Women in Elected Office | Wisconsin 2021

JUDICIARY

2021 was a Year of Record Growth for Women across the Wisconsin Judiciary.

The percentage of judicial seats held by women doubled from 2010 to 2021, largely due to the increasing numbers of women Circuit Court judges.

*DID YOU KNOW...

Only nine women have served on the Supreme Court since Wisconsin became a state in 1848.3

Shirley Abrahamson* 1976—2019
Janine Geske 1993—1998
Ann Walsh Bradley 1995—
Diane Sykes 1999—2004
Patience Roggensack* 2003—
Annette Ziegler* 2007—
Rebecca Bradley 2015—
Rebecca Dallet 2018—
Jill Karofsky 2020—

Women as a Percentage of Seats in Wisconsin’s Supreme, Appellate, and Circuit Courts, 2005-2021

Women in the WI Judiciary—Combined (276)

- 34% 19% 17% 15%

Supreme Court Justices (6 of 7 in 2021)

- 86% 71% 57% 43%

Court of Appeals Judges (7 of 16)

- 44% 38% 31% 19%

Circuit Court Judges (80 of 253)

- 32% 17% 15% 14%

*Chief Justice

Women Hold One-third of Judicial Seats

Women account for 1-out-of-3 judges* in the Wisconsin Judiciary (Supreme, Appellate, and Circuit Courts combined), up from 1-out-of-6 judges in 2010.

*Includes Supreme Court Justices.

Circuit Court Increases Driving Growth

Percentage of women holding Circuit Court judicial seats has doubled over the past decade—from 15% in 2010 to 32% in 2021.

Nationally

Wisconsin leads the nation for the percentage of state supreme court seats held by women.¹

Seats held by women, nationally:
- Supreme Courts: 39%¹ (vs. WI 86%)
- Appellate Courts: 41%² (vs WI 44%)
- General State Courts (e.g. Circuit Court): 35%² (vs WI 32%)

More factsheets in this series are available at: https://womenscouncil.wi.gov/publications.

What women need to know about running for office at: https://localgovernment.extension.wisc.edu/elections/

Wisconsin Women in Public Life Report https://www.alverno.edu/Research

Local Government Education women in government
FOOTNOTES

DATA DISCLAIMER
https://womenscouncil.wi.gov/Pages/Disclaimer.aspx

Who Represents You?
Visit the official websites of state and local governments in your area to find your elected officials.

The Wisconsin Women’s Council is the state’s statutory commission on the status of women and girls. Founded in 1983, the 15-member Board is appointed by the Governor and legislative leadership.

Since 2005, the Women’s Council has tracked and published statistics on women elected officials in state and local government in Wisconsin.

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For over 20 years UW-Extension’s Local Government Education has been helping local government officials build their capacity to govern.
We teach, learn, lead and serve, connecting local governments with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

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Founded in 1970, the Research Center for Women and Girls (RCWG) generates and applies research, develops curricula, prepares evaluation tools, facilitates programming and conversations, and conducts outreach for the purpose of supporting and inspiring community initiatives to improve the lives of women and girls locally and nationally.

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Madelyn Adler, Research Assistant

Statements of fact and opinion are made on the responsibility of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent the views of other listed organizations. No endorsement by such organizations is given or implied.

Questions? Contact the Women’s Council at womenscouncil@wisconsin.gov.