

Wisconsin Budget Project: Wisconsin's public sector is smaller than most states'

Posted on Tuesday, Feb 6, 2018

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Wisconsin has fewer public employees for our size than most other states, according to a new analysis by the Wisconsin Budget Project. The number of public employees in Wisconsin has fallen over time, and current levels of public employment are significantly lower than they were fifteen years ago.

Wisconsin ranks 36th in the number of government workers per population, and has three percent fewer government workers than the national average.

“Only 14 other states had a smaller percentage of public sector employees than Wisconsin,” said analyst Tamarine Cornelius. “We need to make sure we have enough public employees to have the kind of efficient, effective public sector that can improve the state’s economic competitiveness and the quality of life for Wisconsin families.”

Public employees in Wisconsin also earn less than in other states. The payroll per employee in Wisconsin was four percent lower than the national average.

Most public employees work in schools, according to the analysis. Six out of ten government employees work in education, mostly in K-12 schools. Other major work areas for public employees include health and human services, police and fire departments, corrections, and transportation.

“Public employees in Wisconsin teach our children, repair our transportation network, and keep our communities safe—all activities that help make Wisconsin a

good place to do business and raise families,” said Cornelius. “But we can’t continue to undernourish the public sector without doing serious harm to our economy and to our social well-being.”

The Wisconsin Budget Project’s analysis is based on state and local government employment figures collected by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The full analysis, [“Wisconsin’s Public Sector is Smaller than Most States’,”](#) is on the Wisconsin Budget Project website.