



---

## The First Two Community ID Programs in the Midwest: Organizing, Evaluation, and Community Health in Johnson County, IA and Washtenaw County, MI

Irund A-wan\*<sup>1</sup>, Barbara Baquero\*<sup>2</sup>, Keta Cowan\*<sup>3</sup>, Jason Daniel-Ulloa\*<sup>2</sup>, Alana LeBrón\*<sup>4</sup>, William D. Lopez\*<sup>5</sup>, Mayra Elena Martínez\*<sup>6</sup>, Marlén Mendoza\*<sup>2</sup>, Nicole L. Novak\*<sup>5</sup>, Xiomara Santana\*<sup>2</sup>, Rosamond Smith\*<sup>2</sup>, and Olivia Temrowski\*<sup>3</sup>

\*<sup>1</sup>*Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa*

\*<sup>2</sup>*University of Iowa College of Public Health*

\*<sup>3</sup>*Synod Community Services and the Washtenaw ID Project, Michigan*

\*<sup>4</sup>*National Center for Institutional Diversity at the University of Michigan School of Social Work*

\*<sup>5</sup>*University of Michigan School of Public Health*

\*<sup>6</sup>*eHealth and eNovation Center at University of Iowa Community Medical Services*

---

### Abstract

The post-9/11 sociopolitical climate has led to an increase in anti-immigrant policies and practices, including the federal REAL ID Act of 2005, which established standards requiring proof of “legal presence” for state identification cards (IDs) and driver’s licenses to be used for federal purposes such as air travel. This has led several states to revise their ID eligibility requirements, and undocumented immigrants cannot access state IDs or driver’s licenses in any Midwestern state except Illinois (Mathema, 2015; Park, 2015). Lack of photo ID limits access to important resources including bank and check-cashing services, pharmacies, libraries, housing, and police services (Lagunes, Levin, & Dittmann, 2012). Undocumented parents face additional challenges as IDs may be required to volunteer at children’s schools or pick them up from child-care (de Graauw, 2014).

In 2015 two Midwestern counties (Washtenaw County, Michigan and Johnson County, Iowa) became the eighth and ninth U.S. localities to issue ID cards regardless of immigration status. These grassroots initiatives, the first local government-issued ID programs in the Midwest, were spearheaded by local activists and advocates who had witnessed—or experienced firsthand—the challenges of living without locally accepted IDs. The Washtenaw ID Project and the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa each worked with community members, county officials, and law enforcement with the goal of developing IDs that were accessible, secure from fraud, and widely accepted by area businesses, service providers, and law enforcement.

These programs are well suited to the 2016 Cambio de Colores theme, “Building Bridges.” Local IDs were designed to serve not only undocumented immigrants but also others that face challenges in accessing ID: the elderly, transgender individuals, individuals with

chronic mental illness, residentially unstable individuals, and those displaced by natural disaster or domestic violence.

This panel included several perspectives on these innovative programs. Representatives from the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa and the Washtenaw ID Project shared lessons from years of organizing, advocacy, and policy development. They discussed each county's process of identifying the need for local IDs, organizing to promote local ID policies, and implement the ID policies. Both groups worked to promote local IDs widely, including to those with state-issued IDs, so that local IDs were not stigmatized as substandard forms of identification.

Researchers from University of Michigan School of Public Health and Social Work and University of Iowa College of Public Health shared findings from a multi-site, mixed-methods longitudinal evaluation of these programs. The objective was to evaluate whether community IDs increased access to community resources. Researchers partnered with the community agencies above to develop and administer surveys to ID applicants on the day they applied for ID (n=407). In Washtenaw County, qualitative interviews on the day of ID application (n=18) provided richer data about applicants' day-to-day experiences prior to accessing ID. Researchers presented preliminary findings about changes in participants' day-to-day experiences and access to resources since being issued ID.

The panelists concluded with recommendations for designing local ID policies in other communities, including eligibility criteria, administration process and community engagement.

*Keywords:* Community organizing, government-issued identification, local policy, evaluation, collaborative research, community-engaged research, public health

---

## **Introduction**

In 2015, two Midwestern counties (Washtenaw County, MI and Johnson County, IA) became the eighth and ninth U.S. localities to issue ID cards to residents regardless of their immigration statuses. These grassroots initiatives, the first local government-issued ID programs in the Midwest, were led by local activists and advocates who hoped to enhance service access and community inclusion for several groups who face challenges in accessing ID: undocumented immigrants, the elderly, transgender individuals, individuals with chronic mental illness, residentially unstable individuals, and those displaced by natural disaster or domestic violence. Our panel presentation included representatives from the Washtenaw ID Project and the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa, who described the years of community organizing that brought these two local ID policies about. Community advocates were joined by students and academic researchers from the Univer-

sity of Michigan and the University of Iowa, who together described collaborative efforts to evaluate the effects of these new ID policies on the communities they serve.

## **Background**

### **Local IDs in context: the national and state landscape for ID policy and practice**

The federal REAL ID Act of 2005 requires that in order for state-issued IDs to be used for federal identification purposes, states must ensure that state IDs are issued to persons who can prove their documented status (Mathema, 2015). This has led many U.S. states, including all Midwestern states except Illinois, to deny ID to undocumented immigrants (see Figure 1). At the same time, many U.S. citizens also lack government-issued photo ID: a 2006 nationally representative survey found that 11% of adult U.S. citizens do not have valid ID. For US citizens,

lack of ID was disproportionately high among the elderly, African Americans, Latinos, and individuals earning less than \$35,000 per year (Brennan Center for Justice, 2006). ID access is especially difficult for individuals with chronic mental illness, individuals who are transgender and do not identify with the gender marker assigned on their federal ID, and those who are homeless, residentially unstable, formerly incarcerated, or displaced by natural disasters or domestic abuse (Wilson, 2009). These challenges in accessing ID occur in a racialized context: in an experimental study in New Haven, CT, researchers observed non-Latino White and Latino male actors making identical transactions and found that Latino customers were carded at a higher rate than White customers (Ditlmann & Lagunes, 2014).

**Figure 1. State ID policy and locations of active county or municipal ID programs as of March 2016.** State-level image adapted from Park (2015) with local-level information from Mathema (2015).



Local government-issued IDs have emerged as a response to the patchwork of restrictive ID policies across the country. They began in New Haven, CT, in 2006, and have since spread to several other municipalities (San Francisco, CA; Oakland, CA; Richmond, CA; Newark, NJ; New York, NY) (Figure 1). There are also local ID cards issued by non-governmental organizations in Mercer County, NJ and Greensboro, NC (Mathema, 2015). Localities throughout the U.S. and the Midwest have increasingly considered local ID programs, but the first two local IDs to come to the Midwest were Johnson County, IA and Washtenaw County, MI.

## Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa and Johnson County Community ID

The Center for Worker Justice (CWJ) is located in Iowa City, IA (Figure 1) and was founded in 2012 by a coalition of religious, community, labor and immigrant organizations. CWJ is a membership-driven organization of low-wage workers: worker-members unite across race and immigration statuses to achieve social and economic justice through education, organizing, direct services and community alliances. CWJ members and allies identified a local, county-issued “Community ID” as a primary organizing goal early in the formation of the organization after a survey of community members revealed that relationships with police were a primary concern. The Community ID was identified as a tool to improve relationships with local law enforcement and increase confidence in reporting crime. CWJ chose to organize at the county level because many potential beneficiaries of the Community ID live outside city limits or work in a different municipality than their city of residence. The Johnson County Board of Supervisors approved the Community ID in April 2015 and IDs were first issued in July 2015.

**Figure 2. Johnson County, IA (in black) and Washtenaw County, MI (in grey).**



## Synod/Washtenaw ID Project and Washtenaw County ID

Organized in 2012, The Washtenaw ID Project is a joint public-private partnership between the County of Washtenaw, MI and local area advo-

cacy organizations led by Synod Community Services (see Figure 2). The central goal of the ID Project is to provide government-issued county identification cards to any county resident regardless of immigration status. After a two-year process of education, governmental and community advocacy, and planning, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners voted to fund the administration of the ID card program in November 2014.

The individual who first brought this issue to Synod's attention was an elderly White citizen with diabetes whose original identity credentials had all been lost by the hospital where she had received treatment. Once discharged, she discovered that no physician in her insurance network would see her because she lacked a government-issued photo ID. Despite a pressing need for medical care, there were no exceptions to the Secretary of State's requirement that a specific set of original credentials be presented to obtain a state ID. Upon canvassing the advocacy and social service community for solutions, Synod learned that lack of ID was preventing a number of marginalized communities from accessing needed resources and services. This community-wide conversation gave rise to the Washtenaw ID Project.

### **Organizing for Local IDs and ID Policy Design**

#### **Important aspects of organizing for Johnson County**

In Johnson County, CWJ took a multi-pronged approach to organizing for the Community ID, uniting individuals who needed ID, faith leaders, academics and local government in presenting an argument for the Community ID. Early in the organizing process, CWJ members (including members who did not currently have a state ID or driver's license) met with local police departments and the county sheriff to ask for their support of the program and for their willingness to accept a county-issued photo ID as proof of identification. CWJ also partnered with students in the Advanced Immigration Law and Policy Project, led by law professor Stella Burch Elias at the University of Iowa. In 2013 Elias'

students created a report for Iowa City about the feasibility of a Community ID (Fleck & Moody, 2013). In April 2014, CWJ members, Professor Elias, and local faith leaders spoke at a bilingual community forum about the need for the Community ID. CWJ also created multimedia materials and circulated a pledge to tally the number of people who would get an ID if the program were created. Throughout the advocacy process, CWJ relied on direct action (marches and demonstrations) to unite CWJ members and allies and present a visual show of support for the Community ID.

#### **Important aspects of organizing for Washtenaw County**

Beginning in 2012, Synod channeled a growing community conversation around negative outcomes for those who lack ID into an organizing campaign. Several decision points were crucial to this effort: First (1) Synod chose to organize the ID Project at the county level, both to accommodate individuals who live in different townships, and to align with the county's management of other vital statistic functions (e.g., birth certificates, veteran's cards). Second (2), the ID Project actively worked to prevent the ID from being associated only with the community of undocumented immigrants by forming a coalition including members and advocates of the homeless community, the transgender community, the undocumented community, the African American community, and individuals with disabilities. Third (3), the ID Project used parallel organizing, promoting discourse and planning with and between members of the affected community and local policy makers. Fourth (4), with the support and leadership of Sheriff Jerry Clayton of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office, project staff worked to ensure that all law enforcement agencies in the county agreed to accept the county ID as valid identification. After two years of discussions, all jurisdictions had agreed to accept the ID.

Fifth (5), the ID Project promoted the ID among local institutions providing fundamental health, safety, and education services. As of August

2016, all libraries and health care institutions, three area pharmacies, and two banks had agreed to accept the County ID for accessing their services. Last (6), the ID Project initiated outreach with local retailers and universities to defeat the possibility of stigma attaching to the County ID. The goal was for the ID card to be incentivized with retailer discounts so students and other residents could be persuaded to get a county ID even if they already had a state ID or driver's license. This would help ensure that marginalized communities were not the only people utilizing the county ID for identification, which could stigmatize the card and reduce its utility for those who most need it.

## **Community ID**

### **Community ID Study Team and Community ID Evaluation.**

A bilingual (Spanish/English) team of undergraduate and graduate students and researchers from the University of Michigan (School of Public Health and School of Social Work) and University of Iowa (College of Public Health) worked in collaboration with the Center for Worker Justice, Synod, Johnson County, and Washtenaw County to conduct a study evaluating whether a local ID program affected access to services, feelings of community belonging, and chronic stress of life without a state-issued ID or driver's license.

The mixed-methods study incorporated a longitudinal survey of ID applicants and a secondary record review of all ID applications from the first six weeks of each ID program. This was complemented by qualitative data collection through field notes and in-depth interviews with a subset of ID applicants. Following the evaluation, the study team disseminated results to increase awareness and support for community-wide use of local IDs.

### **Quantitative Methods**

The quantitative portion of the Community ID program evaluation involved surveys with ID

applicants and a secondary record review. Baseline and follow-up surveys were used to assess participants' experiences accessing resources and services, sociodemographic information, and experience applying for the ID (Wave 2). Surveys were administered on the day participants applied for their IDs (n=407) and six months after applying for their IDs (n=139). Surveys took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete, were available in both English and Spanish, and could be completed either with a bilingual evaluator or individually. The secondary record review provided further information regarding the ID application process. Researchers reviewed ID applications, identified which documents were accepted or not, and identified recommendations for future changes that could be made to make the process more accessible.

### **Qualitative Methods**

The evaluation also included two forms of qualitative data: in-depth interviews with Washtenaw ID holders and field notes from the Washtenaw ID evaluation team. Trained interviewers conducted in-depth interviews with 18 Washtenaw ID card holders who identified as lacking documented status, having a chronic mental illness, being transgender, and/or experiencing housing instability or homelessness. Semi-structured interview questions centered on participants' ID-related experiences prior to having the Washtenaw ID and their expectations for use of the Washtenaw ID. Interviews ranged from 5 minutes to 20 minutes. Additionally, evaluators took field notes at several events in support of the Washtenaw ID policy, during the data collection process, and when assisting applicants with applying for the Washtenaw ID.

### **Collaborative Model**

Our collaborative model used the research process to leverage support for the ID program wherever possible. For example, in addition to collecting data, bilingual researchers also assisted ID applicants in interacting with non-Spanish-speaking county

staff. Modest study incentives (\$10 or \$15) helped to offset the cost of county IDs. As described below, the research team also worked to promote ID uptake as it disseminated study results.

### **Dissemination strategies**

Both evaluation sites engaged several dissemination strategies to share preliminary evaluation findings with ID policy advocates and county residents more broadly. In Washtenaw County, we developed several articles (e.g. Lopez, LeBrón, Fa'Aola, & Cowan, 2015) for Groundcover News, a local newspaper managed and distributed by members of the homeless community. Our goal was to raise awareness of the Washtenaw ID and to enhance readers' understanding of the salience of ID in the day-to-day lives of several populations who experience contested access to government-issued ID. We also developed an article featuring the perspective of an ally on these issues, in an effort to encourage current US government-issued ID holders to leverage their ID privileges to support the use and acceptance of the Washtenaw ID.

In Johnson County, the research team co-hosted a Community ID anniversary party to celebrate the program and share preliminary study results with CWJ members. We began by asking CWJ members to share their experiences with the ID (if they were able to access one), and shared study results in several different mediums including facilitated discussion, posters, interactive activities, and handouts. We shared study results and invited further conversation regarding: where the ID had been accepted/rejected; why particular businesses or institutions had rejected the ID; how CWJ members could promote access to and acceptance of the ID; and next steps for organizing. Another topic was the stigmatization of the ID.

### **Other synergies between research and community**

In Washtenaw County, members of the research team worked with the Washtenaw ID Project on a "Solidarity in Action" campaign to promote ID

uptake among students at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. This included informational sessions about the importance of ID policy to vulnerable communities and a "solidarity march" in which students proceeded to the County Clerk's office to apply for County IDs.

In Johnson County, undergraduate students working on the ID evaluation identified an opportunity to promote the ID among international students, who comprise 11.3% of the student body at the University of Iowa. The students learned that many international students' only forms of valid identification are their visas and passports, and that carrying these important documents in daily life distresses many students. The Community ID may help international students to feel more included in the community and provide them with a safe, locally accepted, and alternative form of identification. Undergraduates working on the ID Evaluation took the initiative to organize a Community ID registration clinic for the Fall 2017 International Student Orientation.

### **Conclusions**

Our collaborative partnerships across disciplines, sectors, and states have endeavored to broaden the evidence base for local government-issued IDs, community-driven interventions that have the potential to ease day-to-day life for many members of our increasingly diverse communities. We have focused on the first two local ID programs in the Midwest and have found that ID programs benefit from a great deal of collaboration not only for their design and enactment, but also to continue functioning in ways that benefit those who need them most. We recommend that localities interested in developing their own local ID policy build broad coalitions across multiple groups affected by restrictive state ID policies. We advocate for the development of sustainable, equitable partnerships that will be able to provide ongoing feedback and support for implemented local ID policies.

**Table 1. Basic information about the Community ID programs in Washtenaw County, Michigan and Johnson County, Iowa**

	Washtenaw County, MI	Johnson County, IA
<b>Program launched</b>	June 2015	July 2015
<b>County population</b>	354,240	139,155
<b>ID advocacy</b>	Washtenaw ID Task Force	Center for Worker Justice
<b>ID administration</b>	County Clerk's Office	County Auditor's Office
<b>Hours of administration</b>	At first M 8:30-4, W 8:30-4, F 8:30-12, now M-F 8:30-4:30	M-F 7:45-5:30
<b>ID requirements</b>	300 point system	1 ID doc from category A or 2 ID docs from category B
<b>ID price</b>	\$25	\$8
<b>ID receipt</b>	ID received on day of application	ID sent to mailing address
<b>Financial Support</b>	ID Scholarship Fund	Community ID Study created ID Scholarship Fund-distributed by CWJ
<b>Homelessness</b>	Can get ID if homeless	No ID without permanent address
<b>County staff</b>	English only	English only
<b>Application support</b>	ID Support Clinic	None/Community ID Study
<b>Age limits</b>	14 or older	All ages
<b>ID benefits</b>	Discounts at participating businesses	Discounts at participating businesses
<b>Acceptance at banks</b>	Two banks accept as primary ID <i>if</i> applicant also has a social security card	One credit union accepts as primary ID

## References

- Brennan Center for Justice. (2006, November). Citizens without proof: a survey of Americans' possession of documentary proof of citizenship and photo identification. New York University School of Law.
- de Graauw, E. (2014). Municipal ID Cards for Undocumented Immigrants Local Bureaucratic Membership in a Federal System. *Politics & Society*, 42(3), 309–330.
- Ditlmann, R. K., & Lagunes, P. (2014). The (Identification) Cards You Are Dealt: Biased Treatment of Anglos and Latinos Using Municipal-Issued versus Unofficial ID Cards. *Political Psychology*, 35(4), 539–555.
- Fleck, E., & Moody, J. (2013). An Iowa City Community Identification Card: A Report for the City of Iowa City on the Feasibility of Implementing a Community Identification Card Program (Advanced Immigration Law and Policy Report). University of Iowa College of Law. Retrieved from [https://ailp.law.uiowa.edu/sites/ailp.law.uiowa.edu/files/wysiwyg\\_uploads/An%20Iowa%20City%20Community%20Identification%20Card%20FINAL.pdf](https://ailp.law.uiowa.edu/sites/ailp.law.uiowa.edu/files/wysiwyg_uploads/An%20Iowa%20City%20Community%20Identification%20Card%20FINAL.pdf)
- Lagunes, P. F., Levin, B. M., & Ditlmann, R. K. (2012). Documenting the Undocumented: A Review of the United States' First Municipal ID Program. *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy*, 24.
- Lopez, W., LeBrón, A., Fa' Aola, J., & Cowan, K. (2015, July). The Washtenaw County ID. Groundcover News, p. 4. Ann Arbor, MI.
- Mathema, S. (2015, November). Providing identification to unauthorized immigrants: the state and local landscape of identification for unauthorized immigrants. Center for American Progress.
- Park, H. (2015, March 29). Which states make life easier or harder for unauthorized immigrants. New York Times.
- Wilson, A. B. (2009). It Takes ID to Get ID: The New Identity Politics in Services. *Social Service Review*, 83(1), 111–132. <http://doi.org/10.1086/599025>

## **Acknowledgements**

Neither Community ID program would exist without the advocacy and bravery of many people living without ID in both Washtenaw and Johnson County. Likewise, we are grateful to participants in the study who shared their experiences.

We are grateful to all of our partners in this project, including the Washtenaw ID Task Force, the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa, the Johnson County Auditor's Office, and the Washtenaw County Clerk's Office.

Data collection volunteers in Iowa include Ann Mwangi, Bill Riker, Julian Robles, Gregorio Sánchez, Lauren Slagel, Louise Wolf-Novak, and Claire Weidman.

Funding for this project came from the Curtis Center for Research and Evaluation at the University of Michigan School of Social Work and the Center for Social Epidemiology and Population Health at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. We are also grateful for logistical support from the Department of Community and Behavioral Health at the University of Iowa College of Public Health.

We thank our faculty mentors on this project, Jorge Delva (University of Michigan School of Social Work), Belinda Needham, and Philippa Clarke (University of Michigan School of Public Health).



---

## The Changing Face of Students: Meeting Language, Academic, and Social Needs of Recent Immigrant Youth

Jamie Cardwell and Karina Arango

*Ritenour School District, Missouri  
International Welcome Center*

---

### **Abstract**

Relocation across national borders poses unique challenges and possibilities to newcomer immigrant students. As they enter new schools, newcomer students face a number of challenges in their adjustment. School districts across the country have developed special schools or programs designed to meet their language, academic, and social needs. This paper describes the efforts of one suburban district in the St. Louis area to meet the needs of newcomers by opening a new International Welcome Center.

*Keywords:* newcomers, school districts, immigrant students, education

---