


F R O M	NAME & TITLE	Terry Hickey, Director	CITY of BALTIMORE	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Mayor's Office of Human Services (MOHS) 7 E. Redwood Street, 5 th Fl.		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill Report 18-0223	M E M O	

DATE: June 10, 2018
TO: Mayor Catherine E. Pugh
Members, City Council Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee
FROM: Mayor's Office of Human Services
POSITION: **In Support**
RE: Council Bill 18-0223 – Equity Assessment Program

INTRODUCTION - For the purpose of providing for the implementation of an Equity Assessment Program for Baltimore City, to be developed and overseen by the Department of Planning; requiring City agencies to assess existing and proposed policies and practices for disparate outcomes based on race, gender, or income and to proactively develop policies, practices, and investments to prevent and redress those disparate outcomes; defining certain terms; providing for the adoption of rules and regulations to carry out this Program; requiring certain notices and reports; and generally relating to the goal of eliminating structural and institutional racism and other forms of discrimination based on immutable characteristics.

PURPOSE/PLANS – The purpose of this bill is to analyze processes and practices that currently exist throughout the city that aid in exacerbating social inequities throughout Baltimore City. This legislation aims to eliminate such processes and practices, and create new, all-inclusive policies in their place. The new policies will be created and instituted in an effort to eliminate institutionalized racism and discrimination, city wide.

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT POSITION –

MOHS (Homeless Services, Head Start, Community Action Partnership, and Youth Services) works to support and uplift some of Baltimore's most vulnerable and disenfranchised populations. We recognize that poverty and homelessness have deep roots in racial inequality and our staff are dedicated to advancing policies and practices that eliminate disparate outcomes and provide equitable access to housing stability and economic opportunity.

The following policies and practices have been completed or are presently underway at MOHS:

Homeless Services

- **Data Analysis:** Utilizing the Homeless Management Information System and other evaluation tools, MOHS has the ability to disaggregate and analyze data in ways that are critical to identifying and addressing racial and other key disparities.
 - In 2015, MOHS began tracking racial disparities for Veterans in prevalence of homelessness and successful housing placements. The prevalence of homelessness for Veterans was more closely linked to race than military service. Information was reported to HUD and the VA, resulting in increased outreach and homeless prevention services for black Veterans.

- In 2017, MOHS began tracking disparities in the prevalence of homelessness and successful housing placements for youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth. The information is utilized to increase access to services for youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth and develop new partnerships that to serve these youth.
- One key federal and local system performance measure addresses employment and income stability and gains for homeless and formerly homeless households. This allows us to understand and address income disparities and the Continuum has a workgroup dedicated to developing strategies pertaining to this.
- **Coordinated Access:** All housing programs funded by MOHS are required to receive their referrals through a centralized assessment, prioritization, and referral system called Coordinated Access. Coordinated Access ensures that programs are following all required Fair Housing requirements which span race, gender identity, ethnic origin, disability status, familial status, sexual orientation and more. This has significantly reduced the prevalence of homeless programs denying entry to individuals on the basis of these attributes, and provides a fair and easy to access reporting tool for clients to report discrimination.
- **LGBTQ+ Standards of Care:** In June 2018, MOHS will release the final standards and implementation plan for homeless services programs. Standards of Care create new policies for homeless service programs, including strategies to ensure equitable treatment and access to services for people identifying as LGBTQ+. All agencies funded by MOHS will be required to implement these standards and will be evaluated based on their performance. The policies and implementation plan were formed in partnership with a workgroup of clients, advocates, and allies serving the LGBTQ+ community. MOHS and key community partners will be providing organizational assessments, technical assistance, and training during 2018-2019 to implement the new standards successfully.
- **Journey to Jobs Analysis:** This report will be released in June 2018 and explores interactions of Baltimore City residents with the homeless service and criminal justice systems with a specific emphasis on the disaggregation of data based on race, gender, age, and housing and employment status. The report recommends the adoption of an explicit racial equity lens, including:
 - Specific and measurable goals for practice and policy changes to support homeless jobseekers of color; Dedicated resources, including positions, technical assistance, trainings, and programming, focused on advancing a racial equity agenda; A plan to track and report on system performance measures related to racial disparities within the homeless service and workforce systems, including additional analysis to better understand the needs of people of color and intersections with gender, sexual orientation, and other key factors that may lead to discrimination and disparate outcomes; and Analysis of the demographic characteristics of organizations and systems serving homeless jobseekers to identify opportunities for professional development and advancement for people of color and people with experience of homelessness, and increase diversity within organizations, workgroups, and leadership boards.

- **Community Participation, Inclusion, and Diversity:** Starting in 2016, the Baltimore City Continuum of Care and MOHS have jointly implemented strategies to advance more diverse, inclusionary planning and decision-making processes and infrastructure to address homelessness.
 - The Continuum’s Consumer Advisory Workgroup meets weekly and provides an opportunity for people experiencing homelessness to develop and submit recommendations to the City and meet with City officials and employees. Members of the workgroup are also provided with training and speaking opportunities.
 - The Board requires at least four of its 23 voting members have lived experience of homelessness. Currently, more than 20% of the Board has personal experience of homelessness.
 - Committees and workgroups have increased participation from people with experience of homelessness.
 - Public meetings: The Continuum of Care and MOHS jointly hold public meetings and listening sessions at community-based sites and make materials publicly available. Members of the public can join the Continuum of Care and vote to elect Board representatives.
 - In 2018, the Board began to formally track demographic characteristics and identities of Board members in order to assess its composition based on race, gender, and other factors. This will be utilized by the Governance Committee to inform recruitment and increase diversity.

- **Community Outreach Team:** MOHS explicitly solicited applications from and hired people with lived experience of homelessness to promote diversity in the workplace.

Head Start Program:

- The logic of the Head Start program carries an implicit goal of improving equity among children by targeting vulnerable groups, mostly low-income children, a disproportionate share of whom are racial or ethnic minorities.
- Head Start addresses the problem that low-income children have limited access to high-quality early childhood education and demonstrate lower average achievement scores at kindergarten entry in comparison to their higher-income peers.
- Head Start helps reduce the racial/ethnic gap in access to early childhood education given that black and Hispanic families are more likely to be low-income and therefore susceptible to cost barriers to quality early childhood settings.
- By providing Head Start services that are governed by regulation, it reduces inequities in access and outcomes between children in low-income and higher-income families.

Youth Services:

- Attended the *People's Institute training on Undoing Racism* organized by the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers. The training focused on the effects of racism on structural inequity and participants reflected on the impacts of internalized racial inferiority and internalized racial superiority in their lives

- To increase procedural equity, the youth services team has implemented a community review process and a system to track demographics of community reviewers to assess how well reviewer demographics reflect the demographics of Baltimore City. Data about reviewers is disaggregated by race, gender, ethnicity, and zip code and can be used to drive outreach efforts to recruit more representative reviewers. A breakdown of reviewers recruited to review summer funding collaborative proposals is available on the youth services website and highlights that we need to increase the number of Latino/Hispanic reviewers in the future.

MOHS has identified the following recommendations to ensure the successful implementation of an Equity Assessment Program:

1. Training and technical assistance will be necessary to provide the foundation for developing a meaningful and effective equity assessment; baseline and ongoing data analysis and evaluation capacity needs to be supported.
2. Designated positions within each agency are imperative to developing and implementing an equity lens and agenda. Equity coordinator positions require dedicated resources and specific experience and expertise.
3. Incorporate intersectionality and address equity as it pertains to additional populations and intersecting identities.
4. Build racial equity requirements into RFPs
5. Assess the policies and practices of shelters and other funded programs to provide services and housing that is informed by an understanding of race, ethnicity, gender, etc.
6. Staff trainings and technical assistance are desperately needed within MOHS and the Continuum of Care
7. Analysis of leadership positions, salaries, and promotion rates within MOHS, across City agencies, and within the homeless service provider network
8. Reform hiring practices: revise job descriptions and role requirements, actively solicit applications from disenfranchised groups, blind application reviews, etc.
9. Dedicated staff position to address equity
10. Adopt system performance measures to assess disparate outcomes
11. Refine employment/income measures
12. Analyze placement of formerly homeless households based on neighborhood characteristics
13. Cross-sector analysis of intersecting barriers
14. Improved engagement of excluded groups within the Continuum of Care, its Board, and committees and workgroups

The Mayor's Office of Human Services **supports** City Council Bill 18-0223, and respectfully requests a favorable report. We look forward to engage in a process to develop implementation policies that have flexibility that may rectify any conflict with our future selection and prioritization processes.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at Terry.Hickey@baltimorecity.gov or 410-396-7370.