

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 11, 2021

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

From: Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services
Jeff Roman, Director, Office on African American Affairs

Subject: From the Director, Department of Administrative Services, submitting an action report recommending changes to the policy outlined in File 20-551, the Milwaukee County Equity Assessment Overview

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

From the Director, Department of Administrative Services, submitting an action report recommending changes to the policy outlined in File 20-551, the Milwaukee County Equity Assessment Overview. The Overview outlines staffs plan to meet the directive of the County Board. Three primary amendments are incorporated.

1. *The directive is redirected to the Office of Equity created as part of the adopted 2022 Milwaukee County Budget.*

The focus of the new Office of Equity will be best positioned to engage partners and lead the equity review as part of their work plan. The Department of Administrative Services, Grants and Special Projects, Office of Corporation Counsel and other necessary departments will continue to provide support for the project.

2. *The scope of the project is broadened to consider other forms of equity.*

While the County's focus is centered on racial equity, the review of ordinances, policies, practices and procedures creates the opportunity to consider other forms of inequity, including but not limited to: ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, class, and income. Staff would like support from the County Board in considering these other forms of inequity as long as time is being invested in the comprehensive review.

3. *The project timeline is extended until 2024, with an expectation for staff to report at least bi-annually as to progress.*

As it outlined in this report and the Project Overview, the project is likely to take consider training, analysis and review before a final report will be prepared. Learning from other similar efforts, we estimate 5,639 project hours may be need. The timeline extension is recommended to more accurately reflect the complexity of the task, while providing opportunity for regular communication with the Board.

POLICY

The entirety of Milwaukee County's Code of General Ordinances and other internal policies and procedures are to be impacted.

BACKGROUND

Related File No's:	21-551: Approval of a resolution directing the Office on African American Affairs (OAAA) [Department of Administrative Services (DAS)] analyze the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances and internal documents including Administrative Manual of Operating Procedures (AMOP), guidelines, trainings, and plans used for hiring, salaries and wages, employee retention, provision of Milwaukee County services, and other relevant materials to identify language that is racist or supports systemic and institutional racism and directing that OAAA, in consultation with the Office of Corporation Counsel, provide to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors recommended changes to those laws and policies for approval
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	21-61, 20-31, 19-397, 20-174, 20-205

In July of 2021, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution directing the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to “analyze the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances and internal documents including Administrative Manual of Operating Procedures, guidelines, trainings, and plans used for hiring, salaries and wages, employee retention, provision of Milwaukee County services, and other relevant materials to identify language that is racist or supports systemic and institutional racism (*herein referred to as “policies”*) and directing that DAS, in consultation with the Office of Corporation Counsel, Office on African American Affairs, and any other relevant County departments, the provide to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors recommended changes to those laws and policies for approval” (Item 21-551).

Note: While “racial equity” and “institutional racism” are not directly antonymous, the term “equity” will be used to convey the successful elimination of institutional racism (oppression). This process will be referred to as a “[racial] equity assessment”

Since the resolution was approved, DAS has formed a work team consisting of individuals from OAAA, DAS-Grants and Special Projects (DAS-GSP), Human Resources and the Department of Health and Human Services and has consulted with the Office of Corporation Counsel on the project. The work team is led by project sponsors Aaron Hertzberg and Jeff Roman and has project management support from Nikki Todd, DAS-GSP.

The team has prepared the attached *Milwaukee County Equity Assessment Project Overview*. The overview provides context, considerations and steps for completing the review, including the following key actions:

- Identifying stakeholders
- Understanding project dynamics
- Outlining a process for review
- Anticipating a project timeline
- Setting up review team structures
- Anticipating project workload
- Identifying equity assessments & tools
- Priority policies for review, and
- A draft equity assessment rubric.

The work team has identified examples of where similar actions have been conducted elsewhere. Internally, the Department of Health and Human Services has initiated a process to review internal policies, practices, and procedures to advance equity goals. Other Counties including Buncombe, NC; Lane County, OR; and King County, WA have initiated equity reviews that help provide examples for Milwaukee County's effort.

The team has also begun engaging stakeholders that will be impacted by this work. Department leaders were informed of the effort with an opportunity to provide input. Additionally, the Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission has been engaged as partner to participate in the process. The team views the Commission's participation as vital in helping to offer community perspective in the process.

Through this research and engagement, staff has recognized the totality and challenge in not just completing the task but doing so effectively and thoroughly. To do so, we believe reviewers will need to be well educated and trained to understanding equity and be able to identify and draft policies and procedures to promote equity. We recognize that to achieve equity, we must be able to not only identify inequity, but also the absence of equity, which may require the addition of intentional language.

The process for developing an evaluation rubric will be complex, iterative and require testing before reviewers can be trained on how to use and implement the model. That said, we believe we can be prepared to implement a model in the Spring of 2022. The review process will also be timely, engaging every department in Milwaukee County, and required legal review of any proposed changes. The team estimates the total project hours to be 5,639. The proposed overview creates a process that spreading work hours out among existing positions within Milwaukee County.

The draft Project Overview is attached to the file for review. Staff welcomes feedback from the County Board and input into preferences for prioritization of reviews.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The “WHEREAS” clauses outline the justification and alignment to Milwaukee County’s Strategic Plan. From lines 61-72:

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County, in its commitment to achieving racial equity, must examine its own policies and practices to ensure that the language used does not contribute to systemic or institutional racism; and

WHEREAS, these policies and practices include the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances and internal documents including AMOPs, guidelines, trainings, and plans used for hiring, salaries and wages, employee retention, provision of Milwaukee County services, and other relevant materials; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County should ensure that actionable steps are taken to achieve its goals stated in Chapter 108 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances through aligning its laws, policies, and practices; now, therefore,

FISCAL EFFECT

No budget impact is anticipated from the recommended amendments. It should be noted that resources for training or other resources necessary to effectively complete the project may be necessary, but no budget or details have yet been identified.

TERMS

The Resolution sought an initial report from DAS in December 2021. This report is intended to satisfy that directive.

A final report with recommended changes was expected in April 2022. As outlined the project timeline, staff does not think it can comprehensively and effectively complete the task on such a timeline. While the work team is committed to regular communication to the Board, it believes a more realistic timeline for completion of the review is in 2024.

While the Overview provides a timeline for review of existing policies, practices and procedures, staff believes that the rubric developed may be utilized in consideration of future policies, practices, and procedures.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services

Jeff Roman, Director, Office on African American Affairs
Nichole Todd, Senior Analyst, Grants & Special Projects

PREPARED BY:

Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services
Jeff Roman, Director, Office on African American Affairs

APPROVED BY:



Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services



Jeff Roman, Director, Office of African American Affairs

ATTACHMENTS:

Equity Assessment Project Overview.docx
Equity Assessment Overview.pptx

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