



**WISCONSIN
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PROJECT**

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New Data Show Wisconsin Still Has a Lean Public Sector Stimulus Funds Helped Maintain Staffing for Public Services

Wisconsin continues its decade-long trend of having fewer state and local employees than the national average, according to a new analysis by the Wisconsin Budget Project.

Recently-released data from the U.S. Census Bureau show that Wisconsin has 4.4 percent fewer state and local government employees per capita in 2009 than the national average, ranking 38th among the states. State and local employees include workers in a wide variety of functions, including teachers, highway workers, corrections guards, firefighters, and police officers.

“The new Census Bureau data on public sector employment may come as a surprise to some, but Wisconsin has had fewer state and local employees per capita than the national average going back at least a decade,” said Wisconsin Budget Project Director Jon Peacock. Wisconsin had 51.8 state and local full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) per 1,000 residents in 2009, compared to a national average of 54.2 FTEs. “The Census Bureau figures show that only 12 other states had a leaner public sector than Wisconsin in 2009,” Peacock noted.

Wisconsin is also lower than the national average in payroll spending for state and local government employees. Per capita spending for state and local government employees in Wisconsin was 8.7 percent below the national average and ranked 30th nationally.

The number of Wisconsin state and local government employees (FTEs) per capita dropped to unprecedented lows in 2007 and 2008, before regaining part of that drop in 2009. The biggest increase in FTEs in 2009 was in local employment in higher education, such as technical colleges, which have experienced sharp enrollment increases during the recession as unemployed workers seek new job skills.

Federal fiscal relief has helped state and local governments maintain current levels of employment. “Without the stimulus funding, state and local governments in Wisconsin would have likely laid off significant numbers of employees, thereby increasing the unemployment rate and further slowing the economy,” said Peacock. “We don’t know for certain how the number of state and local government employees will be affected when this funding is gone.”

The report can be found on the Wisconsin Budget Project website at:

http://www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org/public_sector_rankings_090910.pdf