



RACIAL EQUITY BUDGET TOOL

Date Submitted: 7/9/20

Department: Department on Aging

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?

The Department on Aging works with Human Resources to design strategies to attract the best talent for its vacant positions. Based upon HR's recommendations, positions are posted on various career websites. The Department works with HR staff to post positions outside of our typical posting channels to reach a diverse pool of applicants. Applicants are screened by HR and then by hiring managers and staff. Applicants are invited for in-person interview(s) based on review of application and/ or a telephone screening. These interviews are conducted by a panel of experts using a set of preplanned interview questions to mitigate bias. The Department has also worked with HR to add interview questions that specifically ask about the County's strategic plan and commitment to racial equity. The scores of each panelist are compiled and the highest scoring candidate is offered a position. Current all staff composition is: 51% minority, 49% non-minority; Minority Managers 23%, non-minority managers 77%. The associated cost of using this process is that it takes a very long time to fill positions. This places an undue burden on existing staff. The Department continues to make effort to find qualified diverse applicants for management positions to improve representation of minorities in higher level jobs. In terms of staff retention efforts and inclusivity, the Department has: participates in the racial equity ambassador project (2 employees are racial equity ambassadors); strongly and consistently offer external and internal training and professional development to improve skill sets; consistently highlights the achievements of staff through a quarterly newsletter as well as at public meetings such as the Commission on Aging; organizes potlucks and all-staff meetings to update staff on current initiatives and activities as well as to highlight staff achievements; and consistently has interviewed front-line staff when vacancies open up for management or higher-level positions. Additionally, managers are encouraged to review the job evaluation questionnaires (JEQ) to keep these current and reflective of needs of the job.

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?

The Department encourages staff to update skills by offering both external and internal professional development and training opportunities. In 2019, the Department spent approximately \$45,000 on professional development. Some examples of all staff trainings include Microsoft Excel, employee well-being and change management, and racial equity. Two staff were selected to be racial equity ambassadors and have contributed to shaping the dialogue on this issue within the County and in Aging. Additionally, line staff were encouraged to participate in Dementia care, Elder Abuse, Alzheimer's related conferences and trainings. Staff are recommended to and selected for the Leadership Excellence (LEX) Program. Two minority managers have participated in this program. In 2019, two staff were selected for the LEX program and 1 staff was promoted to a managerial position. Staff also continue to be recommended to the Managerial Development program. In addition, all Department managers are consistently encouraged to work with their staff to seek external trainings aimed at improving employee skill sets.

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)?

The Department on Aging uses a robust network of community participants, stakeholders, and public input to guide its work both fiscal and operational. Aging's work is guided by the Commission on Aging (COA) which meets almost every month. Virtually all of its members are 60 years or older. The racial composition of this body is 64% African American (AA) and 36% Caucasian. Both the existing Chair and most recent Chair of the Commission are African American, and three of the Commission's four standing committees are chaired by African American women. Up until a few weeks ago, the Commission also had one Asian-American member and one Latino/Hispanic member, but both of those individuals recently resigned. The Commission's Service Delivery Committee (50% minority), Advocacy Committee (17% minority), Wellness Committee (18% minority), Advisory Council (40% minority), and Aging and Disability Resource Center Governing Board (20% minority) are all official platforms for review and advocacy of senior issues and work done by the Department. All meetings are open to the public, vendors, State staff, and broader public. These meetings are advertised on Milwaukee County CLIC and community participation is actively promoted. Also, every two years, the Department prepares an Area Agency on Aging (Area Plan) plan that sets the path for all actions. This plan is prepared using public input from multiple open public forms; in fact, in constructing the Department's current Area Plan, over 500 seniors were contacted through surveys and public forums. In the Budget Development process, all inputs received from various platforms are considered and incorporated based on fiscal realities. Finally, the Department has regularly shared budget updates with its Commission on Aging and the Commission's Advocacy Committee and Advisory Council. Each October, the Service Delivery Committee reviews and recommends purchase-of-service contracts, and these recommendations are sent to the full Commission each November. The Commission's recommendations (where appropriate) are sent to the County Board of Supervisors.

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

The Department serves all older adults within Milwaukee County. Its Aging Resource Center (ARC) employs 4 bilingual (Spanish) staff who assist Latina community members who contact the ARC about service options, including help applying for Medicaid and dementia care support. In addition, the ARC also uses the interpreter services of vendors such as the Language Line (\$3,455 in 2019) and International Institute of Wisconsin (\$10,171 in 2019) to meet the service needs of other minorities such as Hmong, Arabic, Iranian, Punjabi, Vietnamese, etc., whose primary language is not English. Besides this, the Department also contracts with a diverse group of minority service vendors such as the United Community Center (Latina, \$393,189), Asian American Community Center (Chinese, \$37,500), Hmong American Friendship Association (\$36,185), Jewish Family Services (all languages, \$30,000), Milwaukee Christian Center (South Asian/Hmong/Latino, \$353,550), and Muslim Community Health Center (various ethnicities and languages - \$10,000) to provide a wide variety of socialization opportunities, meals, and outreach services centered around the specific ethnic needs of these populations. The Department uses Telecommunications Relay Service for consumers calling who are deaf or speech impaired. We have Hearing Loop technology for in-person office visits for consumers who use hearing aids. The Department also provides sign language interpreter(s) at various Commission on Aging meetings and braille documents to seniors who may require such services. These services are garnered through volunteers.

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?

The budget development process is a robust and inclusive process that seeks input from the lowest responsibility center. Each responsibility center budget considers the needs of its staff and services rendered. This responsibility center budget is rolled up into a functional area, and its consolidation results in the Department budget. Each supervisor gathers input from staff, historical experiences, and anticipated future needs. Staff input is gathered throughout the year through monthly team and one-on-one meetings, as well as quarterly all-staff meetings. Apart from the adopted budget process, the fiscal team works with managers to proactively manage budget to actual variance and submit budget amendments to meet "new" or revised needs of the area. The budget highlights are shared through all staff meetings. This budget development methodology results in an inclusive environment and represents the needs of each service area. This budget development model was a consequence of the 2016 Employee engagement survey which showcased a need to make this process more inclusive. Based on the feedback of this survey, funding was earmarked for services to improve employee engagement and advance professional development. Also, as a result of input from line staff, a safety committee was established to mitigate risks encountered by staff in their day-to-day work. Similar initiatives are planned in 2021.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE CATEGORY 4: IMPROVED PERFORMANCE & EQUITABLE PRACTICE

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.)

Every two years, the Department prepares a state-mandated biennial Area Plan which lays out the blueprint of services rendered by the Department. This plan is prepared through robust inputs from the public, Commission on Aging members, State Department of Health Services staff, and MCDA staff. Contracts within each service area in the Area Plan are created and performance outcomes are specified. Each month, every vendor submits demographic data of older adults served and outcomes achieved. An analysis of service area spend is conducted as part of the Comptroller's monthly variance reporting to identify shortfall and overages. As part of each Area Plan, focus areas for service enhancements are identified. One such focus area was to increase service reach within heavily minority zip codes in Milwaukee County. In 2019, the Department contracted to fund senior center management and meals within 53206; 100% of older adults served in 2019 were African American. Also, in 2019, the Department contracted with Able Access, a transportation vendor which is 100% minority owned and services 47.5% minority seniors. In addition, vendors are required to input demographic data per older adult served for each registered service such as meals, national family caregiver program, and case management within the WellSky system. Upon additional allocation of grant funds, the contracts are adjusted based on service needs, priorities identified, outcomes achieved, and cost to continue considerations. In the 2019 Federal Fiscal year, 41.6% of all registered service users were minorities. In 2019 the following are the percentage of minorities served per contract under the non-registered services: 5-County owned senior centers (44% minority), transportation services 47.5%, Outreach to LGBT community 30%, employment services 86.7%, legal services 53.0%, telephone reassurance 28%, late life counseling 16%, family support services for disabled seniors 27%, and neighborhood outreach services 10%. The 2021 Budget increases the following contracts based on reach to minority impact: Able Access transportation (\$48,000), Goodwill (\$80,000), and Alzheimer's Association (\$ 18,074). To meet the tax levy target, the County Owned Senior center programming contract decreases by \$170,000. To mitigate the impact of this reduction, virtual programming services like those offered in 2020 will be used for the first quarter of 2021.

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.

Positive impacts include contracting with the following vendors (service, minority population served, and proposed contract increase for 2021): Able Access - transportation services (80% minority; \$50,000), Alzheimer's Association - national family caregiver services (47.4%, \$18,000), Goodwill - home delivery of meals (33.8%, \$80,000), Milwaukee LGBT - outreach and advocacy services to LGBT seniors (30%, \$10,000), Life Navigators - services to disabled seniors and families (27.3%, \$15,075), and Eras - neighborhood outreach volunteer transportation as well as grocery delivery (9.9%, \$10,000). Transportation services were rated as a high need area by community and the Area Plan. The increase in funding is for transportation services will allow more older adults to be transported to medical appointments, grocery stores, and meal sites. The County contracted with St. Charles Youth and Family Services to hire a federal grant-funded Project Coordinator who will coordinate multidisciplinary services to victims of elder abuse and exploitation. Additionally, a new Elder Benefits Specialists position is created which assists seniors with a wide range of questions around Medicare and related public benefits. A specific focus area of this position is low-income seniors. In combination with one-time funding to pilot these services in-house along with federal match, the County for the first time can get additional resources to provide additional services for older adults through the Aging Resource Center. These service enhancements are more aligned with the County's "No Wrong Door" approach and improved customer service quality. This service increment will be available to all Milwaukee County older adults who call the Aging Resource Center for services. The Department also plans to add additional weekend meals to seniors so that seniors can stay safely at home. In 2019, the home delivered meal program served 34% minority seniors.

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?

Given the large tax levy cut, the 5-county owned senior center programming contract decreases by \$170,000. This is our only contract funded exclusively by tax levy. While all other services funded by grants see services increase, this contract sees a decrease to achieve the tax levy cut assigned to the Department. Given the COVID pandemic, this contract has moved to an almost all virtual format in 2020, reducing staffing and maintenance needs at the centers. The Department is also exploring to what extent to use existing staff and volunteers to supplement services. While it is not known if services will resume in an in-person format, it is anticipated that centers will continue using a virtual format for a portion of time in 2021 (probably through March 2021). These services will remain available from Monday to Friday for any seniors. Moving to a virtual format is helpful as it provides a more cost-effective and safer method to render services given the County's pressure on tax levy funding on a year-over-year basis.

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

The Department continues to work with Serving Older Adults (SOA), its contracted vendor that coordinates social programming at the five county-owned centers, to come up with a robust plan to minimize any service disruptions. SOA will be challenged to continue providing virtual programming through at least the first quarter of 2021, with some very limited outdoor programming also taking place. SOA will also be asked to continue their wellness check calls on a weekly basis to ensure that isolated seniors are having their needs met. Senior programming will continue to be provided five days a week.