

## **CIO Statement on Efforts Toward Racial Equity**

Sparked by the killing of George Floyd there has been an outpouring of advocacy and movement to bring lasting institutional change toward achieving racial equity. I would like to highlight some of ITMD's efforts, past, present, and future, to further those goals.

To support racial equity and inclusion in the community, ITMD has sought opportunities to share City fiber communications resources with non-profit entities such as:

- Sojourner Family Peace Center, which helps families affected by domestic violence achieve safety, justice and well-being
- The United Community Center, as part of their PASOS career development program for Hispanic students to increase the number of Spanish-speaking health care workers
- IndependenceFirst, to promote awareness, employment, and access for residents with disabilities
- Alverno College, to assist their mission to prepare women for lives of personal and professional distinction and meaningful engagement with the world

ITMD participated with DCD and ECO in the redevelopment of Fondy Market, installing free and open WiFi access in the park. Currently, ITMD is assisting with providing communications to the City's new Office of African American Affairs. Going forward, ITMD will continue to explore additional opportunities to leverage the communications infrastructure to serve those in the community without access to such resources. This includes expanding WiFi at additional parks in targeted neighborhoods and seeking out additional non-profit organizations to share City fiber.

ITMD has partnered with companies such as Microsoft to promote their Technology Education and Literacy in Schools (TEALS) program to connect ITMD staff with classroom teachers to support teachers as they learn to teach computer science at local schools. ITMD staff have volunteered time and management has provided flexible work schedules in support of these efforts. ITMD will continue to seek out and promote similar opportunities.

Through the leadership and support of the Common Council and sponsorship of Ald. Coggs, budget funds have been allocated for the Technology Growth Initiative. This was a collaborative effort with the private sector and community that involved a grant awarded to Young Enterprising Society (YES) to support their efforts with business training for local startup companies started by minorities. ITMD looks forward to facilitating similar efforts in the future.

ITMD has worked cooperatively with council members on other recent efforts, as well. Ald. Coggs provided an introduction earlier this year that has led to collaborative efforts with local community groups Code for Milwaukee and Neighbor Express that contributed to Milwaukee's COVID-19 website with mobile-friendly design. ITMD and MHD are exploring additional opportunities with these organizations, including an opportunity to bring in their volunteers as consultants to review current IT practices and standards. This would require non-traditional employment and procurement processes and ITMD will be working with budget, DER, and procurement staff to identify ways to make this work.

In addition to hiring local community members as consultants, ITMD efforts to increase staff diversity include a tiered structure of seniority to allow hiring residents without traditional IT degrees and

providing them training and promotional opportunities. This has been implemented over the past several years with positive results. Most staff in ITMD are minority or female staff. Management, as well, is comprised of 50% minority or female staff. While our department demographics do not fully reflect the communities we serve, they are much better than most IT organizations. ITMD will continue to leverage the tools in place and innovative options like volunteer consultants from the community to maintain and improve departmental diversity.

As part of ITMD's efforts to support equitable, inclusive, and fair work environments, the tools temporarily implemented for the COVID response will be leveraged to provide permanent options whenever possible to provide flexibility in working from home, flexible hours to accommodate public transit/ride-sharing schedules, and other needs, not just within ITMD, but to enable these opportunities for other departments around the City, as well.

The largest direct interaction ITMD has with underserved communities is through reporting of service requests through the City website, mobile applications, and the call center. The service request website and mobile application were recently updated to provide ease of use, adding features such as a mobile-friendly webpage, a mobile application that displays in the user's preferred language (based on the default language of their device), and a review of ADA compliance to serve residents with disabilities. The City's website will also be updated with similar features and focus in July. In each case, ITMD has engaged with community organizations such as Mujeres con Poder and Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative, to provide engagement and feedback. That valuable feedback has been incorporated in the new deployments.

ITMD is also working to deploy a new social media management tool later this year. This will provide departments tools to better engage with the community and monitor feedback and input.

ITMD supports numerous tools that departments can utilize to gather data, analyze data, and present data, as it relates to disparate services or for any other need. The tools managed by ITMD to gather data primarily includes service requests through online, mobile, and the call center. Tools to analyze data include traditional office productivity software and specialized applications. Tools to present data includes enterprise support for mapping and storyboards from ESRI and ArcGIS. A good example of a storyboard to illustrate the [10,000 homes initiative](#) to improve affordable housing opportunities. Conversely, ITMD hosts the open data portal to encourage easy access to City data for community organizations and residents. ITMD will continue to support and encourage use of these tools by departments to collect data and measure success.

These efforts, past, present, and future, to improve City services and the environment for Milwaukee's underserved residents are based on a history of ITMD collaboration with various City departments, City leadership, community groups, and individual resident input. These efforts are intended to be collaborative and to evolve as needed over time. I appreciate the constructive input that has guided these initiatives and welcome additional feedback and questions from the council members and their constituents both now and in the future.