

Wisconsin Women's Council: Women gaining seats in Wisconsin state and local government in record numbers in 2021: 2nd data release

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Madison, WI (December 16, 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 the second installment in the 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.

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 release include the State Legislature, Tribal Councils and Legislatures, and the Wisconsin judiciary. The first release included findings for County, City, and Village governments. The series is presented in factsheet format by level of government, with new factsheets released over the month of December. Factsheets released to-date are available at <https://womenscouncil.wi.gov/pages/home.aspx>.

Summary findings:

Wisconsin State Legislature Women hold 41 of the 132 seats (31%), up from 36 seats (27%) in 2019. Seats held in 2021 breaks a 30-year stretch when the

percentage of seats held by women hovered around 25%, with highest being 29% decades ago, in both 1993 and 2003.

Tribal Councils and Legislature: Wisconsin is home to 11 federally recognized Native Nations, each led by a Tribal Council or Legislature. In 2021, women hold 32 (36%) of seats, down from 38 (42%) in 2015, but still continue to outpace representation by women in the state legislature (31%).

Judiciary: The number of judicial seats held by women continues to increase across the board for the State Supreme, Appellate, and Circuit Courts. Over the past decade, the percentage of judicial seats held by women doubled from 2010 to 2021—from 17% to 34%—largely due to the increasing numbers of women Circuit Court judges.

Future releases include School Boards and Towns.

Information presented in the 2021 Factsheets 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.

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](https://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.