



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

County of Dane

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October 25, 2019

TO: Members of the Personnel and Finance Committee

FROM: Karin Peterson Thurlow, Chief of Staff
Dane County Board Office

SUBJECT: Update on Equity and Sustainability Efforts

The County Board Office initially developed its equity plan in 2015 and updated it last year. The seven goals are:

- Goal 1: Increase racial equity education.
- Goal 2: Increase staff diversity.
- Goal 3: Increase the learning platform for supervisor/community racial equity.
- Goal 4: Engage a racial equity template into committee agendas/budgets.
- Goal 5: Implement strategies to ensure Dane County is an effective and inclusive government that engages community and is responsive to its needs.
- Goal 6: Ensure that all neighborhoods and people are safe and racial disproportionalities in the criminal justice system are eliminated.
- Goal 7: Develop national and local partnerships to advance racial equity.

New items in 2019 include:

- District-specific demographic information;
- Piloting of the broadcast of Health and Human Needs Committee meetings;
- Multiple initiatives associated with Engage Dane, including:
 - Committee and County Board registration slips printed in both Spanish and Hmong;
 - The Juvenile Reception Center art-based focus group project with youth; and
 - Development of budget education and engagement materials to reach those who often do not attend public meetings, including a video, a brochure which is at each library in the County, and the Balancing Act simulation model.
- The County Board continued its sponsorship of the YWCA Madison Racial Justice Summit.
- As part of the support of the Criminal Justice Council, the Board Office led several initiatives to improve the criminal justice system and address racial disparities.

Ensuring social and racial equity in county government operations is an integral part of meeting human needs and achieving sustainability in Dane County government. The Office engages in an ongoing efforts to implement the Dane County Equity Initiative.

The Sustainable Operations Plan was completed in 2016. The County Board Office identified the following goals:

- Create Guidelines for Office Use of Printer/MFD
- Develop Communication Plan for County Board Office Sustainability and Equity initiatives
- Explore Options for Optimizing Use of Technology in County Meeting Rooms
- Reduce Emissions Impact of Office-Related Travel
- Implement the Dane County Equity Initiative
- Optimizing the Sustainability of the Shared Office Kitchen and Break Room
- Reduce Waste and Improve Recycling Practices in County Board Office
- Review and Update Purchasing Practices for County Board Office to Ensure Consistency with County Sustainability Principles

These goals have helped to guide internal practices, while Lisa MacKinnon – the County’s Sustainability Coordinator – works with Board members and with colleagues throughout county government to change policies and practices. For example, she worked with staff to the Affordable Housing Development Fund on additional funds being provided for proposals that included renewable energy systems.

Other initiatives in 2019 include:

- Design for new office space with sustainability in mind, including improved technology for distance meetings.
- Continued waste reduction approaches, particularly regarding paper waste.
- Phone participation for training webinars and other meetings.
- Hiring of an intern to determine actual savings associated with the 83 SMART Fund grants allocated to date. This project will be completed by early 2020.