



**Department of Neighborhood Services**

**Erica Lewandowski**  
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To: Chairman Jose Perez, and Honorable ZND Committee Members

From: Erica R Lewandowski, Commissioner

## **Advancing and Achieving Racial Equity**

### **Department of Neighborhood Service Policy Statement**

The Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS) implicitly believes that all residents of the City of Milwaukee, particularly vulnerable communities and communities of color, deserve safe buildings and communities in which to live, work, and play. DNS stands committed to promoting and protecting racial equity through our actions, policies and initiatives, and by creating and operating in a professional environment where the inherent worth of individuals of color is recognized and valued.

As an employer, DNS will relentlessly create a culture where bias, racism and other injustices are not tolerated. DNS will create a structure of accountability, and collective employee engagement to address issues of racism and racial disparity regularly and proactively. DNS believes that our workforce should reflect the diverse community we serve, where persons of color are employed at all levels of the department and share in the responsibility to guide our actions in a socially conscious manner.

As an agency working in the community, DNS pledges to protect the residents it serves by fairly and uniformly applying the regulations we are charged with enforcing, while recognizing and monitoring the regulatory footprint this creates. Through deliberate and thoughtful implementation of its outreach activities and community engagement, DNS will strive to improve the stability and conditions of Milwaukee's impoverished neighborhoods, and will continue to collaborate with stakeholders in the community to ensure fair and consistent delivery of resources to those who need it most.

## WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

		Dept Totals	Male	%	Female	%
	<b>Management Staff:</b>	40	23	57.5%	17	42.5%
		<b>Management Staff Diversity:</b>	40.0%			
Black/African American	12	30.0%	3	25.0%	9	75.0%
Hispanic/Latino	2	5.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
White	24	60.0%	18	75.0%	6	25.0%
Asian	2	5.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
		<b>Dept Totals</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>All DNS Staff:</b>	226	141	62.4%	85	37.6%
		<b>All DNS Staff Diversity:</b>	40.7%			
Black/African American	67	29.6%	28	41.8%	39	58.2%
Hispanic/Latino	19	8.4%	10	52.6%	9	47.4%
White	134	59.3%	99	73.9%	35	26.1%
Asian	5	2.2%	3	60.0%	2	40.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.4%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
	226					
<b>2019 - Present</b>	<b>New Hires (25 total)</b>	<b>Promotions (12 total)</b>	<b>Separations (10 total)</b>			
Black	10	7	0			
Hispanic	3	1	1			
White	12	4	8			
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0	1			

## PROMOTING RACIAL EQUITY - INITIATIVES AND PRACTICES

### CURRENT

**Intern Program-** This program, established in 1995 by Alderman Marvin Pratt, provides training to individuals seeking to gain experience in DNS activities while completing code enforcement coursework at MATC, with the goal of obtaining full time city employment as a Code Enforcement Inspector. In 2019 this program was expanded to include staffing of the Downspout Disconnection Program. Since 2011, 40 interns have successfully completed the program and are currently employed by the City of Milwaukee, demographically comprised of 40% African American and 8% Hispanic individuals.

**DNS – University-** DNS University is a commitment by the Department of Neighborhood Services to employee training and professional development that contributes to and supports a culture of service excellence. DNS University consists of a multi-faceted curriculum, administered in partnership with Cardinal Stritch University that provides training opportunities for non-management DNS employees with the goals of preparing the employee for advancement into management. Since 2017, 2 cohort

groups consisting of a total of 44 employees have completed the program, and were comprised of 29% African American and 13% Hispanic participants.

**Community Outreach-** DNS recognizes the value in connecting and fostering relationships with communities throughout the City. These relationships build trust, and ensure that DNS is able to effectively deploy resources into the community. As such, DNS has created a team of outreach experts who work in the community every day to engage stakeholders, hear community concerns, and connect residents to resources. Examples of this include the graffiti abatement team, the Rent for Success and Landlord Training programs, and participation in numerous job fairs and community events. Please see the list below of community groups and activities that DNS has worked with in recent years.

River Works	United Garden Homes Inc.	City Partners
Center St BID	Martin Drive Neighbors	Revitalize Milwaukee
Havenwoods BID	Vliet St Neighborhood association	Safe and Sound Inc.
Near Westside Partners	Amani Neighbors	Community Advocates
Artist Working Education	West Care WI	Take Root Milwaukee
Sherman Park Community Association	Friends of Lincoln Park	Community Warehouse
Washington Park Community Partners	Pathfinders	SDC
Harambee- Keefe Ave task force	St A's	LISC
Dominican Center for Women	Walnut Way	Fair Housing Council
Children's Outing Association	MPS Schools	Legal Action Of Wisconsin

**Workforce Development - Out of School Youth & Compete Milwaukee- DPW/DNS Partnership**

Since 2016, 22 Compete Milwaukee participants have been placed in DNS to work beside interns and office assistants to gain skills to move on to family sustaining wages. In 2018, DNS along with DPW expanded the program to work with Out of School Youth (16-24) for a contractor connected program. This program comprised of our partners Employ Milwaukee, Wisconsin Regional Training Program (WRTP/Big Step) and a City of Milwaukee contractor. 100% of the Out of School Youth were minorities, and 8 went on to be placed in positions at the City earning family sustaining wages.

**Compliance Loan Program (CLP)-** The Compliance Loan Program assists homeowners in making repairs necessary to fix code violations on their property. CLP does this by providing 0% interest, deferred payment loans. This means homeowners pay no interest and only pay back the loan when selling or transferring the property.

**Jan 2020 to present:**

Loans Approved: 38 loans	Average income: \$29,499
Total Loan Amount Approved: \$490,842	Average years occupied: 16
Average loan amount: \$12,721	Average assessment: \$80,276
Average age of owners: 56	



**Neighborhood Improvement Program-** The City of Milwaukee's Neighborhood Improvement Project assists eligible owner occupants in repairing their homes. All repairs are based upon municipal building code violations, lead hazard reduction, health and safety concerns. Applicants must have a household income at or below 60% of the County median.

Current Neighborhood Improvement Program Active Case Demographics-  
60 African American, 14 Hispanic, 20 White

## **PROMOTING RACIAL EQUITY - INITIATIVES AND PRACTICES**

### **GO FORWARD STRATEGIES**

- ✓ Create an anonymous survey for DNS staff to identify racial inequity and disparities they may be experiencing and to explore solutions to create a safe space for open communication and solutions. Enforce a no-tolerance culture for actions and statements, and other activities that imply, create or otherwise support discrimination, racial inequity, or implicit bias.
- ✓ Continue to fully support and seek growth opportunities for the DNS Intern program. Work with DER and the DNS Outreach team to identify recruitment tools that ensure that the opportunity is widely promoted to persons of color.
- ✓ Explore the creation of a Uniform Dwelling Code Inspector position, to facilitate more entry level positions to DNS, specifically in the Construction Trades Division, which historically sees a lower number of minority inspectors.
- ✓ Partner with local community groups to offer additional free "Rent for Success" classes, with a focus on delivering this service in most Milwaukee's impoverished and vulnerable neighborhoods. Rent for Success is a free tenant-training program designed to educate and empower renters to make safe, healthy housing choices.
- ✓ Commit to translating commonly used brochures and enforcement documents into Spanish.