

ByCOUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 19, 2024

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

From: Aaron Hertzberg, Executive Director, Department of Administrative Services

Subject: Department of Administrative Services 2023 Annual Report

File Type: Informational Report

This informational report provides a report on how Department of Administrative Services (DAS) set and achieved its 2023 goals.

POLICY

This report aligns to Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health.

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health
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BACKGROUND

[File 22-104](#) amends Chapter 108 to require that “annually, by April 30 of each year or sooner, each Milwaukee County department leader and/or their designee(s) shall provide a written and oral report outlining their year-end results to a Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors committee. The reports shall, at a minimum:

- (a) Indicate the year-end goals the department set in the prior year
- (b) Share the rationale and relevance of the department’s performance metrics (i.e. explaining why they are “SMART” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, and extending) and how they align to the county’s racial equity strategy, if applicable)
- (c) Report the department’s year-end results relating to the goals it had set, and
- (d) Provide a thorough analysis clearly articulating why goals were significantly exceeded, met, or not met.
- (e) Explain the department’s progress in creating a departmental-level strategic plan that aligns to the countywide strategic plan and provide an update about future plans to revise and enhance the departmental-level plan in the year ahead.”

[File 22-657](#) The Department of Administrative Services 2021 Annual Report.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

- 1A: Reflect the full diversity of the County at every level of County government
- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government
- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

Alignment to the above strategic goals is articulated in response to the questions below.

BODY

1. What were the top 3 goals of your department 2023? Please explain why they are “SMARTIE” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, inclusive, and equitable) and how they align to the county’s racial equity strategy.
 - a. **Goal 1:** By the end of 2023, achieve a position fill rate of 87.5% across the Department, while more closely aligning the departments demographic measures to the Milwaukee County population we serve.

The Department of Administrative Services, like many other departments has struggled with employee recruitment and retention. Low position fill rates (high position vacancy), significantly impacts our ability to provide quality service to our customer departments and the public at-large. This also has a compounding impact on employees that are often expected to pick up additional workloads or feel the stress of project delays.

To ensure alignment to the County’s Strategic goal 1A, a focus was put on tracking demographics as part of the charge to fill positions and better understanding the talent pool.

The goal has wide ranging impacts on all four of DAS’s strategic objectives: 1. Employee Engagement, 2. Operational Excellence, 3. Customer Service and 4. Racial Equity.

- b. **Goal 2:** Set a path to allocate and spend the \$113M in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding that's been allocated for Capital Projects by the established Act timelines while delivering project outcomes.

ARPA funding has created the opportunity for a much needed historic investment in the facilities and infrastructure of Milwaukee County. This investment was much needed, as Milwaukee County's need for capital investment has grown to well over \$1B. The allocation more than doubled the typical load of capital projects annually approved in the budget, allowing for much needed investment and a significant increase in workload that must be effectively managed in alignment with the County's strategic plan. The investment has significant impacts on strategic focus areas 1C and 3B.

- c. **Goal 3:** By the end of 2023, reduce County wide energy use by 25% from the 2014 baseline established as part of Milwaukee County's efforts to achieve the Paris Climate Agreement goals and climate neutrality by 2050.

The goal is important to meeting the charge set forth in resolutions on the subjects passed by the Milwaukee County Board in 2017 and 2021 respectfully. Scientific study demonstrates the importance in reducing energy use and carbon impact on our warming climate. Studies also suggest that the impacts of climate are often unequally felt in our communities, with disproportionate impacts on communities of color and those in lower-income neighborhoods. Over the last 10 years, Milwaukee County has acknowledge our role in need to reduce emissions and work to address these disparities.

2. To what extent were these goals accomplished in 2023? Please explain.

- a. **Goal 1:** Significant effort and progress was made, but DAS ultimately fell short of the 87.5% position fill target. DAS began the year with a fill rate of 75.35% position fill rate. Department leaders quickly identified the strain and impact of the low position fill rate on our ability to deliver quality service, meet timelines and the impact on existing employees. By year end, DAS achieve a 82.01 position fill rate, a net increase of 7% points in the 292 employee department. Ultimately, DAS fell 5.5% short of our goal, but have maintained focus on this goal and continue to make progress in 2024.

Additionally, focus and tracking was implemented to build a workforce representative of the Milwaukee Count population we serve. Positive progress was achieved in this area, though work remains to advance equitable hiring. See the chart below:

DAS Employee Race/Ethnicity and Gender Percentages

	December 2022	December 2023	Net Change
AIAN	.5	.9	.4
Asian	4.2	3.9	-3
Black/AA	16.3	17.5	1.2
Hispanic/Latino	5.6	5.7	.1
NH or OPI	0	0	
Two or more	.9	2.6	1.7
White	67.8	64.5	-3.3
Female	29	30.3	1.3
Male	71	69.7	-1.3

Groundwork has been laid to build momentum in the future. Efforts to advance this goal include the following:

- Increased analysis and accountability around hiring and hiring timelines.
- Focus on recruitment and collaboration with HR recruiters
- Development of career ladders
- Implementation of DAS Diverse and Inclusive Hiring Guidelines
- Revising job requirements
- Diverse hiring panels
- Implementing a centralized departmental on-boarding

- b. Goal 2: Milwaukee County made significant progress in spending and encumbering funds in 2023. Of the \$113M allocated to capital projects from the ARPA, 72% has been spent or encumbered as approved across 63 projects, as reported by the Comptroller's office. As per the ARPA, funds must be spent or encumbered by the end of 2024, with full funds expended by the end of 2026. 25 capital projects have spent or encumbered more than 75% of their allocation, 8 projects have spent or encumbered between 25 and 75% of their allocation and 30, mostly smaller scale projects, have spent or encumbered less than 25% of their allocations. Discussions are underway with DAS, the Comptroller's Office and the Strategy, Budget, and Performance Office to ensure that remain projects are positioned to adhere to ARPA timelines or otherwise create paths to completion.

It should be noted that capital projects in the revenue loss recovery category makeup the single largest pool of funds allocated through the ARPA program at Milwaukee County.

- c. Goal 3: In 2021, a significant reduction was achieved to reach a 14% reduction in energy use from the 2014 baseline. Much of the reduction could be attributed to reduced facility usage during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, ground was lost, with energy totals reach only 11% from the baseline year, suggesting a net

increase in energy usage. A high bar was set for 2023 in hopes of refocusing efforts.

Ultimately the goal of a 25% percent reduction from the baseline year, was not fully realizing. At year end, an 18% reduction was achieved. While this was significant progress, energy reduction will remain a major focus in the years to come. Efforts to reduce energy usage include HVAC and electrical upgrades and footprint reduction and modernization including the disposition of the Behavior Health Complex in 2023. Additional project advancements in 2023, including: space reduction and modernization associated with the new Coggs Building, Forensic Science and Protective Medicine and lighting and HVAC upgrades at senior centers, the Boys and Girls Club and within our Parks system. When implemented these projects should have significant positive impacts in future years.

3. What factors *enabled* progress toward accomplishing these goals?
 - a. DAS is fortunate to have strong support and buy-in from employees that were ready and excited to participate in the strategic planning process and aligned to the County's goals. The level of engagement and support is and will continue to be critical to our success.
 - b. Consistent and uniform alignment to the Milwaukee County strategic plan is critical. Knowing that we are all focused on the same overall goals, helps build trust and collaboration.
 - c. Support and examples from other Department has been helpful in advance our efforts.
 - d. Setting clear performance indicators has helped move the team from discussing "what's not going right" to "what do we need to do to fix it".
 - e. Significant investment from the ARPA and other budget allocations were critically important to advancing these goals particularly around capital improvements.

4. What factors *hindered* progress toward accomplishing these goals?
 - a. Staffing challenges continue to be a major challenge throughout the department due to retirements, turnover and difficulty recruiting new staff members with pay that has not kept up with market trends. The leadership team has been keenly focused on this issue. Compensation continues to be the lowest scoring category in employee engagement surveys. Years of budget cuts and even flat tax levy targets where departments are expected to absorb inflation continue to take their toll across all lines of business.
 - b. Culture change and development continues to be a work in progress, particularly as it relates to working in an under-resourced work environment. After years of being asked to maintain or increase programs and operations with less resources, we are working to overhaul our strategy to attempt to better address "upstream" issues. This includes the modernization of our processes, re-

alignment of staff and resources and seeking additional resources and staff support as appropriate.

5. Aside from financial resources, what help does your department/office need in identifying and achieving your strategic goals?

While resources and staffing remain a primary concern, we also need support and encouragement to stay focused on our goals. We appreciate the Board seeking awareness of our strategic planning and accountability our goals. We are hopeful the Board and our other supported Offices and Departments are supportive of our efforts to implement strategic solutions that can, on occasion, require changes to current practices. These efforts can also be hindered by one-off changes in directions or distracting side projects. We'll continue to do our best but appreciate open discussions with our staff about how to best prioritize and align resources and timelines with larger strategic efforts.

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

DAS has completed its strategic plan. We continue to work on dissemination and alignment of staff to the plan and our objectives. It will take time for staff to full absorb the critical role each employe plays in advancing Milwaukee County's vision.

FISCAL EFFECT

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

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

PREPARED BY:

Aaron Hertzberg, Executive Director of Administrative Services

APPROVED BY:

Aaron Hertzberg

ATTACHMENTS:

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