



## INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

**DATE:** August 21, 2020

**TO:** Marcella Nicholson, Chairperson, Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Jeffery Roman, Acting Executive Director, Office on African American Affairs

**SUBJECT:** From the acting director, Office on African American Affairs, providing an informational report regarding the Racial Equity Survey Results Report 2020

### REQUEST

At this time, no request is being made by the Office on African American Affairs, this report is informational only.

### BACKGROUND

The Office on African American Affairs (OAAA) empowers the community to achieve positive, long-term, sustainable outcomes through employing a multifaceted racial equity model that will convene county and community partners to systematically address racial inequities, and to assist the County in making its vision, 'by achieving racial equity, Milwaukee is the healthiest county in Wisconsin' a reality. To achieve this vision, the Office on African American Affairs provides advice, guidance, education, research, and technical assistance.

Building on the county's declaration of "racism as a public health crisis," OAAA was a key partner in the creation and the lifting of the racial equity ordinance establishing Chapter 108 "Achieving Racial Equity and Health" of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances. The ordinance commits Milwaukee County to support the Office on African American Affairs by ensuring it is strategically positioned within County government to assist with the development and institutionalization of racial equity tools, collaborate with departments to assess and transform policies, procedures, practices, and power structures to help the County become a place where everyone can thrive.

OAAA will continue to support the county's equity work of the countywide vision while driving transformational culture changes (implementing the use of an equity tool and health and equity framework, by all staff). OAAA aims to support improving racial equity in: operations, fiscal appropriations, IT systems, data & analysis management, policies and programs, legislation, workforce, organizational culture and community engagement.

In 2019, OAAA provided over 11,000 hours of racial equity training to more than 3,000 Milwaukee County employees to normalize discussions on racism, implicit bias, and microaggressions. Trainings were offered to the entire County workforce, from elected officials and cabinet members to front line workers across all county departments and divisions. Additionally, OAAA launched and has continued coordination of the Racial Equity Ambassador Program and has recommended Racial Equity Ambassadors for the following countywide initiatives and workgroups: Racial Equity Budget Tool (REBT) Development Workgroup, Hiring Panel Participation Pilot, Change Management Workgroup, ROC Workgroups, the Racial Equity Toolkit Development Workgroup, and many other departmental and division efforts.

Earlier this year, OAAA worked with the County Executive's office to roll out a Racial Equity Baseline Survey to all Milwaukee County employees. The goal of this survey was to gauge our employees' knowledge of the County's racial equity efforts and to determine what tools or trainings county departments and divisions would need to be more equitable in their policies and practices. These survey results are attached to this informational file.

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

The report notes that Milwaukee County government continues its commitment and priority of racial equity within the organization and throughout all of Milwaukee County. In 2019, the County launched its new strategic plan that explicitly recognizes racism as a public health crisis and leads with the vision that: By achieving racial equity, Milwaukee is the healthiest county in Wisconsin. To build on this commitment, the leadership of Milwaukee County partnered with Studer Education in Spring 2020 to administer a Racial Equity Survey.

The purpose of the Racial Equity survey was to gather feedback directly from Milwaukee County government employees about their understanding, perceptions, and attitudes toward the collective efforts of the County to improve racial equity within the organization and throughout Milwaukee County. "Employee Perspective" is one of the five three-year objectives in the strategic plan and focuses on the active engagement of County employees. Thousands of County employees directly serve residents each day and as such their insights and perspectives must inform and support conversations on improving County policies, procedures, programming, and practices.

The Racial Equity Survey was administered in an anonymous way in Spring 2020. Employees were invited to participate using an anonymous link sent via email and asked to provide feedback on 30 benchmark items in three areas:

1. Personal Experiences and Self-Reflection;
2. Experiences within the Employee's Department; and
3. Experiences within Milwaukee County government as a whole.

Collecting this data allow leaders to:

1. Recognize the good work accomplished to date and areas/opportunities for improvement;
2. Develop tools, resources, and training to support employees to successfully advance racial equity in their work at Milwaukee County;
3. Develop tools, resources, and training to create a safe and inclusive work environment for all Milwaukee County employees; and

4. Provide baseline data for County leaders to understand employee perspectives of racial equity.

Report highlights:

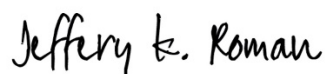
1. Training was identified as the most frequent reoccurring theme in past and/or present successes in racial equity;
2. Declaring “Racism as a Public Health Crisis” and the identifying the need to prioritize racial equity were both consistently reported as successes;
3. Employees also note the need for visible leadership buy-in and accountability across all Milwaukee County leadership and departments as well as constant, consistent, and cascading racial equity messaging and training; and
4. The need to create more racially internal policies and procedures including but not limited to hiring policies and amending Job Evaluation Questionnaires.

OAAA would like to highlight the following recommendations after reviewing the report and analyzing the data.

1. Continue prioritizing the work of racial equity, specifically through training, as training was the most frequently identified theme as past or present success in racial equity;
2. For all but two questions posed in the survey, the majority (55% to 75%) of respondents reported that they are either moderately or under engaged in their understanding, perception, and attitude towards the collective racial equity efforts. Racial equity training should focus on this population of influence;
3. Leverage constituents and employees to promote racially inclusive collaboration, engagement, and assessment by implementing policies that require the engagement of people most deeply affected by the strategy, policy, or procedure, both within government and in the community; and
4. Create system-wide policy and/or procedure to document department specific racial equity activities to assess activity over time.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is informational only, there is no request at this time.



Jeffery K. Roman

Acting Executive Director, Office on African American Affairs

CC: David Crowley, Milwaukee County Executive  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley

Attachments: Racial Equity Survey Results Report 2020