

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: 4/17/2026

To: Marcelia Nicholson-Bovell, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Cassandra Libal, Director, Office of Emergency Management

Subject: OEM 2025 Annual Report

File Type: Informational Report

This informational report provides a report on how Office of Emergency Management set and achieved its 2025 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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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 responses to the questions below.

BODY

Please tell us about your progress on your Department/Office's top goals in 2025. If any of your goals have changed, briefly explain why, how they are "SMARTIE" goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, inclusive, and equitable), and how they align to the county's racial equity strategy.

1. What key factors *enabled* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

The Emergency Management Division was able to accomplish its goal of establishing new outreach initiatives due to its continued strong relationships that it has built with key stakeholders. Additionally, the August 2025 flooding highlighted the division's ability to leverage pre-existing relationships to directly impact the response and recovery to the event. While the event itself was a significant burden on OEM, numerous new partners were established along the way.

The Radio Services Division was able to improve responder communication and system reliability with the completion of the upgrades to communication infrastructure and the replacement of the Microwave Backhaul network. With the transition to the WiPSN system and the Microwave Backhaul upgrades being completed in 2024, the focus in 2025 was to maintain system reliability. Weekly updates were pushed out to users in a non-intrusive manner, further strengthening efficiency and reducing the possibility for cyberattacks to the system. Upgrades to radio equipment is needed with only a few departments receiving radio upgrades. This project will continue over the next few years as financial capabilities improve. The Radio Division is working to increase radio resilience for our fire department users. A workgroup has been established with the surrounding municipalities to discuss changes to both the law enforcement and fire department users.

The 911 Communications Division sponsored a comprehensive study to upgrade or replace our existing Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, aimed at improving public safety across the county. This initiative explores the potential benefits of incorporating technological advancements to enhance efficiency, response times, data management and offer cost-sharing options where spending is duplicated across the county. Our goal is to ensure that public safety services are accessible, equitable, and enhanced by the latest technology for all members of our community. The study is in its draft form, with completion scheduled for May 2026. 911 Communications was also able to secure a long-term agreement with Milwaukee County Airport Fire to provide communication support through dispatching fire first responders and Emergency Medical support to 911 callers within and around the airport grounds.

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division was successful in establishing a bi-

directional Health Information Exchange (HIE) with Children's Hospital. Although the connection was successful, software limitations are preventing full data sharing, this is an issue OEM continues to work with the Health System and software vendors on. Other health systems are watching closely as we navigate the challenges with the desire to jointly participate in a successful solution.

2. What key factors *hindered* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

The biggest hinderance to the Emergency Management Division in 2025 was the response to the August 2025 flooding. The event continues to dominate the division's priorities as we continue to work directly with state, local and federal partners assisting in community recovery efforts.

The biggest hinderance to Radio Services, was equipment failures outside of maintenance windows and failures as a direct result of natural occurrences (i.e. flooding, lightning strikes, extreme heat, etc.).

Ongoing staffing shortages within 911 Communications continue to strain operations, as dispatch positions remain fully saturated across the county. The presence of multiple, emergency communication centers, further complicates coordination efforts. As the study will show, many centers are not interested in sharing data which continues to limit opportunities to strengthen partnerships and achieve greater communication efficiencies. 911 Communications continues to meet the goal of answering 95% of emergency calls within 10 seconds.

Software engineering limitations preventing the flow of EMS data. The fields exist, there needs to be a concerted effort to engineer connecting these fields from one data system to another. Ultimately this comes down to a bandwidth issue internal to the software companies.

3. If any goals are changing, please list those and briefly explain why. (Please put "N/A" if your goals will remain the same.)

N/A

FISCAL EFFECT

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

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

PREPARED BY:

Cassandra Libal, OEM Director

APPROVED BY:

Cassandra Libal, OEM Director

ATTACHMENTS:

Presentation

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