



Wisconsin's Public Sector is Smaller than Most States'

Wisconsin ranks 36th in the number of government workers per population, and the pay that public employees receive in Wisconsin is less than the national average, according to government figures published by the U.S. Census Bureau. The number of public employees in Wisconsin has fallen since 2001, and current levels of public employment are significantly lower than they were around the turn of the century.

Wisconsin Has Fewer Public Employees Than The National Average

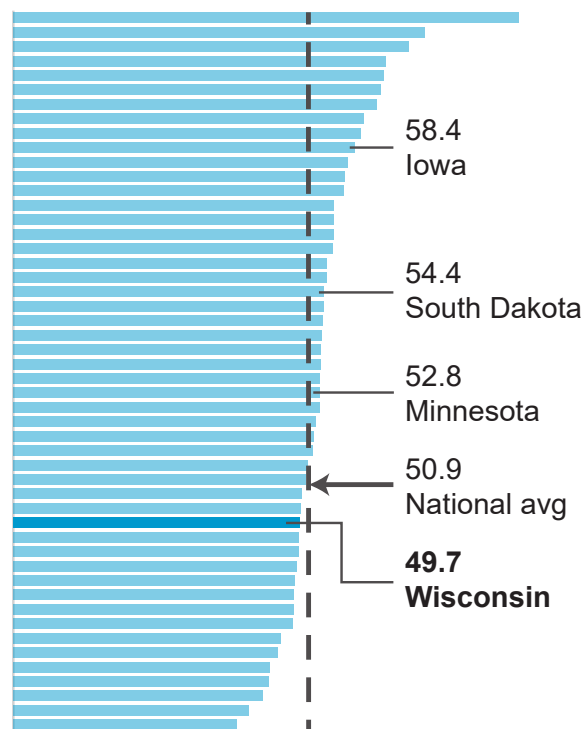
Compared to other states, Wisconsin has relatively few state and local government employees. Wisconsin had 49.4 government employees per 1,000 residents in 2016, 2.9% less than the national average. Put another way, for every 100 public employees in other states, Wisconsin has only 97. If Wisconsin had the same ratio of public employees to state residents as the national average, Wisconsin would have 8,600 more state and local government employees than it actually does.

The difference is even larger when you compare Wisconsin to the national median rather than the national average. Wisconsin public employment levels are 6.7% below the median. If Wisconsin had the same public employment-to-population rate as the median state, Wisconsin would have 20,300 additional government employees.

Wisconsin spent 7.3% less than the national average on public payrolls in 2016, ranking 26th among the states. One reason public payroll costs are low in Wisconsin is, of course, because we have fewer public employees. But another reason is that public employees in Wisconsin earn less

Wisconsin Has Fewer Public Employees than Most States

Full-time equivalent state and local government employees in each state in 2016 per 1,000 population.



Source: Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau figures
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Wisconsin Has Fewer Public Workers, Smaller Payrolls than the National Average

For full-time equivalent employees in 2016.	WISCONSIN	NATIONAL AVERAGE	DIFFERENCE	WISCONSIN RANKING
State and local government employees per 1,000 pop	49.4	50.9	-2.9%	36
Monthly payroll per state resident	\$222	\$239	-7.3%	26
Monthly payroll per employee	\$4,493	\$4,705	-4.5%	19

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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than the national average. The payroll per employee in Wisconsin was 4.5% below the national average.

In Wisconsin in 2016, there were 285,300 full-time employees in state or local government. And most of those employees—75%—worked for local units of government, not the state.

Government Employment in Wisconsin Has Fallen Over Time

The number of government employees in Wisconsin per resident fluctuates from one year to the next, but the general pattern shows a decline in the number of public employees over time. Wisconsin had 49.4 state and local government full-time employees per 1,000 state residents in 2016, down 7% from a high of 53.3 employees per 1,000 residents in 2001. If Wisconsin government employment levels had stayed at the 2001 peak levels, Wisconsin would have 23,000 additional government employees over the current levels.

State imposed constraints on property taxes and reductions in state support for local governments have likely contributed to the decline.

Most Public Employees Work in Education

State and local government workers in Wisconsin are concentrated in the field of education. Six out of ten government employees work in education, mostly in K-12 schools. A smaller number of employees work in higher education. There are also significant concentrations of state and local government employees working in health and human services, police and fire departments, corrections, and transportation.

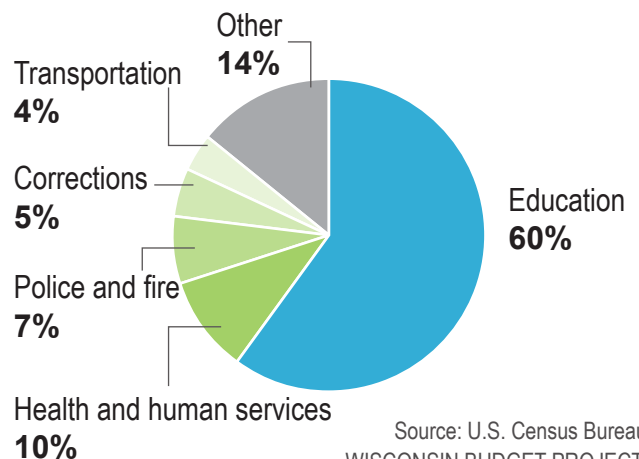
Why an Underpowered Public Sector Is Bad

An effective public sector helps Wisconsin families and businesses thrive. Government employees teach Wisconsin's children, repair our transportation network, protect our environment, and keep our communities safe—all activities that help make Wisconsin a good place to do business and raise families. If we don't have enough public sector workers, these crucial tasks won't get done.

We can't cut corners on Wisconsin's public sector without doing serious harm to our economy and to our community and family well-being.

Most Public Employees in Wisconsin Work in Education

Area of work for state and local government full-time equivalent employees in 2016.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau
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