

DRAFT:

EOC Response to “Why Madison, Wis. Is the Top 100 Best Place to Live 2015” by *Livability*

Madison is a very complex city to call home. There are many great things about living here some of which have recently been mentioned in articles such as one highlighted via social media from Livability.com (<http://livability.com/best-places/top-100/2015>) which claims Madison as the number 1 place to live. While we appreciate the support and notice of any media we would like more for it to provide a fair, accurate, and balanced portrayal of the community we live in.

The Livability article even hints, in their own statistical measures, at some of these issues. While Madison ranks highly in such categories as Amenities, Health, Housing, and Education it scores significantly lower in the Demographic category which is where the question is asked "Does this community serve everyone?" One of the core beliefs behind the Madison Equal Opportunities Commission is to see that we serve everyone equally and with equity. Currently, the statistics simply do not bear out that we are doing this to our full capacity.

- Madison enjoys 6% overall unemployment yet 25% of unemployed are people of color.
- Madison has an overall low poverty rate and yet 75% of children of color are living at or below poverty levels.
- The overall population living in poverty is around 4% for whites, 54% for people of color.
- Under Education, 11% of non-hispanic whites rated below 3rd grade reading levels, 48% for people of color.
- 16% of white students did not graduate with a high school degree within 4 years, 50% for people of color.
- In Madison, juveniles are 6 times more likely to be arrested if they are people of color as opposed to being white. That rate jumps up to 9 times more likely for adults.

(Source: Race to Equity Report - <http://racetoequity.net/dev/wp-content/uploads/WCCF-R2E-Report.pdf>)

We applaud Madison for being an engaged City and hope that positive strides will be made so that we can have an impact in the area of opportunity where we are not currently treating everyone with equality and equity. It is our hope as a Commission that real and sincere efforts will be made based upon the items brought forth in the Race to Equity report. The numbers don't lie. Madison has a long way to go in terms of equity. So, yes, Madison can be a great place to live given the right conditions but the question we ask is shouldn't Madison be an unconditionally great place to live for everyone?