



Certain Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities *Department of Administration*

The Department of Administration (DOA) monitors and supports the diversity, equity, and inclusion activities of most state agencies. In November 2019, the Governor signed Executive Order 59, which pertains to diversity, equity, and inclusion in state government. The Executive Order requires each agency to develop an equity and inclusion action plan.

The Joint Legislative Audit Committee requested that we conduct an audit of diversity, equity, and inclusion activities in order to determine specific activities performed in compliance with Executive Order 59 or other strategic plans; analyze amounts expended by agencies for these activities, including for staffing; and review reported outcomes resulting from these activities.

To complete this audit, we relied on information agencies provided us pertaining to their equity and inclusion action plans. In a separate report (report 25-06), we examined diversity, equity, and inclusion activities at University of Wisconsin System institutions.

We determined the number of diversity, equity, and inclusion actions listed in agency equity and inclusion action plans

We reviewed the equity and inclusion action plans that 21 agencies completed from January 2020 through April 2024. We found that the 21 agencies each completed two multiyear plans that listed a total of 1,212 actions the agencies planned to take pertaining to staff recruitment, staff retention, and agency culture. These actions are shown in Appendix 3 for each agency.

DOA did not require three agencies we included in our audit—the State of Wisconsin Investment Board, the Department of Tourism, or the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation—to complete such plans.

We assessed the outcomes of certain diversity, equity, and inclusion actions that agencies completed in FY 2023-24

In fiscal year (FY) 2023-24, 19 agencies completed 81 of the 192 actions (42.2 percent) they had expected to complete in that fiscal year, according to their equity and inclusion action plans. Some agencies did not expect to complete particular actions in that fiscal year.

The equity and inclusion action plans typically specify the particular outcomes that agencies anticipated to achieve after having completed the given actions. The anticipated outcomes varied widely. For example, one anticipated outcome was for an agency to write at least one relevant social media post per month. Another anticipated outcome was to build a sense of community throughout an agency.

In FY 2023-24, 15 agencies achieved the anticipated outcomes associated with 26 of 53 actions completed in that fiscal year (49.1 percent). The agencies did not achieve the anticipated outcomes for 27 actions (50.9 percent), based on documentation the agencies provided to us.

We estimated certain amounts that agencies spent on diversity, equity, and inclusion

None of the agencies tracked the amounts they spent specifically on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We used the available information to estimate four types of costs that agencies incurred. Because some amounts overlap multiple types of costs, the amounts we estimated cannot be summed. We found that:

- 12 agencies spent an estimated \$2.2 million on salary costs for 47 positions with job duties pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion in FY 2023-24;
- 23 agencies spent an estimated \$705,300 in salary costs for time spent attending diversity, equity, and inclusion training required by Executive Order 59 or DOA in 2023;
- 8 agencies in FY 2023-24 spent an estimated \$444,300 to complete certain actions that were listed in their equity and inclusion action plans and that they had expected to complete in that fiscal year; and
- 23 agencies spent an estimated \$200,200 in salary costs for time spent attending meetings of diversity, equity, and inclusion committees in FY 2023-24.

We determined the extent to which state staff completed required diversity, equity, and inclusion training

From 2021 through 2023, 82.9 percent of newly hired staff at 23 agencies completed the equity and inclusion training required by Executive Order 59. Over this three-year period, 85.3 percent of staff at 23 agencies completed the annual respectful workplace training required by DOA.

From 2020 through 2023, 8 of 12 cabinet agency secretaries whose agencies we included in our audit annually attended a professional development training or conference relating to diversity, equity, or inclusion, which Executive Order 59 required them to attend.

An equity and inclusion officer helps to develop, coordinate, and implement an agency's equity and inclusion action plan. In 2023, documentation indicated 5 of 11 equity and inclusion officers completed equity and inclusion training required by DOA.

We assessed DOA's efforts to monitor equity and inclusion action plans

Executive Order 59 requires DOA to conduct monitoring efforts in order to ensure consistency in developing and implementing equity and inclusion action plans.

We found that:

- agencies did not consistently document to DOA that they had corrected issues of noncompliance that DOA had identified during its monitoring efforts;
- DOA did not consistently require agencies to take corrective action to resolve such noncompliance;
- agencies did not consistently comply with statutorily specified open meetings requirements, which apply to affirmative action advisory committees that certain agencies are statutorily required to establish; and
- most agencies did not submit to DOA from 2021 through 2023 all required annual progress reports pertaining to their efforts to achieve equity and inclusion goals.

DOA considers equity and inclusion action plans to fulfill statutory requirements pertaining to affirmative action plans, and DOA monitors equity and inclusion action plans based on legal requirements pertaining to affirmative action plans.

We found that DOA did not comply with statutes and administrative rules because it:

- did not require certain agencies to develop affirmative action plans;
- did not provide the Governor with certain plan-related information;
- did not annually report all required affirmative action information to the Governor and the Legislature; and
- did not conduct affirmative action-related monitoring at all agencies.

We make 22 recommendations to DOA for improvements

Please see the complete list of our recommendations on our website.