



2019 Office for Equity and Inclusion Budget Hearing Comments

The Tamara D. Grigsby Office for Equity and Inclusion 2019 budget places a direct focus on developing County Departments' Equity and Inclusion plans, working to strengthen the County's infrastructure and commitment to equity and accessibility to County government. Our budget follows the County Executives guidelines for funding requests. Though we have not moved outside of the County Executives guidelines, our 2019 budget continues to provide outreach and support to innovative and creative ideas to address social and racial inequities in the County.

In 2018, we had the opportunity to provide financial assistance to encourage diverse student participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematic fields of study. We increased our support of the Madison Region Economic Development and Diversity Summit, which strives to encourage business growth and opportunity. We continued our collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club Internship program, placing seven (7) interns, our highest number of interns placed in the program since the inception of the program. Under the administration of our new Manager of Policy and Program improvement the Dane County Driver's License Education Program has continued to grow. We've continued to provide support for the Madison Metropolitan School District and expanding to a total of 9 School Districts, now including the Wisconsin Heights and Waunakee School Districts.

The Executive Committee recently asked our Department, "what should we be listening for, when we hear Department Equity Plans"? You should be listening for six (6) primary areas of opportunity. You should be listening for a commitment to equity and a strategy, or strategic method to address systemic inequities. You should be listening for plans that include leadership development, participation in one of our sponsored internship programs with the Boy's and Girls Club or Simpson Street Free Press Internships, or a plan for mentorship of current county employees. You should be listening for innovative ideas to address inequities. You should listen for collaboration with our Department and fellow community assets that work to confront systemic inequity in the community like the Urban League or Centro Hispano. You should expect budget requests and new initiatives that include a focus on equity. One of the primary goals of the equity plans is to impact the way the community views Dane County and the way we view ourselves by taking action to address inequity.

There is a direct relationship between an equitable Dane County and a sustainable Dane County, whether we're thinking of Public Health, Land and Water Resources, or Public Safety. We are pleased with the collaboration we've initiated with County Departments and Community Partners, in taking action to address inequities. Department Equity Plans are now developed and the Department's will need your support and guidance in future innovative ideas for a sustainable and equitable Dane County.