

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 22, 2026

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

From: Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services

Subject: Department of Administrative Services 2025 Annual Report

File Type: Informational Report

This informational report provides a report on how Department of Administrative Services (DAS) set and achieved its 2025 goals.

POLICY

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

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| 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.

[File 23-526](#) The Department of Administrative Services 2022 Annual Report.
[File 24-476](#) The Department of Administrative Services 2023 Annual Report.
[File 25-311](#) The Department of Administrative Services 2024 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

As part of the Department of Administrative Services’ (DAS) 2026 Budget presentation, five priority goals were outlined. The goals were chosen in the context of DAS’s strategic plan, which stives to develop a *highly engaged workforce that provides operational excellence and superior customer service while working to achieve Milwaukee County’s vision for racial equity.*

DAS’s mission is to plan, develop, build, and manage the technical, operational, and physical infrastructure of Milwaukee County to deliver great public service. DAS’s work centers on four key objectives.

- **Engaged Workforce:** Develop an engaged workforce that is representative of Milwaukee County at all levels
- **Operational Excellence:** Driven by key performance indicators consistently improve performance
- **Customer Service:** Build trusted relationships so we can exceed customer expectations
- **Racial Equity:** Build a culture that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion and applies an equity lens to our work

The priority goals of DAS are focused on ensuring the Department is best positioned to execute on it’s duties and support of Milwaukee County’s Vision.

SCORECARD

| DAS | 2021 Actual | 2022 Actual | 2023 Actual | 2024 Actual | 2025 Actual |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Maintain a position fill rate above 87.5% | 76.6% | 75.4% | 82.0% | 88.6% | 93.6% |
| 2. Percentage of operational KPIs with positive progress from prior year to year end 2025. | 27.8% | 52.4% | 77.7% | 71.1% | 76.5% |
| 3. Percentage of employees with a professional development goal for 2025 | 0.0% | 36.0% | 42.1% | 65.2% | 79.4% |
| 4. Percentage of open positions filled through internal promotion | 9.0% | 9.2% | 7.1% | 7.5% | 12.5% |
| 5. Increase in customer satisfaction as documented through anonymous survey results | N/A | N/A | N/A | 82.4% | 85.7% |

1. Maintain an employee position fill rate to 87.5%

In 2021, DAS and Milwaukee County were struggling with declining position fill rates. The low fill rates led to serious challenges to meet the minimum responsibilities of the department, negatively impacted service quality to customer departments and the public, and was leading to employee stress due to increased workloads covering for vacant positions. In 2022, DAS set a goal to address this issue by maintaining a position fill rate above 87.5%. The goal aligned with industry averages for such a department.

After seeing progress in 2023, the goal was achieved in 2024, ending the year at 88.6% of DAS's almost 300 positions filled. In 2025, DAS finished the year with a 93.5% fill rate, demonstrating that Milwaukee County and DAS remain an attractive place to work.

Efforts included streamlining position posting timelines, outlining hiring guidance to broaden applicant and talent pools, and a renewed focus on employee engagement that includes consistent on-board practices, training and development programs, employee focused programming and a departmental mentoring program. The efforts have worked with consistent progress to better attract and retain talent within the Department.

Data from the County-wide Employee Engagement Survey Engagement scores is typically collected in the fall of even numbered years. DAS saw a major increase in scores in 2024, up 9.5% in employee satisfaction from 2022. That exceeded the general positive trend across Milwaukee County. In 2026, DAS hopes to continue improvement of those scores.

2. Increase departmental operational key performance indicators (KPIs) with positive progress.

As DAS set to formalize a data focus, 90 key performance indicators (KPIs) were set to be tracked across DAS's 8 service areas: Central Business, Economic Development, Facilities, Information Management Services, Economic Inclusion, Procurement and Risk Management.

The KPIs help to ensure the Department is watching indicators of success across varied lines of service that are often difficult to align into a single metric. DAS service areas centrally track and report their KPIs at least quarterly. The sharing helps to maintain accountability and positions the leadership team to support one-another as challenges arise.

In 2024, DAS saw a decline in the number of KPIs with positive progress over the year. This is in part due to modification to standards and increased expectations. The evolution of standards helps to demonstrate the teams focus on continuous improvement to regularly improve practices. A few highlights below:

- Facility Workorders: In prior years, we tracked only closure times for “emergency workorders”. In 2024 we began tracking closure times for all workorders. Not surprisingly the change resulted in an overall increase in response times from just less than 5 days to now just less than 10 days under the expanded definition. We hope the new tracking system helps empower a focus on timely closure of all open workorders and we can return to reduced closure times in future years.
- In IMSD we saw major reductions (improvements) in:
 - Service level agreement breaches reduced from 11% in 2022 to <6% in 2024. This is a significant improvement considering that we receive over 2,100 service requests a month.
 - The team has also reduced its extended open ticket target tracking from those existing over 100 days in 2022 to, under 60 days in 2024. Actual results averaged 52.4 days. Resolving extended open tickets remains a core focus.
- Economic Inclusion saw a reduction in the number of certified firms available for TBE contracting from 582 to 552, but an increase in the number of certified firms with an active project from 109 to 148.
- In Risk Management, worker compensation claims increased by three claims from the prior year to 268 total claims. The total remained within our target goal range. Annual meetings have recently been completed with high risk and high frequency groups to help review and discussion safety improvement opportunities.
- In Economic Development, new in-rem foreclosure rules are too new to demonstrate year-over-year comparisons. We have seen a focused effort to increase revenue within the group to help offset budget constraints. In the airspace parking lot revenue category revenues increased by \$190,547 from 2023. The increase helped reduced DAS reliance on tax levy.

3. Percentage of DAS employees with a professional development goal.

DAS is focused on growing and developing talent within their ranks. With the implementation of goal tracking feature in the County's employee management system, DAS has made it a priority to encourage employees, and their people managers to set and track goals within the system. This creates transparency and clarity between employees and their managers about expectations and priority focus areas. It also helps to build a culture of shared discussing and understanding to ensure there are no surprises during employee performance reviews, as in, regular and consistent feedback is best. Steady progress has been demonstrated with individual goals cascading to more employees. Ideally goals align with the four key objectives of DAS and Milwaukee County's strategic plan. As noted in the table, nearly 80% of employees had development goals in 2025. While the target is to have a development goal, it should be noted that many employees now have multiple professional development goals and the quality or "stretch" of goals seems to also be improving. This helps DAS build an environment that helps to both challenge and support employee development.

4. Percentage of open positions filled through internal promotion.

In alignment with DAS's efforts to grow and development talent within the organization, DAS Leaders are focused on tracking the number of employees that are internal promoted within the organization. 2021 and 2022 saw a major increase in internal promotions in alignment with increased hiring activity during periods of high vacancy. In 2023, the number dipped to 7.1%. In 2024, the number of internal promotions ticked back up to 7.5%, showing that a healthy number of open positions are filled internally. In 2025, the number jumped to 12.5%, demonstrating that talent development efforts remain strong within DAS. The DAS leadership team continues to discuss the balance of value in internal development and bringing in fresh perspective from external talent. With more internal promotions occurring, DAS Leaders have been asked to continue expanding their external networks to ensure we are gain fresh perspective. This includes staying attune to industry reports or trends, meeting counterparts from other communities or professional associations, learning best practices, etc. One such example includes planning for the Investing in Justice Courthouse Complex project. Teams have visited four different recently constructed courthouse in the region and talked with at least 6 other communities about their efforts, lessons learned and challenges along the way. Seeing and hearing directly from counterparts will add to the value of our own efforts. Similar exchanges occur in other areas of DAS as well.

5. Increase in customer satisfaction as documented through anonymous survey results.

In 2024, DAS introduced a new anonymous survey tool to gather feedback from customers. DAS Employees now all have a link in their email signature lines "How was your service today" that feeds to a general survey. Responses are not linked to the specific employees to ensure they stay anonymous. Users are offered a link that when clicked allows them to select the area of service, score on a 5-point scale (Extremely Satisfied to Extremely Dissatisfied) and offer optional feedback. The tool is intended to

gather general feedback about the quality of DAS's service and to ensure opportunities exist for feedback loops. It also helps DAS build a customer service centric mindset among our team. On a quarterly basis, DAS service areas, including the Director's Office, reviews the survey results and considers how best to address any areas of concern and hold up examples of exceptional services. 2025 results have been favorable, 85.7% of respondents scoring DAS service in the satisfied or extremely satisfied categories. That's up 3.3% from the initial year results in 2024. Because DAS's customer service goal is to exceed customer expectations, neutral responses are not considered a positive result. Only scores of 4 or 5 are considered positive. An active DAS Customer Service Work Group remains active. In 2025, the group worked with the Department of Human Resources to roll out a department-wide Customer Service Training for all employees. The training helped to set a department standard for expectations related to customer service and provided time for employees to talk out their experiences and opportunities for service areas to create uniformity in approach.

FACTORS

Several factors have contributed to DAS's success in achieving results:

- 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.
- We regularly hear from employees and customers that 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.
- Support and examples from other Department has been helpful in advance our efforts.
- 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".
- Employees often express a desire for clear expectations and guidance. Focusing a majority of DAS's goals on employees is fundamental to creating operational and customer success.

Several factors have hindered DAS's progress

- DAS continues to see some generational shift in workforce with long-term employees retiring and newer staff coming on board without legacy knowledge from Milwaukee County. The leadership team has been keenly focused on this issue.
- While improved in some areas recently, compensation continues to be among the lowest scoring category in employee engagement surveys. Without major focus on equity to peers, we are likely to struggle with motivating, attracting and retaining talent. I'm particularly concerned about the impact on skilled-trades employees. While wages across the board have not kept pace with inflation, skilled trades employee compensation has fallen well behind peer employers.
- With negative budget targets in 2026, we have few positions (even if previously vacant) to undertake the important work of our department. Maintaining our progress will be very

challenging this year as the work expectations don't diminish. 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.

- Legacy systems, complex structures, and the critical nature of Milwaukee County operations, make innovation challenging. We often take a first do no harm approach that can slow progress if it has the potential to introduce risk.
- 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.

FISCAL EFFECT

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

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

PREPARED BY:

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APPROVED BY:

ATTACHMENTS:

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