

Wisconsin Women's Council: Announces women are gaining seats in Wisconsin state and local government in record numbers in 2021

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New Factsheet Series tracks changes in numbers of women in elected office since 2015.

Madison, WI (December 1, 2021) – The Wisconsin Women's Council in partnership with Alverno College's Research Center for Women and Girls (RCWG), and UW-Extension Local Government Education Women in Government (LGE WIG) is releasing a new 2021 census of women in state and local elected office in Wisconsin. The last complete census was published by the Women's Council and RCWG in 2015.

"The Research Center for Women and Girls and UW-Extension Local Government Education Women in Government have produced groundbreaking work on the pipeline and pathways for women in public office in Wisconsin", said Christine Lidbury, Executive Director. *"The Women's Council is pleased to partner with these research leaders to continue to produce high quality data measuring women's representation and progress in elected offices in order to inform future research and support the advancement of women in public office."*

New 2021 data suggest a departure from the slow and uneven progress of past reports, to record growth by women in nearly all elected offices, across levels and

branches of state and local government. From Wisconsin's City Councils to the Circuit Courts, it appears women are running, winning, and serving in ever larger numbers.

Data in this series are presented in factsheet format by level of government, with new factsheets released weekly in December. The factsheets being released today are available at <https://womenscouncil.wi.gov>, they are:

County Boards and County Constitutional Offices Nearly 400 women serve on County Boards, statewide. Women hold 24% of Supervisor seats (+89 seats) in 2021, up from 19% in 2015 – the first increase since 2005. There are fewer women serving as County Board Chair, however, than in 2015. Among Constitutional Offices, new records were set for the historically male-dominated offices of Sheriff (4) and District Attorney (19).

City Councils and Mayors More than 400 women serve on City and Common Councils, statewide. Women hold 29% of Council seats (+90 seats) in 2021, up from 23% in 2015. Women hold 24 of Wisconsin's Mayoral seats (13%), up from 21 (12%) in both 2015 and 2010. While there is only modest change in women holding mayoral seats, 2021 represents the first increase in a decade.

Village Boards Nearly 700 women serve on Village Boards, statewide. Women hold 27% of Trustee seats (+130 seats) in 2021, up from 22% in 2015. Women Village Presidents also increased significantly to 72 women Presidents in 2021, up from 46 women in 2015.

Future releases include Judiciary, School Boards, State and Tribal Legislatures, and Towns.

“UW Extension's Local Government Education's Women in Government team is excited to work with the Wisconsin Women's Council and Alverno College's RCWG to research issues and educate women interested in serving in Wisconsin's Local Governments,” said Daniel Foth. Local Government Specialist.

Information presented in the 2021 Factsheets also complements RCWG's forthcoming report, *Women in Public Life: Elected Officials*, which uses quantitative and qualitative data to identify pathways, barriers, and opportunities for women to achieve success in public office.

“Alverno College’s RCWG is glad to be partnering with the Wisconsin Women’s Council by participating in and supporting efforts to inform and explore important issues related to women in public office, including celebrating their many accomplishments and acknowledging the challenges they must overcome on their pathway to progress,” said Lindsey Harness, Executive Director.”

A complete census of elected offices in Wisconsin includes reviewing nearly 14,000 officeholders and over 2,400 municipal units, statewide. The Wisconsin Women’s Council has been tracking and reporting statistics on women in elected office since 2005. For more information:

- Women in elect office reports and factsheets: womenscouncil.wi.gov/Pages/-Publications.aspx
- Information on what women need to know about running for office: localgovernment.extension.wisc.edu/elections/
- Wisconsin Women in Public Life Report: www.alverno.edu/Research

ABOUT WISCONSIN WOMEN’S COUNCIL

The Women’s Council promotes initiatives to empower women, serves as a clearinghouse for information on programs and resources, conducts research on the status of women, and engages in unique partnerships to address barriers and inequalities affecting Wisconsin women. The Women’s Council is comprised of 15 members appointed by the Governor and Legislative leaders.