



TAMARA D. GRIGSBY  
OFFICE FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION

OEI NEWSLETTER

# 2023

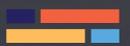
MENTORING THE  
NEXT GENERATION

PROJECT  
BARRIERS  
TO EMPLOYMENT

UNVEILED  
NEW BLACK  
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BANNER

GRANT  
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EQUITY

SUSTAINING  
OUR COMMITMENT  
AMIDST COVID-19





# A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE

## AND A CAPSTONE PROJECT



As the Tamara D. Grigsby Office for Equity and Inclusion (OEI) progresses into 2023, I'd like to take this opportunity to provide a message of gratitude. I offer a message of gratitude to our customers, the citizens of Dane County, County Employees, and specifically the staff of the Office for Equity and Inclusion.

Titles VI & VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act demand a response to our customers if they perceive that they've been discriminated against, even during a pandemic. Discrimination can take many forms and our office stands to uphold the rights of every Dane County resident. We express gratitude for the patience and understanding that the citizens of Dane County have demonstrated as we've responded to a global pandemic in our attempts to provide meaningful and efficient services.

Our service delivery to Dane County employees is a major priority in seeing that neither discrimination nor retaliation occurs within our own County Departments. With our racial equity and social justice programming, we are attempting to establish a framework for equity that embeds a commitment to inclusion that makes Dane County special and that begins with the service providers ourselves. We express our gratitude to Dane County employees, our colleagues, as we provide daily services through an increasingly focused equity lens.

To meet our goals, as a Department, The Dane County Office for Equity and Inclusion is accepting the challenge to be a part of the University of Wisconsin LaFollette School of Public Affairs Capstone Project. Each year a group of LaFollette graduate students embark on a task to measure success of a particular government program or effort. This spring semester project is the last semester of the masters of public administration program and a group of 3 to 5 students complete the study. The school looks for real world issues grounded in both qualitative and quantitative analysis to provide the students with a strong analytical, writing, and presentation assignment. OEI will collaborate with the Human Resources Department and Division of Information Management by providing a demographic analysis of the Dane County workforce, suggestions on best practices in recruitment and retention and managing an aging workforce. I am pleased to serve as the liaison for OEI and the Capstone team and I am grateful for the opportunity to share our knowledge and experiences.

The adjustment back to a stable working environment may bring many challenges in 2023. As the Director of the Tamara D. Grigsby Office for Equity and Inclusion, I am so pleased to work with such a caring, creative, and hard working group of individuals here in OEI. I extend my gratitude to the staff of the Office for Equity and Inclusion for your hard work and diligence during this season which we hope will one day be considered post-pandemic.

Wesley Sparkman  
Director, The Tamara D. Grigsby Office for Equity and Inclusion



# NEW BLACK HISTORY MONTH BANNER UNVEILED



In conjunction with the City of Madison Department of Civil Rights, The Dane County Tamara D. Grigsby Office for Equity and Inclusion collaborated to have a new black history month banner created. The previous banner was well over two decades old and it was time to retire it and replace it with fresh, new, and original artwork to honor African American History Month.

Working with Alina Puente of [Puente Creative Studios](#), the two departments worked with the artist and provided input on the new banner, to create something uplifting with a modern feel to the banner. The Departments did not want the usual sort of cliché when you see posters and banners representative of cultural events but something colorful and eye-catching and yet would give one room to pause and think.

The two Departments wanted it to be art, joyful, and reflective of the diverse faces of people in the African American community in Dane County and the City of Madison while in the same vein recognizing the varied contributions that the African American community has contributed to American society as a whole and will continue to do in the future. The banner also captures the spirit of the Negro National Anthem Lift Every Voice and Sing (a poem by James Weldon Johnson and put to music by his brother John Rosamond Johnson). When entering the city-county building during the month of February, it is the hope that it will put a smile on one's face and we all continue to work towards diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that one does.

The banner was unveiled in February 2022 in the Lobby of the building as one walks in from the Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. It is displayed in honor of the varied contributions of African Americans in the United States in the month of February for Black History Month. The unveiling was memorialized by the city of Madison at the link [HERE](#).





# BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

Since 2019, the Office for Equity and Inclusion has worked with the Barriers to Employment Project (BEP). BEP is an educational initiative created by Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc. (LAW) and Urban League of Greater Madison (ULGM) devoted to removing legal barriers to employment for Dane County's residents. The purpose of the clinics is to meet with residents and review their Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Crime Information Bureau (CIB) reports. Dane County residents facing legal barriers and actively seeking employment who have an annual income at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible for assistance. LAW project will educate residents on how to remove legal barriers to employment.

Volunteer attorneys educate participants about the contents of their criminal record; whether it was possible to remove, correct, or expunge any of the information; and their rights related to employment, arrest, and conviction records. In addition, information about pardon eligibility is provided.

In collaboration with Foley and Lardner LLP, WI Association of African American Lawyers (WAAL), and the State Bar Association through meetings, phone and email communication, the BEP Team decides on the Expungement Clinic date and location. Foley & Lardner and WAAL use their networks to recruit attorney and non-attorney volunteers to staff the clinic. ULGM contacts its members and publicizes the event, and their front desk staff make client appointments and confirms participation. Legal Action prepares the clinic materials and supplies and plans the clinic logistics with ULGM.

In 2019, the BEP served 155 clients and brought together five partner organizations and over 40 unduplicated volunteers to address criminal records as a barrier to employment in Dane County. Persons seeking assistance had income from a variety of sources including child support, public assistance and employed and self-employed. Monthly incomes ranging from \$0 to \$4001. Persons ranged in ages from 20 to 60 with the majority of persons asking for assistance in the 30 to 39 age range followed by persons in the 40 to 49 age range category. Over half the persons seeking assistance were African American while their white counterparts comprised over a quarter.

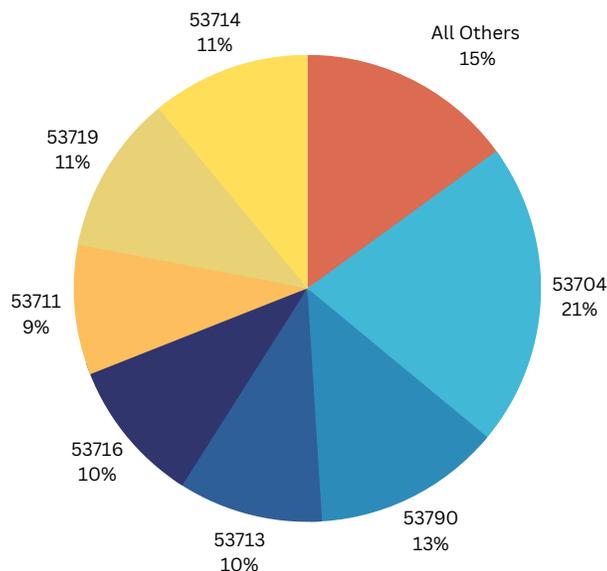


# BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

(CONTINUED)

RACE/ETHNICITY	Q1 AND Q2	Q3 AND Q4	2019 TOTAL
Asian	1	0	1
Black or African American	25	44	69 (54%)
Multi-Racial	2	12	14
White	16	18	34 (27%)
Hispanic	3	5	8
No data	1	0	1
			<b>127</b>

In 2020, the BEP served 70 Dane County residents and brought together five partner organizations and attorney and non-attorney volunteers to address criminal records as a barrier to employment in Dane County. Expungement Clinics were held in August, September, November, and December. As 2020 was the start of the COVID Pandemic, it caused staff to rethink the service model. Therefore, 3-hour clinics were held through a hybrid model, with residents on-site at the Urban League of Greater Madison and the volunteers participating virtually through Zoom. Persons served came from several zip codes within Dane County.

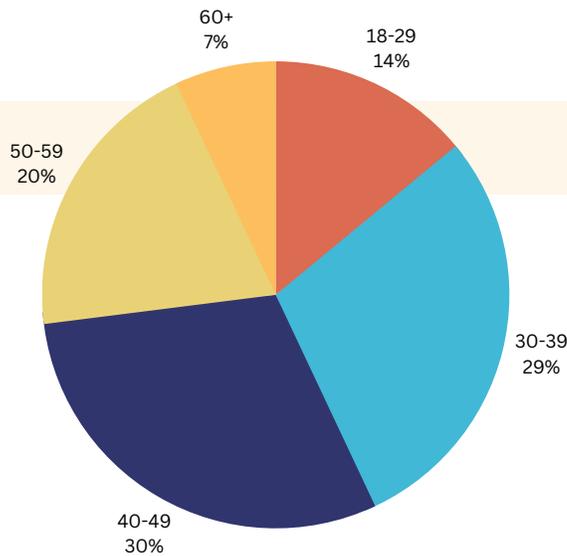




# BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

(CONTINUED)

As in 2019, the age categories seeking assistance were nearly identical except that person in the 30 -39 the 40-49 age categories were nearly equal.



In 2021, the BEP opened 160 cases for Dane County. In many situations, the clinics were able to assist residents with multiple legal issues, and more than one case was opened for them. Eight Expungement Clinics were held in 2021. Seven of these 3-hour clinics were held on a hybrid model. This hybrid clinic model allows clients to still receive services at the Urban League, but attorney and non-attorney volunteers are online. Rather than put everyone in a large room, each client has their own room with a computer where they can meet via Zoom with an attorney. The advantages of a hybrid clinic include: COVID-19 safety, volunteer attorneys do not need to factor in travel time, they can do other work if there is any downtime, and it allows attorneys who no longer reside in the Dane County area to continue volunteering.



# BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

(CONTINUED)

The program has been successful. Many clients were eligible to have arrest records removed once charges were dismissed and no other charges resulted in a conviction for the incident. For one individual the program was able to remove both arrest cycles on her background check, meaning that now when a potential landlord or employer checks her background, “No Record Found” is all that shows up.

On a system level, one case made the difference for 7,000 other Dane County cases to be removed off the criminal background database, Consolidated Court Automation Programs, also known as CCAP. Working on that one client case allowed the team to alert the court system about a glitch in the system, which resulted in tens of thousands of cases to be removed statewide off CCAP. A new Supreme Court Rule went into effect on CCAP records’ retention on July 1st. One change was that cases that started as felonies but were disposed of as misdemeanors now come off CCAP after 20 years instead of 50 or 75 years. One of the clients had a 20+ year old misdemeanor that started as a felony. BEP Staff kept an eye on the case for the client. The record did not come off CCAP after July 1st, so she reached out to the Clerk of Courts. The issue was a wider issue than just that client’s and the Clerk was able to fix it for many more people.

In 2022, the BEP held seven expungement clinics and opened 174 cases. Ethics of Empathetic Lawyering and Pardon Trainings were held for volunteer attorneys, non-attorney volunteers, and Legal Action staff. In the former, they were trained on effectively and empathetically working with formerly incarcerated clients, many of whom are survivors of trauma. In the virtual Pardon Training, they were trained to assist clinic clients on pardon applications. Both trainings were eligible for Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit. Since 2019, there have been in excess of 400 persons who attended the clinic. Of those 400 plus individuals, approximately 60 were not eligible for assistance through the program. In those cases, the clients were deemed ineligible because their income exceeded the threshold or they were not residents of Dane County.



## MANAGER OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

CARRIE BRAXTON

Salutations! I am the Manager of Equal Employment Opportunity in the Office for Equity and Inclusion. I am on my sixth year in this department, having served in two different roles. The first being the Diversity Recruitment Specialist and the other being my aforementioned title at the beginning of this article. I am hoping that everyone is in good spirits or are trying to be in the best place mentally that one can be in. I am a proponent of positive thinking and self-care! Now on to the items that I will be discussing.

- In person activities - I am happy that I am able to do more in person activities presently, whether they are trainings, meetings, forums or summits – seeing people in person was something that I missed while dealing with the pandemic. Although very convenient, most of the time, virtual meetings cannot replace the face-to-face human contact.
- Presentations – A part of my managerial duties are that I give presentations on various topics and facilitate discussions. I periodically update some of my presentations. Additionally, I have been creating new presentations, as I continuously research information that I feel will be beneficial for the type of work that I do; keeping equal employment at the forefront. Therefore, it is important to know that one should be able to apply for and have the opportunity to interview for a position if they meet the qualifications. That said we must be open-minded about the fact that culture, micro-aggressions and other actions or inactions play parts in employment. In other words, there is more than just the initial application aspect of it sometimes. Therefore, it is very important to be able to assist applicants and potential applicants in the best way. There is no one set way to do this but by being open-minded about our actions is a good start.
- New Employee Orientation – In 2020, the in-person trainings were halted for safety reasons and we facilitated trainings virtually. They started up again in person briefly, but were once again halted. I facilitate the Civil Rights training portion, which covers Equal Opportunity and Harassment training. I look forward to seeing the new employees during my presentation slot on the designated dates. Whether in person or virtual, I enjoy the interactions with the employees and like to welcome them to Dane County!
- The 2023 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award - I serve for the County on the Joint City-County Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award Commission (MLK Commission) that oversees the annual nomination process for the potential awardees. The commission has monthly scheduled meetings that select a winner at the end of the previous year.



## MANAGER OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY CARRIE BRAXTON (CONTINUED)

Additionally, I serve for the County on the Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition (King Coalition) that creates an annual program for the event. The program, held on the observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day - the third Monday of January annually, celebrates Dr. King’s legacy and includes having the deserving recipients being presented with the award by the County Executive and Mayor (or their representative), MLK Choir performances, participating community leaders and a keynote speaker. There is an invite-only reception held after the program. This year the program was in person after being virtual for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was well received. Whether in person or virtual, the teamwork of the dedicated persons involved are second-to-none. The end-result is always an inspirational and memorable program that I am extremely proud to be a part of.

Speaking of teamwork, earlier, I mentioned that I was on my sixth year in the Office for Equity and Inclusion. This I am grateful, as I work with such hard-working employees and we have exceptional leadership. Now, I want to mention lastly and proudly that in May 2022, I began celebrating my 25th year with Dane County. I have learned a lot during this time and hope to continue to progress as I feel I have. I have received wonderful plaques and a certificate acknowledging my longevity in my employment.

### DANE COUNTY HIRING 2019 THROUGH 2022

This is an overview of Dane County hiring from 2018 through 2022 thus far. There have been a steady increase of staff hired over the past several years. That said over the past two years, there have been more retirements for various reasons also.

#### Employees Total

2022 - Employees 2481, increase of 41 from 2021  
2021 - Employees 2440, increase of 77 from 2020  
2020 - Employees 2422, increase of 113 from 2019  
2019 - Employees 2309, increase of 34 from 2018

#### Minority Managers Total

2022 - Minority managers 39, increase of 0 from 2021  
2021 - Minority managers 39, increase of 14 from 2020  
2020 - Minority managers 25, increase of 9 from 2019  
2019 - Minority managers 16, increase of 3 from 2018

#### Some departments with the highest numbers of minority staff currently

Office for Equity and Inclusion - 85.7% minority staff  
Juvenile Court Program - 52.6% minority staff  
Badger Prairie (Human Services dept.) - 45.4% minority staff  
Public Health - 25.9% minority staff  
Administration - 25.0% minority staff  
Corporation Counsel - 24.6% minority staff



# MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION: MEETING JUDY WOODRUFF

The Tamara D. Grigsby Office for Equity and Inclusion (OEI) sponsored four high school/college young ladies to attend the TEMPO Madison 40th year gala at the Monona Terrance. TEMPO Madison is the city's premiere networking organization for female professional and executive leaders. Membership consists of approximately 240 women across a variety of industries and includes C-Suite leaders, Presidents, Vice Presidents, Directors and State Agency Secretaries. As part of the organization's goal, Madison TEMPO seeks to connect influential women of diverse backgrounds and experience success at the highest professional levels in the community.

TEMPO Madison provides programming related to professional development, assistance with securing corporate board seats and networking events. The TEMPO of Madison Foundation provides need-based scholarships to young women in Dane County.

At the gala, students had the opportunity to network with others including meeting the Mayor of Madison, the former mayor of Fitchburg, the President of the Madison Symphony, CEO of Summit Credit Union and others. They were able to make connections regarding employment and gain advice about careers and education during the event. Most importantly, they had the opportunity to hear the keynote speaker, Judy Woodruff, anchor and managing editor of PBS NewsHour, talk and share her experience of rising up in the ranks of the news media industry.

Students were able to talk to her about what they were currently doing and spoke of the steps they were taking to fulfil their career aspirations and goals; and of course, they had the opportunity for a photo op with Ms. Woodruff. "It was extraordinary to see these young ladies interact with many influential women. To see the student's star struck faces when they were introduced to someone was great to see, but they kept their cool and had meaningful conversations" said Reyna V.

Ms. Woodruff has covered politics and other news for more than four decades at NBC, CNN and PBS. In 2013, she and the late Gwen Ifill were the first two women to co-anchor a national news broadcast. In 2016, after Ifill's death, Woodruff became the sole anchor of NewsHour and was a founding co-chair of the International Women's Media Foundation.



L to R: Irene K., Eden M., Kaylie V., Victoria C and Ms. Woodruff

# MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION: (CONTINUED)

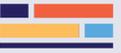
During the course of her keynote, Ms. Woodruff used the opportunity to speak directly to the young people in the room and recounted one of her first employment interviews. She tells the story of her interaction with the hiring manager, which she recalled in vivid details. She is a college-educated professionally dressed woman at a job interview and responding to questions posed to her by the interviewer. Nervous and really wanting the opportunity to be employed at the agency, she responded to all the questions asked – her background, experience, what skills she would bring to the position. Afterwards, she was informed that she selected to fill the position. She was most definitely excited and eager to begin, but what the manager further states to her would be deemed sexual harassment in the workplace had the comments have been made present day. He turns to her and says something to the effect, “how could I not hire you with legs like that.” Immediately and simultaneously, the young ladies, turned their gazes to Theola Carter, Carrie Braxton and Reyna Vasquez, chaperons/mentors to the young women at the event, with astonishment; they did not have to speak what they were thinking. The young ladies’ eyes said it all ... Whaaat? Really? For Real? You got to be kidding! Jerk! This one incident told by Ms. Woodruff allowed for some very lively, informative and honest table conversation between the students and the OEI staff members needless to say.



Standing OEI Staff: Theola C. Reyna V. and Carrie B.  
Seated L to R: Irene K., Victoria C., Eden M. and Kaylie V.

Post the event, the students were asked how they liked the event? Did they learn and get anything from it? They all said yes; however, Eden M. a senior at Memorial High School she had a real moment and stated, “I almost cried.” When asked why? She responded, “It was so inspiring.” These are the kinds of motivating events and opportunities we want to give to as many young people in the Dane County community for our children are our greatest resources and the next generation to lead organizations (whether public or private) of the future.

At the Tamara D. Grigsby Office for Equity and Inclusion, not only do we want to work to end disparities and lead change for a more diverse, equitable and inclusive Dane County, but we also want to pave the way for the next generation and seek to inspire the next generation. We encourage them to explore opportunities before them, consider the County as a viable option in their career goals but no matter what, lead with dignity and fairness.



# HOW WE SUSTAINED OUR COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE THROUGH THE TURBULENT COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This week marks the beginning of March 2023. A month that in the past meant the worst of winter was now (hopefully) behind us, and that the promise of longer days and verdant pastures were ahead. That is, however, until March became the month our lives were first fully upended by Covid-19. More specifically, I am referring to March 16th, the day we were first sent home for what was only to be a two-week quarantine. (It also happened to be the same day we welcomed our ADA Coordinator, Ellen Derge—what a way to begin!) In just a few short weeks, we will be at the three-year anniversary of that fateful two-week period when life as we knew it came to a screeching halt.

Through such challenging and uncertain times, in what ways were we able to adapt and maintain our commitment to serving the public? Below are a few memorable examples that I can point to with pride.

One of the assignments I am most proud of from the pandemic is my work with 911 Director, Luis Bixler. Luis became the director of the Public Safety Communications Department in November 2020. Immediately, he made his presence felt with his dedication to increasing diversity within his department. The Communicator position had changed his life and he was determined to provide that same life-changing opportunity to those who came after him, especially those who had overcome adversity or come from humble beginnings, like himself. So Luis had a pair of Communicator recruitments that he designated for Alternative Selection, which is a hiring practice that's written into the Civil Service ordinance whereby we share job opportunities exclusively with agencies that work with socially or economically disadvantaged individuals, instead of posting it onto our careers webpage.

As Diversity Recruitment Specialist, it is my job to handle all of the County's Alternative Selection recruitments, so Luis and I worked together to strategize ways to better promote these opportunities to the community.

Ahead of sharing the job postings with our Alternative Selection sources, Luis and I collaborated on multiple presentations to the community where we highlighted the role of the Communicator and the importance of the Public Safety Communications department. I served as a resource during the presentations, answering any questions from the audience related to the Employee Relations side of things. It was also my duty to convene our community partners and spread the word about the recruitments and presentations to their clients, students, and job seekers. I even posted the information on the social media platforms of Latino Academy of Workforce Development and the Urban League. We offered an evening presentation and a daytime presentation so that it could be more accessible for working families. It paid off! As a result of these targeted recruitment efforts, we had by far the most applicants I have received for any Alternative Selection recruitment.

Another part of my job that transferred well to the virtual realm that dominated most of Covid were mock interviews. I was able to keep providing them to Operation Fresh Start's Strive cohorts, and to Centro Hispano's Caminos workforce cohorts. There's always a little bit of nerves going into interviews, even the interviewer is not immune to that, but it's very rewarding when you can instill confidence and provide useful advice to these young adults or individuals whose first language may not be English. They actively and courageously are stepping out of their comfort zones to learn and improve and to provide a better opportunity for themselves and their families.

The resolve and hunger that they bring with them is inspiring! I always leave feeling like I, too, have benefited from our conversations, with a greater sense of purpose and clarity about my values and my why.

These are just a few of the ways in which I have been able to maintain service to the community in the midst of such turbulent times. With the President's declaration that the national emergency is now due to end on May 11th, we hope that the worst of the pandemic is behind us. And perhaps, too, March can now return to its true form as a month optimism, with its promise of longer days and verdant pastures ahead.

Until next time. Sustainably yours,

-Rodrigo Valdivia





# PARTNERS IN EQUITY GRANTS

The Partners in Equity Grant (PIE Grant) was approved by the County Board of Supervisors and County Executive. The program was piloted in 2015 to address systemic racial inequalities in health, education, employment or criminal justice. During the pilot period the grant was administered by the Department of Human Services and the Office for Equity and Inclusion. The grant supports Dane County-based community groups that propose to use funding to address systemic racial inequities in the criminal justice system, with a preference for proposals that address issues identified by the Criminal Justice Workgroup Recommendations in the September 2015 white paper titled Investigating Solutions to Racial Disparities and Mental Health Challenges in the Dane County Jail and throughout Dane County's Criminal Justice System.

In 2018, the county added an additional component to the PIE Grant. In partnership with the Dane County Food Council, the Food PIE Grant was initiated. This program was created to encourage the innovative development of projects that advance equity and access in local food systems and to increase access to healthy food, land on which to grow food, and/or food waste and recovery across Dane County. Per County Executive Joe Parisi, in 2018, "The Partners in Equity Food Grant Program is one of the many ways we in Dane County strive to achieve equity in our community...By partnering together, we can make healthy food more accessible and help increase opportunity for everyone in our community". In that same vein, then County Board Supervisor Sheila Stubbs stated, "The Partners in Equity Food Grant Program allows not-for-profits to partner with Dane County in addressing shared community challenges related to food equity for the benefit of everyone."

When the COVID Pandemic hit in 2020, these programs were crucial to the communities in Dane County as the nation attempted to grapple with the virus and the safety concerns surrounding the virus. Just because the pandemic hit did not mean that social justice issues stopped existing and people were not going hungry in Dane County. If anything, the pandemic showed how wide the cracks of disparity are in various communities. For example, students who normally would have had a meal in school for breakfast and lunch were now without options. More than anything, COVID emphasized the need to make funds available within the community and we did just that and are continuing to work to eliminate food deserts and break down the barriers to racial disparities in social justice, education, criminal and health care systems.



# PARTNERS IN EQUITY GRANTS

## FOOD- PIE

Since the first Food PIE grants were allocated in 2018, the Food Council/Dane County has issued a little over \$95,000 in grants to various non- profits and organizations within Dane County. The smallest grant issued was in the amount of \$444 in 2020 to assist the applicant with replacing fruit trees that were lost during the polar vortex of 2019 to a grant of \$5000 to move surplus food from commercial food service operations for packaging and re-distribution to local food pantries throughout the area. However, there have been some slight changes to Food PIE grant process.. The Food Grant application is now tiered. Tier 1 supports funding requests up to \$2,000 and Tier 2 supports funding requests between \$2,001 and \$4,000. Application for the Food PIE program normally takes place in January of each year with the awards being announced by the end of March.

## PIE GRANT RACIAL EQUITY SOCIAL JUSTICE GRANTS (RESJ)

The Partners in Equity Grant also known as the PIE-RESJ Grant was approved by the County Board of Supervisors and County Executive and piloted in 2015 to address systemic racial inequalities in health, education, employment or criminal justice. Individual organizations may apply for up to \$15,000.

Partnerships or collaborations of two or more eligible organizations may apply for up to \$50,000. In his 2021 press release Dane County Executive Joe Parisi stated, “Dane County is committed to partnering with local organizations to help address racial inequities for communities of color,” ... Their efforts highlight that, by partnering together, we can work to ensure opportunity for all in our community.”

Brenda González, a member of the OEI Advisory Committee, said, “I appreciate the work of this committee that partners with organizations in Dane County to increase access and opportunities to help improve the lives of all Dane County residents. The PIE Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Grant Program is an intentional commitment that hopes to support the amazing work of many of our local organizations in their efforts to fight against the systemic racial disparities that are faced.” Since implementing the grant program in 2017, in excess of \$300,000 has been awarded to over 20 agencies and nonprofit organizations to address disparities in various sectors.

## OEI NEWEST STAFF MEMBER - REYNA VASQUEZ



In life there is growth which is the reason we will miss our previous Bilingual-Clerk, Azalea, we are delighted she has sought out a career that will further her growth. We wish her the best in her endeavors. With that, we would like to introduce, Reyna Vasquez, our new Bilingual-Spanish Clerk III for the Office for Equity and Inclusion (OEI). Many of you may have spoken with her or written and received emails from her already and it seems like she has been with us for years but Reyna began her role in August of 2021. She came in hitting the ground running learning and mastering new systems and did it without a hitch.

She brings in fifteen (15) plus years of administrative experience. Coming from a different field, Corrections to be exact, she brings a different perspective on the issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), has a first-hand account of the importance of having a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion department within government, and knows the impact that DEI makes in the life of staff and the community. It means a lot for her personally to work in a department whose goal is to have equal access to opportunity and address disparities.

“I love working in our office. First of all the work culture and environment is inviting and welcoming. The issues we address in the department are varied and everyone has their niche that they work on; however, we would not hesitate to give one another a hand whether or not it is something that is within our job description.” – Reyna Vasquez

Having parents that did not speak English or know how to read or write in general, she understands the struggles that many face and is proud to be a part of a team that raises awareness and advocates for equity. Reyna plays a key role in helping maintain organization in the office, with deadlines, synchronizing meetings and updating the OEI’s webpage. As the first point of contact, Reyna answers inquiries or refers people to proper officials. Throughout her first year, she has learned about each individual’s role in the department, continues to expand her knowledge of the office duties, and will continue to grow within Dane County.

## HISPANIC HERITAGE



The 12th Annual Herencia Hispana (Hispanic Heritage) luncheon, held every October in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month, was a memorable one in 2022! The annual ceremony celebrates the accomplishments and contributions of individuals and organizations who are making an impact for the advancement of Dane County's Latino community. The Tamara D. Grigsby Office for Equity & Inclusion once again had a strong contingency this year as we were proud to support and celebrate the hard work and dedication of these individuals and allies.

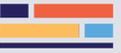
This year was a particularly moving ceremony as our beloved Lupita and Luis Montoto, founders of La Movida Radio, Wisconsin's first Spanish-language radio station, led by announcing that their son had recently been diagnosed with cancer. Everybody in the room felt that deeply and we were united in our love and support for Los Montotos. For Los Montotos to still organize the luncheon despite unimaginable challenges speaks volumes to their commitment and dedication to uniting and uplifting the Latino community and its allies.

Emceed by the great Mario Mendoza, the voice of La Movida, the event included a proclamation by County Executive Joe Parisi as well as some of our local mayors and alders. Awards were presented for different categories and this year our very own County Executive Joe Parisi received the Amigo Award! According to La Movida, the Amigo Award recognizes an individual who through their own dedication, promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace, mirrors commitment to success, and contributes to making a significant difference in the community. It was a joy to see him presented with this award and we certainly made some noise for him!

This year's guest speaker was Juan José López, who spoke passionately about his desire to see Latino's in all levels of leadership. He praised many of the guests in attendance for the honorable work they do day-in and day-out and elevated the next generation of change-makers. Another awardee was Norma Gallegos-Valles, Workforce Manager at Centro Hispano and President of the Latino Professionals Association, who implored the importance of voting and giving voice to the millions of undocumented immigrants who are never granted that opportunity.

For those who have never attended, this is a joyous and diverse celebration that at times can tug on the heart-strings, while simultaneously infusing us with pride and motivation to continue the difficult path ahead of creating a more equitable and inclusive community for all. It fills up quickly, so keep an eye out in late September for the next iteration of this joyous occasion.





# DANE COUNTY

## EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NOTIFICATION SIGN-UP

Dane County Emergency Management provides several services to citizens, businesses, and local governments. These services include coordinating emergency responses; assisting citizens, cities, towns, schools, and businesses to create emergency plans; developing community hazard mitigation plans; operating the countywide tornado siren and other emergency alerts, and organizing Emergency Medical Services. It is important that you are prepared as much as possible and know what to do in the event of an emergency. A key factor in knowing what, where and when is Dane County Emergency Notification.

The Dane County Emergency Telephone Notification is the official emergency notification system used by Dane County first response agencies to communicate with community members during emergencies. Sign up now to receive free alerts via text message, email, and/or voice message.

Add your addresses (home, work, school) to receive geo-targeted alerts  
Indicate what types of alerts you want to receive, including weather, evacuation orders, armed person/active shooter, hazardous materials incidents, gas leaks, missing persons, and more.

Indicate how you want to be notified: text, email, and/or voice message.

To sign up and receive emergency notifications go to

[https://www.smart911.com/smart911/registration/registrationLanding.action?cdnExternalPath=.](https://www.smart911.com/smart911/registration/registrationLanding.action?cdnExternalPath=)



**Sign up to  
receive alerts**

**Emergency alerts and notifications via**

Phone call, text message, email and social media



