Why We Did This Audit

In August of 2014 we released an audit titled, *Milwaukee County Can Benefit from a Contemporary, Comprehensive Workforce Diversity Policy.* The major findings included a lack of a contemporary, comprehensive workforce diversity among full-time staff in major County departments and data issues. We provided seven follow-up reports to the County Board on the status of pending recommendations. The length of time that has passed since the initial audit and a new emphasis at Milwaukee County on racial equity resulted in a decision for our office to revisit the countywide data in regards to its workforce.

What We Recommend

ASD made 8 recommendations that, if implemented, will address the issues raised in the report. The Department of Human Resources accepted all of our recommendations. Key recommendations include:

- *Work with County agencies that are outliers in both directions for both racial groups and genders to formulate a plan to diversity their staffing.*
- *Set up a system to regularly monitor the variance in salaries by race and analyze the data to determine the cause. Once cause has been determined, establish appropriate steps to eliminate the variance and report actions to County leadership and policymakers.*
- *Review, update and distribute all relevant diversity AMOPs (e.g. Diversity and Inclusion, Equal Employment Opportunity, Hiring for a Vacant Position).*
- *Conduct a review of all involuntary separations to determine if there is a reason for the disproportionate number of Black or African American employees or other racial groups. Devise a plan to work with managers to combat this trend.*
- *Work to establish a toolkit for recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce to provide specific guidelines and train hiring managers on how to hire a diverse staff.*
- *HR should establish policies and procedures regarding the production, publication and retention of the biennial EEOC report.*
- *HR should evaluate whether manager diversity performance should be added to the annual performance evaluation process.*
- *Update, publish and present County workforce data to policymakers annually.*

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Pulling Back the Curtain: A Look at Milwaukee County's Workforce through Racial and Gender Equity Lenses from 2009 to 2019.

BACKGROUND

During the fall of 2019 an administrative strategic planning effort resulted in the development of three-year objectives for Milwaukee County. This effort followed multiple events that looked to foster changes at Milwaukee County related to racial equity. A prior audit found the County lacking in a clear diversity policy and having wide variations in workforce diversity at the department level. Given these developments this audit was focused on a review of findings from the prior audit and to conduct an analysis of the exiting workforce to provide a benchmark and starting point for the County as it works to achieve its workforce diversity.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The objective of the audit was to provide a look back at what the County workforce has looked like for the past ten years and provide data to policymakers and hiring managers as they begin to work to achieve the County's new strategic goals. The analysis includes full-time, non-elected County employees from 2009 to 2019. For certain analysis, we used four years for comparison – 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2019.

WHAT WE FOUND

- From 2009 to 2019, the County workforce dropped from 4,448 employees to 3,424; average age dropped by 2.1 years from 46.2 to 44.1 and average length of service dropped 3.6 years from 12.7 to 9.1.

- Comparing the overall County workforce to the 2018 Milwaukee County population's census estimates shows some variance. Hispanic or Latino employees are 8.1% lower than the census estimate, Black or African American employees are 5.9% higher and White employees are 5.7% higher than the census estimates.

- Large disparities exists at the functional area level and agency levels versus the County workforce for both racial groups and gender. The biggest outlier was the Parks and Recreational functional area with staffing of 89% from the White racial group. The Zoological agency had 93% staffing from the White racial group. For gender, the Transportation functional area employed 15% Females. The Fleet Management agency had 3% female employees.

- The greatest workforce variance between race and gender was for Black or African Americans with Males representing 33% of all Black or African American employees in 2019.

- Black or African American employees had the lowest average salary in three out of four years we reviewed (see chart below for 2019 data). We also found this racial group to be 50% of the County workforce earning in the bottom third of salaries and 11% of the top 100 earners while being 31% of the County workforce. Hispanic or Latino employees saw the smallest growth in earnings since 2009 at 12% while the countywide average was 16%.

- Females overall earned less than males in every year we reviewed but were 49% of the top 100 earners.

- In 2009, the County had a lower separation rate than the Bureau of Labor Statistics average rate for state and local governments. By 2019 it was just under the average.

- Resignations have seen the largest growth in separation type since 2009. Involuntary separations are higher for Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino employees than the county average.

2019 Average Salary by Race (in thousands)

Countywide Average $56,747

- 🟩 American Indian or Alaskan
- 🟥 Asian
- 🟦 Black or African American
- 🟪 Hispanic or Latino
- ⬜ Two or more races
- 🟨 Unknown/Blank
- 🟧 White

69 · 63 · 62 · 59 · 52 · 48 · 46