

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

**DATE:** July 10, 2020

**TO:** Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** County Executive David Crowley  
*Prepared by Isaac Rowlett, Director of Strategic Planning, and Kelly McKone, Director of Organizational Performance*

**SUBJECT:** **Milwaukee County Organizational Assessment – Current State Analysis**

**Background**

Over the course of 2019, Milwaukee County leaders collaborated to launch the County’s first enterprise-wide strategic planning effort in two decades. By the fall of 2019, the County established a bold and transformational vision: “By achieving racial equity, Milwaukee is the healthiest County in Wisconsin.” Currently ranking 71<sup>st</sup> of 72 counties in the state according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings<sup>1</sup>, Milwaukee County has a long road ahead to realize this vision.

In order to assess the County government’s readiness for achieving this vision, a team comprised of two consulting firms were hired to conduct an organizational assessment. One firm, Eagle Hill Consulting, is a management consulting firm based on Washington, D.C. The second firm, Sector Management Consulting Group, is management consulting firm based in Milwaukee. The two firms bring unique and complementary skill sets and experiences that positioned them well to lead this work for the County.

The consultants collaborated to conduct their organizational assessment of Milwaukee County between December 2019 and February 2020. This report provides an overview of the team’s data collection, analysis framework, and findings.

**Data Collection**

The consultants used three approaches to gather data about Milwaukee County.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

First, they reviewed documents including the strategic plan update, current organization charts, and department descriptions to understand how the County is currently structured and the services offered.

Second, they interviewed County leaders to gather additional context on current organizational strengths that will enable the County's success and obstacles that may hinder progress toward achieving the vision of racial equity and health.

Third, they conducted 7 focus groups with 45 leaders from across the organization and 16 residents who use County services in order to further understand strengths and opportunities in meeting the needs of those served by the County.

### **Analysis Framework**

Data gleaned from the methods outlined above were analyzed by categorizing findings across four "focus areas" and five "enabling pillars." The focus areas included racial equity, duplication & efficiency, collaboration, and resident-oriented service. The enabling pillars included processes, services, people, culture, and structure.

### **Findings**

The consultants used qualitative research methods to identify the following findings:

- Inefficient and/or undefined processes (and systems) were frequently mentioned as a barrier to collaboration and employees' ability to meet residents' needs.
- A lack of formal resident-oriented service processes and supporting infrastructure was frequently mentioned as a barrier to leadership and staff's ability to understand the extent to which they are meeting residents' needs.
- While people were highlighted as a strength of the organization, staff do not know their role in achieving the racial equity and health vision.
- Organizational silos –reinforced by the structure --were frequently identified as a barrier across all focus areas.
- Staff highlighted that employees are passionate about serving their community and want to collaborate to better serve, but are hindered by silos and limited insight into residents' needs. In turn, racial equity is not yet widely integrated into the County's culture.

### **Recommendation**

This report is informational and no action is required.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Crowley', with a horizontal line underneath.

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County Executive David Crowley  
Office of the Milwaukee County Executive

cc: Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive  
Julie Landy, Director, Department of Administrative Services  
Claire Miller, Continuous Improvement Manager, Department of Administrative Services