



INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: May 31, 2018

TO: Theo Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Board of Supervisors

CC: Marcelia Nicholson, Vice Chairwoman, Board of Supervisors and Chair Economic and Community Development Committee

FROM: Nicole M. Brookshire, Executive Director, Office on African American Affairs

SUBJECT: File No. 18-391 (Informational Report – Role and Objectives of the Office on African American Affairs)

REQUEST

At this time, no request is being made by the Office on African American Affairs, this report is informational only.

BACKGROUND

The Office on African American Affairs (OAAA) was created in 2016 via resolution (15-636) with the following objectives: the examination and definition of issues central to the rights and needs of African Americans; recommendations for changes in programs and laws that disparately impact African Americans; development and implementation of policies, plans, and programs related to the special needs of African Americans; and the promotion of equal opportunities for African Americans.

On May 10th Board Chairman submitted file #18-391, “requesting a written information report from the Director, Office on African American Affairs (OOAA), regarding the role and objectives of the OOAA, including the provision of recommendations for changes in Milwaukee County programming that promote equal opportunities.”

REPORT

As outlined by file #15-636, OAAA was created to review all policy and legislative decisions and make recommendations to the County Executive and County Board, it has become clear that this method, solely, will not address or resolve the ‘root causes’ of racial inequities in Milwaukee County. Due to OAAA’s staff size, fiscal limitations, and the County’s ongoing challenge of receiving increased shared-revenue (from the State of Wisconsin), it is cost prohibitive to create an internal process for the Office which would require the review of every policy decision and legislative requests. As part of OAAA’s long-term vision to eradicate racial inequities, the Office has reached out to national organizations (Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), Policy Link, etc.) and jurisdictional peer offices (City of Madison, Dane County, Grand Rapids, Michigan, etc.) to ascertain racial equity ‘best practices’ from

around the country. Addressing these racial inequities should not be the burden of African American constituents, People of Color, or OAAA solely – but collectively should be civil servants, elected officials, and administrators; those who make and implement these inequitable policies.

- The Office is currently developing a countywide Racial Equity Action plan that will develop long-term solutions. The plan would speak to prioritizing racial equity, to implement practices of being the Community Thought-leader on Racial & Equity and ‘Authentic’ Inclusion, and to Build Strategic Alliances, while speaking to Accountability, Integrity and Respect, as part of our work culture and daily activities. It is imperative to highlight the strong community push to drive a collaborative effort across all units of government; at the local, regional, state and federal levels. Creating an inclusive Racial Equity plan starts at the top and must include all elected officials.

In seeing that Milwaukee County is number one nationally (across a number of indicators) for racial disparities, OAAA’s effort to drive racial equity training as part of the first phase of the plan will require a cultural shift – a move from being reactive to proactive. The plan will allow OAAA (with the support of an internal Racial Equity CORE team and larger – community-wide – Racial Equity Taskforce) the ability to implement trainings and policies to ensure that all decisions are made with a Racial Equity lens.

MOVING FORWARD

This report is informational only. However, the Office on African American Affairs is making the following recommendations.

- Milwaukee County implement countywide Racial Equity trainings to be completed by all county employees and elected officials by 2019 (year-end).
- Implement a ‘pilot’ Budget Equity Assessment Tool for FY 2020; a tool which includes a general set of questions to guide departments and elected officials in assessing how budget requests benefit and/or burden communities, specifically communities of color and people with disabilities; addressing unintended consequences of fiscal decisions.
- As outlined by file#15-636, OAAA should devise strategies to address public policy concerns of the African American community through partnerships. Authorization by the County board to provide OAAA an exemption of the travel ban. Thereby, allowing the Office (staff) the ability to forge long-term partnerships, site visits, racial equity shadows/trainings. Using the partnership experience to implement equitable policies and procedures including but not limited to Budget Equity Assessment Tools.
- Milwaukee County Board Representation as part of the Racial Equity CORE team, as well as participation in the fiscal budgeting process, to ensure representation of all constituents in decision making.



Nicole Brookshire
Executive Director, Office on African American Affairs

MILWAUKEE COUNTY ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

INFORMATIONAL REPORT (File #18-391)

Division Name: Office on African American Affairs (OAAA)

Date of Presentation: June 11, 2018

Previous Presentation: N/A

OAAA'S MISSION, VISION, PURPOSE

- **Mission:** Through strategic partnerships and collaboration with County leaders and community organizations, OAAA will serve an integral role in recognizing and resolving the County's racial inequities for the benefit of all of its citizenry, and for the region to achieve its full potential.
- **Vision:** Milwaukee County is a vibrant world-class municipality, where all people are safe and healthy, treated with dignity and respect, and have equitable opportunities for success and happiness.

The office will empower the community to achieve positive, long-term, sustainable outcomes through employing a multi-faceted racial equity model that will convene county and community partners to systematically address racial inequities.

- **Statement of Purpose:** The Office on African American Affairs will lead the organization's equity work in support of the countywide goal of improving equitable service delivery and organizational culture through the use of an equity lens and framework. To support enterprise equity initiatives by addressing racial bias in decision making through the implementation and use of racial equity tools, trainings and evidenced based models. OAAA aims to improve racial equity in: operations, fiscal appropriations, IS systems, policies and programs, legislation, workforce, organizational culture and community engagement.

OAAA'S VALUES

- *Prioritizing Racial Equity* – Recognizing that institutional racism is a critical issue to the inequities experienced in the African American community. Our efforts will be intentional and effective in generating equity decision-making practices across all levels of government and when interacting with the community.
- *Community Thought-leader on Racial & Equity Inclusion* – To be at the forefront at the local community movement to address Race and Equity inclusion and extend these discussions regionally and nationally.
- *Building Strategic Alliances towards Equitable Solutions* – We will identify and collaborate with other organizations to unite efforts in creating equitable and viable solutions.
- *Accountability, Integrity, & Respect* – To create a workplace culture where racial equity is a value, which is integrated into daily activities.

OAAA'S ROLE & PILLARS OF FOCUS

Division's Role:

- Review/comment on proposed legislation/regulations
- Advise & provide information to CEX on policies
- Advise CEX on coordination/administration on programs
- Liaison between community & government
- African American representation – all levels of government
- Recognition of African American accomplishments
- Annual report on activities/recommendations to CEX & County Board

8 Disparate Areas of Focus:

- Education
- Economic Growth **
- Housing
- Health –Mental & Physical
- Food Deserts
- Youth Re-engagement **
- Social Justice Initiatives**
- Transportation

** Priority pillars per Community Listening Sessions

RACIAL EQUITY FOCUS

- Government has a key role in advancing racial equity; to develop into an inclusive and effective democracy
 - Historically, government has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequities. Policies and practices have created, and still continue to create disparate results (even when the intention to discriminate is not present).
 - Overall goal is to improve overall outcomes by focusing efforts on the underserved communities, those where communities consist of people of color.
 - Current government systems are: costly (collectively), depress outcomes & life changes for communities of color
- In order to advance racial equity – must focus on programs, policy and institutional strategies that create and maintain inequities.
- Racial equity focus- to maintain a clear focus on racial equity through out all stages of the process, working with any resistance that may arise and providing racial equity resources for participants who lack the skills needed, to meaningful participate.

COUNTYWIDE SYSTEMIC DEFICIT

Present:

Limited to no 'authentic' inclusion, limited equity consideration when making decisions, when establishing legislative policies/processes. Limited community awareness/engagement on the 'unintended consequence' of potential decision and impact to under-served/people of color communities.

Moving Forward:

Using a best practice model, implement an innovative racial equity plan throughout government to address the ROOT CAUSES of historical and persistent racial inequities thereby, addressing the identified 8 disparate areas of focus.

Develop intentional collective leadership, community engagement, equity tools, and infrastructure to support and sustain systemic change, and shared accountability.

GARE- GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON RACE & EQUITY

- **Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)**
 - Joint partnership w/Center for Social Inclusion, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society
 - National network of government working to achieve racial equity and increase success for all;
 - Dismantle structural racism and accelerate equity for all.
 - 150 local jurisdictions in 30 states
- GARE provides:
 - Tools,
 - Resources,
 - Training
 - So as, to help Milwaukee County analyze their operations and develop an action plan to implement solutions
- Racial equity model will develop:
 - Goals and outcomes that will result in improvements countywide
 - Results to improve services for all groups – equitable outcomes
 - Strategies to increase collective success and are cost effective



RACIALEQUITYALLIANCE.ORG

OAAA'S LONG-TERM GOAL STATEMENT

Establish racial equity plan as a core principle in all decisions, policies, plans, programs, budgets and functions of Milwaukee County.

Our focus on racial equity will allow us to address Milwaukee County's most persistent inequities while supporting a sustained shift towards fairer practices throughout our institution(s) that will ultimately benefit all. Using this plan to facilitate conscious consideration of equity and examine how communities of color and low-income populations will be affected by a proposed action/decision of Milwaukee County.

- Racial Equity in Operations
- Racial Equity in Policies and Budgets
- Racial Equity Outreach efforts

RACIAL EQUITY PLAN - OPEN ISSUES

- **Fiscal Feasibility Study**
 - Upon approval of 2018 Fund transfer, OAAA to complete fiscal feasibility study
 - Outlining training needs/costs for 2018
 - Training Forecast for 2019 & 2020 (inclusive of RE Training Providers)
- **Joint Membership w/City of Milwaukee/MPS/MPD/MHD**
 - Confirmation on government's interest and applicable internal teams
 - Confirmation on philanthropic agencies and City's fiscal support
- **Public Awareness on OAAA's Racial Equity Plan**
 - Strategies to drive community engagement
 - Leaderships' Official Pronouncements to support Racial Equity Plan & Urgency
- **Finalizing OAAA's Baseline Operations**
 - Relocation to new office space
 - Filling all vacant positions/on-boarding/training