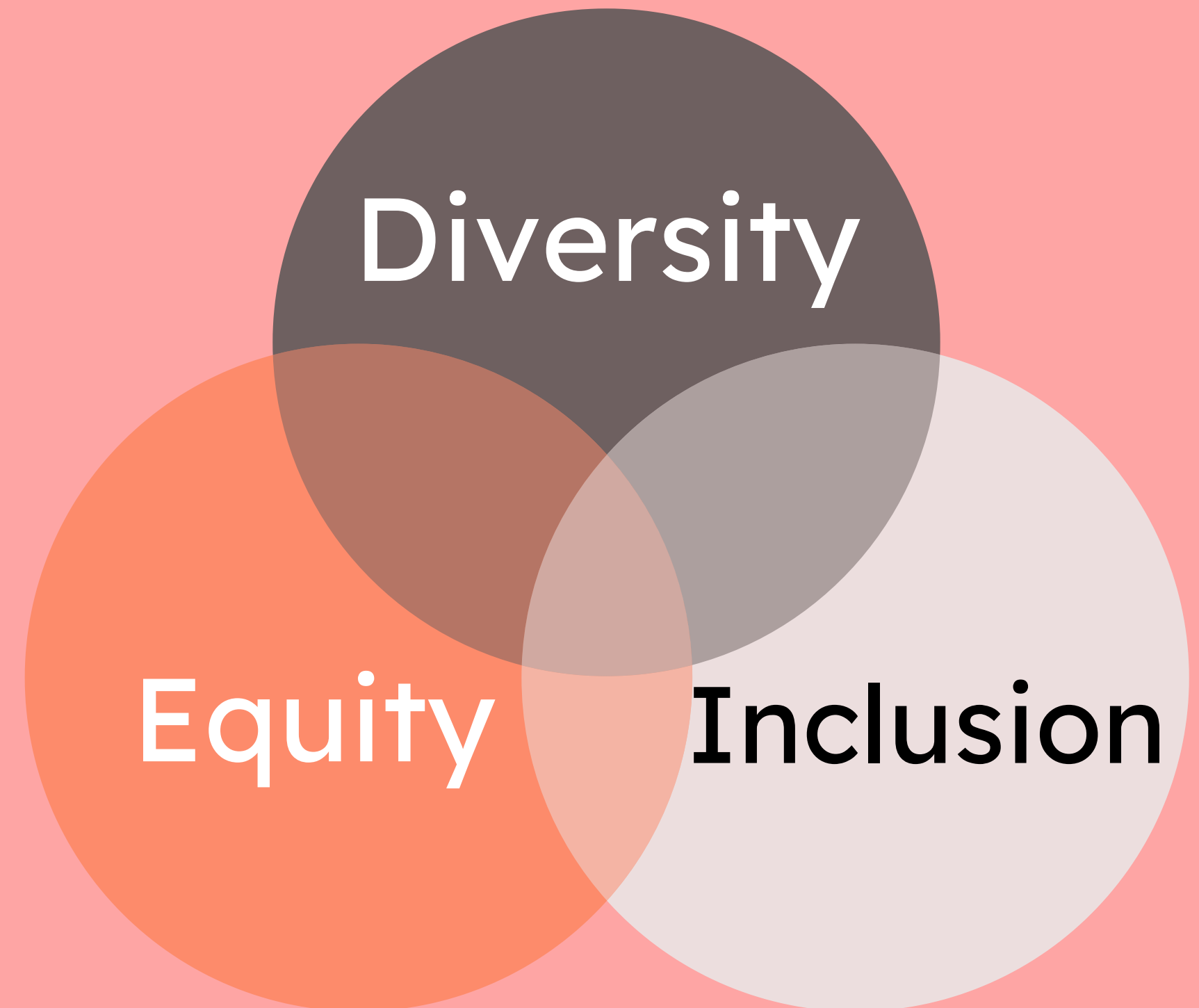


# The Budget Equity Tool

Fiscal Year 2024 Analysis



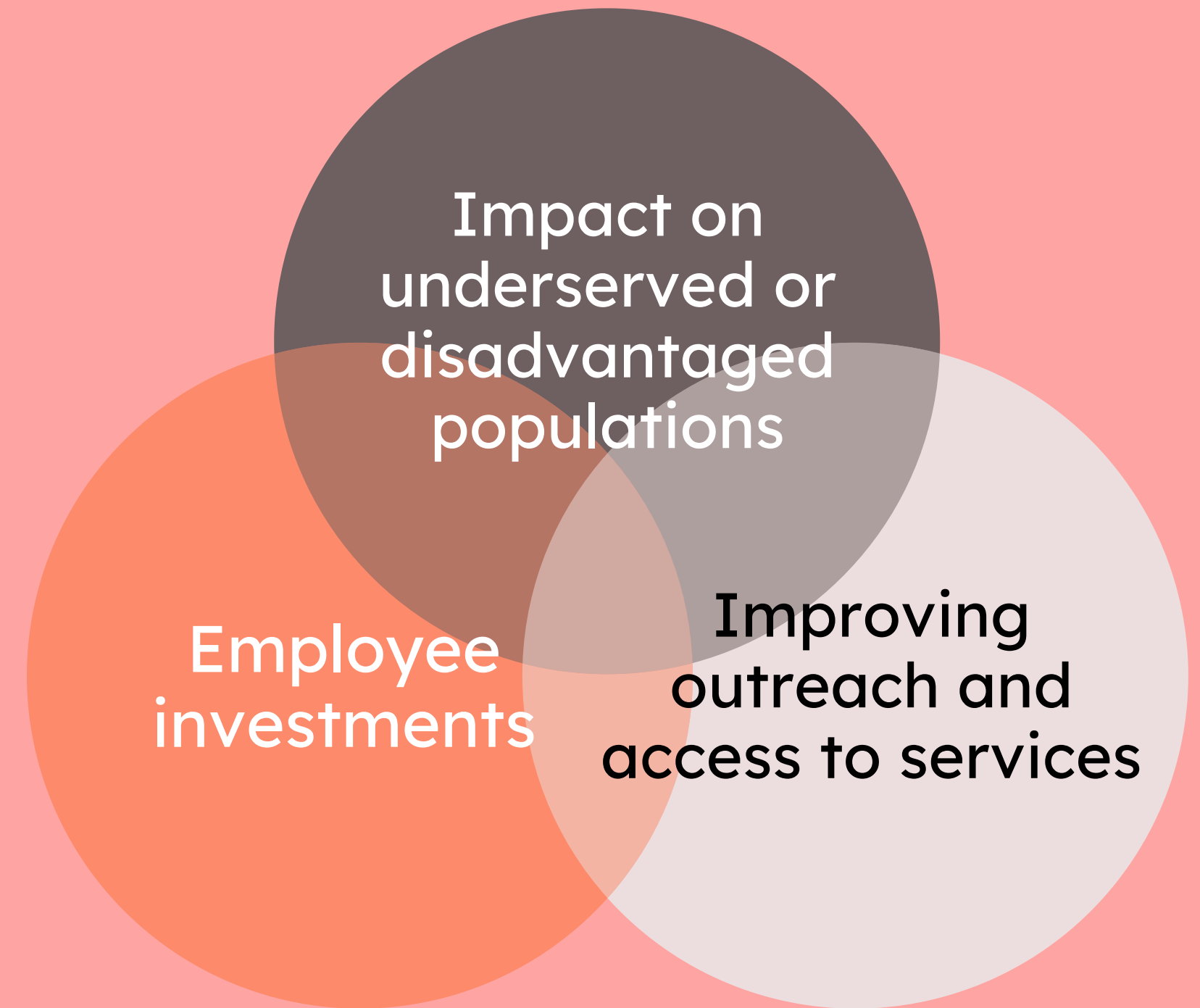
# The FY2024 Tool

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion developed the Budget Equity Tool to guide Metro departments on how to embed equity into the budgeting process and their overall operations.

## **FY2024 Redesign**

This fiscal year, we asked departments to focus on the impact their budget requests would have in three different areas:

- How would budget requests impact underserved or disadvantaged communities?
- How would budget requests create a more equitable work environment for Metro employees?
- How would budget requests enhance outreach to residents or access to services?



# Questions and Strategies

We asked departments:

- **Question 1: Are there budget modifications for departmental programs that address the needs of underserved or disadvantaged communities?**
- **Question 2: Are there budget modifications that will promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among department staff?**
- **Question 3: Are there any budget modifications that will enhance outreach to Metro residents or increase accessibility to departmental services and information?**
- **Question 4: Provide a general characterization of any remaining budget modifications that do not align with the previous three questions.**

# Questions and Strategies

We asked departments to utilize these strategies in their requests:

- **Adopt an Equity Lens**
  - Departments should evaluate whether budget decisions and requests anticipate potential burdens or benefits to underserved or underrepresented communities.
- **Be Data-Driven**
  - Departments should identify the data they will need and make a plan to collect the necessary data.
- **Promote Assessment and Accountability**
  - Departments need to use that data to develop a system of program management and assessment.

# The FY2024 Tool

**Departments were allowed to classify a budget request in more than one category.**

- For example, a department might request a new staff position as both helping to increase outreach and creating a more equitable work environment.
- As a result, some budget requests and their total expense are counted in multiple categories.

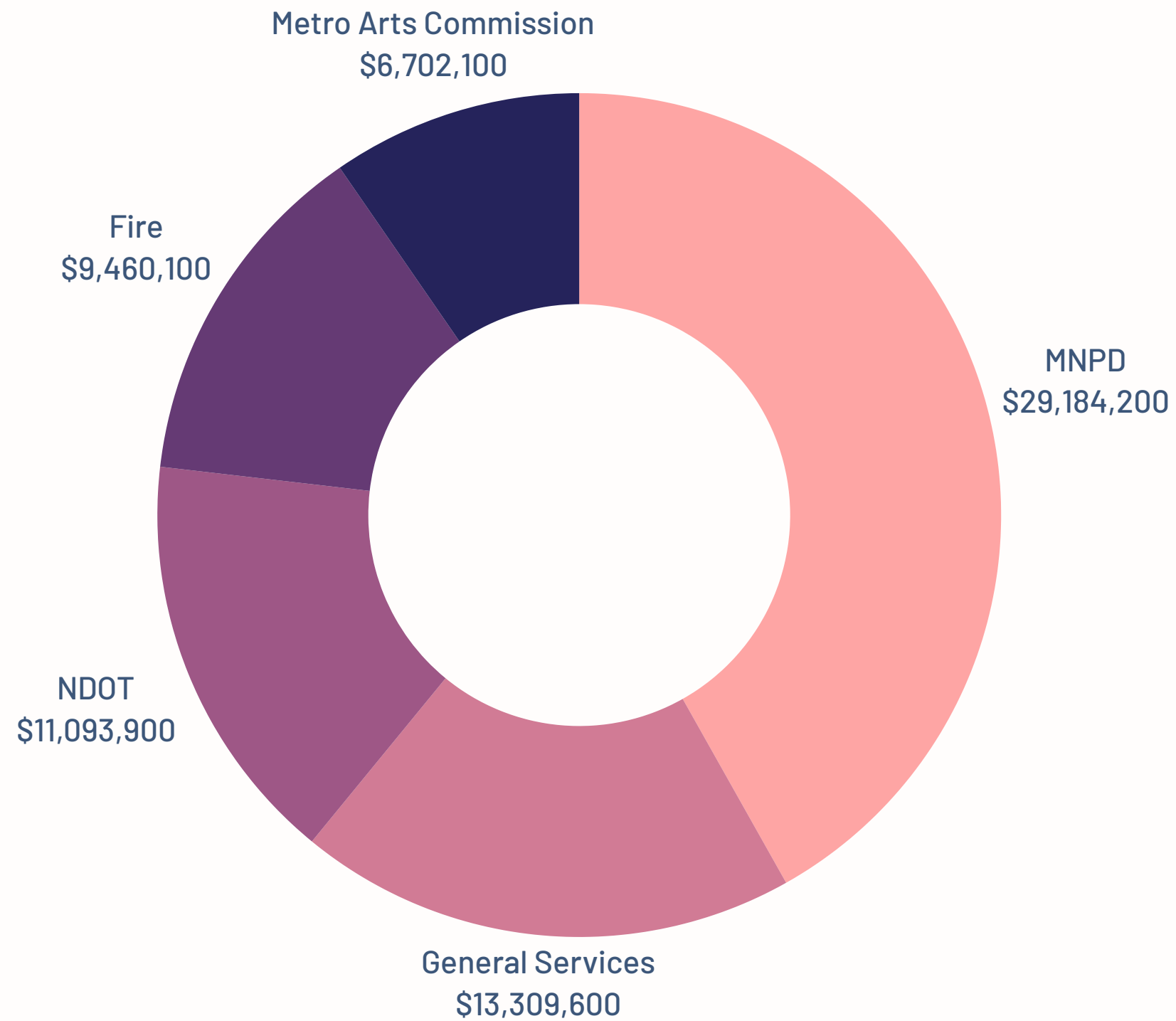


**Many departments classified some of their budget requests as having no direct equity impact.**

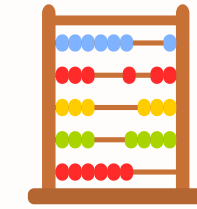
- While there was a lot of variety in the type of budget requests in this category, many of these were contractual increases for purchased goods and services.

# Question 1

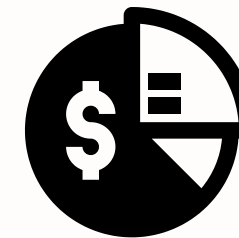
## How did departments say their budget requests would impact underserved or disadvantaged communities?



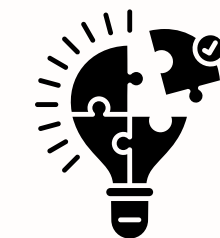
We asked departments to consider whether any of their FY2024 budget requests would have a positive impact on underserved communities.



We then quantified how many budget requests departments said fit into this category in two ways: by number of budget requests and their total costs.



The chart to the left displays the departments with the highest dollar amount of requests that they believed would have an impact on underserved communities.



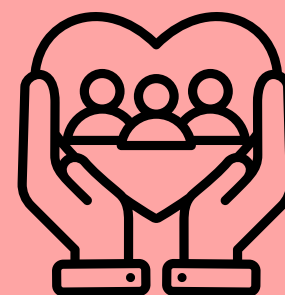
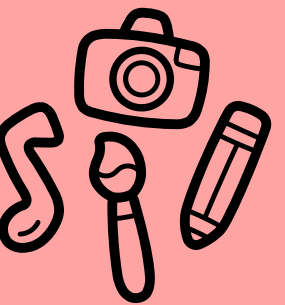
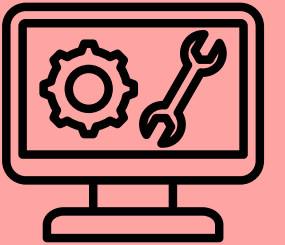
Overall, **38 departments** said they had a budget request that would impact these particular communities. In total, **163 individual budget requests** were characterized in this way.



# Key Findings

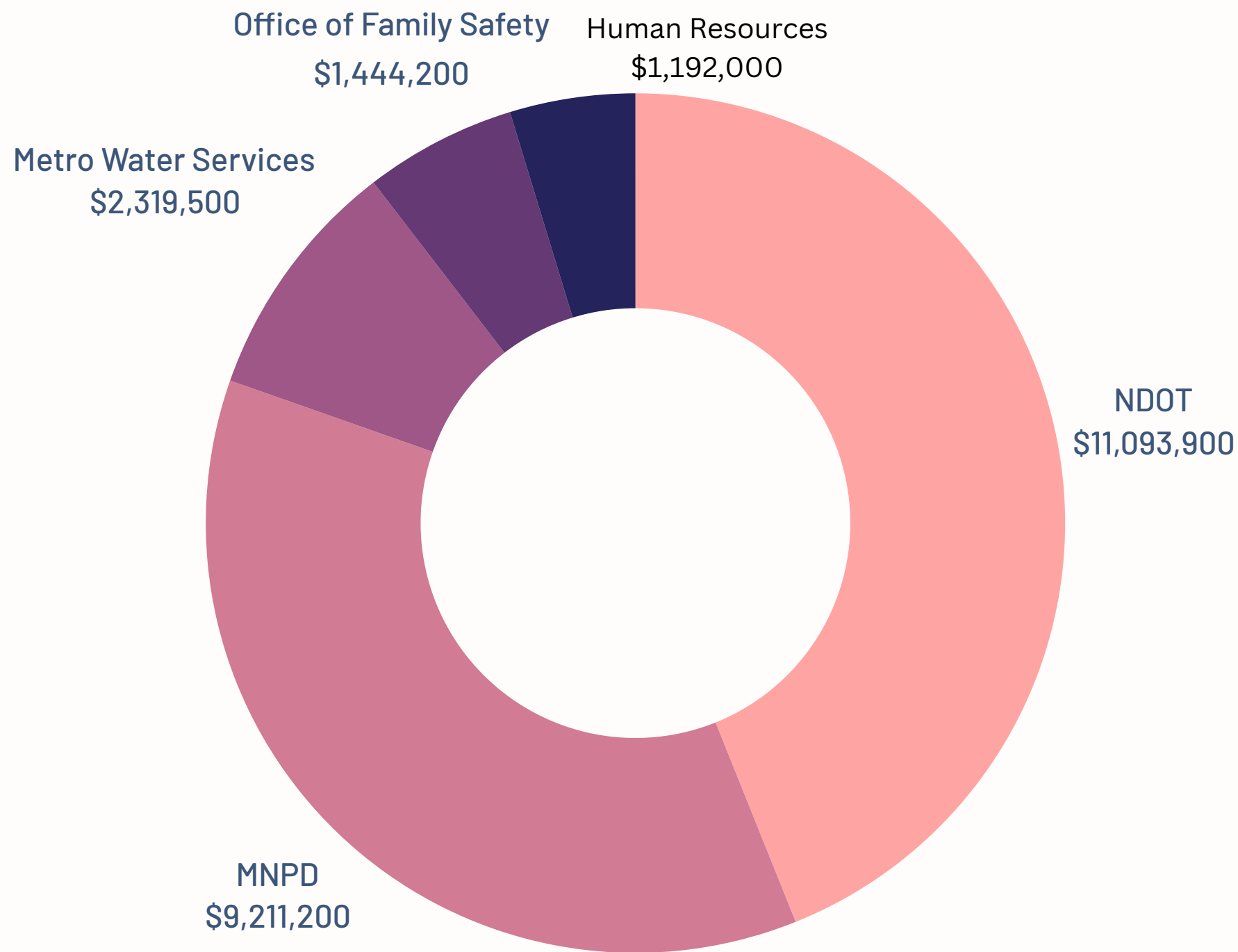
Several departments classified nearly all budget requests or a high dollar amount as meeting the needs of underserved populations.

- For Social Services and the Office of Homeless Services, their core mission is to serve these populations. It makes sense that they would see their budget requests as serving these populations.
- Departments like Nashville Department of Transportation, the Police, and General Services viewed expansion of services on a large but not targeted scale as a way to serve underserved communities. If service or operations are improved overall, the assumption is that underserved populations will benefit as well.
- The Public Library and Metro Arts Commission requested funds to expand their current programs or create new ones, creating more access to their programming and benefitting underserved communities.
- The Criminal Court Clerk, Information Technology Services, and Justice Integration Systems rationalized that supporting the work of other Metro departments would benefit to underserved communities. Funds to support their work would also support the work of those more directly interacting with underserved communities.

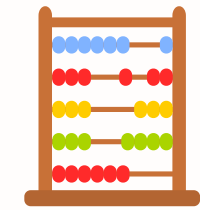


# Question 2

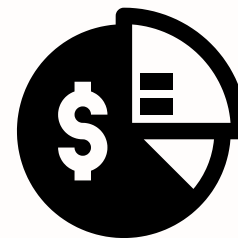
## How did departments say their budget requests were improving equity for Metro employees?



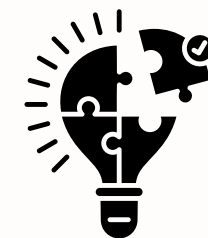
We asked departments to consider whether any of their FY2024 budget requests directly impact their employees.



We tracked how many budget requests departments said were employee related by the number of budget requests and total costs. We also counted the total number of new positions requested, and the number of direct benefits departments requested for employees.



The chart to the left displays the departments with the highest dollar amount of requests that they believed would increase equity for their employees.



**28 departments** said they had a budget request that would impact their employees. In total, **78 individual budget requests** were characterized in this way. Out of all the categories, the smallest number of budget requests were for employees.

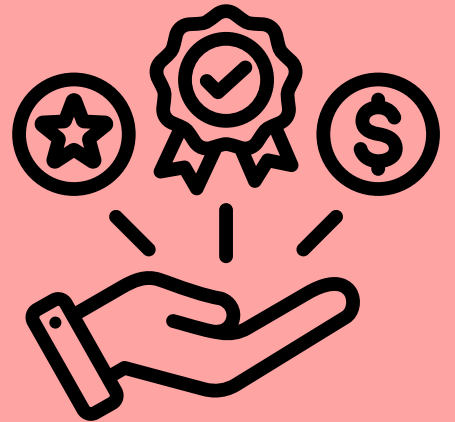
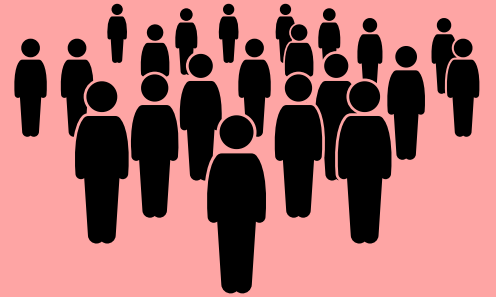




# Key Findings

Requests for additional staff were the most common and most expensive way seen to promote diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces.

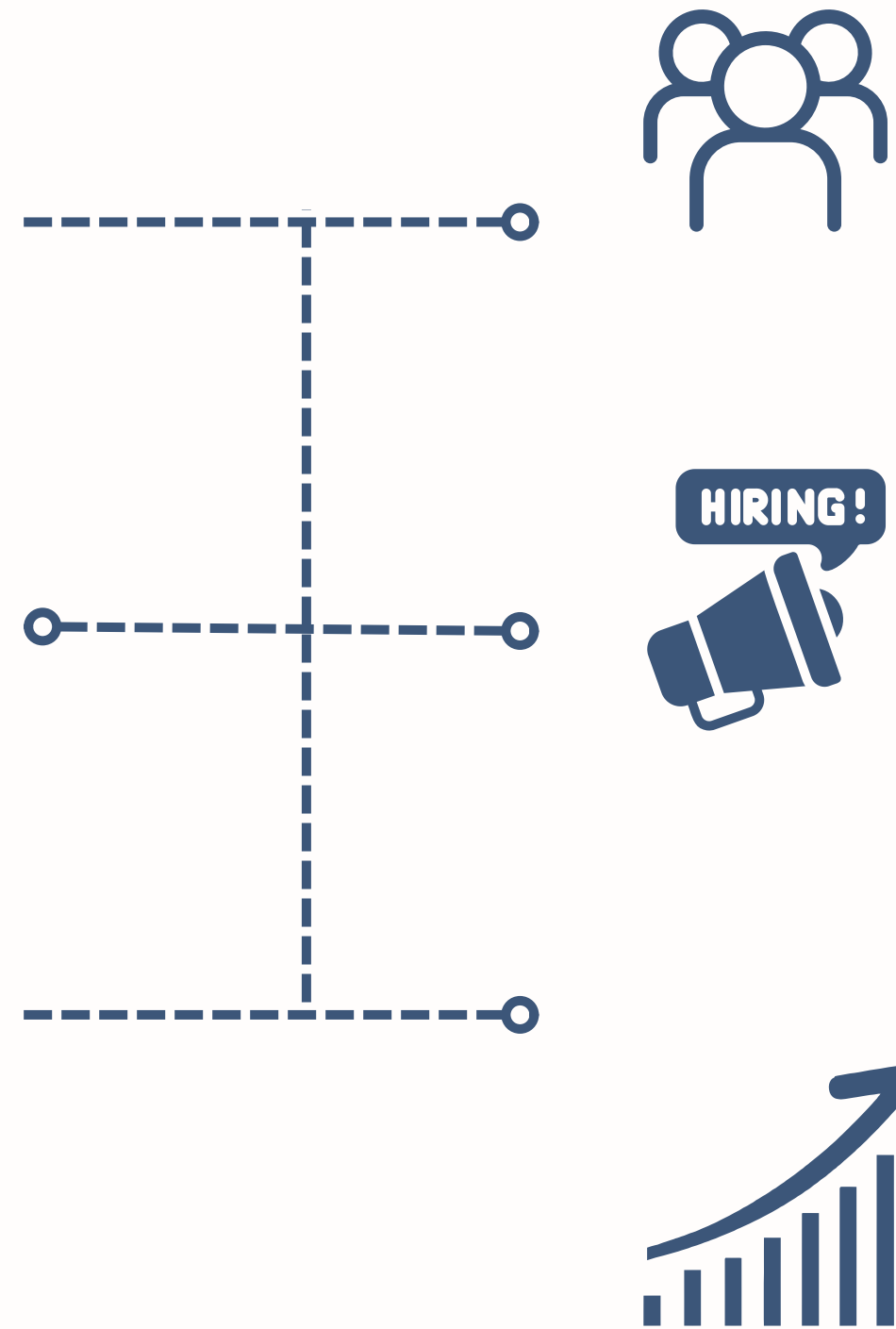
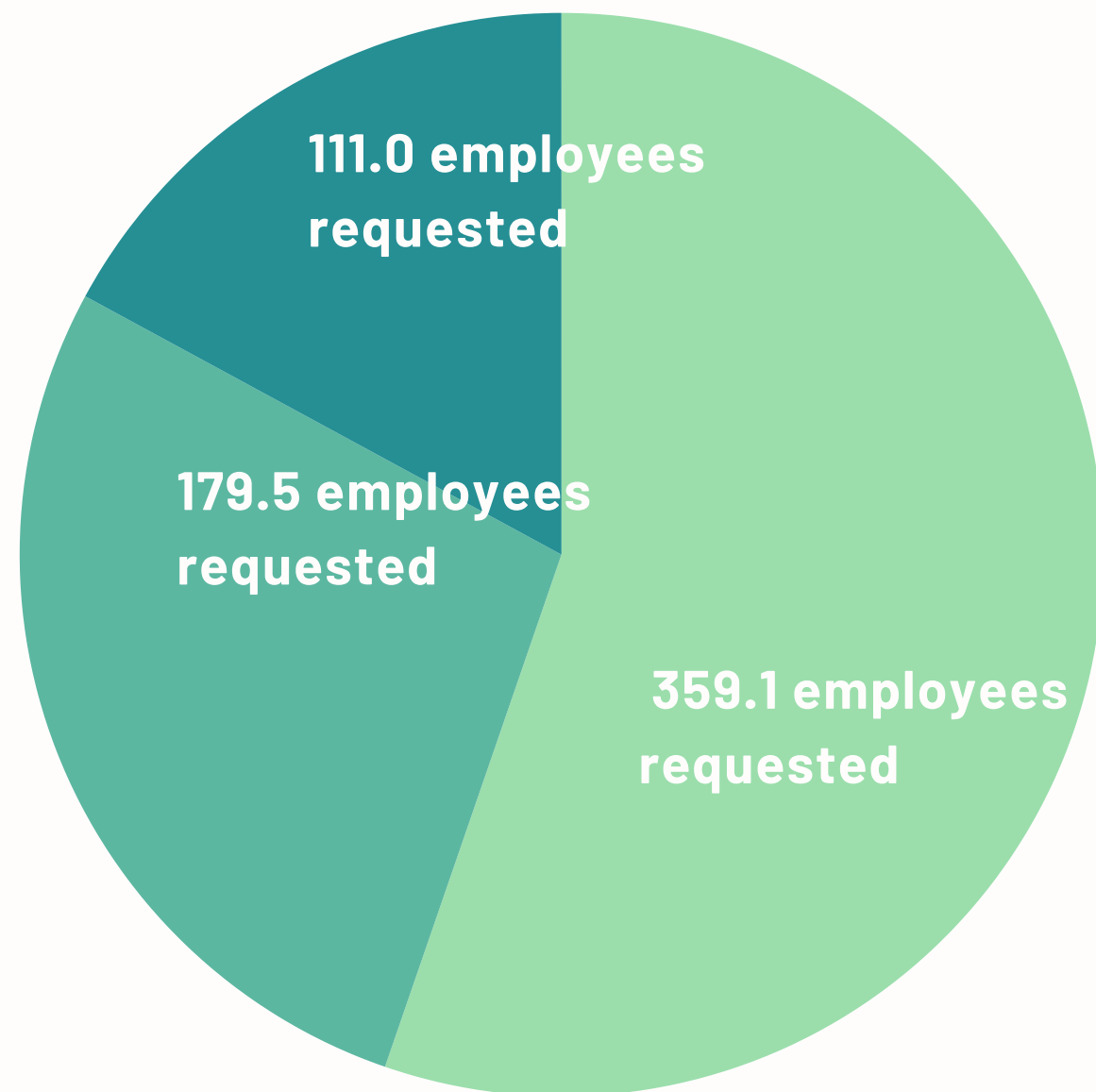
- Only a small number of departments made requests to fund staff professional development and training or sought salary increases.
- Select divisions (Health Equity Bureau, Workforce Diversity, and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) believed that additional staff would benefit employees throughout Metro, and not just in their own departments.
- Departments believed that staff additions would create opportunities to diversify their workforce. However, whether departments had a clear plan on how to recruit and retain a diverse staff varied from department to department.
- Many departments believed additional staff would help to address the workload of existing staff.
- Departments seemed more willing to frame budget requests that could benefit employees as also benefitting residents rather than solely investing in staff equity.



# Requests for New Employees

In total, over 542 employees, both full-time and part-time, were requested in FY2024.

- Having an impact on underserved communities
- Having an impact on Metro employees
- Having an impact outreach and access to services



## What role do Metro employees have in addressing equity?

Increasing staff is the preferred strategy to addressing the needs of underserved populations.

## How are departments investing in staff?

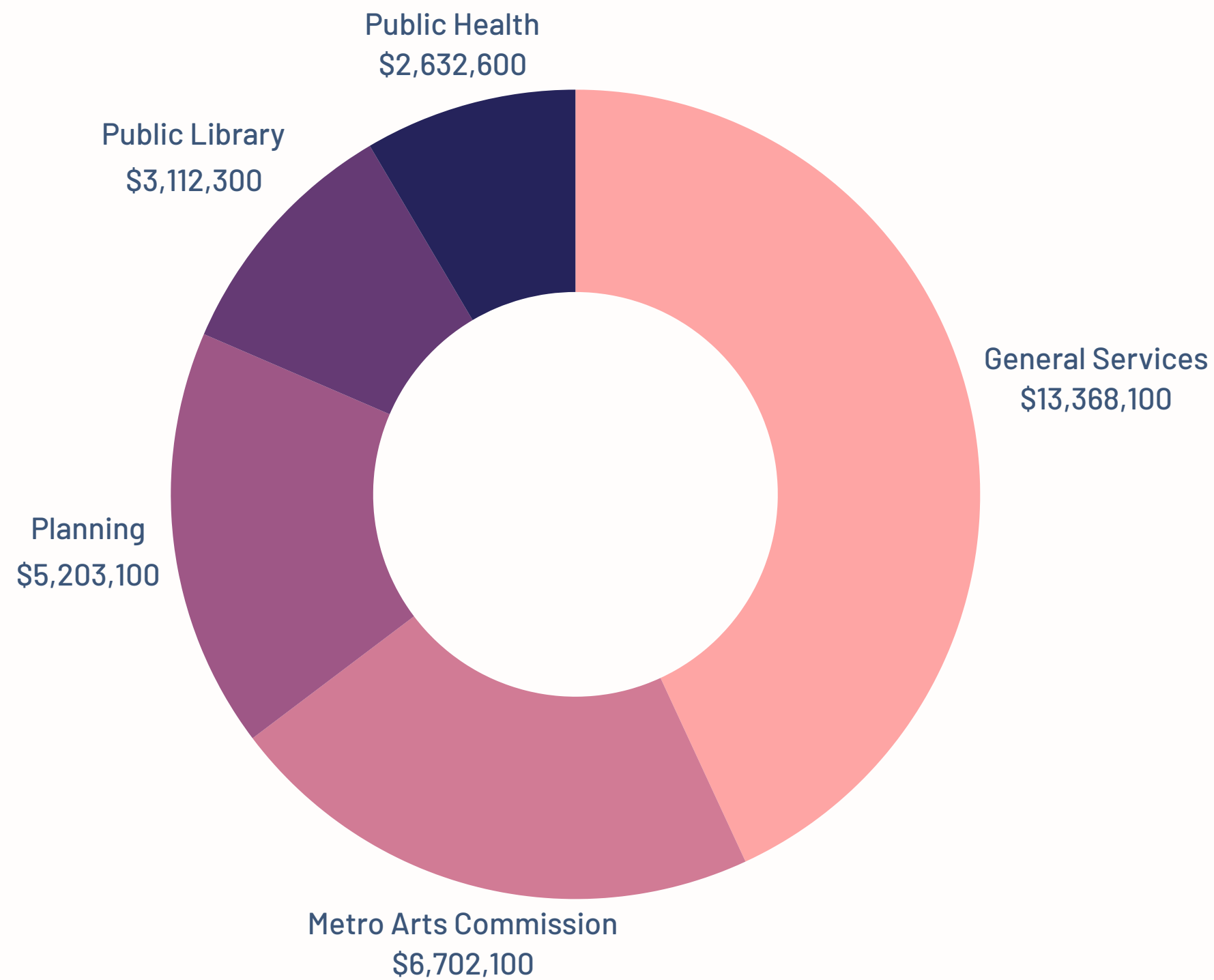
Departments requested to fund employee travel to conferences and training opportunities, support their professional development, and increase staff salaries outside of the pay plan.

## Service and Demand

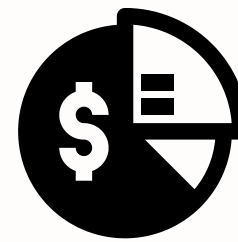
Departments cited an increased demand in services and local population as driving the requests for more employees.

# Question 3

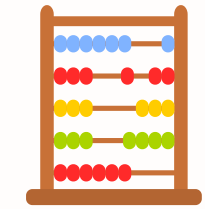
## How did departments say their budget requests would increase outreach to residents or access to services?



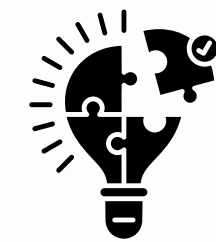
We asked departments to consider whether any of their FY2024 budget requests would increase access to services for residents or engagement with the community.



The chart to the left displays the departments with the highest dollar amount of requests that they believed would improve outreach to residents and accessibility to services.



We then quantified how many budget requests departments said had an impact in two ways: by number of budget requests and their total costs.



Overall, **32 departments** said they had a budget request that would impact these particular communities. In total, **93 individual budget requests** were characterized in this way.

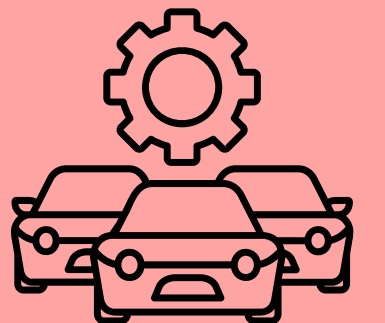
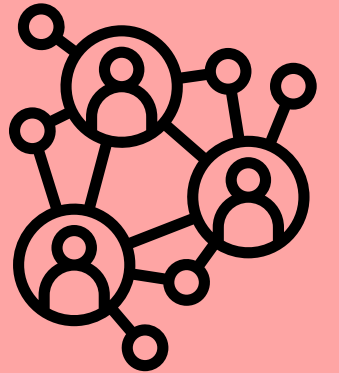
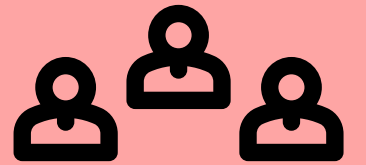


# Key Findings

Departments most often requested additional staff or expansion of existing programs to promote access to services.

- Additional staff would allow departments to expand their services and create more access to them. A small portion of these staff would focus specifically on outreach or serve as a public information officer for the department.
- Departments like Social Services, the Office of Homeless Services, the Metro Arts Commission, and the Public Library described many of their requests as ones that would enhance outreach and access to services.
- Internal serving departments like ITS and General Services highlighted the role they have in ensuring other Metro departments can reach and be reached by residents.
- A small set of departments requested funds for marketing and advertising through billboards, educational materials, radio advertisements, or mailers.
- Departments also sought funds to leverage different tools and technologies to enhance outreach efforts.

**STAFF**



# Final Thoughts

## **FY 2024 Redesign**

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Overall, the new format of the BET produced more thoughtful considerations on ensuring equitable outcomes through the budget process.

## **Equity Advancements**

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Departments positioned additional staff as the best way to advance equity for residents and employees.

Additional employees were seen as both a way to maintain current service levels and expand services.

- While population growth is flattening, departments continue to ask for more staff. However, departments may still be trying to meet the needs of past and higher population growth.

## **BET Strategies**

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Departments were willing to engage with the equity lens strategy but struggled to fully state the role data and assessment would play in tracking the impact of budget requests.

- A single fiscal year may not be enough time to adequately understand these impacts.
- Departments may need more support and training on fully embracing the equity strategies.