

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 22, 2022  
To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
From: Jeff Roman, Chief Equity Officer and Director, Office of Equity  
Subject: Office on African American Affairs 2021 Annual Report  
File Type: Informational Report

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This informational report provides a report on how the Office on African American Affairs (OAAA, now the Office of Equity) set and achieved its 2021 goals.

**POLICY**

This report aligns to Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health.

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	<a href="#">Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity &amp; Health</a>
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**BACKGROUND**

[File 22-104](#) amends Chapter 108 to require that “annually, by April 30 of each year or sooner, each Milwaukee County department leader and/or their designee(s) shall provide a written and oral report outlining their year-end results to a Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors committee. The reports shall, at a minimum:

- (a) Indicate the year-end goals the department set in the prior year
- (b) Share the rationale and relevance of the department’s performance metrics (i.e. explaining why they are “SMART” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, and extending) and how they align to the county’s racial equity strategy, if applicable)
- (c) Report the department’s year-end results relating to the goals it had set, and
- (d) Provide a thorough analysis clearly articulating why goals were significantly exceeded, met, or not met.
- (e) Explain the department’s progress in creating a departmental-level strategic plan that aligns to the countywide strategic plan and provide an update about future plans to revise and enhance the departmental-level plan in the year ahead.”

## **ALIGNMENT TO 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
- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

Alignment to the above strategic objectives is articulated in response to the questions below.

## **BODY**

1. What were the top 3 goals of your department/office 2021? Please explain why they are “SMARTIE” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, inclusive, and equitable) and how they align to the county’s racial equity strategy.
  - a. Goal 1: Provide advice, guidance, support, and technical assistance to County leaders and departments on matters related to racial equity. File No. 20-172 strategically positioned OAAA within County government to assist with the development and institutionalization of racial equity tools to collaborate with departments to assess and transform policies, procedures, practices, and power structures to help the County become a place where all citizens are healthy, welcomed, and thriving. Advise, guidance, and support provided OAAA serves to support County leaders and departments in applying a racial equity lens to take down barriers that exist for adversely impacted communities and improve outcomes for all. This goal aligns to all the County’s strategic objectives, as racial equity expertise is a critical component of advancing the strategic plan.
  - b. Goal 2: Provide training to normalize, organize, and operationalize racial equity practice at all employee levels. OAAA was tasked to lead the normalization of conversation about race and racism at all levels of County government, including building the capacity of Racial Equity Ambassadors to help facilitate institutional change as prescribed by a model from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). OAAA provided training supports the development of skills and capacities of every County

employee to create and maintain a culture in which all persons are recognized and respected, and to ensure the inclusion of diverse opinions, values, and beliefs to enhance the delivery of quality public services. This goal aligns to all the County's strategic objectives, objective 2C in particular, as building capacity of County leaders and employees to apply a racial equity lens is a critical component of advancing the strategic plan.

- c. Goal 3: Serve as a conduit between African American residents and County government to address public policy concerns and devise strategies to meet the unique needs of African American communities. File No. 15-636 directs OAAA to maintain a liaison between African American communities and County government entities and to advise the County Executive, Board of Supervisors, County departments, and the general public on the views and needs of African American residents concerning issues such as health inequity, education, unemployment, affordable housing, and the disproportionate numbers of African Americans involved in the criminal justice system, among other. This goal speaks to advancing all the County's strategic objectives, as the African American community is more burdened by health disparities than any other community.
2. To what extent were these goals accomplished in 2021? Please explain.
    - a. Goal 1: OAAA led the County's Racial Equity Lens Strategy Team which is tasked with defining terms and framing context for racial equity work within the County and developing tools and processes to apply a racial equity lens to all County decision making. Additionally, OAAA is a resource to County leaders and departments in evaluating the impact of program, budget and policy decisions that affect adversely impacted residents. This included supporting enhancement of the County's Racial Equity Budget Tool to align with the County's strategic objectives, and engaging municipalities and other institutions within the county to prioritize racial equity and align efforts to address structural racism producing disparate health and quality of life outcomes.
    - b. Goal 2: OAAA continued to provide racial equity training to County leaders, people managers, and Racial Equity Ambassadors to strengthen internal racial equity awareness, understanding, and capacity. OAAA additionally maintains a catalog of learning resources and tools dedicated to racial equity accessible to County leaders and staff through the County's intranet and external website.

- c. Goal 3: Through outreach and collaboration with County departments, State agencies, and other community partners, OAAA sponsored and supported the development and implementation of programs related the special needs of African Americans served as a conduit for grants, research, and policy advocacy to advance the County's health and racial equity vision. Activities included strategic partnerships with African American-led organizations to expand outreach and capacity building supports, engagement and facilitation supports for the County's Community Resilience Imperative Initiative, and an increase in the visibility of OAAA and other County department at community events targeting African American residents.

3. What factors *enabled* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

Milwaukee County's continued leadership commitment to putting the unique needs of African American residents at the center of shaping strategic priorities and work to make the vision of achieving racial equity to become the healthiest county in Wisconsin a reality. County leaders and departments continue to work with OAAA to target outreach, resource connection, and service delivery to African Americans within the county.

4. What factors *hindered* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

OAAA scope, while important and needed, is not enough to drive the County's vision. During 2021, County leaders engaged in a process to reimagine OAAA to better increase countywide capacity to achieve racial equity through broadening reach to all communities impacted by health and racial disparities. OAAA has encountered some resistance to the expanded scope of department but has made intentional strides to assure its commitment to the African American community as the department evolves into the Office of Equity. The new office will maintain relationship with African American community partners and residents and work to center their voices.

5. What is the status of your department/office in developing its strategic plan?

The Office of Equity had developed a workplan to support County leaders and departments and align the broader community around the County's strategic plan and priorities.

**FISCAL EFFECT**

The report is informational only and there is no fiscal impact.

**PREPARED BY:**

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