

NIU CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES

PROPOSAL TO
City of Whitewater
FOR A COMMUNITY SURVEY
May 8, 2023



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Center for
Governmental Studies**

Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development

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PROPOSAL TO THE CITY OF WHITEWATER FOR A COMMUNITY SURVEY

CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES BACKGROUND AND STAFF EXPERIENCE

The Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University (NIU) is a public policy research and service organization located at 148 N. Third Street, DeKalb, Illinois, 60115. The mission of CGS is to provide policy research and assistance, planning support, evaluation resources, and data and training services to national, state, and local government entities, private enterprises, public-private partnerships, and institutions of higher education. CGS has been a leading academic and applied research organization for Illinois and the entire country since 1969. CGS currently has 36 staff that are divided into six teams: survey research and data visualization, strategic management, policy, and community development, organization development, governance, and training, data informatics, workforce development, and association management.

One of the most popular services of CGS is survey research. Surveys conducted have covered a variety of subjects including satisfaction with services, public safety, economic development, housing, and other issues tailored to meet individual client's needs. CGS collects data using mail surveys, online surveys, telephone interviewing, multi-mode surveys, focus groups, and in-person interviews. CGS provides full service in every step of research design, survey construction, sampling, data collection, data analysis and reporting. It conducts both large and small studies and prides itself on being able to implement studies in a variety of subject matter areas, being creative in designing studies, and working with clients to conceptualize their research questions and implement studies that meet their objectives and resources. CGS is committed to providing actionable results that are collected in a professional and timely manner.

CGS has conducted surveys for more than 50 governmental and private sector organizations during recent years, including surveys for municipalities, counties, park districts, school districts, libraries, and health departments. Surveys have been conducted for the City of Elmhurst, Village of Hanover Park, City of Rochelle, City of Aurora, City of Freeport, City of Sandwich, City of Dubuque (IA), Village of Arlington Heights, Village of Round Lake Beach, Village of Bartlett, Town of East Haven (CT), Lake County, DeKalb County, Hanover Township Mental Health Board, Winnetka Public Schools, Batavia Public Library, St. Charles Park District, DuPage County Health Department, and Kane County Health Department.

Our proposed project team includes professionals with years of experience in survey research. The experience of our staff has included specialized studies for large and small organizations. The project team will be led by a senior staff member of CGS, Mindy Schneiderman, Ph.D., who will act as the Project Director. She will manage every step of the project to ensure that the client's research needs are met and meaningful, actionable results are provided. Dr. Schneiderman can be contacted at 815-753-0039 or schneiderman@niu.edu.

Dr. Schneiderman will be supported by CGS' professional staff members Julia Gommel Bailey and Ivy Hood. Other CGS staff will assist with the project as needed.

Mindy Schneiderman, Ph.D., Assistant Director, Center for Governmental Studies, Survey Research Team. Dr. Schneiderman manages the CGS Survey Research and Data Visualization Team. Prior to joining CGS, Dr. Schneiderman was the Associate Director of NIU's Public Opinion Laboratory from 2008-2013. She was the Director of the Division of Survey Research and Analysis at the American Medical Association for 11 years. Dr. Schneiderman has numerous publications on survey research methodology. She has taught workshops on conducting surveys and focus groups. Her survey research has been cited in the New York Times and Wall Street Journal and has been used in U.S. Congressional testimony. She has a Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology from Rutgers University.

Dr. Schneiderman brings to the project more than thirty years of experience managing survey projects using mail, online, telephone and multi-mode survey data collection methodologies, as well as experience conducting focus groups and in-person interviews.

Julie Gommel Bailey, MPH, Research Associate, Center for Governmental Studies, Survey Research Team. Ms. Gommel Bailey has experience conducting community surveys for libraries, park districts, school districts, and municipalities. Examples include, City of Aurora, Batavia Public Library, Deerfield Public Library, Algonquin Area Public Library, as well as other community surveys. She has experience with data collection in mail, telephone, and online survey modes, as well as focus group moderating. Ms. Gommel Bailey holds an MPH with a focus in health promotion from Northern Illinois University. Ms. Gommel Bailey has thirteen years of experience managing survey research at NIU.

Ivy Hood, MPPA, Research Associate, Center for Governmental Studies, Survey Research Team. Ms. Hood has 7 years of research, analytics, and project management experience, including data analysis, designing, and conducting surveys, interviews, focus groups, workshops, and educational outreach in northern Illinois. Her experience includes work for the 2020 Census, economic development groups, elections authorities, electric vehicle and other transportation planning, collaborative governance, government revitalization, budgets, and community needs/development. She began working at CGS in April 2022 and completed a Master of Public Policy and Administration with a focus in public policy from Northwestern University in December 2022.

PROPOSED SCOPE OF SERVICES

To assist the City of Whitewater, obtain residents' opinions of the City, a community survey will be conducted using a multi-mode methodology (online, mail, and telephone reminder calls). A multi-mode methodology will achieve a higher response rate and more representative respondents than other methodologies by allowing residents to complete the questionnaire using their most preferred method.

INITIAL PROJECT MEETING

The CGS Project Team will meet with the City staff at the beginning of the project to discuss the objectives, methodology, and schedule for the survey. Weekly updates will be provided to the City staff during the project.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

We have assumed a four-page questionnaire and cover letter. The questionnaire and cover letter will be developed in consultation with the City staff. The CGS Survey Research Team will ensure that all questions are worded in an unbiased and non-leading manner.

Possible topics to be covered in the survey include:

- Quality of life in the City,
- Overall satisfaction and importance of services provided by the City,
- Satisfaction with specific services (e.g., public works, police),
- Priorities for the City, and
- City communications and sources of information about the City.

The questionnaire will be translated into Spanish. The questionnaire will be formatted and printed for mailing and programmed into our online survey software system.

SAMPLE

The Center for Governmental Studies will purchase from the Marketing Systems Group, a survey research sampling firm, mailing addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of a random sample of approximately 2,000 households in the City. We estimate we will receive 500 completed questionnaires. With about 4,200 households in the City, the margin of error for the findings will be approximately ± 4.1 percentage points.

PRETEST

CGS will pretest the questionnaire with approximately 20 households. The pretest is designed to gauge whether the respondents understand the questions being asked and can provide the necessary information. Upon completion of the pretest, CGS will review the results with the City staff and collaboratively determine if there are any revisions necessary to the questionnaire.

DATA COLLECTION

CGS will work with the City staff to develop communications about the survey prior to and during the data collection period. These communications will be important to achieve a high response rate for the survey.

All sampled households will be sent an invitation email to participate in the survey that briefly explains the purpose of the survey, how the results will be used, express assurances of confidentiality, identify the City of Whitewater as the sponsor, and provide a unique link for completing the online survey. Up to four reminder emails will be sent to non-responding households. Four weeks after the invitation email is sent, nonresponding households will be mailed a cover letter, the questionnaire, the description of services document, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope in which to return the questionnaire to CGS. The cover letter will explain the purpose of the survey and how the results will be used, express assurances of confidentiality, identify the City of Whitewater as the sponsor, and provide a web address and unique password for completing the online survey. The cover letter will also include CGS' telephone number if the individual has questions about the survey. Two weeks after the questionnaire is mailed CGS will begin reminder calls.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data will be weighted to reflect the demographics of the population using the 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey.

Frequencies of responses for all closed-ended questions will be produced. Crosstabs by key demographic variables for all closed-ended questions, including but not limited to respondent's gender, respondent's age, respondent's race/ethnicity, whether they are a student at the University of Wisconsin Whitewater or not, annual household income, household's location in the City, and years living in the City will produced. Chi-square tests will be conducted to determine statistically significant differences between groups. Open-ended responses will be analyzed using content analysis.

FINAL REPORT

A written report of the survey results, including executive summary, background and purpose of the project, methodology, results with graphs and tables, conclusions, survey instrument, and verbatim comments will be provided.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

We estimate, based on similar past projects that it will take approximately 3.5 months to complete the project.

COSTS

The cost for conducting the work described in the survey proposal is **\$14,000** and is guaranteed through December 31, 2023. The proposed figure includes all personnel costs, as well as travel. The final deliverables will be an electronic copy of the report. Costs have been broken out by project activities below.

Description of Activity	Cost
Questionnaire Design	\$700
Data Collection	\$10,800
Data Analysis/Reporting of Results	\$2,500
Total	\$14,000

Option-Online survey link distributed by the University of Wisconsin Whitewater to all students who live on campus. Additional Cost-\$2,500.