



STATE OF WISCONSIN

Office of the Secretary of State

2021-2023 Biennial Report

October 2023

Dear Citizens of Wisconsin,

As required by Wisconsin Statute 15.04 (1) (d), I am submitting to you the 2021 - 2023 Biennial Report of the Office of the Secretary of State.

This report presents an overview of the functions of the Agency, the operations and performance of the Agency during the past biennium, and projected goals of the Agency.

Wisconsinites want a government that they can count on. This report contains a reflection of the office's hard work serving the people of Wisconsin and the services we intend to improve on through commonsense solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Godlewski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "S" and a smaller "G".

Sarah Godlewski
Secretary of State

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OVERVIEW OF THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES, 2021 - 2023

Wisconsin's Constitution requires the Secretary of State to hold an accountability and accessibility role in the state government by maintaining official acts of the Legislature and Governor, and countersigning all official acts of the Governor. The Office of the Secretary of State is also responsible for overseeing the Government Records Division. This includes issuing authentications and apostilles; recording official acts of the Legislature and the Governor; and filing oaths of office and deeds for state lands and buildings.

Legal assistance is provided to the Office by the Attorney General's Office, with information systems support provided by the Division of Enterprise Technology within the Department of Administration.

Through this support, the Office will be able to improve services both for customers and other government officials by modernizing services. Putting services online and creating an effective customer relationship system can reduce processing time, offer documents in multiple languages, and meet people where they are.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION CHART

SECRETARY OF
STATE

Sarah Godlewski
(1 FTE)

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GOVERNMENT RECORDS DIVISION

- Records Management Supervisor
(1 FTE)
- Apostilles/Authentications
- (2 PT LTE)

PART TIME AND FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE POLICY

The agency has been successful at creating a flexible workplace. While the majority of office deliverables must be carried out in person, when possible full-time staff is able to work remotely. The Office also has available positions for two part time positions.

REVIEW OF AGENCY OPERATIONS AND WORKLOAD IN THE 2021-2023 BIENNIUM

The Office of the Secretary of State has been hard at work to maintain performance, excellent customer service, and responsiveness to customer requests. Powerful interests have worked against those goals and materialized in staff and budget cuts. Accomplishments have been made

through an on-going commitment to supporting the Office's mission by working to seek innovative ways to improve services.

To continue to preserve important records, better public access to those records, and to maintain IT systems which meet industry standards and public expectations, on a very limited budget, will require ongoing efforts to optimize information technology systems. Efforts to maximize impact and effectiveness of available staff and fiscal resources will be ongoing. In addition to support these efforts, the Office of the Secretary of State will continue to regularly revise and update its website to reflect new systems, policies and offer enhanced service and accessibility to online documents for public access.

The amount of apostille and authentication cases processed is below for FY21 and FY22. FY23 is still being calculated:

	FY 21	FY22
Total Documents	11,416	14,696

PROJECTED GOALS AND CHANGES FOR THE 2023 – 2025 BIENNIUM

Effectively managing workload volume in areas administered by the Office and building capacity through technology will be an ongoing challenge. The Office will strive to meet these goals with current staffing and budget levels by continued cross-training of all employees and a close partnership with the Division of Enterprise Technology in the Department of Administration to maximize efficiency of computer programs and systems.

The Office will make every effort to continue to provide the prompt, courteous, and professional response that users have come to expect in person, on the phone, by mail, and electronically. This will be accomplished by staying abreast of trends in information management and seeking unique approaches to improve service.

Currently all forms and applications available from the Office of Secretary of State are available on-line. These forms and applications will require updating and upgrading on the website to promote ongoing ease of use for customers. This process will again be part of the ongoing modernization process taking place in the office. The Office will continue to explore and integrate new technologies as appropriate to utilize finite resources most effectively.

In addition, below you will find the recommended funding for the Office of the Secretary of State for the Governor’s budget proposal.

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Source of Funds	FY23 Adjusted Base	FY24 Recommended	% Change Over FY23	FY25 Recommended	% Change Over FY24
PR-S	3,400	3,400	0.0	3,400	0.0
PR-O	284,700	481,700	69.2	496,900	3.2
TOTAL	288,100	485,100	68.4	500,300	3.1

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITION SUMMARY

Source of Funds	FY23 Adjusted Base	FY24 Recommended	FTE Change Over FY23	FY25 Recommended	FTE Change Over FY24
PR-O	2.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	0.00
TOTAL	2.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	0.00

PROGRAMS, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Program 1: Managing and Operating Program Responsibilities

Authentications and Apostilles

Goal: Provide proper authentication of notaries public and other public official signatures/seals to any and all documents requiring such validation promptly and professionally.

Objective/Activity: Maintain a comprehensive database of completed apostilles (as required by the Hague Convention) and authentications, as well as comprehensive records of public officials used for certification. Track and maintain an accurate list of countries requiring certification in an apostille format as determined by international treaty. Remain current on standards and policies for providing this service as set by the Hague Convention and individual countries.

Preservation and Accessibility of State Records

Goal: Ensure that important and historical state records are preserved and electronically available to the public.

Objective/Activity: Continue to explore and integrate new, emerging technologies in order to meet industry standards and public expectations for ease and speed of access to state records.

Legislative Acts

Goal: Inform various state agencies of new joint resolutions and constitutional amendments and maintain and bind the acts into books.

Objective/Activity: Provide various state agencies with information and documentation of publications in a timely manner. Maintain a complete log of new state laws, constitutional changes and joint resolutions and have new enacted legislation bound into books.