

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: May 23, 2022

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairperson, County Board of Supervisors

From: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

Subject: From the Director of the Department of Transportation and Airport Division Director regarding the Airport's employee leadership diversity efforts and initiatives.

File Type: Informational Report – Airport Overview

REQUEST

Informational report provided at the request of the Chairwoman of the Transportation and Transit Committee regarding the Airport's employee leadership diversity efforts and initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The following report is provided at the request of the Chairwoman of the Transportation and Transit Committee regarding the Airport's employee leadership diversity efforts and initiatives. The Airport, like many county departments and divisions, has engaged in various initiatives to recruit and retain a diverse workforce representative of those living in Milwaukee County. There are certain barriers that make recruitment for Airport positions challenging. The Airport's location presents a challenge in that it is located on the far southeast side of Milwaukee County.

The Milwaukee County Transit System does provide near round-the-clock coverage to the Airport, however trip length for some can be a challenge when transferring from other routes. For those without reliable transportation, it can take a significantly long time to get to the Airport by bus adding a significant amount of time to an individual's workday.

The Airport is also a heavily regulated environment by the federal government. The Airport is regulated by a wealth of federal regulations including operating regulations, funding requirements and restrictions, and safety and security regulations. Due to the heavily regulated environment, Airport staff must be knowledgeable of the various restrictions that affect the work they do, or the groups they interact with. These regulations apply to various aspects of Airport operations, financing, properties, and project management. Violation of these requirements could result in heavy penalties including the loss of funding or the need to return funds back to the federal government.

Given the significant amount of regulation, Airport staff need to be regularly trained and remain highly knowledgeable about how airports work, what the restrictions and limitations are, they also need to remain up to date on industry changes. Many on staff have gone through some type of industry-based education, credentialing, or accreditation through professional organizations such as American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE). They have curriculum for areas of operations training, fire training, Airport finance, and management accreditation such as Certified Member or Accredited Airport Executive testing. In addition, it is required that security personnel take mandatory training to administer the security plan. Fire fighters complete 40 hours of training before they can become an Airport fire fighter, and they conduct annual live burn exercises.

All Airport employees are screened and badged which is a federal security requirement. Those driving on the airfield must take an annual driving test to make sure they are knowledgeable about driving on the airfield. The Airport is required to keep training records; they are kept for 24 months, and these records are reviewed annually by the FAA. Daily inspections are performed per federal requirements, and an annual inspection is performed to make sure the Airport follows federal standards.

Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Given the backdrop provided, the Airport endeavors to not only recruit a diverse, talented workforce, but to keep them as well because of the rigorous training investment that is made. The unique nature of many Airport positions lends itself for nationwide position recruitments. The Airport performs national recruitments for several positions within the Airport, and unfortunately, loses staff to other Airports around the country as well. Recently the Airport lost three emerging staff members to Madison and Denver.

Over the last 5 years, Airport leadership has taken a deliberate approach to the diverse recruitment and retention of staff. These efforts include:

- Review of all job postings with the Department of Human Resources to remove unintended bias from job descriptions.
- Requirement to use diverse hiring panels for all positions, this includes use of and/or consultation with Human Resources staff, staff from other departments, or staff from external agencies who have interaction or solid understanding of the job requirements.
- Provide job postings with agencies that target minority groups such as Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC) which the Airport is a member of.
- The Airport last year hosted a job fair for county jobs as well as jobs within the Airport drawing over 800 potential candidates with a result in 100 job offers, the most of any Airport job fair in the country.
- The Airport sent out specific invitations and notices about the job fair to a dozen agencies that have greater outreach into minority communities.
- The Airport hosted Girls in Aviation Day to promote aviation careers to girls.

- The Airport resumed the Aviation Careers Education (ACE) program in partnership with MPS and WisDOT targeting minority youth who may not have had exposure to aviation in the past.
- This year, we have partnered with Urban League of Milwaukee to showcase Airport jobs at their hiring events.
- Last year, all Airport-based equity pay adjustments were provided to those who identify as minority or female at a manager level or below.

In general, some of the initiatives taken on are to broaden the recruitment process to a wider audience creating intentional inclusion, while other initiatives are geared toward career exposure or upstream investment in future

Challenges

In its effort to recruit and retain top, diverse talent, the Airport is lagging its peers, or in some cases smaller Airports, and the local market for certain positions. There are many recruitment efforts that either have a small number of one or two qualified individuals, and in some cases the recruitment does not garner any candidates with a minimum qualification for the position. Compensation was one of the challenges listed in the Airport's 2022 budget presentation last fall.

Currently, one of the largest candidate pools, Airport Maintenance Workers, those who work on the airfield in summer and winter operations as well as in the terminal, are underfilled by about 12 positions. This past winter season, the Department had to institute a recruitment and retention bonus structure to incentivize people staying in these jobs. In addition, there have been several instances of hiring a person into a position only to have them leave shortly thereafter for another position somewhere else, or not even show up to the job on the first day because they found other employment for a higher wage. This is not unique to just the Airport Maintenance Workers, this is the case for nearly every type of position at the Airport.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the strategic plan:

- 1A: Reflect the full diversity of the County at every level of County government
- 3A: Invest "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Presented by: Brian Dranzik, Airport Director, MCDOT Airport Division

PREPARED BY:

Brian Dranzik, Airport Director, MCDOT Airport Division

APPROVED BY:

Donna Brown-Martin

Donna Brown-Martin, Milwaukee County Director of Transportation

ATTACHMENTS:

None

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