

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication


Date: April 17, 2025

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

From: Margo Franklin, Chief Human Resources Officer, Department of Human Resources

Subject: Department of Human Resources 2024 Annual Report

File Type: Informational Report



This informational report provides details on how the Department of Human Resources set and achieved its 2024 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

1. Please submit your Scorecard Report along with this report, to show progress on your Department/Office’s top goals in 2024. If you would like to add any additional information about the extent to which you accomplished your goals, please do so here.

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) is committed to making Milwaukee County a leading employer by cultivating a high-performing, engaged workforce that consistently meets and exceeds organizational goals—within a supportive, diverse, and inclusive workplace. To fulfill this mission, DHR advances a set of strategic departmental goals that align with Milwaukee County’s broader strategic priorities. As part of the 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, the DHR Scorecard outlines five (5) key goals currently driving the department’s efforts.

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

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) has worked hard to meet and exceed established goals as outlined in our strategic plan and 2024 scorecard. There are several factors that have enabled departmental progress:

- The DHR Talent Acquisition team increased attendance at community events, over 100 in 2024, and broader application of the Hiring Event Model have resulted in a 36% increase in hires for 2024 over 2023, with seasonal hires being doubled by an impressive 115%. The administering of the Hiring Event Model, along with expanded community presence at events, requires endorsement, communication and support by the administration, department leadership, and the County Board of Supervisors.
- The DHR Learning & Development team introduced several new training courses to support diverse hiring initiatives, including: Navigating Internal Job Applications, Interview Process (eLearning) and Bias in Hiring (eLearning). These new offerings are designed to advance the goal of building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. The DHR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) team added a DEI Director to ensure DEI work is aligned with Milwaukee County’s Strategic Priorities. The team of two (2) successfully worked to launch ‘Into the Streets’, a volunteer experience for Milwaukee County employees. Over 200 employees logged more than 2500 hours of community service and donated 3000 pounds of food to Friedens Food Pantry. The DEI team also developed a partnership with Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project to feature moments of LGBTQ+ history in Milwaukee County in the Courthouse Rotunda, in partnership with Prism Network Resource Group (NRG). Overall, NRG participation and involvement in the community has significantly increased, fostering a greater sense of belonging among employees. This enhanced connection is directly linked to improved employee retention and satisfaction. Notably, this marks the first time since the program’s inception that participation in community events has reached this level.
- Results for the 2024 employee engagement survey significantly improved across all elements of the survey over the 2022 results. This was the fifth county-wide engagement survey since 2016 and the first time the county

used the same survey and survey vendor for consecutive surveys. Improvement in employee satisfaction and engagement can lead to higher retention, greater focus on the county's vision and a higher performing workforce.

- The transition to a Total Rewards model reflects a strategic shift toward a more holistic and integrated approach to attracting, retaining, and engaging talent. Rather than operating Compensation and Benefits as separate entities, the Total Rewards framework combines compensation, benefits, wellness, and retirement programs into a unified strategy. This approach allows DHR to better align offerings with employees' diverse needs and expectations, support their overall well-being, and enhance the employee experience. It also enables more consistent messaging, streamlined processes, and greater flexibility in how we deliver value to the workforce.
- The Compensation Transformation Project is ongoing. The team has successfully developed job families for all roles within Milwaukee County, transitioning 70% of employees into these newly established job families. Additionally, some JEQs were reviewed and pay adjustments were made to align with the updated pay grades.
- DHR continues to receive ongoing support from Strategy, Budget and Performance Team members for their expertise and guidance to help DHR refine metrics and support continued progress towards goals completion. DHR receives continued support from County leadership, including the County Executive's Office, Department Heads and the County Board of Supervisors. This support is critical as we advance our goals.

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

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) continues to make progress, however, there were some factors that limited our progress towards accomplishing departmental goals:

- The Documented Onboarding Process initiative is currently in the planning phase and has not yet begun. This project supports our broader attraction and retention goals and is scheduled to launch in 2025.
 - The Compensation Transformation Project officially launched in 2022. The initiative focuses on phasing out the previous compensation structure—which included over 290 grades and rigid, arbitrary steps—and replacing it with a more flexible, range-based structure. This new approach is being implemented for all non-represented positions across Milwaukee County, with the goal of creating a more modern, equitable, and sustainable compensation framework. Although funding has been allocated for this project, there is limited large sweeping investments to transforming compensation.

- Milwaukee County has conducted an employee engagement survey biennially since 2016. After years of decline, the 2024 survey indicated significant improvement in overall employee satisfaction and engagement. To continue to make progress in a cost-effective manner on improving the employee experience, it is important to maintain the biennial survey cadence and administer an employee engagement survey in 2026.
 - Limited and ongoing funding and resources to expand diversity, equity, including and belonging initiatives for Milwaukee County employees. This would include support for internal and external initiatives, Network Resource Groups (NRGs) and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Council. Departments considering the unilateral implementation of human resources programs and related actions that are the responsibility of DHR to implement and manage. These actions may contribute to employee confusion and impede DHR's ability to effectively implement countywide programs and services.
4. If any goals are changing, please list your Department/Office goals for 2025.
- There is ongoing consideration to adjust the retention rate metric for Milwaukee County. Rather than focusing solely on achieving a fixed target, the emphasis may shift toward demonstrating consistent year-over-year improvement. Additionally, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) may explore segmenting retention data to better reflect trends in specific roles or departments.

FISCAL EFFECT

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

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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APPROVED BY:

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ATTACHMENTS:

Department of Human Resources Strategic Goals/Scorecard
Department of Human Resources Strategic Plan
DHR 2024 Annual Board Report Presentation

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Director Legislative Services, Office of the County Clerk
County Executive David Crowley
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Executive's Office
Supervisor Patti Logsdon., Chair, Personnel Committee
Supervisor Shawn Rolland, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs and Strategic Planning Committee
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