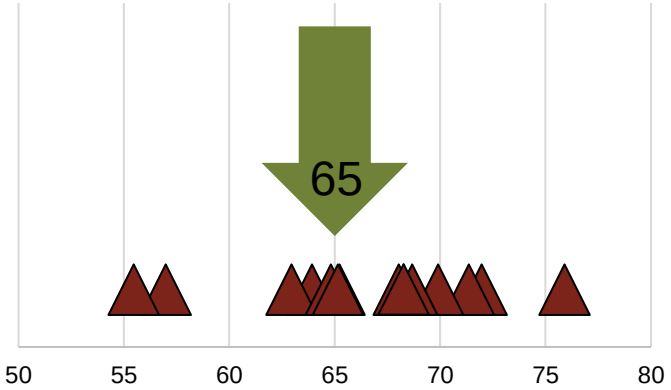
The Data Collection and Use average impact on systemic racism scores by each engagement group are shown below on the left. The overall average impact on systemic racism equally weighted score was 65. This score is shown below on the right and is noted by the green arrow. The Data Collection and Use score 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.

Impact on systemic racism average scores by engagement group: Data Collection & Use




Average impact on systemic racism weighted scores by all focus areas: Data Collection & Use




| 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: DATA COLLECTION AND USE

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**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 for context

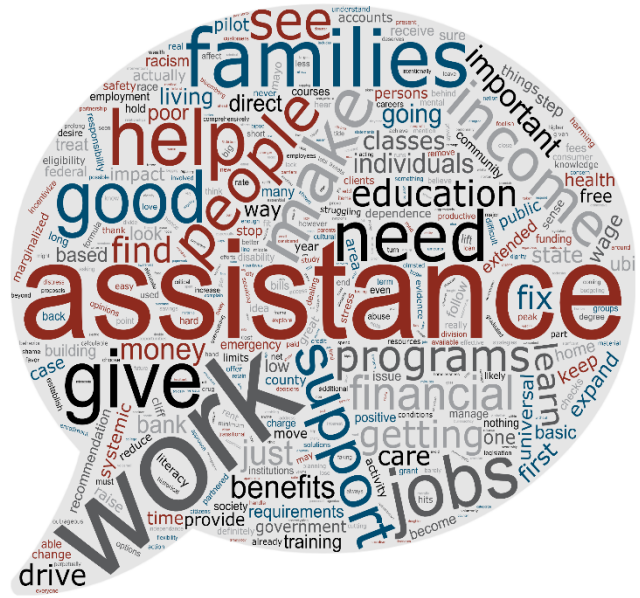
- Currently, emergency funding is only for specific uses and eligibility currently requires applicants to have been denied or have already exhausted other similar community programs. This funding could be expanded via a separate funding stream to allow more flexibility for program beneficiaries to spend the support on other things that are not allowed by the current program. While a well-intentioned stop-gap, asking applicants to complete an outside process (to receive a denial or support via other funds) before being able to be approved for this program creates an undue burden on applicants.
- Some individuals and families come to a pivotal decision-making point when their financial situation could potentially improve, however, they would lose critical access to benefits. The position that experts call the “benefits cliff” serves as a disincentive for securing a full-time job which would jeopardize their eligibility.

## Aim statement

Ensure and potentially increase available financial assistance as well as look at skill building strategies for recipients of financial assistance.

## Draft recommendations

- Expand emergency assistance funding and eligibility.
- Find strategies to fix benefits cliff.
- Pilot universal basic income program for families/individuals. Grants for families/individuals.
- Encourage new bank accounts when enrolling recipients in direct payment government programs. Work with community partners to offer accounts that meet an individual's current needs.
- State legislative agenda: Change eligibility requirements for federal benefits programs.



# FOCUS AREA: FINANCIAL HEALTH

## Data from community engagement sessions

### Qualitative themes

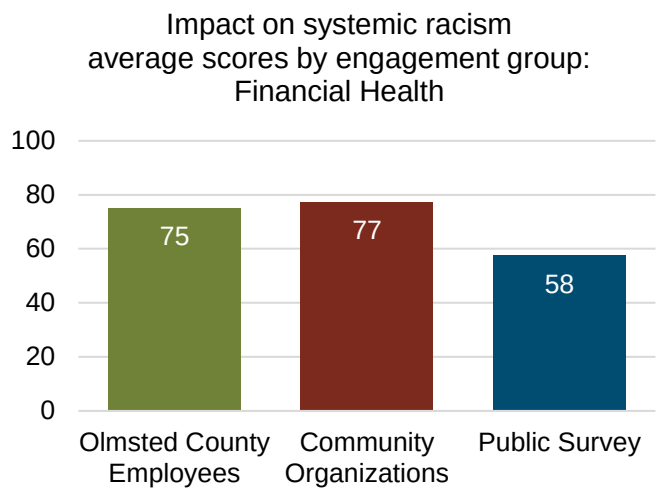
- Universal based income
- Impact of flexible benefit
- Eligibility
- Financial institutions role
- Training and education
- Financial institutions could play an important role
- Need to revise/expand eligibility requirements
- Emergency funds could be very beneficial

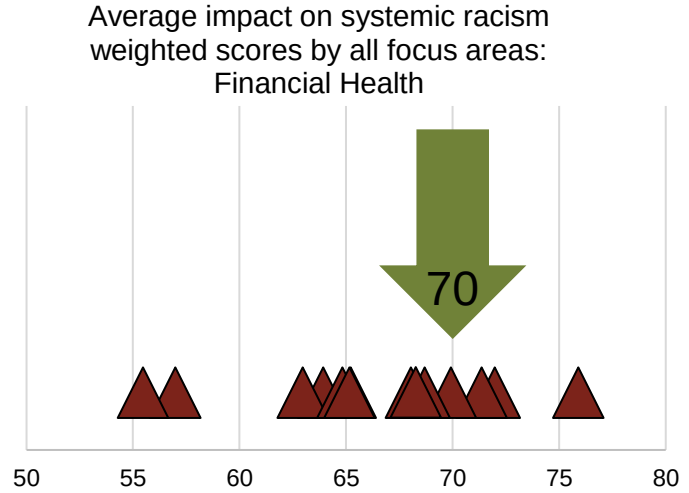
"The criteria and guidelines to access financial assistance often create barriers from serving people who truly need help because they are not eligible."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: FINANCIAL HEALTH

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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 for context

- Olmsted County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) shared that homelessness disproportionately affects Black individuals when considering the percent of the population that they represent.
    - 80% of clients needing federal housing assistance in Olmsted County are people of color, and 98% live in Rochester.
- City of Rochester 2020 COVID-19 Impact and DEI survey results showed lowest ratings were given on providing equal access to housing for residents of all backgrounds – over half gave a rating of excellent or good, but 44% gave ratings of fair or poor.

## Aim statement

Invest in resources to alleviate and/or eliminate homelessness, address the lack of affordable rental housing, and increase and support home ownership, especially among BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities.

## Draft recommendations

- Expand emergency shelter for families.
- Increase public and community partner awareness and coordination of available housing programs and services.
- Examine how effective coordinated entry is at addressing emergency shelter needs in the county.
- Consider investment in permanent housing for the chronically homeless.
- Pilot prevention opportunities aimed at different populations at risk of homelessness.

# 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

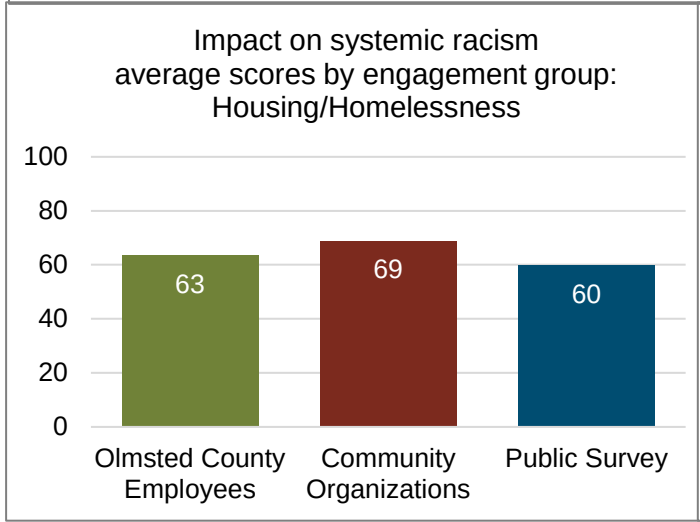
Opportunity for non-profits and financial institutions to collaborate

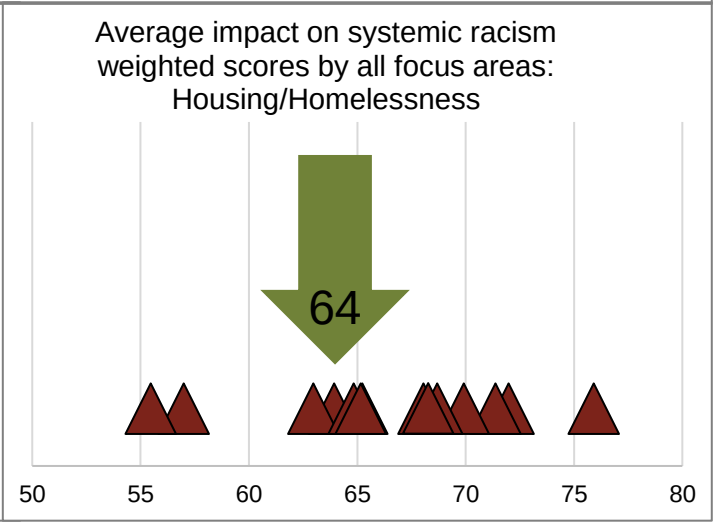
"Top for me is reviewing coordinated entry. I think this has significant opportunity for bias and racism to be embedded in process and decision making."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: HOUSING - HOMELESSNESS

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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 for context

- Black community members have the highest percentage of renter-occupied households in Olmsted County (Maxfield Study). Rents climb regularly, while the cost of a mortgage relative to income decreases.
- 80% of clients needing federal housing assistance in Olmsted County are people of color, and 98% live in Rochester. The average household income is $22,400, including SNAP and SSI (Olmsted County HRA).

## Aim statement

Invest in resources to alleviate and/or eliminate homelessness, address the lack of affordable rental housing, and increase and support home ownership, especially among BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities.

## Draft recommendations

- Identify/build more affordable subsidized and rental options in Rochester.
- Increase the number of housing vouchers using local funds where possible.
- State legislative agenda: Support passage of state anti-discrimination in housing legislation.

# FOCUS AREA: HOUSING - RENTAL ASSISTANCE

## Data from community engagement sessions

### Qualitative themes

The need to provide support and education to landlords

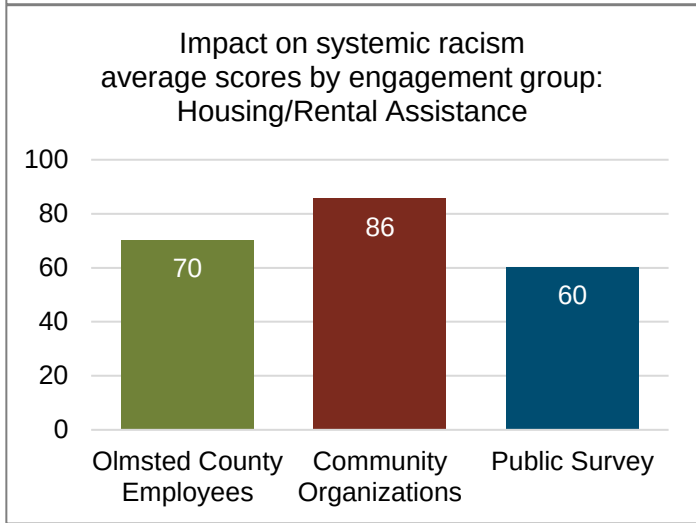
Vouchers need to be increased (monetary and number)

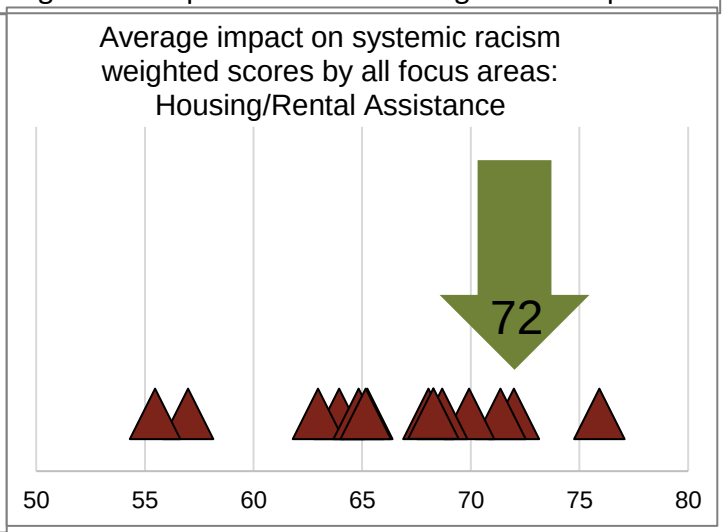
Opportunities for policy changes such as income guidelines and zoning

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: HOUSING - RENTAL ASSISTANCE

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**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 for context

- One of the most glaring examples of systemic racism has been in the area of housing, where redlining was used to prevent Blacks from securing mortgage loans, and racial covenants were used to exclude Blacks from purchasing homes. Since the accumulation of wealth over generations is largely a result of home ownership, these discriminatory practices have led to a wide gap in intergenerational wealth between Blacks and Whites.
- There are large disparities in home ownership in Olmsted County (2020 Olmsted County Community Indicators):
  - 77% of Olmsted County residents own their homes.
  - 22% of Olmsted County Black residents own their homes.
- African American and Hispanic populations are projected to grow around 16% in the next five years (2020 Olmsted County Community Indicators).

## Aim statement

Invest in resources to alleviate and/or eliminate homelessness, address the lack of affordable rental housing, and increase and support home ownership, especially among BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities.

## Draft recommendations

- Develop programs to increase home ownership within the BIPOC community with special emphasis on shifting BIPOC renters to owners.
- Increase affordable home ownership options for people at 50% AMI (area median income).
- Work with partners to lower the cost of home buying.
- The County should support local nonprofit and mortgage lenders to get potential BIPOC, especially Black home buyers' mortgage ready, particularly given the history of redlining and racial covenants.
- Given the current and growing need, identify additional resources that could be used to jumpstart and sustain programs that build home ownership among lower-income people, especially Black families.

# 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

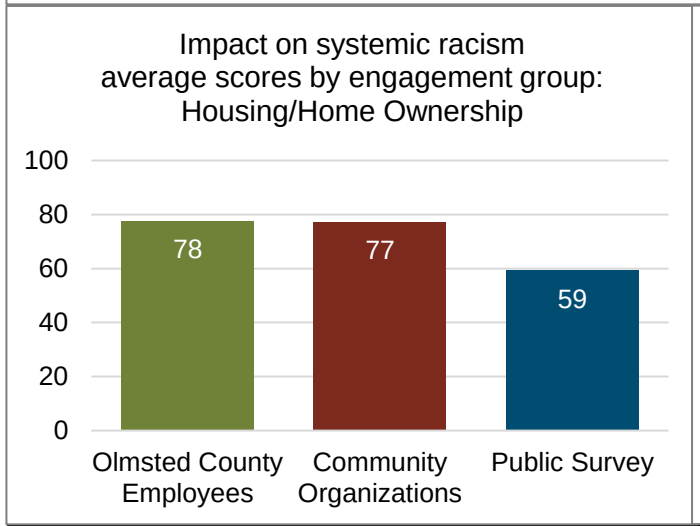
Many factors contributing to the lack of affordable housing

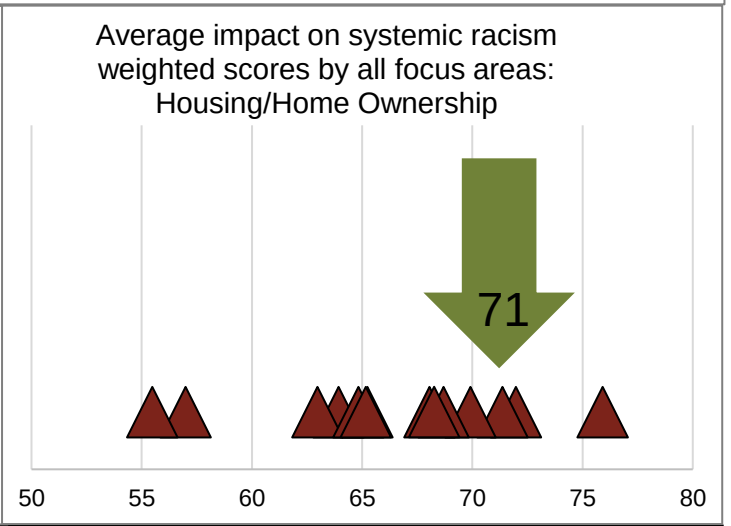
"Home ownership is key to growing generational wealth, and there have been so many practices and policies in the not-so-distant past that have excluded individuals of color from home ownership."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: HOUSING - HOME OWNERSHIP

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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 for context

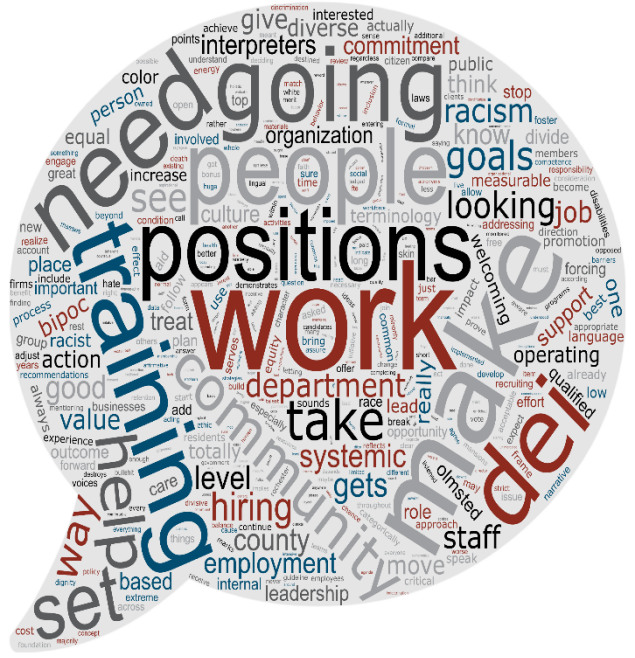
- Some departments are further along in creating a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) plan while others do not have any plan. It is important for Olmsted County to have one unified plan that each department can work towards (Olmsted County DEI Focus Group Feedback Report, January 2021).
- The 2019 Olmsted County residential survey showed unfavorable responses on the relevancy of Olmsted County, the understanding of its purpose, and the feeling that Olmsted County cares about its residents. When disaggregating that data, many of those responses came from residents of color.
- During the Joint Study process, Olmsted County staff were asked many questions focused on DEI broadly. Staff answered those in many ways, which revealed a need for shared terminology is key. When all employees use the same language to discuss the same concepts, it will hopefully lead to fewer disagreements and more consensus.

### Aim statement

Foster a welcoming community that values belonging, equity, diversity, and dignity in people and ideas.

### Draft recommendations

- Each department creates DEI goals.
- DEI goals to include increasing representation of BIPOC Olmsted County staff and staff with lived experience relative to department.
- DEI goals to include increasing BIPOC leadership at the highest pay levels.
- Increase DEI-focused FTE to lead efforts across organization.
- Establish shared DEI terminology across the organization.
- Increase interpreters and bi-lingual staff.
- DEI Training for County Board of Commissioners and Olmsted County Department Leadership.
- Assess organizational culture and come up with strategies (ex. retention plan) to support the current and incoming workforce.



# FOCUS AREA: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND SYSTEMS

## Data from community engagement sessions

### Qualitative themes

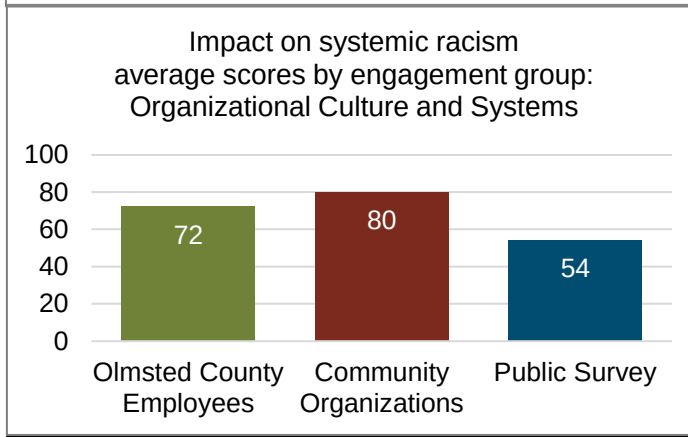
| | |
|---|---|
| Organizational culture | These recommendations should already be in place |
| Training | More representative leadership |
| Hiring and retention | Need to hire more bilingual staff |
| Community involvement | |
| Terminology | Training is crucial |

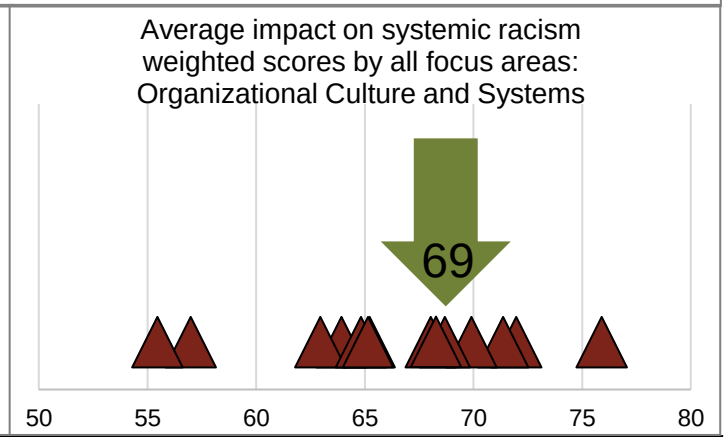
"Those dedicated to this effort are never short on motivation and commitment. But this work needs to spread beyond this inner circle. If others don't join in and take responsibility for this too, it will not move."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND SYSTEMS

# FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**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 for context

- Olmsted County residents have indicated that stigma, disconnectedness, and a fragmented service delivery system negatively impact the core dimensions of mental wellness – health, home, purpose and community.
- The 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment reports that 42.1% of people of color feel socially connected compared to 70% of white non-Hispanic people. 48.6% of foreign-born feel socially connected. 38% of respondents self-reported mental health issues, 25% saw a mental health provider in the past 12 months and 8% delayed mental health care.
- City of Rochester 2020 COVID-19 Impact and DEI survey results indicated loneliness and anxiety were the pandemic challenges being experienced most often by Rochester residents.
- According to the IMAA Whole Family Systems Executive Summary, lack of access to mental health care was a theme identified by the core planning team. Limited support for families with poor mental health was another theme identified along with limited transportation options or having to work which limits getting mental health care that's needed.

## Aim statement

Promote strategies to reduce stigma and barriers in BIPOC communities in the area of mental health and increase access to culturally sensitive providers. Support Olmsted County staff training in de-escalation practices.

## Draft recommendations

- Promote public awareness/education and address culturally specific stigma about mental health and wellbeing.
- Promote social connection/social connectedness; work on eliminating social isolation within specific cultural communities.
- Enable and expand access to current mental health programs.
- Facilitate a network of mental health providers that can match patient need to culturally sensitive provider.
- Decrease barriers to accessing mental health professionals. (Rationale: general lack of access/availability to all communities, but particularly BIPOC communities).

# FOCUS AREA: MENTAL HEALTH

## Data from community engagement sessions

### Qualitative themes

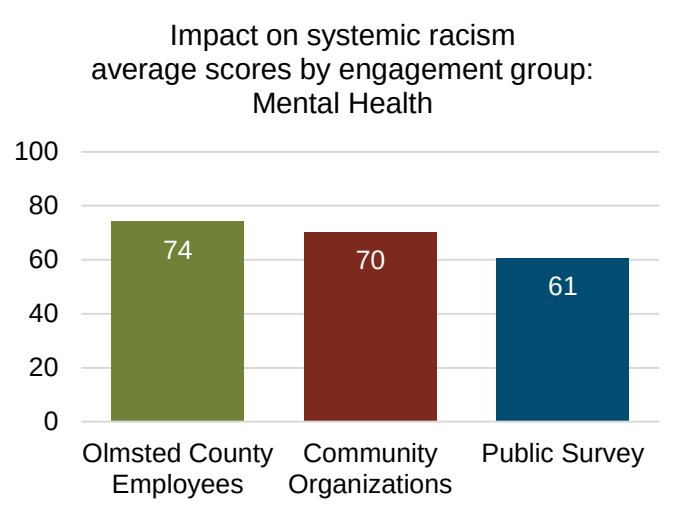
| | |
|---|---|
| Affordability and accessibility | Stigma plays a significant role in why people do not talk about mental health or seek care |
| Cultural sensitivity | Create a network of providers that are sensitive to social stigmas with all cultures |
| Connection to substance use | More education and awareness around services and mental health |

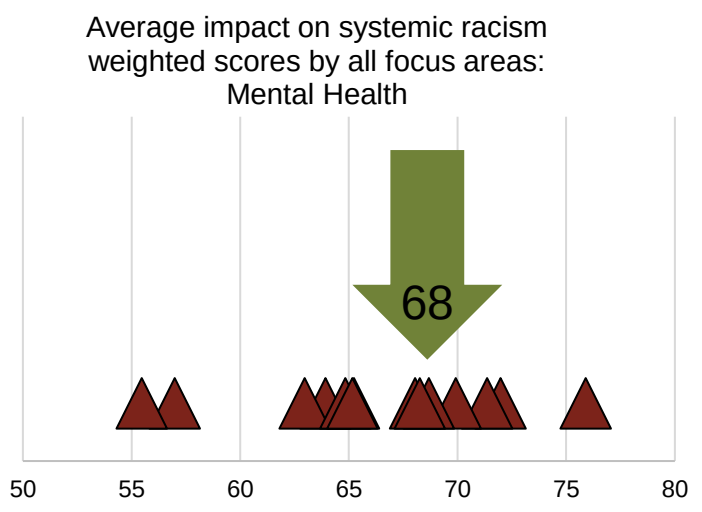
"Quality of care should not be dependent upon cost of care."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 |

# FOCUS AREA: SUBSTANCE USE - PREVENTION AND RESILIENCY

## Data for context

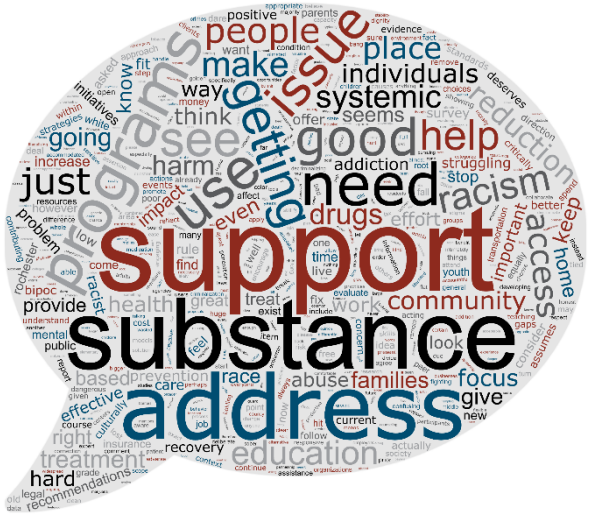
- Youth drug use (of any kind) increased since 2016, and significant disparities exist by race, particularly for E-cigarette and prescription drug use (2021-2023 Olmsted County Community Health Improvement Plan, CHIP).
- Community members said they were not aware of all the recovery services offered by the county. They asked for more marketing that was reflective of their community members (2020-2021 CHIP Community Dialogues).
- Community members stated that increased access to peer support programs would help reduce stigma felt by going through substance use treatment (2020-2021 CHIP Community Dialogues).
- Research shows that a combination of medication and therapy can successfully treat individuals with substance use disorders, and for some people struggling with addiction, medication-assisted therapy can help sustain recovery. Medication-assisted therapy is available to those experiencing alcohol, tobacco, opioid, and other substance dependencies (SAMHSA).

## Aim statement

Support strategies that prevent substance use, reduce harm, and support resiliency and recovery.

## Draft recommendations

- Further education and outreach/marketing of substance use recovery services.
- Provide substance use prevention education in elementary schools within existing programs (school-aged childcare and community schools) or new programs.
- Explore opportunities to support youth mentorship within existing programs (school-aged childcare and community schools) or new programs.
- Support youth resiliency skill development efforts in existing programs (school-aged childcare and community schools) or new programs.
- Explore ways to increase substance-free events for the broader community.



# FOCUS AREA: SUBSTANCE USE - PREVENTION AND RESILIENCY

## Data from community engagement sessions

### Qualitative themes

Affordability and accessibility

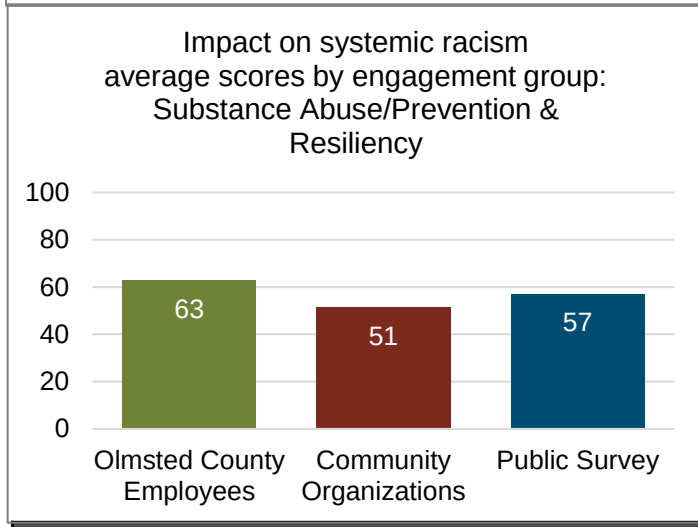
Need to remove barriers to treatment and recovery programs

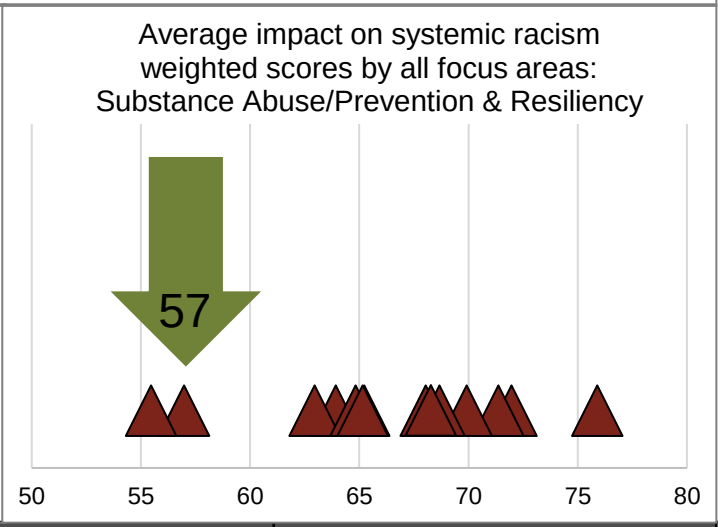
"Important to focus on these barriers to access because it doesn't matter how good a program is if participants can't get to them In an uncomplicated way."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 for context

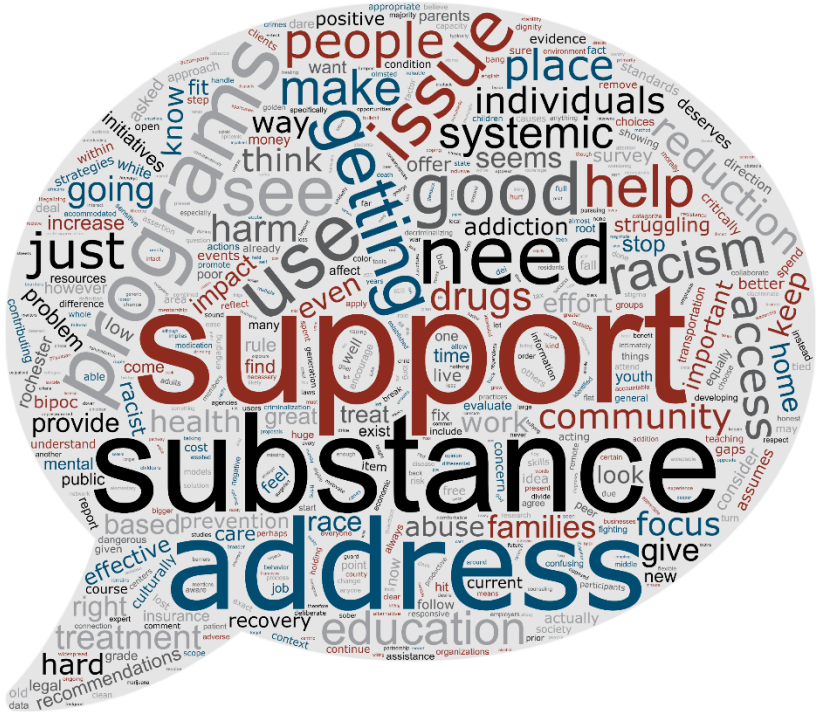
- Youth drug use (of any kind) increased since 2016, and significant disparities exist by race, particularly for E-cigarette and prescription drug use (2021-2023 Olmsted County Community Health Improvement Plan, CHIP).
- Community members said they were not aware of all the recovery services offered by the county. They asked for more marketing that was reflective of their community members (2020-2021 CHIP Community Dialogues).
- Community members stated that increased access to peer support programs would help reduce stigma felt by going through substance use treatment (2020-2021 CHIP Community Dialogues).
- Research shows that a combination of medication and therapy can successfully treat individuals with substance use disorders, and for some people struggling with addiction, medication-assisted therapy can help sustain recovery. Medication-assisted therapy is available to those experiencing alcohol, tobacco, opioid, and other substance dependencies (SAMHSA).

## Aim statement

Support strategies that prevent substance use, reduce harm, and support resiliency and recovery.

## Draft recommendations

- Create programs focused on substance use and harm reduction.
- Evaluate current substance use and harm reduction programs for efficacy.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families
abuse
prevention
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effective
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way
think
going
increase
stop
struggling
reduction
important
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keep
provide
health
work
look
give
new
current
race
care
insurance
recommendations
evidence
positive
parents
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fit
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strategies
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# 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

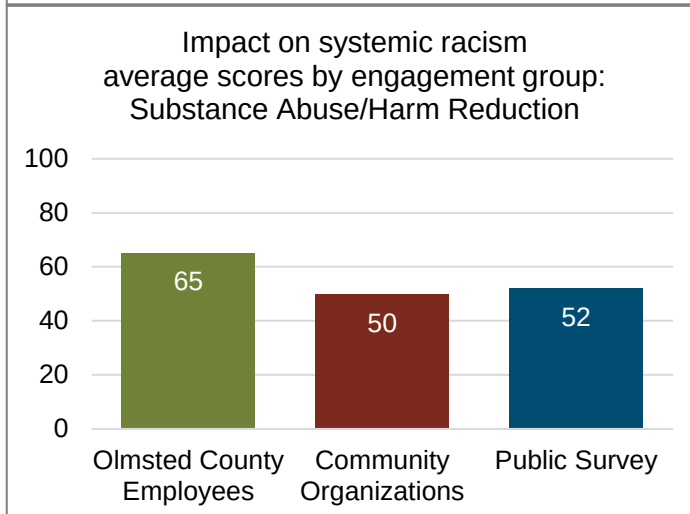
Opportunity to collaborate with community organizations

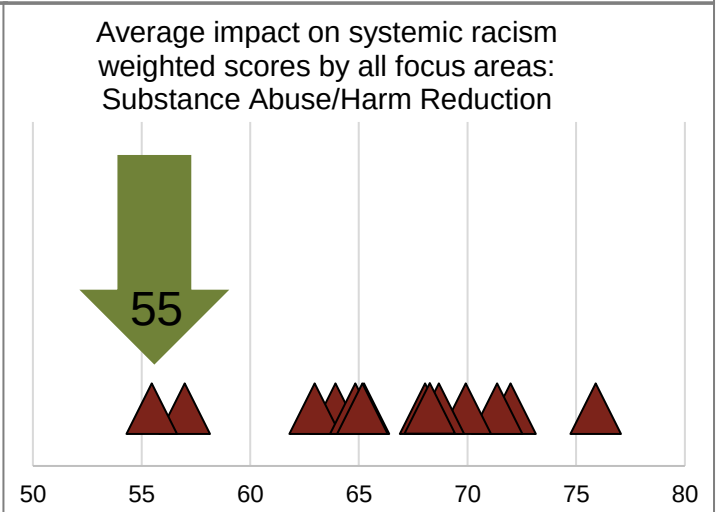
"If we learn coping skills when we are young and get a foundation to build upon, I would think we have a lesser chance of handing adversity in what could be a destructive manner."
-Community engagement participant

### 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 | BIPOC community prioritization |
|---|---|
| Create programs focused on substance use and harm reduction… | Medium to High |
| Evaluate current substance use and harm reduction programs… | Medium to High |

# FOCUS AREA:

## SUBSTANCE USE - RECOVERY

## Data for context

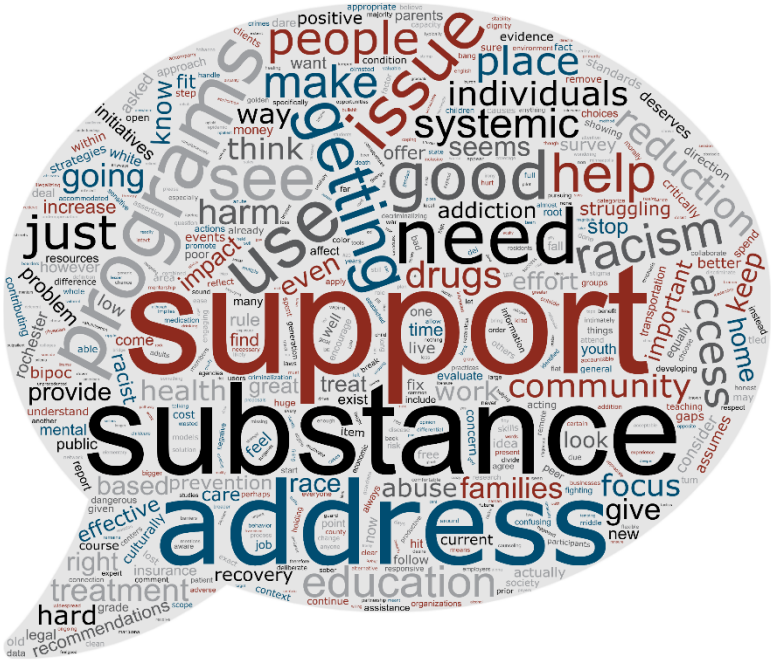
- Youth drug use (of any kind) increased since 2016, and significant disparities exist by race, particularly for E-cigarette and prescription drug use (2021-2023 Olmsted County Community Health Improvement Plan, CHIP).
- Community members said they were not aware of all the recovery services offered by the county. They asked for more marketing that was reflective of their community members (2020-2021 CHIP Community Dialogues).
- Community members stated that increased access to peer support programs would help reduce stigma felt by going through substance use treatment (2020-2021 CHIP Community Dialogues).
- Research shows that a combination of medication and therapy can successfully treat individuals with substance use disorders, and for some people struggling with addiction, medication-assisted therapy can help sustain recovery. Medication-assisted therapy is available to those experiencing alcohol, tobacco, opioid, and other substance dependencies (SAMHSA).

## Aim statement

Support strategies that prevent substance use, reduce harm, and support resiliency and recovery.

## Draft recommendations

- Increase access (transportation, time off work, home program, remote service) to lower cost substance use treatment/peer support programs.
- Inventory and expand medication-support substance use treatment programs.



# FOCUS AREA: SUBSTANCE USE - RECOVERY

## Data from community engagement sessions

### Qualitative themes

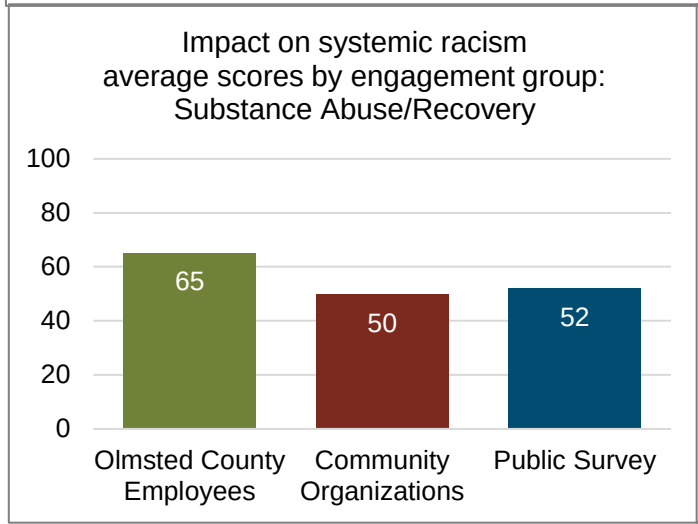
- Supportive services after treatment
- Need for substance-free activities and events
- Substance use education
- Unsure what is the right age to start substance use education, but it is important

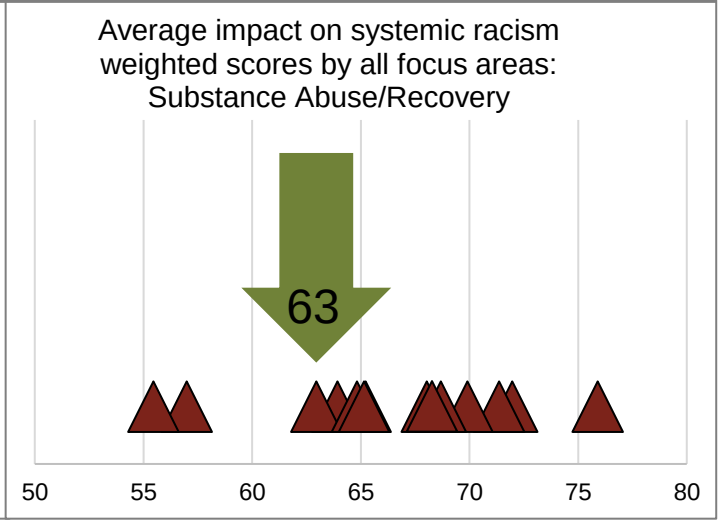
"Strategies/programming needs to be culturally responsive. There is a strong need for decolonized substance use programming."
-Community engagement participant

### 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).

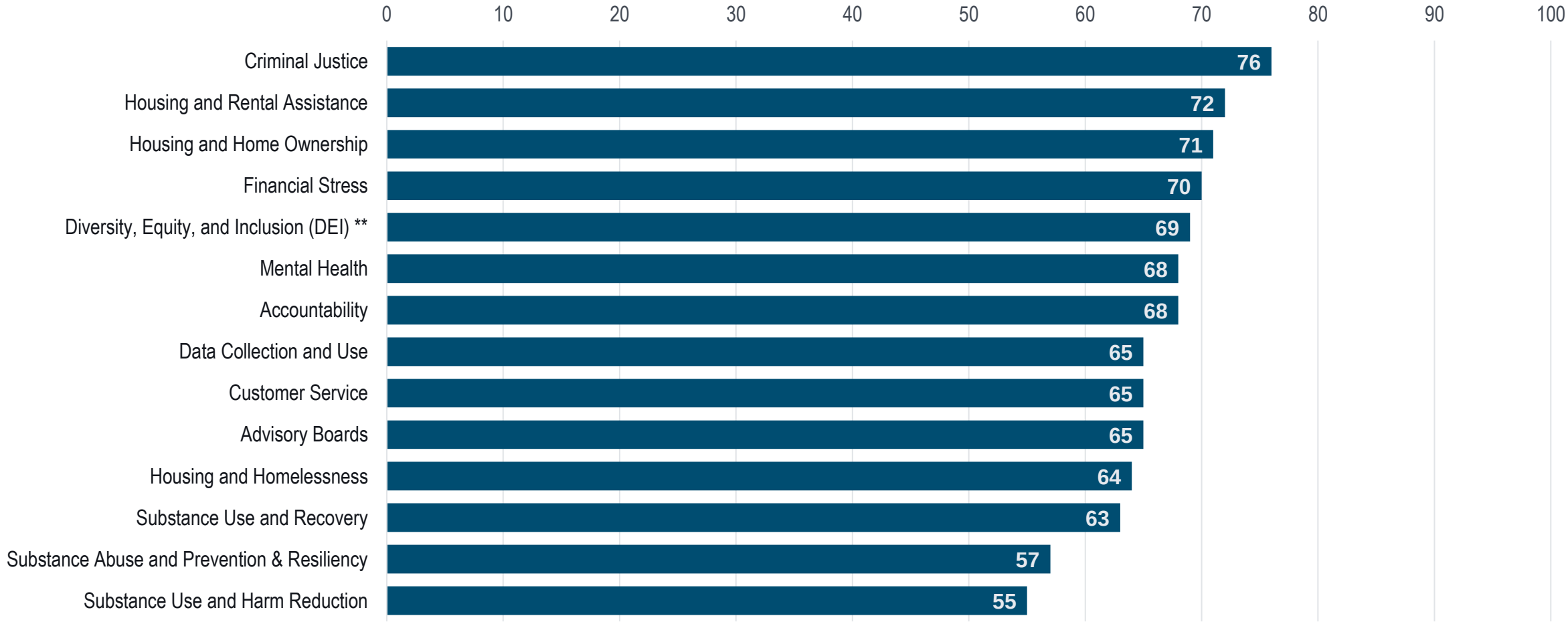
*Substance Use and Mental Health have joint recommendations.

**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.

OLMSTED COUNTY
MINNESOTA

Public Health
Olmsted County

OLMSTED COUNTY
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

Supporting rights. Changing communities