

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 22, 2022

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

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

Subject: Department of Transportation 2021 Annual Report

File Type: Informational Report

This informational report provides a report on how the Department of Transportation set and achieved its 2021 goals.

POLICY

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

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 to revise and enhance the departmental-level plan in the year ahead.”

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

Alignment to the above strategic objectives is articulated in response to the questions below.

1. What were the top 3 goals of your department/office 2021? Please explain why they are "SMARTIE" goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, inclusive, and equitable) and how they align to the county's racial equity strategy.

The Department of Transportation's Strategic Plan goals are recruitment and retention, communication, resiliency, and fiscal sustainability. The goals were set in 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, the priority goal was communication; however, the pandemic required the department to reprioritize recruitment and retention as the main goals (grouped together as Goal 1 below). Although a departmental focus on recruitment and retention has been necessary due to compensation challenges at all levels of the organization, the pandemic exacerbated the problem. As such, recruitment, and retention of staff, particularly critical infrastructure workers, were the main goals for the Department of Transportation in 2021.

2. To what extent were these goals accomplished in 2021? Please explain.

SMARTIE	Recruitment	Retention
Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review JEQ requirements to ensure greater inclusivity.Work with HR Business Partner to identify how long to post and where to post job announcements.Assess departmental positions for hybrid/telework opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Offer a combined recruitment and retention bonus to critical infrastructure workers for the 2021-2022 winter season.Review compensation for difficult to fill and retain positions including but not limited to Airport and Highway Maintenance Workers, Fleet Mechanics, Fiscal staff (budget analysts and accountants).
Measurable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of qualified applicants for each recruited positionNumber of position re-postings to solicit more than five qualified applicants.Number of positions identified as below market and/or lacking equity with similar positions within the department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of eligible staff for the full season bonus (only given for a full month's work).All vacant critical infrastructure positions (both seasonal and permanent) filled in time and throughout the winter season and low turnover ratio.Vacant fiscal positions filled and low turnover ratio of existing staff.

Achievable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment goal is achievable with the assistance of Human Resources Department. The recruitment goal is achievable with the approval of the County Board to provide bonuses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention goal is achievable with the assistance of Human Resources Department. The retention goal is achievable with the approval of the County Board to provide bonuses.
Realistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving this goal is realistic if funding is available and approved to be competitive in the marketplace. Given the impacts of the pandemic on hiring, it is assumed that the department may need to recalibrate its efforts over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving this goal is realistic if funding is available and approved to be competitive in the marketplace. Given the impacts of the pandemic on hiring, it is assumed that the department may need to recalibrate its efforts over time.
Timely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving the recruitment goal is expected to take a minimum of two to three months or County Board cycles due to the nature of reviewing JEQs and following Chapter 3 of the Administrative Manual of Operating Procedures. Approval of the recruitment bonus for vacant and seasonal critical infrastructure workers was received towards the end of the recruitment process. It was provided to existing staff as well to ensure a minimum amount of turnover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the retention bonus for critical infrastructure workers was received towards the beginning of the winter season, which was timely.
Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All critical infrastructure worker staff were eligible for and received the bonus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All critical infrastructure worker staff received a bonus for each month they worked through the winter season.
Equitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All critical infrastructure worker staff received the bonus. There were no requirements associated with the bonus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All critical infrastructure worker staff received the bonus (which was offered monthly). The only requirement was being compliant with the County's COVID-19 vaccine mandate. All eligible employees met this requirement.

3. To what extent were these goals accomplished in 2021?

The Department provided recruitment and retention bonuses to eligible employees as approved by the County Board. In addition, the Airport, Highway Maintenance, and Fleet Management Divisions had varied success in filling all vacant positions for the winter season. Fleet had the most success but a fewer number of vacant positions to fill. Airport and Highway Maintenance Divisions were unable to fill all vacant critical infrastructure worker positions throughout the course of the winter season.

Fiscal positions remain a challenge for recruitment and retention. To date, the Transportation Services Division continues to recruit for its Budget & Fiscal Manager position and four of the eight fiscal positions at the Airport remain vacant.

For 2022, the Department is working with the Human Resources Department and Office of Strategy, Performance and Budget to study compensation challenges for recruitment, retention, and internal equity throughout the department. The salary studies aim to resolve persistent pay equity disparities between Airport Maintenance Workers and Highway Maintenance Workers as well as vertical compression issues. Also, a salary increase is being requested for numerous Fleet Management positions to be competitive with the marketplace and resolve internal pay equity issues. Compensation analysis of vacant fiscal positions is ongoing. This approach is expected to provide greater employee stability throughout the department.

4. What factors *enabled* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

Advanced preparation and swift action by all Department managers to identify recruitment and retention objectives, secure necessary approvals, and implement strategies quickly and efficiently enabled the department to achieve these goals, to varying degrees.

5. What factors *hindered* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

The lack of the Department's financial resources hindered some progress as well as the department's inability to rely on the Department of Human Resources, due to its personnel challenges, to move more quickly on recruitment and retention goals and to measure the extent to which the department achieved its goals. Also, Chapter 3.07 – Position Change Requests of the Administrative Manual of Operating Procedures prevents the department from moving quickly and nimbly in achieving these goals.

6. What is the status of your department/office in developing its strategic plan?

The Department's strategic plan is ongoing, and implementation is incremental due to a lack of financial and human resources. The department will have implemented its final two goals of resiliency and financial sustainability by the end of 2023.

FISCAL EFFECT

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

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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PREPARED BY:

Julie Esch, Deputy Director

APPROVED BY:

Donna Brown-Martin

Donna Brown-Martin, Director

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