



## INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

**DATE:** April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**TO:** Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Board of Supervisors

**CC:** Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Nicole M. Brookshire, Executive Director, Office on African American Affairs

**SUBJECT:** File No. 19-416 (Informational Report – Office on African American Affairs Racial Equity Update)

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### 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) was created in 2016 via resolution (15-636) with the following objectives: the examination and definition of issues central to the rights and needs of African Americans; recommendations for changes in programs and laws that disparately impact African Americans; development and implementation of policies, plans, and programs related to the special needs of African Americans; and the promotion of equal opportunities for African Americans.

The Office on African American Affairs will lead the organization's equity work in support of the countywide goal of improving equitable service delivery and organizational culture using an equity lens and framework. To support enterprise equity initiatives by addressing racial bias in decision making through the implementation and use of racial equity tools, trainings and evidenced based models. OAAA aims to improve racial equity in: operations, fiscal appropriations, IS systems, policies and programs, legislation, workforce, organizational culture and community engagement.

Government has a key role in advancing racial equity; to help develop an inclusive and effective democracy. Historically, government has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequities. Policies and practices have created and continue to create disparate results (even when the intention to sustain racial inequities are not present). The overall goal of the Office on African American Affairs is to improve the disparate outcomes that impact the underserved communities, those communities consisting of people of color.

Current government systems are: costly (collectively), have depressed outcomes and disparate life changes for communities of color. To advance racial equity, we must focus on programs, policy and institutional strategies that currently create or maintain inequities.

To accomplish these goals OAAA became an official member of Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), in late 2018. GARE is a national network of government jurisdictions, who collectively work to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. (<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/>). GARE will support OAAA in the development of racial equity tools, guides, as well as in the overarching long-term goal of a Racial Equity Action plan; one which spans across all of Milwaukee County.

As part of OAAA's long-term vision to eradicate racial inequities, the office is embracing GARE's national framework of: *Normalizing, Organizing and Operationalizing*. The use of the three-pillar model, ensures that Milwaukee County will deliberately work to sustain racial equity by developing long-term solutions. It is imperative to highlight the strong community push to drive a collaborative effort across all units of government; at the local, regional, state and federal levels. Creating an inclusive Racial Equity plan starts at the top and must include all elected officials.

In seeing that Milwaukee County is number one nationally (across several indicators) for racial disparities, OAAA's effort to drive racial equity training (across leadership, management and all county employees), is the first phase of the department's plan to normalize the conversation about race. The office's efforts for the remainder of 2019, will be to deploy RE training (Summer) as well as to sustain RE Ambassador program training. These trainings will support the County's cultural shift – a move from being reactive to proactive. It is anticipated that OAAA will have a 'draft' outline of a Racial Equity plan by the start of FY 2020.

#### **REPORT**

Please refer to the enclosed PowerPoint presentation.

#### **MOVING FORWARD**

This report is informational only.



Nicole Brookshire  
Executive Director, Office on African American Affairs

Cc: County Executive – Chris Abele  
County Executive Chief of Staff – Raisa Koltun