

**Minding the Gap:
Employee Friendly County Policies
Did Not Entirely Stem the
Loss of Women of Color During
Covid-19 and Will Require
Efforts by the County to Achieve Its
Goal of Racial Equity**

June 2022

**Milwaukee County Office of the Comptroller
Audit Services Division**

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June 23, 2022

To the Honorable Chairwoman
of the Board of Supervisors
of the County of Milwaukee

We have completed an audit, *Minding the Gap: Employee Friendly County Policies Did Not Entirely Stem the Loss of Women of Color During Covid-19 and Will Require Efforts by the County to Achieve its Goal of Racial Equity*. A response from the Department of Human Resources is attached as **Exhibit 2**. We greatly appreciated the cooperation extended by the Department of Human Resources during the course of this audit.

We conducted an assessment of the effect of the pandemic upon the County's workforce by reviewing the implementation of Administrative Orders released during the pandemic with an emphasis on understating the impact to female employees and the intersection of race and gender on equity. This review included a detailed analysis of various paid leave programs at the County during the pandemic, the demographics of separations and hires at the County and interviews with 90 County employees about their experiences during the first two years of the pandemic.

We found that the County implemented 21 Administrative Orders with 77 revisions from March 2020 to March 2022 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. While the County workforce shows minimal overall change since 2019 in its race and gender distribution, the County lost a net of 349 employees since 2020: 213 were employees who identify as female. Those employees who identify as Black or African American and female were 24% of separations while they are 20% of the County's workforce. There were 22 payroll codes issued and used during the pandemic. We reviewed the use of the payroll codes and found variance by race, by gender, by race and gender, and by functional areas including which type of leave employees used. Additional premiums were authorized during the pandemic for employees in select positions who worked in high-risk areas. These premiums were paid more to people of color in part due to the County employing more people of color in the eligible positions. We talked to 90 employees to hear about their experiences during the pandemic to understand the impact beyond payroll data and Administrative Orders and found an overall satisfaction with the County's performance but heard many suggestions for improvement.

We made four recommendations that we believe will help the County address the issues raised in the report. Please refer this report to the Audit Committee.

Jennifer L. Folliard

JLF/mrp

Attachment

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We conducted an assessment of the effect of the pandemic upon the County's workforce by reviewing the implementation of Administrative Orders released during the pandemic with an emphasis on understanding the impact to female employees and the intersection of race and gender on equity. The resolution requested that the audit explore the separation and hiring rates of County employees since March of 2020.

What We Recommend

ASD made 4 recommendations that, if implemented, will address the issues raised in the audit. Key items include:

- DHR review all information available, including those contained in personnel files, exit interviews, and follow-up with direct supervisors to understand why these employees voluntarily separated and come back with a report on the results of this review and targeted retention strategies. DHR should report back to the County Board within one year with results and recommendations on how to increase retention of women of color.
- DHR should work with the Office of Corporation Counsel to craft a plan to contact impacted County employees who have unknown listed as their race/ethnicity to request that they update the data. DHR should report back with an updated report on 2021 hiring data as soon as practicable but no later than within one year.
- DHR should review employee testimonial excerpts contained in the audit and evaluate whether the proposals could be implemented and studied further and report back to the County Board in six months with the results of the review.
- DHR should pull together a pandemic lessons learned from the last two years and issue a guide for future actions including a review of communication of policies to managers and staff.

Minding the Gap: Employee Friendly County Policies Did Not Entirely Stem the Loss of Women of Color During Covid-19 and Will Require Efforts by the County to Achieve its Goal of Racial Equity

BACKGROUND

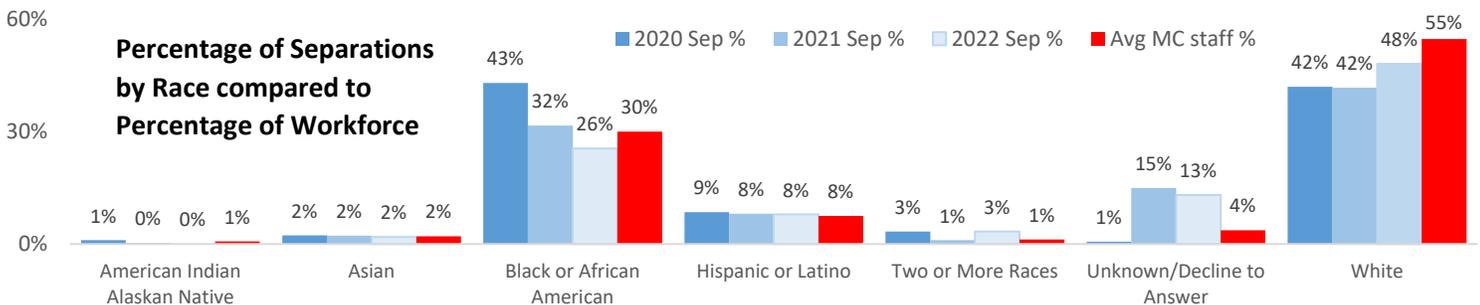
In December 2019, a novel strain of the coronavirus was detected with eventual worldwide spread. In March of 2020, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency. At that time, it was anticipated that the impact of Covid-19 would be done by May 2020; however, the pandemic is still an issue in 2022. The Milwaukee County Executive issued administrative orders beginning in March of 2020 relating to Covid-19 and established a Covid-19 supplemental paid leave program. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on labor market metrics for the nation, every state, economic sector, and major demographic group including Milwaukee County. Nationally and in Wisconsin, the disproportionate impact on women and women of color has been widely reported.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Our overall objective was to identify policies designed and enacted by Milwaukee County to assist its employees during the Covid-19 pandemic and to analyze the impact and overall satisfaction and feeling of support these policies had on full time employees with an emphasis on women and women of color.

WHAT WE FOUND

- The County issued 21 Administrative Orders with 77 revisions dealing with Covid Paid Leave, teleworking, facility reopening, travel, mask requirements, vaccine mandate, procedures for responding to symptoms and fiscal mitigation methods.
- The distribution of the overall County workforce by race/ethnicity shows minimal change at the highest level from the start of the pandemic to the first quarter of 2022.
- While national labor force data showed a large exodus during 2020, the County's year with the largest exodus was in 2021.
- 39% of hires in 2021 were listed as having an "unknown" race/ethnicity which hindered analysis. In 2020 this category was 3.7% of all hires and in the first quarter of 2022 it was 6%.
- Employees who identify as Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino separated at a higher rate than their share of the workforce in most years while employees who identify as White separated at a lower rate than their share of the workforce in all periods we reviewed. This is displayed in the graph below. Black or African American females were 24% of the separations while being 20% of the County's workforce.
- The Black or African American race/ethnicity was the largest percentage of all hires at 42% in 2020. The Hispanic or Latino race/ethnicity saw its share increase from 8% in 2020 to 14% in the first quarter of 2022.
- Comparing hires to separations from 2020 to the first quarter of 2022 shows the County with a net loss of 349 employees. 140 were employees who identify as Black or African American and female.
- The use of Covid Paid Leave spiked during the first eight weeks of the pandemic. Overall, employees who identify as Black or African American were 38% of Covid paid time off and were 30% of the workforce. Employees who identify as White were 47% of the Covid paid time off and were 55% of the workforce. The remaining race/ethnicities were within 1% of their workforce share with their Covid Paid leave use.
- Employees who identify as Black or African American were 45% of the School/Child Care hours and are 30% of the workforce. Employees who identify as Hispanic or Latino were 13% of the School/Child Care hours and are 8% of the workforce. Employees who identify as White were 39% of the School/Child Care hours and are 55% of the workforce.
- Hours used by gender were consistent with the County's gender distribution. Analyzing use by type showed the largest gap in the use of PH Close where 62% was used by employees who identify as female. The split by gender for Covid paid leave for employees who identify as White was 62% male.
- Premium and risk recognition pay show use by employees who identify as Black or African American at a higher rate than their share of the workforce but at a rate consistent with their workforce share for eligible positions.
- We interviewed 90 employees about their personal experience during Covid-19. Their stories paint a picture that statistics and administrative orders cannot and offer suggestions to the County to consider.



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Minding the Gap: Employee Friendly County Policies did not Entirely Stem the Loss of Women of Color During Covid-19 and will Require Efforts by the County to Achieve its Goal of Racial Equity

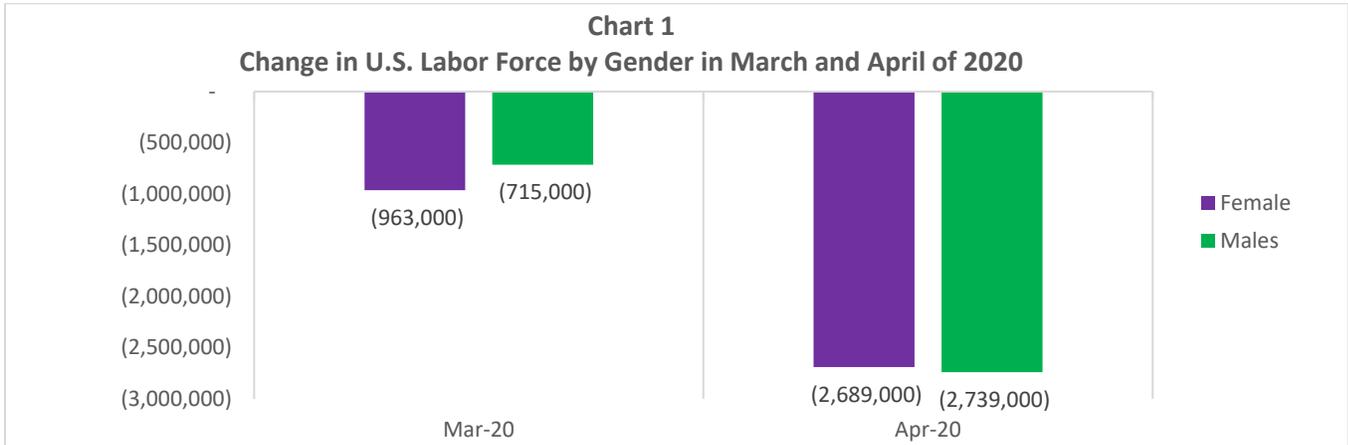
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Background

In December, 2019, a novel strain of the corona virus was detected, which was named Covid-19, and it spread throughout the world, including every state in the United States. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and on March 12, 2020, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency to direct all resources needed to respond to and contain Covid-19 in Wisconsin. On March 24, 2020, Governor Evers issued an order for Wisconsin residents to stay at home or place of residence with minimal exceptions. All for-profit and non-profit businesses with a facility in Wisconsin, except Essential Businesses and Operations, were required to cease all activities at facilities located within Wisconsin while all essential businesses and operations were encouraged to remain open. Each government body was to determine its essential government function, if any, and identify employees and duration. The order from Governor Evers was effective as of March 25, 2020. Milwaukee County operates both non-essential and essential operations and complied with the Governor's order. While actions taken in March of 2020 anticipated a conclusion to the impact of Covid-19 by the end of April 2020, the pandemic is still an issue in 2022.

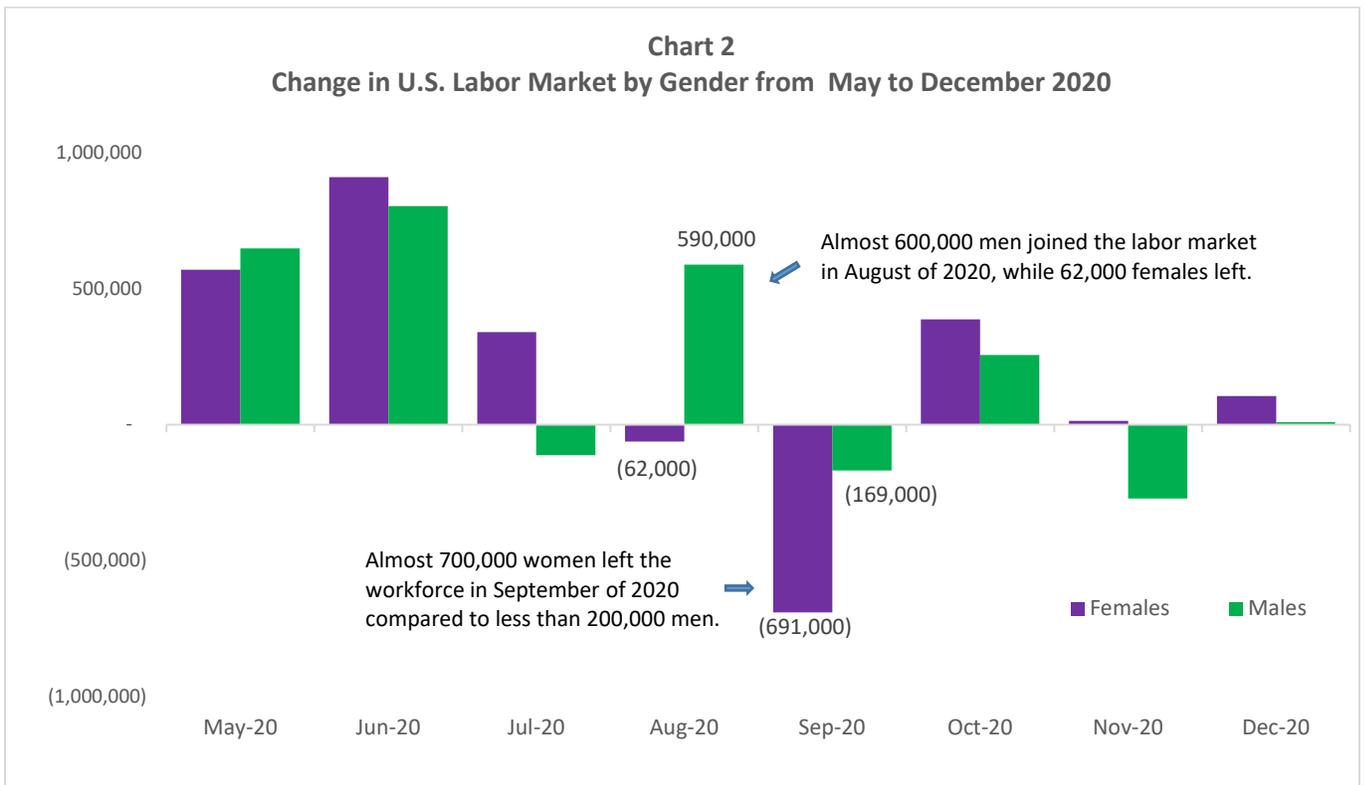
The Milwaukee County Executive issued administrative orders beginning on March 13, 2020 relating to Covid-19 response orders and established a Covid-19 supplemental paid leave program at Milwaukee County.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on labor market metrics for the nation, every state, economic sector, and major demographic group in the United States including Milwaukee County. Nationally and in Wisconsin, the disproportionate impact on women and women of color has been widely reported. We created a word cloud based upon key words in headlines in the national news discussing the impact of the pandemic on women to show major trends.



Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In addition, disparity between genders occurred later in 2020 at the traditional time of school reopening. We reviewed the data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics which showed that in August and September of 2020, 753,000 females left the workforce while 421,000 men entered the workforce. Chart 2 displays the change in the U.S. Labor Market by gender from May 2020 to December 2020.



Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

We reviewed the 2021 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics which showed that during the course of 2021, 961,000 females entered the workforce while 666,000 men entered the workforce although month to month there were wide variances between the genders. In the first quarter of 2022, 240,000 women entered the workforce while 1.5 million men did.

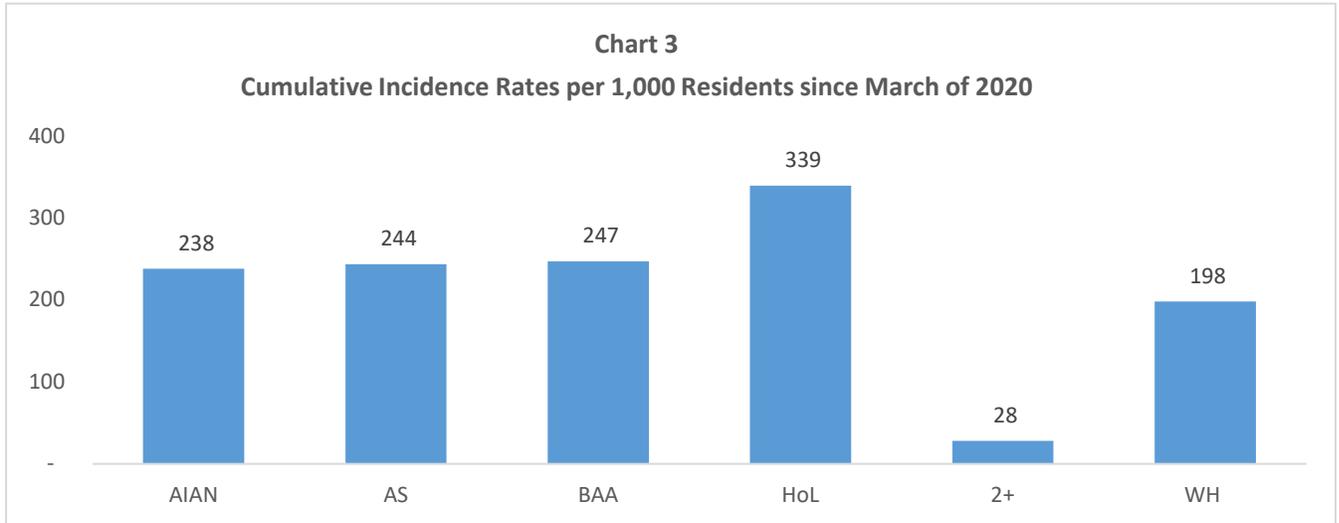
Covid-19 Caseload within Milwaukee County

The Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management tracked and published a robust dashboard showing the cases, hospitalizations, and deaths from Covid-19 within Milwaukee County's population. Reviewing this data shows that the pandemic had a disproportionate affect upon members of different race/ethnicity. The Milwaukee County Covid-19 Epidemiology Intel team issued a report based on cumulative data as of April 21, 2022 that showed breakdowns by gender and race/ethnicity.

Throughout our report we use abbreviations of race/ethnicities for ease of reading and fitting the labels into charts and graphs. The key to the race/ethnicities is in Table 1.

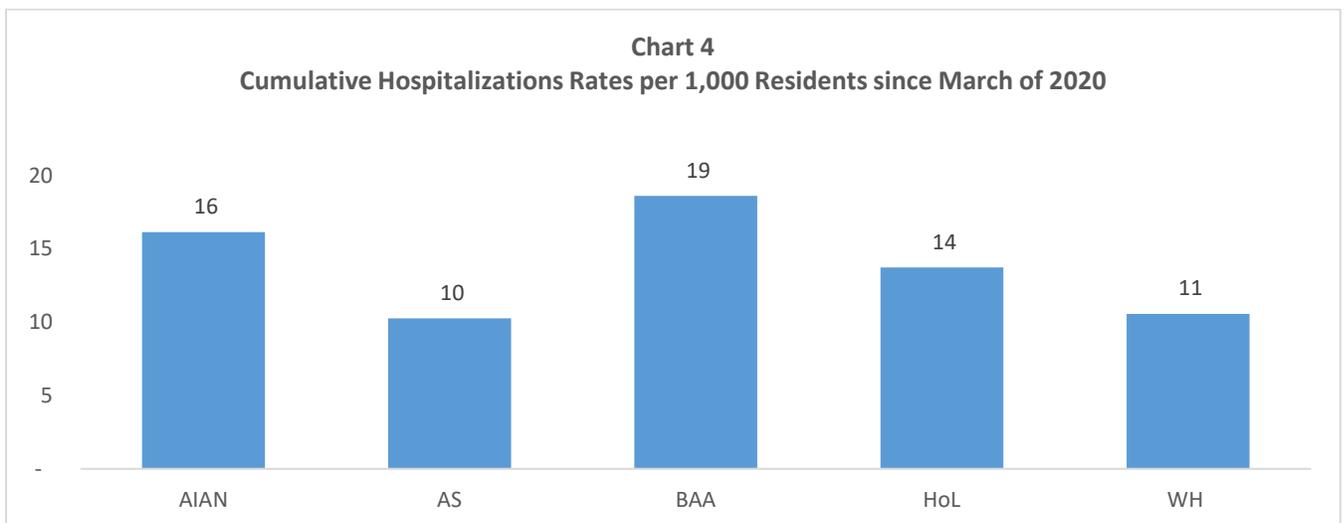
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	AIAN
Asian	AS
Black or African American	BAA
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	HPI
Hispanic or Latino	HoL
Two or More Races	2+
Unknown/Decline to Answer	UNK
White	WH

Hispanic or Latino residents had the highest Covid-19 incidence rate at 339 per 1,000 residents. White residents had the second lowest incidence rate of 198 per 1,000 residents. Black or African American, Asian, and American Indian or Alaskan Native residents ranged from 238 to 247 per 1,000 residents. Chart 3 shows the cumulative incidence rates by race per 1,000 residents since March of 2020.



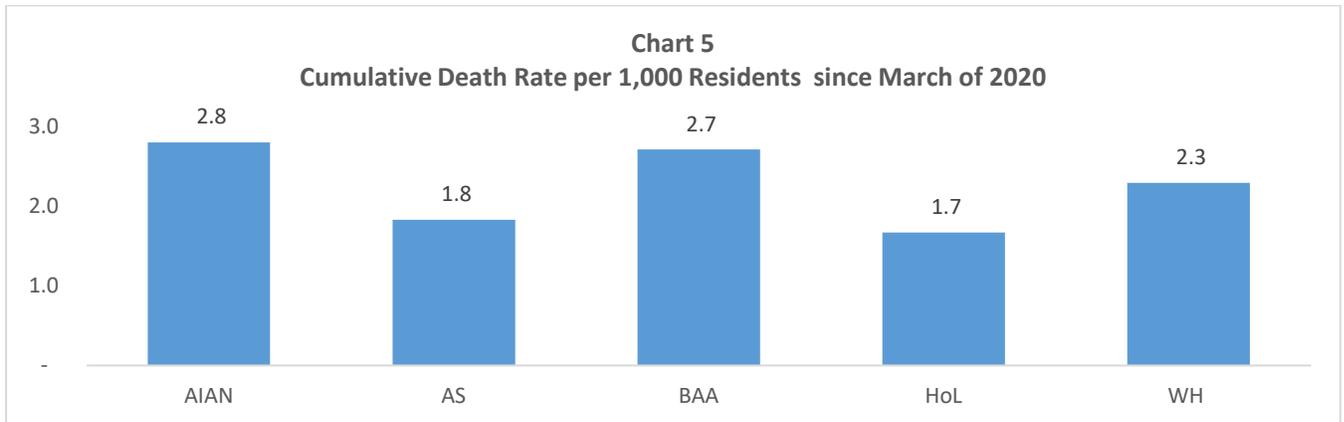
Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management.

Black or African American residents had the highest rate for hospitalization with 19 hospitalizations per 1,000 residents. Hispanic or Latino residents had 14 hospitalizations per 1,000 residents. American Indian or Alaskan Native residents had 16 hospitalizations per 1,000 residents. White residents had the second lowest hospitalizations rate of 11 per 1,000 residents. The lowest race/ethnic group was the Asian race/ethnic group with 10 hospitalizations per 1,000 residents. Chart 4 shows the cumulative hospitalization rates by race per 1,000 residents since March of 2020.



Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management.

American Indian or Alaskan Native residents had the highest death rate at 2.8 deaths per 1,000 residents. Black or African American residents were second highest with a death rate of 2.7 deaths per 1,000 residents. White residents had the third lowest death rate of 2.3 per 1,000 residents. Asian residents were the second lowest with a rate of 1.8 deaths per 1,000 residents. The lowest rate was for Hispanic or Latino residents with 1.7 deaths per 1,000 residents. Chart 5 shows the cumulative death rates by race per 1,000 residents since March of 2020.



Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management.

People who identify as female are 52% of the County's population but accounted for 54% of cases. People who identify as male are 48% of the County's population but accounted for 46% of cases. Table 2 shows the incidence, hospitalizations and death rates by gender. Females had higher rates for both incidences and hospitalizations but a lower death rate.

	<u>Incidences</u>	<u>Hospitalizations</u>	<u>Death</u>
Females	252	5.5	0.9
Males	229	5.3	1.1

Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management.

Milwaukee County Racial Equity Goal

During the fall of 2019 an administrative strategic planning effort resulted in the development of three-year objectives for Milwaukee County including an objective category of a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce. This objective contained the following goals:

- A. Milwaukee County leadership, management, and staff will reflect the demographics (including but not exclusively racial) of Milwaukee County.
- B. Milwaukee County will have an inclusive workplace culture where differences are welcomed, where different perspectives are heard, and where individuals feel a sense of safety and belonging with no significant differences by race and gender.
- C. Employees will understand what skills and experience are expected to advance to the next level and will have opportunities to gain those skills and experiences.

In addition to the objectives of the strategic plan, Milwaukee County has a goal of achieving racial equity. These objectives were codified into Chapter 108 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances in April 2020.

A common theme within the media and found in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data on the national level is that Covid-19 impacted women and women of color disproportionality from a work standpoint. The impact at the local level has not been as heavily reported or researched. The audit of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and women of color at Milwaukee County was initiated in response to a resolution adopted by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. The resolution requested that the Audit Services Division review the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on Milwaukee County's workforce and the impact of the Administrative Orders released throughout 2020 and 2021 on employees, with an emphasis on understanding the impact to female employees and the intersection of race and gender on equity. In addition, the resolution requested that the audit explore the separation and hiring rates of County employees since March of 2020. This report was prepared in response to the adopted resolution.

Section 1: The County implemented 21 Administrative Orders with 77 revisions from March of 2020 to March of 2022 in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The County’s response to Covid-19 was fluid with changing administrative orders to guide the County through the pandemic and provide proper record retention within the County’s systems.

Starting in March of 2020 and continuing into 2022, the Milwaukee County Executive issued a total of 21 Administrative Orders. The orders were updated to reflect the ever changing pandemic environment resulting in a total of 77 versions of the administrative orders to guide the County throughout the pandemic. In November of 2021 the County Board adopted File No. 21-918 that effectively ended the emergency declaration and voided all administrative orders as of March 1, 2022. A second resolution, File No. 22-298, changed the end date of the emergency declaration to April 1, 2022.

Table 3 shows the administrative orders issued by year, by primary topic, and the number of subsequent revisions that were released.

Table 3				
Number of Covid-19 Administrative Orders Issued by Area and By Year 2020–2022				
<u>Primary Topic of Administrative Order</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>Versions</u>
Payroll	5	1	0	20
Travel	1	0	0	4
Telework	1	0	0	1
Procedures for Responding to Exposure, Symptoms	4	0	0	17
Fiscal	1	0	0	3
Contracts	1	0	0	1
Phased Reopening	1	0	1	13
Face Mask Policy	1	0	0	11
Vaccine Mandate	0	1	0	3
Other	2	1	0	4
Total	17	3	1	77

Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from the Milwaukee County Office of the County Executive.

Recognizing and responding to the need for time off due to the pandemic resulted in six administrative orders with 20 versions that allowed for employees to account for time away from work.

One of the largest areas of administrative orders that had direct impact on employees was the expanded leave time offered to employees as they dealt with Covid-19. There were six administrative orders with 20 versions issued during the pandemic that dealt with payroll and paid leave due to the pandemic. Many of the revisions were due to changing state and federal laws in addition to the County adding additional paid leave hours for its staff beyond the federal and state requirements.

The first set of Covid Paid Leave pay codes were the PH set which were used for the first week of the pandemic.

The first administrative order was effective from March 13, 2020 until March 20, 2020 and contained the first set of paid leave codes to be used by employees. Full time employees received 120 hours, part-time employees who worked less than 40 hours a week received a proportionate amount of time, hourly and seasonal employees received a minimum of 40 hours leave for staff exposed to and/or experiencing symptoms of Covid-19. Subsequently, an order was created that provided employees with categories of paid leave to use in order to track use. It was effective on March 20, 2020 to April 1, 2020 when new federal guidelines were issued. Table 4 shows the pay codes created under these orders.

**Table 4
Paid Leave Pay Codes, Use and Effective Dates**

<u>Pay Code Name</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>
PH Leave	Staff exposed to and/or experiencing symptoms of Covid-19	3/13/2020	3/30/2020
PH Covid	For quarantining and cannot telework	3/20/2020	4/1/2020
PH Care	Child and dependent care	3/20/2020	4/1/2020
PH Commute	Unable to work due to local commuting resource disrupted	3/20/2020	4/1/2020
PH High Risk	One or more family members falls into CDC high risk category	3/20/2020	4/1/2020
PH Close	Employee is able to work but cannot telework or work onsite due to facility closure	3/20/2020	12/31/2020

Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from the Milwaukee County Office of the County Executive.

The enactment of the Federal Families Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) changed the PH codes to FFCRA based pay codes which were used until December 31, 2020.

On April 1, 2020, in response to the enactment of the Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) the County created a new set of pay codes for employees to track leave time due to the pandemic. FFCRA Leave policy provided employees with leave if they were unable to work on-site and could not telework for specified reasons related to Covid-19. Eligible full time employees received up to 80 hours of paid leave with prorated hours for less than full time employees. The FFCRA pay codes were in effect from April 1, 2020 until December 31, 2020. In addition, Family Medical Leave (FMLA) was expanded to include time spent on childcare due to school or childcare closure. For employees who could not work or telework and did not qualify for leave under the FFCRA, the PH Close pay code was continued. The FFCRA did not require employers to provide paid leave for employees who are not able to work or telework for reasons other than those provided in the Act. Table 5 shows the pay codes created under these orders.

**Table 5
FFCRA Based Paid Leave Pay Codes, Use and Effective Dates**

<u>Pay Code Name</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>
FFCRA EPSL Bank COVID Quar	Eligible employee is subject to self-quarantine based on government order or administrative order or travel	4/1/2020	12/31/2020
FFCRA Bank Healthcare Quar	Employee advised by healthcare provider to quarantine	4/1/2020	12/31/2020
FFCRA EPSL Bank Symptoms	Employee is experiencing symptoms of Covid-19 and is seeking medical diagnosis	4/1/2020	12/31/2020
FFCRA EPSL Bank Care	Employee is caring for an individual who is quarantining	4/1/2020	12/31/2020
PH Close	Employee is able to work but cannot telework or work onsite due to facility closure	4/1/2020	12/31/2020
FFCRA FMLA Childcare Unpaid	First two weeks of unpaid time off for childcare	4/1/2020	12/31/2020
FFCRA EPSL Bank FMLA Childcare	First two weeks of time off for childcare – paid	4/1/2020	12/31/2020
FFCRA FMLA 66% Pay Extended Care	Time off for childcare	4/1/2020	12/31/2020

Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from the Milwaukee County Office of the County Executive.

DOL guidelines in April of 2020 resulted in the creation of Covid Paid Leave codes to allow employees to draw upon existing leave for FMLA for childcare.

Based upon Department of Labor (DOL) guidelines on the use of FMLA for childcare, on April 25, 2020, the County began requiring that the remaining 10 weeks of FMLA for Childcare run concurrently with other paid leave currently available to employees. This change resulted in the creation of FFCRA pay codes which draw upon employees' existing sick, vacation, personal, accrued holiday and accrued overtime banks. Table 6 shows the pay codes created under these orders.

Pay Code Name	Use	Start Date	End Date
FFHLU	Accrued holiday time to be used with FMLA for childcare	4/25/2020	12/31/2020
FFOTU	Accrued Overtime time to be used with FMLA for childcare	4/25/2020	12/31/2020
FFPER	Personal time to be used with FMLA for childcare	4/25/2020	12/31/2020
FFVAC	Vacation time to be used with FMLA for childcare	4/25/2020	12/31/2020
FFSICK	Sick time to be used with FMLA for childcare	4/25/2020	12/31/2020

Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from the Milwaukee County Office of the County Executive.

With the termination of the FFCRA program, the County created Expanded Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) for employees to use from January 1 of 2021 until March 31, 2022.

When the Federal paid time off program, FFCRA, ended the County created Expanded Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) pay codes for County employees following the FFCRA model. Eligible employees received a new bank of up to 80 hours of paid leave with prorated hours for less than full time employees. In May of 2021, paid leave use was expanded to include caring for a dependent who must quarantine. Employees could use up to one hour of this paid leave per instance in order to test for Covid-19 and/or obtain a vaccine. Table 7 shows the pay codes created under these orders.

**Table 7
EPSL Paid Leave Pay Codes, Use and Effective Dates**

<u>Pay Code Name</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>
EPSL Leave Quarantine	Employee is exposed to Covid-19 and is required to quarantine	1/1/2021	3/31/2022
EPSL Leave Symptoms	Employee has symptoms compatible with Covid-19	1/1/2021	3/31/2022
EPSL Leave CV19	Employee is isolating because of positive test for Covid-19 or doctor order	1/1/2021	3/31/2022
EPSL Child Quar	Employee must care for a dependent who must quarantine due to an exposure at school or daycare	5/2/2021	3/31/2022
EPSL Vaccine	Unvaccinated employees may use up to 1 hour to receive vaccination or vaccinated employees to get booster	12/2/2021	3/31/2022
EPSL Testing	Exposed vaccinated employees can receive up to 1 hour for testing	12/2/2021	3/31/2022

Source: Audit Services Division created table based upon data from the Milwaukee County Office of the County Executive.

The County implemented pandemic pay in April of 2020 with continuation until June of 2020 for identified positions based upon Occupational Safety and Health Administration criteria.

The County offered pandemic pay premiums to specific positions within the following four departments: the House of Correction, the Sheriff, the Medical Examiner and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Beginning April 19, 2020, the County began to implement pandemic pay which was in effect until June 9, 2020. Pandemic Pay was provided to employees with eligible roles in the following four departments: the House of Correction, Sheriff, Medical Examiner, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS staff included those working in the Division of Youth and Family Services, Housing, and the Behavioral Health Division's Crisis and Community Divisions. The eligible roles were based on criteria from the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The pay was provided on a tiered premium pandemic pay structure for Fair Labor Standards Act eligible positions of \$2.00 to \$3.00 per hour and Non-Fair Labor Standards Act eligible positions of \$80.00 to \$100.00 per week for qualified staff.

Beyond the Administrative Orders that dealt with payroll issues, the County issued multiple administrative orders dealing with other Covid related issues such as teleworking, facility reopening, travel, mask requirements, vaccine mandate, procedures for responding to symptoms and fiscal mitigation methods.

Teleworking guidelines began in March of 2020 and directed all departments that have telework ready employees to begin teleworking as soon as possible. Further guidelines stated, “Only essential workers who are not able to telework should be working in person at County facilities.” As of May of 2022, the County was planning to return employees to on site work where possible.

The County issued an additional 12 Administrative Orders with 57 versions that dealt with other areas impacted by the pandemic such as masking, teleworking, and vaccine mandates.

The County provided procedures for employees, contractors, vendors and their supervisors when responding to a symptomatic person in the workplace and responding to employees and contractors who have close contact with a symptomatic person. This evolved over time providing guidance on what to do when an employee or contractor develops Covid-19 or exhibits signs or symptoms of Covid-19 in the workplace or has family members test positive for Covid-19 or exhibit signs or symptoms of Covid-19. The County Connect Covid-19 webpage provided to managers and employees job aid guides for Exposure, Symptoms, Confirmed Cases, and Critical Infrastructure Employee Exposure. The County followed CDC guidelines in its policies regarding mask requirements during the pandemic. The County established policies to deal with employee travel during the pandemic and to insert language into current and new contracts that included new pandemic protocols for vendors. In addition, County officials participated on regional and County-specific planning groups including Milwaukee County Unified Emergency Center and the Re-Opening Steering Committee to provide guidance related to the use of resource and safe re-opening strategies.

In response to challenges of potential shortfalls in sales tax, investment income, and program revenue because of businesses and operation closure, the County implemented fiscal measures such as an internal review of operating capital expenses, capital cash programs, and encumbrances. Departments were directed to ensure that only the most essential commodities and services were purchased. In addition, the following freezes were in effect until September 29, 2020: hiring, personnel actions, overtime, new contracts and contract amendments and work travel. Department managers were encouraged to work with staff to identify employees who were willing to voluntarily use time off without pay until April 5, 2021.

In fall of 2021 administrative order 21-3 was issued which required all Milwaukee County employees to get vaccinated against Covid-19 by October 1, 2021. The administrative order created incentives, and allowed for penalties for those who did not comply, for employees to obtain their vaccine and allowed for the application for an accommodation to the requirement. All new employees are required to have received the vaccine or an approved accommodation.

Following a year and a half since the start of the pandemic and the issuances of 21 administrative orders the County Board ended the emergency declaration.

On November 4, 2021 the County Board approved File No. 21-918 ending the County Executive's Covid-19 Emergency Declaration. File 22-298 changed the date of the end of Covid-19 Emergency Declaration to April 1, 2022.

A workgroup consisting of leaders from Human Resources, the Office of Corporation Counsel, the Chief Health Policy Advisor, and the Office of the County Executive will use data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and

Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) as well as the County Chief Health Policy Advisor to determine the Covid-19 “Disease Activity” and quickly adjust policies based on guidance from the four-level mitigation matrix. This group will meet and report the current state of Covid-19 mitigation measures regularly to the County Board. Policies will be based on: telework, masking, facility capacity, health screening at facilities, and cleaning standards.

Other local governmental entities offered similar paid leave policies to those of the County.

We reviewed Dane County where the City of Madison is located and the City of Milwaukee to compare what paid leave policies were enacted by those entities to see if they were comparable to what the County offered its staff. All three entities offered additional paid leave in 2021 but only Dane and Milwaukee County continued that pay into 2022.

The County offered similar paid leave to the City of Milwaukee and Dane County but had additional incentives for employees to receive a vaccine and returned non-essential employees to in-person work later than the City of Milwaukee.

Milwaukee County returned staff to in person/hybrid work from teleworking with Milwaukee County officially stating that as May 2022, the directive to telework when possible was removed unless the case load returned to “high”. The City of Milwaukee returned to in person work June 2021 while Dane County has an anticipated return to in person work/hybrid in June of 2022.

All three entities required employees receive a vaccine unless an accommodation was granted and provided for paid leave to receive the vaccine. All three entities included consequences for a lack of compliance including potential discharge. Milwaukee County included incentive for employees to receive vaccines through its “Vaccin8” program.

Section 2: While the County’s workforce shows minimal overall change since 2019 in its race and gender distribution, the County lost a net of 349 employees since 2020: 213 were employees who identify as female. Those who identify as Black or African American and female were 24% of separations while they are 20% of the County’s workforce.

Similar to the work we performed in our *Pulling Back the Curtain: A Look at Milwaukee County’s Workforce Through Racial and Gender Equity Lenses from 2009 to 2019* report, the analysis included in this audit defines the Milwaukee County workforce as employees who were non-elected and work full-time. As such, elected officials, seasonal and part-time employees are not included.

The distribution of the overall County workforce by race/ethnicity shows minimal change at the highest level from the start of the pandemic once alterations for a data issue are included. Analyzing the data by race and gender reveals concerning data.

The hiring data for 2021 shows the Unknown or blank category as the largest hiring category with 39.3% of all hires falling into this race/ethnicity. In 2020, this category was 3.7% of all hires and in the first quarter of 2022, it was 6.0%. There were 238 employees who were hired in 2021 that do not show a selected race/ethnicity. Of those 238 employees, 11 selected “decline to answer” while the remaining are listed as blank or unknown.

39% of the hires for 2021 were listed as having an “unknown” race/ethnicity which hindered analysis using 2021’s data.

While overall, the “unknowns” still account for a relatively small portion of the County’s workforce, their share of 2021 and early 2022 hires is so significant that we cannot accurately measure the County’s efforts to diversify its staff through hiring for 2021 and early 2022.

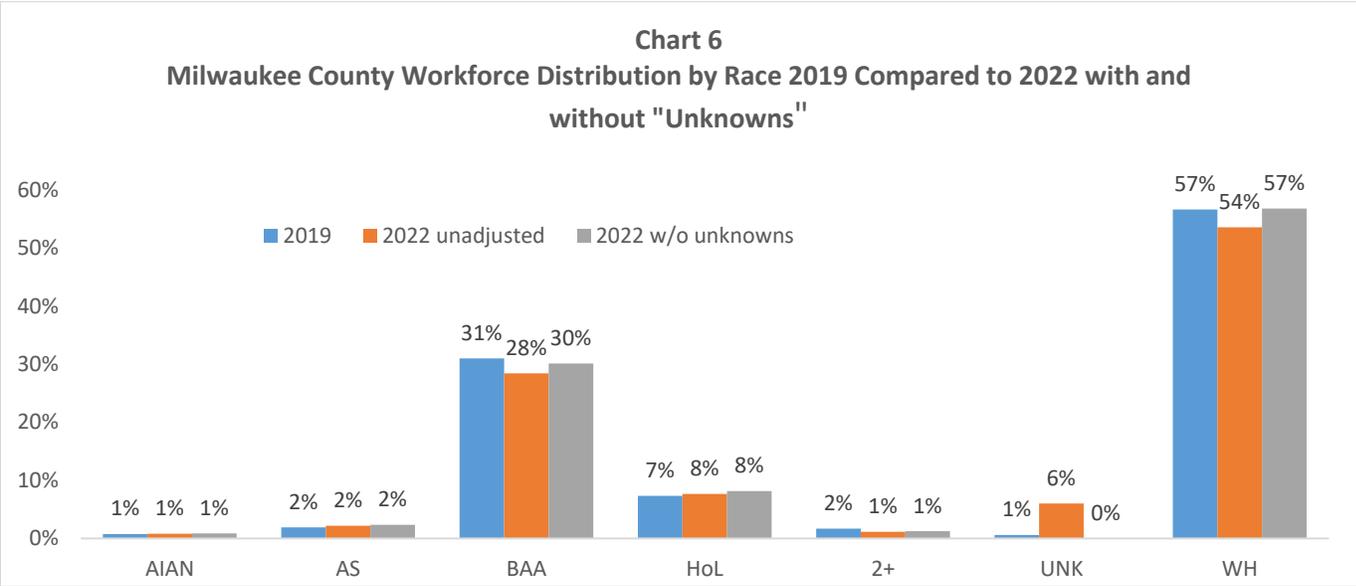
We interviewed both the Department of Human Resources and the Comptroller’s Payroll Division regarding this issue. Reasons given for the rise in unknowns included

implementation of a new payroll system, the transition of new employee orientation from in-person to virtual, and an increase in unwillingness of employees to select a race/ethnicity category or decline to answer. Our review of hiring in 2022 shows a return to more consistent level of unknown racial/ethnicity status for employees later in the first quarter. There has not been a correction into the existing data, however, the May 16, 2022 issue of the County's weekly "What's Up" newsletter included a solicitation for employees to correct their demographic data.

In addition, the County recently implemented an additional category for gender identity. The choices now include: Female, Male and Other. In a video released to County employees on May 16, 2022, the County Executive notified staff of the additional category for gender.

Adjusting for the unknowns shows the change in the share of the County's workforce from 2019 to 2022 to be less than 1% for all races/ethnicities.

We reviewed two scenarios to estimate the impact to the workforce if the unknowns were filled in. One method was to distribute the unknowns based on the share of each race/ethnicity's existing County workforce and the other method was to remove the unknowns from the calculation. Both methods resulted in the change of the share of the County workforce from 2019 to 2022 to be near or less than 1% for all races and ethnicities. Chart 6 and Table 8 show the changes both with and without adjusting for the unknown population.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System. We did not include any race/ethnicity with less than 10 employees.

Table 8
Change in Workforce Percentage from 2019 to 2022 by Race/Ethnicity

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2022 Unadjusted</u>	<u>2022 w/o Unknowns</u>	<u>2022 Prorate Unknowns</u>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian	2%	2%	2%	2%
Black or African American	31%	28%	30%	30%
Hispanic or Latino	7%	8%	8%	8%
Two or more races	2%	1%	1%	1%
Unknown/Decline to Answer	1%	6%	0%	1%
White	57%	54%	57%	56%

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System. Numbers are rounded. We did not include any race/ethnicity with less than 10 employees.

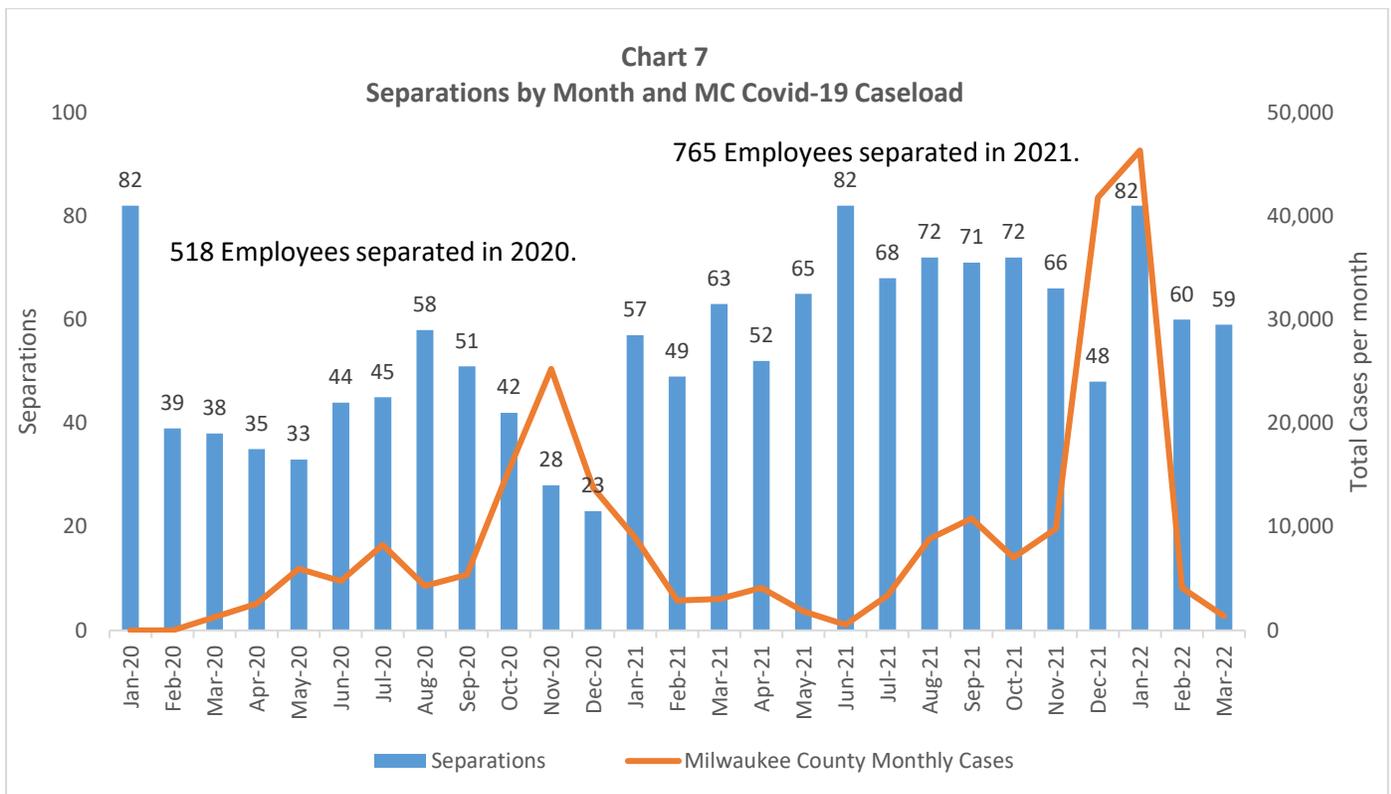
While national labor force data showed a large exodus during 2020, the County's year with the largest exodus was in 2021. Our point in time count showed the County's workforce dropped from 3,424 employees in 2019 to 3,171 in 2022. Its separation rate did not follow national trends for 2020 and 2021.

March and April of 2020 at the onset of the pandemic were amongst the lower amount of monthly separations during the 27 months we reviewed.

Separations at the County did not appear tied to Milwaukee County Covid caseload.

In 2020, 518 employees separated from the County while 765 did in 2021. From January to March of 2022, 212 employees separated from County service. In 2019, the last year without an impact from the pandemic, 617 employees left the County. We tracked the monthly number of separations that occurred at the County beginning in January of 2020 to see if there appeared to be an increase in separations as caseloads within Milwaukee County increased. The months at the start of the pandemic in 2020 were amongst the lowest amount of monthly separations during the 27 months we reviewed. The County saw 38 employees leave in March of 2020 and 35 leave in April of 2020. Separations did not appear tied to Milwaukee County Covid cases.

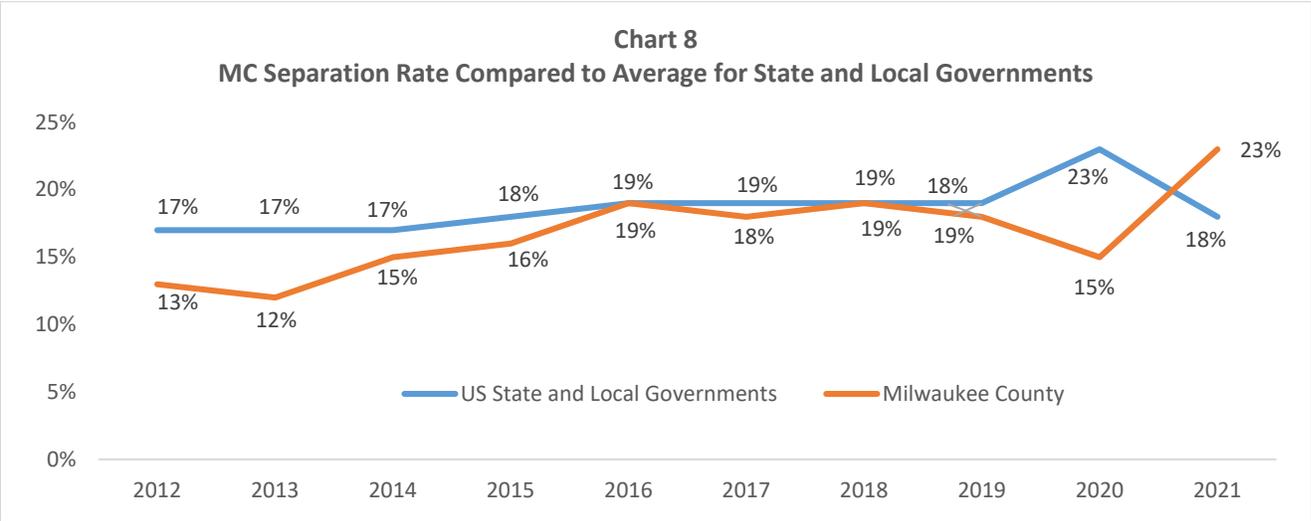
Chart 7 shows the monthly total for employee separations and the monthly total for Covid-19 caseloads.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System and the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management. Numbers are rounded.

The County’s separation rate was higher than the national rate for state and local governments in 2021. That was the only year this was true in the last ten years.

We did a ten year comparison of the overall separation rate at Milwaukee County versus the rate for State and Local Governments that is published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. We found that the County was at or below the national average from 2012 to 2020. The largest gap was in 2020 where the County separation rate was 15% and the national rate was 23%. In 2021, those rates flipped and the County’s rate was 23% and the national rate was 18%. Chart 8 shows the County separation rate by year vs the U.S. State and Local Government Separation Rate.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The County retained and paid its staff while its facilities were closed at the start of the pandemic. Separations in 2020 were below the national average. In 2021, the County saw a large departure into a strong labor market.

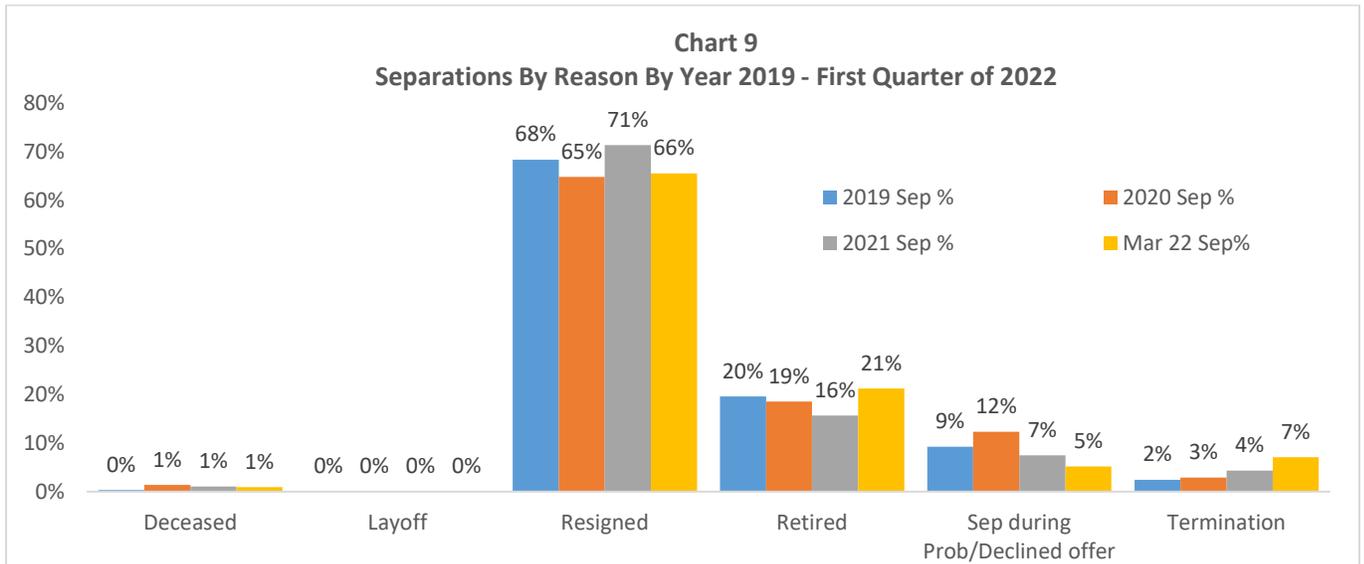
The County did not see an exodus of employees at the start of the pandemic which is in contrast with the national data where the largest workforce exodus occurred in March and April of 2020. The County did not lay off any employees at the start of the pandemic even though some facilities and services were shuttered. The County saw a much larger separation from the national data in 2021 as employees that had been retained at the start of the pandemic voluntarily separated to a hot labor market.

We analyzed the reason noted in the payroll data for employee separations from 2019, 2020, 2021 and the first quarter of 2022 and found little variance over the three years.

We reviewed the reason for employee separations from 2019, 2020 and 2021. We included 2019 as the last year without an impact from the pandemic. In all three years, the largest category for separation was resignations. In 2020 resignations were 65% of the separations but by 2021 that number grew to 71% of separations. In 2019 resignations accounted to 68% of all separations. The second largest group was retirements which saw a modest increase over the three years from 20% in 2019 to 21% in the first quarter of 2022 after dropping to 16% in

We found little variance from 2019 in why employees separated from the County.

2021. Separation during Probation and Declined Offers accounted for 5 – 12% of separations. Terminations were a minimal 2 – 4% during 2020 and 2021 but increased to 7% in the first quarter of 2022. Chart 9 shows the separations by reason by year from 2019 to the first quarter of 2022.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

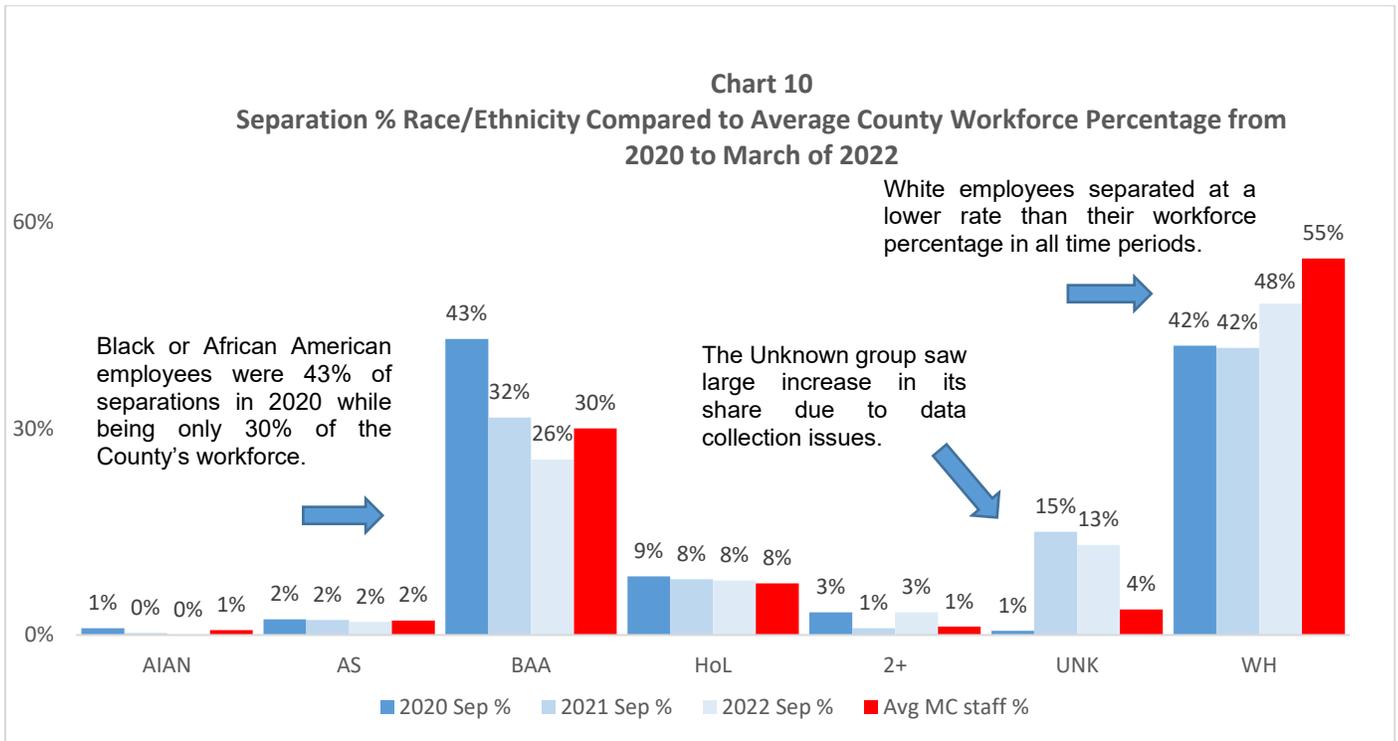
The review of separations by race/ethnicity again showed the issue with data in the system in 2021 for unknown. The Black or African American employees and Hispanic or Latino employees separated at a higher rate than their share of the workforce in most years while White employees separated at a lower rate than their share of the workforce in all periods we reviewed.

Employees who identify as Black or African American were 43% of all employees who separated from the County in 2020. In 2021, Black or African Americans were 32% of total separations. Their share of separations dropped to 26% for the first quarter of 2022. On average 30% of the Milwaukee County workforce identified as Black or African American.

Employees who identify as White were the only group that saw separations at a lower percentage than their workforce for all three periods we reviewed.

Employees who identify as White had separations which were lower than their share of the workforce. The White race/ethnicity group was 42% of all separations in 2020 and 2021. It was 48% of all separations for the first quarter of 2022. On average, 55% of employees identify as White.

Chart 10 shows the annual percentage of separations from each race/ethnicity and the average share of the County workforce for 2020 and 2021.

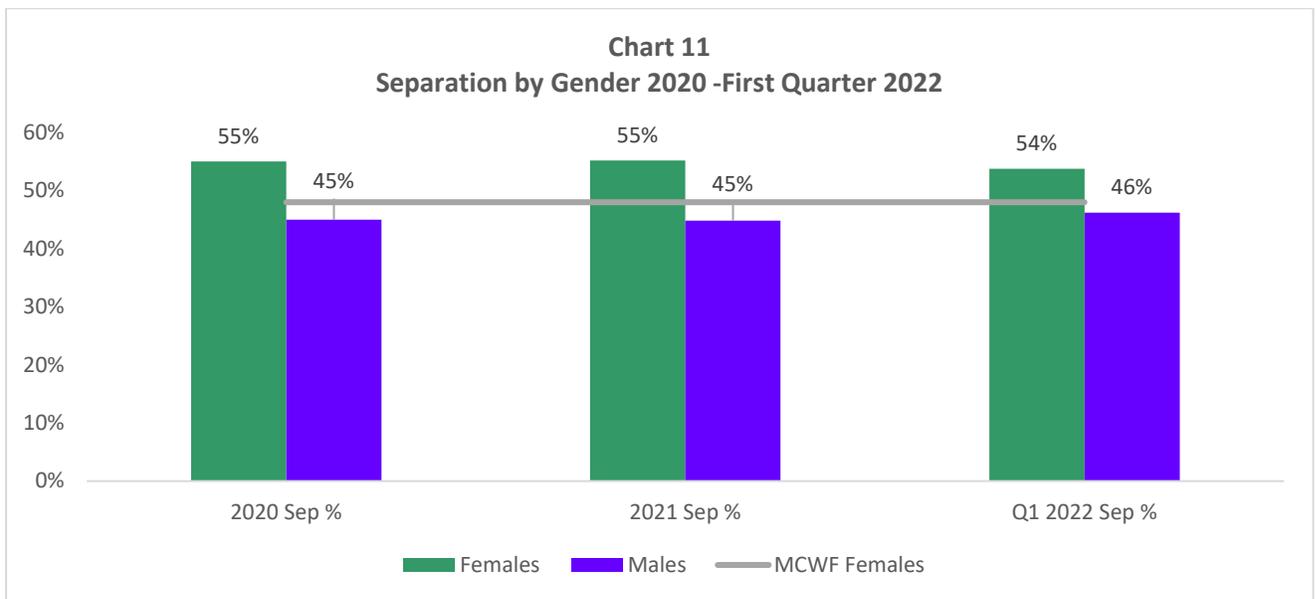


Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System. We did not include any race/ethnicity with less than 10 employees.

The separation data by gender showed that employees who identify as female left more than employees who identify as male and at a greater rate than their share of the County workforce.

Similar to the national trends reported in the media, Milwaukee County saw the separation of females at a higher rate than their share of the Milwaukee County workforce for the time periods we reviewed. In both 2020 and 2021, females were 55% of the separations. This group was 52% of the workforce during all time periods. In the first quarter of 2022, the separation percentage for females dropped to 54% Chart 11 shows the separations by gender during our review.

More employees who identify as female departed the County than those who identify as male.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

The separation data by race and gender showed that employees who identify as Black and African American and female left at a higher rate than their share of the County workforce.

Employees who identify as White left at a lower rate than their workforce share for both genders.

Employees who identify as Black or African American and female were 24% of the separations during 2020 to the first quarter of 2022. Their workforce share is 20% making them the group with the largest separation share compared to workforce share. Employees who identify as White for both genders had a share of the separations that was more than 4% less than their workforce share. All remaining race/ethnicities were within 1% of their workforce share. Table 9 shows the separations by race/ethnicity and by gender during our review.

**Table 9
Separations by Race/Ethnicity and Gender Compared to Workforce Share**

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>2020 to March 2022 Percent of Separations</u>		<u>2020/2021 Percent of Workforce*</u>		<u>Variance between Separations and Workforce</u>	
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%
Asian	0.7%	1.5%	1.2%	0.9%	0.5%	-0.6%
Black or African American	23.6%	10.9%	19.7%	10.3%	-3.9%	-0.6%
Hispanic or Latino	4.3%	3.9%	4.0%	3.5%	-0.3%	-0.4%
Two or More Races	1.1%	1.0%	0.7%	0.5%	-0.5%	-0.5%
Unknown	5.5%	4.3%	2.2%	1.6%	-3.3%	-2.7%
White	19.4%	23.3%	23.8%	30.9%	4.4%	7.6%
Total	54.9%	45.1%	51.9%	48.1%	-3.0%	3.0%

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll system. We did not include any race/ethnicity with less than 10 employees.

*Percent of workforce is an average of the workforce for 2020 and 2021 as of November 1.

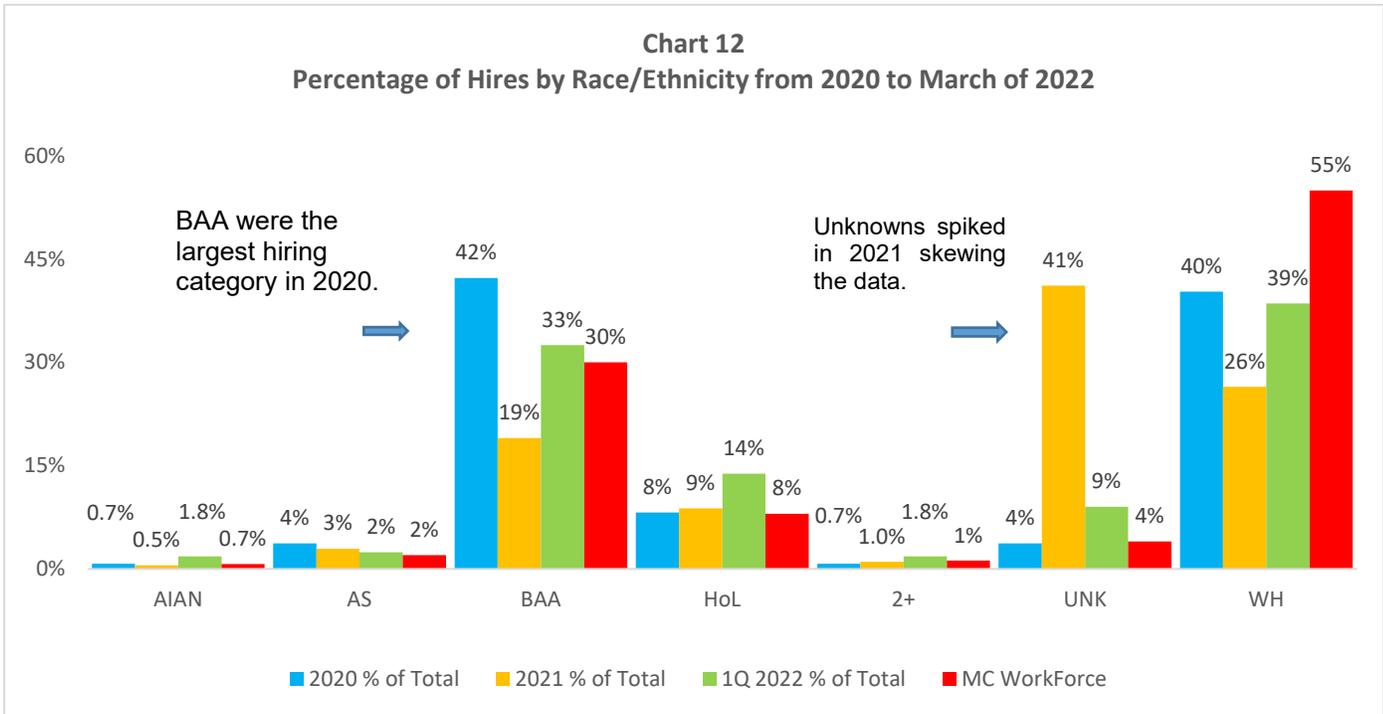
The Black or African American race/ethnicity was the largest percentage of all hires in 2020 while the hiring of the Hispanic or Latino groups had a large increase in the first quarter of 2022.

Hiring of employees who identify as Black or African American exceeded their workforce share in 2020 and the first quarter of 2022. We did not include 2021 due to data issues related to the unknown category.

In 2020, 42% of all new hires identified as Black or African American. In the first quarter of 2022, Black or African American employees were 33% of new hires. Both of those shares exceed the share of the County workforce by that race/ethnicity. Hispanic or Latino employees showed a large increase in its share of the hiring in the first quarter of 2022 where 14% of all hires identified with that race/ethnicity. In 2020 and 2021 Hispanic or Latino employees was just over 8% of all hires in both years. White employees accounted for 40% of all hires in 2020 and 39% in the first quarter of 2022 which is below the share of the County workforce for this race/ethnicity.

We did not include a discussion of the race/ethnicity distribution of hires in 2021 due to 39% of all hires having unknown listed for their race/ethnicity.

Chart 12 shows the hires by race/ethnicity for groups for 2020, 2021 and the first quarter of 2022.



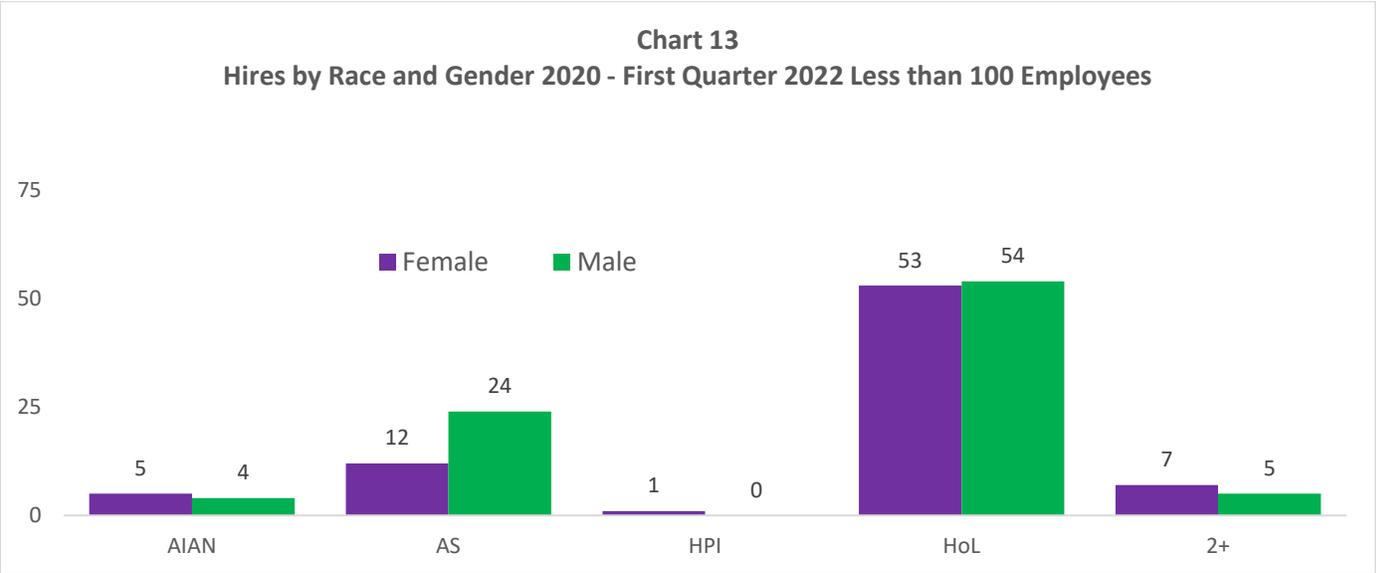
Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System. We did not include any race/ethnicity with less than 10 employees.

Analyzing hires by race and gender shows three of eight race/ethnicities where employees who identify as males were hired at a higher rate than employees who identify as female.

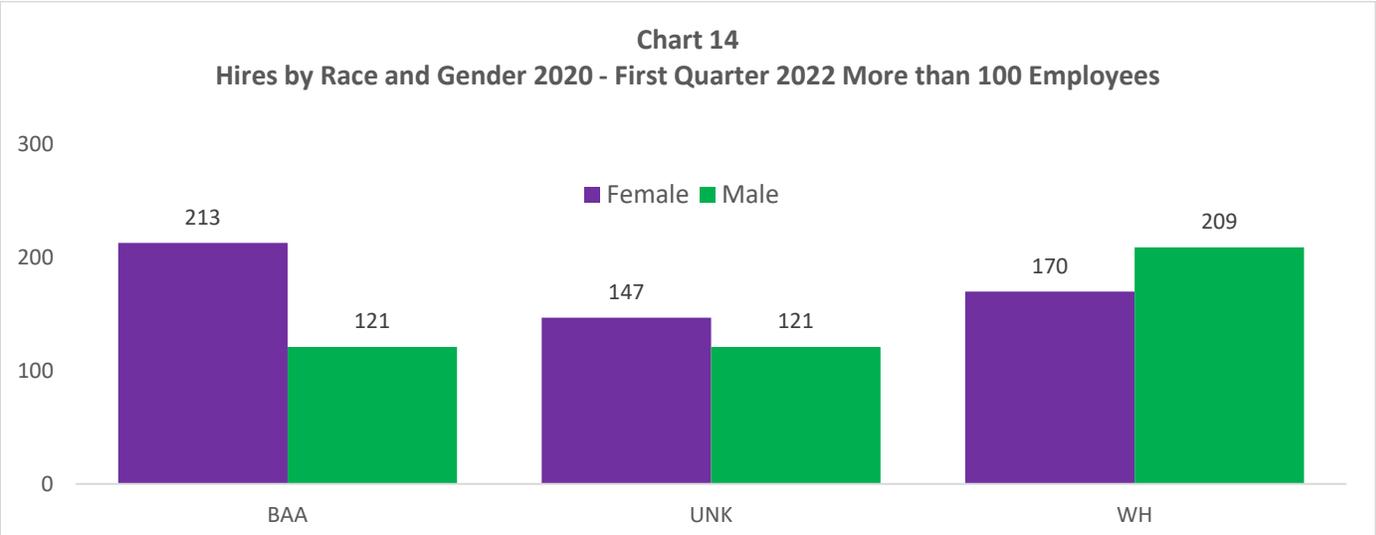
From 2020 through the first quarter of 2022, employees who identify as female were hired at a larger rate for the American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black or African American, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Two or More Races and the Unknown race/ethnicity than were males. Employees who identify as male were hired at a larger percentage for the Asian, Hispanic or Latino and White race/ethnicity.

Employees who identify as males were hired at a larger percentage for the Asian, Hispanic or Latino and White race/ethnicity groups.

Charts 13 and 14 show the breakdown by gender and race/ethnicity for hires from 2020, 2021 and the first quarter of 2022.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

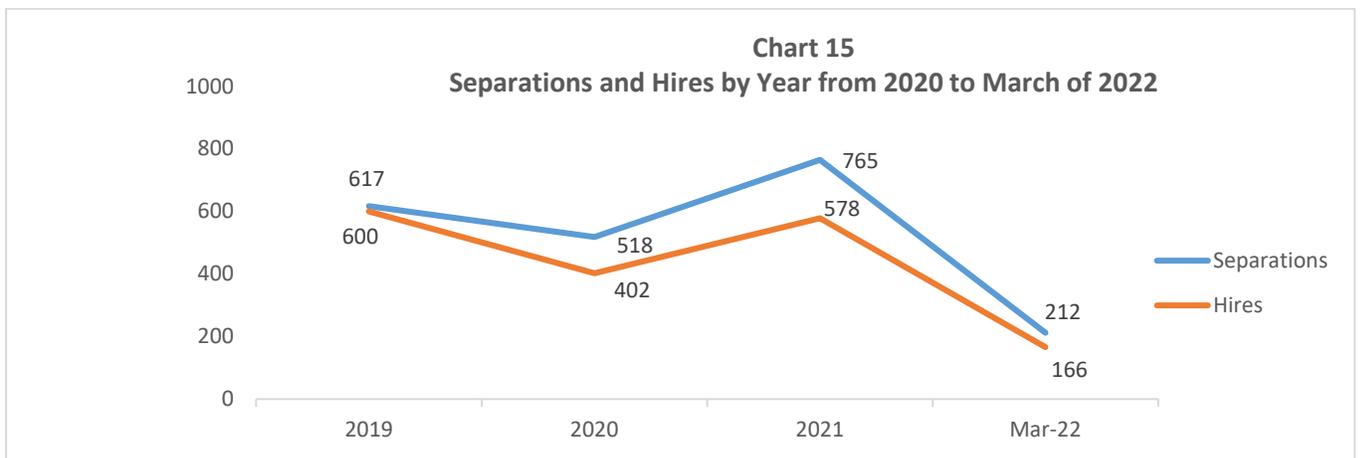
Comparing Hires to Separations from 2020 to the first Quarter of 2022 shows the County with a net loss of 349 employees.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics change in the civilian labor force showed that in 2020 a total of 3.8 million employees left the workforce while in 2021 1.6 million returned and in 2022 1.8 million returned. During that same time period the County saw a net loss in all three years with a decline in its workforce of 116

in 2020, 187 in 2021 and 46 in the first quarter of 2022. The County's retention of employees in 2020 versus the national trend may be due to the County's paying of employees for functions that were not operational instead of laying off staff. As we will detail in the next session, there was a large use of the "PH Close" pay code for when employees were able to work but could not telework or work onsite due to facility closure.

2019 saw a net loss of 17 employees at the County. During the pandemic the County lost 349 total employees.

The County saw total hires of 1,146 from 2020 to the end of the first quarter of 2022. During that same period 1,495 employees separated from the County for a net loss of 349 employees. In comparison, the last year before the pandemic the County had a net loss of 17 employees. Chart 15 shows the separations and hires for each year.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

The net change to the workforce is calculated by subtracting hires from separations.

The net change by race/ethnicity is impacted by the high number of employees hired in 2021 who do not have a race/ethnicity identified in their payroll file. Other race/ethnicity saw large swings in their net change when comparing individual years.

Calculating the variance between employees who separated and employees hired results in the net change for employees. Full understanding of the net change of the workforce is limited by the unknown data issue for employees hired in 2021.

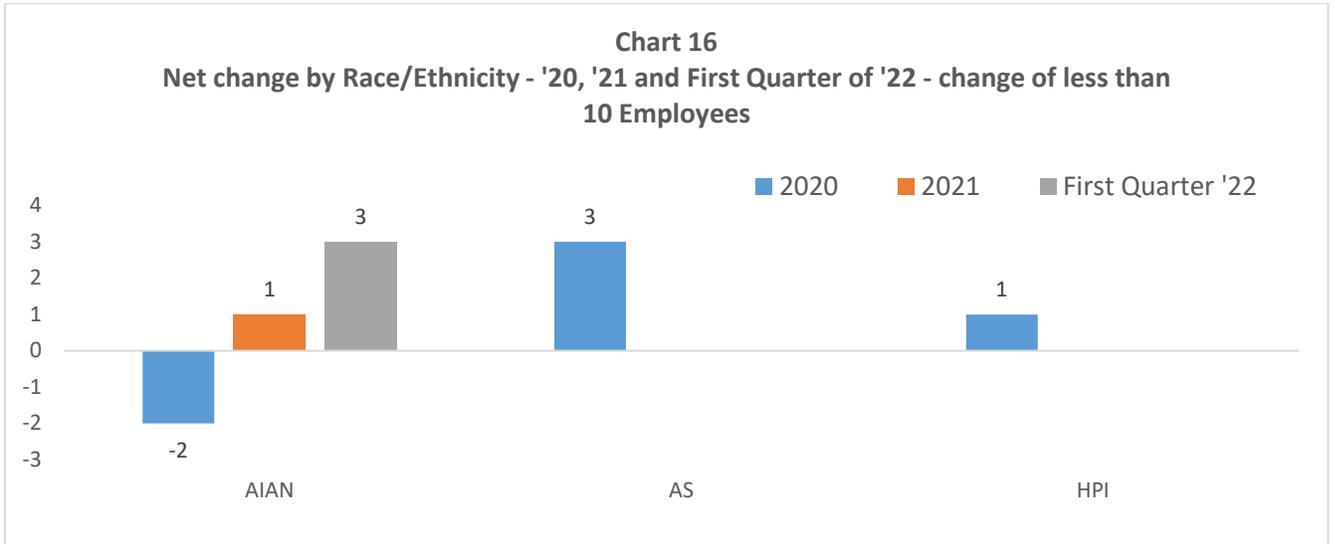
Employees who identify as Black or African American saw the largest decrease in staffing numbers with a net loss of 182 employees from January 2020 to March 31, 2022.

Reviewing the net change for employees by race and ethnicity we found that those who identify as Black or African American had the largest swing in net change from a loss of 50 employees in 2020, a loss of 132 employees in 2021 and a net change of zero for the first quarter of 2022. The net loss of employees from the Black or African American group is consistent with trends reported within the national media.

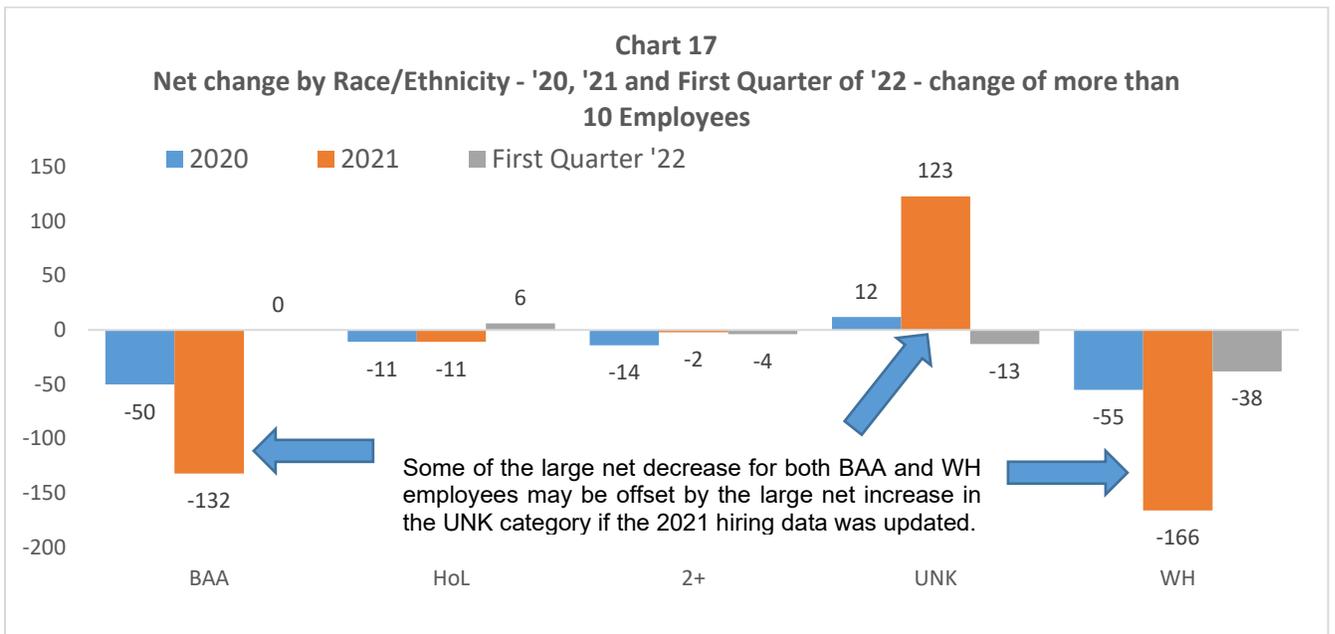
Those who identify as Hispanic or Latino rebounded from a net loss of employees totaling 11 in both 2020 and 2021 to have a net increase of six employees in the first quarter of 2022. Those who identify as American Indian or Alaskan had a negative net change of two in 2020 but had positive net changes in both 2021 and the first quarter of 2022 with one and three net changes respectively. Those who identify as Two or More races and White had negative net changes in all three time periods we reviewed. Table 10 and Charts 16 and 17 show the net change by race/ethnicity from January 1, 2020 to March 31, 2022.

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>Mar-22</u>	<u>Total</u>
American Indian or Alaskan	-2	1	3	2
Asian	3	0	0	3
Black or African American	-50	-132	0	-182
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0	0	1
Hispanic or Latino	-11	-11	6	-16
Two or More Races	-14	-2	-4	-20
Unknown/Decline to Answer	12	123	-13	122
White	-55	-166	-38	-259
TOTAL	-116	-187	-46	-349

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

Employees who identify as females experienced a larger net change than did employees who identify as males during 2020 to the end of the first quarter of 2022.

More employees who identify as female departed the County than those who identify as male.

Similar to national trends, the County had an overall loss of 213 employees who identify as female from 2020 to the end of the first quarter of 2022. Employees who identify as male dropped by 136 during the same time period. 2021 had the largest net decrease for both genders with a net decrease of 117 females

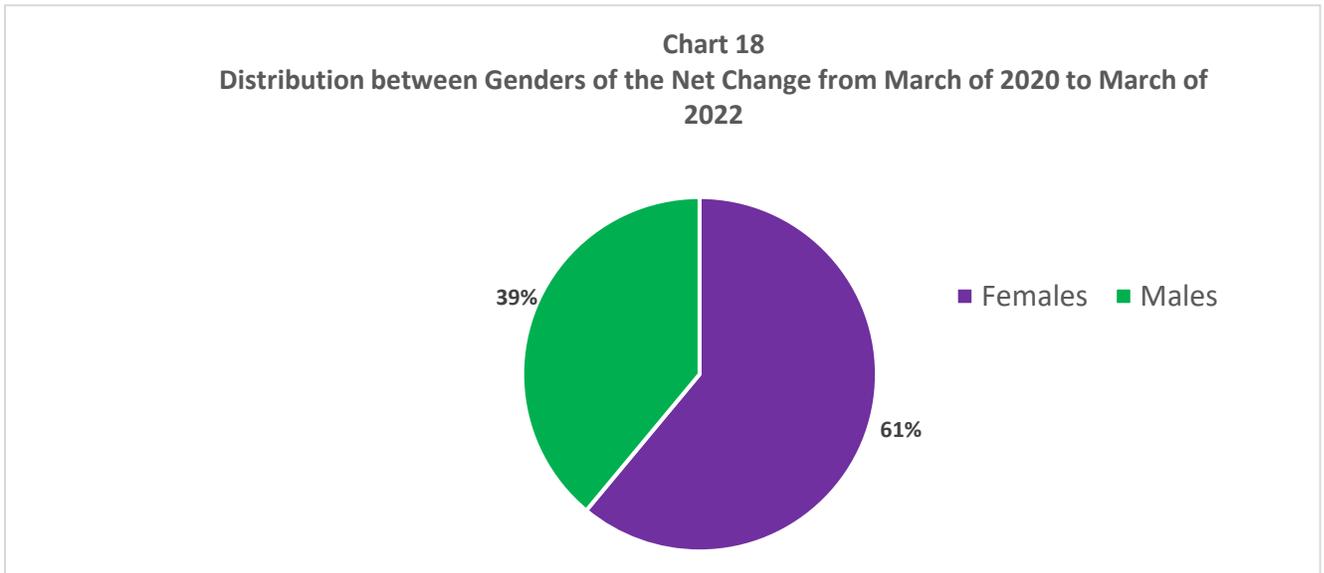
and 70 males when accounting for separations and hires as shown in both Table 11.

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>Mar-22</u>	<u>Total</u>
Female	-82	-117	-14	-213
Male	-34	-70	-32	-136

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

52% of the County's workforce identifies as female. They were 61% of the net change in employees.

Employees who identify as female are 52% of the County's overall workforce. They accounted for 61% of the net change to the workforce from March of 2020 to March of 2022. Chart 18 shows the split between genders for the net change from March of 2020 to March of 2022.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

Reviewing the net change by race and gender shows the largest variance between Black or African American employees who identify as females and employees who identify as males with 77% of the net change being female. The Hispanic or Latino group is close behind at 75%.

The net change by race/ethnicity and by gender showed variances between the different race/ethnicities.

The net change for Black or African American employees who identify as female at the County was a net loss of 140 employees while the net change for Black or African American employees who identify as male was 42 employees. For Black or African American employees, females accounted for 77% of the net change, this is 11% higher than the share of the Black or African American workforce which is 66% female.

Racial identities that had a positive net change for both genders include the American Indian or Alaskan, and the Asian groups. Those who identify as Hispanic or Latino saw a loss of employees for both genders with 12 net employees who identify as females and four net employees who identify as males. 75% of the net change for those who identify as Hispanic or Latino were employees who identify as female. The Milwaukee County workforce for those who identify as Hispanic or Latino who also identify as female was 53% for 2020 and 2021.

Those who identify as White also saw of a loss of employees for both genders with 120 net employees who identify as female and 139 net employees who identify as males. 53% of the net change were employees who identify as male. 56% of employees within the White race/ethnicity identified as males for 2020 and 2021. Table 12 shows the split by gender of the next change for all races/ethnicities.

Table 12
Net Change by Race/Ethnicity and Gender
From 2020 to March of 2022

	<u>2020</u>		<u>2021</u>		<u>2022</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
American Indian or Alaskan Native	-1	-1	0	1	3	0	2	0
Asian	2	1	-1	1	0	0	1	2
Black or African American	-48	-2	-101	-31	9	-9	-140	-42
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Hispanic or Latino	-7	-4	-12	1	7	-1	-12	-4
Two or More Races	-7	-7	-1	-1	-2	-2	-10	-10
Unknown/Decline to Answer	8	4	71	52	-14	1	65	57
White	-30	-25	-73	-93	-17	-21	-120	-139
Total	-82	-34	-117	-70	-14	-32	-213	-136

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll

Section 3: There were 22 payroll codes issued and used during the pandemic. We reviewed the use of the codes and found variance by race, by gender, by race and gender, and by functional areas including which type of leave employees used.

The County provided additional paid leave for employees in response to the pandemic. Due to the evolving nature of the pandemic response and the passage of Federal law requiring specific paid time off, administrative orders dealing with time use rules were revised multiple times. Overall, 22 pandemic pay codes were created. For ease of understanding, we will refer to all pandemic related paid time as “Covid paid leave” or “CPL”. We combined like CPL codes into four categories in order to present use by type. The four overall CPL categories are:

- Covid-paid time off for employees with Covid-19 or symptoms of Covid-19.
- Covid Related-paid time off for employees who need to quarantine, have high risk family members or cannot work due to Covid-19 related disruption.
- School/Child Care-for employees to care for child with covid, child who is quarantining or has child care or school closure.
- PH Close-paid time off for employees who were able to work but could not telework or work onsite due to facility closure.

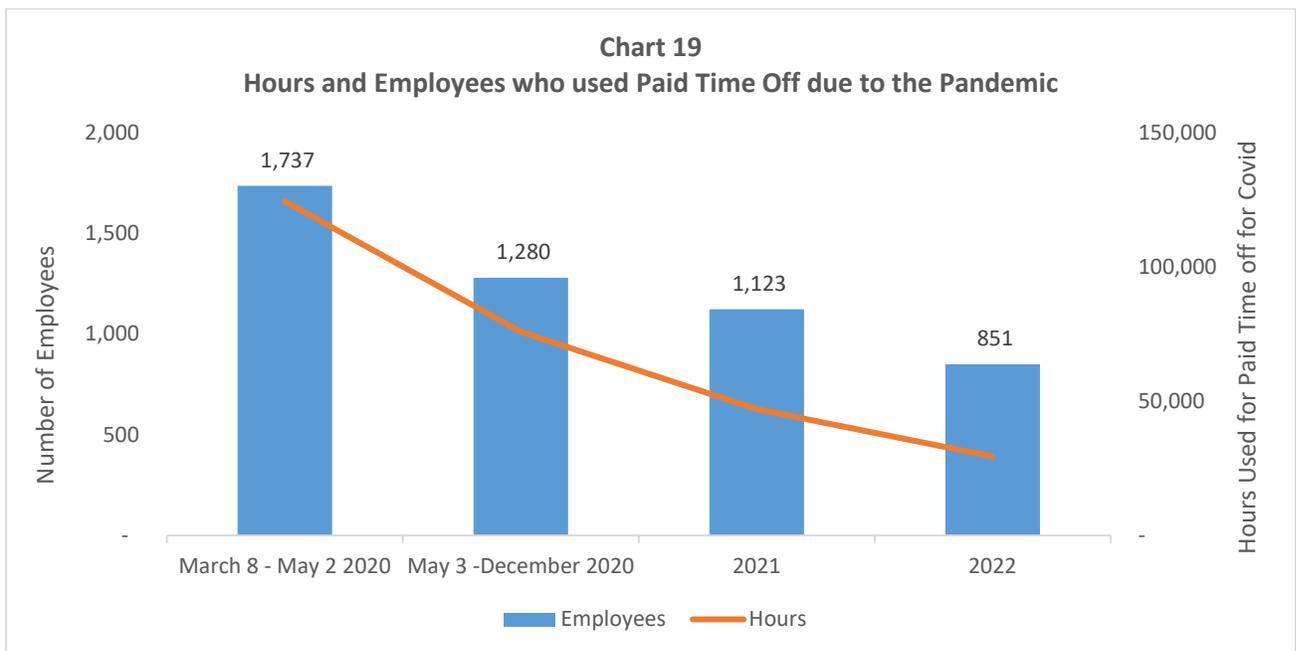
Table 13 shows the four groupings with the relevant pay codes assigned to that grouping.

Table 13	
Grouping of Paid Time Off Pay Codes to Perform Analysis	
<u>Paid Time Off Grouping</u>	<u>Pay Codes Included</u>
Covid Related	PH Leave, PH High Risk, PH Commute, Covid-19 (travel), PH Leave, FFCRA EPSL Bank COVID Quar, FFCRA EPSL Bank Healthcare Quar, FFCRA EPSL Bank Care, EPSL Leave Quarantine
Covid	PH Covid, FFCRA EPSL Bank Symptoms, EPSL Leave Symptoms, EPSL Leave CV 19
School/Child Care	PH Care, FFCRA FMLA Childcare unpaid, FFCRA EPSL Bank FMLA Childcare, FFCRA FML 66% pay extended Childcare, EPSL Leave Child Quar
PH Close	PH Close
Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Executive’s Office.	

The greatest number of individual employees using CPL used it during the first eight weeks with steady decline after the initial pandemic response.

124,461 hours for Covid paid time off were used during the first eight weeks of the pandemic. For the remaining almost 2 years of the pandemic from May of 2020 to March 31, 2022 152,394 hours were used.

The onset of the pandemic and the first eight weeks had substantially higher use of paid time off than the remainder of 2020. During that eight week period there were 1,737 employees who used 124,461 paid time off hours. Chart 19 shows the total hours used by time period and total employees who use paid time off.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

Different time periods of the pandemic showed employees used different types of Covid paid time off.

During the two years of the pandemic, we found the largest use of the Covid Related paid time off pay codes with 34% of all paid time off hours; the second highest category was the Covid paid time off hours with 32%; PH Close was 23% and School and Child care was 12%.

The PH Close code was used most during the first eight weeks of the pandemic.

Time period 1- March 8, 2020 to May 2, 2020. During the first eight weeks of the pandemic, the largest use of the CPL was for PH Close as the County transitioned to telework where possible

Transitioning to telework caused some use of PH Close code during the first weeks of the pandemic.

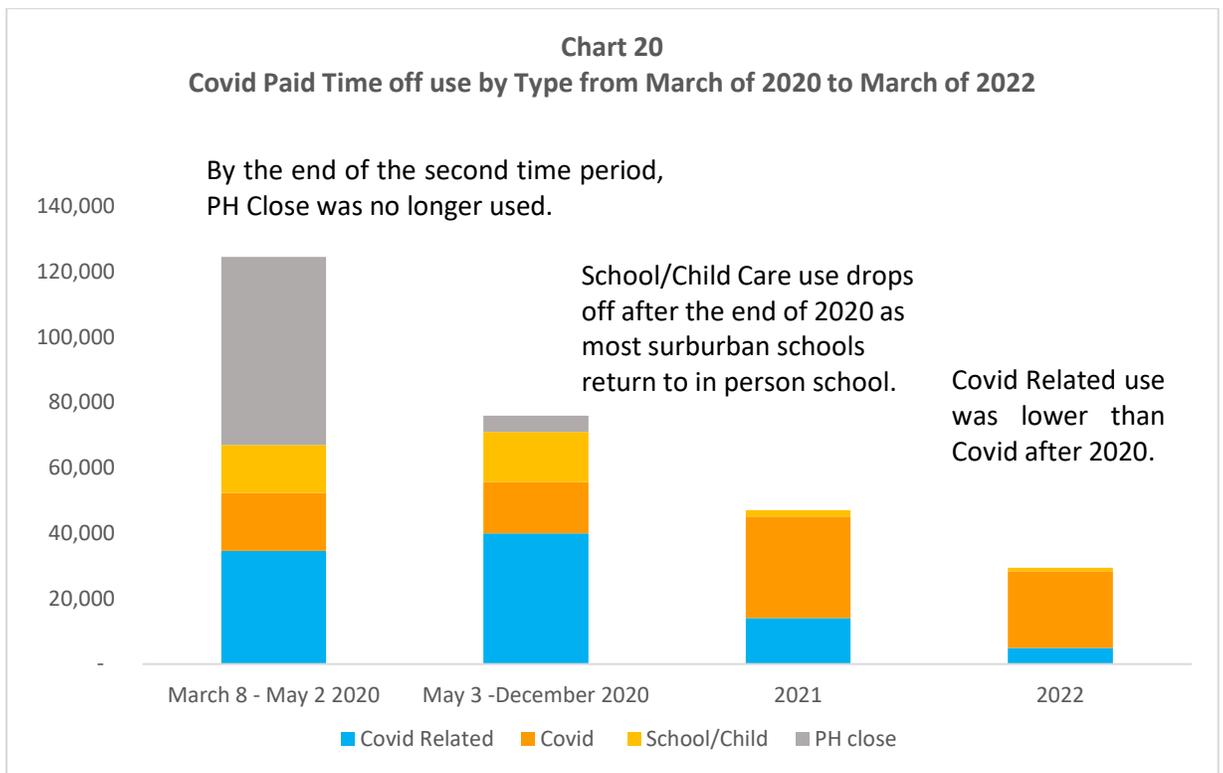
and closures of other facilities. Prior to the pandemic many, but not all employees, had laptops. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Milwaukee County's IMSD deployed a total of 434 new laptops to Milwaukee County employees. The three departments that had the highest number of laptops deployed were Child Support Services with a total of 70 laptops, Behavioral Health Division with a total of 62 laptops, and the Milwaukee Clerk of Courts with a total of 58 laptops. While awaiting deployment, employees relied upon PH Close to continue to receive full pay.

Time period 2- May 3, 2020 to December 2020. During the remainder of 2020, the Covid Related paid time off codes were most used.

Time period 3- January 2021 to December 2021. The highest CPL category was Covid during 2021.

During the spike in cases at the end of 2021 and into early 2022 we saw the highest levels of use of the Covid time off codes.

Time period 4 - January 2022 to March 31, 2022. Similar to 2021 the highest CPL used during this time period was the Covid pay code. Milwaukee County saw a large increase in cases in late December of 2021 into early January of 2022. Chart 20 shows the paid time off use by type by the four time periods we reviewed.



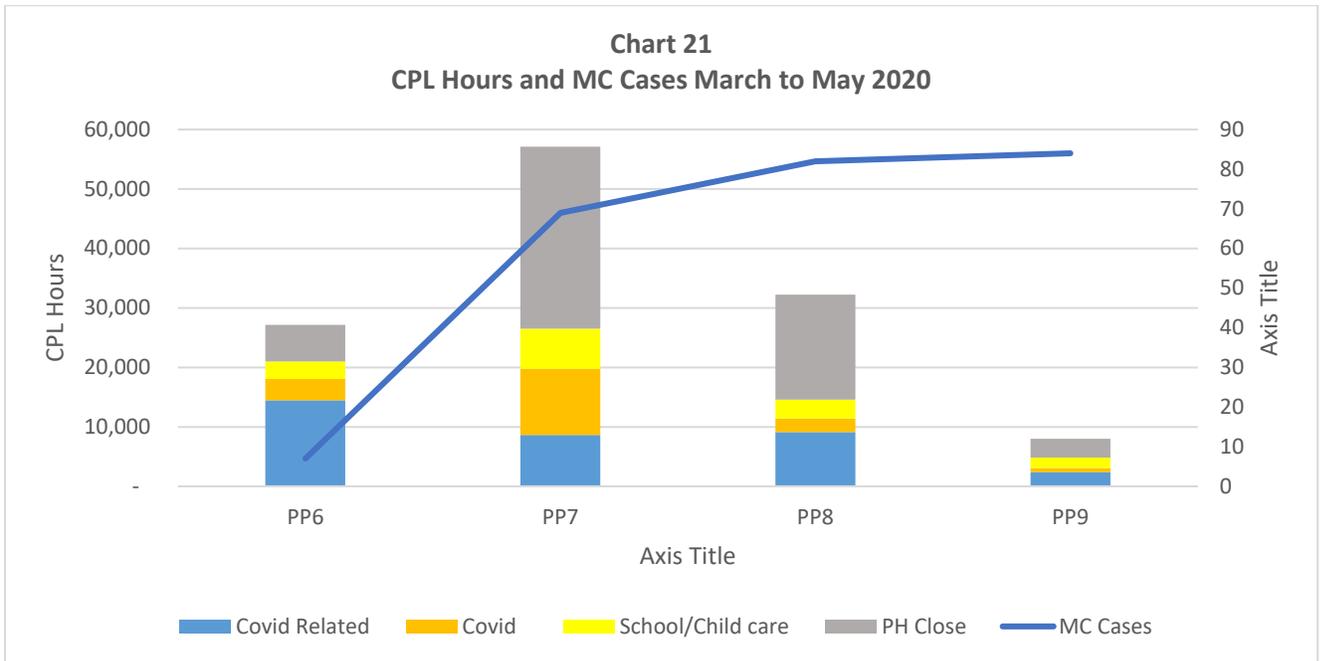
Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

We looked at the 14 day average for cases within Milwaukee County and the use of paid time off to see if use followed caseload trends. While the first eight weeks did not seem to follow the confirmed case load, the remaining paid time off during the pandemic did.

We separated the first time period from the remaining three time periods due to the large use of paid time off during this time. The highest paid time off use was during pay period 7, March 22, 2020 to April 4, 2020, which had 57,090 hours.

The use of Covid paid leave during the first eight weeks of the pandemic did not follow Covid caseload levels.

During the first eight weeks of the pandemic, we found use of paid time off to not follow the pattern of Milwaukee County confirmed cases as shown in Chart 21 where cases increased for each pay period in that time period while paid time off use peaks in the second of the four pay periods in that time period.

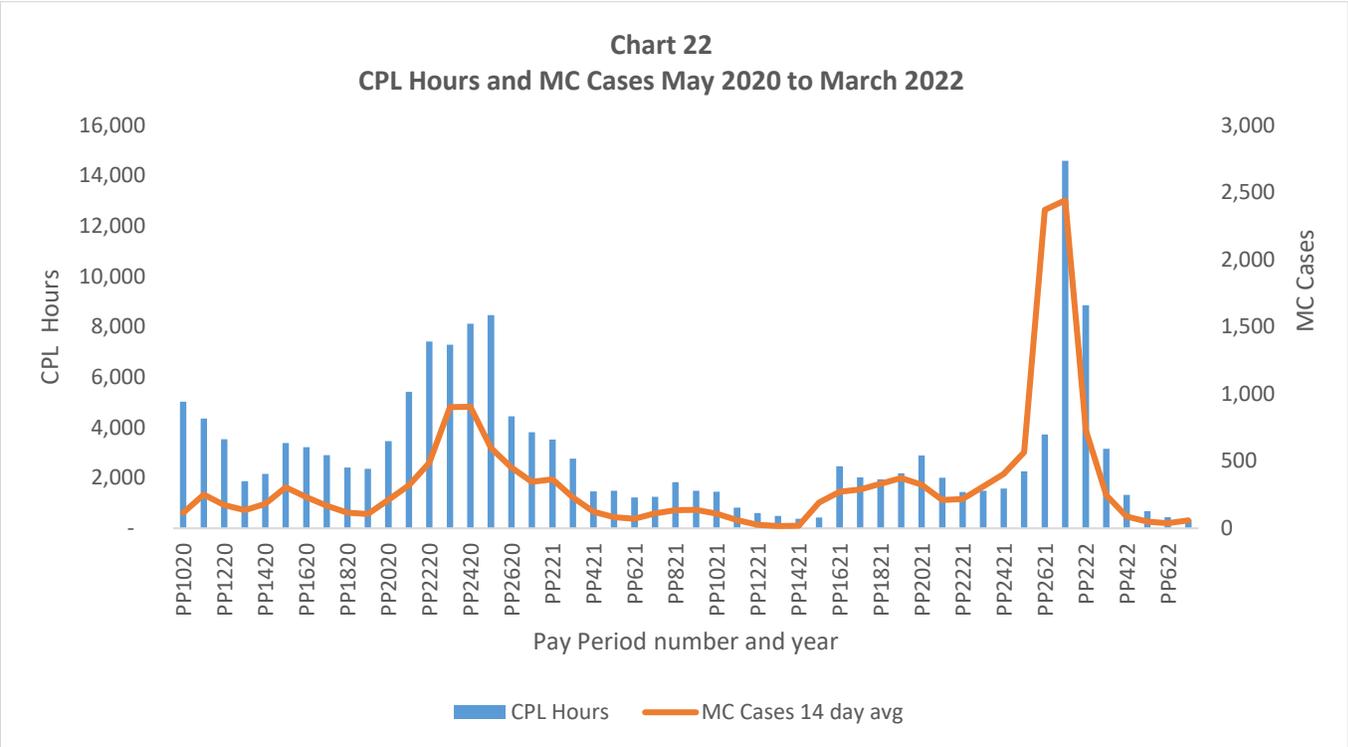


Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

After the first eight weeks of the pandemic, the remaining use of paid time off hours follows the pattern of the caseloads within Milwaukee County.

After the first eight weeks of the pandemic, the use of Covid paid leave followed Covid caseload levels.

We reviewed the use of paid time off during each pay period from May of 2020 to March of 2022 along with the 14 day average caseload for Milwaukee County. The largest paid time off use during a single pay period for the three remaining time periods was pay period 1 of 2022, December 26, 2021 to January 8, 2022, which had 14,596 paid time off hours which was during the Omicron variant outbreak. We found that paid time off use generally followed the same pattern as the caseloads. Chart 22 shows the by pay period use of paid time off and the 14 day average of Milwaukee County cases.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System and the Office of Emergency Management.

Employees who identify as Black or African American and White had large variances of use of CPL hours compared to their workforce percentage. The remaining race/ethnicities did not.

We compared the use of paid time off hours by race/ethnicity for the two years of the pandemic to their share of the County workforce during the same time period. We found all CPL hours for all but two groups to be within two percent of their workforce percentage.

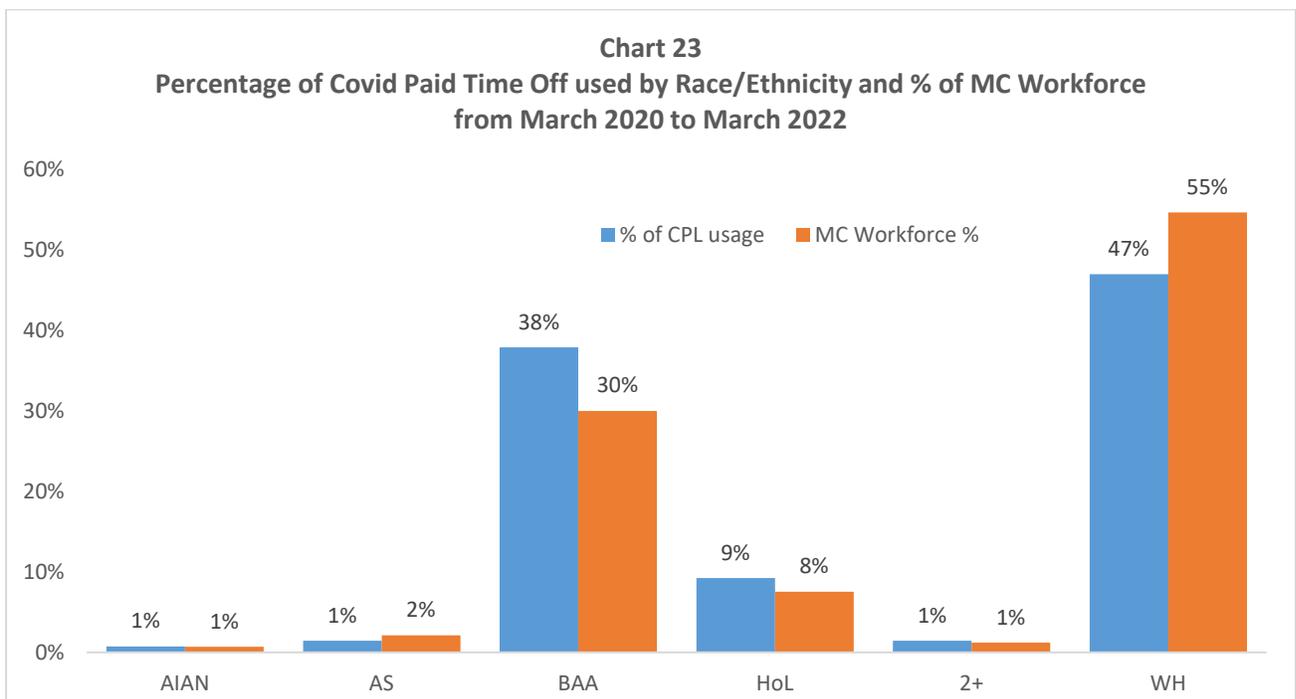
Employees who identify as Black or African American and White used time that was eight percent higher and lower, respectively, than their share of the workforce. All remaining groups were within two percent.

Employees who identify as Black or African American used 38% of all paid time off hours while their percentage of the County workforce is 30%. This use is consistent with the Milwaukee County rates per 1,000 for incidents, hospitalizations and deaths, where the share for the Black or African American residents was highest for hospitalizations and second highest for incidents and deaths.

Reviewing the covid rates for incidents, hospitalizations and deaths per 1,000 residents showed evidence that groups with lower rates for Covid measures used less paid time off.

Employees who identify as White paid time off use was 47% compared to their workforce share which is 55%. This use is consistent with the Milwaukee County rates per 1,000 for incidents, hospitalizations and deaths, where the share for the White group was second lowest for hospitalizations and incidents.

Chart 23 shows the use of Covid Paid time off versus workforce percentage for all employees by race/ethnicity.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System. We did not include any race/ethnicity with less than 10 employees.

We reviewed the three largest race/ethnicities to see the type of paid time off use within each race/ethnicity and found that both employees who identify as Black or African American and as Hispanic Latino had a higher use of the school child care leave than their percentage of the workforce while the opposite was true for employees who identify as White.

When we reviewed the use of paid time off by type and racial category we found variances amongst the uses by different race/ethnicities. For employees who identify as Black and

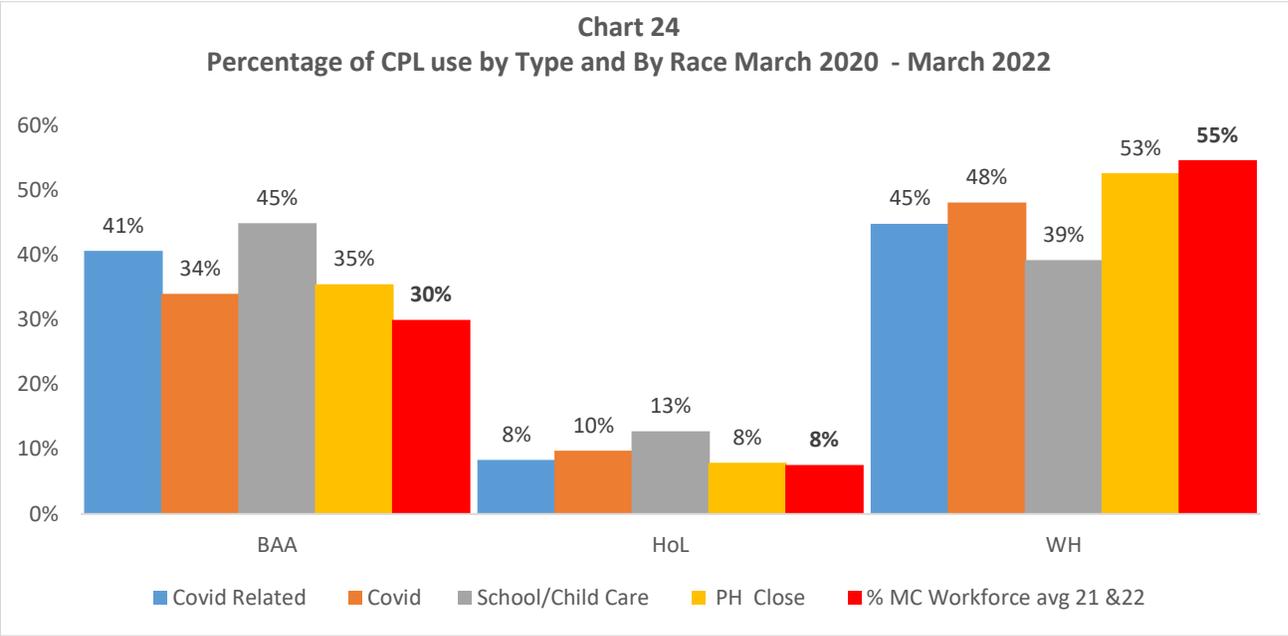
African American and employees who identify as Hispanic or Latino, both had a higher use of the paid time off for School and Child Care than their percentage of the workforce.

Employees who identify as Black or African American are 30% of the County's workforce but accounted for 45% of the School Child Care paid time off use. The second highest paid time off use for employees who identify as Black or African Americans was Covid Related paid time off with 41% share of the use.

Employees who identify as Hispanic or Latino are 8% of the County workforce but accounted for 13% of the School Child Care paid time off use. The second highest paid time off use for employees who identify as Hispanic or Latino was Covid paid time off with 10% share of the use.

Employees who identify as White used the PH Close time code at the highest rate for all race/ethnicities and at a rate that nearly matched their workforce share.

Employees who identify as White are 55% of the workforce and 39% of the School Child Care paid time off. Employees who identify as White were 53% of the PH Close paid time off which most closely matches its share of the workforce. Chart 24 shows the use of CPL by type and race for selected race/ethnicities.



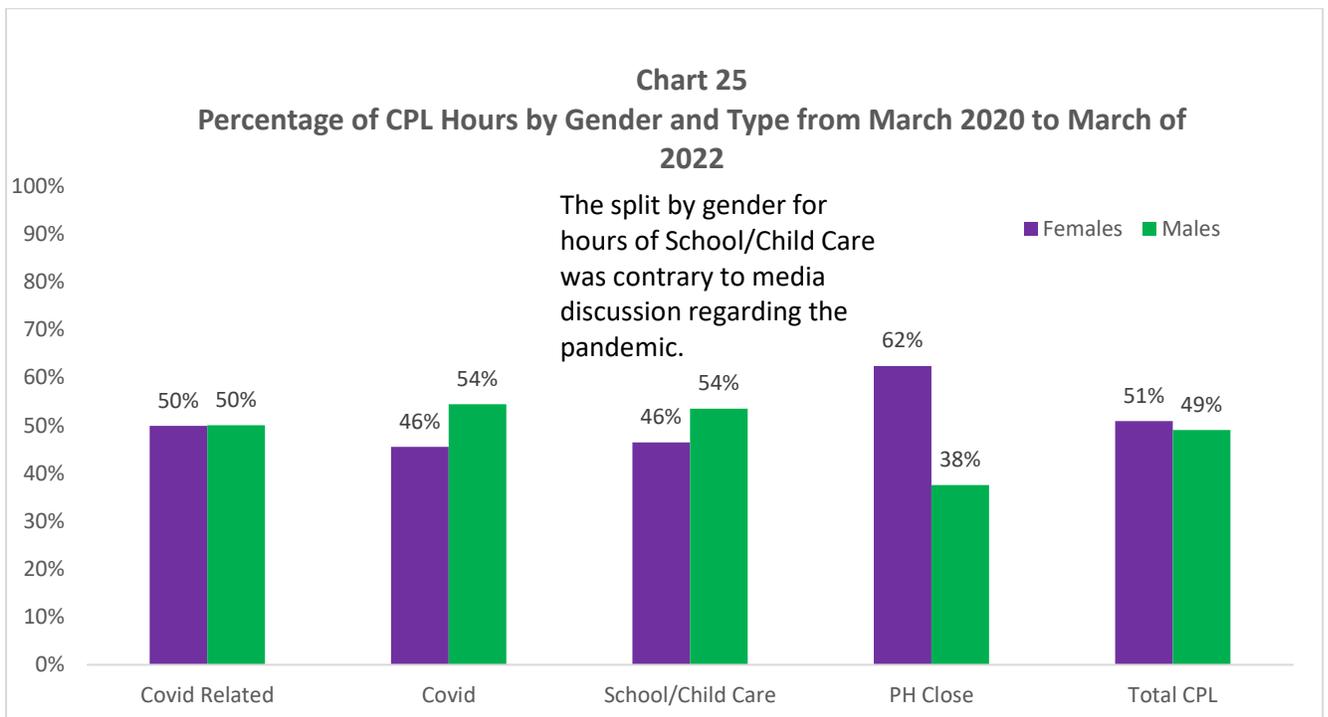
Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

Covid paid time off use by gender in total nearly matches the County workforce numbers however, use by paid time off type varied greatly with the largest gap in the use of PH Close where 62% of the hours were used by employees who identify as female.

The County’s overall workforce is 52% female and 48% male. The breakdown of paid time off use by gender for the two years of the pandemic showed overall use of 51% employees who identify as female and 49% employees who identify as male.

The use of School and Child Care leave was higher among employees who identify as male than females.

The Covid related category is evenly split between the two genders. Covid paid time off and School/Child Care showed 54% of the paid time off hours were used by people who identify as male. The paid time off code with the largest variance between the genders and the County workforce was PH Close where people who identified as females used 62% of all paid time off hours. PH Close was used in County Departments that are more predominately female employees. Policies put into place to help a historically disadvantaged groups, often help everyone. Chart 25 shows the use of paid time off by type and by gender and overall paid time off use by gender.

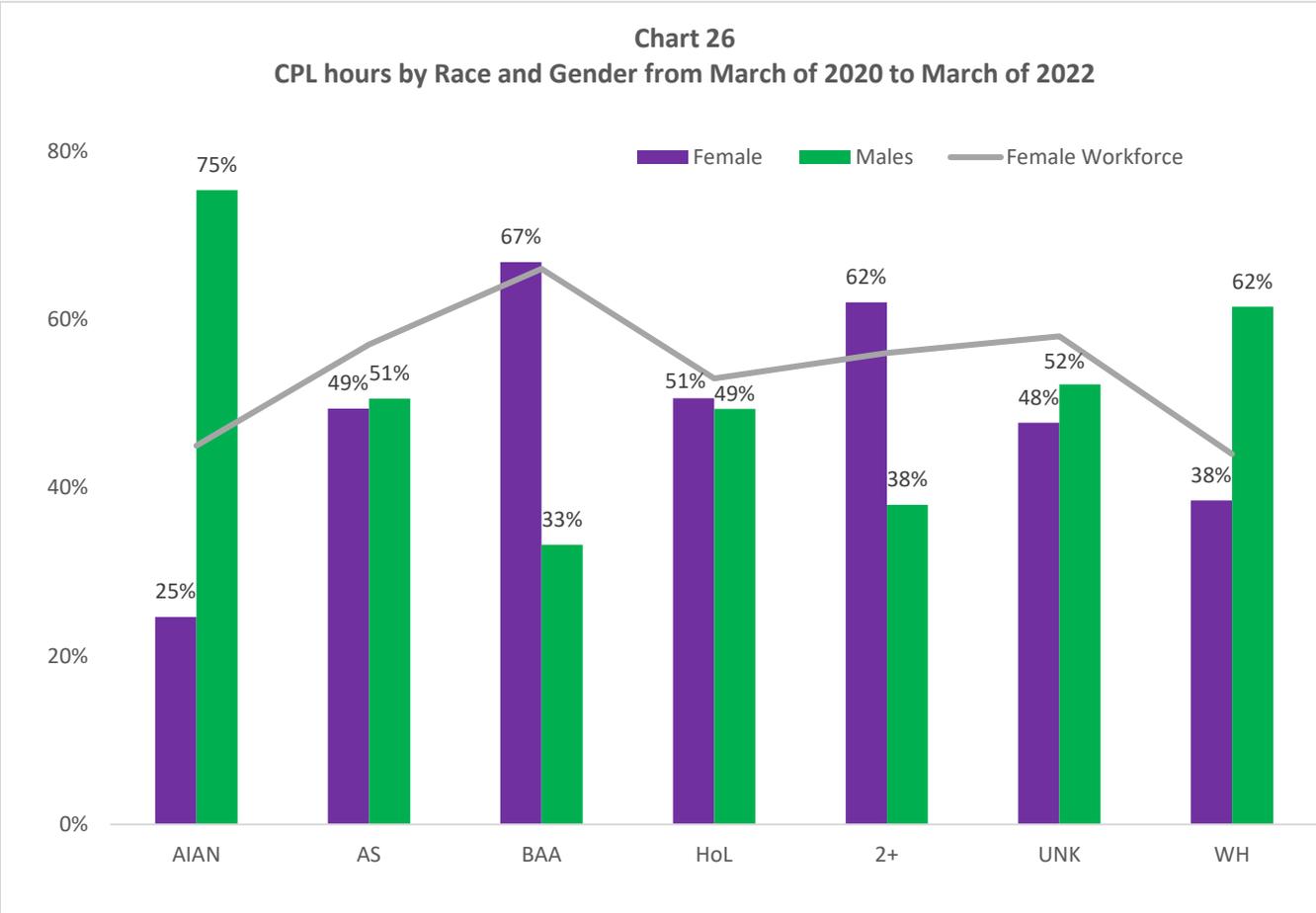


Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

The breakdown of paid time off use by race and gender shows a wide variety among the race/ethnicity and genders but for many groups, follows the workforce gender percentages.

The group with largest gap between genders was employees who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native where 25% of the paid time off use was by employees who identify as female. Their workforce share is 45% female.

While the data shows a large gap between genders for employees who identify as Black or African American, the gap is within 1% of the gender distribution for that group. Chart 26 shows the paid time off use by race and gender for the two years of the pandemic.

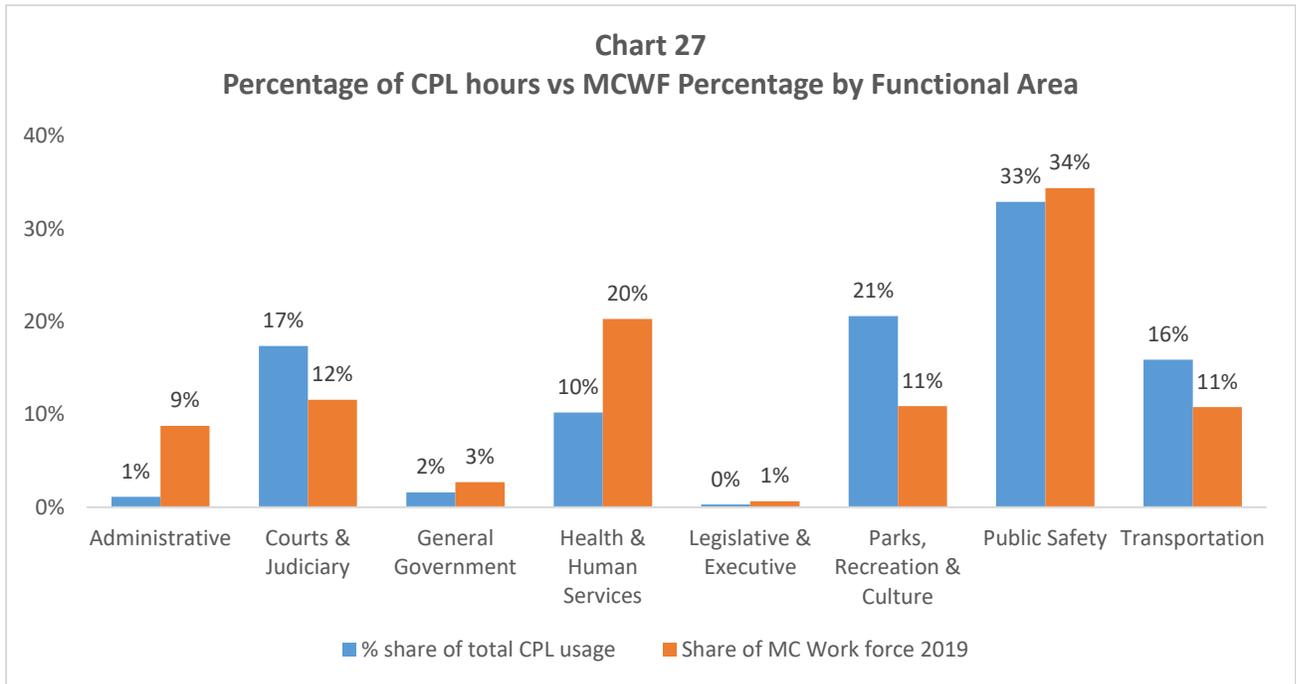


Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

We reviewed the use of paid time off by functional area and by type and found that areas less able to transition to telework had more paid time off use.

Reviewing the comparison of paid time off use to the share of the County Workforce by function area showed that areas that are more suited to telework, such as Administration, General Government, Legislative and Executive and Health and Human Needs had less paid time off use than their share of the County workforce. The areas who had larger use of paid time off compared to their County workforce were the Courts and Judiciary functional area, Parks, Recreation and Culture and Transportation. Public Safety had paid time off use that almost matched its share of the County workforce which is partially driven by the operation of the Jail and House of Correction which did not have a shut down. Chart 27 shows the paid time

off us by functional area compared to the share of the County workforce.

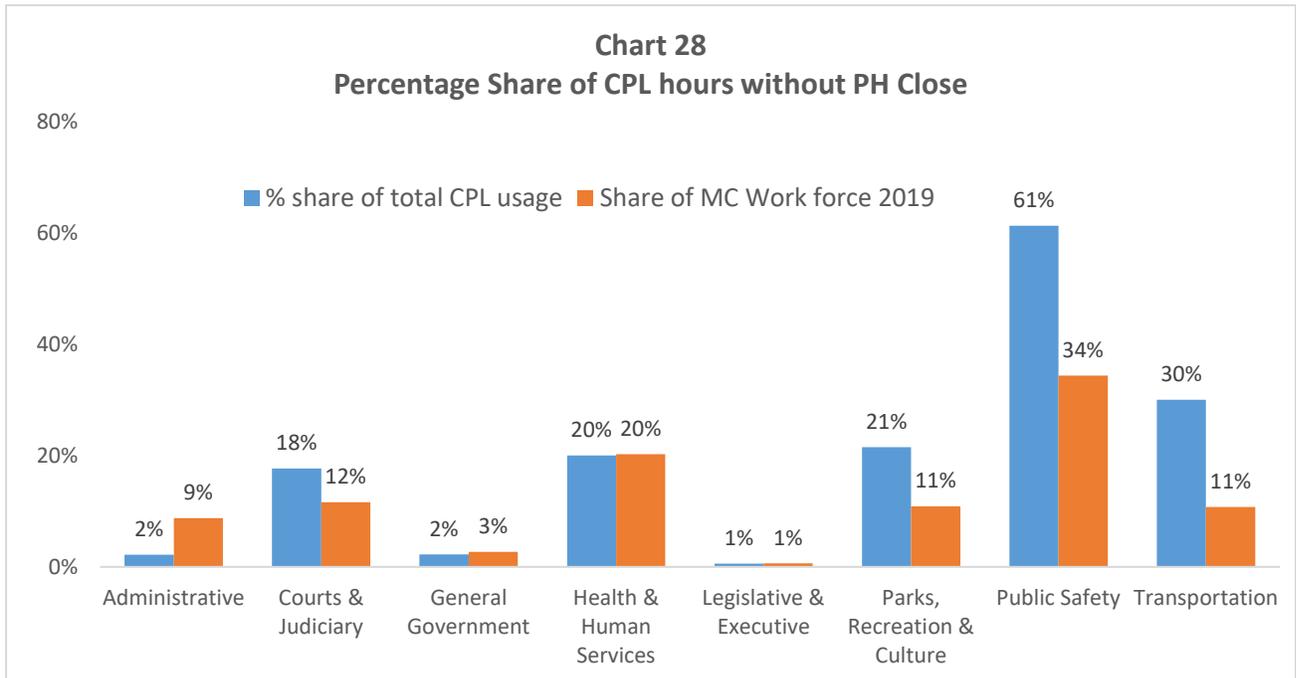


Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

Removing PH Close code from the distribution by functional area shows the use of CPL without the influence of whether areas were open and operating at the start of the pandemic.

Reviewing the comparison of paid time off use to the share of the County Workforce by functional area without PH Close showed three areas whose share of the use of CPL changed. Health and Human Services with PH Close accounted for 10% of CPL, without PH Close this area increased to 29% which matches its share of the workforce. The Public Safety functional area's share of CPL use almost doubled when PH Close was removed from 33% with PH Close to 61% without. This use reflects that this staff works in an area with a high level of risk of exposure due to staffing of the House of Correction and the Milwaukee County Jail with interaction with residents. These facilities also did not have a shut down when the pandemic started. The Transportation functional area, which does not include employees of the transit system, also saw its share

almost double from 16% with PH Close to 30% without. Chart 28 shows the use of CPL by functional area without PH Close.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

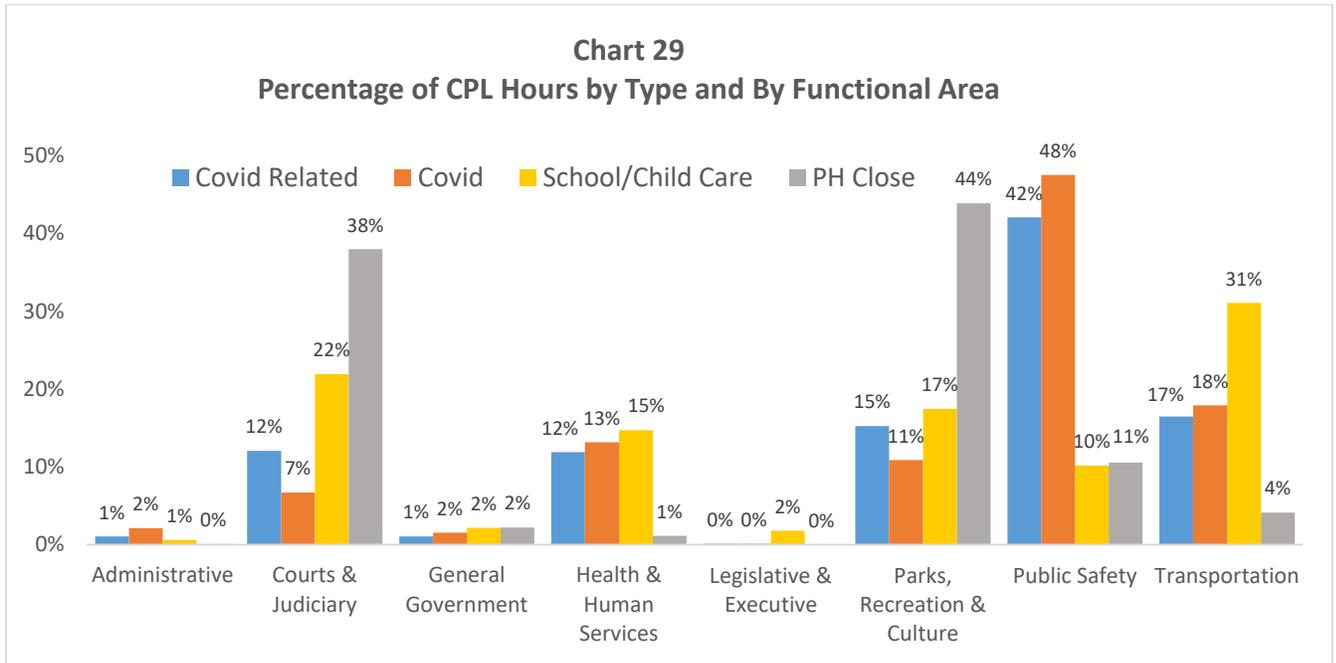
Analyzing the paid time off type by functional area shows a window into why certain functional areas had paid time off use.

Both the Parks, Recreation and Culture and Courts functional area saw a high level of PH Close use which is for staff able to work but unable to telework or report in due to facility closure. Courts staff needed to be converted to laptop use when the pandemic hit and required approval from the State of Wisconsin to operate in part remotely.

Public Safety's highest category of paid time off use was Covid followed closely by Covid Related. Public Safety use is partially driven by the operation of the Jail and House of Correction which did not have a shut down. Both are congregate living facilities with high risks for exposure and disease transmission.

Transportation's highest area of paid time off use was for School or Child Care. In our Pulling Back the Curtain Audit, we found that in 2019 the Transportation functional area was 85% male. This also may partially explain why the split for School Child Care use was 54% employees who identified as male. The large use by the Transportation functional area may have driven up the split of the paid time off by gender.

Chart 29 shows the paid time off hours by type and by functional area.



Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll System.

Section 4: Additional premiums were authorized during the pandemic for employees in select positions who worked in high risk areas. These premiums were paid more to people of color in part due to the County employing more people of color in the eligible positions.

There were enhancements offered to select employees via premiums and risk recognition during the pandemic.

Via both administrative orders and County Board action during the pandemic, premiums and risk recognition pay were offered to select positions. The goal of the policy was to provide an added incentive or boost to employees on the frontlines and in the high risk positions at the County. In this section we discuss the breakdown of the various pay enhancements compared to the overall racial/ethnic makeup of the County workforce except in the case of Correctional Officers where it is compared to both Countywide and Correctional Officer specific staffing levels.

Premiums and risk recognition pay show use by employees who identify as Black or African American at a higher rate than their share of the workforce.

Administrative Orders 12 and 16 created a premium pandemic pay structure and risk recognition pay for qualified employees. This pay was provided to employees with eligible roles in the following four departments: the House of Correction, Sheriff, Medical Examiner, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS staff included those working in the Division of Youth and Family Services, Housing, and the Behavioral Health Division's Crisis and Community Divisions. The eligible roles were based on criteria from the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The list of authorized positions included Correctional Officers, Registered Nurses and Forensic staff. In total the order included more than 70 title codes across the four departments. Since this pay was

Nearly half of the premium pandemic and risk recognition pay went to employees who identify as Black or African American.

not available to all County staff, the use of pay is driven by the employees within the eligible jobs. Later versions of the program offered the premiums only during hours in which the employee was performing a high risk task.

Payroll data showed the payment of 317,941 hours resulted in payments of \$1,014,528 for all race/ethnicities.

Employees who identify as Black or African American were 44% of those who received pandemic or risk pay while being 30% of the workforce. Employees who identify as White were 43% of those who received pandemic or risk pay while being 55% of the workforce.

Table 14 shows the distribution of pandemic pay hours by race/ethnicity.

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Percent of Pandemic Pay Hours</u>	<u>Percent of Workforce*</u>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1,817	0.6%	0.7%
Asian	5,643	1.8%	2.1%
Black or African American	141,154	44.4%	30.0%
Hispanic or Latino	25,009	7.9%	7.5%
Two or More Races	6,427	2.0%	1.2%
Unknown/Decline to Answer	2,425	0.8%	3.7%
White	135,346	42.6%	54.7%
Total	317,821		

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll system.

* The workforce percentage is based upon an average of 2020 and 2021 workforce data as of November 1 in each year. Numbers are rounded and we excluded any race/ethnicity with less than 10 employees.

Females accounted for 43% of pandemic and risk pay hours while males were 58%. Analyzing the data further down into race/ethnicity and gender identity shows that employees who

identify as Black or African American for both genders had a larger share of pandemic pay hours than their share of the overall County workforce. Black or African American employees who identify as female are 20% of the workforce and were 26% of the pandemic and risk pay. Black or African American employees who identify as male were 18% of the pandemic pay hours compared to being 10% of the workforce. White employees who also identify as female were 12% of the pandemic hours compared to being 24% of the workforce. Table 15 shows the Pandemic/Risk Recognition Pay by race/ethnicity and gender compared to the percentage share of the County's workforce.

**Table 15
Pandemic/Risk Recognition Pay Hours by Race/Ethnicity and Gender Compared to Workforce Share**

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Hours</u>		<u>Percent of Pandemic Pay Hours</u>		<u>Percent of Workforce*</u>	
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	570	1,247	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Asian	1,916	3,727	0.6%	1.2%	1.2%	0.9%
Black or African American	83,752	57,402	26.3%	18.1%	19.7%	10.3%
Hispanic or Latino	8,903	16,105	2.8%	5.1%	4.0%	3.5%
Two or More Races	2,682	3,745	0.8%	1.2%	0.7%	0.5%
Unknown	751	1,674	0.2%	0.5%	2.2%	1.6%
White	39,352	95,995	12.4%	30.2%	23.8%	30.9%
Total	137,926	179,895	43.4%	56.6%	51.9%	48.1%

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll system.

* The workforce percentage is based upon an average of 2020 and 2021 workforce data as of November 1 in each year. Numbers are rounded and we excluded any race/ethnicity with less than 10 employees.

The County Board voted in the fall of 2021 to create premiums for Correctional Officers at the House of Correction, the Sheriff's Office and the Department of Health and Human Services for employees compliant with the vaccine mandate. CO staffing does not follow overall County staffing by race.

Correctional Officer premiums were paid to Black or African American employees at a rate higher than their share of the Correctional Officer staff.

In November of 2021, the County Board implemented a \$3.00 per hour premium pay increase for Correctional Officer (CO) staff until December 31, 2022 who are compliant with the County’s vaccine mandate requirements and retroactive to October 3, 2021. The resolution stated that the competitive job market and recent action by neighboring jurisdictions in raising the pay for correctional staff has led to a high vacancy rate for COs which in turn has resulted in mandatory overtime. These items were included as justification for using federal funds released to local governments to navigate the pandemic.

During our review from October 3, 2021 to March 31, 2022, there were 401,530 hours paid out at the premium pay for COs. 70% of CO positions are filled by people of color while the overall County workforce is 43% people of color when unknowns or blanks are excluded.

Employees who identify as Black or African American are 50% of the CO workforce but accounted for 54% of the CO pay. Employees who identify as White are 27% of the County’s CO workforce and 25% of the CO pay. Table 16 shows the distribution of premium hours by race/ethnicity for COs.

**Table 16
Correctional Officer Premium Hours by Race/Ethnicity Compared to Workforce
From October 3, 2021 to March 31, 2022**

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Percent of Premium Pay Hours</u>	<u>Percent of Workforce in 20 & 21*</u>	<u>Percent of CO Staff 2021</u>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1,187	0.3%	0.7%	0.2%
Asian	2,384	0.6%	2.1%	1.0%
Black or African American	218,473	54.4%	30.0%	50.4%
Hispanic or Latino	36,391	9.1%	7.5%	9.2%
Two or More Races	4,616	1.1%	1.2%	1.5%
Unknown/Decline to Answer	36,842	9.2%	3.7%	11.0%
White	100,619	25.1%	54.7%	26.5%
Total	400,512			

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll system.

* The workforce percentage is based upon an average of 2020 and 2021 workforce data as of November 1 in each year. Numbers are rounded and we excluded any group with less than 10 employees.

Females were 45% of the Correctional Officers and 47% of the Correctional Officer premium pay.

Employees who identify as female accounted for 47% of the COs premium hours while employees who identify as male were 53%. The CO staffing is 45% female. Employees who identify as Black or African American and female accounted for 31% of the CO pandemic pay while being 28% of the County's workforce. Employees who identify as White and male are 18% of the pandemic pay and 20% of CO staff. All remaining employees were within 1% of their CO staffing level with their share of the CO premium pay. Table 17 shows the distribution of the CO Pandemic pay by race/ethnicity and gender.

**Table 17
Correctional Office Premium Pay by Race/Ethnicity and by Gender Compared to Workforce
From October 3, 2021 to March 31, 2022**

<u>Race/ Ethnicity</u>	<u>Hours</u>		<u>Percent of Pandemic Pay Hours</u>		<u>Percent of Workforce*</u>		<u>Percent of CO Workforce</u>	
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
AIAN	0	1,187	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%
AS	408	1,976	0.1%	0.5%	1.2%	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%
BAA	124,099	94,374	30.9%	23.5%	19.7%	10.3%	27.9%	22.5%
HoL	15,614	20,777	3.9%	5.2%	4.0%	3.5%	3.5%	5.6%
2+	128	4,489	0.0%	1.1%	0.7%	0.5%	0.4%	1.0%
UNK	17,426	19,416	4.3%	4.8%	2.2%	1.6%	5.6%	5.4%
WH	30,053	70,566	7.5%	17.6%	23.8%	30.9%	6.7%	19.8%
Total	187,728	212,785	46.7%	53.0%	51.9%	48.1%	44.8%	55.8%

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll system.

* The workforce percentage is based upon an average of 2020 and 2021 workforce data as of November 1 in each year. Numbers are rounded and we excluded any group with less than 10 employees.

The County Board voted in the fall of 2021 to create premiums for staff within the Department of Health and Human Services Adult Protective Services Program from October to December of 2021. This program was used by 15 employees.

There were 6,207 hours paid out at the premium pay for Adult Protective Services workers from October 2021 to December 31, 2021. We found three of seven race/ethnicities did not have any premium hours within the 15 employees who used the program. Employees who identify as female accounted for 74% of the Adult Protective Services workers premium hours.

The American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian and Two or More Races groups had no Adult Protective Services pandemic pay.

Employees who identify as Black or African American accounted for 43% of the Adult Protective Services workers pandemic pay. Employees who identify as Hispanic were 7% of the Adult Protective Services workers pay. Employees who identify as White were 21% of the Adult Protective Services' Workers pay. Table 18 shows the distribution of premium hours by race/ethnicity.

Table 18
Adult Protective Services Premium Pay by Race/Ethnicity Compared to Workforce

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Percent of Premium Pay Hours</u>	<u>Percent of Workforce in 20 & 21*</u>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0%	0.7%
Asian	0	0%	2.1%
Black or African American	2,738	43%	30.0%
Hispanic or Latino	418	7%	7.5%
Two or More Races	0	0%	1.2%
Unknown/Decline to Answer	1,915	30%	3.7%
White	1,352	21%	54.7%
Total	6,424		

Source: Audit Services Division created based upon data from the Milwaukee County Payroll system.

* The workforce percentage is based upon an average of 2020 and 2021 workforce data as of November 1 in each year. Numbers are rounded and we excluded any group with less than 10 employees.

Section 5: Administrative orders, County Board actions and payroll data tell a part of the pandemic story but the pandemic affected everyone. Degrees of impact varied by race, gender, job location and family life. We talked to 90 employees to hear about their experiences.

We interviewed 90 employees about their personal experience during Covid-19. Their stories paint a picture that statistics and administrative orders cannot.

We interviewed 90 Milwaukee County employees during our fieldwork for this audit. We solicited employees by asking departments for employees to contact, asking those employees we interviewed for co-workers who might be interested in talking to us and placing information in the County's weekly "What's Up" newsletter that is delivered to all employees at the County. We conducted our interviews between September of 2021 and March of 2022.

Of the 90 employees that were interviewed, 25 were male and 65 were female; 37 were people of color, two identify as Asian, nine identify as Hispanic/Latino, and 26 identify as Black or African American. There were 26 management employees and 64 non-management employees interviewed. 51 employees had children at home during the pandemic and of the 51 employees, 42 had children who did virtual school, and 6 replied that their daycares closed during the pandemic. 80 employees either rated the County with a 7 or better on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest or stated positive words for the County. Employees from at least 13 County departments were included in this review.

Excerpts from many of our interviews are included in the following pages. We have sorted comments for the employees into common topics we heard while conducting our interviews. The topic areas are: Telework, County paid leave, in-person work issues, reopening, mental health and stress, vaccines, interpretations of Administrative Orders,

Covid personal risk and other. We removed any identifying information the employee provided to protect their anonymity and allow for employees to feel comfortable providing answers to our questions. In addition, we underlined any suggestions for improvements that employees made to us or comments we thought should be highlighted.

Telework

Yes, very supportive. I was allowed to telework, and due to having my children at home and dealing with their virtual schooling needs, I was able to flex my workday schedule to do some of my work after normal business hours. My immediate manager was very flexible with whatever it took to get my job done.

The County was very generous, considerate and supportive with the things it offered to the employees. The employee stated that employee anxiety was kept down through clear communication the management team shared. Employee believes the County did a really good job supporting employees and sees teleworking as a benefit, a way to enhance employee flexibility and a way to help with employee retention.

Employee stated, yes, manager was amazing and very supportive and understanding of any family circumstances that came up. Employee stated that adjusting to a virtual platform was very rough at the beginning but has provided numerous teaching moments that has taught and allowed the participant to continue adjusting to the current work environment.

Employee shared that, personally, the employee would like to see telework continue as an option for County employees. Having the ability to telework does help to eliminate some hardship that employees have such as family situations or life changing events. The employee shared that there is a current employee who was faced with having to move to Appleton, WI or losing their position and because telework is currently in place, this employee did not have to quit their job. The participant also shared that maybe the telework option should be opened to allow out-of-state employees, as this would definitely open the door to attract a broader range of applicants.

Employee shared that when the County implemented the countywide use of TEAMS over Zoom, this caused a lot of issues. The employee stated that clients had an easier time of downloading and using Zoom but when they switched over to TEAMS, clients were not able to freely download and use TEAMS. The participant did share that IMSD was not very accommodating to this issue, but they were eventually able to have the employees setup with Zoom.

In my area we did everything with paper but when the shutdown occurred, we were thrust into doing everything electronically. We had to hit the ground running with the new way of conducting business electronically. I have never been computer savvy, so this was a big adjustment for me. My staff had to conduct appointments with the clients over the phone or virtually and that was very challenging because we like to see our clients in-person. I'm still teleworking but in a hybrid model. I go into the office three days per week. The hybrid model started about three months ago due to staff requesting time in the office. In our department we need to see clients in-person preferably.

Employee stated the shutdown had helped modernize the County by going paperless and feels teleworking is a “perk” and is being looked at as a way to attract people to work at the County since County pay is not too good.

Employee has worked for the County for 11 years and has not seen their children or grandchildren in two years and, due to medical issues, has implemented home deliveries and used Covid time off. Due to the pandemic, employee has had to adjust to teleworking, being furloughed, and managing staff remotely. To meet the challenge of remote managing, employee has implemented weekly staff meetings. A huge benefit of the pandemic has been the department going paperless with the sharing electronic documents and the implementation of employee’s weekly staff meetings. I would give the County 6 on a scale of 1-10. The biggest problem was getting the IT equipment for staff to work at home. We operate from the state system so trying to get computers that would work for both the State and County was a challenge. One of our biggest problems is dealing with staff so managers and supervisors know what they can and can’t do when it comes to covid protocols. Many managers and supervisors are State employees, and they are operating under the State guidelines which states that they have to be in the office, but the CEX is saying send as many people home to slow down the spread, so we are having a disconnect there. By not being in the office or people being in multiple locations, has required us to put electronic documents in a shared drive.

I think there is some jealousy towards the people who were able to work from home. I must add that there were people that worked from home that we weren’t able to get in contact easily. Makes you wonder what they were doing.

Re-opening

I teleworked until November 2020. We were told we could open the facility at that time, this was right when the pandemic was at its worst. I would have preferred opening that summer since the cases were at their lowest point. I just felt like I wasn’t being heard regarding the re-opening. It was very stressful covering all the open hours at that time too because we didn’t have enough staff. I believe they did as good as they could do. I feel very blessed that I do work for Milwaukee County, they did their best to keep us all working.

Mental Health – Stress

I must mention that the pandemic took a toll on mental health. Mental health as far as our customers and staff were concerned. Our customers are a big part of my job and the customers didn’t have our services available to them during the pandemic. Our customers come here to just let off steam sometimes by getting involved in physical activities. We also offer meals for the community, as well as help with homework and translation services (Spanish to English) for the children. All the services we offer I feel help our community with mental wellness. We received lots of anger from the public regarding our mask enforcement. It was hard for them to adjust to the requirement. Also, Milwaukee County continued to hire management staff as opposed to general ground workers which were very much needed.

While teleworking eliminated some stress, most of the stress was due to the inability to see family and friends as well as, in the beginning, working a lot of days and extra hours to get a major project up and running. Employee stated there was a need for an additional employee, but it took roughly six months to a year to hire one, so he gives Milwaukee County’s efforts an 8 out of 10. Employee believes that Milwaukee County’s hiring process could have been improved to help eliminate working the extra hours. At the beginning they worked over 100 days in a row, 40+ hours a week to get the major project up and running.

I am an employee with two small children at home. My husband and I pulled our kids out of daycare and school, so we were all at home together. Adjusting to all of us being at home all day every day and working from home was challenging. As a manager it has been challenging as well because I feel like I didn't know exactly what my staff was doing. I missed the conversations and connections I had with staff each day. We started having TEAMS meetings regularly just to connect. The pandemic has taken a toll on mental health with some of my staff. My staff did not feel comfortable working strictly from home every day. Me and my staff were redeployed from office jobs to outside jobs and most of them are office workers, so this was different, stressful.

Employee stated that the employee has been lucky in the sense that the employee and spouse were both able to work since the start of the pandemic, therefore no financial hardships occurred. The employee shared that the employee did contract the COVID-19 virus, but thankfully was still able to work due to being able to telework. Employee shared that it was very stressful due to having two young kids at home and trying to balance time for work and kids was hard because spouse worked outside of the home. The employee also shared that the employees at their worksite were considered essential workers, therefore, were required to be work onsite. The employees were upset that other workers were able to telework, but they had to work onsite. The employee did share that management would stop by to check-in with staff, provide pizza, and show appreciation for their continued service.

My spouse works 3rd shift and I work 1st shift. The issue was the kids being at home because I was in the office. To help lessen the stress level, my boss was flexible and would allow me to pick the kids up from school at 2 and then finish my work at home. I could do some of my work at home. I worked this hybrid telework schedule for 8 months until my spouse got on first shift.

Employee has worked at the County for 10 years. Employee has experienced extreme stress with juggling the duties of the job and childcare, especially when required to work unplanned mandatory OT shifts. Employee is on a 6-month waiting list to utilize the County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to help with stress. Due to the stresses of home life and work, the experience with EAP, and being an essential frontline worker in daily contact with residents the employee rates the support by the County a 1. Employee suggests that the County provide to essential workers some kind of Countywide childcare and/or childcare vouchers, maintain the premium pandemic pay for COs, and have on staff a psychologist or therapist to help staff. Additionally, employee feels that the County undervalues COs as essential workers who put their lives on the line every day and asks the County to evaluate and put the COs challenges into perspective. I did not get much sleep. It was stressful doing my job at the same time and not knowing at a moment's notice if I would have to work mandatory OT. In those instances, I would have to scramble to find childcare. Employee stated I would give a rating of 1. In addition to the mandatory OT, child care issues and EAP issues, this is based on no social distancing at my worksite. Even with rapid testing the residents still come up positive and we get spit on.

Employee said, at the beginning of the shutdown, the employee was stressed with figuring out how to perform their job going from in-person to Zoom or phone calls. This year the employee currently works in the office 3 days a week allowing for in-person interviews but teleworks 2 days a week. Some aspects of their job are still remote, and their job is affected by the limited equipment (phones, computers) available for use by their clients.

Employee stated, it was a very stressful period. My kids were at home doing virtual school and that didn't go well at all. I currently have a 7-year-old and a 9-year-old (at the time the 7-

year-old was just learning to read) and the 7-year-old is behind now in reading because he was in the grade where you start learning to read. It was hard to teach him because he had to have someone working with him because he could not read the computer to do his work. Luckily, my husband was home to help him read the computer while doing virtual schooling. Employee stated that they teleworked and are still not back in the office full-time. I work at home 2 days a week and at the office 3 days a week. Our department started this type of schedule in June 2020. Employee stated, there was nothing further the County could have done to help its employees. I was still able to work, work kept going on.

Employee has worked for the County for 8 years. I was considered an essential employee but not compensated with hazard pay. Employee stated being stressed, overwhelmed, and scared of working in-person and performing additional job duties while having no additional incentive for being essential was hard, which triggered things, more mental health things. Employee started teleworking a hybrid work schedule after the courthouse shutdown stating, you have to remember that just because the courthouse shutdown, the need for the service did not stop. Employee felt supported by management but was stressed by how Covid was affecting family members – death and suicide attempts. Employee was not furloughed and did not use FMLA/FFCRA or EPSL. Employee rates the County's efforts in supporting employees a 7 – 8. Besides the County offering EAP, employee would like the County to have an online site or onsite support system for mental health issues. Employee suggests better understanding from the County is needed by providing better training/communication for employees and parties when things shutdown. Employee stated, I was never sent home I was part of the essential team; it was scary because I didn't know if I was going to get sick. Every day I had to go to work, and this place was like a ghost town, it was scary. I had a lot of mental stress listening to the news, with things shutting down, with people dying and some being in my own family. It was not good. Besides the EAP services, I really feel that there could be more communication such as online services to talk to someone or offer meetings on Teams. Mental health became a reality for me and to be honest, something directly onsite would be very beneficial. I used to work for a private company, and I did appreciate the onsite clinic they had. I wished we had an onsite clinic for mental health, health etc.

Vaccines

Employee was really impressed with the way Milwaukee County handled the pandemic situation and making sure information gets out to the employees. However, employee said that the one thing that they wish was handled better would be the vaccination mandate, the time frame of when the information was relayed to the employees. Going forward, the employee said that they would like to see meetings and training continue via TEAMS (virtual), and the teleworking option to continue. Employee said, I've been really impressed with Milwaukee County, especially coming from private sector employment. The 2 weeks quarantine pay was great to have in place as an option for employees. Making sure employees have access to the vaccine was great. Also, the information in the "What's Up" newsletter was a nice touch. The County Executive's videos were great and a positive touch on all that was going on.

Employee was unable to telework. They, along with their staff, have had to adjust to working long 14–16-hour days and work a lot of overtime. The long workdays has led to stress in their home life with their fiancée. The excessive hours have led to low staff morale. Employee stated they think the vaccine mandate is good for their department. Their superiors have been very supportive of them by finding them a backup person. They also showed support to them and their staff by hosting a cookout for staff. The morale is terrible, not sure what we can do

to help it, and nothing is really helping it. I think overall with the vaccine mandate it is good for our setting even though I don't believe in forcing people to do what they don't want to do.

Employee really likes teleworking and is very appreciative of the flexibility of which the County and her manager and supervisor allowed her. Employee had one child at home which was doing virtual school for about 1 year while she teleworked, this was a huge adjustment. Employee was furloughed and did receive unemployment compensation for it. Employee said that they thought the County did an A- job with navigating employees through the pandemic, and they really appreciated the mask and the vaccination mandates.

In person Work – masks, distancing, long hours during pandemic

Employee stated that most people in their department didn't want to wear a mask or social distancing. Staff was used to being in the same vehicles together. It was hard telling people they couldn't be together in the same vehicle because normally the vehicles have 3 people in them. The department had to adjust the number of people in vehicles and develop alternative ways of getting people to the worksite such as using alternate vehicles.

Employee said, yes, I felt very much supported by staff. Our director did an amazing job with everything that was going on. She made sure that we were safe and taken care of. She also reassured us emotionally anytime we needed it. I just want to say that the mask mandate was hard to enforce with both customers, as well as with internal employees. I don't like being an enforcer with stuff like that. I would rate the County highly. It was just hard for everyone and there was no rulebook to go by. I think my health was highly valued by Milwaukee County.

Employee said I would say what I didn't like is that at the very beginning of the shutdown only two of us were working onsite while everyone else got to stay at home. I had to keep coming in and I felt this was unfair because everyone else didn't have to go in and I felt they should have rotated employees coming in.

The employee couldn't telework, did not take any kind of leave, and was not furloughed during the pandemic. The employee gave the County a "2" on a scale of 1-10, because they did not think it was fair for their department to be the only department open for in-person interaction during the pandemic.

Employee rates the County's efforts in supporting employees a 7 stating they did all they could. They did put the plastic up, they gave us masks and hand sanitizer, tissue etc. Employee believes that the electronic and processing aspects of the job could be done at home and feels that all people should be able to work from home not just certain personnel.

The employee would give the County a 9 on a scale of 1-10 for their efforts during the pandemic, because they feel that the County tried to provide a lot of flexibility with their job during a really difficult situation. Employee stated teleworking has been my biggest adjustment. I have never done telework prior to the pandemic shutdown. An adjustment was getting technology in place for staff to handle calls from the public from their homes. This transition was a brand-new way of doing our work, our service. It was a very tough scramble for the first few months getting things in place. Another adjustment was getting PPE for staff, which at a certain point once some were allowed to meet with some of the public again, included wipes for staff cars, masks for them too. It was just as challenging ordering PPE and distributing that PPE. We also had to distribute PPE to the numerous vendors that we work with. We also lost a lot of our volunteers due to the fear of catching Covid-19.

Employee has worked for Milwaukee County for about 17 years. The employee says during the pandemic it has been difficult adjusting to working so closely with guests because many of them don't always wear a mask. This employee would give the County an 8 on a scale of 1-10 for their efforts during the pandemic regarding its employees but would give them a 2 in their efforts regarding their area, department. When asked if the County could have done anything differently to address the pandemic regarding its employees, this employee said not the County, but their department's upper management could have done things differently. They went on to explain that upper management of their department could have come to the areas of the department and tried to understand the jobs of each area prior to making the decisions that they made. They went on to say that in the area we are sent to, typically nobody would be wearing a mask. If you said something about the rules that they should be wearing a mask, they would get upset and you then would be treated like garbage, and that drove me crazy. I don't know how to fight anymore. There were a lot of supervisors that didn't wear a mask, and the staff didn't wear masks.

CPL - County Paid Leave

Employee's immediate supervisor and management up the chain were 100% supportive for employee and staff answering questions, providing time off for the kids or just giving staff what they needed. Employee would rate Milwaukee County's efforts in supporting its employees a 9 and doesn't think anything should have been done differently. The County did a 9. They tried. There are so many employees and different situations so there is some that will not apply to some people. I feel that it worked well for my department. There are a lot of people in my department that have kids and they used the time off available for them. Even now they are having to use the EPSL. I feel it was good.

Employee stated employees feel safe, and they feel whatever needs to be done is for their good. Staff with kids feel supported with the EPSL and it has helped the newer staff with kids keep their jobs, it has been "a life saver" for them. Employee stated the County did a really great job scrambling to give us EPSL time off right from the get-go. I commend them for that. Employee thinks the County is doing very well at doing the safe things, has no complaints and doesn't think the County could have done anything different to support its employees.

Employee said, I used EPSL when I was sick with COVID-19. The mask mandate and social distancing was something that supported me as well. Maybe more details in the instructions for requirements of employees. I know I wasn't sure about the time off instructions and how that all works regarding COVID-19.

Employee has only been in their current role since March 2021 but has worked for Milwaukee County and within their department for 22 years. The employee says they have worked in-person basically since the pandemic began and that wearing a mask all day at work is hard but needed. Employee has no children but needed time off during the pandemic for lots of necessary appointments for their mother. The employee was not furloughed and did not use any leave time during the pandemic shutdown. The employee says that their manager was supportive especially with allowing them to take time off to take care of their mother's needs with appointments for her. The employee says that they had to do training for their new position via ZOOM and that was very difficult. The employee says that they would give Milwaukee County an 8 or 9 for their efforts during the pandemic because they believe Milwaukee County had so much to do in a short amount of time. Moving forward the employee would like to see their department setup return to the way it was pre-pandemic.

Employee stated I started working from home through the pandemic and I actually started working from home a couple of weeks prior to the pandemic shutdown because I am

immunocompromised. My supervisors understood my condition and allowed me to work from home for health safety concerns. I caught Covid-19 and had to be hospitalized. I was hospitalized for 30 days, and I was put on a ventilator, received dialysis and was in a coma. Once released from the hospital I entered a nursing home where I lived for 30 days. At the nursing home I received speech therapy 5 days a week because I wasn't speaking properly and couldn't think straight when answering questions. and had a long recovery before I could return to work. My doctor said I had what is called covid-brain. This was all a blow to my self-esteem. The employee says they would give Milwaukee County a 10 on a scale of 1 – 10 for their efforts during the pandemic and says they felt very supported by the County. Employee felt very supported by their manager and colleagues as well. They allowed me to comeback slowly and ease into my job especially since I had covid-brain. Human Resources told me they could replace me, but my managers kept my position for me. They were looking out for me, and I very much appreciate them.

Interpretation of Administrative Orders

Employee feels lucky the pandemic did not really affect them. Their supervisors were and are very supportive of employees by working very hard themselves and being understanding if someone needs to stay home or use time off for childcare. Employee feels the County could have worded some of the Administrative Orders differently by using more precise language so that everyone did things the same and could not interpret them differently. Employee stated, with respect to the administrative orders, they were a little difficult to interpret. So maybe a better understanding of who they affect and how to make sure that they are understood and interpreted the same way between departments. The forms I had to fill out at the beginning were difficult so I would say have more understanding of the make-up of departments and what is expected of them before creating the administrative order.

Employee thinks dealing with the pandemic was stressful and setting up the office equipment at home in the beginning was somewhat tough to do. Employee said that there was so much communication from the administrative orders, and it became overwhelming. Employee felt very supported by their direct supervisor and whole leadership team. I would give the County overall a "10". Dealing with what we were going through with the pandemic, I couldn't ask for better support from my employer. I think there was great communication, great support from my manager and the leadership team, and I was allowed flexibility to deal with my household needs and my children. Also, maybe the vaccine mandate could have been communicated earlier.

Employee stated that the administrative orders backed up our own policies and procedures and made sure staff were wearing PPE and distancing properly. I referred to that administrative order a lot and other departments would call us with questions and issues. We had some exceptions for staff with medical conditions, and I would refer to that administrative order and send it around to let people know if there was an exemption. This was big in educating our employees and I needed to keep the content of the administrative order simple to get the point across.

Employee said, during the start of the pandemic, since we have live plants in the facility, we had one employee come in everyday to look after the plants. This person was the only one that worked in the facility at that time. I just think the planning and mandates were geared more towards office employees and not facilities like ours that allows the public to enter. The mask mandate is good, but it is very hard to enforce. The contention we had to face when we tried to enforce it with the public was hard.

Employee has worked in their role and for Milwaukee County for 13 years and is considered an essential employee. This employee says wearing a mask and socially distancing is an adjustment they had to make, but it was challenging with outside parties that they work around. The employee says the pandemic affected their home life because they were more cautious when they arrived home from work with immediately taking a shower so as not to give their family Covid-19 if they had potentially contracted it. Employee was not furloughed and did not use any kind of leave during the pandemic. This employee had 2 preschoolers that they kept at home during the pandemic to reduce the chances of them contracting the virus. The employee says the administrative order allowing them to receive Hazardous Pay was nice. This employee says the County did a good job with their efforts during the pandemic, they have no complaints and could not think of anything the County could have done differently to handle the obstacles of the pandemic.

The employee says they would give Milwaukee County a 9 or a 10 on a scale of 1-10 for their efforts during the pandemic because they feel all the procedures were in place during the shutdown. However, the employee says that an information hotline could have been available to answer questions employees may have helped.

Employee said, I could read some of the documented procedures and still not know exactly what to do. The administrative orders were somewhat difficult to understand. The pandemic affected our division and our individual jobs differently from other areas of the County because of the nature of our jobs. I think they could have given the Directors of each area a little bit more latitude to tweak protocols, procedures for their area. I think it should be a Director's right to modify things in their own areas. One size fit all for employees never works but I know this was a tough situation and it was new for everyone. Also, revenues should have come second after employee safety.

Covid Personal Risk

Employee said, we didn't have masks at the beginning of the shutdown so I would take a scarf and wrap my nose and mouth with it. We didn't have partitions in the beginning, so we had to put up plastic at the window openings where we saw customers. We brought in bleach to wipe things down. I was one of only a few staff members that came into the office, others were teleworking.

Employee said, I worked in-person at the beginning of the shutdown, then about one month to one and a half months at home. While we were working from home, they decided staff needed to return to the office because they felt we were more productive at the office. It became very stressful for me, and it still is very stressful. They are putting more and more work on us. We have more job duties than we did prior to the pandemic. It is very stressful, and I believe that's why I keep getting sick. We are doing more work but there's no recognition for those that must come into the courthouse and work in-person. On top of the added amount of work we are getting, there is concern about the customers that are coming in without a mask on and that I could catch covid-19, and this is very upsetting.

Employee stated I would give them a 5 on a scale of 1-10. My reasoning for the score is that I know things were put in place but I'm not sure if those procedures were utilized. I know for a fact that employees who traveled to hotspots during the pandemic did not quarantine after they came back from their travels. Also, they put up Plexiglas dividers between the cubicles, but there is about an inch opening between the dividers. With that big of an opening, I just don't feel that was protection enough for me not to catch Covid-19 if someone comes in with the virus.

Employee stated (asked if name or any identifying information would be present as feels uncomfortable talking about this) I feel my supervisor doesn't take the pandemic seriously and thinks it's not a big deal. My supervisor didn't get vaccinated until it was mandated, and they have even contracted Covid and was asymptomatic. I don't think they care too much about us catching Covid but is very insistent with us taking the health screening. I feel my supervisor wants us to pass the health screening regardless of how we are feeling which makes me feel as though I have to fudge that health screening for me to be able to show up for work. I know that other coworkers felt the same as I regarding that health screening. But I wouldn't blame it all on my supervisor because I feel they were doing this at the direction of their managers. I have Covid now and my supervisor requires me to show proof.

Employee says they only worked from home about 2 months at the beginning of the pandemic and then returned to the office due to the nature of their job. The employee says they feel exposed to the virus because they take the bus to and from work every day and some people on the bus do not wear a mask. Due to the pandemic, the employee states most of their job duties have been converted to online. With my job lots of radical change took place and work shifted to an online process. Because of that change, right now the majority of what I do is online and none of my job was online before the pandemic. In my department we are playing catch up with our work and it's somewhat overwhelming. Due to the pandemic, we are very much behind on our work in my department. The employee says they have not been able to see their family for 2 years due to the pandemic and that breaks their heart. Employee stated "Yes and No" when asked if they feel supported by their supervisor and coworkers I can give you an example though. People were coming in sick with Covid-19 and they got past security. People have told me they just fudge the answers on the health screening. Whenever someone came in sick, I would report it to the supervisor, and they would send that person home. But even if they are sent home, at that point you have already been exposed to the virus so what can you do?

Employee was hired during the pandemic and has been in their position and been an employee of Milwaukee County since May 2021, less than a year. Employee experienced challenges with contacting HR during and after the orientation process. The employee says that not every employee is on the same page with the administrative orders and wearing a mask. This employee said the pandemic hasn't affected them much personally but feels they may be affected regarding promotions and other opportunities as a Milwaukee County employee due to not being vaccinated. When asked if they felt supported by their colleagues during the pandemic, the employee stated I feel mixed on the answer for this. One minute I would say yes, they are supportive, but the next minute they are vindictive. I think the vindictive behavior comes from those employees who have been grandfathered in. They do just enough to get by. I can't say that my answer for this question would be a resounding yes.

Employee has worked for Milwaukee County for 3 years. The employee has had to adjust to the pandemic by being extremely cautious with not contracting COVID-19 since they have a severe medical condition. Also, they miss the social connections they had at work since they have had to telework since the start of the pandemic. The employee says the effects of the pandemic have been very hard on them because they have had to stay indoors mainly, and they have lost four loved ones due to the pandemic. This employee said their supervisor has been fantastic and their coworkers have been supportive, their team is great. Employee stated I think that they need to be more aware that they have people working for Milwaukee County that have disabilities, and not just think about the minority population. I think the focus has been more on minorities working for the County and not enough focus on people with disabilities that work for the County.

Employee says their manager and coworkers have been supportive during the pandemic, however, upper management has not been so supportive. The Employee stated, the Director is communicative and wants to change things for the better. Employee was not able to telework, was furloughed and received unemployment compensation for their time off. This employee says they would give the County a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-10 for their efforts during the pandemic because they feel they weren't able to get basic support and basic cleaning supplies at the beginning of the pandemic. The employee said they think the County could have handled the reopening of their facility better, relooked at reducing capacity limits specific to their building, enforce the public to wear masks, and have better communication regarding exposure protocols. I would give them a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-10. We struggled to get just basic support at the very beginning of the pandemic. We couldn't get basic cleaning supplies in this building even though the facility had the supplies. We did not get hazard pay and they wouldn't even have discussions on this with us. It was very frustrating. The numbers of people coming into the facility was just too many and we felt very unsafe. Our building is designed to be where people are close together. Lots of people coming into the facility didn't wear a mask and would come right up to us and talk to us. We brought issues to the attention of upper management, but they always rejected our ideas, suggestion. Security said there is nothing they can do about the public not wearing masks. I think they rejected our ideas because upper management all work from home, and they don't see what's going on like we do. We want everyone to know that communication regarding exposure to the virus has been a huge issue. We didn't feel happy about the exposure protocols.

Other

Employee states that Milwaukee County's efforts were great and could not have asked for anything better. The employee shared that at times, it seemed like an information overload due to all the information coming in and trying to understand it all.

Employee stated, the County has been excellent. I couldn't ask for more because everyone was dealing with the unknown. I believe the County did everything for the betterment of their employees.

Employee stated, I want to say thanks to IMSD with all their help with setting up all the additional computer equipment.

Employee stated that the department was furloughed for 4 hours a week and was able to receive unemployment compensation for it. The employee shared that the County did an excellent job on providing the County employees with this option and that didn't burden the employees, it benefited them. The employee would like to continue with the ability to telework, or at least, see some type of hybrid option.

Employee stated, I would give Milwaukee County an "8" on their efforts for employees during the pandemic. They did a pretty good job with providing information. With our department, they could have done a little better as far as rules for my department and not just having general rules for the County overall. My day-to-day has changed from how it used to be as far as conducting business, which is good. Business dealings have been enhanced due to technology, so I do not need to meet with customers in-person. I think this works better for me because I can do more through emails, TEAMS, and by phone. I feel like my work performance is better because I am more accessible.

Employee has teleworked since the beginning of the pandemic shutdown. Employee was deployed to work outdoors for a couple of hours each week at the beginning of the pandemic

shutdown and was not pleased about this. Employee thinks Milwaukee County did a great job handling the pandemic and thinks IMSD did an amazing job with all the setups for County employees.

Employee stated, I don't see what they have really done for employees except for giving us the ability to work from home, which I guess helped. I would say on a scale from 1-10 I would give the County a "6". I feel they didn't fail me, but they didn't do anything more for me.

Employee response when asked if they teleworked, Yes, I started working in the office about 3 months ago. I work from home 2 days a week, but it depends on the schedule of the person in charge. There's still work that I can do from home. Me, the person in-charge and my colleagues talk and make the schedule work for us all.

Employee's manager was very supportive and explained that having the ability to adjust their working hours was very helpful. The employee shared that in their department, they're always reminded to, "do what you need to do" and "family comes first, and your job comes after that."

Employee has worked for Milwaukee County for about 6 years. The employee said having to adjust to not seeing clients face-to-face was a big adjustment, as well as being away from co-workers. This employee says working from home blurs the lines between worktime and off-time. Employee says their immediate supervisor as well as their coworkers have been supportive during the pandemic.

Employee said due the pandemic and the shutdown of the Freeway Flyer forced this employee to drive their own vehicle to work which increased their transportation budget from \$10 to at least \$80 per month. This employee and spouse had contracted COVID-19 and were not able to work for just over 2 weeks. The employee teleworked 3-4 hours a day at the very beginning of the shutdown but returned to the office full-time in-person about 2 weeks into the shutdown. Employee was not furloughed. Employee did not have children at home but had a father who was admitted into the hospital which cause lots of anxiety for them. Employee stated that their manager/supervisor were very supportive. Employee said that the County did an amazing job with navigating through the pandemic and that they cannot think of anything they could have done better. I think the County's efforts were amazing. The level of support by all County officials was just amazing, well done. Also, I did use the 80 hours that were available to employees, so that was something the County did that was very helpful.

Employee stated that they would give Milwaukee County a 6 or 7 on a scale of 1-10 for their efforts during the pandemic but would give the County a 3 for their efforts regarding essential employees. This employee would have liked the County to have spoken directly to the employees who worked in the trenches to get their thoughts on what should have been done during the pandemic. Employee stated that there are only a limited number of staff who can work with a certain animal, so we all must make sure we are very careful outside of work as well with Covid protocols so that we don't get sick, because if we get sick there aren't many people who could step in and do our jobs with the animals.

Employee said on a scale of 1-10 they would give the County an 8 for their efforts during the pandemic. However, this employee added that they would give their administration a 5 for their efforts during the pandemic because the administration kept changing things and didn't communicate with the staff that was directly dealing with the public. This employee added that they feel that staff is running on fumes and morale is very low.

Section 6: Findings and recommendations.

In 2019 the County began a process to work toward its goal of achieving racial equity at the County. No one anticipated that riding out a two plus year pandemic would impact the progress toward achieving that goal. The County's overall workforce distribution by race/ethnicity only changed by near or less than one percent from 2019 to 2022 for every race/ethnicity. This can be viewed as a success given the reported impact of the pandemic on women and women of color nationally. However, when reviewing the employee data the County did experience a high level of separation for women of color especially employees who identify as Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino during the pandemic. During this time period, the County did hire people of color at a higher rate, but those hires did not fully replace those who left County service resulting in a net loss of 158 women of color, and notably, a net loss of 140 employees who identify as Black or African American and female. Obtaining an understanding, if possible, of why this loss occurred could provide the County with a guide to achieving its racial equity goal by retaining more women of color, therefore, we recommend:

1. *DHR review all information available, including those contained in personnel files, exit interviews, and follow-up with direct supervisors to understand why these employees voluntarily separated and come back with a report on the results of this review and targeted retention strategies. DHR should report back to the County Board within one year with results and recommendations on how to increase retention of women of color.*

A key component of Milwaukee County's vision to achieve racial equity centers on diversification of the County's workforce. The hiring data for 2021 shows 238 employees hired who do not show a selected race/ethnicity or decline to answer. This hinders analysis of the County's race and ethnicity data. We received multiple answers to the cause. While we did see evidence indicating the problem has been resolved for 2022 hiring, at the time we completed fieldwork on this project the existing data has not been fixed. The May 16, 2022 issue of

the County's weekly "What's Up" newsletter included a solicitation for employees to correct their demographic data. The lack of data and the outlier for "unknowns" for 2021 hinders the ability to analyze the County's data and will continue to do so if not corrected, therefore, we recommend:

2. *DHR should work with the Office of Corporation Counsel to craft a plan to contact impacted County employees who have unknown listed as their race/ethnicity to request that they update the data. DHR should report back with an updated report on 2021 hiring data as soon as practicable but no later than within one year.*

We conducted interviews with 90 County employees to hear their experiences with the pandemic. The employees came from a variety of areas and represented a variety of race/ethnicities and genders. The County is a large, diverse institution that offers many services that are distinct from another. Many employees commented that policies were too general and did not take into account the variety of work spaces the County operates. The ability to telework for some positions and not others was a repeated topic from many employees. The staff we talked to had many suggestions from the frontline and living within County policies of how things could be improved and what changes they would like continued. We included in the audit a subset of testimonies, therefore, we recommend:

3. *DHR should review employee testimonial excerpts contained in the audit and evaluate whether the proposals could be implemented and studied further and report back to the County Board in six months with the results of the review.*

The County received high marks from employees during our fieldwork interviews for the most part. The Covid-19 pandemic was a constantly shifting environment with federal and state changes needing to be implemented at a rapid pace. The County issued 21 Administrative Orders with 77 revisions from March 2020 to March 2022. The orders were complex with pages of detailed procedures, and many employees we spoke to admitted that it was difficult to keep up with the changes and understand the changing County protocols. As the County enters its third year of reacting to the pandemic, a reflection upon what worked

well and what could be improved would provide a road map for future situations like Covid-19, therefore, we recommend:

- 4. DHR should pull together a pandemic lessons learned from the last two years and issue a guide for future actions including a review of communication of policies to managers and staff.*

AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this audit were to identify polices designed and enacted by Milwaukee County to assist its employees during the Covid-19 pandemic and to analyze the impact, and overall satisfaction and feeling of support these polices had on full time employees. We reviewed the use of Covid Paid Leave by a variety of demographics including by race, gender, functional area and hourly rate. We compared the separation rate at Milwaukee County to the national separation rate for 2019 2020 and 2021 and reviewed the separation and hires at Milwaukee County by a variety of demographics including by race, gender, functional area. In addition we reviewed the impact upon employees from interviews conducted with employees.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

We limited our review to the areas specified in this Scope and Methodology Section. During the course of the audit, we:

- Reviewed relevant regulations, policies, administrative procedures and orders, budgets, resolutions, and County Board and Committee minutes, and County Legislative Information Center pertaining to Covid-19 Pandemic Administrative Orders and informational reports on Milwaukee County employees.
- Reviewed applicable County and State Emergency Proclamations, County Ordinances and Administrative Manual sections, State Statutes, Administrative Code, and Federal regulations and rules sections to ensure compliance with state and local laws.
- Assessed internal controls relevant to the audit objectives. Based on the review no Internal Control processes relevant to the audit objectives exist.
- Interviewed and corresponded with County Department Heads throughout the County to obtain a clear understanding of the impact of the pandemic to departmental operations and employees.
- Interviewed essential and nonessential employees throughout the County to obtain a clear understanding of the impacts of the pandemic and County policy on their employment within the County.
- Identified and charted issues identified during employee interviews noting any patterns.
- Compared Covid related policies and procedures of Milwaukee County to City of Milwaukee, Dane County and the State of Wisconsin.

- Reviewed relevant Covid related payroll codes.
- Obtained and analyzed employee hiring and separation data by race, by gender, by race and gender, and functional area to obtain a clear understanding of the impact on the County workforce during the pandemic.
- Analyzed the County payroll for a 24 month period to review the use of the Covid Paid Leave by race, by gender, by race and gender, and functional area.
- Analyzed the payment of risk recognition, pandemic premiums and premiums for Correctional staff and Adult Protective Services staff by race, by gender, by race and gender.
- Reviewed National and State Civilian workforce labor data for women and men by for the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.



Department of Human Resources

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

Date: June 23, 2022

To: Jennifer Folliard, Director of Audits

From: Margo Franklin, Chief Human Resources Officer

Subject: Response to the June 2022 Audit – Minding the Gap: Employee Friendly County Policies Did Not Entirely Stem the Loss of Women of Color During COVID-19 and Will Require Efforts by the County to Achieve its Goal of Racial Equity

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) provides the following responses to the four (4) recommendations as noted on page 69 of the audit report.

Recommendations:

- 1. DHR review all information available, including those contained in personal files, exit interviews, and follow-up with direct supervisors to understand why these employees voluntarily separated and come back with a report on the results of this review and targeted retention strategies. DHR should report back to the County Board within one year with results and recommendations on how to increase retention of women of color.**

Department of Human Resources (DHR) is committed to partnering with Milwaukee County leaders to make Milwaukee County an “employer of choice” for all current and future employees. By identifying the key drivers of employee retention and the root causes of employee turnover, DHR can recommend the appropriate strategies and tactics to help promote and create a culture of engagement and inclusion for all employees. A variety of tools are used to identify these key drivers and root causes including all employee engagement surveys, employee focus groups, stay surveys, and the systematic review and analysis of other data like separation, absenteeism, and exit interview data, among others. Systematically analyzing employee engagement and inclusion related data will improve DHR’s ability to improve the retention of women of color and contribute to making Milwaukee County an employer of choice for all employees.

- 2. DHR should work with the Office of Corporation Counsel to craft a plan to contact impacted County employees who have unknown listed as their**

race/ethnicity to request that they update the data. DHR should report back with an updated report on 2021 hiring data as soon as practicable, but no later than within one year.

DHR is committed to encouraging employees to self-identify and to voluntarily update their confidential demographic information in Dayforce. Significant steps have already been taken to reduce the number of employees classified as “unknown” including a video from the County Executive encouraging employees to update their information and other messaging. DHR will continue to support communication and marketing campaigns encouraging employees to provide their demographic information. Critical to the success of this effort is also helping employees understand the importance of collecting this demographic data. DHR and all County leaders must work to create an environment of trust where employees feel comfortable providing this information. DHR will work to communicate how self-identification and collecting demographic information are aligned with the mission and vision of Milwaukee County.

- 3. DHR should review employee testimonial excerpts contained in the audit and evaluate whether the proposals could be implemented and studied further and report back to the County Board in six months with the results of the review**

Gathering “voice of the employee” feedback is critical to identifying actionable process improvement ideas and to ensure employees feel that their concerns are being heard. DHR is committed to further analyzing the voice of the employee themes identified in this audit and to identifying any potential actions to help improve retention of all employees.

- 4. DHR should pull together a pandemic lessons learned from the last two years and issue a guide for future actions including a review of communications of policies to managers and staff.**

DHR will partner with leaders from throughout the County to conduct a hindsight review of the steps taken since March 2020 to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 to Milwaukee County employees and the people they serve. This wide-ranging review will include a review of various employee related communications, policies, and procedures. Systematically analyzing these lessons learned may better inform the County’s ongoing response to the pandemic and identify a more effective response to similar challenges in the future.