

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 15, 2025

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

From: Isaac Rowlett, Strategy Director, Office of Strategy Budget and Performance

Subject: From the Strategy Director, Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance, Providing an Informational Report on the Future State Project

File Type: Informational Report

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**REQUEST**

This informational report is to provide an update on the Future State Project.

**POLICY**

In June 2024, the County Board authorized a professional services agreement ([File #: 24-534](#)) with Berry Dunn and Kairo Communications to support the Milwaukee County Future State Project. This is an informational report on progress to date.

**BACKGROUND**

The Milwaukee County Future State Project is an opportunity to reimagine what local government should look like. Milwaukee County's vision is by achieving racial equity, Milwaukee is the healthiest county in Wisconsin. Using our strategic goals as guiding principles, Milwaukee County strives toward a future state where we can provide services that truly meet the unmet needs of the community.

Milwaukee County's Future State project seeks to create a plan for the "Future State" of Milwaukee County. This plan, with the goal of making Milwaukee County the healthiest County in the state, will outline how the County can increase the health and quality of life for our residents via County Services.

This project seeks to understand the answers to what the greatest needs of Milwaukee County residents are, what services should County Government provide to best meet the needs of our residents, and how should those 'businesses' be prioritized and structured. With Berry Dunn and Kairo Communications as the consultants, work began in June 2024 and will continue through April 2026.

Since the start of the project, the team has completed the project planning and management phase, which included establishing the work plan, timeline, and racial equity approach. Work has also been completed on the current state assessment, which involved conducting focus groups (internally with employees and externally with

the community) and reviewing key documents to produce a detailed inventory of County programs and services. This analysis assessed the County's current state and identified critical gaps between current offerings and community needs.

The current phase of the project is benchmarking research. This research is being conducted by County staff to produce a best practices report comparing Milwaukee County to peer local governments. This provides a reference point for identifying opportunities for innovation and improvement in service delivery.

The next phase of work will focus on analysis and recommendations. This will include the development of a Future State model that outlines a recommended portfolio of services aligned with community needs, the County's strategic priorities, and fiscal sustainability.

### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [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

While this project advances all of the County's strategic goals, it especially aligns with goal 2A: "Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity." The creation of most County services has been an iterative process over many generations, and health equity has often not been at the forefront of the list of criteria for establishing these services. As a result, this project represents the best opportunity to date to strategically plan for a more equitable, effective and sustainable County government.

### **FISCAL EFFECT**

Not applicable.

### **VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Claire Miller, Senior Manager, Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance  
Isaac Rowlett, Strategy Director, Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance

### **PREPARED BY:**

Claire Miller, Senior Manager, Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance  
Isaac Rowlett, Strategy Director, Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance

**APPROVED BY:**

Joe Lamers, Director, Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Resolution

Fiscal Note

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