



City of Racine, Wisconsin

# COMMON COUNCIL

## AGENDA BRIEFING MEMORADUM (ABM)

**COMMITTEE: Public Works and Services**

**LEGISLATION ITEM #: 0803-20**

**Related Items #:**

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**AGENDA DATE:** Public Works and Services, December 8, 2020

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**DEPARTMENT: Administration**

**ABM Prepared by:** Shannon Powell, Chief of Staff

**Review by:** Jennifer Williams, Assistant City Attorney

**Approved by:** Kathleen Fischer, Interim City Administrator

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**SUBJECT:** Communication sponsored by Mayor Mason requesting to update the Racine Works Ordinance.

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Racine Works Ordinance was put into place in June of 2018. The state purpose of the ordinance is:

“U.S. Department of Labor statistics show that the unemployment rate in the City of Racine is one of the highest in the state and is consistently higher than other parts of the State of Wisconsin. The City of Racine Common Council finds that the high unemployment rate, especially among low and moderate income groups, has a substantial adverse impact on the social and economic fiber of the entire community. The Racine Works Program is designed and intended to reduce unemployment by creating work opportunities for Racine residents and by retaining current jobs of residents through imposition of a requirement that, for certain public works contracts, a designated percent of project hours worked under the contract be performed by qualified low-income Racine residents with a certification. Through targeted strategies to include more city residents in city funded projects, the objective of the Racine Works Program is to support more families joining the middle class.”

29 In short, the ordinance puts a requirement on contractors and developers that any publicly funded or  
30 incented project whom receives at least \$200,000 from the City or one of the utilities must hire City  
31 residents for the equivalent of 20% of the total project labor hours.

32 The 2020 City budget approved funding to contract with a vendor who helps the City recruit, train, and  
33 place City residents on projects. The contractor also helps certify that City residents are being placed  
34 and that contractors are meeting their obligations. The City has contracted with WRTP/Big Step, who  
35 also manages a similar program for the City of Milwaukee. The City and WRTP/Big Step worked diligently  
36 to refine our efforts to better reach City residents and work with contractors to meet their needs. We  
37 are now building a pool of City residents who are certified under the Racine Works Program, and who  
38 contractors can hire and know those work hours count towards the residency requirement hours.

39 As we refined this process and reviewed the ordinance, we realized we needed to make tweaks to the  
40 ordinance to better reflect the intent and process we use for the Racine Works Program.

41 The ordinance makes the following changes:

- 42 1. Eligibility of Racine citizens for participation,  
43 The edits to the RWP include definitions for who qualify for program admission based  
44 on residency, as well as specific guidelines for proof of residency, as well as an outline  
45 for what the RWP considers “underemployed.” In addition, the amendment includes a  
46 provision that explains once a resident achieves certification how long that certification  
47 is valid, and the process for re-certification.  
48 See 46-41(b), Eligibility.
- 49 2. Compliance requirements:  
50 Sections 46-41 (c) provides detail for exceptions to the RWP, and the procedure for  
51 obtaining project exception approval when a project may not be compliant. In the  
52 original version, exemption could be predetermined and approved proactively by the  
53 Commissioner of Public Works or the Director of the Water Utility. The new language  
54 requires the contractor or developer to prove that they need an exemption.  
55 Section 46-41(e) contains an amendment for the process of submitting documentation  
56 to demonstrate compliance with RWP requirements.
- 57 3. Responsibility for oversight.  
58 Throughout Section 46-41, the responsibility for compliance, record keeping, and  
59 communication with RWP participant residents and projects is moved from the  
60 HR/Affirmative Action officer to the City purchasing agent  
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62 **FISCAL IMPAC:** none

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64 **OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES:**

- 65 1) Approve the requested changes in item number 0803-20 to the Racine Work’s Ordinance  
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- 67 2) Deny the requested changes in item number 0803-20 to the Racine Work’s Ordinance

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69 **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

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Approve the requested changes in item number 0803-20 to the Racine Work's Ordinance