

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: September 30, 2021 (Updated: 10/18/21)  
To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
From: Isaac Rowlett, Strategy Director  
Subject: File 29-143, Strategic Planning Update  
File Type: Informational Report

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This informational report provides updates regarding how Milwaukee County is advancing its strategic plan.

**POLICY**

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

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	<a href="#">Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity &amp; Health</a>
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**BACKGROUND**

This report is being submitted to the Health Equity, Human Needs and Strategic Planning (HEHNSP) Committee per the request made of the Milwaukee County Strategy Director during the previous HEHNSP meeting on September 15, 2021.

**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

This report directly aligns to all of the County's strategic objectives, as it details how each of the strategy teams are progressing to advance each of the objectives.

## **BODY**

At the beginning of 2021, Milwaukee County established seven strategy teams to guide the advancement of each of the nine strategic objectives. Each team is made up of 5-10 representatives from across all County departments. In some cases, participants include representatives from external organizations such as municipal governments and nonprofit organizations.

The teams include the Diversity & Inclusion Team (1A & 1B), the Equitable Contracting Team (1C), the Service Alignment Team (2A & 3A), the Integration Team (2B), the Racial Equity Lens Team (2C), the Fiscal Health Team (3B), and the Inclusive Communities Team (3C).

Below are updates from each of the Strategy Teams as of September 30, 2021.

### **Team I: Diversity & Inclusion**

The Diversity & Inclusion Strategy Team is presently focused on building out metrics that will help support future programming to engage employees around Diversity and Inclusion. The team is building out a maturity model, which will assess where Milwaukee County is on the Diversity and Inclusion journey. The model will have key metrics and benchmarks to measure progress and provide a framework to create initiatives that fit the needs of employees and goals surrounding Racial Equity. Following the completion of the model, the team will focus on two areas for enhancement: workforce diversity, which will assess the current hiring and recruitment process. Finally, workforce inclusion, which will focus on creating a culture of belonging and connectivity for current Milwaukee County employees through initiatives such as Employee Resource Groups and a Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Council.

### **Team II: Equitable Contracting**

The Equitable Contracting team has produced a survey that will go out to all County departments. With a strategic goal to "Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses", the team decided that an understanding was needed in regards to departmental contracting processes. The group would like to learn if there is correlation between which contracting methods/practices lead to participation and which do not. Here are a few of the things the team is looking to learn from the survey:

- Does the length of time that a solicitation is open have an impact on participation
- Where are solicitations advertised for public consumption
- What barriers to participation have you identified in regards to your departmental contract process

The Equitable Contracting team is working with a consultant to help maintain confidentiality for all respondents of the survey, as we feel this will allow for open and honest feedback regarding County contracting. The belief is that the results of the survey, along with other next steps will help to determine possible suggestions/recommendations for the County moving forward in increasing County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses.

### **Team III: Service Alignment**

The Service Alignment team is focused on aligning the services provided by the county of the needs of the County's residents, with a particular focus on impacted communities. In addition, the team aims to move more investments "upstream" in order to address racial disparities in areas of the social determinants of health before they manifest in future health disparities.

To date, the team has completed several deliverables. First, the team developed and implemented an updated template for Board reports in order to ensure requests made of the County Board of Supervisors would be conducted in keeping with the County's strategy.

Second, the team collaborated with all departments under the administration to create a detailed inventory of all county services. The team is currently analyzing the services (including how much is allocated toward each) to assess their degree of alignment to the County's health equity framework.

Third, the team is developing a Strategy for tracking three categories of performance measures:

1. How each County service is performing against its individual set of performance measures (which are under various stages of development).
2. The County's progress toward advancing the KPIs for each strategic objective.
3. How the County is progressing in terms of overall population health. Specifically, population health is being measured using specific community impact indicators in the realms of housing, employment, and life expectancy.

### **Team IV: Integration**

The Integration Team for the strategic focus area 2B was charged with the objective of "breaking down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered." Over the past year, this team has focused on organizational structure as the main way to enable County government to change and adapt to be more strategic, customer-focused, and equitable in its service delivery. The team collaborated closely with the Service Alignment and Fiscal Health strategy teams, which are addressing additional, yet intersecting, organizational pain points.

The Integration Team first analyzed the current state by using information collected from

the organizational assessment, reviewing Counties similar to Milwaukee County in various ways, and developing a scorecard to evaluate organizational structures. The scorecard was used as a baseline evaluation tool to see how an organization's structure aligned with indicators critical to achieving Milwaukee County's vision. The team then hired a consulting firm who are experts in organizational design to do a deeper analysis and provide recommendations on how best to structure the County.

An informational report regarding the recommendations was presented to the County Board in September. A number of changes, particularly those in administrative functions, are proposed to occur alongside the 2022 budget process, despite many recommendations being cost neutral. Other changes are recommended for implementation in 2023 or later, though preparation for those changes may start more immediately.

### **Team V: Racial Equity Lens**

With more than thirty meetings and working sessions completed, Strategic Planning Focus Area 2C displays relentless dedication to shaping the implementation of Milwaukee County's bold vision statement. The team of eleven—spanning from BHD to MCDOT, hail from the depth and breadth of our organization.

The team began with training to normalize key working terminology and concepts. After a brief period of capacity building, the following was accomplished:

- *Draft Definition of Racial Equity for Milwaukee County*  
(Incorporated Focus Group Feedback)
- Drafted Recommendations of Key Concepts for Enterprise Learning  
(Supporting RE Lens Application)
- Drafted Racial Equity Lens Definition & Draft RE Lens Application Graphic
- Submitted KPIs
- Currently Revising a Draft RE Census Survey & RE Inventory Design

Our next initiative is to launch the RE Census and review the list of services rendered by Milwaukee County, to recommend guidance manuals and racial equity toolkit development. The group will also develop a generalized racial equity toolkit for Milwaukee County.

### **Team VI: Fiscal Health**

Due to the scale of the County's fiscal challenges, the Fiscal Health Strategy Team recommends placing focus on numerous efforts to enhance the County's fiscal sustainability, with a goal to make meaningful progress over the next three years. The Fiscal Health Team is supporting efforts to advocate for the 1% sales tax increase as an option for stabilizing the County's finances and for raising revenues to meet the scale of the County's needs. Recommendations of the Retirement Sustainability Task Force are

being examined regarding the future state of the pension system. In collaboration with the Employee Benefits Division, options for health care plan changes are being evaluated including potential options to expand the County's Wellness program. In regards to infrastructure planning, the updated five year capital plan covering 2022-2026 will be used as a base for evaluating infrastructure needs and addressing infrastructure maintenance backlogs. With the implementation of a Grants unit in 2021, grant writing capacity is expanded and information is being tracked to measure grant application success rates. In 2021 year-to-date as of September the Grants Division has supported 32 grant applications of which 11 have received awards totaling \$18 million, with other grant applications pending. The Fiscal Health Team will provide support to other Strategy Teams in matters pertaining to County services, expenditures, and revenues.

### **Team VII: Diverse & Inclusive Communities**

The Dismantling Barriers to Diverse and Inclusive Communities group consists of representatives from across the county, community organizations, and municipal leaders.

The team has established two drivers: to increase quality of life and opportunity for people of color within the core of the city, and to address barriers to inclusion and increase positive experiences, access, and opportunity in municipalities.

In order to achieve these drivers, three primary initiatives were established: identify barriers and put forth a set of recommendations to move the needle, create welcoming spaces throughout the county, and actualize the policy and fiscal influence of the County. The group is in the process of identifying specific focus areas that are high impact and broadly accepted. This cannot be done without community input, ICC collaboration, and asset mapping. To that end, one current effort is the development and distribution of a survey to gauge community member attitudes toward diversity and inclusivity in their respective communities.

Additionally, the team members are actively engaging the ICC through strategic updates and findings related to municipal visits. The survey results will be shared with ICC members to promote on-going information sharing and awareness building toward an aim of engagement and commitment to racial equity across the county. Asset mapping will be done over the course of the next month.

The team has agreed to four success measures that will be operationalized in collaboration with the Strategy Dashboard team; the measures include: change in perspectives from community members over time (longitudinal surveys), increased access to transportation, increased access to housing, and changes in culture and climate of organizations in favor of racial equity.

### **FISCAL EFFECT**

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

## **VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

- Margo Franklin
- Dan Terrio
- Sherri Jordan
- Lamont Robinson
- Mary Jo Meyers
- Isaac Rowlett
- Claire Miller
- Jeff Roman
- Jennifer Harris
- Joe Lamers
- Dan Laurila
- Leanne Delsart

### **PREPARED BY:**

Isaac Rowlett, Strategy Director

### **APPROVED BY:**

Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of the Staff to the County Executive

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

N/A

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