

Equity and Inclusion Work Plan – Clerk of Circuit Court – 2023 Update

AREA OF OPPORTUNITY

1. Organizational Commitment

	Initiative Area	Current Status (Where are we now?)	Chosen Target (Where do we want to be?)	Tactics to Close the Gap (How do we get there?)	Measures of Success (How will we know we're there?)	Lead Staff Responsible (Who? By When?)
1 a.	Attract and retain a diverse workforce.	<p>The current department workforce has increased diversity since publishing our 2020 workplan. 7% of our staff can be identified as racial or ethnic minorities.</p> <p>We have two people on staff who are certified Spanish-language court interpreters, who are able to provide assistance to people at our customer service counters.</p> <p>It also bears noting that 3 out of our 17 judges are African-American, and 8 of our 17 judges are women.</p>	Continue to improve diversity to come closer to matching the diversity of the county population as a whole. We are improving in this regard.	Continue to work with the Department of Administration/ Employee Relations (DCER) to improve the recruitment process, expanding the reach of recruitment activities.	When we have achieved a measurable level of staff diversity at or exceeding 16%. Our prior plan identified a 6% threshold, but that reflected the proportion of county residents who are African American, and we'd like to expand that out.	Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Court; Shelly Maas, Chief Deputy Clerk of Court; this will be an ongoing process.
1 b.	Provide training opportunities to staff to increase sensitivity to issues of equity and inclusion, and to enhance cultural competencies.	To the extent that the county currently offers training on the identified issues, staff are encouraged to attend. It does not appear that the county offers regular trainings, however.	An introduction to the issues of equity, inclusion, and cultural competency should be built into every new employee's county employment orientation. Routine staff development trainings on these topics should be an ongoing initiative for DCER.	<p>The County should provide funding to DCER to perform county-wide staff training.</p> <p>To bridge any gaps, my department's Conference and Training line should be enhanced in future budget cycles to allow for the possibility of external training attendance.</p> <p>(Our conference/training appropriation remains at the 2020 level, as other budget priorities have arisen.)</p>	When all staff have equity, inclusion, cultural competency training certificates from their initial employee orientation and at least one annual continuing education program.	Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Court; Shelly Maas, Chief Deputy Clerk of Court; this will be an ongoing process.

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2. Leadership Development

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2 a.	Develop a diverse leadership team.	Our leadership team is small and can be considered diverse (1 out of 6).	Turnover in these positions is very low, but to the extent we encounter a vacancy, we will always make hiring decisions with diversity goals in mind.	Create the widest recruitment net possible for our management positions, working in collaboration with DCER.	When the diversity of our management team exceeds 16%.	Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Court; Shelly Maas, Chief Deputy Clerk of Court; this will be an ongoing process.

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3. Program Innovation.

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3 a.	Increase the diversity of our jury pool.	We send summonses to a population that is indeed reflective of the diversity of Dane County as a whole. However, the pool of jurors who actually report are not sufficiently diverse. We receive new master lists of prospective jurors on a quarterly basis (as opposed to the statewide standard annualized basis) as a means to reduce returned mail.	We want every Monday morning's jury pool to reflect the diversity of the county as a whole.	Work with the Director of State Courts' Office to enhance the summoning method statewide, including new data sources allowable by statute. Provide more effective follow-up to prospective jurors who do not respond to summonses.	When the weekly pool of qualified, eligible jurors is reflective of county demographics. We are making modest progress. In 2020, our juror master list was 4.32% African American when the census data showed a 5.12% of the county population. In 2022, those percentage were 4.39% and 5.12%.	Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Court; Tammy Pauley Dane County Jury Clerk
3 b.	Continue to enhance Pretrial Services.	Our pretrial services office has added staff and developed risk assessment procedures with one goal of this process being to reduce the pre-trial jail population, which may be racially disparate.	Only the objectively highest-risk individuals should be subject to pre-trial incarceration	This clerk of court, along with court officials from around the state, will continue to work with state government legislators and officials to pursue cash bail and pretrial assessment supervision reforms. With support from County government, we successfully created a standalone Office of Pretrial Services in the 2022 budget, which should prove more effective than the current organization.	We will see a downward trend in the jail population representing reductions in pretrial incarcerations. On November 15, 2021, the percentage of the jail population in pretrial status was 28%. On November 15, 2022, this percentage was 24%. This is a trend that should be periodically monitored.	Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Court; handing off to Rhonda Frank-Loron, Director of the Office of Pretrial Services in December of 2022. (As Pretrial Services is now its own discrete county office, future work plans will no longer include Pretrial Services.)

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3 c.	Services to non-English speakers seeking court services (New Initiative)	We have always employed staff and contract interpreters to assist litigants in court proceedings. However, when customers who may not speak or understand English presented at our customer service counters, we often did not have interpreters on hand to help them do business with us.	We want to enhance our levels of service to non-English speakers.	We have recently purchased electronic devices that facilitate the translation of spoken language, providing the ability to communicate with customers in any of 127 languages.	As staff become adept in using the devices, we will be able to more effectively serve our diverse customer base, resulting in less delay in service and less demand upon our interpreter staff.	Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Court

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4. Collaboration

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4 a.	Continue work with the Dane County Child Support Agency and the University of Wisconsin on research that will result in new programs directed at helping families out of poverty.	Currently working with the UW Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP).			We hope that this ongoing research will lead to new and effective state-level programs that will address issues pertaining to families experiencing poverty.	Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Court Vue Yang, Child Support Legal Director

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4 b.	Continue our contractual partnership with the Wisconsin Law Library.	The Law Library has a branch in the Courthouse that permits litigants who cannot afford attorneys, including significant numbers of litigants of color, to procure the forms, copies, and other documents necessary to participate in the civil and criminal cases within which they may be a party. This includes the running of legal clinics in collaboration with the UW School of Law to provide procedural advice in family/paternity cases, small claims/eviction cases, restraining orders, and domestic abuse restraining order clinics (in collaboration with DAIS and VOCA).		Explore new resources to provide for self-represented litigants (although this may come at a cost).	This is a process of continuous improvement as the library is able to provide progressively higher levels of service.	Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Court; Amy Crowder, State Law Librarian
4 c.	Work with DCDHS on Title IV-E (Foster Care) Legal Services federal reimbursement to remove the burden of paying for these services on disadvantaged families	Successfully completed the federal contract for 2020-2022 and are implementing the same for 2023.			We are there!	Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Court; Martha Stacker, Dane County Department of Human Services

AREA(S) OF OPPORTUNITY

5. Resource Mobilization - No entry here

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6. **Brand and Visibility** - No entry here