

Program Evaluations Conducted by Dane County Board Office

2012- 2019

The County Board rules (§7.13(7)) give the Executive Committee the duty and responsibility “in conjunction with the office of the county board, (to) oversee program reviews and audits conducted by county board staff or contractors, and review the results thereof.” The Executive Committee initiates this process by soliciting ideas for program evaluation topics from the full County Board. Sometimes it occurs at the end of a year to prepare for the following year and at other times the process happens at the beginning of a new year with an understanding that the evaluations conducted that year will not affect that year’s budget process.

Program evaluations are conducted by the County Board not just to respond to a perceived problem with a program; they are good practice for providing current, comprehensive information and emerging best practices on which we can base policy and budget decisions. The County Board Office’s program evaluation process has increasingly been employed to evaluate topics within the county’s jurisdiction to gather information that informs future policy making.

The following is a list of program evaluations that have been carried out by the County Board Office in the last seven years. The role of our Sustainability and Program Evaluation Coordinator, Lisa MacKinnon, is to take the program evaluation topics selected and prioritized by the Executive Committee and position those evaluations for successful implementation that yields information that can be used by the County Board to make informed decisions and policies regarding the subject programs.

The Program Evaluation Coordinator manages the evaluation process from start to finish, which includes: Working with the Chair and County Board Supervisor(s) who proposed the selected topic to define the objective, scope, timeline, and deliverables for the evaluation; working with relevant Dane County department staff to gather useful input from them regarding the program topic and to facilitate their cooperation in the evaluation process; drafting the Request for Proposals; working with the Chair of the Executive Committee to appoint, convene, and staff subcommittees of supervisors to oversee the vendor selection process (when necessary); coordinating scoring and interviewing teams (both county department staff and supervisors); convening and working with various staff to do initial and final review and scoring of submitted proposals; scheduling and conducting vendor interviews, when required; checking references of selected vendors; negotiating and drafting the contract for purchase of services from the selected vendor; scheduling vendor logistics; facilitating vendor interactions (interviews, site visits, data requests) with relevant project stakeholders (both inside and outside county government); reviewing and editing draft and final reports by vendors and ensuring any concerns are addressed and changes made; distributing draft reports for review by stakeholders; serving as the primary County Board Office contact and liaison between consultants and stakeholders to facilitate every aspect of the program evaluation from contract start to the final presentation of findings to the County Board.

(over)

The following evaluations are in chronological order. Dates indicate the month and year that the evaluation was completed and information in parentheses indicates the general County Board priority area.

1. Peer Review of the Dane County Lake Level Management Guide for the Yahara Chain of Lakes, 6/2012, (Sustainability/Land and Water)
2. Targeted Review and Assessment of the Overtime Policies and Practices of the Dane County Sheriff's Office, 8/2012, (Criminal Justice)
3. Dane County Department of Human Services POS Contract Process Assessment, 4/2014, (Human Services)
4. Audit of the Organizational Structure of Land and Water Programs in Dane County, 6/2014, (Sustainability/ Land and Water)
5. Racial Equity Analysis of Dane County Government and Recommendations, 9/2015, (Racial Equity)
6. Program Evaluation of Contracting and Procurement Equity in Dane County Government, 8/2017, (Racial Equity)
7. Dane County Jail Deflection and Diversion Data Analysis and Best Practices Recommendations, 10/2019, (Criminal Justice and Racial Equity)

NOTE: Two additional program evaluations were initiated in early 2020, but were tabled early in the process due to uncertainty and/or changes in board priorities related to the pandemic.

Updated April 2021