

AREA OF OPPORTUNITY	TIER 1 (BEGINNING) ~ Information ~	TIER 2 (EMERGING) ~ Analysis ~	TIER 3 (ADVANCING) ~ Action ~
<b>I. Organizational Commitment</b>			
Statement of commitment to fairness and equity in day-to-day operations and communications			Connect those living on the margin with budgeting resources, social services, housing assistance, job searches, etc.
<b>II. Leadership Development</b>			
Statement of commitment to value diversity and public service	Share examples of how equality ≠ equity		
	Share online implicit definition, examples, add online assessment		
	Share learning and communication similarities and differences between generations		
<b>III. Program Innovation</b>			
Accessible counter, public terminals, information availability, and tax-related discussions at times that work for both the taxpayer and the treasurer		Make a concerted effort to identify who benefits and who burdens in each decision	Help those facing aging and disability, in-person visits with delinquent taxpayers
Address communication barriers like translation and cultural differences			Incorporate in-person, phone, and online translation services
<b>IV. Collaboration</b>			
Urban League, Centro Hispano, Literacy Network, YWCA, etc.	Share tax information regarding deadlines, how to pay, methods to prevent delinquencies, etc.		
Youth in Government & school/community education			Visit youth to discuss broad financial management, the tax system, the Treasurer as the public fiduciary (liquidity-security-yield), and the role of ethics
<b>V. Resource Mobilization</b>			
<b>VI. Brand and Visibility</b>			

## **I. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

**“The Dane County Treasurer’s Office serves the public in a manner that is fair and equitable in its day-to-day operations and communications.”**

Life is full of challenges. Some of those, like an exam or a game or a special project, are goals that can be accomplished within minutes, hours, days, or weeks. Others, like financial distress, are long-term hurdles that can take months or years to overcome.

People can feel embarrassed and overwhelmed when they are behind on their property taxes and need someone to talk it over with; someone who will not judge them. Falling behind on property taxes is often one of the first signs that a citizen is in financial trouble. The Dane County Treasurer personally visits with property owners, during and after normal office hours, to connect them with resources of which they may not be aware and to get them caught up on their taxes. Such resources include but are not limited to:

- Human services
- Budgeting services
- Veteran services
- Job services
- Other community organizations

In a similar vein, the Treasurer’s Office serves as a source of information pertinent to the day-to-day operations of the office and strives to answer questions in person, over the phone, and via email. The office website also provides a wealth of information available from home, work, school, or a library without needing to drive downtown Madison, find and pay for parking, and locate the Treasurer’s Office. Some of the information available includes the following:

- Real estate property tax system
  - Due Dates for property taxes
  - How to pay property taxes
  - Where to locate amounts due and amounts already paid
  - Changing the names and/or billing addresses on tax bills
- Lottery and gaming credit
  - Explaining the credit
  - Applying for the credit
- Unclaimed funds through the Dane County Treasurer’s Office
  - Rightful owners of the funds
  - How the rightful owner can claim the funds due to them
- Tax deed sales
  - Properties available at auction
  - Upcoming auction dates
  - Auction procedures
- Agricultural use conversion charge summary
- Contact information for local and county government

## II. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**“Appreciating the diversity of taxpayers and colleagues helps the Dane County Treasurer’s Office serve the public and meet the needs of the people.”**

Wis. Stats. §§59, 74, and 75 establish the duties and responsibilities for the county treasurer. While these requirements are very structured, the Dane County Treasurer’s Office can work with taxpayers to the extent possible in an equitable manner that both follows the law and respects the individual’s needs regardless of race, age, abilities, or native language. To support an office-wide appreciation for the difference between equality and equity, and to foster an understanding of implicit bias, the following resources are to be shared within the office:

1. The below visual depictions attempt to help differentiate the concepts of equality and equity as they relate to just and fair opportunities.

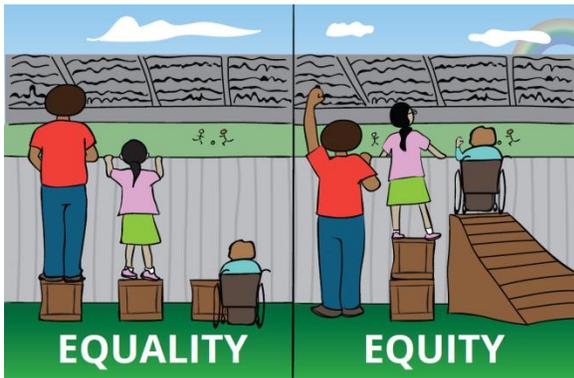


Figure 1: <http://secondlineblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Equity-vs-Equality.png>

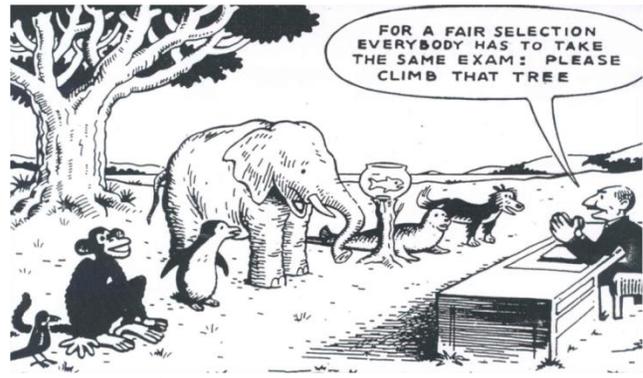


Figure 2: <http://lskydifferentiatedinstruction.wikispaces.com/file/view/assessment.jpg/173586135/assessment.jpg>



Figure 3: [www.rwjf.org/content/dam/images/unrestricted-use/infographics/RWJF\\_bikes\\_equality\\_equity\\_PURPLE.jpg](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/images/unrestricted-use/infographics/RWJF_bikes_equality_equity_PURPLE.jpg)



Figure 4: Carleigh Olson, Program Coordinator for Public Health – Madison & Dane County presentation (Madison, WI: June 2, 2018)

2. Below are descriptions and examples of implicit bias as well as a link to the online implicit bias assessment.

Figure 5: Alliance on Race & Equity “Advancing Racial Equity in Dane County” webinar (May 19, 2015)



Figure 6: Dane County MAC presentation (Madison, WI; December 5, 2014)

**Implicit Bias Assessment:** <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>  
**Social Environment Example:** [www.outsideonline.com/2268931/why-are-adventure-hubs-so-homogenous](http://www.outsideonline.com/2268931/why-are-adventure-hubs-so-homogenous)

3. The generational comparison chart below compiles data from various sources to identify some considerations for effective and respectful communication with the public and colleagues across generations.

	TRADITIONALISTS	BABY BOOMERS	GENERATION X	GENERATION Y
Born:	1925 – 1945	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1980	1981 – 2006
Historical Narrative:	grew up during a time of economic and political uncertainty	grew up during a time of economic prosperity and positive change	grew up during a time of negative change for families, public trust, and the environment	grew up during a time of technology, multimedia, diversity, and violence
Major Events:	Great Depression New Deal WWII Korean War Atomic Bomb	Cold War Vietnam War assassinations space travel	energy crisis Watergate Challenger explosion Berlin wall fall Gulf War	Oklahoma City Columbine shooting 9/11
Characteristics:	adhere to rules respect authority hard work	question authority personal growth	resourceful self-reliant pragmatic	goal-oriented optimistic respect diversity
Values:	consistency command & control	recognition collegial	work/life balance equality	diversity full life
Communication Styles:	one-to-one face-to-face letter landline	in-person email fax cell phone voicemail	direct immediate text email	email voicemail social media text
Communication Tips:	build trust through inclusive language (we, us)	use body language and avoid controlling, manipulative language	use open and honest communication	give information in short and to-the-point messages that include them in decisions

**Table 1:** UW-Green Bay PME “Presentation Skills” course (Madison, WI; March 4, 2013); West Midland Family Center “Generational Differences” chart; Montana Office of Public Instruction “Understanding Generational Differences” presentation; Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel “Generational Differences & Communication” presentation; National Contract Management Association “Providing Exceptional Customer Service Across the Generational Divide” presentation (Washington DC; July 30, 2014)

### **III. PROGRAM INNOVATION**

**The Dane County Treasurer's Office has improved its service to the public and staff by providing an accessible counter-height window for in-person payments, public terminals at a height suitable for wheelchair access, online availability of information at <https://treasurer.countyofdane.com> and <https://accessdane.countyofdane.com>, and accommodations for tax-related discussions at times that work for both the taxpayer and the treasurer.**

In working with the public and making decisions affecting the office, there is a concerted effort to identify who benefits and who is burdened by each decision. Decisions are made to follow the law and support the greatest good.

For example, prior to the City County Building first floor remodel, the Dane County Treasurer's Office replaced a standard table with one suitable for wheelchair access. This table, which remains in use even after the first floor remodel, houses two public terminals for access to digital records. The remodel provided an opportunity to install further office accommodations like an accessible counter-height window for in-person payments. These improvements help the public conducting business at the Dane County Treasurer's Office as well as employees that may have similar needs.

In addition to the physical infrastructure accommodations, The Dane County Treasurer's Office has also been collaborating with other departments like Planning and Development, Register of Deeds, Land Information, and Information Management to improve online information availability. For example, the Access Dane website is a primary reference for taxpayers, title companies, realtors, etc. This site displays zoning and assessment data, Open Book and Board of Review dates, a parcel map, and tax information.

Another online resource for the public is the Dane County Treasurer's website. This site is updated throughout the year to reflect the regular progression throughout the tax year, inform the public of unclaimed property that the rightful owner can claim, and detail upcoming and past tax deed auctions. With the information available on both of these sites, those facing aging and disability challenges, those who are out of town when taxes are due, and those who prefer avoiding the hassle of driving into Madison and finding parking can obtain the information they need in the comfort of their home, at a friend or family member's home, or at the nearest library.

A third ongoing practice to helping support the needs of taxpayers who are falling behind on taxes is to personally visit with those individuals. Sometimes, this comprises the Dane County Treasurer initiating a call to a delinquent taxpayer. Sometimes, this is reserving a meeting room to discuss matters the taxpayer feels is personal in nature and/or embarrassed about sharing in a public space. Sometimes, this involves visiting the property after work hours when they are more likely to be available to discuss the tax status of the property taxes. The approaches to personal communication serves a variety of individual needs for delinquent taxpayers whether they are homebound, have full-time employment, or have a preference for either in-person or phone conversations. During these visits, the taxpayer can obtain a better understanding of the real estate tax system, acquire contact information for resources that may be of assistance, and build a personal goal to get taxes paid before the property is tax-deeded for nonpayment of taxes.

**As part of equity and inclusion, it is reasonable to expand the focus to address communication barriers like translation and cultural differences.**

The Dane County Treasurer’s Office does its best to communicate with people who have a limited English proficiency. Although not recommended for interpretation services, individuals whose primary language is not English often bring a friend or family member who can help translate. Other times, staff from a nearby office is asked to assist with translating.

Aside from in-person interpretation assistance, there are translation reference sheets available that list languages most often spoken in the Dane County area. These reference sheets come in a variety of styles from poster-size down to a small, free-standing card. Examples of this resource are provided by the Wisconsin Department of Health (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/civil-rights/lep-resources.htm>), the US Department of Homeland Security ([www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/crcl/crcl-i-speak-poster.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/crcl/crcl-i-speak-poster.pdf)), and the D.C. Office of Human Rights (see Figure 5). Using these cards to first identify the language, a translation service like Language Line Solutions ([www.language-line.com](http://www.language-line.com)), referenced by the Dane County Tamara D. Grigsby Office of Equity and Inclusion, can then provide phone and online video translation services with a charge by the minute as needed. Below is a sample of the translation reference sheet:

**English Translation:** Point to your language. An interpreter will be called. The interpreter is provided at no cost to you.

<b>Amharic</b> አማርኛ አንድ ቃል ወይንም ሌላ ቃል ለመጠቀም ለሌላ ሰው ጥያቄ ይጠይቁ። አንድ ቃል ወይንም ሌላ ቃል ለመጠቀም ለሌላ ሰው ጥያቄ ይጠይቁ።	<b>Korean</b> 한국어 귀하께서 사용하는 언어를 지적하시면 해당 언어 봉역 서비스를 무료로 제공해 드립니다.
<b>Arabic</b> عربي أشر إلى لغتك. وسوف يتم جلب مترجم فوري لك. سيتم تأمين المترجم الفوري مجاناً.	<b>Mandarin</b> 威語 請指認您的語言， 以便為您提供免費的口譯服務。
<b>Bengali</b> বাংলা আপনার ভাষার দিকে নির্দেশ করুন। একজন দোভাষীকে ডাকা হবে। বোভাষী আপনার নিখরচায় পাবেন।	<b>Pashto</b> پښتو خپل ژبې ته اشاره وکړئ. یو ژباړونکي به راوبولي شي. تلو ته ژباړونکي وړو یا برابرو وني شي.
<b>Cantonese</b> 廣東話 請指認您的語言。 以便為您提供免費的口譯服務。	<b>Portuguese</b> Português Indique o seu idioma. Um intérprete será chamado. A interpretação é fornecida sem qualquer custo para você.
<b>Farsi</b> فارسي به زبان موردنظر اشاره کنید. ما برای شما مترجم می آوریم. این کار هیچ هزینه ای برای شما نخواهد داشت.	<b>Russian</b> Русский Укажите язык, на котором вы говорите. Вам вызовут переводчика. Услуги переводчика предоставляются бесплатно.
<b>French</b> Français Pointez vers votre langue et on appellera un interprète qui vous sera fourni gratuitement.	<b>Spanish</b> Español Señale su idioma y llamaremos a un intérprete. El servicio es gratuito.
<b>Haitian Creole</b> Kreyòl Lonje dwèt ou sou lang ou pale a epi n ap rele yon entèprèt pou ou. Nou ba ou sèvis entèprèt la gratis.	<b>Thai</b> ไทย ช่วยชี้ถึงภาษาที่ท่านพูด แล้วเราจะจัดหาท่านให้ท่าน การใช้ส่วไม่ต้องเสียค่าใช้จ่าย
<b>Hindi</b> हिंदी अपनी भाषा पर इंगित करें और एक दुभाषिया बुलाया जाएगा। दुभाषिये का प्रबन्ध आप पर बिना किसी खर्च के किया जाता है।	<b>Tigrinya</b> ትግርኛ ኣንድ ቃል ወይንም ሌላ ቃል ለመጠቀም ለሌላ ሰው ጥያቄ ይጠይቁ። ኣንድ ቃል ወይንም ሌላ ቃል ለመጠቀም ለሌላ ሰው ጥያቄ ይጠይቁ።
<b>Indonesian</b> Bahasa Indonesia Tunjukkan bahasa Anda. Jurubahasa akan diadakan. Jurubahasa diadakan tanpa Anda dibebani biaya.	<b>Turkish</b> Türkçe Konuştuğunuz dili gösterin. Size bir tercüman çağırıyoruz. Bu tercüman size ücretsiz olarak tedarik edilecektir.
<b>Japanese</b> 日本語 あなたの話す言語を指して下さい。 無料で通訳を提供します。	<b>Vietnamese</b> Tiếng Việt Hãy chỉ vào ngôn ngữ của quý vị. Một thông dịch viên sẽ được gọi đến, quý vị sẽ không phải trả tiền cho thông dịch viên.

Figure 7: <https://ohr.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ohr/publication/attachments/Language%20ID%20Desktop%20Poster.pdf>

In addition to awareness and utilization of translation resources, it is important to maintain proper customer service etiquette when working with people who have a limited English or literacy proficiency. The suggestions below are from sources that work with communication between people of different cultures and languages:

#### Dimensions of Culture

- A cross-cultural communications training service for healthcare professionals
- [www.dimensionsofculture.com/2010/10/8-tips-for-communicating-with-limited-english-proficiency-patients](http://www.dimensionsofculture.com/2010/10/8-tips-for-communicating-with-limited-english-proficiency-patients)

- Keep it simple

“In work settings, we slip into our professional roles, often changing our way of speaking automatically. We choose to say *utilize* instead of simply *use*. With limited English proficiency, ... [b]asics such as good, give, take, more, less will be better choices than positive, administer, increase, decrease. Keep word choice simple and keep sentences simple as well. Avoid run-on sentences ... As we ramble, we tend towards more complex ideas rather than simpler ones. Try to allow some silence between simpler phrases and pause after asking a question. The other person may need a moment to consider their best answer.”

- Give and seek feedback

“Even if you are using simpler words and shorter sentences, you can’t be certain there has been communication until the receiver acknowledges it with feedback ... [H]ead nodding does not count as feedback with people from many different cultures ... [H]ead nodding is often a sign of partial comprehension. So you must ask clarifying questions.”

- Close-ended questions: These usually begin with *do, did, does, is, are, will, or can*.
- Open-ended questions: These usually begin with the 5 *Ws* – *who, what, when, where, why (and how or how many)*.

- Not understanding vs. misunderstanding

“Keep in mind that when people don’t understand you, you are more likely to get some immediate indication of the miscommunication than when they MISunderstand you. When there’s a lack of understanding, a person may ask you to repeat what you have said or you may read confusion in facial expressions. But when people MISunderstand, they may be less likely to indicate this, especially if they come from an indirect and face saving culture ... Asking clarifying questions is crucial.”

- Speak Slowly and Clearly – NOT Loudly

“Often when people don’t understand our language, we treat them as if they are deaf ... without realizing we are doing so. Articulate your words in shorter phrases rather than just speaking more loudly.”

- Repeat if Necessary

“Much of what we gain from a conversation is in the context or general content of the discussion. Our brains constantly fill in the missing information. If we don’t actually hear every word, we compensate. For example, if I say, “I left you a message on your \_\_\_\_\_,” [native speakers] will almost automatically fill in the blank with cell phone, phone, or voicemail. Non-

native speakers will struggle to do this. So repeat key phrases and summarize key points. Also, make it clear at the outset that you are happy to repeat anything you say in conversation.”

- Avoid acronyms, idioms, and abbreviations

“[Every profession] has a language of its own that includes many acronyms ... Always take the time to say things the long way and avoid terms that will create confusion for non-native speakers ... Common expressions and idioms can also block communication. If you say, “I’ll run that past the \_\_,” a limited English proficient [person] may literally picture you running ... which sounds urgent when you intended a casual tone.”

- Write it down and demonstrate while speaking

“Providing simple notes about the key points ... can be very useful ... Written material with more detailed information ... can also be very helpful in conjunction with thorough explanation ... A really thorough explanation will include checking for understanding via open ended questions, gesturing while speaking, and demonstrating actions ... Even people who have had the benefit learning English in an academic setting may not have gotten much practice with actual conversation. They learned via workbooks and taped dialogues and may not understand native speakers. For those persons who have had no formal schooling, written material may be beyond their capacity entirely, but perhaps someone at home can help translate what is written. That way they will have a reference point for what was said in conversation ... Written materials that can be taken away and read at a leisurely pace are often greatly appreciated.”

#### ANTVibes

- Creator of the Audible Tag, a mobile marketing and customer engagement tool that adds the human voice to product advertisements whereby the user can scan a QR code and listen to an audio playback about that product, service, or entity.
- [www.business2community.com/strategy/5-tips-when-interacting-with-people-who-speak-english-as-a-2nd-language-esl-0197279#igPo7flzcuKVKO5p.97](http://www.business2community.com/strategy/5-tips-when-interacting-with-people-who-speak-english-as-a-2nd-language-esl-0197279#igPo7flzcuKVKO5p.97)

- Slow down your speech

“By speaking at an appropriate pace, you’ll make it easier on the English as a second language speaker you are interacting with, and allow them to get more out of the conversation. However, be careful not to speak to someone like they’re dumb. It’s easy to come off as condescending when speaking slowly.”

- Enunciate clearly and use voice intonation

“Pronounce your words fully and remember to pause when needed, such as between sentences or subject matters. In other languages, such as Spanish, intonation is used to signify a question. Tone of voice can signify various different moods and emotions, and can help deliver the message you are trying to convey.”

- Use body language

“Body language can make interactions clearer no matter what [language] ... Hand gestures help give context to your speech, and can both prompt and signal different messages. The way you position your head and your facial expressions can also provide context. Your stance, or posture, can also give off certain vibes. Whether you want to be seen as casual or professional,

the appropriate stance can convey your message. How you position your arms can signal your mood – serious, relaxed, not amused, etc. As always for effective communication, be sure to make eye contact with the person(s) you are interacting with.”

- Be culturally aware

“Being aware of cultural preferences and differences can keep your interactions ... optimal. The more you know about the culture ... the better ... Also be sure to learn their name and pronounce it correctly. A large part of being respectful and learning about other cultures is to understand the associated names and heritage. Knowing how to correctly pronounce [the person’s] name will put you in a better light and help you make a stronger connection with the individual.”

#### **IV. COLLABORATION**

**Because there are already well-established organizations that work with diverse populations throughout the community, the Dane County Treasurer's Office can collaborate with those groups to educate and reach-out to serve as a conduit to information and resources.**

People contact the Dane County Treasurer's Office to obtain tax information regarding deadlines, how to pay, methods to prevent delinquencies, etc. Collaboration with local organizations can help make the Dane County Treasurer's Office more readily available to those who need assistance. Professionals within the organizations already know the individuals who use their resources, and they can provide basic guidance through that established relationship as well as by connecting them directly with the Dane County Treasurer's Office for more detailed assistance. Moreover, those professionals may have ideas for potential additional resources that would also be helpful. A few of those organizations and their missions are listed below:

- Centro Hispano: empowers youth, strengthens families, and engages the community to work towards a Dane County where Latino families can aspire upward to reach their personal goals and dreams because they feel engaged and strengthened with the tools for success
- Literacy Network: offers programs specifically tailored to the needs, goals, and different learning styles of individual adult learners, free of charge, to help them achieve life goals
- Urban League of Greater Madison: dedicated to ensuring African Americans and other community members are educated, employed and empowered to live well, advance professionally, and contribute to the common good
- YWCA: works to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, support families, and strengthen communities to create a more inclusive community, help people improve their financial situations through job training and transportation, and support people in housing and shelter

**In addition to reaching out to adults, there are opportunities to introduce youth at an early age to general financial management, the tax system, the Treasurer as the public fiduciary, and the role of ethics.**

Each spring, the American Legion Dane County Council sponsors an annual Dane County Youth Government Day. Through this program, students from around the county visit Dane County offices and learn the responsibilities of each department. When the students visit the Treasurer's Office, they receive a matching game and a word search, both including terminology common to the office. They learn the basics of the tax system and get to explore information on the Access Dane website and the unclaimed funds website. Through this experience, the group learns about the assessment process, how property values apply to calculating property taxes, credits that can be found on the tax bill, the impact of being delinquent on property taxes, and unclaimed funds that get disbursed to the rightful owner through the Dane County Treasurer's Office.

Another potential opportunity to educate youth is by visiting students in their classrooms when time permits. The presentation could open with a discussion about what financial management is and why it is important, starting with personal finances (explain budget basics like expenditures, causes of debt, ways to save). Including property taxes as part of personal finances provides a segue to introducing the property tax system and explaining the Treasurer as the public fiduciary with priorities being in the order of liquidity-security-yield. Given the fiduciary responsibilities of the Treasurer, it would be reasonable to conclude with the role of ethics (doing what is best for the public) and checks-and-balances (a means of security from fraud). Such a presentation could be interactive by involving online or SMS (text message) polls with the students to gauge their early understanding and perceptions unless the educational facility has a preference of tools for this type of activity in which to interactively engage the students.

## **V. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

No additional funding requested at this time.

## **VI. BRAND AND VISIBILITY**

Branding and visibility of the Dane County Treasurer's Office is an ongoing process that encompasses all the values and initiatives identified in this report.