

May 14, 2021

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

James Mathy, Division Administrator
Department of Health and Human Services – Housing

Via email: shakita.lagrانت@milwaukeecountywi.gov
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Subject: Energy Burden

Director LaGrant-McClain and Administrator Mathy,

I write to formally request that the Department of Health and Human Services – Housing Division provide an informational report on the impact of energy burden and energy debt disparities within Milwaukee County. In line with the vision of becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin by achieving racial equity, I would like the report to include policy recommendations that the County Board may consider implementing to address inequities in energy consumption and expenses.

The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) found that Milwaukee was in the top five of cities whose energy burden was disproportionately larger than the energy burden of its state overall. Moreover, a [study by the Sierra Club](#) released just last month reports major disparities in Milwaukee noting the energy burden of households in predominantly Black and Hispanic/Latinx neighborhoods is roughly double that of households in predominantly white neighborhoods.

I ask that the report explore the following:

- Opportunities to expand or enhance existing programs such as the Energy Assistance program and the Home Repair Program as it relates to energy efficient upgrades.
- How the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbates energy burden inequities and contributes to energy debt.
- Opportunities to leverage funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, which provides \$65.1 billion in direct, flexible aid to every county in America, including the possibility of partnering with WE energies to cancel energy debt using ARP dollars.

Milwaukee County Courthouse

The intent would be to have this report ready for the July 2021 legislative cycle. Thank you for your time and consideration as we work countywide to achieve racial equity and healthier, more sustainable communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcelia Nicholson". The script is cursive and fluid.

Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors