

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 28, 2022  
To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
From: George L. Christenson, Milwaukee County Clerk  
Subject: County Clerk's Office 2021 Annual Report  
File Type: Informational Report

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This informational report provides a report on how the Milwaukee County Clerk's Office 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.

- Goal 1:

Increase voter participation and electorate awareness throughout Milwaukee County. The goal is achievable since, with greater access to information, all eligible voters should be able to cast their votes on Election Day if they wish to do so. Empowering Milwaukee County residents - especially those most vulnerable – through unencumbered access to the ballot is an important mission that leads to a more just and equitable society. Voting is a solemn right guaranteed by our Constitution and it must never become a privilege that some who are otherwise eligible to vote cannot attain.

Utilizing marketing software (GovDelivery) and social media, we provided vote-eligible residents with updates and information on important election-related information. The messages were timely and coincided with key election-related deadlines, such as voter registration, in-person absentee voting, as well as Election Day timelines.

- Goal 2:

Increase staff diversity to include employees that can provide the highest quality of customer service to the growing Latino population of Milwaukee County. The latest United States Decennial Census indicates a growing Latino population in Milwaukee County. To ensure that all Latino customers feel welcome and receive top-level customer service in the County Clerk’s Office, we decided in 2021 to double the number of Spanish-speaking staff persons assisting customers in our front office.

- Goal 3:

To provide the highest level of customer service possible to every single member of the public we come in contact with. The goal is realistic and it promotes inclusion and equity by ensuring that every customer receives exceptional customer service regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, faith, ethnicity, language, ability or social class. The achievement of this goal was measured by utilizing the Customer Satisfaction Survey, both in paper and electronic form.

2. To what extent were these goals accomplished in 2021? Please explain.

- a. Goal 1:

While the goal of mounting a robust information campaign was achieved, the overall goal of increasing voter participation also increased by .75% compared to the 2017. In 2021 - 105,220 voters cast their ballot in the April, 2021 election and 100,883 cast their ballot in the 2017 election which was a comparable election cycle. Each election cycle is different and will yield a different outcome and participation level. It is our goal to continue working with the municipalities to ensure that have all the necessary tools they need to ensure that every voter has the opportunity to cast their ballot and does not have to feel intimidated by the process.

- b. Goal 2:

This goal was successfully achieved in 2021. Currently, half of the staff processing Marriage Licenses, Passports, DNR and Transit sales read, comprehend, and speak fluent Spanish. This is very important as it allows bi-lingual customers and those who only speak Spanish to feel more welcome in our office and receive the best customer service possible. Achieving this goal has additional benefits as the Clerk's Office is often the first point of contact for the general public in need of County services. Whether over the phone or in person, Spanish speaking members of the public who engage with our staff feel more comfortable speaking Spanish, regardless whether they are in need of services provided specifically by the County Clerk's Office.

- c. Goal 3:

This goal was successfully achieved as nearly all of the respondents to the Customer Satisfaction Survey rated their experience as Excellent. Respondents almost unanimously "Strongly Agreed" (highest ranking on the customer satisfaction scale) that: they were promptly greeted by a staff member upon entering the office; that their wait time was reasonable; that the staff assisting them was professional and courteous; that the person assisting them was knowledgeable; that the process involving the business they were transacting was clearly explained; that when they called the office their questions were answered; and that they found the Clerk's website helpful. Considering that the service such as processing an application for a Marriage License spans across race, gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, faith, ethnicity, language, ability or social

class, it is very encouraging to see that nearly all applicants gave the highest marks to our office and its staff.

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

Dedicated staff both in the County Clerk's Office and the Election Commission who was willing to go above and beyond to achieve these goals. With respect to elections, additional help came from community partners working towards the same goal of increasing voter participation, such as Souls to the Polls and League of Women Voters.

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

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic was one of the hindering factors in executing all three goals in 2021. The political and social climate involving elections and the ongoing wasteful investigations of the 2020 elections continue to hurt voter participation. Diminished customer base, protective measures, and staffing shortages somewhat hindered our customer satisfaction goals as we did not service as many customers as we could have (due to their reluctance to marry or travel) and we could not serve them in as personable way as we would have preferred (due to protective barriers and social distancing).

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

Our strategic plan is a work in progress, but we plan to work with the Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance to help us with our strategic planning efforts.

**FISCAL EFFECT**

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

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

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