

Milwaukee County Exec. Crowley: Marks two years in office, observes victories in equity

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MILWAUKEE, WI - Two years ago today, Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley was sworn into office as the first Black man elected to lead the County since it was founded in 1835. County Executive David Crowley released the following statement in observance:

“Two years ago, I stepped into the role of County Executive and immediately faced an unprecedented crisis in the form of a global pandemic. Right away our work was centered around navigating the crisis and doing all we could to keep residents healthy and safe.

“The crisis also exacerbated the disparities many of us know all too well and have existed for many, many of years. I made a commitment to the people of Milwaukee County to dedicate the work of my administration addressing these long-standing inequities.

“We’ve implemented the County’s first strategic plan in over 20 years and framed it to focus explicitly on achieving health and racial equity. We’ve identified three strategic focus areas to achieve our vision: Creating Intentional Inclusion, Bridging the Gap, and Investing in Equity.

“In just two years we’ve made progress in transforming County government to reflect the communities we serve. We’ve transformed our service delivery models to ensure services are tailored to individuals and meets residents’ holistic needs no matter how which department or division they interact with. And, we’ve made the best use of federal dollars to make important investments in equity for residents in

communities all over the County.

“The victories in equity we’ve achieved so far are victories for all of Milwaukee County. We are well-positioned to continue our progress on the road to achieve racial equity and improve the lives of everyone in our region.”

Background on Victories in Equity

Intentional Inclusion:

- Appointed or reappointed 65 women to Board and Commissions, appointed 50 people of color
- Half of Cabinet-level departments are led by women, and more than half of cabinet-level leaders are Black
- Made Juneteenth a major holiday for County employees
- Unveiled the newly named Lucille Berrien Park
- Created the Office on Equity to better align departmental scope and focus with the overall County vision and strategic plan.
- Invested in additional Human Resources staff to assist in hiring and retention practice for a more diverse workforce at all levels
- Launched the “Changemakers” marketing campaign for making Milwaukee County a choice place for employment.

Bridging the Gap:

- Implemented “No Wrong Door” model at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
- Created a “one-stop shop” for children’s services within DHHS – including a centralized process and information hub for children with disabilities and their families in Milwaukee County.
- Integrated Department of Veterans Affairs, Department on Aging into the Department of Health and Human Services to elevate the unique needs of both communities.
- Developed strategy dashboard and community impact measures to track the County’s progress toward advancing racial and health equity.
- Became the among the first jurisdictions in the nation to use Zip Codes to target COVID-19 vaccination distribution to vulnerable populations.
- Launched a public vaccination program at the Kosciuszko Community Center to help increase equitable vaccine access.

Investing in Equity:

- Connected strategy and budget functions including update of the Racial Equity Budget tool to further align spending to the strategic plan.
- Created the Grants and Special Projects Division to identify and secure every federal or state grant dollar to fund ideas that improve access to and the quality of services for residents.
- Invested \$77 million in CARES funding to support life safety measures, emergency operations, and investments in critical economic stability and public health services
- Invested more than \$47 million dollars into eviction prevention and mortgage assistance and launched the Right to Counsel program to help residents stay in their homes.
- Due to Milwaukee County's Housing First approach and an emphasis on housing-focused homeless outreach, the unsheltered population in Milwaukee County has decreased 90% since 2016, from 207 to 17. Additionally, Milwaukee has seen a 46% decrease in overall homelessness from 2015 to now.
- Completed all three phases of MCTS Next, improving the rider experience and meeting the community's modern needs. The result is faster routes, more connections, and an easier system to navigate.
- Broke ground on the East-West Bus Rapid Transit Line slated to launch later in 2022
- Broke ground on the new Mental Health Emergency Center slated to open in the fall of 2022
- Completed accessibility features at Bradford Beach making it one of the most accessible beaches in the entire country.
- Launched and expanded the Crisis Assessment and Response Team
- Awarded over \$11 million in Small Business Grants to 1,534 Milwaukee County small businesses.
- Allocated \$6.7 million in ARPA funding to address community violence
- Launched ongoing series of Community Health & Healing conversations that focus on normalizing talk around mental wellness, increasing awareness of available resources, and eliminating barriers in connecting to services.