

# Milwaukee County Exec. Abele: To provide racial equity training for employees

Posted on Tuesday, Oct 16, 2018

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All full-time County employees, starting with leadership, will take part in training to advance racial equity throughout operations and community engagement

MILWAUKEE, Tuesday, Oct. 16, 2018 – By the end of 2019, all of the more than 4,000 full-time employees at Milwaukee County will have taken part in racial equity training, part of the County’s ongoing commitment to building up diverse communities and ensuring fair and equal opportunities for all residents, Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele announced today.

The trainings are a key part of the Office on African American Affairs’ (OAAA) planned initiatives for the coming year. Every member of the County leadership team will receive 16 hours of racial equity training from OAAA and the YWCA of Southeastern Wisconsin by late spring. Training opportunities for all other employees will be scheduled in the months following.

“These trainings are critical for Milwaukee County to create momentum in advancing racial equity,” said Abele. “We recognize that Milwaukee has historically been one of the most segregated communities in the nation, and we recognize that we’ve never undone the legacies that racist policies and practices have left.

“If we can get our county government moving in the right direction, I believe it’ll have larger effects in creating change in our community,” he added.

Created in 2016, OAAA is tasked with looking both internally and externally for opportunities to advance racial equity across Milwaukee County. In order to do so, the County seeks to examine everything it does – from delivering county services to fostering partnerships – through a lens of promoting racial equity. Through its partnership with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), the County is following the lead of more than 120 municipalities across the country and leading with race.

In addition to the racial equity training, OAAA continues to enhance its partnerships across County departments, with other governmental entities and within the community. This past year, OAAA offered support for County and community partners toward securing nearly \$4 million in grant funds, led direct community engagements at a dozen events and held presentations on social-justice initiatives for state and local leaders.

As the 2019 Milwaukee County recommended budget was developed, OAAA Director Nicole Brookshire played a key role, providing a racial-equity lens for all budget discussions.

“Implementing racial equity training for all Milwaukee County staff demonstrates our commitment as a pro-equity trailblazer and also makes Milwaukee County the third jurisdiction in Wisconsin to implement a governmental racial equity action plan,” said Brookshire.

“One of OAAA’s goals is for full and equal access to opportunities, power and resources so all people may achieve their full potential. Being pro-equity requires us to dismantle inequitable systems and transform them into systems which work for all residents,” she added.

During a Countywide employee survey administered in September, several questions were included to gather aggregate data on employees’ awareness of and engagement with racial-equity issues. That data will help inform County leaders in developing effective training and in goal-setting.