



Cuyahoga County Equity Commission *Report*

January, 2021

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Executive Summary

The Cuyahoga County Equity Commission was appointed to oversee the County's equity efforts. In the Summer of 2020, in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic and social unrest, the Equity Commission was charged with the responsibility to create an Equity Plan that will improve how Cuyahoga County can better serve all residents.

The Commission identified five pilot agencies within the County and one Board to begin the process of assessing each agency's policies and programs, with respect to outcomes, using data through a lens of racial equity. This data review is an initial step towards gaining a better understanding of program outcomes in these agencies to develop a plan and identify metrics to improve how we deliver services and programs.

Concurrently, Cuyahoga County Council passed [Resolution No. R2020-0122](#) "declaring racism a public health crisis in Cuyahoga County." With racial disparities widening with regards to healthcare, education, quality of life, and economic mobility, the County Council and the County Executive acknowledged the needed focus and urgency to create systemic change across Cuyahoga County, starting with the County government.

This Equity Report consists of status reports from the following five pilot agencies and one Board:

1. Department of Health and Human Services
2. Department of Development
3. Department of Public Works
4. Department of Human Resources
5. Office of Procurement and Diversity
6. Cleveland – Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board

The following agencies have submitted updates as pilots and have outlined their recommendations below.

Department of Health and Human Services

1. Normalize conversations with respect to racial equity
2. Identify racial equity training
3. Utilize GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) to learn from other communities
4. Explore Racial Equity Impact Assessment tools
5. Review departmental policies and practices to ensure they reflect REI principles
6. Support Employee Resource Groups
7. Conduct an annual staff perception survey

Department of Development

1. Support Cleveland Innovation Project to focus on tech and entrepreneurial diversity
2. Provide new programs for Small Business support
3. Develop and implement new capital access programs targeted to minorities
4. Support affirmative minority hiring for lending programs
5. Develop and support new Equity Zones/Job hubs in distressed communities

6. Continue outreach for SkillUp
7. Support Lead Coalition and other lead-safe efforts

Department of Public Works

1. Contracting and Procurement: Create a process to simplify and streamline bidding
2. Public Works and Infrastructure: Use the Economic Health Score to prioritize infrastructure projects
3. Education: Engage in community outreach to improve workforce development outcomes by partnering with organizations such as Tri-C, CSU and CMSD

Office of Procurement and Diversity

1. Develop MWBE subcontractor goals with definitive Good Faith Efforts Requirements
2. Enhance contract compliance
3. Increase staffing and resources
4. Staff training to better understand the intersectionality of OPD's role
5. Increase utilization of Small Business Set-Aside Program
6. Contract forecasting
7. Coordinate vendor outreach
8. Reform data infrastructure

Department of Human Resources

1. Provide tuition reimbursement for County staff
2. Work with the Personnel Review Commission to modify educational requirements for positions
3. Lead and support racial equity training

Overarching Recommendation

Every agency should engage in a racial equity evaluation and assessment. To ensure racial equity is advanced at the County, racial equity training across the County Government must be prioritized.

Statement of Purpose - Executive Armond Budish

In 2016, Cuyahoga County established a strategic plan and a vision where we declared that we believe that all things are possible and that everyone should have a chance to thrive. Yet, it is clear that more must be done to achieve this goal. In July 2020, my administration, working with County Council, developed a resolution declaring racism as a public health crisis. The resolution was created in response to the social unrest around racial justice that swept the country in the Spring of 2020, as well as to the clear and inequitable differences in ways the pandemic is affecting minorities, particularly African Americans. The resolution's goal is to engage County leadership and staff to evaluate our programs and policies and their effects. The ultimate goal is to ensure that *everyone* in Cuyahoga County has the opportunity to thrive. While each person will ultimately define what "thrive" means for them, my goal is for the County government to create an environment where this outcome is expected and possible.

It is also important that we better understand the causes of structural racism that have resulted in African-Americans suffering from shorter life expectancies, lower incomes, higher unemployment, and other effects of long-standing racial inequity.

Given the complexity and depth of these challenges, answers will not come easily or immediately, but I am committed to having the County government confront them and challenge ourselves to build on the great community in which we live as we work together to achieve a better way forward. Doing so is vital to our County's future.

We know that equity goes beyond race. Given our Country's history, I believe it is an urgent matter to tackle the disparities that exist in our County and it is why I have asked the Equity Commission to prioritize a solution that transcends race.

I've asked the five-member Commission comprised of senior County leaders, to develop a plan to evaluate our programs and policies to identify how County agencies can better understand the impact of addressing racial and economic disparities. The Equity Commission will work with the Citizens Advisory Council on Equity (CACE) to develop a plan to evaluate our programs and policies and develop specific recommendations. The pilot agencies (joined by the Ohio Means Jobs/Workforce Development Board) that will lead this evaluation and outline structural and programmatic changes are:

1. Department of Health and Human Services
2. Department of Development
3. Department of Public Works
4. Department of Human Resources
5. Office of Procurement and Diversity
6. Cleveland – Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board

I'd like to acknowledge the terrific initial work that HHS has done in advancing their equity work. As reflected in their report, they have established a baseline assessment of their employees and culture – this is a starting point to determining biases that may be present as they develop and implement our policies and programs. We will build on their learnings to assist the other County agencies as we expand the work to every County agency by the end of 2021. Every

agency in County Government will eventually undergo a similar review. This will be completed by December 2022.

At the beginning of January 2021, I received a [report](#) from the Citizens Advisory Council on Equity. I have asked the Internal Commission to review, prioritize and develop a funding recommendation in partnership with the CACE chair, Mr. Eddie Taylor.

Additionally, I have taken the following actions since this work launched in October:

- Creation of an initial \$500,000 Equity Fund that will fund key initiatives.
- I have accepted the Internal Commission's recommendation to implement all of the recommendations outlined in the 2020 Cuyahoga County Disparity Study and released Executive Orders to support the recommendations.
- I have accepted the joint recommendation of the CACE and the Internal Commission to launch County-wide Racial Equity training to improve the culture and awareness of County employees regarding racial disparities and definitions. This work will start immediately and will continue through 2021 until completed.
- The County is now a member of the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), a national organization that will enable us to learn best practices by government agencies nationally.
- I have directed my departments to use Economic Health Indicators to help make decisions about where to deploy programs and initiatives. (See the Department of Public Works Status Report).

I have asked our Chief Economic Development officer, Ted Carter, along with Health and Human Services Director, David Merriman, and Director of the Office of Procurement and Diversity, Lenora Lockett, to co-chair the Commission. This is the beginning of critical work that will make our county a model for our state and the country – I thank Ted, David and Lenora for their commitment and leadership.

Statement from the Equity Commission

On behalf of the employees of Cuyahoga County, it is our privilege to have been asked to lead the County's efforts to evaluate and address equity disparities in our government. We want to thank County Executive Budish and County Council for giving us the opportunity to make our County government better.

Throughout 2020, we faced the twin challenges of Covid-19 and social unrest. These challenges have given us the opportunity to reflect and reset. At the first formal meeting of the Commission on September 24th, we voted to focus our initial efforts on addressing racial disparities to complement the work of the CACE. We want to thank the members of the County working group, who have (in addition to their regular duties) diligently supported this Commission's efforts the past three months with care, engagement, and devotion. In these first several months, we have organized ourselves and have begun to lay the foundation for significant, enduring change in the way in which the County government executes its complicated, daily responsibilities.

Addressing racial inequities is critical to our county's future growth, cohesiveness, and prosperity as a community. We view this report as a starting point and the beginning of a long, iterative, but rewarding journey. We recognize that considerations of equity are broader than race and hope that given the salient issues of racial disparities that exist in the County, addressing these first will serve as a foundation/starting point and model for other dimensions of inequities that exist that also must be addressed.

We thank the County employees who have approached and embraced these early discussions with an open mind and have leaned into uncomfortable, new topics; and who have developed an appreciation of new perspectives from their colleagues and neighbors. Their continued support and engagement will be critical to our collective success.

This report will outline Cuyahoga County's Equity Initiatives since the passing of Resolution No. R2020-0122 in July 2020 declaring racism a public health crisis. It will outline a plan of commitments for 2021.

Now is our moment! – Let's go!

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission

Ted Carter, *Director, Department of Development*

Jesse Drucker, *Director, Department of Human Resources*

Lenora Lockett, *Director, Office of Procurement and Diversity*

David Merriman, *Director, Department of Health and Human Services*

Alex Pellom, *Director, Department of Public Safety and Justice Services*

Commission Staff: Cari Morales, Program Manager

Equity Initiative Structure

Background:

The [Cuyahoga County Code](#) defines Equity as “fairness, justice and inclusion by and among people and across all social, economic, and political classifications regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation including gender identity, disability, age, or ancestry. An equitable community is a fair, just and healthy community, one that cares that income, race, and neighborhood are often major predictors of high school graduation rates, incarceration rates, general health and life expectancy. An equitable community is a connected community, one that links more people to better opportunities – among those being job opportunities, business development and wellness opportunities.”

Review of Legislation and Introduction

The Cuyahoga County Equity Commission (CCEC) was appointed to oversee the County’s equity efforts. In the Summer of 2020, in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic and social unrest, the Equity Commission was charged with the responsibility to create an Equity Plan that will improve how Cuyahoga County can better serve all residents.

The Commission identified five pilot agencies within the County and one Board to begin the process of assessing each agency’s policies and programs, with respect to outcomes, through a lens of racial equity. This data review is an initial step toward gaining a better understanding of program outcomes in these agencies.

Concurrently, Cuyahoga County Council passed Resolution No. R2020-0122 “declaring racism a public health crisis in Cuyahoga County.” With racial disparities continuing to expand in healthcare, education, quality of life, and economic mobility, the County Council and the County Executive declared the urgency to create systemic change, starting with the County government.

According to the legislation, the CCEC is directed to:

1. Develop and implement a system for the collection of baseline equity data.
2. Develop equity plan goals after collection of baseline data and the completion of the 2020 Cuyahoga County Disparity Study.
3. Assist departments and agencies in developing and implementing equity plans, including objectives, measurement of outcomes, and revision of objectives when needed. When feasible, the Commission shall collaborate with county boards and commissions in developing and implementing equity plans.
4. Coordinate with the (external) Citizens’ Advisory Council on Equity.
5. Develop and implement a plan for community outreach on equity.
6. Maintain a page on the County’s website to provide information on its activities.
7. Issue an Annual Equity Report no later than January 31.

Recommendations adopted in the Fall of 2020:

1. Focus efforts on Racial Equity
2. Equity Commission to meet on a quarterly basis
3. Adopt recommendations made in the Disparity Study
4. Make Human Resources a pilot agency

Equity Commission Members

The Equity Commission consists of the Directors of Development, Human Resources, Health and Human Services, Procurement & Diversity, and Public Safety and Justice Services. The people who serve in these roles are as follows:

Theodore Carter, Department of Development, *Co-chair*

Jesse Drucker, Department of Human Resources

Lenora Lockett, Office of Procurement and Diversity, *Co-chair*

David Merriman, Department of Health and Human Services, *Co-chair*

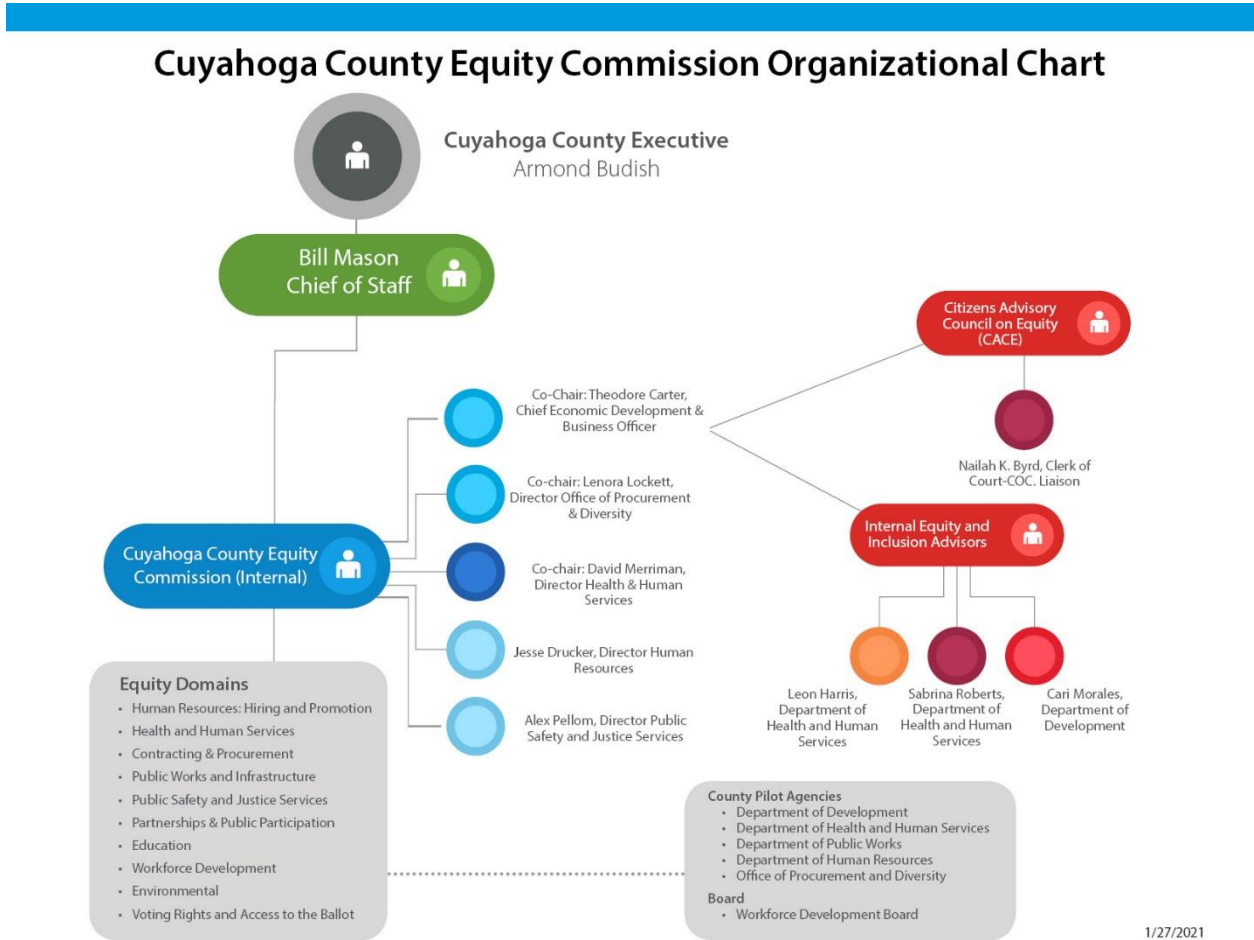
Alex Pellom, Department of Public Safety & Justice Services

Equity Commission Staff: Cari Morales, Program Manager

a. Structure

A working group has been formed composed of 25 county senior staff, and the organizational structure was approved as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1



b. Working Group Members

In September of 2020, the Equity Commission created an internal multi-agency group to support the day-to-day work and develop strategies and recommendations to advance racial equity across all county agencies in Cuyahoga County. Having a working group comprised of individuals across departments helps ensure that this important work is not being done in silos. Those who serve in the working group are listed below:

Laura Black, *Clerk of Courts, CACE liaison*
Crystal Bryant, *Health and Human Services*
Melinda Burt, *Alternative Commission Member, Public Safety & Justice Services*
Nailah Byrd, *Clerk of Courts, Liaison to the Citizens Advisory Council on Equity*
Matt Carroll, *County Executive Office*
Lauren Carey, *Cleveland – Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board*
Robert Coury, *Public Safety & Justice Services*
Marisha Daniels, *Communications*
Yolanda Guzman, *Human Resources*
Leon Harris, *Alternative Commission Member, Health and Human Services*
Sheba Marshall, *Alternative Commission Member, Human Resources*
Cari Morales, *Development, Equity Commission Staff*
Chris Murray, *Treasurer, Fiscal Office*
Andrea Nelson-Moore, *Law*
Edwin Nunez, *Alternative Commission Member, Procurement & Diversity*
Sara Parks Jackson, *Development*
Sabrina Roberts, *Health and Human Services*
Tom Sotak, *Public Works*
Anthony Thomas, *Health and Human Services*
Catherine Tkachyk, *Innovation & Performance Management*
Eliza Wing, *Communications*

Five County agencies and one Board have been designated as pilots to perfect the County's Equity Model. They were selected because of their foundational relationship to key elements of the equity discussion:

- Culture
- Infrastructure
- Economy and Community
- Contracting

The five pilot agencies and one board are:

1. Department of Health and Human Services
2. Department of Development
3. Department of Public Works
4. Office of Procurement and Diversity
5. Department of Human Resources
6. Cleveland – Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board

Review and Summary of Cuyahoga County’s Equity Initiatives from Pilot Agencies

To better understand the role County staff play in eliminating racial disparities in Cuyahoga County, the five County agencies and one Board identified as pilots have submitted a status report to better implement next steps moving forward. They are included in this section.

1. Department of Health and Human Services
2. Department of Development
3. Department of Public Works
4. Office of Procurement and Diversity
5. Department of Human Resources
6. Cleveland – Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board

Pilot Agency Status Reports

Department of Health and Human Services

Cuyahoga County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) consists of more than 2,300 leaders, managers, and frontline staff, who make up the workforce for eight operational divisions and offices. As a collective, DHHS' mission is to transform lives at every age and stage, through collaboration, innovation, and service; connecting people with the opportunity to live their best lives. The four largest divisions under the DHHS umbrella are the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Job and Family Services (JFS), Office of Child Support Services (OCSS), and the Division of Senior and Adult Services (DSAS). There are four smaller offices, referred to as Community Initiatives, consisting of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), the Office of Re-entry (OOR), the Office of Homeless Services (OHS), and Family and Children First Council (FCFC).

Steps to advance Racial Equity and Inclusion (REI)

As early as summer 2018, DHHS began to take steps to address issues related to Racial Equity and Inclusion (REI), by conducting an organizational climate and employee engagement assessment. DHHS' Organizational Climate and Employee Engagement study was initiated by the Performance Evaluation and Innovation (PEI) unit, as an effort to obtain employee feedback on their perception of workforce atmosphere, build buy-in and trust between management and staff, and utilize the data as a baseline to identify areas of improvement and track progress. A complete copy of the DHHS Organizational Climate and Employee Engagement study can be viewed in *Appendix 1*. In the spring of 2020, David Merriman, the newly appointed director of DHHS, fully embraced the need for REI. Since the passing of Cuyahoga County's July 2020 resolution, declaring racism as a public health crisis, DHHS has advanced its efforts to create and sustain a culture that is rooted in valuing and empowering employees, innovation, and eliminating racism and inequities.

The first step in the DHHS REI strategy was to create an internal steering committee intended to help with strategy and facilitate implementation. This steering committee consists of an 11-person multi-cultural group of staff, who are representative of the DHHS divisions and offices. During the first DHHS REI Steering Committee meeting, mission and vision statements were drafted and finalized, and the following REI goals were identified:

- DHHS-wide REI training
- Normalize REI conversations
- Provide vehicles for workforce input
- Review DHHS policies and practices with an equity lens
- Review and disaggregate DHHS employee data

In addition, a phased REI strategy and theory of change were developed. The phases include:

1. Setting the stage and increasing knowledge
2. Getting to the root cause
3. Making changes
4. Operationalizing the use of an equity framework

Although there are various phases, the plan is designed to offer the flexibility for the phases to ensue concurrently. The full plan can be read in *Appendix 2*.

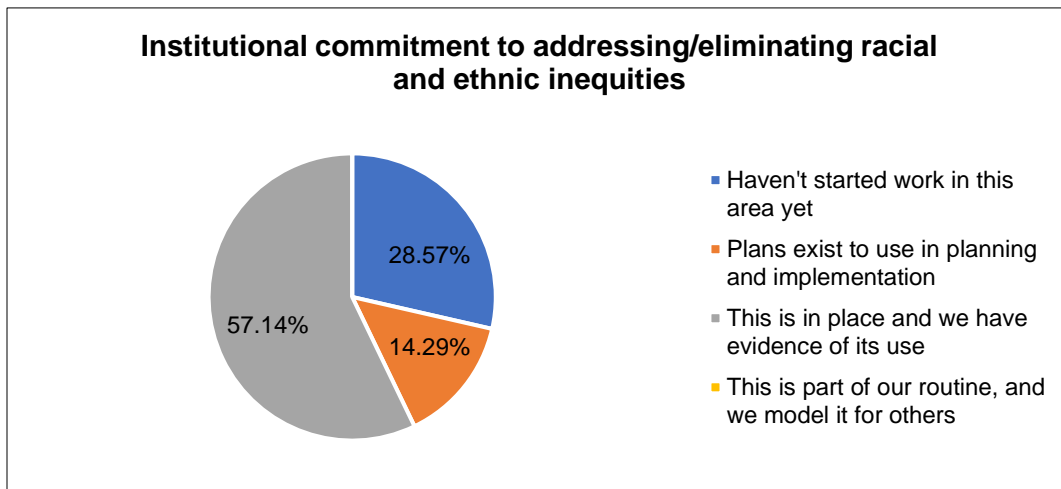
After the HHS REI plan was finalized, efforts shifted to identifying the most practical and efficient manner to engage and educate the HHS workforce around REI. The HHS REI Steering Committee worked with the HHS Communications office to develop an internal webpage, that included the HHS REI mission and vision statements, goals, steering committee members, REI plan, a timeline of events, and a list of REI resources that includes definitions, video, books, questionnaires, and more. The rollout of the internal webpage was communicated through an all-staff email, near the end of September 2020.

Following the rollout of the internal REI webpage, the HHS REI steering committee focused their energy on engaging the directors (and their leadership teams) to assess specific REI-related work or activities that had occurred or are ongoing within their organizations and/or partnering agencies. The *Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment Related to Racial Equity*, was distributed to DHHS directors in early October (2020) and they were given 60 days to complete the comprehensive assessment. Please see the findings below:

Assessment findings

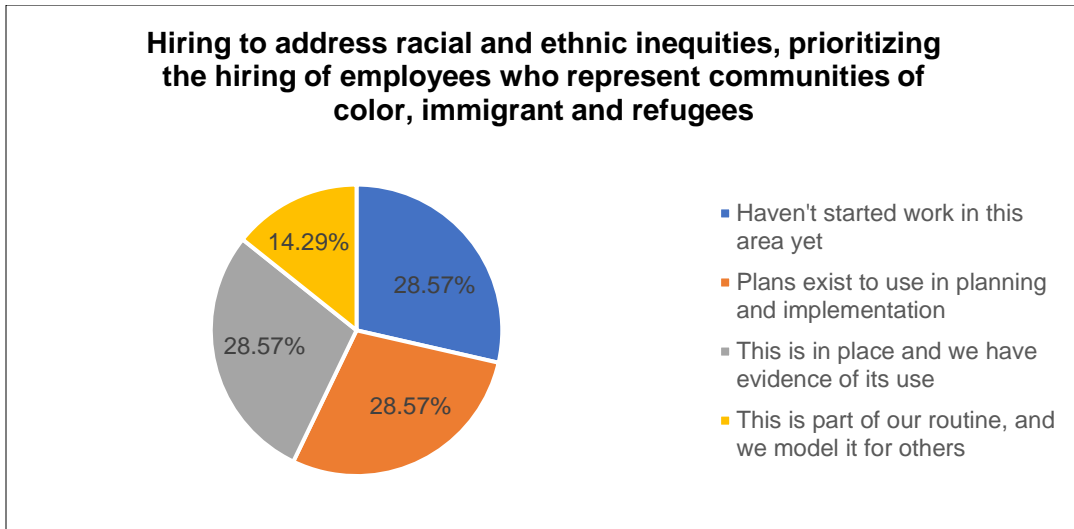
In *Step 1* of the assessment, HHS Directors were asked to reflect and respond to their organization’s readiness, in relation to specific organizational characteristics and workplace competencies. A subset of director’s *step 1* responses will be highlighted below. **Complete step 1 responses will be made available upon request.**

Figure 1.



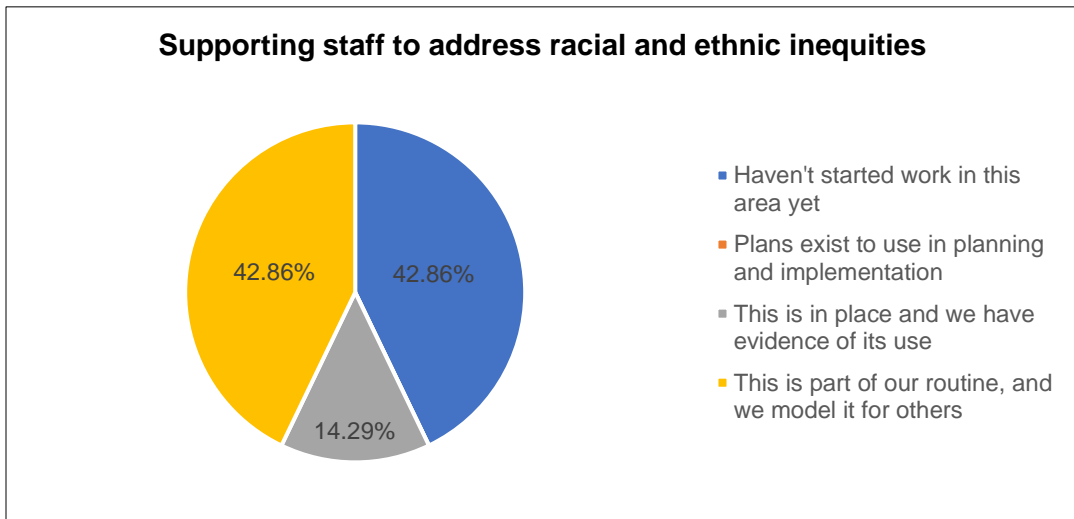
- Figure 1 illustrates that over half (57.14%) of HHS Directors reported having an institutional commitment to addressing/eliminating racial and ethnic inequities.

Figure 2.



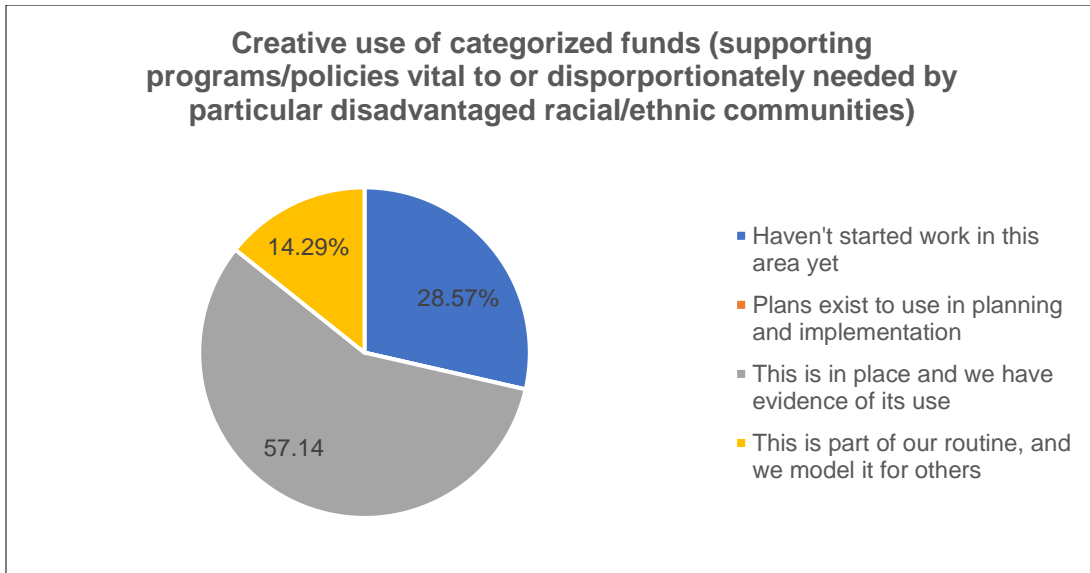
- Figure 2 shows consistent variation as to how HHS Directors reported hiring to address racial and ethnic inequities, prioritizing the hiring of employees who represent communities of color, immigrant and refugees.

Figure 3.



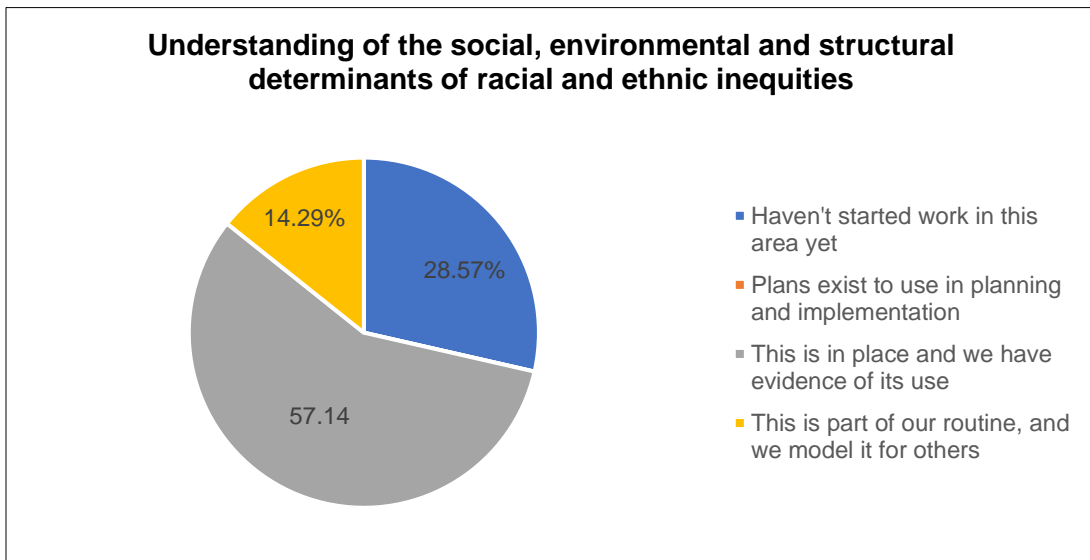
- Figure 3 exhibits that some HHS Directors reported not having started work in supporting staff to address racial and ethnic inequities, while other directors reported that this is a part of their routine, and that they model it for others.

Figure 4.



- Figure 4 reveals that more than half (57.14%) of HHS Directors reported creative use of categorized funds (supporting programs/policies vital to or disproportionately needed by particular disadvantaged racial/ethnic communities) as being in place and having evidence of its use.

Figure 5.



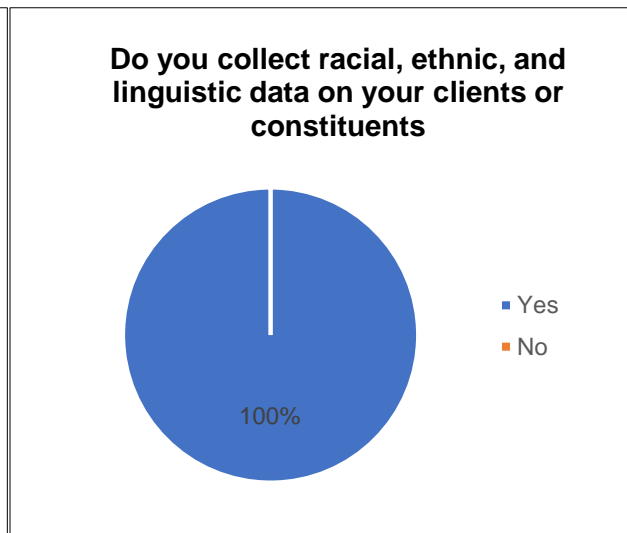
- Figure 5 displays that nearly three-quarters of HHS Directors reported either having a plan in place (57.14%) for understanding the social, environmental, and structural determinants of racial and ethnic inequities, or that it is a part of their routine (14.29%).

In *steps 2 through 5* of the assessment, HHS Directors were asked to respond to questions from nine different focus areas: 1. Organizational Commitment, Leadership & Governance; 2. Racial Equity Policies & Implementation Practices; 3. Organizational Climate, Culture, & Communications; 4. Service-Based Equity; 5. Service-User Voice & Influence; 6. Workforce Composition & Quality; 7. Community Collaboration; 8. Resource Allocation & Contracting Practices; and 9. Data, Metrics & Continuous Quality Improvement. Response options vary across the different *steps*. Response options include “yes/no” (step 2 & 3), “short answer” (step 4), and “narrative” (step 5). A subset of director’s *step 2 through 5* responses will be highlighted below. Complete *step 2 through 5* responses will be made available upon request.

Figure 6.



Figure 7.



- Figure 6 illustrates that all (100%) of HHS Directors reported that they do not have a written racial equity plan with clear actions, timelines, people responsible for each action, indicators of progress and process for monitoring and evaluation.
- Figure 7 presents that all (100%) Of HHS Directors reported that they collect racial, ethnic, and linguistic data on their clients and constituents.

Figure 8.

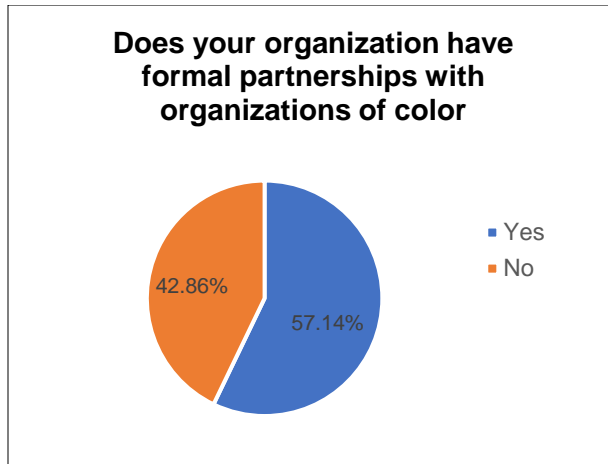
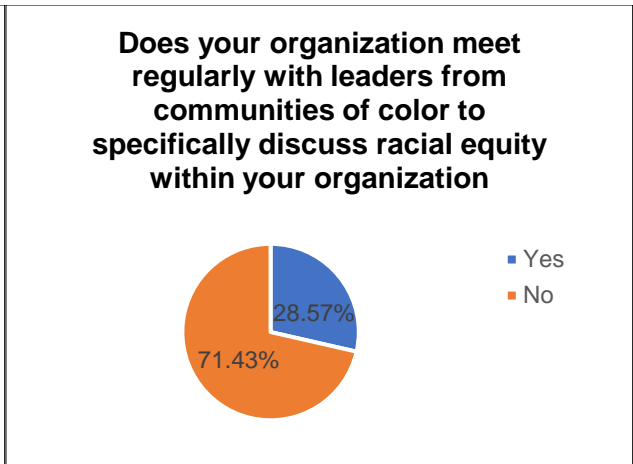


Figure 9.



- Figure 8 shows that more than half (57.4%) of HHS Directors reported having formal partnerships with organizations of color.
- Figure 9 exhibits that more than two-thirds (71.43%) of HHS Directors reported that their organization does not meet regularly with leaders from communities of color to specifically discuss racial equity within their organization.

Figure 10.

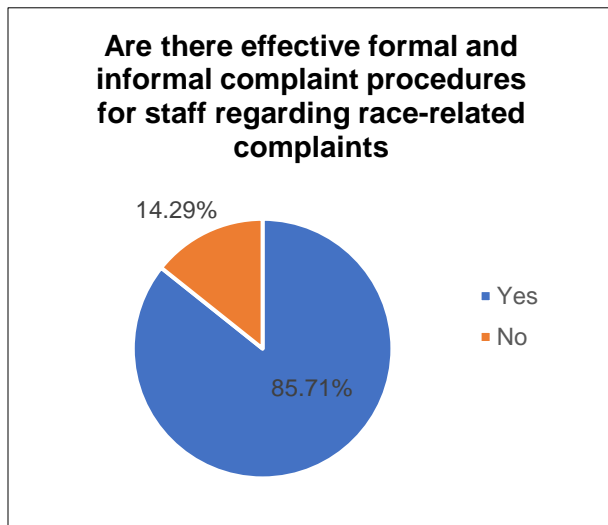


Figure 11.



- Figure 10 shows that majority (85.71%) of HHS Directors reported that their organization has formal and informal complaint procedures for staff regarding race-related complaints.
- Figure 11 displays that nearly three-quarters (71.43%) of HHS Directors reported that they require their vendors and contractors to adhere to the same equity practices and policies as their organization.

As previously mentioned, the assessment provided DHHS Directors the opportunity to also respond in short answer and narrative form. This is critical, as it offers directors an opening to deliver more context and examples. DHHS Directors provided the following anecdotal quotes:

“Staff is advised that change moves at the speed of trust. Staff understands that meetings are a safe space and that we must value each other opinions, thoughts and perceptions. We discuss empathy and cultural diversity in a manner that is consistent with the services delivered to clients to ensure the greatest impact. For example, a staff member struggled with understanding why expungement clinics must be held for the population when they are able to be proactive and apply for record sealing on their own. Staff all supported the director in helping this staff member understand the social disparities that discourage self-sufficiency and why our office is exist to bridge the gap.”

“During meetings we try to ensure multiple viewpoints are represented in the room and folks are given the opportunity to present their viewpoints. All staff are expected to take Implicit Bias training. Creating an awareness of implicit bias can help improve positive interactions among individuals.”

“We are very sensitive in this area - all of our marketing materials reflect the population that we serve including seniors, adults with disabilities, race, ethnicity, and age.”

“Currently we recognize the benefits Access partnership as formal stakeholders. This contains representatives from the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, the Greater Cleveland Foodbank, and the Center for Community Solutions. These agencies do not formally represent communities of color.”

“In 2019, OHS began analyzing race disparity in the shelter system. While 38% of the Cuyahoga County population is Black, between 73% and 78% of families and single adults experiencing housing instability are people of color. OHS has analyzed resource access and housing stability outcomes and implemented interventions to improve housing stability.”

“In our UPK RFP we ask for information on who the provider serves and take this into consideration when we select providers. Currently our UPK program serves approximately 70% minority families which demonstrates our commitment to equity as this is almost exactly the opposite of county demographic composition.”

“Leaders in communities of color who hold key positions in professional and civic roles are dually engaged in collaborative efforts from planning to execution.”

“This work has just now recently begun after the lynching of George Floyd. In the past when this was brought up it was placed on the back burner.”

“It has informed and influenced our services by discussing with vendors where services should be located, hours of operation, changes to programmatic approaches. Termination of existing contracts and creation of collaborative strategies versus the funding of individual program models.”

“In the last several years, OCSS has focused on procedural justice, which involves the education of participants and their feeling of fairness in an administrative procedure. Procedural justice is linked to racial justice in that some perceptions of agency actions, and the child support program in general, are rooted in inequitable practices. Committing time to educate child

support participants in the child support program, practices, and their involvement and rights within administrative actions helps strengthen faith in the program and racial justice in the community. Another example is the OCSS involvement in the Behavioral Interventions in Child Support (BICS) federal grant. The grant utilized behavioral economics to increase participation in child support processes as well as improve on outcomes. One of the phases focused on the review and adjustment of child support orders. During the first phase, Cuyahoga OCSS targeted vulnerable populations, those who were incarcerated or received cash assistance to bypass a step that often resulted in lack of cooperation which would result in a dismissal of the action. Bypassing this step and sending case directly to scheduling based on default qualification criteria made the process more accessible and relevant to the situations of the individuals on the case at that specific time.”

“While we do not currently engage with communities of color, we do engage with the community. During our quarterly Community forums, we receive feedback that helps drive decisions on Program administration.”

“Racial Justice is not a standing agenda item at meetings. However, Center Manager leadership team is made up of majority people of color. Racial Equity was raised as a topic for discussion in June. Several conversations were had, and the management team went through a training as well. Further efforts were delayed until the HHS plans were finalized.”

To close out 2020, the HHS REI Steering Committee developed and distributed an all-staff survey, seeking volunteers, to expand our capacity and network of staff who are committed to learning and establishing a culture of equity. In all, 80 staff volunteered and were categorized into five Employee Resource Groups (ERG’s). The ERG’S include:

- Communication and outreach
- Resources (e.g., books, articles, media, etc.)
- Process development and measurements
- Policy
- Reports and progress

While these ERG’s are very broad, the expectation is that they will be umbrellas for more specific ERG’s, in the future. Another design of the ERG’s is to develop members into REI ambassadors, who will help to recruit and educate their peers, and further advance the HHS REI initiative. This information, along with additional expectations, was communicated to the five ERGs, through virtual lunch-hour meetings that were held daily from December 14th through December 18th.

Recommendations

The DHHS REI strategy places a great deal of emphasis on creating an environment where the voices of all staff are elevated, and the work is owned by the collective. To that end, we will approach 2021 with intention and resolve. The cornerstone of our approach will be guided by listening and looking at best practices from across the country that will inform our implementation strategies.

The recommendations were established with input from the DHHS Steering Committee, the DHHS Senior Leadership Team, and approval from the DHHS Director.

1. Begin to normalize conversations related to race, equity, and inclusion by launching a *Critical Conversations Series* for all staff. In order to embed a culture of equity in our department, we must create safe spaces for our workforce to have difficult conversations around equity issues.
2. Identify training curricula and ensure that all DHHS staff are educated on REI principles.
3. Utilize the G.A.R.E. membership to learn from others on successes and lessons learned.
4. Explore various Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) tools that are used in similar organizations across the country that can be adopted by DHHS. This may assist with developing a dashboard of metrics that are maintained across DHHS to monitor progress toward REI goals.
5. Review DHHS policies and practices for potential barriers related to the vendor selection and contracting process, hiring, compensation, and professional development opportunities to ensure that these activities are reflective of REI principles and our commitment to those values.
6. Continue to develop the infrastructure and provide support to the HHS REI Employee Resource Groups (ERG). The ERG's will serve as the mechanism by which staff are able to have input into building a culture of equity across DHHS.
7. Implement annual Staff Perception Survey. It is always important to take the pulse of our organization to gauge buy-in on the strategies to be implemented, as the workforce is our most valued asset.

Priorities

- Continue to research national REI best practices to help inform our strategies.
- Normalize conversations related to race equity and inclusion.
- Provide continuous training opportunities for all staff. Ensuring there are guided (formal training) and self-guided (informal training; e.g., resource library) available for staff in order to ground them in the principles and practices of REI.
- Utilize ERG's to collaborate with DHHS leadership and other departments such as, Contracting and Procurement and Human Resources, to review policies and practices.
- Develop metrics to monitor and track progress.

Conclusion

To accomplish the goal of providing superior services to the community, there must first be a priority to create and sustain a culture at DHHS that is diverse, inclusive, and equitable, from top to bottom. Establishing and maintaining such a culture is critical to DHHS' professional development efforts, policy development, and workforce engagement, aimed at eradicating the structures of racism and inequity. Training and educating the workforce of DHHS may help employees to develop the cultural competence that is needed to empathize with clients and better serve the residents of Cuyahoga County, ultimately improving service provision satisfaction.

Department of Development

Background

The Charter of Cuyahoga County, adopted by a countywide popular vote in November 2009, recognizes that the Department of Development bears a unique responsibility. The Charter states:

*The Department of Development shall coordinate the programs and activities of the officers, departments, agencies, boards and commissions of the County that relate to economic development, **including identification of the causes of unemployment and economic underdevelopment among segments of the population and within communities in the County and the development of programs and activities to remedy such conditions.** (Section 7.02).*

The 2016 Fund For our Economic Future report [*Two Tomorrows*](#) highlighted the economic challenges and disparities that confront our community and its economic growth and competitiveness, particularly along racial lines. The report challenged the regional economic development ecosystem to be more intentional and collaborative in its execution of economic strategies and policies, especially with respect to reversing long standing economic racial disparities.

The Department of Development recommit itself to achieving equitable outcomes in the execution of its varied programs in a manner that will reduce and eventually eliminate, economic disparities along racial lines, while providing equitable opportunities. We will continue to focus, through a **systems approach** to our work, on designing and executing our programs to redress the unacceptable racial disparities in economic outcomes across our countywide service area. Since the beginning of the Budish Administration, the Department has begun taking steps to accomplish this goal. The Department's leadership has been intentional in recruiting and supporting the hiring of minority and female staff. As a result of this effort, the Department staff is significantly diverse. Minority staff hold 15 positions while female staff hold 17 professional positions in our department of 35.

Programmatic initiatives related to equity during the Budish administration include:

Economic Development

- Formalized a small business working group, focused on the provision of minority capital.
- In partnership with the Urban League of Greater Cleveland and the National Development Council, established a minority focused, small business growth fund. (The County provided a loan loss reserve in 2016, renewed and expanded this in 2020)
- Collaborated with other stakeholders to create county-wide Opportunity Zones focused on distressed urban and inner-ring suburban communities – this led to the creation of a partnership with a national social impact fund, Arctaris, to create a new Opportunity Zone investment fund.
- Invested significant county funds in 5 small business intermediaries that are specifically focused on small business capital provision. These intermediaries provide substantial support to minority owned and women owned businesses.
- Established a place-based economic development loan program, to spur new investment in neighborhoods. Examples include a mixed-use office and housing development on the

near west side of Cleveland, and redevelopment of a vacant factory building in the midtown neighborhood of Cleveland into offices and housing.

- During COVID – intentionally created three small business grant funds that have supported over 300 minority-owned small businesses countywide.

Housing

- Through a thoughtful process with widespread stakeholder consultation, developed a countywide Housing Plan which has been funded for a six-year period, including emphasis on home repair assistance and small dollar mortgage assistance which is disproportionately needed in minority neighborhoods.
- Provided financial support for financial literacy as an approach to wealth building, including support for minority led nonprofit counseling agencies.
- Provide ongoing funding for countywide fair housing enforcement and education.
- Support lead remediation work in primarily minority communities where systemic racism impacts have forced families to raise their children in poorly maintained rental housing with significant lead poisoning exposure hazards.
- Over-invested in the construction of more than 1,000 new units of permanent supportive housing for single homeless persons, many of whom are minorities.

Workforce Innovation

- In 2017, the Department initiated a new innovative SkillUp service that analyzes business owners' behavior and provides both advice and financial assistance to encourage businesses to hire, train, and promote workers using data-driven, non-discriminatory criteria. Our work encourages business owners to select employees based on the specific skills needed for the job, not arbitrary educational attainments that perpetuate the discriminatory impact of unequal access to educational opportunities.

Department Organizational Culture:

- The Department's Leadership Team will continue to engage staff in thoughtfully designed activities to counter the unconscious bias many staff members may influence how our services are delivered. This work includes both all-staff discussions led by our Internal Equity Team and focused staff-level work in our SkillUp program led by a Cuyahoga County Human Resources training expert.
- We will be conscious of the need for substantive investments from an equity and inclusion standpoint across all our programs. ([2019 Five Year Economic Development Plan](#), Page 3).
- We will be responsive to our clients, developers, companies, and residents, offering superior customer service.

Data Collection and Reporting:

The DoD Leadership Team will build on existing data collection systems to identify, enhance, and collect data on additional diversity, equity, and inclusion metrics. Current data collection includes the race, gender, and household income of persons served in housing programs, the race, gender, and earnings of persons hired for new jobs or kept in existing jobs through workforce innovation and economic development programs, and the race and gender of all business owners served.

Examples of the outcomes reported through our current data collection are:

- In Housing and Community Development, 82% of the persons served with Community Development Block Grant funded programs were African American, and 80% of the persons served by Home Investments Partnerships Program funded housing aid were African American.
- In Economic Development, 31% of the persons hired or kept in their jobs by programs operated by Cuyahoga County's small business support organization partners were African American (but African American average earnings were only 92% of non African American average earnings).
- In Workforce Innovation, 47% of workers receiving wage increases due to County funded job training were African American, and 28% of businesses served were African American owned.

In our five year plan we have listed the following indicators as success metrics:

1. Opportunity Index
2. Entrepreneurship: Business Starts
3. Business Attraction: JobsOhio/Attraction/Expansion
4. Growth of Existing Business
5. Workforce Development (Talent Gap)
6. Economic Inclusion: Labor Force Participation Rate
7. Population: Total

2021 EQUITY PLAN COMMITMENTS

Significant new and intensified programmatic work included in the 2021 Equity Plan will include:

Economic Strategy:

In Cuyahoga County's Five-Year Economic Development Plan, an explicitly articulated strategy to address racial disparities states:

“Research done by the Fund for our Economic Future demonstrates that systemic racial disparities continue to exist in earnings and employment. Gender disparities also continue to exist. While our major lending programs are open to all business owners, the Department of Development will continue to support activities specifically designed to support innovation, entrepreneurship, and employment in good jobs of those who are still at a disadvantage. Our work includes funding minority business assistance programs, capitalizing loan funds directed towards growing minority businesses and supporting the

innovative “Paradox Prize” competition, which seeks to overcome the distance discrimination barrier to employment of those who do not own private cars.”

Initiatives to implement this strategy will include:

- Support The Cleveland Innovation Project, which emphasizes inclusion and resource access to minority tech-based businesses and talent.
- Small business support will include new funding to small business support partners for their focused support to minority and women-owned businesses.
- New funds will be allocated for working capital loans to minority-owned businesses.
- The Department will seek to negotiate affirmative minority hiring and subcontracting efforts in its direct economic development lending programs.
- Job Hubs with access for residents of distressed communities will be supported as preferred locations for new business attraction and business growth investments.
- Support Lead Coalition and other lead safe efforts.

Community Development and Housing:

- Development will renew its focus on HUD’s Section 3 business registry which requires affirmative outreach to businesses owned by low-income community residents, contracting goals for such Section 3 businesses, and hiring goals for Section 3 low-income community residents. This will expand contracting opportunities for minority-owned businesses.
- As part of the County’s Equity Zone initiative, community development and housing support resources will be focused and enhanced in designated distressed areas, complementing opportunity zones and other county programs that are directed to designated areas.

Workforce Innovation:

- Outreach and recruitment for the Department’s innovative SkillUp program will be redesigned to significantly increase the number of businesses adopting data-driven, non-discriminatory hiring and promotion practices. This is expected to increase the number of African American workers hired and promoted and reach more African American owned businesses to provide broad business supports.

Department of Public Works

The Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works includes over 600 employees who plan, design, and maintain a network of roads, bridges, sewers, and County-owned buildings, throughout the County with a \$200,000,000.00 annual operating budget. Additionally, the County Airport and the County Animal Shelter are operated by the Department of Public Works. An overview of the Department's responsibilities is listed below:

- Assisting 59 municipalities located within Cuyahoga County with the maintenance and repair of over 750 route miles of County Roads
- Maintaining and repairing over 25 route miles of County Roads located within two townships
- Maintenance, repair, and capital improvements on 209 bridges and 140 culverts
- Maintenance and repair of 27 County-owned buildings
- Design, maintenance, and repair of storm and sanitary sewers located within 33 communities and two townships

As an agency providing vital services on a countywide basis, the Department is involved in the procurement of a substantial amount of goods and services yearly requiring a workforce of wide-ranging skills and talents. Because of these factors, the Department makes an ideal Pilot Agency with a large overall imprint on the County's efforts to promote Racial Equity and Inclusion in many areas, including the following:

- Human Resources: Hiring and Promotion
- Contracting and Procurement
- Public Works and infrastructure
- Education
- Workforce Development

Initial Assessment

The Department of Public Works has completed an initial assessment of current policies and procedures and how they relate to promoting Racial Equity and Inclusion. The results are as indicated in the categories noted below.

Human Resources

- Performed a self-examination of departmental staffing to determine the current racial makeup of the department. Additional work needs to be completed in analyzing the local employment market to ensure an appropriate racial staffing balance across all the employment sectors housed underneath the Department of Public Works umbrella based upon local job market conditions.

Contracting & Procurement

- Examined the percentage of contracts that were awarded to SBE, MBE, or WBE contractors and consultants during the past year.

- During the past year, the Department of Public Works has awarded a total of 13 contracts to architectural and engineering firms. Of the 13 firms, 5 contracts or 38% were awarded to SBE, MBE, or WBE firms. The remainder of the firms were required to meet a 30% goal for SBE, MBE, or WBE participation unless provided a waiver from OPD.
- During the past year, the Department of Public Works awarded 17 construction contracts in the Road and Bridge, Sanitary, and Facilities Sections. Of the 17 contracts 10 contracts or 59% of the contracts were awarded to either SBE, MBE, or WBE companies. The remainder of the contracts required a 30% participation goal for SBE, MBE, or WBE companies unless provided a waiver by OPD.
- The above information presents definitive evidence that the County's SBE, MBE, WBE programs have been successful in propelling small, disadvantaged companies into successful, significant, and competitive enterprises capable of designing and constructing large complex projects using their own resources, but we also recognize that there is more work to do
- Provided construction forecasts featuring a list of upcoming departmental sponsored projects to the contracting community. Forecasts can be especially useful to small and new businesses since it gives them a tool to better plan their resources to be prepared for future procurement opportunities.
- Developed a new scoring factor for the Departments COVID Building Improvements Program whereby SBE, MBE, and WBE contractors who solicited the County for business via a request for proposals (RFP) were provided with additional scoring consideration.
- As a part of the Department's COVID Building Improvements Program, additional outreach was provided to SBE, MBE, and WBE contractors wishing to submit proposals to the County for the first time. The outreach included enhanced Pre-Bid Meetings to thoroughly educate first time contractors on the intricacies of the County procurement and scoring process.

Public Works and Infrastructure

- Use of [Economic Health Score](#) to recognize the need of disadvantaged communities to increase capital spending in those respective areas. The Economic Health Score considers the Per Capita Income along with the percentage of households below the poverty level within a given community as a significant factor in determining the rank and scoring for infrastructure projects competing for funding provided by the Ohio Public Works Commission.

Education

- Public Works team members participated in the County supported True2U high school mentoring program sponsored by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD).

Development of an Equity Plan

The Department specific plan moving forward will include changes that can be made to improve racial equity and increase economic opportunity and inclusion within the next year. The plan items listed immediately below are initiatives that will be taken on solely within the Department of Public Works. Also included in our plan are initiatives that will require a combined, synchronized effort between two or more departments within the County to be successfully implemented. Those planned initiatives will be listed later in this report.

Human Resources

- Based upon the findings of the self-examination, formulate a department specific staffing plan working towards the goal of having the racial makeup of the department reflect the diversity of the population residing in Cuyahoga County for a given employment sector.
- Work towards racial and gender balanced departmental interview teams.

Contracting & Procurement

- Increase the utilization of the SBE, MBE, WBE scoring factors for other RFP submissions beyond the COVID 19 Buildings Improvement Program.
- Create a process to simplify and streamline bidding documents produced by the Department of Public Works for the benefit of new or otherwise inexperienced contractors. Bidding documents produced by the department should contain consistent information across all service sectors including, road and bridge, sanitary, and facilities.

Public Works and Infrastructure

- Continue to utilize the redline maps and Economic Health Index to ensure that Public Works is providing an increased level of infrastructure investment to designated areas.

Education

- Department representatives will again be involved in the True2U program sponsored by the CMSD to expose minority students to potential career paths represented within the DPW.
- Explore additional avenues to invest/assist in workforce development programs for students sponsored by educational institutions such as CMSD, Cuyahoga Community College, and Cleveland State University.

Measurement of Progress

The Department intends to set specific benchmarks this year to measure progress towards the goal of Economic Equity and Inclusion. Plan items requiring the collaboration between two or more departments will likely prove difficult to set specific goals within the confines of the upcoming year. An appropriate milestone of achievement for those items to be discussed later in the report will be to simply have a plan identified with an implementation date in 2022.

Human Resources

- Set an incremental goal by year's end and thenceforth on a yearly basis to move the various divisions within the department towards the goal of having a workforce that closely reflects the diversity of Cuyahoga County for a given employment sector.

Public Works and Infrastructure

- Ensure that the Economic Health Index is used as factor for consideration of all future Roadway Operations and/or 50/50 Infrastructure Projects sponsored by the Department of Public Works.

Contracting & Procurement

- Utilize the B2G Program to assist OPD in ensuring that 100% of the companies doing business with the DPW maintain reasonable compliance with the diversity goals to address disparity as per Executive Order# EO-2020-0001 and the disparity report issued by Griffin and Strong.
- Award a percentage of set-aside contracts to SBE, MBE, and WBE companies to be in proper compliance with Executive Order# EO-2020-0004 and the disparity report issued by Griffin and Strong.
- Provide a 24-month forecast of contract and purchasing opportunities to OPD annually per Executive Order # EO-2020-0003. Add at least one new trade or professional organization to our contact list of forecast recipients. We currently provide information to two trade groups consisting of 25-50 members each. Simply adding one new organization to our contacts list would make our forecasts available to a large number of additional contractors/vendors.

Education

- Establish an additional partnership with a local educational institution related to workforce development of disadvantaged students within two years.

Cross Departmental Collaboration

The following programs and policies will require collaboration and cooperation across two or more departments within the confines of County government for them to be implemented successfully. By bringing separate departments together, we will be able to synchronize efforts to provide a meaningful positive impact in such areas as Contracting and Procurement, and Workforce Development. Workforce development could, in the long term provide the most benefit towards moving the needle towards a more racially equitable and inclusive community by providing well-paying job opportunities for minorities in job classifications where they have been historically underrepresented.

Contracting & Procurement

- With OPD continue to monitor the percentage of Public Works contracts that are awarded to SBE, MBE, and WBE contractors by executive orders and the Griffin and Strong Disparity Study.
- Look for ways to provide the Construction Forecast information to an even greater audience in cooperation with the County's Inclusion Office and appropriate outside agencies.
- Work with OPD to develop a protocol for developing and hosting enhanced pre-bid meetings with a focus on providing additional assistance to vendors who are unfamiliar with the County procurement process by the end of the 2021.
- Work with our partner departments to plan and host outreach events (open houses) for interested SBE, MBE, WBE vendors to explain and answer any questions pertaining to the County procurement process.

Workforce Development

- Work with the departments of Law, HR, and Workforce Development to establish a County sponsored apprenticeship program directed at increasing minority employment within the many trade unions supplying labor to the DPW.
- Explore additional avenues to invest/assist in workforce development programs for disadvantaged students sponsored by educational institutions such as CMSD, Cuyahoga Community College, and Cleveland State University.

Office of Procurement and Diversity

For the County's purchasing and contracting operations, there are three areas of focus for OPD's efforts related to diversity and inclusion initiatives:

1. Certification – the reviewing and evaluation of applications by businesses to make sure that they meet requirements as detailed in the County Code
2. Compliance – the implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives in accordance with the County Code and Executive Orders and monitoring contracts/purchases for compliance. Monitoring includes, but is not limited to, a statistical analysis of each construction trade, business service, professional service and commodity to determine that the utilization of SBEs, MBEs, and WBEs is proportionate to the established goal.
3. Outreach – the coordination and participation in community outreach events to increase visibility, awareness and to improve understanding of the County's various diversity and inclusion programs.

The Office of Procurement and Diversity (OPD) develops, administers and enforces several diversity programs related to county purchasing and contracting. The following is a brief summary of the diversity programs and initiatives related to county purchasing and contracting. Categories A through D and G are directly administered by OPD. Category E is administered by the County's Law Department. Category F is related to the payment process and is part of the contract administration process which is led by the agency/department responsible for the contract/purchase.

A. Diversity Programs – Small Business Enterprise (SBE), Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), & Women Business Enterprise (WBE)

On December 19, 2011, Ordinance No. 02011-0054 was passed approving the Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program, effective January 1, 2012. On February 15, 2014, the ordinance was amended to revise program policies and procedures (Ordinance No. 02014-0002).

Furthermore, on April 26, 2016, Ordinance No. 02016-0005 was passed approving the ability to set aspirational Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and/or Women Business Enterprise (WBE) subcontractor participation goals on County purchases and contracts.

The following standards will be used to determine eligibility for certification as a Small Business Enterprise, Minority Business Enterprise and/or Women Business Enterprise:

A business applying for certification must establish that it has a physical presence located within the applicable geographical limits as registered in official documents. (Mailbox facilities or other similar arrangements do not constitute a physical presence).

The applicant(s) must demonstrate operational and managerial control of the business.

To become eligible for the SBE Program, a business must demonstrate that it has been in continuous operation in the category or the related category for which it is requesting certification for one year and that majority ownership has at least one (1) year of work

experience relevant to the business certification category. For the Small Business Enterprise, its annual gross revenues or its total workforce must be at or less than the amounts established by the Small Business Administration and it must be located in Cuyahoga County.

For the MBE Program, the business must be at least 51% owned by one or more individuals who are African American, Hispanic American, Native American, Asian-Pacific American, or Asian-Indian American and they must have operational and managerial control, interest in capital, and earnings commensurate with the percentage of ownership.

For the WBE Program, the business must be at least 51% owned by one or more individuals who are women and they must have operational and managerial control, interest in capital, and earnings commensurate with the percentage of ownership. For the MBE and WBE certifications, the business enterprise must be located and doing business in Cuyahoga County, Geauga County, Lake County, Lorain County, Medina County or Summit County.

B. Cuyahoga County Based Business (CCBB) Preference Program

On November 27, 2012, Cuyahoga County, approved Ordinance No. 02012-0020 establishing the Cuyahoga County Based Business (CCBB) Preference Program.

A business applying for certification as a Cuyahoga County Based Business must meet the following standards:

a) The business must demonstrate that its principal place of business has been, located in Cuyahoga County for at least three (3) years as registered in official documents filed with the Secretary of State of Ohio or the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Office. If one party to a joint venture has its principal place of business in Cuyahoga County, the joint venture shall be considered as having its principal place of business in Cuyahoga County; or

b) The business must be a business organization with a "significant economic presence" in Cuyahoga County. For the purpose of this program,

"Significant economic presence" means a business organization that has for at least three years

- I. Had a sales office, division, sales outlet or manufacturing facility in Cuyahoga County; and
- II. Pays required taxes to Cuyahoga County; and
- III. Has an annual gross payroll in Cuyahoga County of at least \$100,000.00."

C. Cuyahoga County Business Economic Inclusion Program (CCBEIP)

On April 26, 2016, Cuyahoga County approved Ordinance No. 02016-0007 establishing the Cuyahoga County Business Economic Inclusion Program (CCBEIP).

For this program, a business applying for certification as an "Inclusive Business" must meet the following standards:

- a) The business must demonstrate that they have used a Minority Business Enterprise and/or Women Business Enterprise in at least three projects within the past two years;
- or
- b) The business must demonstrate that it hired and employed a diverse workforce based on payroll records within the past two years.

D. Small Business Set Aside Program

On April 26, 2016, Cuyahoga County passed Ordinance No. 02016-0004 expanding the Small Business Enterprise Program to allow Small Business Set Asides.

“Set Asides for Small Business Enterprises” are defined as the reserving of some or all of a Request for Bid, Request for Proposal, Request for Qualifications or contract exclusively for participation by Small Business Enterprises as determined by the Cuyahoga County Office of Procurement and Diversity.

E. Performance Bond Program

On April 26, 2016, Cuyahoga County passed Ordinance No. 02016-0006 establishing the County’s Risk Management procedures and performance bond and insurance requirements. This program includes the ability to pre-qualify County certified SBE contractors for performance bond waivers in certain circumstances.

F. Speedy Pay/Swift Payment Protocol

On May 2, 2016, County Executive Armond Budish approved Executive Order No. EO2016-0002 to ensure that prime contractors are paid on time by the County and to penalize prime contractors who do not pay their subcontractors timely even after being paid by the County for their subcontractor work.

G. Mandatory Pre-Bid and Pre-Proposal Conferences

On May 2, 2016, County Executive Armond Budish approved Executive Order No. EO2016-0003 mandating that the County shall, whenever possible, conduct a conference open to the public where it will allow prime contractors and subcontractors to interact and the County will explain its needs/wants in advance of the due date for every request for bids, request for proposals, and request for qualifications issued by the County.

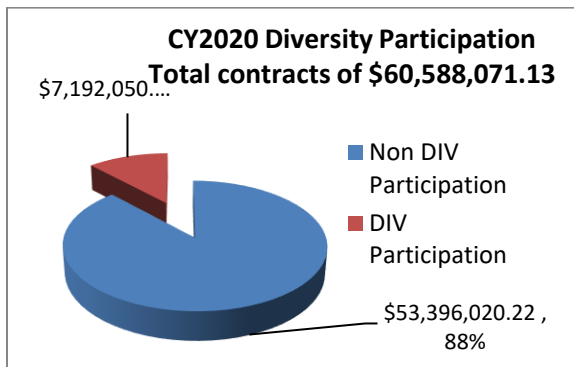
Current State:

The Office of Procurement and Diversity’s Equity Report (*Appendix 3*) for calendar year 2020 provides data on our efforts and results in the three focus areas – certification, compliance and diversity participation:

Table 1 - Certifications Approved – CY2020

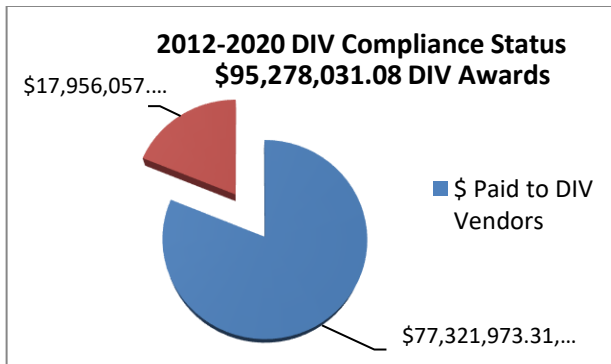
CERTIFICATION CATEGORY	CERTIFICATIONS APPROVED
SBE	134
SBE/MBE	83
SBE/WBE	113
SBE/MBE/WBE	66
MBE	21
WBE	15
MBE/WBE	4
TOTAL ALL CERTIFICATIONS	436

Table 2 – Diversity Awards



Approximately \$60.6M in contracts were awarded in 2020. Of those awards, approximately \$7.2M was awarded to SBEs/MBEs/WBEs.

Table 3 – Diversity Compliance with Awards



As part of our diversity efforts, we track awards to SBEs/MBEs/WBEs. From 2012 through CY2020, approximately \$95.3M was awarded to SBEs/MBEs/WBEs. This represents 81% compliance with our diversity goals. To date, \$77.3 M has been paid to those vendors for goods and services rendered.

Public Reporting

The Office of Procurement and Diversity uses several means to share information. Nevertheless, there is always room to improve. **In 2021, the Office of Procurement and Diversity will review how it shares information with a goal of determining enhancements to share this information more effectively and efficiently.** An example of how OPD communicates to the public is as follows:

- SBE Set Aside Program Calendar – This document provides a list of planned SBE Set-Aside Bid/RFP/RFQ opportunities for the current/upcoming year. The list is posted on the OPD Website (<https://opd.cuyahogacounty.us/>).

Resources Dedicated to Equity Initiatives

Staffing

The Office of Procurement and Diversity’s Diversity Division is the lead department for the implementation of the equity initiatives related to purchasing and contracting. There are currently three (3) full time employees in the Diversity Division: one (1) Senior Contract Compliance Officer and two (2) Contract Compliance Officers. In addition, there is one (1) vacant contract compliance officer position. In addition, the Director of OPD also allocates a significant quantity of work hours to the Diversity Division and the diversity initiatives. The following is a current listing of OPD personnel allocated to equity initiatives:

- Edwin Nunez, Sr. Contract Compliance Officer
- Cassandra Fulton, Contract Compliance Officer
- Vacant, Contract Compliance Officer (formerly held by Sharese McKinney, Contract Compliance Officer)

- W. Ryan Veney, Contract Compliance Officer
- Lenora M. Lockett, Director

The mission of the OPD's Diversity Division is to provide and encourage full and open competition in the procurement of goods and services and require all Cuyahoga County personnel involved with procurement and contracting activities to maintain good faith efforts and appropriate purchasing procedures. This commitment spurs economic development in the public and private sectors of Cuyahoga County's economy.

The Diversity Division has the following goals and objectives:

- Inclusion – Inclusiveness is the core of our various diversity and inclusion programs. As an outcome of information collected to reflect areas with low participation in the County's procurement and contractive process, we are able to identify, create, and implement best practices and procedures required to expand services.
- Comprehensiveness – The goal of the various diversity and inclusion programs is to support Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), and WBEs by creating positive partnerships in County contracting and other procurement opportunities. It is essential for the Diversity Division to continue to find ways to create and maintain equity across all domains, internal and external, in order to create positive partnerships in County contracting and other procurement opportunities.
- Collaboration – All SBE, MBE, and WBE goals and objectives are subject to collaboration. The stronger the partnership among the County and other political subdivisions, private sector businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other community institutions, the greater the opportunities to expand and grow our services.
- Community Outreach – The Diversity Division participated in many different outreach events related to diversity/inclusion programs in calendar year 2020. OPD is committed to creating opportunities that will increase the visibility and awareness of its program, through community events, trade shows and other appropriate business functions, and providing workshops and seminars to SBEs, MBEs, and WBEs on Cuyahoga County's procurement policies and procedures. We will continue our outreach efforts.
- Measurement, Reporting & Transparency – To improve decision making, the Diversity Division currently uses the B2Gnow software system for the monitoring and tracking of data related to contract compliance. These reports are available to senior county executives.

Technology

The Office of Procurement and Diversity's Diversity Division uses the Contract and Concession Compliance Module of the B2GNow Software System by AskReply to track and monitor payments to prime vendors and subcontractors for active County contracts/purchases with diversity goals. This software is used by a few County Agencies (i.e., Department of Public Works, Office of Procurement and Diversity, and the Department of Development). In addition to the B2GNow Software System which was specifically purchased for monitoring and tracking

of payments to prime vendors and subcontractors related to equity initiatives, there are additional software systems used for equity initiatives. Several years ago, the Cuyahoga County Department of Information Technology developed a software system that is used to track diversity certifications. This system is the source of the online searchable listing of County certified SBEs, MBEs, and WBEs. In addition, The Office of Procurement & Diversity's Diversity Division has created several Microsoft Excel and Access Databases to track and monitor several of the equity processes.

Current Efforts:

The Office of Procurement and Diversity's Equity Report (*Appendix 3*) for calendar year 2020 summarizes our efforts to promote and encourage diversity and inclusion in County purchasing and contracting in calendar year 2020.

OPD's goals were and continue to be in alignment with the County's declaration of racism as a public health crisis. The diversity and inclusion initiatives are authorized and implemented in accordance with County Code and Executive Orders.

Furthermore, these initiatives are in alignment with recommendations from disparity studies of the county procurement system. In 2014, the County conducted a disparity study. The [2014 Disparity Study](#) showed that disparities did exist and recommended the implementation of various race- and gender-neutral efforts as well as limited race- and gender-conscious initiatives. In 2016, Cuyahoga County adopted a series of race- and gender-neutral efforts concurrently with limited race- and gender-conscious initiatives. The Office of Procurement and Diversity has been implementing several of these initiatives. These initiatives include the Small Business Enterprise (SBE), the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), and Women Business Enterprise (WBE) Programs and the SBE Set Aside Program. In January of 2019, Cuyahoga County hired Griffin & Strong P. C. (GSPC), through a competitive national solicitation, to conduct a disparity study of County contracting and purchasing for the CY2014 through CY2018 period. The 2020 Disparity Study showed that the County's race- and gender-neutral efforts and limited race- and gender-conscious initiatives that arose from the 2014 Disparity Study had not sufficiently addressed the race and gender disparities. As a result, the 2020 Disparity Study provides legal support to implement more robust race- and gender conscious programs and, thus, makes eight (8) recommendations for implementation to reduce the disparities in County contracting and purchasing (listed below). On December 17, 2020, the Cuyahoga County Equity Commission voted in support of implementing the recommendations from the 2020 Disparity Study.

OPD has continued the implementation and administration of the diversity and inclusion initiatives authorized by County Code and Executive Orders. The results of these efforts are presented in OPD's Equity Report for CY2020 (*Appendix 3*). As the lead County department for the 2020 Disparity Study, OPD has initiated the process of researching best practices and developing the implementation plan for the eight recommendations in the 2020 Disparity Study. While OPD will be the focal point and lead for the implementation plan for the eight recommendations, the implementation process will require a **Countywide team effort** to be successful. First and foremost, the County Executive's leadership, support, and guidance is vital to successful implementation. On January 7th, Executive Armond Budish issued [five executive](#)

[orders](#) to support the disparity study's recommendations. Similarly, County Council's leadership, support, and guidance is also vital to successful implementation. The Department of Law's guidance, knowledge and expertise is critical to implementing initiatives that are legally defensible. Cuyahoga County's procurement system is a hybrid system with a centralized stakeholder (OPD) and decentralized stakeholders (County agency/departments). As such, the implementation plan will have a large impact on user departments and require a significant investment by them. In addition, the implementation plan will require outreach and training to all vendors on the changes to the procurement system.

Equity Initiatives for 2021

The OPD's Diversity Division will continue to support and encourage SBEs, MBEs, WBEs, CCBBs, and CCBEIPs (Cuyahoga County Business Economic Inclusion Program) by creating, providing, and supporting opportunities for them to grow and compete effectively in the general environment for contracting and purchasing opportunities. To achieve this goal, it is essential to:

- Implement recommendations and programs resulting from the 2020 Disparity Study:
 - MWBE subcontractor goals with definitive Good Faith Efforts Requirements
 - Enhanced contract compliance
 - Increased staffing and resources
 - Staff training
 - Increased utilization of Small Business Set Aside Program
 - Contract forecasting
 - Coordinated vendor outreach
 - Reform data infrastructure

Department of Human Resources

The Department of Human Resources contributes to the County's viability and success through the strategic management of its human capital and services. The Department consistently seeks to develop programs and processes that add value. Our vision is to support or to help build where everyone thrives, issues of racial inequities and inclusiveness are addressed, and employees can work for an employer where it is a common belief that all things are possible.

The County's Human Resources department is divided into four major functional areas with a team of close to 70 professionals who handle a myriad of tasks and benefits for almost 5,000 County Executive employees:

- **Talent Management** is responsible for recruitment and hiring, training and employee development, and maintaining organizational culture.
- **Benefits, Compensation and Wellness** is responsible for determining fair and equitable compensation and the administration of employee benefits and wellness programs.
- **Employee & Labor Relations** is responsible for employer-employee relations; contract negotiation, creating a safe work environment; and handling disciplinary actions.
- **Employee Services** is responsible for managing time and attendance and making sure employees are paid accurately.

While the Department of Human Resources was not designated as a pilot agency initially in 2020, we recognize the important role and responsibility we have on the culture and the well-being of all county employees. We will become a strategic partner with other agencies, employees, and citizens in the advancement of the equity work. Towards that end, the HR department is actively working on two new initiatives, which we believe to be key in addressing issues of equity and inclusions and will assist in removing barriers to education and employment or promotional opportunities.

The Department has provided the Executive a proposal expressing the need for a tuition reimbursement program. Progressive employers, and employers of choice, meet these needs, in part, by providing employee educational assistance toward the completion of a certification or a degree. The tuition reimbursement program provides a foundation to removing barriers for employees who seek to broaden their education and will enable us to attain a more diverse workforce.

Where employees simply cannot afford to start or continue their educational endeavors, tuition reimbursement provides that incentive. Tuition reimbursement makes good sense in that it helps to create a skilled up workforce ready for promotional opportunities. It expands an individual's ability to access career ladders and their eligibility for leadership positions.

The second initiative, in partnership with the Personnel Review Commission, is a review of all classified titles to determine experiential equivalents to educational requirements. This means that several years of experience in a position may be a sufficient qualification in lieu of a degree.

In that manner, individuals who may not have had the opportunity of acquiring a college degree may be qualified for a position or a promotion in County service where they may not have been previously qualified.

As a separate matter, the Employee Wellness Program works collaboratively with its community and strategic partners to support a workplace that thrives, one that supports employee health and wellbeing. The Wellness program uses best practices to provides information on support services, resources, and ways to adopt and maintain long lasting healthy behaviors for its employee population. Incentivized programs, such as the County's Employee Wellness Program encourages employees to take a vested interest in their personal health, such as getting timely preventive screenings and other important healthcare serves.

Lastly, we know that on a broader landscape, it is critical to recognize that to continue to address the issues of racial equity and inclusion within the County, there must exist at least a uniform conversation around the topic, both within County employment and in the community. To that end, training is critical. Resources have been made available and plans are being developed to determine the depth and breadth of the program(s) and the appropriate venue to deploy that training by our department.

This year, we look forward to participating as a pilot agency, developing a more in-depth strategy for all County agencies to identify racial inequity areas and provide best practice resolution within the HR scope.

Cleveland – Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board

CCWDB's Mission

To develop and implement innovative partnership and services that meet businesses' needs for qualified talent and provide residents access to careers and economic mobility.

CCWDB's Vision

CCWDB will establish and provide impactful workforce services driving the success of business and economic opportunity, improving racial and economic equity for Cleveland and Cuyahoga County residents.

On February 21, 2020, The Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB) approved the updating of its Vision Statement to include "racial equity". The CCWDB Vision statement states "**CCWDB will establish and provide impactful workforce services driving the success of business and economic opportunity, improving racial and economic equity for Cleveland and Cuyahoga County residents**". During the August 21, 2020 Board meeting it was decided that an Ad-Hoc Committee would be created to address racial equity with board member Sheila Wright serving as the Committee Chairperson. After that meeting a Charter for the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee was established.

In September 2020, the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee of the CCWDB held its first meeting and is scheduled to meet monthly. The Committee was created to integrate fair, inclusive and equitable practices in all aspects of the Board's work and focus its activities towards education and awareness. The specific purposes of the Committee may include: Championing that principles and best practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion are integrated into the four overarching goals of the Strategic Plan; Serving as a Board resource for guidance and consultation regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion issues; and Providing input and focus on board policies and procedures to address diversity, equity, and inclusion and making recommendations to ensure an acknowledgment of relevant diversity, equity and inclusion principles.

The DEI Committee is in the planning phase and is well on its way to have a 2021 Equity Plan/Initiative established in Early 2021. The Committee plans to establish an Initiative for recommendation to the Board to adopt with the intent to assess, and define goals, commit to achieve those goals with a plan to implement, measure and sustain. A draft of the Initiative is found below:

DEI INITIATIVE

- A. Determine OMJ DEI Goals
 - a. Review Mission
 - b. Determine Priorities – Staff, Board
 - c. Establish Goals

- B. Create a Path Forward to Achieve Goals – Four Essential Questions
 - a. Where Are We?
 - b. Where Do We Need to Be? (defining success)
 - c. How Do We Get there?
 - d. How Do We Continue to Improve? (Measurement)

FOUR ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- **Where Are We? *Current State***
 - a. Data collection and analysis – **DEI Data Assessment Tool**
 - i. Internal
 - 1. OMJ Operations
 - 2. OMJ Board
 - ii. External - Partners

- **Where do we want to be? (success) *Future State***
 - a. Goals Fully Integrated
 - i. OMJ
 - 1. Business Objectives
 - 2. Company Culture
 - 3. Business Practices
 - 4. Board Operations
 - ii. External Partners
 - 1. Expectations
 - 2. Outcomes, Impact

- **How do we get there? –DEI Implementation Tool**
 - a. Clearly expressed commitment to change
 - b. Ongoing collaborative implementation practices
 - i. Staff – Leadership and Rank and File
 - ii. Safe space culture for reflection and feedback
 - iii. Commitment to transparency
 - iv. Integration of DEI tools in all aspects of OMJ activities
 - 1. End users – staff, board, participants, stakeholders, partners
 - 2. Activities – e.g., meetings, retreats, HR practices, board meetings, compensation, trainings, recruiting, advancement/promotion, team building etc.
 - v. Establish Partnership Agreements

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commitment to integrating DEI into services based on assessment tool findings 2. Establish DEI partner goals 3. Regular data driven updates around impact, reach and outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Contract renewal conditional upon Partner Agreement Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we improve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regular review, adjustment, evaluation and audit of the initiative |
|--|

Additional Matters of Consideration: To accomplish the proposed goals of the DEI Committee, OMJ will need to reconcile its DEI goals with partner interest (e.g., priorities, funding mechanisms, stakeholder accountability, political realities). OMJ may consider sub-committees to carry out the work of the DEI Initiative.

- I. Assessment Tool – Group Selection/Recommendation**
 - a. Internal - OMJ
 - i. Employees
 - ii. Board of Directors
 - b. Partners / Contractors
- II. Partnership Values**
 - a. Does OMJ expect its partners to uphold its values?
 - b. Should partners share responsibility around outcomes?
 - c. Is it possible to create a third hybrid culture based on collaboration?
 - d. How does OMJ currently evaluate partners?
 - e. OMJ’s commitments in Partnership Agreement
 - i. Transparency for how OMJ will use data from partners
 - ii. Willingness to help partners build capacity to collect data if necessary
 - f. ***Potential long-term sub-committee* – responsible for working with partners
 - i. Results monitoring
 - ii. Recommendations for adjustments and support
 - iii. Regular communication
- III. Suggested Short Term DEI Initiative Sub Committees**
 - a. Goals Sub Committee
 - i. Interview committee members, board members and staff to determine priorities/goals
 - ii. Make a recommendation for the top three DEI goals for the initiative.
 - b. DEI Assessment Tool Selection and Execution Sub Committee (Internal and External)
 - i. Review of sample tools
 - ii. Recommendation for add ons, OR
 - iii. Develop customized tool
 - iv. Establish timelines for completion
 - v. Follow up with staff, board and partners as needed
 - vi. Report findings to the Committee

c. Sub Committee to Establish Key Performance Indicators based on DEI Initiative

IV. Establish Long Term DEI Initiative Sub-Committees based on Key Performance Indicators

Description of how the County collects the reported data and makes it accessible to the public

In 2017, Cuyahoga County released a Strategic Plan that outlined the 15 goals of the County in five different areas: 1) Regional Growth; 2) Economic Opportunity; 3) Individual Well-Being; 4) Mobilize Cross-Sector Resources; and 5) Provide Superior Services. To measure whether or not the County was meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan, Cuyahoga Performance was created. Cuyahoga Performance is a quarterly performance report that is released to the public (<http://executive.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/Strategic-Themes.aspx>). The purpose of Cuyahoga Performance is to enable data-driven decision-making, identify where the County is making progress toward goal achievement and identify where opportunities for improvement exist. Cuyahoga Performance is also a platform for telling the story behind County programs.

One of the best practices to address racial inequities within government is to use data that is disaggregated by race. Over the summer and fall of 2020, the Office of Innovation & Performance worked with departments to identify measures in Cuyahoga Performance where disaggregated data is available. Beginning with the Q4-2020 report to be released on January 31, 2020, the County will begin reporting data disaggregated by race and ethnicity across a number of different measures:

Pages updated in Q4-20 to report data by race include:

- Cuyahoga County Median Household Income
- Job Creation and Retention
- Small Business Supported through Investment in Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- SkillUp Business Advisory Services
- Cuyahoga County Population
- Community Development and Demolition Projects
- Kindergarten Enrollment and Readiness
- Universal Pre-Kindergarten Enrollment and Kindergarten Readiness
- High School Graduation Rate
- Broadband Connectivity
- Poverty Rate
- Children Achieving Permanency
- Older Persons Remaining Independent through Cuyahoga County Programs
- Opioid Deaths
- Infant Mortality

The Office of Innovation & Performance will continue to work with departments to identify if additional measures can be disaggregated by race and report those quarterly.

Update on benchmarks and description of changes in equity initiatives for the coming year

a. Human Resources

Appendix 4 shows the Cuyahoga Organizational Chart, and as of December 2020, there are about 7,600 people who work for Cuyahoga County (in both Executive and non-Executive agencies).

Ethnic Origin	Percent
Undefined EO	2.38%
Caucasian	36.60%
African American	30.43%
Hispanic/Latino	2.50%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.26%
Indigenous/Aleutian	0.20%
Other	14.89%
Two or More Races	1.26%
Chose not to Identify	10.47%

b. Assessment tools and action plan will be implemented in 2021

The Equity Commission Working Group will create a self-assessment and evaluation tool to be disseminated to all County employees. The Department of Innovation and Human Resources will create the framework of this tool in Q1 2021. This assessment tool will allow for better identification of benchmarks.

2021 Equity Approach and Commitments

It is critical to create building blocks for Cuyahoga County and move at a pace that will cause a long-lasting impact for those who work, live, and play in Northeast Ohio. A critical foundational effort to ensure we are going in the right direction is an understanding and common language across all agencies. To receive the needed training, Cuyahoga County became a member of the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#) (GARE) in December of 2020. The GARE Membership Network is a professional peer-to-peer network that enables government racial equity directors and leads and subject area experts to exchange information, collaborate to advance their practice, and develop solutions to racial equity challenges. This tool will allow County leaders to participate in a national community of practice and to learn from one another. We will be able to discuss and troubleshoot different policies and procedures that may be implemented to create a thriving Cuyahoga County.

Also, we need to ensure we understand our benchmarks and how we are processing information. An additional building block that will be key is inviting County staff to participate in a self-assessment as well as an organizational assessment. Working in silos will no longer advance racial equity efforts, and the Equity Commission will continue to partner with the Citizens Advisory Council on Equity to provide transparency and collaboration.

In 2021, the Equity Commission provides the following recommendations to the Cuyahoga County Council and the County Executive:

1. Prioritize Racial Equity Training Opportunities for County employees
2. Identify Racial Equity metrics that will allow us to measure progress across the County organization
3. Establish a budget for the Equity fund in order to advance racial equity both within the County government and to monitor our procurement practices
4. Follow the County Executive's Orders as they relate to the Disparity Study

Our proposed timeline to advance our work is as follows;

By March 31st, 2021

- Equity Training RFP will be issued
- Recommendations from the Citizens Advisory Council on Equity (CACE) will be prioritized

By June 30th, 2021

- Countywide Equity Assessment tool will be finalized and launched
- Agency Equity Metrics will be finalized
- Equity Biennial budget will be developed to include a Diversity Cabinet Officer.
- Commission will seek funding from external partners to support the County's Equity goals and the implementation of CACE recommendations
- Develop a standard equity approach for all County agencies
- Review pilot agency data by race
- The Equity Zone initiative will be finalized for possible inclusion in the Biennial Budget
- County Employee data will be disaggregated

By October 31st, 2021

- Equity Training RFP will be awarded

By December 31st, 2021

- Pilot agencies have completed racial equity training
- Next tranche of County agencies will be identified
- All County agencies will complete an initial review of their policies/procedures through an equity lens
- Pilot agencies will submit status updates for 2021, full year activities & results
- Deadline for County Agency Employees surveys to have been completed (at a minimum by pilot agencies).

Pilot Agency Recommendations

The following pilot agencies have submitted updates and have submitted their recommendations outlined below.

Department of Health and Human Services

1. Normalize conversations with respect to racial equity
2. Identify racial equity training
3. Utilize GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) to learn from other communities
4. Explore Racial Equity Impact (REI) assessment tools
5. Review departmental policies and practices to ensure they reflect REI principles
6. Support Employee Resource Groups
7. Conduct an annual staff perception survey

Department of Development

1. Support Cleveland Innovation Project to focus on tech and entrepreneurial diversity
2. Provide new programs for Small Business support
3. Develop and implement new capital access programs targeted to minorities
4. Support affirmative minority hiring for lending programs
5. Develop and support new Equity Zones/Job hubs in distressed communities
6. Continue outreach for SkillUp
7. Support Lead Coalitions and other lead-safe efforts

Department of Public Works

1. Contracting and Procurement: Create a process to simplify and streamline bidding
2. Public Work and Infrastructure: Use the Economic Health Index to prioritize infrastructure projects
3. Education: Engage in community outreach to improve workforce development outcomes by partnering with organizations such as Tri-C, CSU and CMSD

Office of Procurement and Diversity

1. Develop MWBE subcontractor goals with definitive Good Faith Efforts Requirements
2. Enhance contract compliance
3. Increase staffing and resources
4. Staff training to better understand intersectionality OPD's role
5. Increase utilization of Small Business Set-Aside Program
6. Contract forecasting
7. Coordinate vendor outreach
8. Reform data infrastructure

Department of Human Resources

1. Provide tuition reimbursement for County staff
2. Work with the Personnel Review Commission to modify educational requirements for positions
3. Lead and support racial equity training

Acknowledgments

The Equity Commission would like to thank the following partners for their incredible support and partnership:

- 1) Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish and Councilwoman Shontel Brown
- 2) Cuyahoga County Citizens Advisory Council on Equity
- 3) The Cleveland Foundation
- 4) Cuyahoga County Equity Commission Working Group
- 5) The Fund For Our Economic Future
- 6) Eliza Wing and Cuyahoga County's Communications Team