

## COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE

### Inter-office Communication

DATE: 5/15/2025

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation  
Julie Esch, Interim President & CEO, Milwaukee County Transit System

SUBJECT: From the Director, Department of Transportation, and the Interim President & CEO, Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS), providing an informational report regarding MCTS' Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program, including utilization goals, achievement timetables, and historic trends in EEO Program hiring.

FILE TYPE: Reference File Report

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#### **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) to provide equal employment opportunity to all qualified applicants or employees regardless of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), age, genetic information, disability, marital status, national origin, military status, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law. We are strongly committed to this policy and believe in the concept of fair and equal employment opportunity.

#### **BACKGROUND**

MCTS is committed to equal employment opportunity and a diverse workforce at all levels and in all parts of the organization. To implement our commitment to overcoming the effects of past discrimination on minorities and women, we have in place an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program which includes utilization goals and achievement timetables with respect to employment of available qualified minorities and women within our organization.

We believe that successful achievement of equal employment opportunity utilization goals will help ensure that the culture, values, and opinions of a diverse array of individuals and groups are represented in decision-making processes at all levels of the organization. Utilization goals were updated in 2024 as part of the MCTS EEO Plan that was submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The goals established as part of this plan are good through 2027 and are reviewed annually.

At the end of 2024, MCTS began hiring in-house public safety personnel, prompting the need to track EEO goals in Job category for "Service Workers", as the tables will reflect.

#### **EEO Utilization Status Update - Minorities**

MCTS once again surpassed all utilization goals and saw gains in all job categories. The data below represents a continuous improvement in the utilization of minorities. All data within the subsequent tables are of June 1<sup>st</sup> of the respective year except for 2024 and 2025 which represents data as of May 1, 2025.

Minorities	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal
Directors (100, 101, 102)	36.5%	35.9%	41.0%	43.0%	45.1%	45.6%	45.7%	14.7%
Professionals (200)	25.0%	34.5%	37.0%	42.0%	43.8%	45.7%	53.3%	18.7%
Administrative Support Workers (500)	39.1%	40.5%	43.0%	47.0%	45.0%	51.2%	57.8%	41.0%
Craft Workers (600, 601)	32.1%	34.7%	35.0%	34.0%	34.9%	33.3%	40.9%	40.1%
Operatives (700)	79.4%	79.7%	81.0%	84.0%	84.8%	86.4%	89.1%	72.8%
Laborers and Helpers (800)	70.4%	69.2%	70.0%	77.0%	75.0%	74.2%	82.1%	70.8%
Service Workers (900)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	76.5%	32.7%

The EEO breaks the major job category of “Directors” down further, into Directors (100), Managers (101), and Supervisors (102). MCTS is proud to show that the Director category continues to increase and is now at its highest point in MCTS history.

Minorities	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal
Directors (100)	13.3%	13.3%	7.0%	14.3%	25.0%	31.3%	50.0%	14.7%
Managers (101)	28.0%	29.2%	35.0%	38.5%	40.7%	34.6%	19.2%	14.7%
Supervisors (102)	46.4%	45.3%	51.0%	53.5%	52.5%	57.5%	58.8%	14.7%

#### EEO Utilization Status Update (as of May 2025) - Females

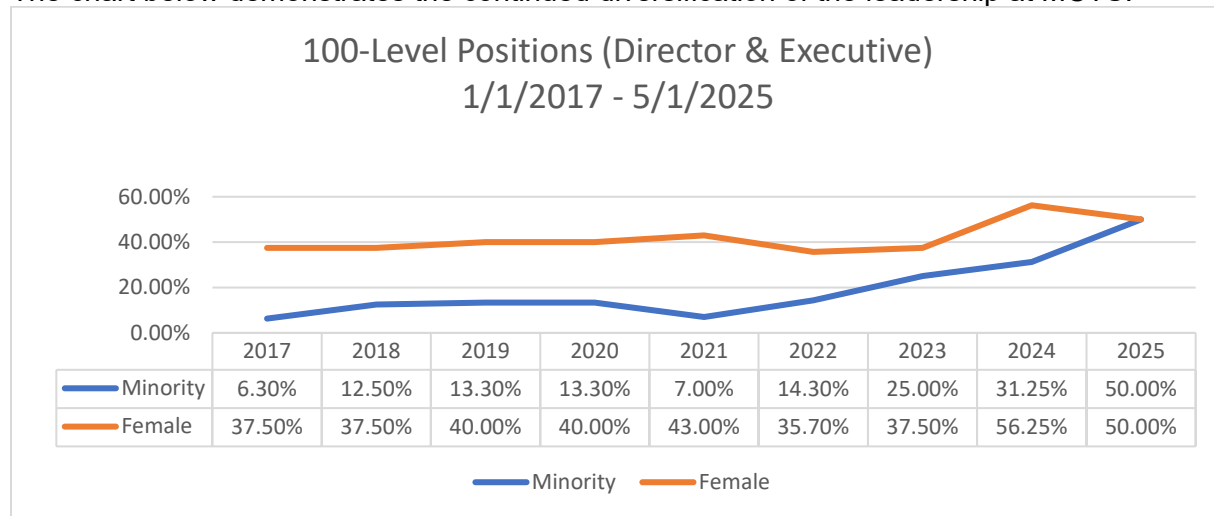
MCTS saw improvement in the utilization in 5 of the 7 categories. All data within the subsequent tables are of June 1<sup>st</sup> of the respective year with the exception of 2024 and 2025 which represents data as of May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Females	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal
Directors (100, 101, 102)	27.1%	27.2%	30.0%	30.0%	33.3%	32.6%	34.8%	42.1%
Professionals (200)	50.0%	48.3%	52.0%	51.6%	53.1%	44.4%	46.7%	55.8%
Administrative Support Workers (500)	58.7%	54.8%	60.0%	58.1%	57.5%	63.4%	60.0%	74.3%
Craft Workers (600, 601)	1.8%	2.5%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%	1.0%	1.7%	10.1%
Operatives (700)	44.5%	45.4%	45.0%	45.2%	43.9%	42.4%	43.0%	27.7%
Laborers and Helpers (800)	29.6%	19.2%	11.0%	15.4%	10.7%	16.1%	17.9%	22.5%
Service Workers (900)	29.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	23.5%	49.8%

Again, the major job category of “Directors” breaks down further into Directors (100), Managers (101), and Supervisors (102). While MCTS experienced a decline at the 100-level, this was due to retirements. It is noteworthy that the 102-level increased substantially.

Females	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal
Directors (100)	40.0%	40.0%	43.0%	35.7%	37.5%	56.3%	50.0%	42.1%
Managers (101)	28.0%	25.0%	26.0%	34.6%	37.0%	30.8%	30.8%	42.1%
Supervisors (102)	23.2%	24.1%	29.0%	27.6%	30.5%	26.5%	32.0%	42.1%

The chart below demonstrates the continued diversification of the leadership at MCTS.



### Strategies to increase Minority and Female utilization:

1. **Transparent & Equitable Hiring Processes** - MCTS has a very robust Recruitment and Selection Policy which requires a scoping meeting at the onset of the hiring process. The selection process is equitable, transparent, and consistent which ensures that each job posting has a diverse applicant pool and interview panel. Before an offer can be extended to a candidate, the EEO Officer reviews the entire selection process including the list of applicants, interview panelists, scores and interview notes.

Although there had already been tools in place to ensure fair scoring to help reduce bias, MCTS recently implemented new interview scoring tools that were based on Wisconsin DOT and industry best practices.

2. **Succession Planning** - MCTS continues to experience a high Retirement Exposure rate within the Director levels (Director, Manager and Supervisor). Although this is challenging for the organization, it also provides an opportunity to hire externally and promote internally qualified minorities and females into these positions that are scheduled to be vacated within the next 12-24 months. MCTS has engaged in succession planning for many of these positions to ensure that there is no disruption to service while focusing on the need to increase Minority and Female utilization within all levels of the organization.

3. **Employee Development Programs**

- a. **Job Shadowing Opportunities**

There are formal Job Shadowing programs in place for administrative employees represented by OPEIU Local 9. The job shadowing ranges from 3-12 months. Upon completion of the program, the employee can apply for an open position within the department where the job shadowing was completed. This program has led to promotion of both minority and female employees.

b. *Mentoring Program*

Successful mentorship is important to an organization's success because it provides employees with skills to develop and prepare for future opportunities. Providing this level of professional development is an amazing opportunity to foster an atmosphere of inclusivity and increase employee engagement. The MCTS Mentorship program was launched at the beginning of 2023, and there are over 25 participants (mentors and mentees combined) ranging from Executives, Directors, Administrative staff, and Frontline employees. This program will play a key role in our efforts to increase utilization of both minorities and females.

c. *Apprenticeship Programs*

In December of 2024, MCTS registered two apprenticeship programs with the State of Wisconsin. In April 2025, the first apprentices started the program. The two programs are Coach/Bus Operator and Coach/Bus Mechanic. These programs will help to support retention efforts, but they also provide an excellent career opportunity for employees. Lastly, these programs will also help to bring more females into non-traditional occupations such as Mechanics and other positions within the Maintenance department. Upon completion of the program(s), employees will receive a journey worker's card issued by the State of Wisconsin.

4. **Training** – Throughout 2024 and continuing into 2025, MCTS conducts training classes to help further our efforts to be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. These trainings include:

a. **Leadership Essentials: Fair Practices, Compliance, and Consistency**

This training equips leaders with the essential knowledge and tools to navigate the complex landscape of workplace compliance and ethical leadership. Participants gain a clear understanding of fair employment practices, key labor laws, and the importance of adhering to company policies and procedures. Through interactive discussions and real-world scenarios, leaders learn how to apply policies consistently and equitably, fostering a workplace culture rooted in integrity, accountability, and legal compliance. This course is designed to strengthen leadership judgment, reduce organizational risk, and promote a respectful and inclusive environment for all employees.

b. **Compliant Hiring Practices for Supervisors and Managers**

This training provides hiring supervisors and managers with the critical knowledge needed to conduct fair, lawful, and effective recruitment and selection processes. Participants explore Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) standards, relevant state employment laws, and internal company policies and procedures to ensure compliance at every stage of hiring. The course emphasizes best practices in job postings, interview techniques, candidate evaluation, and documentation. By the end of the session, managers are better equipped to make informed hiring decisions that are consistent, non-discriminatory, and aligned with both legal requirements and organizational values.

**c. Unconscious Bias Training**

Having a diverse organization can have a remarkably positive impact on employee engagement, performance, and overall productivity. However, unconscious bias can get in the way of true diversity and inclusivity, as it leads to an unfair and potentially toxic work environment. This two-part series helps leaders identify and address unconscious biases as well as better understand the negative impact of bias in the workplace so that they can build a more diverse, high-performing team.

**Summary**

As the data shows, MCTS has continued to diversify its workforce, especially within leadership of the organization. This diversification is only possible by following equitable and transparent practices throughout the recruitment and selection processes. It also remains imperative that we continue to provide the tools and training to managers that are essential for success when leading a diverse workforce. Finally, MCTS remains committed to providing training opportunities to employees at all levels of the organization. This is done to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to advance within their career at MCTS.

**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Describe how the item aligns to the strategic plan:

- 1A: Reflect the full diversity of the county at every level of County government
- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This report is for informational purposes only.

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

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**APPROVED BY:**



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cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk