

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
AGENCY PRIMER: “WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW”

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**INSTITUTE FOR
REFORMING GOVERNMENT**

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FROM THE DESK OF CJ SZAFIR

Freedom and Opportunity. Those are ideals that bind us together as a state. Unfortunately, the size and scope of state government too often gets in the way of individuals and families being able to achieve their full potential as they build their share of the American Dream.

We can do better, and we must do better. We all should ask, – “Is the mission of state government, — of each and every agency, bureau, and division —, aligned with the vision that everyday Wisconsinites have for Wisconsin? Is state government set up to help citizens succeed, or is it a roadblock to success? We need a conservative vision for state government, indeed for each and every agency.

Last spring, with support from our donors and Board of Directors, the Institute for Reforming Government started an ambitious project to help answer those questions about the biggest state agencies to help answer those questions because we believe the best way to enhance liberty is to improve transparency. This project was the work of eight experts in Wisconsin state government, including three senior-level cabinet officials, a budget director, and subject matter experts. In addition, our team had regular meetings with former top officials in state government as well as business leaders and other experts outside of government. We looked at past revenue and spending trends. The findings are not surprising.

State agencies are massive. They spend record amounts of taxpayer dollars year over year. They too often get in the way of individual success and are set up as enforcement agents instead of partners in creating a better Wisconsin. They need reform. We need leaders to bring forward conservative visions to the agencies.

In these briefings, we shine light onto state agencies to help all citizens diagnose what is broken. Later, based on these and discussions with people all over Wisconsin, we'll offer government reform ideas and detailed budget analysis to help chart a new course for Wisconsin, - one where each and every individual in our state has the freedom and opportunity to succeed.

Sincerely,

CJ Szafir

President

Institute for Reforming Government

SUMMARY

“Light and liberty go together”

Thomas Jefferson, In a letter to Tench Coxe, 1795

This document prepared by the Institute for Reforming Government (IRG) is intended to inform policy makers and the public of the full scope of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. Our partners at the IRG Action Fund will release conservative, free market, and liberty minded policy reforms specifically for the department in a separate document.

For the general public, the executive branch of Wisconsin state government can be a mystery. There are countless agencies with billions of tax dollars flowing through them. Although some may have an understanding of an agency because of their daily work or real world experience, few people in Wisconsin have a handle on the entirety of the executive branch. Each agency has its own mission, functions, and programs. Some agencies generate their own revenue, some rely on state tax dollars and many of them take some sort of federal funding. Each agency has unique powers and authorities. The goal of this briefing document is to pull back the veil and show Wisconsinites how their government taxes, spends, and regulates.

Over the course of months, a team of policy experts at IRG poured through all of the information on Wisconsin's biggest agencies. In this briefing document, you will see agency functions, budget trends, a list of past appointees, and policy concerns. These items create a basis for understanding the scope and history of each agency in an effort to inform policy makers in Madison as they carry out their work in the coming legislative session. By doing this, we hope to inspire the next generation of policy makers and cast a conservative vision for Wisconsin.

The department's budget in 2021-2023 was set at \$37 million with authority to employ 34 people making it the smallest cabinet agency. Tourism is a major industry in Wisconsin that is still recovering from massive disruptions caused by travel restrictions and lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Tourism supports the industry through grants, technical support, and marketing activity.



Tourism is a major industry in Wisconsin. In 2021, the Department reported that the total economic impact of tourism was \$20.8 billion, supports 169,700 jobs and generates \$1.4 billion in state and local taxes. Although the COVID-19 pandemic caused massive disruption and losses for the tourism economy in 2020, the industry has recovered, with 2021 tourism direct spending expected to exceed pre-pandemic levels.

The Department of Tourism is responsible for coordinating state government support of the tourism industry. It conducts advertising campaigns to increase tourism, provides technical assistance to the business community and awards grants to cultural, entertainment, tourism related organizations, events, and local governments. The majority of the Department's budget is spent on tourism promotion through advertisements in print, television, billboard, and on the internet. The Department also funds Travel Wisconsin Welcome Centers at rest stops on major highways near the state's borders.

The Department of Natural Resources initially had responsibility for promoting recreational activities. In 1975 the Division of Tourism was created in the Department of Business Development. The Division was then transferred to the Department of Development when it was created through the merger of the Departments of Business Development and Department of Local Affairs and Development. The modern Department of Tourism was created on January 1, 1996 following the passage of the 1995 State Budget.

Locations

The Department has 8 Travel Wisconsin Welcoming Centers:

- Kenosha - Kenosha Area Convention & Visitor Bureau
- La Crosse - La Crosse Area Convention & Visitor Bureau
- Marinette - City of Marinette
- Menomonie - Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Menomonie and Hudson COCs
- Platteville - Platteville Area Chamber of Commerce (COC)
- Prairie du Chien - Prairie du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce
- Beloit - Visit Beloit
- Superior - Superior and Douglas County Area Chamber of Commerce

AGENCY DESCRIPTION, MISSION, & FUNCTION

Information in this section was pulled directly from public sources on the Department of Administration and Department of Tourism websites.

Agency Descriptions

The Department is charged by statute to market the State of Wisconsin as a travel destination to both in-state residents and out-of-state visitors. The Department is led by a Secretary, who is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Secretary appoints the Deputy Secretary and the Communication Director. In addition to the Office of the Secretary, the Department's programs are administered by the following areas: Marketing and Advertising, Communications, Industry and Agency Relations, the Office of Marketing Services and the Office of Outdoor Recreation. The Governor's Council on Tourism advises the Secretary on matters related to tourism and assists the agency in formulating a statewide marketing strategy.

The Wisconsin Arts Board is composed of 15 citizens appointed by the Governor. The Executive Director is appointed by the Board and is supported by three classified civil servants. The Board promotes and supports artistic and cultural activities throughout the state. The Board also sets policy and approves funding recommendations for grant awards made by peer review panels.

Mission

The Department of Tourism's mission is to inspire travelers to experience Wisconsin. The Department of Tourism promotes and elevates the reputation and brand of the state to drive economic impact for all Wisconsinites. By executing industry-leading marketing, advertising, and communications programs, providing reliable travel information and establishing strategic partnerships, the department grows the state's economy and supports jobs. The Wisconsin Arts Board is the state agency which nurtures creativity, cultivates expression, promotes the arts, supports the arts in education, stimulates community and economic development and serves as a resource for people of every culture and heritage.



Function

The main functions of the Department of Tourism are divided amongst its two bureaus and two offices:

Office of Outdoor Recreation

The Office of Outdoor Recreation promotes Wisconsin as a top outdoor recreation destination. Like much of the rest of the department, this office is making an effort to grow the tourism industry, but specific to outdoor recreation.

Office of Marketing Services

The office provides marketing and event planning services to other state agencies.

Bureau of Industry and Agency Services

The bureau works directly with businesses and individuals involved in the tourism industry. They coordinate grant programs, marketing research, graphic design, and put on the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Bureau of Marketing and Advertising

The bureau works to promote Wisconsin as the "Midwest's premier travel destination". They conduct market research and coordinate advertising and promotional campaigns.

AGENCY BUDGET TRENDS

The state budget process begins in September of every even year when each agency sends its budget requests to the Department of Administration. The Governor then has several months to put together the executive budget proposal that is forwarded to the Legislature. The Legislature, through the work of the Joint Finance Committee, then holds hearings and votes on the budget through the spring and summer of the odd year. This culminates with the signing of the budget document that summer. While technically due by July 1 of the budget year, often budget debates will drag into the Summer and sometimes the Fall. However, the government does not shut down in Wisconsin as it does at the federal level when there is a budget impasse - it simply continues on the current spending plan until a new budget is adopted.

Agency Budget Trend

Fund	2017 ACT 59	2019 ACT 9	2021 ACT 58
GPR	\$10,337,800	\$11,171,400	\$13,516,200
FED	\$1,527,400	\$1,541,800	\$1,556,000
PR	\$19,180,800	\$18,809,000	\$18,824,400
SEG	\$3,207,000	\$3,207,000	\$3,207,000
TOTAL	\$34,253,000	\$34,729,200	\$37,103,600

FTE Position Summary

Fund	2017 ACT 59	2019 ACT 9	2021 ACT 58
GPR	29	32	32
FED	1	1	1
PR	4	1	1
SEG	0	0	0
TOTAL	34	34	34



AGENCY LEADERSHIP

As the head of a cabinet agency, the Secretary is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate and serves at the pleasure of the Governor. The Secretary of each agency then must appoint the other members of their team to help them carry out the duties and responsibilities of the agency. Because of its small size, the Department of Tourism does not have an Assistant Deputy Secretary, Division Administrators or Legislative Liaison. Those duties are handled by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary and its legal matters are handled by the Department of Administration. Descriptions of each appointed position are listed below:

Secretary

Appointed by the Governor, the Secretary leads and represents the agency. The position is responsible for directing and managing the agency to execute the Governor's agenda while ensuring the efficient operation of the agency per state statute. The position is also responsible for reporting on the agency's matters to the Governor and Legislature.

Deputy Secretary

The Deputy Secretary serves at the pleasure of the Secretary and is primarily responsible for assisting the Secretary with carrying out the mission of the agency including but not limited to, personnel management, day-to-day operations, and external affairs.

Communications Director

The Communications Director supports the Secretary's Office in strategic communications and responds to media inquiries. The position may also speak on behalf of the Secretary and represent the agency in the media.

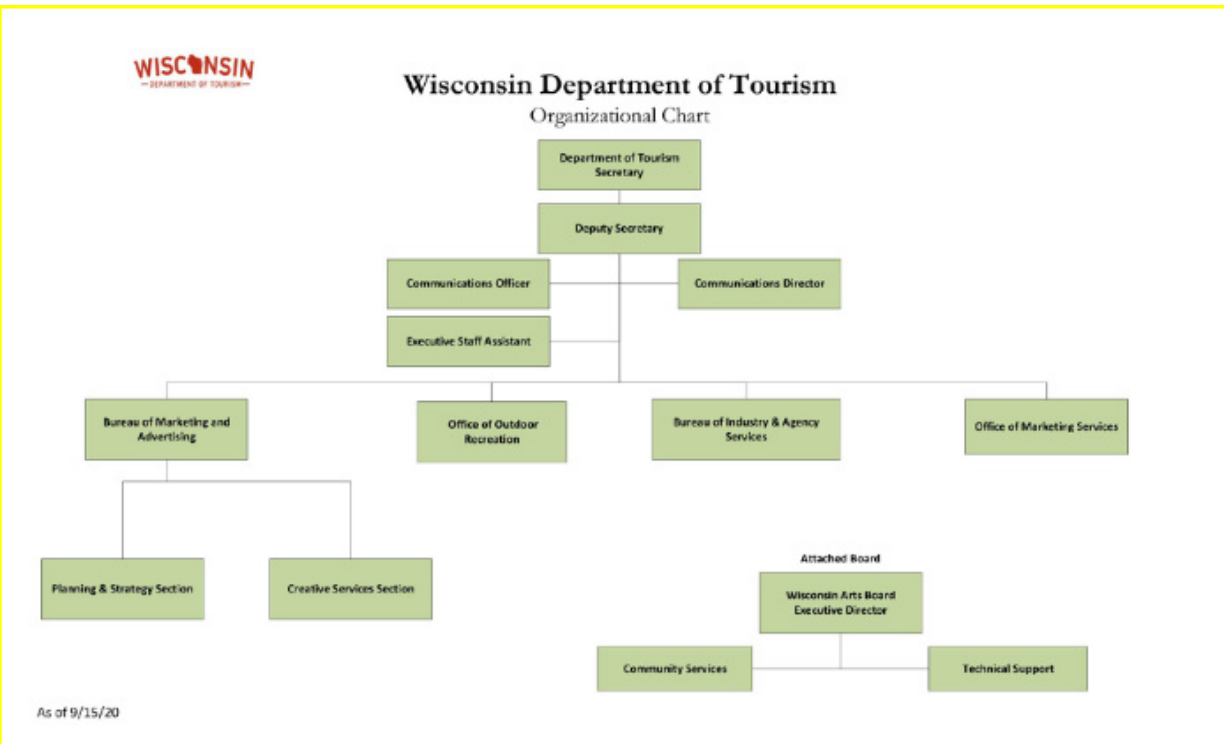
These appointments may change during the 4-year term of a governor. Listed here are the teams serving under Gov. Evers in mid-2022, as well as the team that served at the end of Gov. Walker's final term.

Agency Leadership

POSITION	EVERS	WALKER
SECRETARY	Anne Sayers	Stephanie Klett
DEPUTY SECRETARY	Maria Van Hoorn	Sarah Klavas
ASSISTANT DEPUTY SECRETARY (EXECUTIVE STAFF ASSISTANT)	Chelsey Bence	Charlene Malueg
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR	Craig Trost	Lisa Marshall
DIRECTORS		
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER	Shane Brossard	Shane Brossard
INDUSTRY & AGENCY SERVICES DIRECTOR	Shelly Harkins	Shelly Harkins
TECHNOLOGY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE DIRECTOR	N/A	Joellyn Merz
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION	Mary Monroe Brown	N/A
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MARKETING SERVICES	Dawn Zanoni	Dawn Zanoni



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



As of 9/15/20

ATTACHED COUNCILS, TASK FORCES, & COMMITTEES

Like most agencies, the Department of Tourism has Boards and Councils that are charged with various responsibilities. Generally, these groups either give advice to the Secretary or they are part of the regulatory process itself.

Arts Board

The Arts Board provides guidance, assistance, promotional activities and grants to local arts programs and artists throughout the state. Its budget is \$3.2 million.

Council on Tourism

The Council on Tourism provides guidance and assistance to the Secretary of the Department of Tourism. The council also helps develop the statewide marketing strategy.

Kickapoo Reserve Management Board

The Kickapoo Reserve Management Board manages the Kickapoo Valley Reserve with the HoChunk Nation. The Kickapoo Valley Reserve is an 8,600 acre public land area. It has a budget of \$1.9 million.

State Fair Park Board

The State Fair Park Board is responsible for planning, operations and management of the annual Wisconsin State Fair and the State Fairgrounds.



MAJOR PAST INITIATIVES (2011-Present)

Most major policy initiatives happen during the budget process. The Governor, and sometimes the Legislature, will propose a major reduction or increase in spending for any number of programs. The major initiatives dating from 2011 to the present for the Department of Tourism is listed below:

Major Past Initiatives

INITIATIVE	GOVERNORS	ENACTED	NOTES
Creation of the Office of Outdoor Recreation - 3 FTEs (\$353,000 per year)	Evers	Yes (Budget)	
Market Expansion Funds (\$781,800 (GPR) per year)	Evers	Yes (Budget)	
Arts Board matching funds (\$52,000 over biennium) to match National Endowment for the Arts	Evers	Yes (Budget)	
Not collecting Travel Green Wisconsin Assessments	Walker and Evers	No	Businesses can apply for Travel Green Wisconsin designation. Prior to 2017, an assessment of \$95 was collected from participants.

STAKEHOLDERS

Every agency has a number of organizations, professions, and industries that are uniquely interested in the policy or regulatory decisions that could affect their membership or industry. The groups are commonly organized into trade associations and are represented by registered lobbyists that stay in touch with agency leadership. These lobbyists keep their membership informed on current policy debates and use their expertise to educate policy makers on the issues important to their industries. Below is a non exhaustive list of stakeholders that are interested in the Department of Tourism.

STAKEHOLDER	TYPICAL ISSUES
Wisconsin Association of Conventions and Visitors Bureaus	Agency budget and policies. Signage and billboard issues
Association of Wisconsin Tourism Attractions	Agency budget and policies. Signage and billboard issues
Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association	Room tax, agency budget, tourism promotion
Wisconsin Restaurant Association	Agency budget and policies, tourism promotion funding
Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association	Tourism promotion funding



GOVERNMENT REFORM OPPORTUNITIES

Wisconsin government has grown too big and too expensive. This has precipitated issues across the whole of the executive branch that have become a barrier to the success of Wisconsin residents and businesses alike. The Institute for Reforming Government endeavors to shine light on these issues as prime opportunities for bold reform. Below you will find a non-exhaustive list of policy concerns that we have highlighted for the Department of Tourism.

Department of Tourism Inefficiencies

The Department of Tourism is a small agency that would be more effective if it was better able to coordinate with business development programs in other state agencies with less bureaucracy. Lawmakers should look to see if efficiencies can be gained by consolidating Tourism with another agency.

CONCLUSION

At the Institute for Reforming Government we know that government isn't the way of the future - people are. And we believe that in order to empower people and ideas to flourish, our government needs to get out of the way.

This is nothing new for Wisconsinites- we have a long history as the standard bearer for government reform - we were the first state to implement unemployment insurance, Wisconsin Works (W-2), and we were on the cutting edge of major collective bargaining reform. But today the state we love is beginning to lag behind. Our executive branch has become bloated, slow, and expensive - a burden to the state's economy instead of a catalyst.

The solution to this problem isn't more government, it's less. What we need is a conservative vision for the state. This introductory document lays bare the issues and problems that are standing in the way for Wisconsin. In the coming months, IRG will be releasing a series of reforms that will cast a conservative vision for key executive branch agencies in the state.

Now is the time to renew our faith in the people of Wisconsin, not the government.

