



**Department of Public Works
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To: Chairman Robert Bauman, and Honorable Public Works Committee Members

From: Jeffrey Polenske, Commissioner of Public Works
Karen Dettmer, Superintendent of Milwaukee Water Works

Enhancing and Achieving Racial Equity

Department of Public Works Mission Statement

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is committed to providing essential City services, infrastructure, and facilities that enhance the quality of life in an equitable manner for all residents, businesses and visitors. DPW is also committed to improve employment opportunities for all residents, especially for people of color and women. We are and will continue to work on improving racial equity in everything we do. We recognize that only by ensuring equity and opportunity for those who are most in need, will we be successful as a department and as a community.

DPW will focus on engaging with community partners to foster partnerships and to share ideas. We will actively confront structural inequities and work to craft solutions to eliminate bias and inequity in the services that we deliver and in our organization.

DPW will deliver services to communities of color in a manner where inequity, bias or racism will not be tolerated and our employees will be held accountable for any behaviors or actions that do not support equity. We will proactively work to educate and inform those who we serve and those who are employed by us that our objective is to engage in diversity and inclusion and remove bias and inequity in all that we do. Our goal will be to maximize the use of the resources we have to best meet or exceed our citizen's service expectations regardless of where they live.



DPW will continue to lead the implementation of the City's Complete Streets Policy. DPW recognizes that a comprehensive equitable approach to transportation design can also play a role in addressing disparities, such as, health outcomes, access to diverse transportation options, crash rates, education, income, employment and others. DPW recognizes that when implementing the Complete Streets Policy, special care must be taken when evaluating the impacts of proposed projects on low-income communities and ensuring that this policy is implemented in a manner that fosters equity across city neighborhoods. DPW will prioritize universal and equitable investment in underserved communities throughout the City which lack existing infrastructure that encourages walking, biking, and transit trips, as well as, areas where data indicate crash risk and health disparities.

Milwaukee Water Works (MWW) will continue to work on the Water Equity Task Force, initially through grant funding provided by the US Water Alliance. Seven cities were chosen to participate in a national collaboration to explore the three pillars of water equity: (1) ensure all people have access to clean, safe, and affordable water service, (2) maximize the community and economic benefits of water infrastructure investment, and (3) foster community resilience in the face of a changing climate. MWW has been an active participant in the Milwaukee cohort that chose to focus on workforce development within the water sector to provide opportunity for people of color. While the Milwaukee Water Equity Task Force is reaching a milestone in their work with the Water Equity Road Map, the work and commitment to Water Equity will continue. The Road Map identifies and shapes the goals set by the group to obtain a diverse and inclusive water workforce. Beyond the US Water Alliance, partners include the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, Milwaukee Water Commons, Groundwork Milwaukee, Cream City Conservation, Century City Triangle Neighborhood Association, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Employ Milwaukee, Milwaukee Jobs Work, and Milwaukee Area Technical College.

Finally, DPW will partner with stakeholders and employees to ensure that barriers to opportunity and advancement are removed and that our department will become a place where people of color and women can have a career and not simply a "job." We will create a professional, culturally competent environment where the inherent worth of people of color and women are recognized and valued. We recognize the strength of a diverse work force and believe that our workforce should be representative of the community in which we live.



Workforce Demographics

Abbreviation Chart	
AMIND	= American Indian
ASIAN	= Asian
BLACK	= Black
HISPANIC	= Hispanic
NSPEC	= Not Specified
WHITE	= White

Count of Name	Sex			
	Ethnic Group	Female	Male	Grand Total
AMIND		4	8	12
ASIAN		5	15	20
BLACK		214	587	801
HISPA		19	114	133
NSPEC			1	1
PACIF			1	1
WHITE		156	751	907
Grand Total		398	1477	1875
Percentages		21.23%	78.77%	

Count of Name	Ethnic Group							Grand Total	
	EEO-4 Category	AMIND	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPA	NSPEC	PACIF		WHITE
Administrative Support	1	1	39	8				53	102
Officials and Administrators	2	3	43	17			1	130	196
Paraprofessionals			56	10				35	101
Professionals	1	9	19	5				123	157
Service Maintenance	5		530	46				186	767
Skilled Craft	3	2	93	39				288	425
Technicians		5	21	8	1			92	127
Grand Total	12	20	801	133	1	1	907	1875	
% of ALL Employees	0.64%	1.07%	42.72%	7.09%	0.05%	0.05%	48.37%		



Promoting Racial Equality – Initiatives and Practices

Apprenticeships

DPW has established several apprenticeships, including the very first Urban Forestry Apprenticeship program in the country. The Municipal Services Apprentice Program has been running in the City of Milwaukee since 1979. Moving forward, DPW plans to establish new apprenticeships.

- Urban Forestry Arborist Apprenticeship Program
 - Pre-apprenticeship with Northcott Neighborhood House
- Water Works Youth Apprenticeship (Water Plant Machine Repairperson job class)
- Municipal Services Electrician Apprentice Program

Entry Level Titles

Entry level positions/titles can effectively reduce barriers to Civil Service employment. This strategy allows a wider variety of applicants to compete for positions. DPW is committed to providing on-the-job training, while supporting the attainment of credentials.

- Construction Laborer Intern
 - Partnership with MPS and local schools to create a pathway to construction careers for graduating high school seniors and young adults.
- Urban Forestry Laborer
- Water Works Meter Services – In-house training program during probationary period.
- Water Works Distribution – In-house training program allows promotional opportunities for entry level Repair Workers to be promoted up to Chief Water Repair Worker and Field Supervisor positions.

Workforce development – Community Work Partnerships

DPW has long supported a wide variety of workforce development programming and initiatives. These opportunities support residents at different stages of career ladders. Often participants are un-employed or under-employed residents that may have barriers to employment.

- Compete Milwaukee – Partnership with UMOS, Milwaukee Urban League, Northcott Neighborhood House and Silver Spring Neighborhood Center through the State’s Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ) Program.
 - Approximately 90% of the participants are African-American males who maintain former offender status. The City of Milwaukee is by far the number one employer of program alumni. Approximately 300 residents have participated.
- Compete Milwaukee – Partnership with Employ Milwaukee, UNCOM and MAXIMUS through federal WIOA “Out of School Youth” Initiative



- Annually 18 young adults participate in approximately six month construction based work experiences which provide career exposures into the City employment and the skilled trades. Programming provides trainings, resources, mentorship and more to support the next generation of construction workers.
- Wisconsin Community Services (WCS)
 - An opportunity for ex-offenders, as well as, un-employed and under-employed individuals to gain seasonal work experiences along with career pathways trainings.
- Urban Forestry Training – Dombrowski II Program
 - Compete Milwaukee alumni engaged in a continuation of work experience with enhanced skills trainings, including the attainment of a Commercial Driver’s License.
- Earn & Learn
 - Annually participate in Mayor Barrett’s employment initiative which provides job skills and work experiences to Milwaukee youth.
- Water Equity Task Force
 - Water Works Superintendent serves on a taskforce with industry and community partners to identify and redress systemic inequities in Milwaukee’s water-sector workforce.

Community Engagement & Outreach

DPW engages community members in ways beyond services and workforce development. Staff can be seen at local schools and career fairs highlighting and promoting careers within the City. DPW also supports initiatives which allow small businesses to grow from a one person operation to a small business contractor with multiple people employed.

- Career/Job Fairs – DirectConnect MKE, MPS, Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiatives & more
 - DPW staff from multiple divisions attend various community job fairs, career fair days at local schools and hiring events throughout the year, including Aldermanic sponsored Hip Hop Job Fairs and Girls’ Day.
- Neighborhood Jobs Program / Community Based Organization (CBO) & Small Business
 - In conjunction with code enforcement abatement, small business and CBO’s are able to participate in contract removal of tall weeds and grass, as well as sidewalk snow and ice removal.
- MATC/DPW Driving Staff Training & Testing
 - DPW driving instructor staff provide commercial driver’s license training and testing to students participating in the MATC Truck Driving program.
- MATC/Water Works internship for MATC students in the “Environmental Health and Water Quality Technology” associate degree program.
 - Students spend four days at MWW; two days with Water Quality and two days with Plant Operations; one day at Howard Water Purification Plant and one day at Linnwood Water Purification Plant.



- CORE El Centro’s Mujeres con Poder Material Recovery Facility Tours
 - While tours are on hold at the Materials Recovery Facility this year, we have partnered with Core El Centro to provide Spanish-language tours of the MRF. We plan to continue this partnership when tours can resume.
- Social Media & other Communications Strategies
 - DPW has made great strides in communications by using social media to highlight and increase community awareness around open DPW positions, events, resources, projects and much more.

Trainings & More

DPW has a strong history of developing both City staff, as well as residents participating in DPW supported workforce development initiatives. In addition, providing employees with resources training, mentorship, flexibility and services is essential to work life balance. Nurturing a culture that supports diversity and inclusion in the work place is a priority.

- Public Works (DPW) University
 - Program collaborates with various City departments and Cardinal Stritch University – Leadership Center develop and mentor potential managers for promotional opportunities by providing a multifaceted curriculum focused continuous learning, mentorship and development.
- Certified Public Manager Program
 - Program supports a pathway for staff to become Certified Public Managers through a partnership with the University of Wisconsin – Madison. It is an 18 month nationally accredited management program. Last class graduated May/2018.
- Career Pathways Trainings – Workforce development program participants
 - Partnership with WRTP/BIG STEP to provide Compete Milwaukee participants with a wide of services designed to “meet them where they are at”, while assisting them with “where they want to go”. The comprehensive curriculum is focused on supporting immediate needs with referrals to supportive services, while offering a wide variety of specialized trainings focused on skill development. Through ongoing mentorship and career counseling, participants are engaged in various local employment opportunities with the City of Milwaukee and other local employers.
- Wellness Programming and Lunch & Learns
 - DPW promotes employee participation in City-wide training opportunities, including financial seminars, wellness coaching, counseling, referral services, legal, healthcare resources and more.



Promoting Racial Equality – Initiatives and Practices

DPW Strategies Moving Forward

- Identify inclusion goals and develop teams to recognize and support diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Support the formation and participation in Employee Resource Groups to assist in fostering inclusive work environments which celebrate diversity.
- Develop mentorship programs, while implementing measurable, evidence based trainings focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Work with managers and front-line staff to promote opportunities related to climbing non-traditional career ladders. For example, provide field staff with career exposure opportunities and job shadowing in construction inspection positions and supervisory and management positions.
- Work with hiring staff to expand and establish more entry level titles, internships and apprenticeships-
- Identify diversity planning strategies to strategically recruit, train, develop and retain people of color and women.
- Target hiring recruitments with the conclusion of workforce development programming.
- Expand portfolio of offered workforce development programs, small business development initiatives and community outreach/engagement activities.
- Continue to work with community and organization partners on the Water Equity Task Force to achieve workforce development goals for inclusion and diversity.
- Promote tuition reimbursement, education leave, flexible and non-traditional schedules, as well as other resources and benefits to employees to further educational attainment required for professional and administration level roles.
- Identify strategies for DPW field staff to participate in scheduled Lunch & Learn and workplace health/wellness programming.
- Provide Trauma-Informed Care training, as well as ongoing diversity and inclusion trainings.
- Prepare an annual Complete Streets Health and Equity Report that will highlight and measure progress with implementing the City Complete Streets Policy.
- Administer an open and equitable process for community engagement regarding project development and implementation.
- Identify further strategies and opportunities to engage community stakeholders and citizens and to seek community feedback.
- Identify equitable service strategies to meet localized community needs.
 - For example: Expand & Promote Big Clean MKE through existing and developing initiatives (door step clean-up initiative; Adopt a Block initiative; New branded litter containers in high need commercial corridors; Rapid Response Clean-up initiative; Weekend Box Program; Establish new partnerships for community lead clean-up efforts; etc.)

