Creating a Culture of Belonging in Local Government
Speakers: Paula Phillips, Office of Equity Interim Director, Milwaukee County; Marcelia Nicholson, County Board Chair, Milwaukee County
Moderator: Mark Abeles-Allison, County Administrator, Bayfield County
Creating a Culture of Belonging in Local Government

Marcelia Nicholson- Milwaukee County Board Chairwoman
Paula Phillips- Interim Executive Director, Office of Equity- Milwaukee County
Mark Adele-Allison, County Administrator, Bayfield County
Agenda

• Introductions
• Leading with Intentional Inclusion
• What is Belonging?
• Local government as an employer
• Local government as a place maker
• Lessons Learned
Our Mission
We enhance the quality of life in Milwaukee through great public service.

Our Vision
By achieving racial equity, Milwaukee will be the healthiest county in Wisconsin.
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Create Intentional Inclusion
- Reflect the full diversity of Milwaukee County at every level of county government.
- Create and nurture an inclusive culture across Milwaukee County.
- Increase the number of Milwaukee County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses.

Bridge The Gap
- Determine what, where and how we deliver services based on the resolution of health disparities.
- Break down silos across Milwaukee County government to maximize access and quality of services offered.
- Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.

Invest in Equity
- Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities.
- Enhance Milwaukee County’s fiscal health and sustainability.
- Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.
INCLUSION
Thoughts, ideas and perspectives of all individuals matter

BELONGING
An org. that engages full potential of the individual, where innovation thrives, and views, beliefs and values are integrated

EQUITY
Constantly and consistently recognizing and redistributing power

DIVERSITY
Multiple identities represented in an organization

Over saturation of similarity, homogeneous culture, and simplified points of view

The dominant group or ideology is deferred to for decision making, opportunities and promotions

Culture assimilation results in disengagement and low retention

Source: Krys Burnett, “Belonging: A Conversation about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion,” Jan. 21, 2019
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Intentional Inclusion

• Created the Office of Equity to better align departmental scope and provide focus to the strategic plan and vision.

• Invested in additional staff to assist in hiring and retention for a more diverse workforce.
Intentional Inclusion

• Launched the **Changemakers** marketing effort and invested in Human Resources staff to assist in hiring and retaining a talented and diverse workforce.

• Upgraded **employee compensation packages** to honor the sacrifice of our hard-working employees and address vacancies.
Building Belonging

• Launched the **Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council** along with **Network Resource Groups** to accelerate culture building across the county

• Created opportunities for **Employee Engagement** via Vision Day, Employee Budget Townhall, and CEX departmental visits
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Lessons Learned

• Culture building starts with day to day interactions

• Representation matters
THIS IS US!
Please complete our reflection card and turn into staff at the end of our presentation!
In May 2021, to respond to the rise in reported hate crimes committed against Asian Americans in the United States, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hosted a Stop AAPI Hate Presentation and adopted a resolution publicly condemning such violence and hatred.
Intentional Inclusion: Indigenous Invocations

To recognize November as Native American Heritage Month, and to lift Indigenous cultures, the Board has welcomed several tribal members over the years to open our annual Budget Meeting with an Invocation.

INVOCATION

Chairwoman Nicholson introduced Chairman Ned Daniels, Jr., Forest County Potawatomi Community, who led today’s invocation.

INVOCATION

Chairwoman Nicholson introduced David Grignon, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Museum Director, Menominee Nation, who led today’s invocation.
Last year, Supervisors advanced and adopted a budget amendment to offer translation services, including multilingual captioning services and multilingual meeting notices and agendas, which is expected to launch this year.
Intentional Inclusion:
The Return of Milwaukee County's Youth Commission

In 2022, the County Executive and the Board Chairwoman co-authored a resolution adopted by the Board of Supervisors to re-establish the Milwaukee County Youth Commission. Commissioners have the platform to provide advisory recommendations to policymakers for youth programming within the county.

The Commission is to promote an annual "Take Your Child to Work Day" in Milwaukee County.
Intentional Inclusion
With Milwaukee County Parks

Parks are for more than Play – Make them Universal!
Several County parks have been renamed to honor iconic figures who represent the diverse communities of Milwaukee County, including Lucille Berrien Park, Indigenous People’s Park, and Harriet Tubman Park.

The Board advanced a proposal to add roller skating as a summer activity at a County Park that already hosts ice skating in the winter. This inclusive programming meets community interests while uniting residents with a healthy and joyous activity in the heart of downtown Milwaukee.
Chairwoman Nicholson was eager to create a space for the youth and families of her Supervisory district to play outdoors and gather for holiday festivities.

Last year the first annual Sherman Park Harvest Fest was held with community engagement!

The intention of this annual event is to uplift Sherman Park and surrounding neighborhoods.
The Chairwoman asked for a review of the global pandemic's effects on the intersection of gender and racial equity in Milwaukee County and the resulting audit, "Minding the Gap: Employee Friendly County Policies Did Not Entirely Stem the Loss of Women of Color During Covid-19 and Will Require Efforts by the County to Achieve its Goal of Racial Equity," provided policymakers recommendations for changes to improve racial and gender equity for public employees.
Intentional Inclusion
Here, There and Everywhere!

Happy Labor Day
Marcelia Nicholson
Chairwoman, District 10
Final Comments and Reflections

We invite you to use our comment cards to reflect on today's presentation.