Getting Started: Moving From Words to Action

Presented at Wisconsin Counties Association Webinar Series
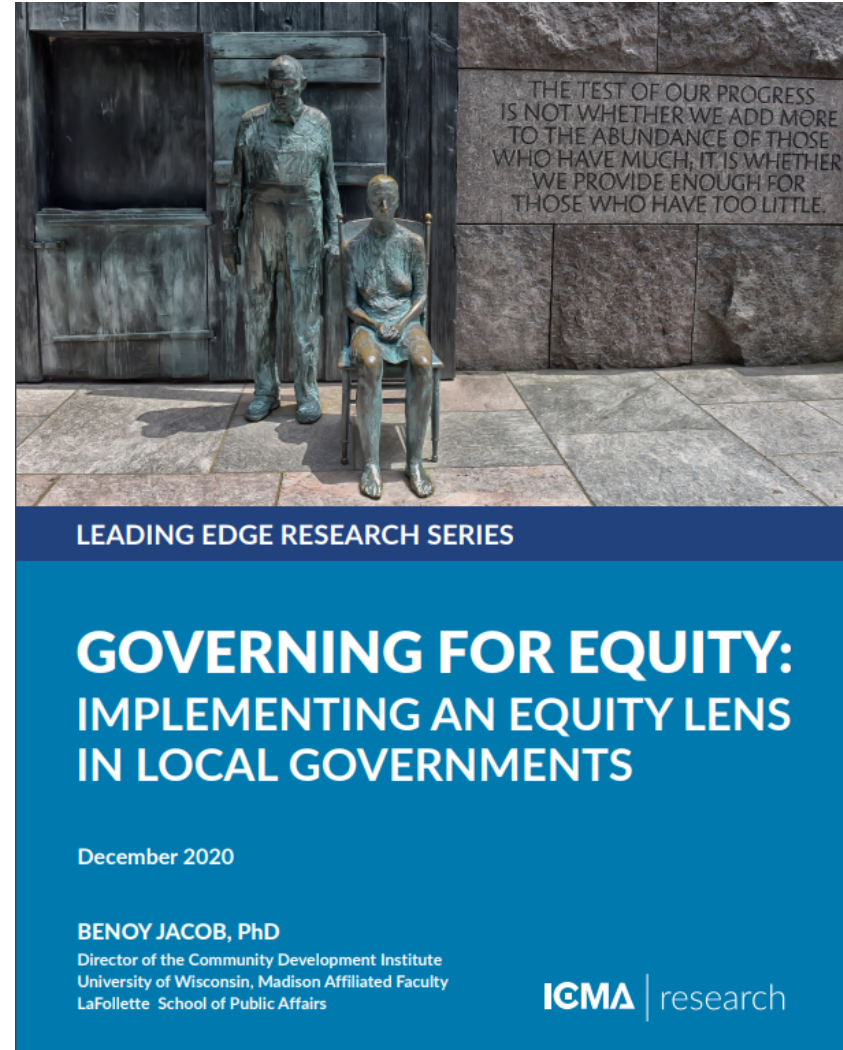February 15th, 2021

Benoy Jacob
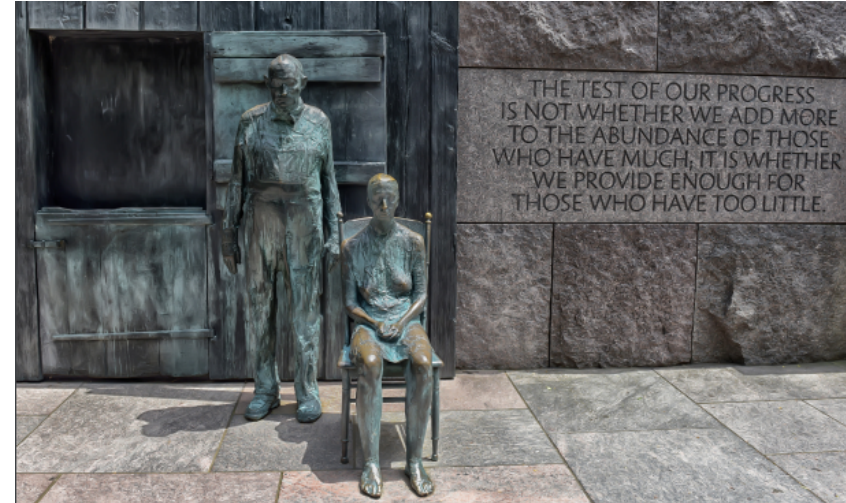Director, Community Development Institute
University of Wisconsin, Madison – Division of Extension

ICMA: Governing for Equity Project

- https://icma.org/governing-equity-implementing-equity-lens-local-government

- ICMA is the membership organization for city and county managers across in the US and Internationally

- Looked at 7 different cases across the country of how an equity lens is being implemented.

THE TEST OF OUR PROGRESS IS NOT WHETHER WE ADD MORE TO THE ABUNDANCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE MUCH; IT IS WHETHER WE PROVIDE ENOUGH FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TOO LITTLE.

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GOVERNING FOR EQUITY:
IMPLEMENTING AN EQUITY LENS
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

December 2020

BENOY JACOB, PhD
Director of the Community Development Institute
University of Wisconsin, Madison Affiliated Faculty
LaFollette School of Public Affairs

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Equity is Organizational Change

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GOVERNING FOR EQUITY:
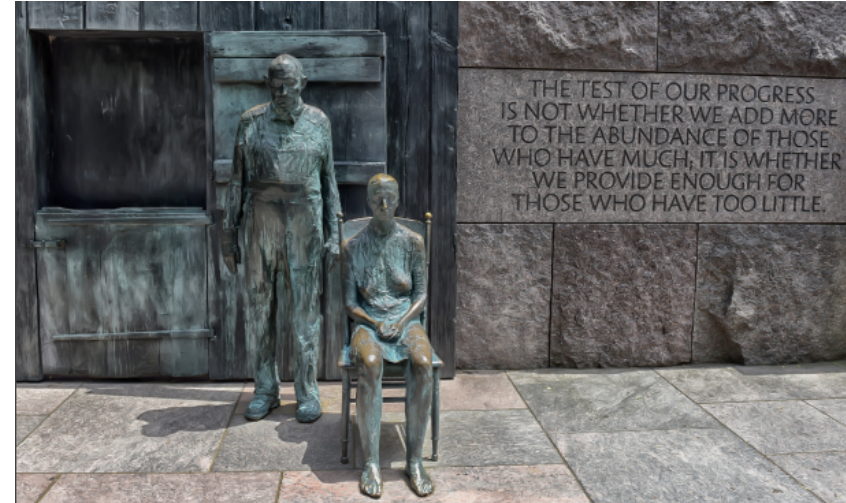IMPLEMENTING AN EQUITY LENS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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Equity is Organizational Change

"I think what we say is that equity isn't like an initiative or a program, rather it's a fundamentally different way of doing work."

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Equity is Organizational Change

Equity is Organizational Change

- Don't forget the words

- Data Drives Action

- Equity is a Team-Game

- Foster Partnerships

- Understand "Success"

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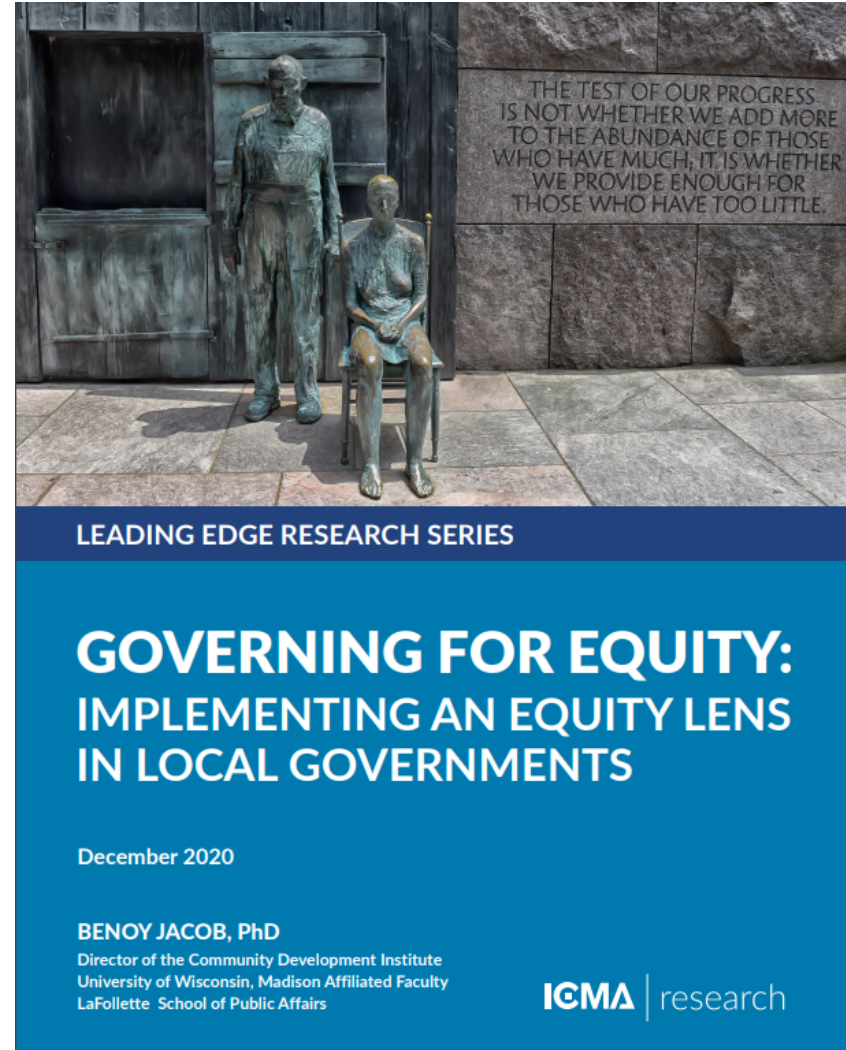LaFollette School of Public Affairs

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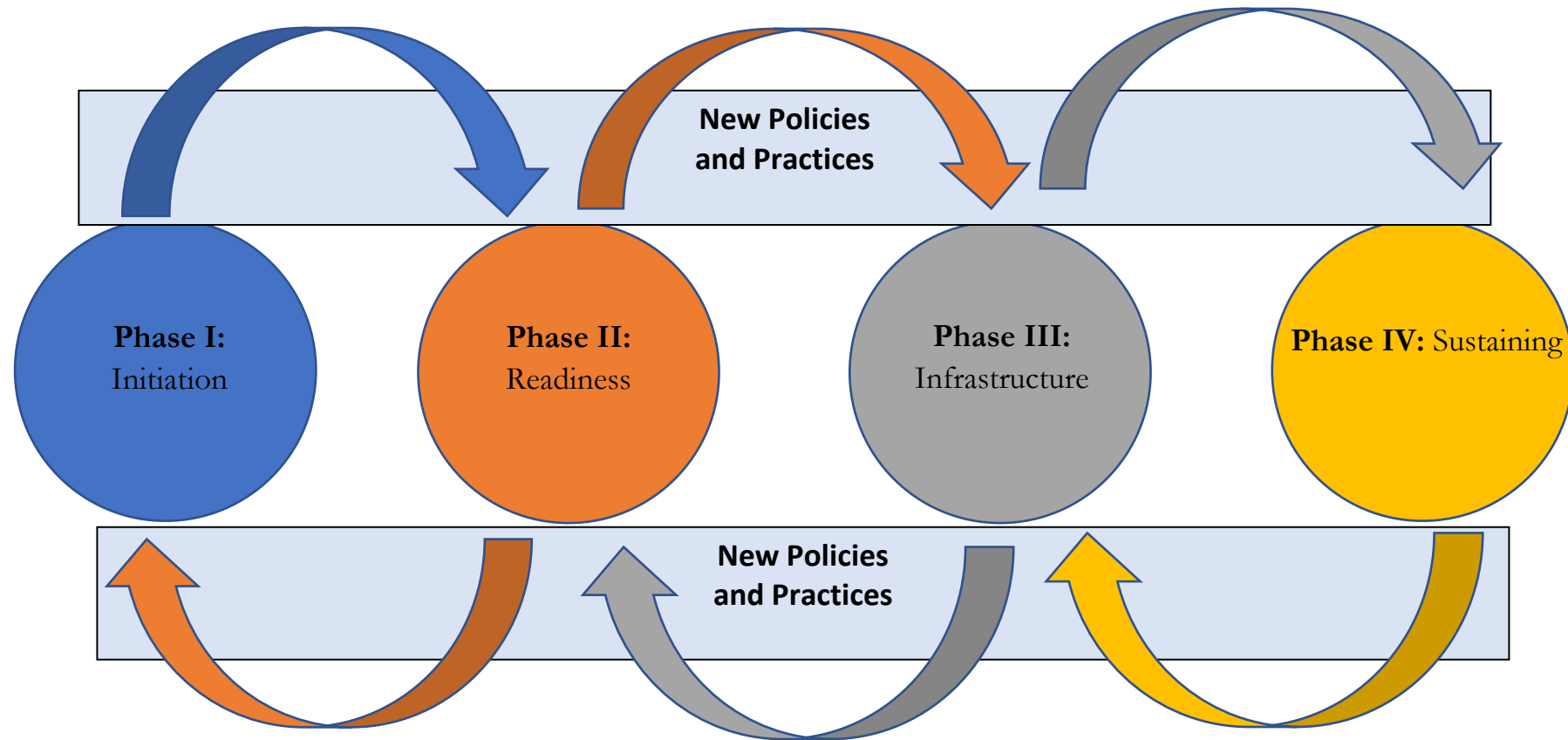
Don't Forget the Words

Define	
Prioritize	
Normalize	

Don't Forget the Words

Define	Be clear about what equity means AND what it looks like in your community.
Prioritize	
Normalize	

Don't Forget the Words

Define	Be clear about what equity means AND what it looks like in your community.
Prioritize	Equity must be clearly stated as an organizational priority. It should be found in your strategic vision, mission, and goals.
Normalize	

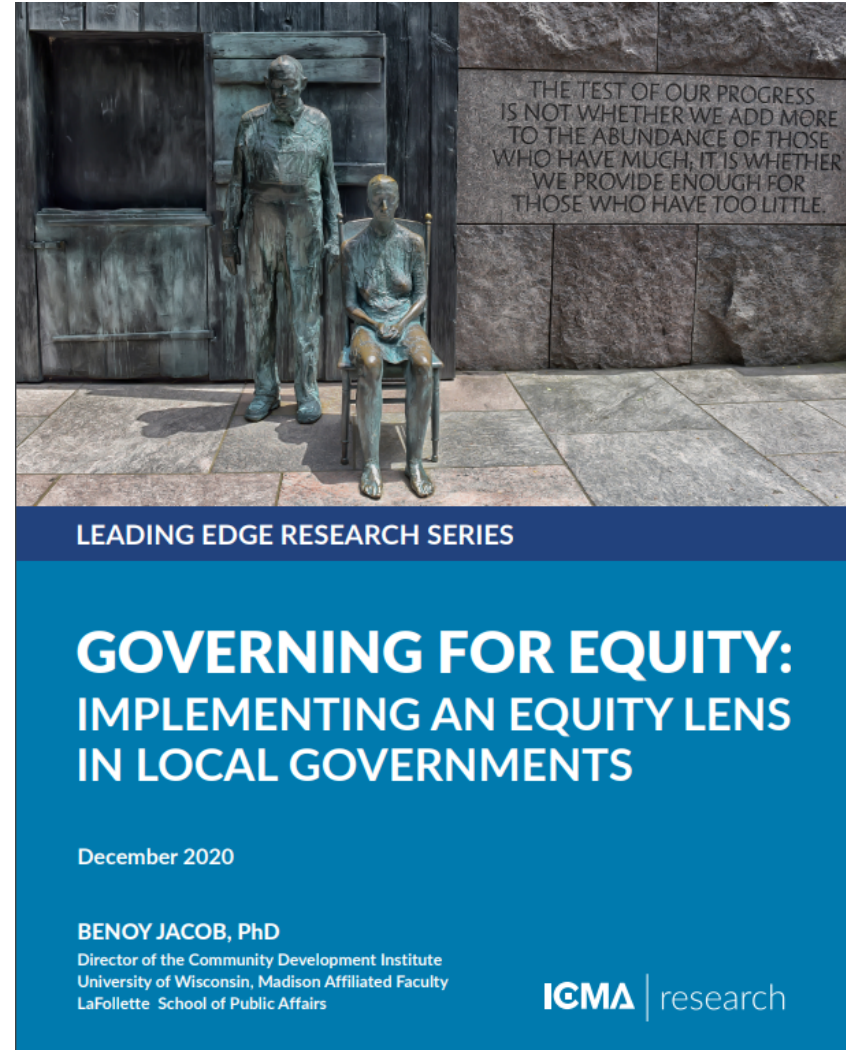# Don't Forget the Words

Define	Be clear about what equity means AND what it looks like in your community.
Prioritize	Equity must be clearly stated as an organizational priority. It should be found in your strategic vision, mission, and goals.
Normalize	Establishes equity as a key value and develops a shared meaning around key issues. Recognizes historic legacy of local governments.

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Data Drives Action

- What gets measured gets done.

- Measuring equity is hard – it "forces" deeper understanding and effort.

- It is critical to communicating progress toward equity.

"So, for me it is data, data, data, and more data. Data will tell you your problem, data will tell you where you are making progress, data will tell you when you are on the right or wrong path."

Equity is Organizational Change

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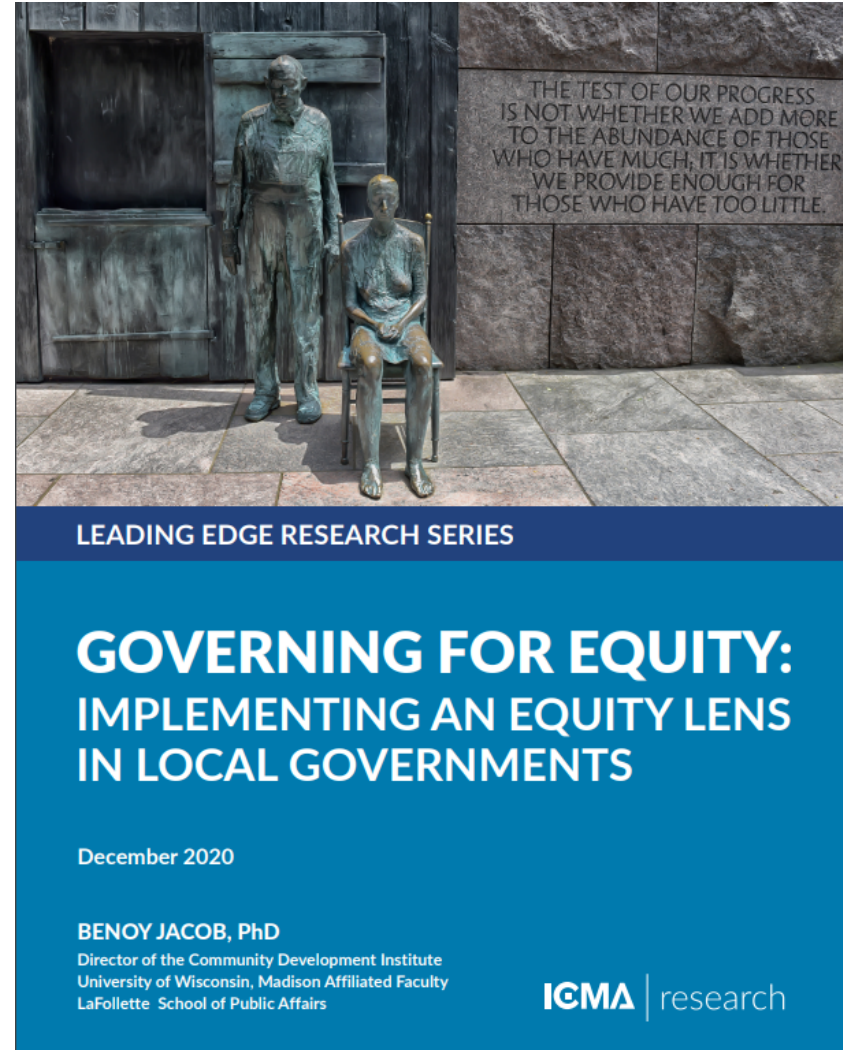- Equity is a Team-Game

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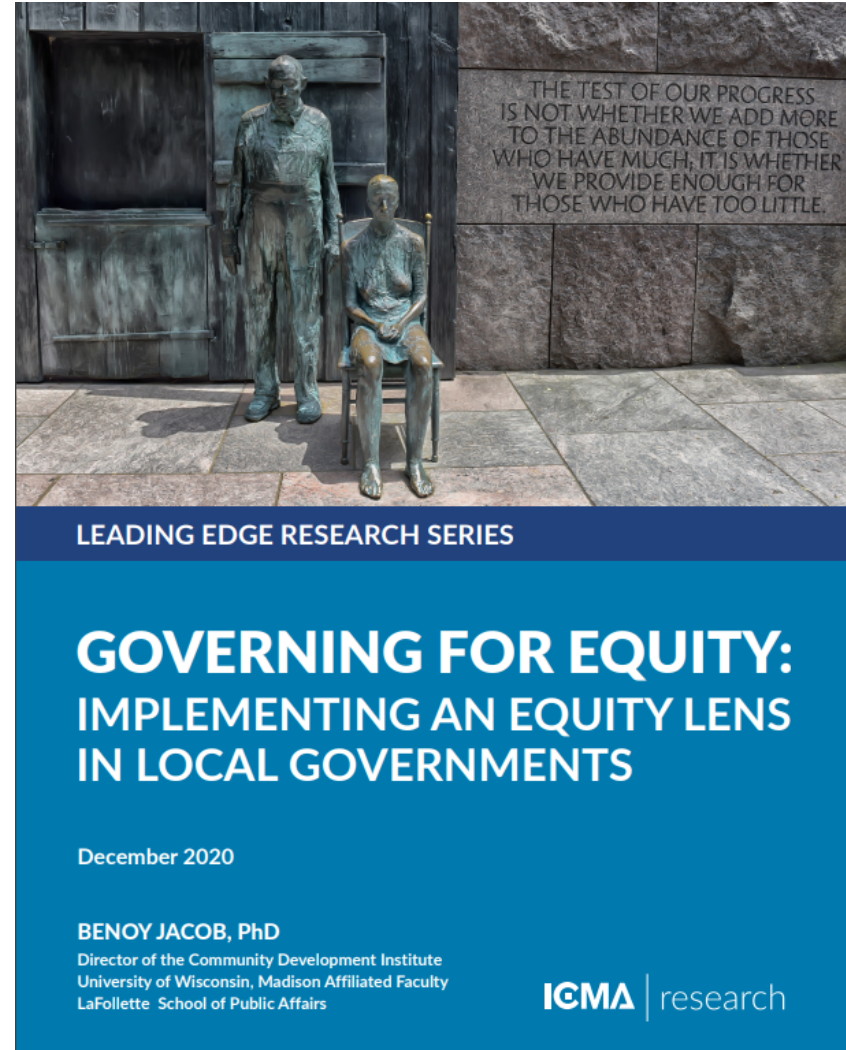LaFollette School of Public Affairs

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Equity is a Team Game…Know your Team

- Equity Teams provide the foundation for equity to disperse through the organization
  - Departmental Teams
  - Core Teams

- Equity Leaders are found throughout the organization.
  - Know when to "bring in" equity officers.

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Foster Partnerships

- Inside and Outside the Organization

So, those partnerships are really important in this space. What we know is that there's all those groups that are working on their own racial equity plans and struggling in this space. So, let's bring it together so we can struggle in this space together

Foster Partnerships

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  - Partnerships within the organization helps <u>spread ideas about best practices, insights from data, and resources for expanding capacity</u>.

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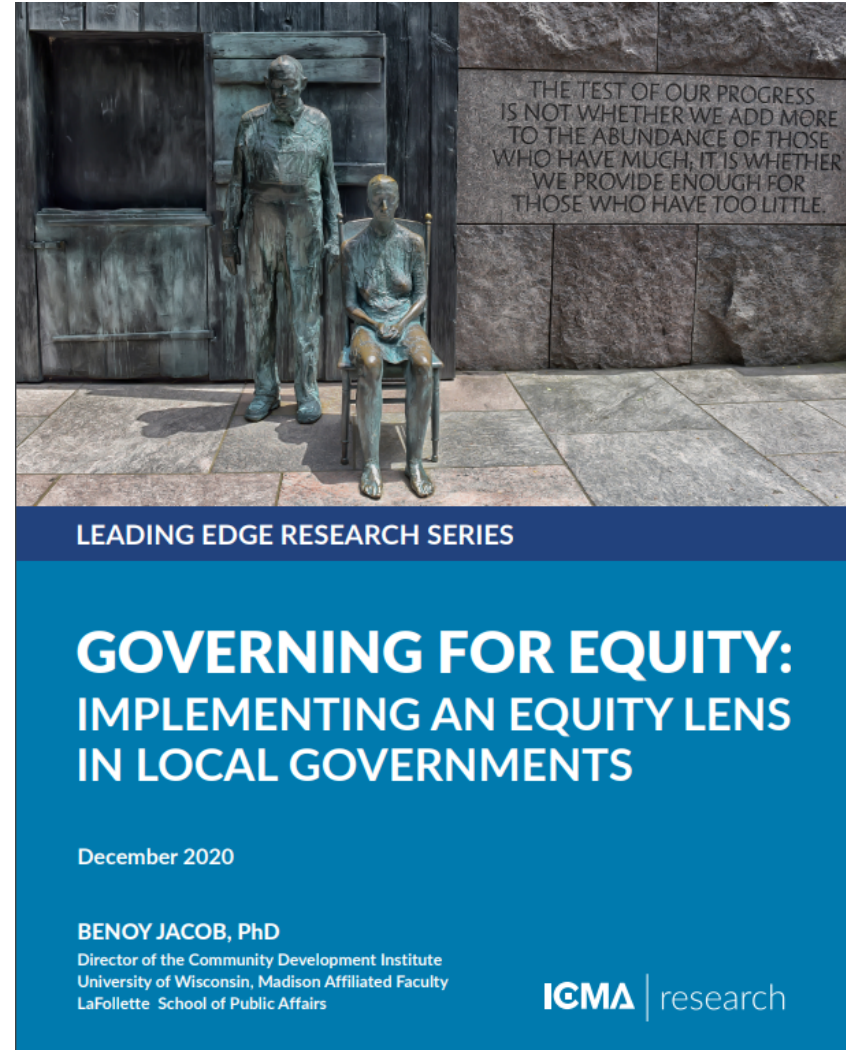
Foster Partnerships

- Inside and Outside the Organization
  - Partnerships within the organization helps <u>spread ideas about best practices, insights from data, and resources for expanding capacity</u>.

  - Partnership outside the organization include <u>other community partners</u> and <u>the broader network of equity-oriented local governments</u>.

So, those partnerships are really important in this space. What we know is that there's all those groups that are working on their own racial equity plans and struggling in this space. So, let's bring it together so we can struggle in this space together

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Understand "Success"

- What does the successful implementation of an equity lens look like?
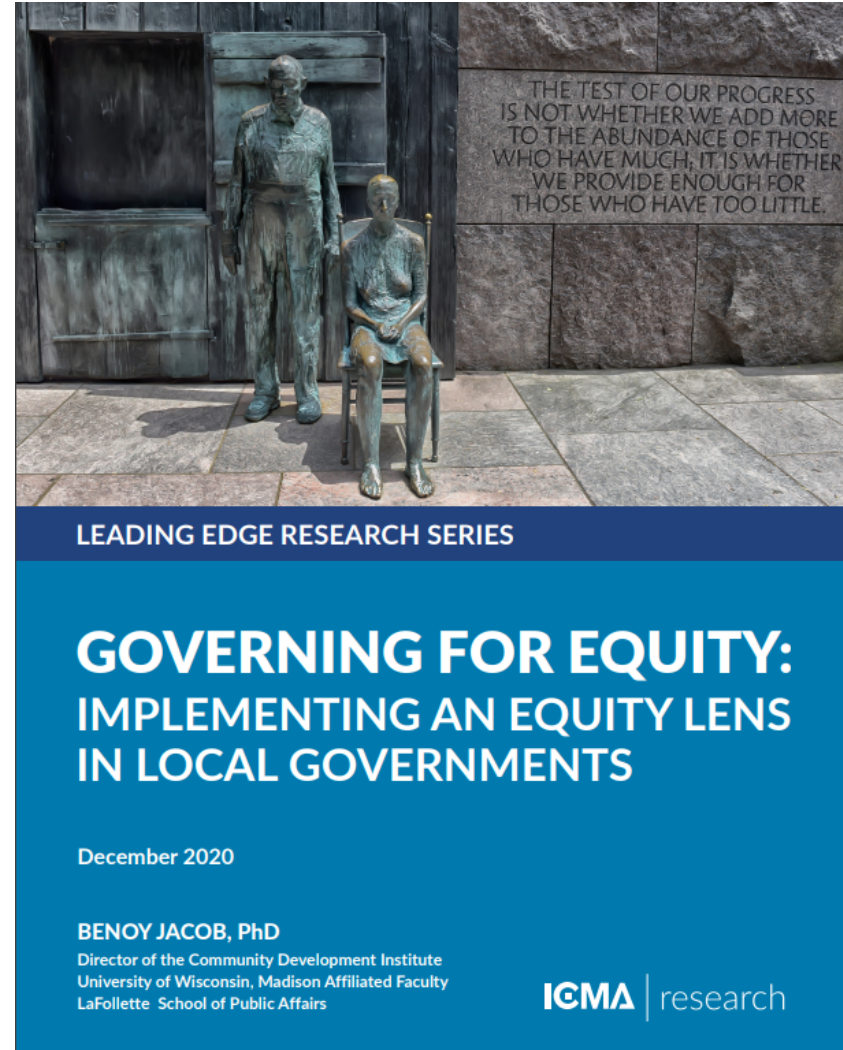
Understand "Success"

- What does the successful implementation of an equity lens look like?

- *For us, the way the new structure can work is that we have a pretty aggressive goal, and by 2020, 100% of our city departments will be doing racial equity assessments.*

- *Fully mature is that we have 100% of our departments deeply rooted in this work with a really strong and sound understanding of it.*

Understand "Success"

- What does the successful implementation of an equity lens look like?

- It won't happen overnight
  - Start small
  - Celebrate "wins" along the way!

- *For us, the way the new structure can work is that we have a pretty aggressive goal, and by 2020, 100% of our city departments will be doing racial equity assessments.*

- *Fully mature is that we have 100% of our departments deeply rooted in this work with a really strong and sound understanding of it.*

- *When we moved beyond just four departments and were at a more system-wide equity effort …. in the sense that staff were recognizing and putting on the equity lens when they make decisions [that was a mature equity program].*

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Thank YOU!!

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"**Instead of holding back we must have the courage to step forward, take our bureaucratic structures down to the studs and rebuild them through the lens of racial and social equity.**"

Marc Ott, Executive Director, ICMA