



Request for Proposals

Community Survey for the City of Whitewater

1. Notice. The City of Whitewater, Wisconsin, invites proposals from qualified research organizations, universities, or consulting firms with demonstrated expertise in community survey design, statistically valid sampling, and public engagement in spring/early summer of 2026. The City seeks to conduct a comprehensive community survey to gather representative input from residents, business owners, and other key stakeholders. The selected consultant will develop an appropriate survey process and methodology to measure community satisfaction and input. The consultant will be responsible for developing and administering the survey after obtaining City staff input on questions; tabulating the results, and presenting a final product to City officials in a written report and formal presentations.

The results of this survey will directly inform City decision-making and help prioritize actions within the City's 2026–2028 Strategic Plan. Whitewater is committed to ensuring that community voices—particularly those historically underrepresented—are meaningfully reflected in policy direction, budget development, and community investments.

2. Background

The City of Whitewater, located in Walworth and Jefferson Counties, was incorporated in 1885. The City of Whitewater is the largest City in Walworth County, Wisconsin with a population of approximately 14,889.

The City of Whitewater operates under a Council-Manager form of government. Five Council Members serve specific districts within the City while two Council members serve at large. The City Manager is appointed by the Council and serves as the chief executive officer of the City. The City is a full-service municipality, providing a range of services.

In partnership with UW-Madison Division of Extension, the City recently completed a strategic planning process involving residents, staff, and elected officials. That process identified five priority issues and related strategic goals to guide community development over the next three years:

- Housing Development

Key Question: How can the City use its resources to incentivize construction of single-family homes and expand affordable housing options?

Strategic Goal: Increase the number of single-family homes by 20 per year for five years.

- Communication and Engagement

Key Question: How can the City effectively communicate with residents in the absence of a local newspaper and improve transparency?

Strategic Goal: Improve understanding of how the community consumes information and strengthen the efficiency and clarity of City communications.

- Economic Vitality

Key Question: How can the City support a thriving business community and attract new employers to Whitewater?

Strategic Goal: Identify underlying needs and leverage local and regional resources to foster economic growth.

- Workforce and Diversity

Key Question: How can the City improve recruitment and retention of staff, with a focus on diversity, inclusion, and equitable opportunity?

Strategic Goal: Develop metrics to evaluate and enhance recruitment and retention efforts.

- Fiscal and Infrastructure Planning

Key Question: How can the City prioritize expenditures and investments given levy limits, infrastructure demands, and unfunded mandates?

Strategic Goal: Gather broad community input to identify and rank fiscal and infrastructure priorities.

As Whitewater continues to evolve as a university community, regional destination, and economic hub, this survey will provide critical data to guide strategic decisions and ensure growth aligns with community needs, values, and aspirations.

3. Project Objectives

The City seeks a professional firm to:

- Design and implement a scientifically valid and statistically representative survey of Whitewater residents.
- Measure community satisfaction with City services, infrastructure, and overall quality of life.
- Ensure meaningful participation from underrepresented groups, including renters, university students, and minority populations.
- Provide clear and accessible findings for use by the Common Council, City staff, community partners, and the public.
- Administer the survey in both English and Spanish.
- Achieve a minimum of 500 completed surveys.

Survey topics should include, but are not limited to:

- Quality of life and community well-being
- Satisfaction with and perceived importance of City services
- Feedback on specific services (e.g., police, public works, utilities, parks)
- Communication preferences and information channels
- Community priorities and future investment needs

4. Scope of Work

The selected firm will be responsible for the following tasks:

A. Survey Design

- Collaborate with City staff and the Common Council to confirm survey goals and desired insights.
- Finalize research questions aligned with the Strategic Plan priorities.
- Develop a mixed-mode survey instrument (e.g., mail, phone, online, or a combination) that ensures valid sampling across demographics and neighborhoods.
- Develop survey questions to gauge community perceptions on:
 - Community needs
 - Contact with the City and sources of information
 - Downtown improvements
 - Residents' preferences on Comprehensive Plan priorities and measures, which will include housing, economic development, and land use
 - Important issues facing the City
 - Sense of community
 - Quality of life
 - Recreation needs
 - Support for potential policy measures
 - Support and preferences for Strategic Plan priorities
- Ensure accessibility, including multilingual options (English and Spanish) and full ADA compliance.

B. Data Collection

- Use random sampling methods sufficient to achieve a minimum 95% confidence level with a $\pm 4\%$ margin of error.
- Implement collection strategies that maximize response rates and achieve equitable representation.

- Track participation across key demographics such as geography, age, income, housing status, race/ethnicity, and student status.

C. Analysis and Reporting

- Provide rigorous statistical analysis, including cross-tabulations by demographic segments.
- Identify trends and community priorities relevant to the Strategic Plan's five key goals.
- Deliver a final written report and public-facing presentation to the Common Council, City staff, and the community.
- Provide raw survey data (with personal identifiers removed) for City use in future analysis.

D. Public Engagement Support (Optional)

Proposers may include optional engagement enhancements such as:

- Facilitating a public meeting or workshop to share and discuss results.
- Creating summary materials (executive summary, slide deck, infographics, or one-page briefs) for broad community communication.

5. Deliverables

The selected consultant will provide:

1. Draft and final survey instruments (English and Spanish).
2. A sampling plan and data collection methodology.
3. Progress updates at agreed-upon milestones.
4. A final report summarizing findings, trends, and actionable recommendations.
5. Cleaned data files and visual presentation materials (charts, slides, and summaries).

6. Timeline

The City anticipates the following schedule RFP Issued – January 2026

Proposals Due – February 2026

Contractor Selected – March 2026

Survey Design Finalized – April 2026

Fieldwork Conducted – May–June 2026

Draft Report Submitted – July 2026

Final Report & Presentation – August 2026

7. Requirements of the City

The City shall assume the following minimum responsibilities:

- Initially meet Consultant to provide concise direction to the Consultant regarding survey formulation, conduction, and result presentation. A City staff member will be available within five (5) business day to discuss with the Consultant if the additional direction is requested by the Consultant.

8. Proposal Requirements

All responses must be made in writing and include the name, address, telephone number, and email of the consultant's primary contact for the proposal. Additional information may be included if deemed pertinent by the applicant. The City will not evaluate or consider submittals missing one or more of the following submission materials. All proposal should be specific, brief (not to exceed 10 page), and should include the following components:

- Organizational background and relevant experience (especially with municipalities and/or university communities).
- Proposed methodology, sampling strategy, and data collection plan.
- Project timeline and detailed budget.
- Examples of similar work and/or client references (Wisconsin experience preferred).
- Qualifications and roles of the proposed project team.
- Optional enhancements (e.g., focus groups, dashboards, deeper segmentation, or follow-up engagement tools).

9. Submitting RFP Questions/Inquiries

Prospective consultants shall submit all questions; requests for clarifications, or addenda to this RFP by email to Becky Magestro at bmagestro@whitewater-wi.gov by February 6th. Responses to relevant questions, clarifications, or addenda to this RFP will be posted on the City website by [Response Date].

10. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

Understanding Whitewater's strategic planning goals and community context.

- Technical quality, statistical rigor, and validity of proposed methods.
- Demonstrated experience working with diverse and smaller communities.
- Cost-effectiveness and value.
- Ability to communicate findings clearly and accessible to policymakers and the public.

11. Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format to:

City of Whitewater

Attn: Becky Magestro, Chief of Staff

Email: bmagestro@whitewater-wi.gov

Subject Line: RFP – Community Survey 2026

Submissions are due by 4:30:00 PM, February 13th , 2026.

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to:

Becky Magestro, Chief of Staff
Email: bmagestro@whitewater-wi.gov

12. Incurring Costs.

The City is not liable for any cost incurred by prospective consultants in replying to this RFP.

13. Withdrawal of Submittals

Prospective consultants may withdraw a submittal, in writing at any time up to the due date and time. The written withdrawal notice must be received by the Chief of Staff. The notice must be signed by an authorized representative of the prospective consultants,

14. Terms and Conditions

- The City of Whitewater reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to waive minor informalities in any proposal.
- All materials produced under this contract will become the property of the City of Whitewater.
- The selected consultant must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations, including Title VI, Title IX, and ADA requirements.