

2025 EQUITY PLAN

Prepared for the Office of Equity and Inclusion

NOVEMBER 2025

Our Vision

Healthy People. Healthy Places.

Our Mission

Working with the community to enhance, protect, and promote the health of the environment and the well-being of all people.

Our Core Values



Health is a Human Right

We advance health as a human right in pursuit of the highest attainable standard of health in Madison and Dane County.



Science

We use science, data, and evidence to deliver programs, services and influence change. Recognizing the importance of the lived experience, wisdom, and beliefs of those we serve, we acknowledge the limitations of scientific knowledge.



Health and Racial Equity

We build collective understanding and capacity across the health department and with other government agencies and community organizations to address racial equity with purpose. We recognize that health outcomes are largely the products of inequitable social, economic, and environmental systems over time.



Relationships

We build relationships and connections with people and organizations to improve health outcomes.



Stewardship

We take seriously the responsibility inherent in our role as a government agency, and work to manage resources intentionally and treat the public's trust with care.

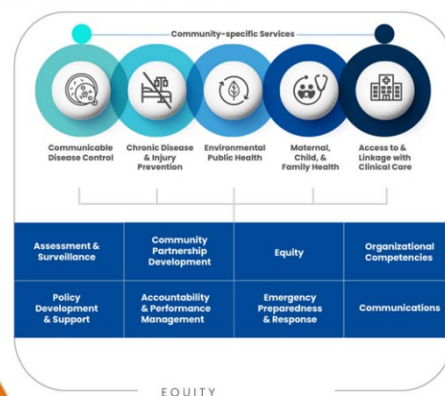
Our Agency Commitment to Health and Racial Equity

We build collective understanding and capacity across the health department and with other government agencies and community organizations to address racial equity with purpose. We recognize that health outcomes are largely the products of inequitable social, economic, and environmental systems over time.

Guiding Frameworks



Foundational Public Health Services



February 2022

How we organize this commitment

Learning and Practice: PHMDC staff (including division, department, and team leads) are engaged in learning and development towards [Competency for Public Health Professionals](#) (Domain 4) in Health and Racial Equity. (Assurance).

Innovation and Strategy: PHMDC is in relationship with the broader public health infrastructure (locally and nationally) tracking trends in health outcomes; sharing progress and setting priorities to advance systems-level strategies towards the desired future state. (Assessment).

Centering Equity: PHMDC explicitly centers health and racial equity in all programs, plans, and P(p)olicies including development, implementation, communication and evaluation processes and products. (Policy Development)

OEI Major Organizing Concepts Framework

Organizational Commitment

Tactics we will start or continue to imbed equity and inclusion in Departmental operations

Leadership Development

Tactics we will start or continue to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of staff, develop a shared definition of racial justice for the Department, and provide staff training and development opportunities

Program Innovation

Tactics we will start or continue to evaluate programs and procedures with a racial justice and social equity lens, to collect and report on data to measure the success of specific programmatic and policy changes, and to develop programs in partnership with our community stakeholders and customers.

Collaboration

Tactics we will start or continue to pursue increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of our network of program and service delivery partners, to seek the feedback and input of clients and communities served, and to build collaborative relationships with communities.

Resource Mobilization

Tactics we will start or continue to dedicate resources (financial, in-kind, and staffing) to advance racial justice in our community.

Tiers

Tier 1: Beginning

A practice or policy that is starting or new.

Tier 2: Emerging

A more developed practice or policy.

Tier 3: Advancing

To move forward, make progress, or lead a practice or policy.

Our Approach

We solicited some of our departmental programs and asked for them to share what has it looks like to operationalize equity in the past two years while using the OEI Framework. This plan gives you a snapshot on how Public Health lives out its core value health and racial equity. New activities that were started after the publication of the 2023 OEI Plan is designate by with N/A placed in the 2023 Tier column. Additionally, activities that have N/A in the 2025 Tier column have been sunsetted.

Organizational Commitment

Program	Activity	2023 Tier	2025 Tier	2025 Updates
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Explicitly centering health and racial equity in all plans, policies, and programs including the development, implementation, communication and evaluation processes and products.	2	2	
Strategy & Systems Improvement	In 2025 to draft a comprehensive evaluation on health and racial equity initiative over the past 5 years	N/A	1	
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Staff are engaged in learning and practicing core competencies in Health and Racial Equity for public health professionals.	1	2	Launch learning and practice system for all staff to engage in continuous learning
Strategy & Systems Improvement	All staff created health and racial equity learning and practice goals tied to annual performance review	N/A	1	
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Cultivating an inclusive and respectful work environment where everyone, especially employees from marginalized groups, feel a sense of belonging and support in achieving personal, team, and department goals.	2	2	Work toward this goal includes Optimal Climate Team priority areas based off staff surveys and continued support of People of Color Affinity Group.
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Optimal Climate team of 20 folks representing different programs and health department divisions. Actions include employee picnic, employee engagement survey, employee resource guide and leadership webinar series.	2	2	New actions areas include root causes of stress and employee all staff meetings
Strategy & Systems Improvement Engagement & Impact	Working with agency partners, policy makers, and the public to advance system-level strategies towards the desired future vision: all people in Dane County having a fair and just shot at optimal health.	1	1	
Strategy & Systems Improvement	People of Color Affinity Group provides a space for relationship building, leadership development and healing necessary for the overall well-being of BIPOC employees and the organization to move towards being an anti-racist organization. Actively recruit new employees who identity as part of the global majority with a total 55 on roster and average 20 folks consistently active to engage in conversation and partnership about how to best remove systemic structures that inherently seek to oppress BIPOC communities.	3	3	POC Affinity contracts with the YWCA for peer and group support over the past 5 years. In the last two years, we've added 15 people for a total of 70.
Project Management	Developing 2024-2029 Strategic Plan featuring agency-wide priorities centered on organizational change and rooted in advancing Health & Racial Equity.	1	3	

Program	Activity	2023 Tier	2025 Tier	2025 Updates
Language Access and Information	Implementation of multi-faceted Language Access policy to ensure all clients have equitable access to services and information, and that bilingual staff are supported in using their language skills according to best practices as they serve these clients.	1	3	In 2024, Public Health hired two language interpreters to further support Spanish translation and interpretation needs for Public Health direct services as well as community events that we participate in
Language Access and Information	Infusion of language-related demographic data into planning and budgeting to continue to expand and sustain language access as community and staff needs change.	1		
Engagement & Impact	Creation of Engagement & Impact Team in 2025 to bring greater alignment across Public Health's community-facing programs such as Community Engagement, CHA/CHIP, Food Systems & Security, and Access to Care; and to advance health and racial equity by promoting coordinated, consistent, and relationship-centered practices.	N/A	1	The team aims at creating connections across programs, helping to translate community input into action, build equitable partnership structures, and steward resources intentionally. This includes coordinating outreach efforts, developing frameworks and policies to guide equitable engagement, and leading department-wide initiatives that strengthen transparency and collaboration with community partners. Through this integrative approach, the team supports the department's goal of ensuring that equity is embedded not only in what we do, but in how we do it
Engagement & Impact	Implemented structures to coordinate outreach activities such as Outreach Policy, Event Tracker, Outreach Strategy Plan and Event Prioritization Tool; to align efforts, steward resources, and ensure more intentional, equitable engagement across programs	N/A	2	
Engagement & Impact	Developed and implemented department-wide tools such as the Community Engagement Framework, Community Compensation Guide and accompanying Standards Operating Procedures (this last one in partnership with Budget & Finance team). The first two are parts of the modules in the LMS for onboarding new staff	N/A	2	

Leadership Development

Program	Activity	2023 Tier	2025 Tier	2025 Updates
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Generating a full Workforce Development Plan for Public Health Employees that begins as Recruitment and taking into account Individual Professional Development. This includes developing mentorships and avenues for professional growth within and out of our agency. Working to align these efforts with Health & Racial Equity Coordinators to ensure we are providing equitable access to these programs.	1	2	
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Providing framing of Health & Racial Equity concepts and agency expectations at new employee orientations to increase understanding of expectations for public health professionals related to core competencies, as well as systems framing around root causes of health inequities.	2	3	Require all staff to outline a health and racial equity (HRE) professional development goal within annual performance evaluation reviews to encourage individual accountability towards previous HRE goals and ongoing support and growth towards new HRE professional development goal
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Intentional recruitment and hiring of racial and ethnic diverse staff and people with lived experiences in areas like violence prevention and substance use.	2	2	58% of Nurse Family Partnership RNs identify as BIPOC, stark contrast to overall WI rate, 7% of RN with Bachelors are BIPOC.
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Engage all agency directors, managers and lead workers in the National Association of County & City Health Officials Roots of Health Inequity Course, offering a series of community of practice sessions to coincide with course learning and support application of concepts to agency and program work	N/A	1	
Engagement and Impact	Facilitates Communities of Practice for outreach coordinators and engagement staff to foster shared learning and strengthen capacity to apply systems thinking, partnership principles and equitable engagement practices. These spaces support equity-centered leadership development.	N/A	2	

Program Innovation

Program	Activity	2023 Tier	2025 Tier	2025 Updates
Communication	Social media strategy focuses on ensuring language access and using culturally relevant approaches. Collaboration with agencies such as Centro Hispano to identify social media posts that are relevant to the Latine community.	2	2	
Communication	Implementation of Equity in Communications Guide, which gives guidance and suggestions about how to infuse equity into communications products like reports, presentations, and factsheets.	2	2	The Guide is update annually
Communication	Translation of externally facing materials into Spanish, including blogs, news releases, and web pages, as well as coordinate the translation of materials into other languages.	3	3	Turnaround time is not as fast as before due to lowered capacity.
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Reviewing current recruitment practices such as minimum qualifications, application question requirements, and interview standardization to create more equitable practices within Public Health's recruitment process.	1	2	
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Standardizing and implementing a Bi-Annual Employee Engagement Survey for Public Health staff, with considerations and intentionality from feedback from our POC Affinity Group. Also taking into account anonymity.	3	3	Next Survey conducted November 2025
Strategy & Systems Improvement	This team brings together positions that work across the agency to support organizational systems improvement. Examples of shared work including supporting the agency in incorporating health and racial equity, fostering relationships across the department, and providing relevant training and workforce development opportunities	N/A	1	
Epidemiology and Data Science	Developed guidelines for disaggregating race and ethnicity data when the numbers are small, in an effort to promote data decolonization and address erasure.	2	2	
Epidemiology and Data Science Maternal and Child Health	The Community Based Public Health Nurse and Data/Epi team worked together on an innovative project to disaggregate Hmong data from the Dane County Youth Assessment. These data were shared with community partners, and relationships are continuing to develop to determine how to use the data and share with the community.	2	N/A	
Maternal and Child Health	Developed a brand-new program, Reproductive Health Nurse Navigators, using a Reproductive Justice framework to provide all-options counseling for Dane County residents.	1	2	

Program	Activity	2023 Tier	2025 Tier	2025 Updates
Maternal & Child Health	The Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) team is part of a national storytelling collaborative and is working towards changing the way that personal story is used in the FIMR process, and how qualitative data can be used to tell the story of infant mortality. Compensating Black women with lived experience of infant loss to help us develop a process for making lived experience of part of FIMR.	1	2	
Engagement and Impact	The Engagement & Impact team is exploring a Feedback-to-Action Framework to strengthen how community and client feedback informs program planning and decision making. This framework aims: - To make community input more transparent, actionable and tied to performance review and improvement processes - To evaluate programs and procedures through an equity lens by integrating feedback mechanisms that reflect community priorities.	N/A	1	

Collaboration

Program	Activity	2023 Tier	2025 Tier	2025 Updates
Community Based Nursing	Community-Based Public Health Nurses partnering with Nurses for Black Wellbeing, a research initiative out of the UW School of Nursing, to examine health outcomes of Black Madison residents.	2	2	
Maternal & Child Health Nurse Family Partnership	The Maternal Child Health and Perinatal teams collaborating with Roots4Change, a grassroots coop of Latina and indigenous doulas, in a variety of ways to support clients.	2	2	
Violence Prevention & Intervention	Violence Prevention teams working with many organizations led and serving people of color in our community.	2	2	The work continues but staffing capacity challenges have limited potential. In 2026, 3 LTE positions will become full time positions
Nurse Family Partnership	Doula Collaborative established after community input identifying a gap in these services. Nurse Family Partnership Program reimburses community doulas supporting clients in this program.	N/A	2	

Program	Activity	2023 Tier	2025 Tier	2025 Updates
Nurse Family Partnership	The Community Advisory Board is comprised of current and former clients that provide input on additional areas of support needed from the perinatal program and how to help clients reach their own goals.	3	3	This group has also expanded access to doula services and held multiple events to build social connections for families.
Substance Use Prevention & Harm Reduction Program	The Substance Use Prevention & Harm Reduction program continues to create opportunities to seek feedback and input of clients to build collaborative relationships with community	2	3	The SUPHR team continues to prioritize incorporating community voice and feedback into program service delivery, plans, and reports.
Strategy and System Improvement	Partnership with the YWCA since 2019 to provide: 1) Agency health and racial equity training and professional development opportunities; 2) Increase Public Health staff access to the YWCA Summit; and 3) Provide support to the organization POC Affinity group.	N/A	3	
Epidemiology and Data Science	Responded to 78 external data requests from partners in 2024. We try to elevate external requests from community organizations with limited data resources.	N/A	2	
Engagement & Impact	The Engagement & Impact Team is leading coordination for the implementation of a partnership management platform to strengthen collaboration, transparency, and alignment across divisions and community partners. This system aims at improving visibility of shared relationships and support more consistent, equitable engagement across Dane County.	N/A	1	
Engagement & Impact	In the meantime, the team continues implementing interim coordination tools such as the Outreach Tracker and triage process to create a more cohesive approach by improving internal collaboration and reducing duplication across programs.		2	
Project Management	Creating organizational infrastructure to guide and facilitate equitable and consistent approach to service delivery, customer relations and partnership management.	1	2	

Resource Mobilization

Program	Activity	2023 Tier	2025 Tier	2025 Updates
Engagement & Impact	In 2024, the Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHA/CHIP) team provided four \$7,500 grants to Dane County community organizations whose work uplifts and supports CHIP priorities	N/A	3	
Engagement & Impact	Embed equity into how resources are distributed and managed. The Community Compensation Guide and companion SOP aims at ensuring that community partners are compensated fairly and consistently for their time and expertise.	N/A	2	
Budget & Finance	Development of a Grant Management and Grant Administration Policy addressing inequities in developing resource mobilization and management in overall community.	1	2	Grants Management Policy launched in November 2025
Strategy & Systems Improvement	Support equitable funding opportunities through the management and iterative design of the Healthy Communities fund and the creation of equitable funding process guidance/support.	2	2	City and County contributions eliminated from 2025 and 2026 budgets
Maternal & Child health	Worked in partnership with Board of Health and support of the County Board to secure \$50,000 of annual, ongoing funding from Dane County for the Saving Our Babies initiative through the 2024 Operating Budget process. Saving Our Babies is an initiative of the Dane County Health Council and community stakeholders with the following goals: Eliminate inequities in health, educational and economic outcomes for Black women, families and children; Eliminate Black-White racial inequities in low-weight births; and Eliminate Black-White racial inequities in infant mortality. This funding goes to the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness to continue coordination of the Saving Our Babies initiative.	N/A	1	
Maternal & Child Health	Compensating Black women with lived experience of fetal or infant loss participating and sharing their knowledge/stories in the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review process. Paid two community partners to attend a national Maternal Child Health conference with the Maternal & Child Health and Fetal and Infant Mortality Review team.	2	2	
Nurse Family Partnership	Nurse Family Partnership Paid Community Advisory Board has 3 Coordinators who are graduates of the program and paid to plan and organize meetings, events, and a doula collaborative.	N/A	3	

Program	Activity	2023 Tier	2025 Tier	2025 Updates
Environmental Protection	Mini grants to community partners working to improve engagement of community members most impacted by environmental health issues such as PFAS.	1	N/A	Due to poor uptake Funding removed from budget