



KALAMAZOO COUNTY

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ISS: 02/15/2017
EXP: 02/15/2020
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IDENTIFICATION CARD

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THE KALAMAZOO COUNTY ID

Needs, Barriers, and Possibilities

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THE KALAMAZOO COUNTY ID PROGRAM

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Funded by: Center for Civic Engagement, Kalamazoo College

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Recognizing a need and addressing the barriers

There are at least 17 municipalities or counties in the country offering identification cards to their residents¹. These cards provide a means to access important services that often require official photo documentation. Across the country, myriad communities² do not have access to state-issued IDs for various reasons, the most prominent being the demand to furnish documentation that is inaccessible to them³. As a result, numerous individuals within our communities are unable to identify themselves. In this brief report, we provide an overview of some of the institutions that can exclude community members on the basis of an inability to furnish identification. We also outline some of the methods utilized across the nation to address this growing problem. Finally, a discussion of the merits of the development of a countywide ID program is provided.

The first municipal identification project originated in New Haven, Connecticut. Numerous localities followed or expanded on New Haven's model to promote the inclusion of all residents in the area. Within Kalamazoo County, while conducting an online search of local institutions⁴ and the documents necessary to receive services, we found a potentially overwhelming need for a localized ID program. This need is accentuated by the difficulties for

¹ South Bend, Indiana recently became the latest municipality to offer their own ID (Porter, 2016; La Casa de Amistad, 2017).

² Wilson (2009) cites the following communities as particularly at risk of being unable to secure IDs: "individuals living in poverty, those with psychiatric disabilities or substance abuse problems, prisoners and other institutionalized populations, victims of natural disasters, the elderly, children, people who are homeless, and those with tenuous housing arrangements" (p. 111-112).

³ This can include documents that take a long time to become available or that require the furnishing of documents that are not available such as specific types of photo identification.

⁴ Research assistants developed a matrix that contained information regarding the documentation necessary to receive access to health care institutions; banks and credit unions; pharmacies; community centers; schools; and other vital social spaces –see Addendum 1.

many individuals to secure state-issued IDs and the current political context in the legislature that is resistant to increasing necessary access.

There is no legal statute that requires individuals to carry State-issued identification, but it is a necessity in everyday life. Given the current context, many individuals and institutions take for granted the ability for people to identify themselves⁵. This is particularly salient given the prominence of globalizing as well as securitization discourse. While these narratives often operate at the macro level of our society, they seep into the localized space and become normalized. For instance, after a cursory search on the necessary documentation for a resident of this County to turn on utilities in their home, we found that the City of Kalamazoo requires one of the following identification documents: Valid driver's license; Michigan Driver's license; or a permit from the city or township if the dwelling is located outside city limits. Similarly, Consumers Energy Company demands the presence of a social security card as well as a driver's license to initiate their services. AmeriGas operates in the same manner and demands a social security card; state issued ID card; or a valid driver's license. While customer service workers at these locations may have a degree of discretion in allowing alternate documents, that type of implementation would be uneven at best and the provision of services would be delineated according to luck (finding a person aware of their discretionary capability and willing to use it) or differential understanding of bureaucratic procedure. This is present in myriad locations, as an example, Amy Blank Wilson (2009), describes a community member who stood in line to receive medication without the means of identifying themselves. At the pharmacy, the individual was told that an old bottle of the same medication would serve as sufficient ID, however, when they returned with the bottle a different individual was working behind the desk and refused to

⁵ One timely example is the initial demand for ID cards in order to receive water during the ongoing Flint water crisis (LeBron et al, 2017)

accept the bottle. The unevenness of implementation is common in bureaucratic spaces and the presence of an accessible ID card can make a significant difference for community members.

Need for identification is not limited to utilities or pharmacies. There are vast similarities when it comes to financial institutions such as banks, credit unions, and check-cashing services. In relation to the latter, all six locations examined (Check into Cash; Cash Store; Approved Cash; Advance America; Check'n Go; and Instant Cash Advance) required valid government issued ID to obtain small loans and they demanded exorbitant fees for cashing checks. Banks also require government-issued identification to open an account. In fact, even social institutions that provide important services, such as libraries and some food banks require the presence of a government-issued identification to receive access to goods and services.

Although the policies within the aforementioned spaces currently demand state-issued identification, there is wide precedent in other localities that acceptance of a municipal or county-issued ID is present. There is also room for the County to demand the recognition of their municipal identification where its funds are utilized and the use of it to receive a service is not prohibited by law. For example, San Francisco requires city-funded institutions to accept their municipal ID (Manuel & Garcia, 2014).

The provision and comfort in contacting essential services are also affected by the inability to furnish identification. Police and Fire departments as well as Emergency Medical Services, can benefit from the ability to reliably identify individuals with whom they interact. Additionally the comfort of residents when contacting them in times of need is increased when residents have government-issued identification. This may be particularly salient when the local community is informed about the recognition of a municipal ID by police officers. In relation to the Fire department as well as Emergency Medical Personnel, these entities may be well served

in being able to identify individuals in order to contact next of kin in case of death, injury, or prolonged absence (particularly in relation to elderly people with memory loss or individuals with cognitive or psychological disability).

In relation to Kalamazoo County, the Needs and Barriers Sub Committee determined that the following communities would potentially benefit from the provision of a countywide ID program: Low-income elderly; youth in the foster system; transgender residents; emancipated youth; the homeless; individuals with physical or cognitive disability(ies); undocumented migrants; survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking; and individuals recently released from the prison system⁶. In the context of this report, it is important for us to recognize that “benefit” does not signal an answer to all problems experienced by the communities in question, but rather an increase in the accessibility of local services. That is, as Els de Graauw (2014) reminds us, the presence of an ID does not create new benefits, it only makes the benefits for which residents already qualify more accessible. The needs and barriers for each of the communities outlined above requires further contextualization as there are wide divergences. However, there is also significant overlap and this report primarily focuses on these convergences.

A prominent limitation of any municipal and county-driven identification process is that most state and federal programs may not recognize it. In short, the Kalamazoo County ID program may not facilitate access to subsidized housing services, state-funded food stamps, welfare benefits, etc. Furthermore, it will not serve as an alternative to a driver’s license or a

⁶ Kalamazoo County is not the first local entity experiencing a joint effort by different marginalized groups working together to bring an ID program to fruition. Els de Graw (2014), in detailing the San Francisco ID card, outlines a coalition consisting of the ACLU of Northern California, Bay Area Immigrants Rights Coalition, Coalition on Homelessness, Pride at Work, San Francisco Labor Council, and the Transgender Law Center, amongst others.

means to obtaining one for those already barred from one. At the same time, for individuals eligible for these services, the ID may prove quite useful in advancing their application. For instance, according to the Secretary of State's list of necessary documents to procure a driver's license or ID⁷, the fifth bullet point under "identity verification" relates to "Photo ID card issued by a federal or Michigan government agency." Common sense would dictate that the proposed program, given that it is issued by a Michigan county, would satisfy this requirement. This would be particularly useful for individuals seeking to obtain a State-issued ID but unable to do so because of their inability to furnish any of the other eligible "identity verification" criteria (Wilson, 2009).

Expanding the recognition of needs & barriers and providing leadership

With thoughtful consideration and credentialing, the opportunity to obtain a government issued ID can be expanded to many communities. While most municipal and countywide ID projects across the nation appear primarily focused on providing access to essential services for the undocumented population, the Kalamazoo County ID project deviates from this explicit focus and recognizes that multiple communities are currently excluded from state-issued IDs. As outlined in the previous section, the provision of a County ID benefits multiple communities. Doing so however, demands recognition of the need to construct a new process of verification and dissemination of the ID. In short, there is a conundrum – how do you provide a picture ID to communities who do not already possess one? Most of the methods utilized across the country are geared to individuals who can access a passport or international identification document. This provision, while useful to some, must be expanded to ensure a higher degree of inclusivity and accessibility. To do so, the county may merge different criteria from across the nation rather than

⁷ http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DE40_032001_20459_7.pdf

replicate a single model⁸. For instance, Detroit allows for the use of “Offender Tracking Information System (OTIS) record” as well as “Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) service point ID” as valid documents verifying identity⁹. The inclusion of these documents may facilitate a more accessible means of procuring the county ID for individuals recently released from the prison system as well as the homeless population. Furthermore, the documents come from recognized institutions. In short, expanding the criteria employed by the state of Michigan is necessary for this card to be useful to all the target communities. Detroit serves as an important case study given its proximity to Kalamazoo County. The Detroit Municipal ID boasts the largest collection of government and business recognition across the nation with over 100 entities that recognize the ID as not just valid (Police services, schools, utilities, and banking institutions), but there is also significant savings attached to its use in many local businesses¹⁰. Overall, there does not appear to be any negative impact from the expansion of criteria as demonstrated by Detroit’s program.

The Kalamazoo County ID may also benefit the local transgender population. This benefit stems from the availability of primarily using one’s preferred name on the front of the ID, choosing the gender to be displayed rather being required to use the individual’s assigned sex at birth, or even the outright removal of gender as an identifying category on the ID. According to Michael L. Johnson Jr (2006), transgender people experience “violence, hostility, and discrimination when they have to utilize an identification card that unnecessarily highlights the dissonance between their sex at birth and their lived gender” (p. 4). Individuals who are

⁸ See subsection titled “Developing the criteria for an identification document” and “Criteria for the Kalamazoo County ID” for further information on the proposed list of accepted documents to receive a Kalamazoo County ID as well as the mechanism (point system).

⁹ <http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/Health/DetroitID/DetroitID-Checklist-English.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.detroitmi.gov/Government/Departments-and-Agencies/Detroit-Health-Department/Benefits>

transitioning or who do not identify with pre-assigned sex are currently required by the state to adopt an official identity and sex on their identification document that may be unacceptable to them. This is a major problem and creates the potential for conflict, risk, and victimization of this population.

An additional barrier identified by the research group relates to age. While some cities and counties place age minimums to receive their ID, places like Detroit, MI and Richmond, CA do not. This is particularly useful for emancipated youth but may also benefit others. According to a report compiled by The Center for Popular Democracy in 2015, youth can benefit from municipal and county IDs as a source of proof of identity when enrolling in afterschool programs. Furthermore, the inclusion of children will also facilitate greater adoption of the card, particularly if linked to local businesses as discussed in the following section.

With respect to age, the creation of a municipal identification card would also benefit senior residents. “Eighteen percent of seniors do not have picture ID,” (The Center for Popular Democracy, 2015) often because they do not find identification worth going through the process of obtaining documents needed for a state ID. As a result, senior residents resort to using their Medicare or social security cards for identification, but these do not include a photograph, address, and may at times be illegal or insufficient forms of identification, thus taking away from their recognition for many city benefits or institutions.

As mentioned above, the Kalamazoo County ID card would also benefit the homeless population, who are unable to obtain state ID due to their lack of an address. The criteria proposed for the Kalamazoo County ID card allows homeless residents to use the address of a homeless shelter or social services agency as their permanent address. While many homeless residents have an Electronic Benefit Transfer card (EBT card), it does not include their address

and in some cases does not include a photograph. Kalamazoo County's identification criteria would also accept the EBT card as a document providing points towards receiving the county identification card. This makes the card more accessible to the homeless population and can decrease some of the barriers for the accessibility of needed resources to the homeless population. To be clear, the ID may not be useful for individuals seeking to use state and federal programs, but that recognition can be gained through communication with both entities. Furthermore, given the current wording from the Secretary of State, the County ID would satisfy a requirement to obtain Michigan ID, which homeless individuals can use to obtain State and Federal resources.

Yet another population that would benefit from the adoption of a County ID card are residents recently returning from prison whose documentation either expired or were lost during incarceration. The lack of identification for recently released residents results in hardship in the search for jobs and housing, which can often be requirements for parole. Given this context, difficulty in obtaining these stabilizing supports can impact recidivism. Therefore, transitioning back into the community after incarceration with no identification is exceedingly challenging. Loss of documents while incarcerated is not uncommon and identification documents provided by incarcerating authorities may not be widely recognized by either governmental institutions or local businesses.

Linking the local economy and cost of the ID

Two localities stand out when analyzing the adoption of an ID card by businesses. In San Francisco, "all city agencies and entities receiving city funds" accept the ID "unless state or

federal law requires otherwise.”¹¹ In addition, six credit unions accept the ID. Thirty-three businesses also attach benefits to displaying the ID in their locale including 10-20% off services to “BOGO” specials or other additional service/products with purchase. As previously mentioned, Detroit boasts the largest local business adoption in the country. Over 100 local businesses promote discounts upon presentation of the ID. It is far easier to describe the businesses by category rather than outline them. These categories include but are not limited to: apparel, home and office, art, pet care, dental, electronics, food, fitness, and training. Overall, there appears to be a well-concerted effort not only to publicize the presence of the ID but also to use it as a means to keep local money within local businesses. Finally, the Detroit municipal ID is also recognized as valid by 1 Detroit Credit Union and Detroit Land Bank Authority.

Ongoing outreach is of the utmost importance. While Detroit and San Francisco excelled at linking the local economy to their municipal ID, it may not be the norm. The value of the ID is clear, it can benefit the local economy and provide additional revenue to the issuing entity. Lagunes, Levin, and Diltmann (2012) describe New Haven’s ID as a card that far surpassed expectations. This card, serving as both library card and debit card, was overwhelmingly adopted by residents, Lagunes et al (2012) highlight a ten-hour waiting line the day the ID was launched. Furthermore, “By 9 August 2007, more than 2,500 people had signed up and the city exceeded its goal of issuing 5,000 cards in its first year in just five months... As of September 2009, more than 8,000 cards had been issued” (p. 51). The Center for Popular Democracy (2015) explains that as of 2015, “New York City’s program, ‘IDNYC’ [had] enrolled over 215,000 people in the first six months of operation, and [had] established partnerships with more than 30 local cultural institutions” (p. 1).

¹¹ <http://sfgov.org/countyclerk/sf-city-id-card-using-your-card>

Given the possibility of cost recovery and potential profit under robust outreach efforts, the price of the ID may be negotiable. Given the card's premise as an accessible alternative to a difficult-to-attain state ID, cost must be considered. Under-served populations are also often under-funded. For this reason, cost can be prohibitive, and it is imperative that the County finds the most economically accessible means for the community to access the County ID. There are multiple localities that charge a sliding scale (Oakland, CA; Detroit, MI; Roselle, NJ) or provide them free of charge (New York, NY). Costs range from \$5 (Plainfield, NJ) to \$25 (multiple locations). The proposed cost for the Kalamazoo County ID card is \$10 to remain on par with the Michigan State ID card. The low cost of the card will facilitate greater adoption by the overall community and can present possibilities for revenue generation for the County. Furthermore, the Taskforce has initiated conversations with local funding entities to secure supplemental funding to cover or lower the cost for individuals who may be challenged to pay for the ID. The Taskforce has received positive feedback from these entities regarding financial support for the program.

Community support

There is widespread support for the development of a Kalamazoo County ID. Local institutions and businesses such as Arcadia Ales, Bank Street Farmer's Market, Borgess Medical Center, Catholic Charities Services, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Valley College, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, and Kalamazoo Public Schools, have already signed in support. Furthermore, the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage, as well as Kalamazoo Township, through their perspective municipal governments have voted to support this endeavor. Finally, as of the writing of this report, over 500 county residents have also signed a letter of support for the ID program.

A full list of endorsements is available in the following page. Please note that this list is partial and consistently growing.

Community Endorsements of May 19, 2017

Governmental Agencies
60th District Service Office
City of Kalamazoo
City of Portage
Township of Kalamazoo

Community Agencies and Organizations
Area Agency on Aging
CARES of Southwest Michigan
Community Services Charity
Douglas Neighborhood Association
Eastside Neighborhood Assoc.
Edison Neighborhood Assoc.
Farm Worker Legal Services
Goodwill
Gryphon Place
Head Start
Hispanic American Council
Home Access Center (HAC)
InterACT of Michigan
ISAAC
Justice for Our Neighbors
Kal Co Dem Party (KCDP)
Kal Community Mental Health
Kalamazoo Community Foundation
Kalamazoo Neigh. Housing Services
Kalamazoo Promise
KARSP
League of Women Voters
Loaves and Fishes
MI- Cure
MI Immigrant Rights Ctr (MIRC)
Michigan United
NAACP
Northside Ministerial Alliance
Open Doors
Partners in Housing Transition

Senior Services of SW Michigan
Urban Alliance
Vine Neighborhood Assoc.
Welcoming Michigan

Libraries
Kalamazoo Library, Wash Sq.
Kalamazoo Public Library
Oshtemo Public Library
Parchment Library
Portage District Library

Educational Institutions
ARCUS
Kalamazoo College
Kalamazoo Public Schools
KRESA
Portage Public Schools
Shamrock Montessori
Wandering Educators

Health Care
Borgess Health
Bronson Healthcare
Family Health Center
N. Warn Courtney -Physician

Businesses
A New Leaf
Arcadia Ales
Bab el Salom
Bank Street Farmer's Market
Community Promise Credit Union
Down Dog Yoga Center
Fiesta Burrito
Fletcher's Restaurant
Gorilla Gourmet
Gulliver on Wall Street
J Bird Vintage
LoDos

Los Brother's Restaurant
Nina's Café
Papa's Italian Sausage
Portage Printing
Quekas Restaurant
Victorian Bakery
Yopa
Zoorona

Developing the criteria for a County Identification Document

As discussed above, the rationale for a municipal identification document requires recognition of the plethora of individual barriers to a state-issued identification card. However, for this document to be valuable to the community, it must be recognized by relevant institutions such as policing and banking. Towards that end, the following table provides the result of a series of efforts aimed at compiling a robust and accessible list of documents that can make the Kalamazoo County ID a rigorous piece of identification. This list was compiled with input from the Compliance Committee and included feedback from the Kalamazoo County Sherriff.

Contributions from members of the police were invaluable, as a primary concern for the creation of this identification card was the ability for individuals to present themselves to police officers with the assurance that their identification would be recognized by law enforcement. This endeavor thus demanded that people involved in the structuring and management of policing services felt confident that the ID cards offered sufficient security features to prevent counterfeiting as well as a procedure to issue the ID that instilled confidence in its ability to accurately identify the cardholder. The New Haven Assistant Chief of Police explained that the “New Haven Resident card has been very helpful from a law enforcement perspective. Since the card was introduced, crime reporting has increased in Fair Haven, yet there were double-digit drops in every category of crime. Overall, the card has improved interactions between police and

undocumented residents, and has played an important role in building relationships and respect” (Center for Popular Democracy, 2015, p. 16). The ability for precarious immigration status populations to feel secure in reporting crime can not only ensure their safety but can also promote better relationships with law enforcement. These efforts are further strengthened with the proclamations by the Kalamazoo County Sherriff that officers under his purview will not enforce immigration law and the City of Kalamazoo’s policy to become a welcoming city. Finally, while the academic literature mainly focuses on the impact between law enforcement and the undocumented, similar effects may be possible with other vulnerable populations.

The banking industry is another space that was considered when developing the criteria for awarding this ID. Community Promise Credit Union is now ready to accept the ID and through continued efforts from the outreach committee, this number can continue to grow. Many localities around the county have recruited local banking institutions to accept their ID, integrated a bank account within their ID¹², or facilitated an either/both option.

To determine the criteria to issue a Kalamazoo County ID, four primary sources were consulted: the criteria for issuance of identification at Washtenaw County¹³, the city of Detroit¹⁴, New York City¹⁵, and the state of Michigan¹⁶. No new criterion was added. The documents in the list of criteria were divided into three discrete columns. Category 1 consists of Identity documents with a photo; Category 2 A & B are “other identity documents” without photo; and Category 3 are documents proving residence within Kalamazoo County.

¹² See Oakland, CA. & New Haven, CT.

¹³ http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/clerk_register/washtenaw-county-id-card-program/apply

¹⁴ <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DetroitID>

¹⁵ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/idnyc/card/how-to-apply.page>

¹⁶ http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DE40_032001_20459_7.pdf

We endeavored to compile accessible criteria to qualify for the Kalamazoo County ID. Beginning by following the example of Washtenaw County, Method A was developed and consists of point-based criteria that includes the presence of picture identification as the basis of awarding the ID. However, keeping in mind that some vulnerable populations may not have access to any picture identification, a “stacking” process was included in our model. As such a second method, “Method B” was developed. Under Method A an individual must gain 300 points from the combination of documents in both categories A and B **and** provide proof of current residence in the county. Method B provides the opportunity for individuals lacking photo identification to meet a higher threshold to prove their identity by providing 400 points worth of documents from category B **and** proof of current residence in the county. The latter will be particularly valuable for individuals who are for any number of reasons unable to procure picture identification, including but not limited to: some elderly, homeless community members, domestic violence survivors, and veterans.

The specific language suggested to inform community members of the process to apply for the ID card is as follows:

The Kalamazoo County Identification program is open to residents age 14 and older.

When applying for a Kalamazoo County ID card, you must fulfill one of two criteria:

- A. Provide documents worth at least 300 points from Section A **and** B and show proof of residency.
- B. Provide documents worth at least 400 points from Section B **and** show proof of residency.

Furthermore, the applicant must also provide a minimum of one identity credential that contains their date of birth

Spouses and domestic partners: Applicants who are unable to prove residency by providing one of the documents from Section C with their own name, may present a document with their spouse or domestic partner's name and either a certificate of marriage, civil union, or domestic

partnership, or a child's birth certificate, demonstrating the applicant's relationship to the spouse or domestic partner.

Criteria for the Kalamazoo County ID

Category 1- Provide at least one of the documents to get 300 points		
Credential	Current Document or expired within 5 years of application date. Point Value	Document expired within 5 to 10 years of application date. Point Value
Current MI State ID or Driver's license with Kalamazoo address	300	300
US or foreign passport	200	100
US or foreign driver license	200	100
US state identification card	200	100
Consular ID card	200	100
US or foreign military identification	200	100
Common Access Card (military Personnel)	200	100
Visa issued by a government agency	200	100
Tribal Identification Card	200	100
US Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-551)	200	100
US Work Permit/DACA with photo	200	100
Elector Identification Card with photo	200	100
Kalamazoo County ID Card (Renewals only, card surrendered)	300	100
Current MI Handgun License	200	200
Criminal Record Check (AFIS) with photograph	200	200
Offender Tracking Information System record (OTIS)	200	200
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) service point ID or record service with photo	200	200
Michigan Department of Corrections prisoner Identification card	200	200
Certificate of US Citizenship/Naturalization	200	200
Michigan social services agency card	100	100
Kalamazoo Metro Transit ID card with photo	75	75
US Union Photo ID	75	75
Educational Institution Identification Card	75	75
Educational Institution records with photo	75	75
Employee Identification Card	75	75

Category 2A: Other Identity Credentials	Points	Category 2B: Additional Credentials (within 60 days unless noted)	Points
Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card	150	Cable, phone, utility bill	75
Medicare card	150	Lease or sublease	75
US Selective Service Registration card	125	Local property tax statement (within 1 year)	75
US voter registration card	125	Property Mortgage payment receipt	75
I-797, I-797A/B or I-797D issued by DHS	125	Banking ,financial , credit card statement	75
US or foreign birth certificate (original or certified copy)	125	Employment pays stub	75
Court order issued by a state or federal court to verify applicant's identity	125	Health institution statement (within one year)	125
Social Security Card	125	Jury summons or court order	125
Military discharge or separation documents (DD-214)	125	USPS change of address confirmation	75
US marriage license or divorce decree (original or certified copy)	125	Letter form Dept. of Ed with proof of relationship	75
Michigan adoption record	125	Insurance statement	75
Michigan Driver Education certificate (for applicants 17 and younger only)	125	Survivors of domestic violence-letter form city agency	75
Criminal Record Check (AFIS) without a photograph	125	Letter from administration for Children's services	75
Taxpayer Identification number letter (ITIN) authorization letter (must contain applicant's name)	125		
Emancipation petition with file stamp	125		
Federal or State Tax Return	100		
Birth Certificate issued to child of applicant (must include name and date of birth of applicant)	100		
Employment verification form (I-9)	100		
Affidavit of identifying witness (witness must appear with the applicant and present photo ID)	100		
Criminal complaint or summons with proof of personal service	100		
Financial Institution account records	50		
Employment records (W-4, W-2, 1099 or Paystubs)	50		
School and Trade School records including diplomas and transcripts	50		
Baptismal records	50		

Category C: Proof of Kalamazoo Residency Documents must be current or dated within the previous 60 days from the applicable date.
Financial Institution account statement
Utility (Electricity, Gas, Heating, Water or Internet) or credit card bill or statement
Letter or record addressed to applicant from a school, college, or university located in Kalamazoo county that the applicant or child of the applicant attended.
Housing lease or rental agreement, unexpired (subleases are acceptable if accompanied by original lease)
Employment record including pay stub, W-2, W-4 or earnings statement issued with the name and address of employer
Life, health, auto or home insurance policy document
Letter or record from a hospital or medical treatment facility addressed to applicant, or letter confirming residency in the previous 60 days
Federal, state, or Kalamazoo County government-issued document, letter, or record.
Michigan title or vehicle registration
Letter or record from a religious organization, social services agency, or homeless shelter located in Kalamazoo County confirming residency or services provided within previous 60 days
Affidavit of Interdependence or copy of Marriage Certificate accompanied by residency document in name of head of household (head of household must appear with the applicant and present photo ID
Mortgage or local property tax statements

Features of the ID

According to the proposal from the taskforce, the machines that produce Kalamazoo County identification cards will have significant features to ensure they minimize the possibility of counterfeit. Proposed security features for the Kalamazoo County ID card include: polycarbonate card stock, faded security seal, 2-D barcode, digitalized signature, signature panel, foil stamp of county seal, embedded watermark, variable fluorescent/UV data, and a holographic laminate image. The ID card will also facilitate access for cardholders to become members of the organ donor registry. Additional features may be available depending on the specific equipment purchased. Furthermore, County staff will be trained in the recognition of original documents used to accrue points in order to meet the eligibility criteria to receive an ID.

The risk of fraud with municipal identification cards appear to be very low. According to the Center for Popular Democracy (2015), “there have been almost no instances of suspected fraud in any of the jurisdictions that currently run municipal ID card programs. When IDNYC released its first quarterly report to the City Council in March 2015, there were only two instances of possible fraud detected among more than 100,000 processed applications” (p.15). This is a 0.002% rate of *possible* fraud, a miniscule amount compared to 16,000 complaints of identity theft in New York State, with a population of 19.8 million, which is a 0.08% rate of fraud, 40 times larger than that of the NYCID¹⁷.

Implementation of the ID

The implementation of the ID program is as important as its conceptualization. For this card to be a success in relation to its accessibility and functionality, it must be accompanied by a careful and detailed procedure for its release and dissemination. This requires a continuously reflexive process that examines the possible limits of the ID and how to address them. This section details practices that provide for a procedure to ensure accountability and accessibility prior to, during, and after the card program has been unfurled.

Informing the community

Disseminating information regarding the presence, purpose, and value of the Kalamazoo County ID card is vital. Residents must be aware and knowledgeable of the benefits of the ID in order for this process to be successful. While the Outreach Sub-Committee of the Kalamazoo County ID Taskforce has met with multiple community organizations, this process must be continuous and may be complemented by advertising within County buildings, at social service

¹⁷ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dca/media/pr051515.page>

agencies, on buses, on public access television, and within local print publications. Furthermore, given the multiple public events present in the County throughout the year, there must be a concerted effort to disseminate information for new residents or individuals who live in the County that have not received information about the ID. Potential sites of outreach include orientation events at Kalamazoo's three institutions of higher education (Kalamazoo College, Western Michigan University, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College); at the Kalamazoo farmer's market; and at the many different festivals hosted locally including the Art Fair and Renaissance Faire.

Upon the passing of the County ID program, it will immediately be recognized by police forces at both the county and municipal level within Kalamazoo County several local libraries, multiple units of local government, as well as endorsing businesses, religious organizations, educational institutions, and a growing number of community agencies, organizations, and associations. Furthermore, Community Promise Credit Union has already approved the use of the ID to open a bank account and Old National Bank has agreed to allow the ID as an accepted document to cash checks and for use as a secondary piece of identification for opening bank accounts. Lastly, over a dozen local businesses have signed on to provide a reward/discount upon patron presentation of the County ID, with others awaiting County Commissioners' vote to create the ID.

Residents must also be aware of the limitations of the ID and what it cannot provide. The Kalamazoo County ID card cannot be legally utilized to procure employment, a driver's license, or any governmental benefit that an individual is already barred from receiving. In short, and as stated above, the County ID does not give any person legal rights they do not otherwise possess. However, it should be noted that for those who are legally able to obtain a driver's license, state

ID, or employment, the County ID could facilitate their attainment alongside other required documentation. Finally, the ID is also not an acceptable identification to purchase alcohol, tobacco, or firearms. In short, any goods or services under the State of Michigan's or the Federal government's jurisdiction are outside the eligible parameters for this card. Institutions and local businesses that provide such goods already train their staff on accepted documentation.

Staffing

While an entire full-time position may not be necessary to provide the ID, the Finance Committee recommends the hiring of a 0.5 FTE staff member. If this is a shared position with another endeavor, it is suggested that the County ID be their primary job assignment for the first six months as demand for the card may be quite high.

In addition to the staff member, there are many human resources within the community that can make the procurement of the ID easier. Both Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University have broad internship programs and may provide the county with the means to further ensure a smooth rollout of the ID, maintain outreach efforts, and aid a potential advisory committee on developing internal research evaluating the success and limitations of the ID program. There are multiple pedagogic connections to interning at the County for the purpose of administering this program. It fits well within curriculum addressing the implementation of public policy, understanding of the local populations, comprehension of the connections between local government and its citizens, etc.

Given the potentially vulnerable populations that may need the ID, training for both the potential new staff person and interns is vital. While the card is available to everyone who lives within the County, and every effort is being made to ensure broad adaptation of the card, there must be recognition that the primary purpose of the card is to address a need for those who find

themselves unable to procure state ID card. To that end, there must be continuous vigilance that modes of oppression are not reproduced in the process of attaining the card. This will require training to address racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, etc.

Location and time

The proposed location and time to obtain the Kalamazoo County ID are the third floor of the County Administration Building within designated normal business hours established by the availability of the staff dedicated for the implementation of the program. This is an optimal site, given its downtown location and availability through the already present public transportation infrastructure. Given the substantial uptake in other locations, the first weeks may require additional hours and support from interns and volunteers.

Advisory Committee

Given the demands on the time of County Commissioners and the County Clerk, as well as the available expertise within the Kalamazoo County, a mechanism to provide Commissioners with up-to-date information on the status of the ID is needed. Ideally, this would entail the development of an advisory committee that reports to County Commissioners on a predetermined schedule (i.e. 6 months pre-implementation; once a month 6 months post implementation; 3-month intervals for the first 2 years following). The Advisory Committee could be charged with holding regular meetings with time for public comment, receiving feedback from the County Commissioners on the process of distributing the ID, communicating with Sherriff Fuller and chiefs of police, promoting the ID with additional local businesses, and maintaining open lines of communication with other counties and municipalities providing residents with ID. These tasks would facilitate the development of a strong ID program that

reflects the needs of community members and provides the means to communicate limitations and possible changes to County Commissioners.

Timeline

The proposed rollout date for the Kalamazoo County ID is January 1, 2018. To ensure a smooth and successful process there is significant labor to be completed prior to this date, including: selection and purchase of the necessary equipment to create the IDs; training for staff in the use of software, machinery and the procedures to procure the ID; training relating to relative vulnerabilities of potential applicants; ongoing outreach and advertising of the ID; and continuous recruitment of local businesses to adopt and support the ID. There is also a clear need to remain proactive once the ID is available to the community. This could include additional contact with local businesses to increase the adoption of the ID.

Suggestions for the creation of the Kalamazoo County ID

The following subsection outlines a few priorities that have been highlighted in the literature or proved helpful in the advancement of municipal and countywide ID programs across the country. It is not an extensive list and should serve as an entry-point into a process that continuously aims to make the card as accessible to the community as possible.

Ensuring adoption by County agencies

The policy considered by the County should include language that requires institutions receiving county funds to accept the ID as a valid form of identification. This will not make particular individuals eligible for a service they are legally barred from receiving for any reason; that distinction can be made while still accepting the County ID.

Avoiding stigmatization

Past mistakes in other localities have stigmatized local IDs as an “immigrant”, “ex-con”, or “transgender” card. This has served as a cautionary tale, but it must be contextualized. That is, while certainly undesirable, the card does not lose all value if it becomes stigmatized. In spite of stigma, it can still prove valuable to those who do not currently have access to a Michigan ID. To avoid stigmatization, outreach efforts must provide information to the citizenry regarding the value of the ID and how it promotes local pride and supports the local economy.

Document retention

The best procedure regarding verification of supporting documents to receive a municipal or countywide ID is to not retain documents. This policy enables the greatest degree of safety for individuals for whom information about their relations or community connections may place them in danger. Furthermore, many residents may also prefer and appreciate to know that the County is protecting their privacy. To be clear, there does not appear to be any legislation that demands the retention of documents (including copies). Legal authorities, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement already have the power to subpoena information and can receive all information stored in the card (name, address, etc.), but there is no need to maintain a greater amount of information regarding each resident.

Language translations and outreach

Information materials informing the community of the availability of the Kalamazoo County ID Card must be available in different languages widely spoken in the area, including

Spanish, Arabic, Burmese, etc. Outreach materials must also be present in high foot-traffic locations¹⁸.

ID aesthetics

The aesthetic design of the Kalamazoo County ID card is very important. As Lagunes, Leving, & Diltmann (2012), delineate challenges in the acceptance of New Haven’s municipal ID, as the card did not “appear official.” According to them, the ““Elm City Resident Card,” a valid form of identification, was less likely to be accepted than the “Ameracard¹⁹” which clearly states that it is not a valid form of identification. To Lagunes et al (2012), “the Elm City Resident Card does not constitute a policy failure; rather, the design of the Elm City Resident Card is to blame for its comparatively weaker rate of acceptance vis-à-vis the non-government-issued ID (p. 55). Examples of three ID cards are given in the following page to better highlight the optics of each card (Ameracard, San Francisco Municipal ID Card, and Elm City ID Card).

ID aesthetic to emulate²⁰



¹⁸ Please see section above titled “Informing the Community”

¹⁹ “The Ameracard...can be purchased by anyone without verification of identity” (Lagunes, Leving, & Diltmann, 2012, pg. 54)

²⁰ All cards used in this subsections are stock photos



ID aesthetic to avoid



Conclusion

The provision of a countywide ID program goes beyond a symbolic gesture that all residents are valued by local government. It addresses some of the needs of various populations who lack documentation to experience a better local context. It also promotes a stronger sense of community both at the governmental level as well as at the local business level. While it is not a “silver bullet” to address all needs, it is an important step in addressing some of the shortfalls created by an exclusionary identification-provision system currently employed by the state. It

also recognizes that meaningful change can occur locally and it may translate into larger jurisdictions. While Kalamazoo County would become the third locality in Michigan to offer its own ID, it can become the leader in accessible identification. Furthermore, there is strong potential that other municipalities or counties may follow this example of good citizenship.

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