

**PROGRAM EVALUATION TOPIC PROPOSAL  
FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

**Submitted by: Sups. Chawla and Smith, EANR  
November 8, 2024**

**Subject: Evaluation of Climate Risks Facing Dane County**

Note: After discussing with your standing committee and any other relevant parties, please submit your proposal to Lisa MacKinnon, Sustainability and Program Evaluation Coordinator in the Office of the County Board, at [MacKinnon.Lisa@danecounty.gov](mailto:MacKinnon.Lisa@danecounty.gov). It will be shared with the County Board Chair and Executive Committee for discussion and consideration. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE: By the end of October.

Please provide information for each of the following sections in order to develop your program evaluation proposal. Take as much space as you need and feel free to provide additional resources if you think they will be helpful to understanding the program evaluation proposal.

**1) TOPIC OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION**

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

Evaluation of climate risks facing Dane County, assessment of steps taken to address climate change emergency preparedness recommendations from prior reports, and holistic evaluation of climate change resiliency of every county department's facilities and ability to deliver services to populations and communities disproportionately harmed by climate change.

**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.]

Dane County released a [Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness Plan](#) in 2013 which outlined near-term adaptations and long-term preparations which included coordinating warming and cooling shelters, stockpiling sandbags, coordinating county-wide weather responses, and other public health and emergency response-focused opportunities. This Plan also indicated that preparing for long-term adaptation should prevent and mitigate flooding and protect county facilities from extreme weather damage. Nearly a decade later, the 2020 [Dane County Climate Action Plan](#) identified that a few investments like \$10,000 for emergency sandbags and \$250,000 for larger culverts that had been made in response to the Emergency Preparedness Plan. It also outlined some opportunities for consideration, but the plan was primarily focused on decarbonization and

renewable energy opportunities. A deeper and more comprehensive evaluation of the county's ability to withstand climate change impacts is needed.

A program evaluation of the progress made on the opportunities outlined in the Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness Plan as well as a fresh take on the climate risks that have grown in severity and breadth would be very important for the county. Climate risks impact all of our county services across departments far beyond emergency preparedness to public works, public health, health and human needs, parks, etc. Such an evaluation is timely and important for the county to understand the risks that could be mitigated by revamped approaches to infrastructure, new building practices, land use and zoning, public health programming, and more in the face of real-time and increasingly severe climate change impacts.

### **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 [2021 Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts Assessment Report](#) found that warmer and wetter trends in Wisconsin's weather will have wide ranging consequences for natural environments, built infrastructure, private structures, public health, food systems, and much more. The report also called for "action at all levels of government".

A program evaluation would analyze the progress made on opportunities identified by previous reports and consider updated information about climate change and its local impact specifically in Dane County. Climate change has accelerated since the previous Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness Plan and it's critical that every county department has an awareness of and is prepared to respond to the severity of natural disasters that face us.

### **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.]

An evaluation report that could influence the 2026 budget would be ideal, but as the goal is a holistic and comprehensive report it can be completed later to influence future budgets.