

# PROGRAM EVALUATION TOPIC PROPOSAL FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Submitted by: Sup. Engelberger, PWT  
November 14, 2024

**Subject: Evaluation of Privatization of Skilled Trades, Maintenance and Labor Type Service Contracts for Dane County**

Submitted by the Public Works & Transportation Committee. Approved 5-0 on 11/12/24  
Contact: Michael Engelberger Chair.

## 1) TOPIC OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION

[Provide a clear statement of the issue that this program evaluation intends to address.]

**Evaluation to Reduce Privatization of Skilled Trades, Maintenance and Labor Type Service Contracts for Dane County.**

Dane County currently has many contracts with private vendors to provide labor services. This could be determined by department finance directors and the Dane County Controller and Director of Administration. Examples of services currently contracted out to private entities are contracting of Plumbing, HVAC and Electrical maintenance, general maintenance on many facilities owned by Dane County, as well as lawn maintenance and snow removal services. Other examples include county contracts with private vendors to provide lawn cutting and lawn maintenance, and hired cleaning services to clean many facilities owned by Dane County.

## 2) SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION

[Which programs, functions, policies, departments will be affected and involved?]

Note: Please consider consulting with the relevant standing committee and affected departments on your proposal as they could provide insight into critical operational details that might affect the success of the proposed program evaluation.]

The evaluation would determine how we could increase use of Dane County employees to provide skilled and labor services at all facilities of the county in lieu of privatized service contracts, to the greatest extent possible.

This has been discussed in general terms at various PW&T meetings in regard to AEC Surge Cleaning and in general with Directors of AEC, Waste & Renewables, Henry Vilas Zoo, Highway Department, Public Works, Air Port, Facilities Management and Administration in attendance at PW&T meetings.

County agencies and personnel contacts that would be most useful for the evaluator to work with to provide data and other information re: process would be the Finance Directors of each department, the Dane County Controller and the Director of Administration.

We are not aware of any state or county regulations that preclude us from making these changes

### **3) ANTICIPATED IMPACTS**

[What are you trying to accomplish through this proposed program evaluation? What are the anticipated potential benefits to Dane County government of doing the evaluation? Are there current questions or concerns you would like this program evaluation to address? What will this information ideally help the County Board do within its jurisdiction?]

The sole purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether and which current contracted services for labor, maintenance and skilled trades can be reduced and/or completely replaced by current and future Dane County employees. The focus should be on skilled and manual labor positions. This evaluation is not intended to address outsourced human services type POS contracts or food or retail service contracts and the like.

Currently there is a mix of privatized and in-house services being performed in our facilities by county employees and private contractors. In many cases services are performed individually by department, and occasionally services may be shared between departments with current county employees. In many cases, these services are coordinated within a department, while in other cases Dane County Facilities Management may coordinate services for multiple facilities.

Questions we would like answered by this proposed evaluation include:

- Is there a better way to streamline coordination and management of employees to perform more labor, maintenance, and skilled trade services at multiple locations in lieu of performing work just at individual departments?
- What are the total costs the county is paying for private contractors to provide these services per contract and per facility?
- We hire employees to do lawn maintenance and snow removal for instance in our parks and other facilities. We contract the same type services at other county facilities. What is the feasibility of providing these services in-house by county employees in lieu of contracting the services out?
- Are there advantages to Dane County of reducing privatization of these services including but not limited to:
  - cost savings
  - providing living wages and benefits, which may not be provided under a privatization contract
- Is there a way to determine efficiency factors of county employees compared to contracted work?

### **4) DESIRED TIMELINE/ BUDGET TIMING**

[Please indicate whether you seek a report and recommendations from the program evaluation to influence the next year's budget period or whether there is a longer timeline. Note: RFPs for program evaluations must go out by early January at the latest in order to yield information in time to inform the next year's budget. For more complex evaluation topics and proposals, the process may take longer.]

Determine in time for the development of the 2026 Dane County budget (approx. by July 2025), whether and which privatized services could be replaced by county employee labor. Depending on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, the timeline could include phasing in recommendations over two or three budget cycles to fully implement.