RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE TOOL

FAST TRACK VERSION

Racial Equity
& Social Justice Initiative

INSTRUCTIONS

This abbreviated version of the Comprehensive RESJI Racial Equity Analysis Tool is intended for issues on a short timeline or without a widespread impact.

Examples: - single piece of legislation already drafted and introduced.
- creation of a single position description and job posting for an open position
- development of a single budget item proposal

For broader policies and legislation in its beginning phase, please use the full version of the RESJ Toolkit.

This tool should be completed by people with different racial and socioeconomic perspectives. When possible, involve those directly impacted by the issue. Include and document multiple voices in this process. The order of questions may be re-arranged to suit your situation.

Mission of the Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative (RESJI): To establish racial equity and social justice as core principles in all decisions, policies and functions of the City of Madison.

Equity is just and fair inclusion into a society in which all, including all racial and ethnic groups, can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity gives all people a just and fair shot in life despite historic patterns of racial and economic exclusion (*www.policylink.org*).

Purpose of this Tool: To facilitate conscious consideration of equity and examine how communities of color and low-income populations will be affected by a proposed action/decision of the City.

The *"What, Who, Why, and How"* questions of this tool are designed to lead to strategies to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts and unintended consequences on marginalized populations.

BEGIN ANALYSIS

Name of topic or issue being analyzed:

Pandemic Voting Access Equity Analysis

Main contact name(s) and contact information for this analysis:

Maribeth Witzel-Behl, Eric Christianson, Jennifer Haar, Maggie McClain, Shelby Hanewold, Bonnie Chang and Mike Quieto

Names and affiliations of others participating in the analysis:

- Anjali Bhasin, Wisconsin Conservation Voices
- Jacqueline Beaulieu, NextGen America
- Ethan Carpenter, NextGen America
- Tamia Fowlkes, UW Badgers Vote, Andrew Goodman Intern
- Earnestine Moss, NAACP of Dane County, Dane County Voter ID Coalition, League of Women Voters of Dane County
- Wendy Heyn, Disability Rights Voting Outreach Advocacy
- Denise Jess, Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired, WEC Accessible Voting Committee, Disability Vote Coalition
- Georgiana Hernandez, League of Women Voters of Dane County
- Tina Adeho, Madison College South
- Debra Cronmiller, League of Women Voters of Wisconsin
- Peter Burress, All Voting is Local
- Eileen Newcomer, League of Women Voters of Wisconsin
- Richard Diaz, Wisconsin Conservation Voices
- Bianca Tomasini, Voces de la Frontera
- Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice
- Jason Beloungy, Access to Independence
- Anthony Cooper, Nehemiah
- Karen Reece, Nehemiah, Justified Anger
- Richard Rydecki, Wisconsin Elections Commission
- Barbara Harrington-McKinney, District 1 Alder
- Arvina Martin, District 11 Alder
- Kwasi Obeng, Common Council Office
- Steven Brist, Assistant City Attorney
- Michael Haas, City Attorney
- Gabriela Arteaga, Building Inspection, RESJI
- Annie Weatherby-Flowers, Madison Public Library, RESJI
- Kym Woodly, Department of Civil Rights
- Donna Collingwood, Department of Civil Rights
- Michael Quieto, City Finance Department (Administrative Support Team)
- Bonnie Chang, City Clerk's Office
- Shelby Hanewold, City Clerk's Office
- Maggie McClain, City Clerk's Office, RESJI
- Jennifer Haar, City Clerk's Office, Civil Rights Coordinator, RESJI
- Eric Christianson, City Clerk's Office
- Maribeth Witzel-Behl, City Clerk's Office

Have stakeholders from different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups—especially those most affected—been informed, involved and represented in the development of this proposal or plan? Who is missing and how can they be engaged?

Stakeholders representing a variety of different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups were invited. During our first meeting, the group found the following stakeholders missing. Invitations to participate were forwarded before our second meeting.

- Aging networks
- League of Wisconsin Municipalities (Gail Sumi)
- United States Postal Services
- Public Health of Madison and Dane County
- Urban League of Greater Madison
- MOSES
- Nehemiah
- Madison Public Libraries
- Access to Independence
- WI Interfaith Voter Engagement Campaign
- Madison Metro

1. WHAT

a. What is the policy, plan or proposal being analyzed, and what does it seek to accomplish?

To examine the April 7, 2020, Election response to the COVID-19 pandemic and make improvements so voting is accessible to all residents, regardless of color, disability, and/or socioeconomic status for the fall elections.

b. What does available data tell you about this issue? (See page 3 for guidance on data resources.)

*See attachments.
- Income level correlates to the method of voting (absentee vs. in-person on Election Day).
- Race correlates to the method of voting (absentee vs. in-person on Election Day).
- Per the Brennan Center for Justice, municipalities need one ballot drop box for every 15,000 voters.
- A study in New Mexico found that voter ID requirements are not implemented equally across voters; election officials are more stringent when checking IDs of people of color.
- In Florida in 2016, voters under the age of 30 made up 9.2% of vote-by-mail voters, but 30.8% of rejected mail ballots. In 2012, 0.9% of absentees cast by white voters were rejected, 1.2% of absentees cast by black voters were rejected, and 1.3% of absentees cast by Latinx voters were rejected. Black voters accounted for 9.4% of absentees cast and 14% of absentees rejected. Latinx voters accounted for 10.7% of absentees cast and 13.8% of absentees rejected.
- In Florida in 2016, black voters accounted for 8.9% of absentees cast and 16.9% of absentees rejected. Latinx voters accounted for 13.9% of absentees cast and 25% of absentees rejected. Absentees cast by black or Latinx voters were more than 2.5 times as likely to be rejected.
- In Milwaukee this April 2020, predominately white wards had 49% voter turnout, and predominately black and Latinx wards had 18% voter turnout.
- In Madison, from 2015-2019, 0.28% of absentees were rejected. In April 2020, 1.44% of City of Madison absentees were rejected.
- The drop in percentage turnout between April 2016 and April 2020 was not even across wards. Many wards in established neighborhoods (like 78-83) had a drop off of only 1 or 2%. Wards east of the airport and north of E. Washington saw drop off between 13 and 19%. Campus wards saw a drop off of 45 to 55%.
- Nationwide, 75% of voters register in-person.
- 33% of non-voters don't think the election system works, and don't think votes are counted fully and accurately.
- Voting is an activity we learn.
- Young people from marginalized communities are the least likely to know about online registration and absentee logistics.
- If young people have a conversation with their parents about a current event, they are more likely to vote.
- 1.44% of absentees were rejected in April in Madison. One of the most common reasons was lack of witness.

c. What data are unavailable or missing?

- *Why* people do not trust voting by mail
- How many people didn't get ballots delivered by Election Day
- Whether there is an impact when people who do not need assistance use the assistive devices at the polling place
- Other reasons absentees were rejected

2. WHO

a. Who (individuals/groups) could be impacted by the issues related to this policy, plan or proposal?

These are the individuals or groups that could be impacted by the issues related to this analysis. The list is fluid and is not limited to:

- People who did not receive their absentee ballots via USPS or have their ballots returned by USPS in a timely fashion to be counted and who may have been voting via mail for the first time
- People who do not know how to request an absentee ballot
- People who do not trust voting by mail (majority people of color)
- People with transportation barriers in regards to the accessibility of polling places that are moved/changed
- People who have difficulty securing a witness, especially during orders of social distancing
- People with visual impairments who vote absentee could lose the opportunity to cast their ballot privately. The possibility of needing a sighted assistant rises with mailed absentee ballots.
- People with visual impairments having accessible voting equipment if polling places move and transportation becomes a barrier
- People with disabilities (including people of color with disabilities) who have the least resources and are in potentially lower income communities
- People living in wards where the polling place is located inside a police station
- People without appropriate voter photo identification; unsure of operations at the DMV because of the pandemic which could include but are not limited to hours of operation, transportation barriers, which locations are open, how to obtain necessary documentation when places of business have changed their operations because of the pandemic
- People who need to register to vote encountering barriers in terms of *where* you can register to vote and how it works
- People living in care facilities who normally rely on Special Voting Deputy visits for absentee voting
- People who do not speak English as a first language; we heard about needing Hmong translations for absentee ballots. This group most often is comprised of people of color and/or lower socioeconomic communities
- People with barriers to technology like internet service – locations where they might normally be able to access internet service and computers were closed or had operations significantly impacted because of the pandemic
- Students' access to voting, including but not limited to: needing to register or ensure their registration was up-to-date, out-of-state students' inability to obtain the UW Voting ID (especially when campus shut down), knowing the process and options for registration and absentee voting, and having their absentee ballots already mailed out locally without adequate time to resend to another address
- Students who receive voting information at SOAR in the fall, which has been cancelled
- Students living within the City of Madison can register at schools but those attending the same schools but living outside the City cannot take advantage of Madison's initiatives on campus
- People affected by information changing quickly and often by Public Health of Madison and Dane County and by the legal challenges occurring until the day before the election
- People who utilize early in-person absentee ballots due to closing of libraries
- People who rent property as opposed to owning property
- People who move frequently (which tends to be POC and/or low income)
- People who are homeless
- People currently occupying a home but not on the lease
- "Off Paper" felons
- The Clerk's office, which administers elections

b. Who would benefit?

- The community as a whole – voters/residents of the City of Madison
- Community groups representing vulnerable populations
- Students at Madison College, Edgewood and UW-Madison
- Candidates
- City Clerk's Office (goal of every eligible voter being able to cast a ballot and have it counted)
- WI Elections Commission
- United States Postal System

c. Who would be burdened?

Who would be burdened if the communication process is NOT improved / if status quo remains?

- Voters/residents of the City of Madison
- Community groups representing vulnerable populations
- Students at Madison College, Edgewood and UW-Madison
- Poll Workers – is it ethical to ask them to work during a pandemic?
- Candidates
- City Clerk's Office
- WI Elections Commission
- The United States Postal System

d. Are there potential disproportionate impacts on communities of color or low-income communities?

- Language barriers
- Accessibility barriers related to the polling place set up
- Accessibility to a polling place location
- Accessibility barriers related to technology
- Accessibility to appropriate voter photo identification
- Transportation barriers
- Polling place location barriers (two currently located inside police stations)
- History of police brutality, particularly for people of color
- Ability to provide in-person outreach because of the pandemic (social distancing, etc.)
- Ability to educate folx who do not vote regularly
- Lack of trust/crisis of confidence in voting process
- Votes from these populations will continue to drop
- Voters belonging to these populations who also have a disability: optimizing safety at the polling place

3. WHY
a. What are potential unintended consequences (social, economic, health, environmental or other)?

- Exposing more vulnerable populations to COVID-19
- Confusion when mailings are duplicated or there is no coordination of who is sending what, when
- Increased lack of trust/crisis of confidence in voting process
- Inadequate time to make necessary legislative changes to the statutes to aid this analysis
- Creating materials at a grade 5/6 reading level to help overcome literacy/language barriers (statute language is difficult)
- In-person outreach is not viable at this time but can be effective for education and registration.

4. HOW: RECOMMENDATIONS SECTION
a. Describe recommended strategies to address adverse impacts, prevent negative unintended consequences & advance racial equity (program, policy, partnership, budget/fiscal strategies):

Planning Ahead
- Keep all options for voting available to every eligible voter.
- Provide more personal protective equipment at each polling place, at in-person absentee voting locations, and at voter outreach locations.
- Plan for and select polling places that have adequate space for protective measures such as social distancing. Elver Park was unable to socially distance inside. Weather in November could compound the issue.
- Close the education gap. A majority of voters were voting absentee for the first time in April and didn't know the process.
- Protect early voting sites and educate voters as early as possible on their locations and how to vote early in-person.
- Improve how we communicate if a polling place is open. Could the state's website, www.myvote.wi.gov, display a generic message for the entire state that polling places may change due to the pandemic, and to contact their Clerk? (Madison updated its polling location listings at myvote.wi.gov, but some voters checked their polling location well in advance of the pandemic.)
- Continue to offer curbside voting, increase the number of locations, and increase education for voters and poll workers about this option. Advertise this more.
- Make larger signage for curbside voting as current ones are hard to see/read upon arrival at many polling places.
- Offer curbside voter registration drives.
- Offer curbside service to aid voters in getting their photo IDs on file.
- Connect voters with people they know. People are more likely to trust people they know.
- Offer help to those outside our networks.
- Make decisions as soon as possible to allow for more communication.
- Offer drop box locations for absentee ballots. Be clearer about when drop boxes can be used. Post someone who can serve as a witness at each drop box location.
- The state is sending a mailing to voters in early September. The Voter Participation Center is planning a mailing that will most likely confuse voters. Create our messages to be consistent with the state's mailing and get it out as soon as possible.
- Offer a voting vehicle to make stops around the City. Partner with the Library's Dream Bus. Could a Metro bus be used?
- Offer translated information/materials in greater volume. For example, materials in Hmong are needed in the Bayview neighborhood.
- Translate current absentee video and all future videos. Translate absentee materials (absentee request forms, absentee ballot-related letters, instructions on how to register to vote or sign up for an absentee

ballot, etc.) and have them readily available. Languages include Spanish, Hmong, and Mandarin. Provide audio description.

- Offer access to materials for those with barriers to technology, language, literacy.
- Test materials with marginalized audiences through partnerships with the organizations working with them.
- Limit City Clerk's in-person contact with the public to keep her healthy.
- Protect health of full time staff in the Clerk's office.
- Grow relationships in care facilities where Special Voting Deputies would typically be used. Can we train their staff to assist the voters with requests, registrations, voting? Can we set up a laptop in a common area and conduct educational sessions/witness sessions via Zoom or Skype? Can we provide additional educational materials to post?
- The DMV has 11 mobile service stations. Can we use one in Madison in targeted areas to help residents obtain voter photo IDs?
- Hold voter registration drives within the Dane County jail. Can we partner with the Department of Corrections, Dane County, and Chaplains to bring voting information to the jail?
- Find a way to obtain an inmate's voter ID so they may request absentee ballots. Is Intake the best/only opportunity? Could jail records become an acceptable form of voter ID? This would require a change in state law.
- Deploy Voter Education Ambassadors with personal protective equipment to help people in-person. Many from certain marginalized groups prefer to do things in person.

Education
- Have a strong voter education campaign. The Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired is currently working with the Wisconsin Elections Commission on education.
- Educate voters where their ward boundaries are. Educate voters on locations of early voting sites.
- Ensure that in-person absentee voting (IPAV) options support multiple learning styles.
- Simplify language on the absentee reference materials (instruction letter, process instructions) to grade level 5 or 6 in order to help those with language/literacy barriers. The Dept. of Civil Rights currently uses grade 6 as the target literacy level. The Clerk's Office has been using grade 7 as the target literacy level for poll worker communications.
- Create short educational videos that explain the absentee ballot process: how to request and complete an emailed ballot, how to request mailed ballots, how to fill out the witness portion of the certificate, how to register, and the general voting process. Utilize translation services to ensure the widest possible audience can view the videos. The WI Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired can serve as consult for audio descriptions on videos. Perhaps we can model the format after the videos created for handwashing and social distancing?
- Leverage educational videos from partners. The Disability Vote Coalition has some videos available on their website: disabilityvote.org. There are also videos available at asgoeswisconsin.com. The Clerk's office has an absentee video at www.cityofmadison.com/clerk/elections-voting/voting/vote-absentee.
- Compile a list of partner resources (i.e. videos) that can be advertised, if time is a barrier.
- Coordinate the creation of materials, such as videos and translation, with partners.
- Run educational videos/commercials/ads in any care facility we serve that has their own internal channel(s).
- Display information on the Dream Bus' video monitor and have voting packets for handing out at its stops/meal deliveries (in multiple languages). The Dream Bus may eventually be able to offer public computing (serving as a hot spot).

- Create a virtual/physical hard copy decision tree to help people determine what their next step is. Do they need to register to vote? Do they need to request an absentee ballot? Do they need to obtain a voter photo ID?
- Create videos specific to students, possibly including a decision tree.
- Provide guidance to voters on certain items that are in legal dispute (like the need/no need for a witness). Be conscious of what guidance might be legally disputed.
- Use clear and consistent language about the legitimate uses of the indefinitely confined category of absentee ballot requests. Avoid using terms like "permanent absentee" in the office as this does not properly represent the indefinitely confined absentee ballots.
- Provide training and focus for poll workers: gender equality (pronouns), trans-inclusivity, racial equity, cultural competency, and that the ExpressVote is for everyone and not just for "those people" (normalize, remove stigmas).
- Provide training for poll workers on using the ExpressVote and what it actually does.
- Improve education to help those who are Off Paper, know they are Off Paper and what their voting rights are.

Utilizing Resources
- Think outside the box to utilize resources: billboards, religious institutions, partner groups, social media, commercials, etc.
- Offer curbside voter registration/voter outreach at food pantries.
- Engage local businesses within a ward to post signage to help with voting.
- Who are the leaders in less-engaged communities? Partner with them. This includes but is not limited to: senior living, apartment (off-campus student housing too) management, etc.
- Leverage networks to increase/improve outreach to the communities.
- Use City agencies to help reach marginalized populations. Agencies could include, but are not limited to: Community Development Authority (CDA), Water Utility, and Engineering (Public Works), Community Development Division (CDD), Food Share, and Childcare providers, etc.
- Encourage landlords to provide voter registration forms again.
- Expand communications to include virtual and more "old school" options.
- Conduct outreach via text messages.
- Can the Job Center be a polling place? Conduct voter registration drives there. Post educational materials there and have blank forms available.
- Set up a drive-through voter registration targeting graduating seniors.
- Set up voter registration drives near protest sites.
- Partner with folx who can provide help with language/reading/witness signatures.
- Partner with Associated Students of Madison (ASM), Morgridge Center, Greek life (volunteer service).
- Include personal care networks to help reach more voters. Oftentimes, these voters have less access to technology and/or a limited life circle so getting messages to them can be difficult.
- Improve poll worker recruitment and retention. Recruit younger poll workers. Can high school students use this toward their community service requirement?
- Have poll workers recruit poll workers. Utilize partners to help recruit.
- Recruit more diverse poll workers. In April, we had younger poll workers but more of them were white. Some of the groups we want to recruit from are more vulnerable to the virus and don't want to take a chance of exposure.
- Pay poll workers more.
- Recruit poll workers from organizations like Freedom Inc, which recruit and mobilize people quickly.

- Use websites like www.hemingwayapp.com or www.plainlanguage.gov to help make materials more accessible.

Election Day
- Place more signage directing voters to each polling place, farther out.
- Utilize ward-specific yard signs throughout each ward and along ward boundaries to let voters know where their polling place will be.
- Set up additional assistive devices at polling places to help destigmatize it. More makes it look less segregated.
- Explore the use of Badger Books (electronic poll books) to help with registration and keep the number of people within the polling place down. This could encourage collaboration between younger and older poll workers.
- Have a Citywide ward voter registration challenge like the challenges students compete in on campus, such as an increase in %.
- Offer hazard pay to poll workers.
- Ensure poll workers are not intimidated by election observers.
- Have information available in August at the polling places about absentee voting to help people prepare for November's election.
- Increase the number of poll workers of color at polling places in communities with large populations of POC.
- Utilize tagged PDFs of absentee ballots instead of screenshots so voters with visual impairments can mark the ballots on the screen and potentially still be within the limitations of the law.
- Ensure poll workers and Chief Inspectors are welcoming to voters *and* fellow poll workers.

DATA RESOURCES FOR RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPACT ANALYSIS

City of Madison

- Neighborhood Indicators (UW Applied Population Lab and City of Madison):
  http://madison.apl.wisc.edu
- Open Data Portal (City of Madison):
  www.cityofmadison.com/data
- Madison Measures (City of Madison):
  https://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/documents/MadisonMeasures-2016.pdf
- Census reporter (US Census Bureau):
  http://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US5502548000-madison-city-dane-county-wi

Dane County

- Geography of Opportunity: A Fair Housing Equity Assessment for Wisconsin's Capital Region (Capital Area Regional Planning Commission):
  www.capitalarearpc.org
- Race to Equity report (Wisconsin Council on Children and Families):
  http://racetoequity.net
- Healthy Dane (Public Health Madison & Dane County and area healthcare organizations):
  www.healthydane.org
- Dane Demographics Brief (UW Applied Population Lab and UW-Extension):
  www.apl.wisc.edu/publications/Dane_County_Demographics_Brief_2014.pdf

State of Wisconsin

- Wisconsin Quickfacts (US Census):
  http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/55000.html
- Demographics Services Center (WI Dept of Administration):
  www.doa.state.wi.us/section_detail.asp?linkcatid=11&linkid=64&locid=9
- Applied Population Laboratory (UW-Madison):
  www.apl.wisc.edu/data.php

Federal

- American FactFinder (US Census):
  http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml
- 2010 Census Gateway (US Census):
  www.census.gov/2010census