

County of Monterey
Office of the Assessor – County Clerk - Recorder

Budget Equity Tool
Fiscal Year 2025-2026

TIER 1: INTERNAL

1. What persistent funding gaps or limitations in your overall budget could inhibit your department's ability to advance racial and economic equity?

- *This can include funding limitations outside the department's control, time constraints, or recognition that current funding is inadequate to address the extent and impact of racial and economic disparities.*

Current funding in the Office of the Assessor – County Clerk – Recorder is inadequate for the provision of translation and interpretation services for the public. However, there is also a lack of sufficient demand to justify the cost.

In January and February of 2024, a survey of departmental supervisory staff was conducted to determine the necessity of recruiting bilingual speakers of languages other than English and Spanish or contracting with a translation service to better serve customers who speak a language that cannot be accommodated by current our staff.

According to the survey results, in 2023, the department encountered a total of four customer interactions where a third-party language interpreter or translator was necessary. Two of the languages in need of translation were believed to be Arabic and an East Indian dialect but the other two languages were not identified. In all but one of the cases, the customer provided their own interpreter or translator in the form of a spouse, friend, or family member.

A manager in our department observed that some persons – particularly immigrants from countries where there is social or political unrest, may have a negative perception of governmental entities and thus would prefer a trusted friend or family member to act as an interpreter over a bilingual speaker or a third-party translation service.

The department will continue to re-evaluate the need these services in the future.

Though it would be helpful to have the information on our website available in languages other than Spanish and English, there are some significant limitations.

The State of California's Board of Equalization does not permit counties to translate its official forms and most of these are only available in English. Thus, even if multiple languages could be accommodated on our website, the general information on the site may direct customers to an official State form that is only available in English. We have requested that the Board of Equalization translate more of their forms into Spanish to help Assessor's Offices achieve compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, but unfortunately, the project is not a high priority at this time.

2. Describe what strategies your department recommends to reduce the impact of barriers to or changes in services for low-income and communities of color.

- *Examples could include services to improve or ensure access, such as transportation or translation and interpretation services.*

The Office of the Assessor - County Clerk - Recorder has made significant progress in its efforts to achieve compliance with Title VI including:

- Posting the Title VI notice at public counters
- Ensuring that non-standard agreements include a nondiscrimination clause.
- Translating vital departmental documents into Spanish. (Note: Official State of California forms cannot be translated by our department) The County Clerk's documents are 80% complete, Recorder's are 100% complete, and the Assessor's are 6% complete. Note that all Assessor forms have been translated and are awaiting review prior to posting on website.
- Minimizing the use of PDF's on the website and including Spanish versions of departmental documents.
- Public voicemails recorded in both English and Spanish.
- All signage at the public counters is in both English and Spanish.
- Currently in the process of translating the public computer kiosks in the County Clerk and Recorder's Office into Spanish. The County Clerk has completed the translation and the Recorder's translation is 75% complete.
- 16 employees or 30% of the staff receive bilingual pay. There is at least one Spanish-speaking employee in each division.
- Efforts are made to send bilingual staff to disaster relief centers and any public meetings.
- All press releases are published in both English and Spanish in English and Spanish-language periodicals. Note: As of Fall 2023, there are no Spanish-language periodicals in Monterey County.
- On December 5, 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved and authorized the Amendment of Article XIII of the Master Fee Resolution to include onsite Civil Marriage Ceremonies at a cost of \$100.00 each effective as of January 1, 2024. An "express" (counter) version of this service was made available to the public in both English and Spanish beginning on February 12th and on March 4th, a more formal "appointment only" version of the service held in a decorated Wedding Room or outdoors were also added at no additional charge.
 - There were 702 Civil Ceremonies between February 12, 2024 – December 31, 2024
 - Of these, 606 were "express" ceremonies and 96 were "by appointment".

3. What specific programs, policies, practices, and structures within your overall budget and improvement requests can address historical and recent racial and economic inequity?

- *Think about some of the inequities in Monterey County that your department might see in the form of a barrier or gap in services. This can include new or expanding programs targeting an underserved or under-resourced demographic or a new office protocol or policy focusing on inclusivity.*

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TIER 2: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

1. In what targeted ways will your department use the budgeting process to advance equity?

- *This can include adjustments in staffing, providing diversity, equity, and inclusion training opportunities for staff, or a commitment to delivering programs, services, research, or other actions with a focus on reducing disparities experienced in your department and the services provided to the public.*

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2. How will your department use targeted data to help inform recruitment, retention, and promotion efforts for staff of color, including executive, supervisory, entry-level, part-time, and field staff?

- *Please reference your department's [Equal Opportunity Plan](#).*

The Office of the Assessor - County Clerk - Recorder does not currently utilize paid subscription-based or free databases to obtain information to inform recruitment strategies. However, since 2017, efforts have been made to utilize diversity demographic data for recruitment, retention, and promotional efforts. The department provides its Management Team with demographic reports of the current workforce in comparison with the minority availability percentages provided by the Civil Rights Office on a biannual basis (in January and July). The department has strived to create visual measures to convey key data points to our team at a glance.

The department has established and maintained positive associations with schools and professional organizations. Recruitment and outreach are dependent upon the level of the position and possible qualified candidates in the local labor pool. Recruitments are posted locally, state-wide, and nationally with different schools and organizations in order to reach a diverse recruitment pool. The department currently spends between \$1,000-\$2000 per year to advertise positions. While funding for paid annual subscriptions to recruitment networks may prove cost-effective for some departments, such networks are not currently within the Office of the Assessor - County Clerk - Recorder's financial reach, nor are they considered cost-effective at our current turnover rate. The use of these networks may be re-evaluated as staffing needs change.

3. Describe ways that your department used or will use racial and economic data to prioritize and develop criteria for resource distribution. What additional demographic data will your department collect, track, and analyze to assess equity impacts in the community moving forward and for future budget decisions?

- [Data Share Monterey County](#)
- [Race Counts: Monterey County](#)
- [American Community Survey](#)

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4. What additional disaggregated demographic data will your department collect, track, and evaluate to assess equity impacts in the community moving forward, and inform your future budget decisions?

- [Data Share Monterey County](#)
- [Race Counts: Monterey County](#)
- [American Community Survey](#)

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TIER 3: EXTERNAL

Tip: When filling this out, consider the Community Engagement Guide included in your department's Title VI plan, the [Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#), and using [SMART goals](#) for assessment and evaluation purposes.

1. **How will your proposed budget enhance your department's ability to engage with and include historically under-resourced communities?**

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2. **How will that engagement be assessed and who will be a part of this self-assessment process?**

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3. **What are the anticipated positive equity outcomes of these allocations?**
 - For example, improved leadership opportunities, advisory committees, boards and commissions, targeted community meetings, stakeholder groups, increased outreach, etc.)?

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4. **How will the department ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate the equity impact of budget modifications?**

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5. **How will the department measure outreach to under-resourced communities?**

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