

RACIAL EQUITY BUDGET TOOL

Date Submitted: July 14, 2022

Department: County Board of Supervisors

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1: **CREATE INTENTIONAL INCLUSION**

1. 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 Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors is the legislative branch of Milwaukee County comprised of 18 Supervisors elected from across the largest and most diverse County in Wisconsin. Each Supervisor district represents approximately 53,000 residents.

To build a diverse workforce, the Chair, as departmental leader, engages Supervisors and staff to circulate posts for job announcements for Board positions to their wide networks with an intentionality towards diversity. This recruitment step is taken to expand beyond the base level of support provided by Human Resources that posts announcements to limited sites. Minimum requirements for educational attainment and drivers' license are evaluated in JEQ development.

To retain a diverse workforce, the department has developed supportive resources, ladders for advancement, and trainings aimed at promoting professional development and success. With these tools, staff are empowered to lead and take ownership of their work.

These efforts to attract and retain diverse talent and build an inclusive workforce require additional staff time within the department without a financial cost for the activities.

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

Chairwoman Nicholson led the Board's ongoing strategic realignment for the department with a focus on the County's vision of achieving racial equity. In doing so, staff positions have been realigned to create ladders for advancement within the department. Chairwoman Nicholson implemented this realignment with the assistance of each staff member to learn about their individual interests and talents. A tremendous effort has been made to try and build a staffing model that creates greater capacity within the confines of an extremely limited budget. The Chairwoman has given each staff member the opportunity to create more agency within their position by creating workflows for their specific assigned roles within the department. Board staff at all levels regularly engage with professional development opportunities either by receiving trainings or by developing resources and trainings for fellow staff members. Upon her reelection as Board Chair, Chairwoman Nicholson uplifted this process to ensure that all staff feel they can diversify their interests.

Additionally, the department's intern program underwent a realignment encouraging applicants of diverse backgrounds to apply and expand their professional development. Chairwoman Nicholson

authored legislation in November 2021 to allow the department to realign the intern positions into paid ones, which aids the department in avoiding the cycle where the privileged have greater opportunities to land paid employment, become leaders, and influence policy. In 2022, the Board successfully launched this reimagined paid student intern program.

Several current staff members have started with the Board as Interns or Legislative Assistants and advanced to leadership roles or positions with progressive responsibilities. These advancements demonstrate that our goal is realistic and achievable. We can measure this goal with paid internships by both examining the diversity of backgrounds we see in the hiring pools now, compared to when the positions were unpaid and by number of applications received overall. The first paid intern with the Board had the opportunity to advance to a full-time position.

3. 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?

As elected officials, each Supervisor can approach the budget individually and through the lens of how to best represent the specific needs of their constituents. This approach can be done through collaborative budget documents and surveys. District and departmental staff are engaged in the development of fiscal priorities, amendments, and communications as part of the budget adoption process.

On a departmental level, the Chairwoman welcomes ideas and suggestions from staff within the department. One avenue for leadership engagement is participation in the weekly core staff meetings, which offers opportunities for centralized departmental staff to provide input on Board operations and projects. Additionally, the Chairwoman created a space for Legislative Assistants (LA) to engage in weekly meetings where staff can share ideas, experiences, and cultivate peer support systems. Staff have cultivated a stronger support network among each other and various external departments since the inception of the weekly LA meetings, which aids in the successful servicing of constituents.

4. Are you tracking contracts with minority and women-owned business? If yes, please share percentages of each. If no, why not?

The County Board does not award contracts of its own but provides legislative oversight of departmental contracts through the Committee on Finance. Through this process, the Board ensures that contracts are being fairly awarded to minority-owned and women-owned businesses. All action items that appear before the County Board are required to have a Fiscal Note attached, which includes whether an item has been reviewed by our Community Business Development Partners (MCGO 42.04). Additionally, File No. 22-12 requests regular informational reports related to participation and departmental waivers of Milwaukee County's Targeted Enterprise Program, and Federally funded projects relative to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and

Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. Through these methods, the County Board monitors adherence to our own ordinances and adopted policies.

5. How and when have service users, in diverse and inclusive communities, and other key stakeholders been engaged to inform decisions about changes in funding levels for services provided in your requested budget (who was involved, what was the forum, what were the results)?

The County Board is a policy-making body and therefore does not provide direct services. One of the Board's primary responsibilities is to pass the County's annual budget that funds direct services. As part of this process, the Board Chair leads the Board's annual public hearing on the budget.

The Milwaukee County Board has historically used the annual hearing, district town halls, community task forces, and "Chat with the Chair" events in locations throughout the county to hear from diverse constituencies and key stakeholders on the issues that matter most to them. These public inputs then help fuel district office decisions during committee and Board meetings. By engaging with communities across the County, the annual budget becomes more than just a reflection of finances, it becomes a reflection of our shared values and priorities as a community.

Under Chairwoman Nicholson's leadership, the County Board developed a hybrid meeting structure, culminating in the first hybrid meeting of the ARPA Taskforce in 2021. With news that Milwaukee County would receive millions in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, the County Board ensured we were a critical partner in the expenditure of those funds through the creation of the ARPA Task Force. The ARPA Task Force provides a vehicle for the voice of the public, our strategic partners, and community groups to be heard and has been nationally recognized as a model for deliberative and strategic allocation of federal funding throughout Wisconsin. The historic nature of this funding meant it was crucial to hear from a diverse constituency to gather public input on fund expenditures. Our hybrid meeting structure enhanced the e-comment and virtual comment tools we implemented in 2020. In 2022, we deployed the first hybrid County Board meeting.

With updated and enhanced technologies and the availability of hybrid meetings, constituencies across the county now have more access points than ever to engage with their local county government.

6. 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.)

Chairwoman Nicholson continues to develop avenues to ask for information through the legislative process in a way that intentionally promotes oversight and advancement of the county vision to achieve racial equity. Quantitative and qualitative data is made available across departments and

within community organizations to help guide the county's budget decisions and distribution of resources.

The County Board Chairwoman created 63 reference files to support the analyses of administrative operations and service delivery with a racial equity lens. These actions empower respective Committee Chairs to provide legislative oversight of matters within their jurisdiction. Informational reports from the Sheriff's Office, Department of Transportation, and Circuit Court were also created to review policies and practices to achieve racial equity.

To further support legislative oversight, which includes resource allocations, the Chairwoman sought and received agreements from Committee Chairs who will fulfill this duty using available tools for matters within their jurisdiction. Committee Chairs are empowered to request departmental reports, utilize the above-mentioned Reference files, and act on file notes from the Legislative Services Division (LSD) in the Clerk's Office.

7. How does your budget reflect efforts to work across departments to break down silos to maximize access to and quality of services offered? How does this help us achieve the vision of achieving equity and health?

Under Chairwoman Nicholson's leadership, the Board created a separate Committee on Audit to enhance legislative oversight of administrative operations in a forum with greater transparency.

The Board also created a reimagined and expanded Committee on Health Equity, Human Needs and Strategic Planning (HEHNSP). County ordinances include the addition of strategic planning within this legislative committee, which means current policy, budget and operational decisions of all county departments can be heard in a single space versus a siloed approach. To track progress on achieving the county mission and strategic plan, departmental leaders are to report on their goals, and the status of those goals, to the County Board each year. Responses to these reports are sent to the Committee on Health Equity, Human Needs and Strategic Planning for review to facilitate the breaking down of previously existing silos.

With the success of the reimagined and expanded Committee on Health Equity, Human Needs, and Strategic Planning, Chairwoman Nicholson authored legislation in 2022 to amend the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances to update the names and duties of standing committees to reflect new roles to put a greater focus on quality-of-life services, Parks and Transit, and the annual budget. These reimagined committee roles will further allow our department to effectively collaborate with external departments and stakeholders and ensure constituent needs are proficiently met.

The successful passage of amendments to the 2021 and 2022 County Executive's Budgets demonstrates that elected officials can collaborate to achieve a shared vision. Disagreement on policy did not prevent collaboration on matters of shared value in the interests of those we represent.

8. 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?

At the beginning of 2022, the County Board adopted File No. 22-104, defining requirements for reporting of year-end departmental results and future goal setting to see how we are making progress, as a County, towards achieving our strategic plan and fulfilling our adopted mission.

Citizen participation and input continues to be a critical component in understanding any potential unintended consequences. Since the pandemic, our department has been able to provide communities with multiple platforms to engage (e.g., e-comments system for committee meetings, virtual forums, social media, meetings and signings) with the legislative process. With these additional access points, the Board is seeing that more individuals can participate and feel connected to their local county government.

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

The Board Chair is committed to driving a strategic direction to impact culture, drive decision making, and align goals as a Board to achieve a shared vision of making Milwaukee County the healthiest county in the state of Wisconsin. Together the Board can better align our values as a County by collaborating with and across departments and supporting County wide initiatives to achieve racial equity.

While the Office of Equity's Racial Equity Ambassador program was discontinued, Chairwoman Nicholson reinstated the position within the County Board. This ambassador has participated in regular learning community sessions and is privy to developing and supporting the execution of divisional and cross-departmental racial equity projects and initiatives. The County Board intends to utilize the racial equity tools currently available to us by LMS trainings and past REA messaging to facilitate our daily processes with a racial equity lens.

9. If your department were to receive some additional funding for addressing racial equity, what specific strategic plan priority would you address, what would be the project/activity and intended outcome, and how much would it cost?

Unlike other County departments, the Board is uniquely subject to a State imposed expenditure cap of no more than 0.4 percent of the total tax levy. The provision of new funding for racial equity through centralized resources would be a step to ensuring that all departments, including the Board, can equally access these services to better represent our constituents and fairly treat our employees. There have been programs implemented that the Board uniquely cannot access such as DOSAA, which is used to award salary increases to address certain equity and employee retention issues.

The potentially negative racial equity implications of the Board's budget exist not in the decisions we have made, but in the decisions, we are *unable* to make.

Centralized resources that all departments can take advantage of will play a critical role in the future success of the County Board. The constituents we serve and represent are our top priority. As such, increased resources for engagement tools and technology solutions that continue to allow broader outreach with more people is ideal. For example, there is continued interest in exploring closed caption services for streaming Board and Committee meetings. As we've moved to support public input during our time away from traditional County Board committee proceedings, we've adapted a great deal but are always looking for ways to better serve our entire community. To ensure that we can do just that, the Board would also greatly benefit from having access to translations services, mental health training, and "no wrong door" training for staff who engage with constituent services and referrals daily.

10. What is your department doing to dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities, including meeting multilingual needs and other communication or accessibility barriers?

Historically, the Board has employed sign language interpreter services for the annual public hearing on the budget and will continue to do so moving forward. The department continues to be interested in exploring a virtual front desk model that mirrors the program utilized by the Register of Deeds office, where multilingual support options are available.

As our department transitions into a hybrid environment, with committees and board meetings occurring in person, our staff continue to provide more digital and in-person accessible ways to relay public testimony. Our capacity allows for e-comments, live testimony in public and virtual. The County Board continues to offer bilingual (English and Spanish) constituent services as a result of staff capabilities. All district offices have access to these services, which include written and oral communication abilities. Systems are in place to manage and direct the workflows of incoming requests to ensure that all bilingual constituent needs are addressed in a timely and efficient manner. The deeper cultivation of these resources was the direct result of the County Board's high need to provide information about the Covid-19 pandemic to its constituents.

In June of 2022, Chairwoman Nicholson authored legislation to modify Chapter 106 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances (MCGO) to reestablish the Milwaukee County Commission on Youth and align its priorities with Milwaukee County's mission and vision to achieve racial equity. Moreover, under the guidance of Chairwoman Nicholson, the County Board has continued to utilize the "Presentations By Supervisors" section of full County Board meetings to uplift community interests with a focus on equity. In doing so, the Board has conducted a wide variety of presentations honoring and uplifting members of marginalized communities including our annual Black History, Women's History, Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage, Hispanic Heritage, and Pride Month presentations to bring awareness to the excellence exemplified by Milwaukee County's diverse community.

Chairwoman Nicholson welcomes partnership with Supervisors to pull from their networks and amplify the achievements of members from the community. These presentations continue to include citations of recognition, which hold the weight of the Body and are forms of legislation, which further solidify an individual's work.

During this term, Chairwoman Nicholson's office has collaborated with the Strategy, Budget, and Performance Office to expand the reach of the presentations to all Milwaukee County employees via the County's "What's Up in Milwaukee" newsletter. In addition to providing all employees with an overview of the presentations and link to view the video stream, the County Board has also given templates of our monthly Teams backgrounds to the Strategy, Budget, and Performance Office to provide all County employees a means to highlight various heritage and awareness months in their own departments. To continue the full County's strategic realignment, the County Board also continues to provide a platform for DAS to provide insight to the Board and its viewers regarding Vision Week.