

**MADISON, WI**  
**Mayor Paul Soglin**

## **CIVIL RIGHTS INITIATIVES**

The City of Madison Department of Civil Rights exists to vigorously pursue the policies and principles embodied in affirmative action, disability rights, equal opportunities, and racial equity and social justice, both within the City as an employer and as a community of people who respect the rights and the contributions of every community member.

The City's **Disability Rights and Services Program** addresses issues around inclusion and access in a holistic way. It recognizes that social justice organizations are often exclusionary or dismissive of disability needs; that the lives of disabled residents exist beyond the world of disability rights; that when otherwise inclusionary community spaces don't practice basic access, the idea that those spaces are not for people with disabilities is reinforced; and that more education and support for inclusionary efforts must become a priority in our justice communities. The program's efforts include:

- **Barrier-Free Playgrounds** – By establishing key partnerships with City agencies and community-based organizations, the City fosters inclusive mindsets from a young age through the development of barrier-free playgrounds, two of which have been constructed and three more are planned.
- **Access Madison** – This campaign, begun through the Disability Rights Commission, brings together community members, the business community and City officials to develop innovative approaches to improving access within the community. In all of its efforts, the program is in direct contact with the disability community for guidance and direction on areas of concern to the community and on pending projects.

The **Equal Opportunities Division** is focused on combating the employment, housing, and public accommodations discrimination occurring in the City, including breaking down policy and enforcement silos with other organizations while building professional relationships.

The City of Madison, with 28 protected classes, offers the most extensive protection in the country. In 2018, 61 percent of all cases were employment related; 22 percent of cases investigated related to housing. The issue of inadequate housing is explored as a matter of public health for obvious reasons – lead, rodent and bug issues exacerbated by landlords – and less obvious reasons – substandard living conditions that cause emotional stress may disparately impact residents because of their race, source of income, arrest and conviction record, homelessness, or other protected class status.

The City is finding new and innovative ways to educate and train trusted community members, and is sharing options for all to exercise their rights, through a strategy titled the Certified Community Partners Program. By allowing residents to access “a government without walls,” and by taking services directly to the community, government and community relationships and awareness are improved.

The **Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative** seeks to continue building and measuring a government that mirrors the diversity of its community and that instills principles of racial equity in its administration of services to that community. Recognizing the individual, structural and institutional barriers that have harmed many racially and ethnically diverse residents, City employees are educated to become anti-racist and to operationalize

equity as a core value within departmental work plans and contracts with community partners. The work is organized through:

- Trainings – These lead with race and incorporate universalism and intersectionality for all identities. Training topics include Implicit Bias and Communication on Race and Oppression.
- Equity Department Teams – All 26 City Department groups are charged with embedding racial justice initiatives as a core value through an Equitable Workforce Plan with annual goals.
- RESJI Action Teams – Monthly meetings are held with citywide equity leaders employing process improvement through Racial Equity Analysis and Equitable Hiring Tools.
- Monthly Featured Speaker Series – Workshops are provided for all employees, elected officials, and community partners.

The **Affirmative Action Division** is charged with taking steps to make equal employment, access to public services, and promotional opportunities a reality, and to correct the effects of past patterns of inequality. The City acknowledges that the mere passive prohibition of discriminatory practices is not sufficient to effectuate the principle of equal opportunity in contracting, employment and promotional opportunities, or in equal access to public services. Efforts include:

- Referrals and Interviews for Sustainable Employment (RaISE) – This program addresses racial disparities in unemployment by matching individuals seeking employment with companies under contract with the City. These companies agree to interview any qualified applicant referred by the Department of Civil Rights or its designated community partners who work in the field of workforce development and placement and collaborate with the City on referring qualified candidates for employment.
- Contract Compliance – This initiative provides education, evaluation and enforcement of the City's equal opportunity and affirmative action policies for all companies doing business with the City. This is accomplished through various meetings, trainings, audits, onsite visits and mandatory reporting. Contract Compliance is also responsible for monitoring the compliance of non-exempt contractors, developers, community-based organizations, vendors and suppliers with Madison General Ordinances and their required affirmative action plans.
- Targeted Business Enterprise Programs – TBE programs ensure that Small, Minority and Women Business Enterprises are afforded the maximum feasible opportunity to compete for City contracting and procurement opportunities – a policy designed to stimulate economic growth, promote the establishment of new businesses, and provide employment opportunities. In addition, when the City expends funds provided to it by federal agencies, contractors are required to comply with applicable federal regulations governing the participation of Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), Women Business Enterprises (WBE), and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE). Further, it is the City's policy that all targeted businesses, including those owned by minorities and women, be afforded the maximum feasible opportunity to do business with the City.

*Additional information is available from Norman D. Davis, Director, Department of Civil Rights, at [NDavis@cityofmadison.com](mailto:NDavis@cityofmadison.com), or 608-267-8759.*