



## RACIAL EQUITY BUDGET TOOL

Date Submitted: 7/15/20

Department: Milwaukee County Department of Transportation -- TRANSIT DIVISION

*Please note: each response field below has a 2,500 character limit.*

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE CATEGORY 1: DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

#### **What activities are you doing to attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce in your department? What are the associated costs of these activities?**

MCTS works to attract a diverse pool of qualified applicants for each job and to remove barriers that reflect inherent racial bias. Prior to posting a job, HR and the EEO Officer at MCTS review the job description to assure the requirements and standards for the position do not unfairly eliminate potential candidates from consideration. When posting for jobs, MCTS uses the outreach network at MilwaukeeJobs.com to distribute job postings to dozens of community based organizations. In 2019 MCTS purchased radio advertising to specifically connect with communities of color.

MCTS HR screens interview questions for racial bias and oversees the interview process. HR and the EEO Officer, per the established policy, review each hiring decision to assure fair hiring procedures were followed. Additionally, MCTS has 'banned the box' and conducts required criminal background checks only at the offer stage to allow hiring managers to assess a candidate's fitness for employment rather than prejudice the candidate based on prior justice system involvement. No candidates are asked about prior pay history.

Retention at MCTS would benefit from more employee engagement. The addition of Ceridian DayForce in 2021 at MCTS is anticipated to include a DayForce Hub feature which promises enhanced communication capabilities. There remains an ongoing need for supervisory/manager training on employee engagement. Aside from new Bus Operator training, MCTS has limited training capabilities. In 2021, training will have to be conducted by limited MCTS HR staff as outside assistance was not budgeted for.

Additionally, specific MCTS departments engage in further activities to help attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce. For example, the MCTS Marketing Department offers 1:1 professional development meetings with leadership and participation in cross-functional workgroups. The MCTS Schedule & Planning has a diverse workforce, in part due to developed relationships with local universities that has helped attract diverse candidates. Once hired, these employees work closely with their direct reports or as members of workgroups, giving them a voice and career advancement opportunities.

#### **How do you use professional development and advancement opportunities to advance equity in your department's workforce? What resources are used to support these opportunities for professional development and advancement?**

MCTS offers tuition reimbursement, a program that is being expanded to support reimbursement for non-degree professional development such as credential/certification programs. Additionally, MCTS is piloting a mentoring program to provide MCTS employees with opportunities to enhance their growth potential within the organization, particularly within the areas of management and leadership. The program participant gains access to a mentor, has access to an expanded tuition reimbursement program, and spends a year or more of work part-time in immersive learning experiences in the company, completing projects outside of his department and gaining valuable experience, new skills, and enhanced knowledge of how the company operates.



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE CATEGORY 2: PEOPLE-FOCUSED DESIGN

**How and when have service users, particularly users of color, and other key stakeholders been engaged to inform decisions about your requested budget (Who was involved, what was the forum, what were the results)?**

MCTS regularly engages the community to discuss service changes. For example, for the 2020 budget, the Marketing and Planning departments collaborated to develop rider surveys to obtain specific feedback about how the budget would impact bus routes. These surveys were fielded on the bus, and via online channels thereby reaching a broad, racially diverse audience. That feedback, including verbatim responses to open-ended questions, provided valuable insight that was shared in a report to the County. Other marketing efforts to communicate the serious implications of a budget crisis were used on the MCTS website, in flyers handed out to the public at Transportation Committee meetings, in our Rider Insider customer e-newsletter, and on social media. +

**What are the multi-lingual needs of your department's service users? How do you use your budget to meet these language needs?**

MCTS analyzed customer contacts covering multiple departments, e.g., Customer Service, Reception, Para-transit, and Dispatch. All areas reported Spanish as the primary language that was used by Limited English Proficiency customers. MCTS produces several Spanish-language items and has also created Spanish versions of Public Service Announcements on buses. MCTS has also equipped RideMCTS.com with a Google widget that can translate all text on the website into any language offered by Google Translate. We are making that feature more prominent in a future website update.

MCTS translates some of its materials into Spanish, but would need to dedicate more budget to increase that reach. Recently, for a COVID-19 ad campaign, it was decided that it was important to translate our bus shelter ads, radio ads and a special issue of our on-bus printed newsletter "Bus Lines" into Spanish. In addition, MCTS is planning on creating a Spanish version of its new "Rules For Riders" on board each bus. +

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE CATEGORY 3: EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE

**Our employees can be a great resource for innovation and knowing what is working well and what needs work. Have you engaged a diverse group of frontline employees to inform decisions about your proposed budget changes? If yes, how was input solicited, who was involved, and what were the results?**

Most MCTS employees are represented by a union. Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 998 represents primarily Bus Operators and Mechanics. OPEIU Local 9 represents Administrative Support Workers. MCTS' Labor Department is in regular communication with these unions over both overarching and day-to-day work issues. The unions provide input on most aspects of the organization on a regular basis, and that input is always vetted and considered. Union input has resulted in many improvements to operations.

In addition, MCTS created three work-groups of diverse (largely non-represented) employees to study and make recommendations on core aspects of transit service: Safety, Reliability, and Customers. These employees have diverse and varied backgrounds and come from different parts of the organization. The results are a more inclusive and engaged workforce, improved morale, and an improved understanding of what we do for each other and for our customers.

Additionally, the aforementioned Racial Equity Workgroup will be another avenue for ongoing employee input on larger organizational matters, including our yearly budget. Lastly, individual departments generally survey employees on budget needs when creating their individual initial budgets. The Marketing Department, for example, has each employee create their own SWOT analysis to show areas of greatest need. These ideas are formulated into the department plan and budget.

**Describe ways in which racial and economic data was used to prioritize resource distribution. (Data can include sources found in the resources section of this tool, department collected data, or any other relevant data from other sources.)**

Per FTA requirements, MCTS regularly engages in an impact analysis of proposed route changes to test whether those changes will disproportionately impact communities of color and disadvantaged communities. Geographic census data is used for this process. MCTS is also looking to improve on how it collects demographic data on riders. Demographic data on riders is currently collected through annual customer phone survey, and when paper surveys are distributed to riders on board buses. It is also our intent to collect data on attendees at public meetings.

MCTS also considers socioeconomic data to determine how it communicates to the public. MCTS uses a wide mix of media to reach people, some are traditional media resources and others are digital. The HR Department also tracks sourcing data and works to cross reference that with self-reported racial data as well as retention data.



**What are the positive or negative racial equity implications of your proposed budget changes? For reference departments may refer to the “Form 1 – Major Changes” tab of your Supplemental Forms 2021 spreadsheet. Any change with identified impacts should be described.**

MCTS is currently budgeting for no service reductions in 2021, so the racial equity implications of proposed budget changes should be minimal.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act of 2020 provided \$25 billion for transit nationally. If not for these funds locally, MCTS would have faced a budget gap of over \$10 million for 2021. CARES Act funds remaining at the end of 2020 will be used by MCTS to develop a budget with no changes to paratransit service or to the fixed route transit service programs for 2021.

**What are the expected benefits and potential unintended consequences to disadvantaged communities of your proposed budget changes?**

**a. What analysis did you do to determine the expected benefits and potential unintended consequences?**

Again, because MCTS is currently budgeting for no service reductions in 2021, we do not expect there to be benefits or unintended consequences to disadvantaged communities as a result of proposed budget changes.

In communications, the Marketing Department expects there to be benefits gained with Spanish speaking customers through an expanded communications reach, increasing awareness of our services amongst Spanish speaking communities. A SWOT analysis found that Spanish translation and investing in sponsorships that target communities of color rose to the top of the list of things we needed to improve.

**b. What will your department do to mitigate unintended consequences resulting from your proposed budget changes?**

MCTS does not anticipate unintended consequences to emerge from the 2021 budget because it does not include service changes.