



PROTECTING THE INTERESTS
OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT



WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) is a membership organization dedicated to protecting the interests of county government. Its primary function is to represent county officials at the state and federal levels through its lobbying efforts. In addition, the WCA is an educational, training and general legal information resource. The WCA provides educational opportunities through its Annual Conference in the fall, its Legislative Conference each February, and numerous educational webinars throughout the year on topics such as the roles and responsibilities of county officials, how to run effective meetings, budgeting, and ethics. The WCA also produces a monthly magazine and electronic newsletters and maintains a website as a means to disseminate information to its membership.

The WCA provides numerous other services to counties, including access to liability insurance, property insurance and employee benefit programs. Through its wholly owned subsidiary, the association offers counties access to products and services that assist counties in providing services more efficiently and cost effectively.

The WCA is a multifaceted organization that provides county officials with the tools they need to best serve their constituents.

HISTORY

The WCA was created in 1935 when the state authorized counties in Wis. Stat. § 59.52(22) to join an association committed to “the protection of county interests and the furtherance of better county government.”

The WCA represents the common interests of the state’s 72 counties.

In 1982, the organization changed its name from the Wisconsin County Boards Association to the Wisconsin Counties Association to reflect the

increasing role of county executives. Understanding that the county executive is the chief elected official in some counties (currently 12), the membership voted to recognize them as full members in the association.

Under the WCA Constitution adopted in 1982, county supervisors and executives are eligible to serve on the board of directors and as officers of the association. More recently, county constitutional officers have been added to the board’s membership.

GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

The WCA Board of Directors is comprised of 27 individuals. The board appoints directors to seats on the board. WCA’s president & CEO nominates a slate for all board seats that the board either elects or declines. Board members serve staggered, four-year terms.

Seventeen members of the board serve as district representatives. For Association purposes, the state is divided into seven districts and the board apportions and allocates seats to each of the seven districts.

The number of directors apportioned to each district is based upon a composite of population and dues paid to the association, with each district entitled to at least one director. Four districts are allocated more than one director through the apportionment process – two directors in the North Central District, two in the East Central District, three in the Southern District, and four in the Southeast District.

The apportionment of directors is calculated after each decennial census. Any district allocated a single director following apportionment is provided an additional director, such that each district shall have a minimum of two directors on the board. Each county with a population over 300,000 that maintains membership in the association has one director apportioned to it from its district’s number of directors. Counties over 600,000 in population have one additional director in addition to the directors apportioned from the districts.

WCA’s representative on the National Association of Counties (NACo) Board of Directors also serves on the WCA Board of Directors, along with two individuals representing the interests of persons involved with Wisconsin county government having characteristics or experiences that are historically underrepresented in county government. The remaining seats on the board

WCA BOARD AT A GLANCE

Director Type	Number of Seats
District representatives*	15
Populous county appointments	3
County executive	1
NACo representative	1
County constitutional officers	5
Historically underrepresented appointments	2
TOTAL	27

*Excludes populous county seats

are designated to representatives from the offices of county executive, sheriff, county clerk, county treasurer, register of deeds and clerk of circuit court. With the exception of the constitutional officers, members of the board must be a county board supervisor or county executive.

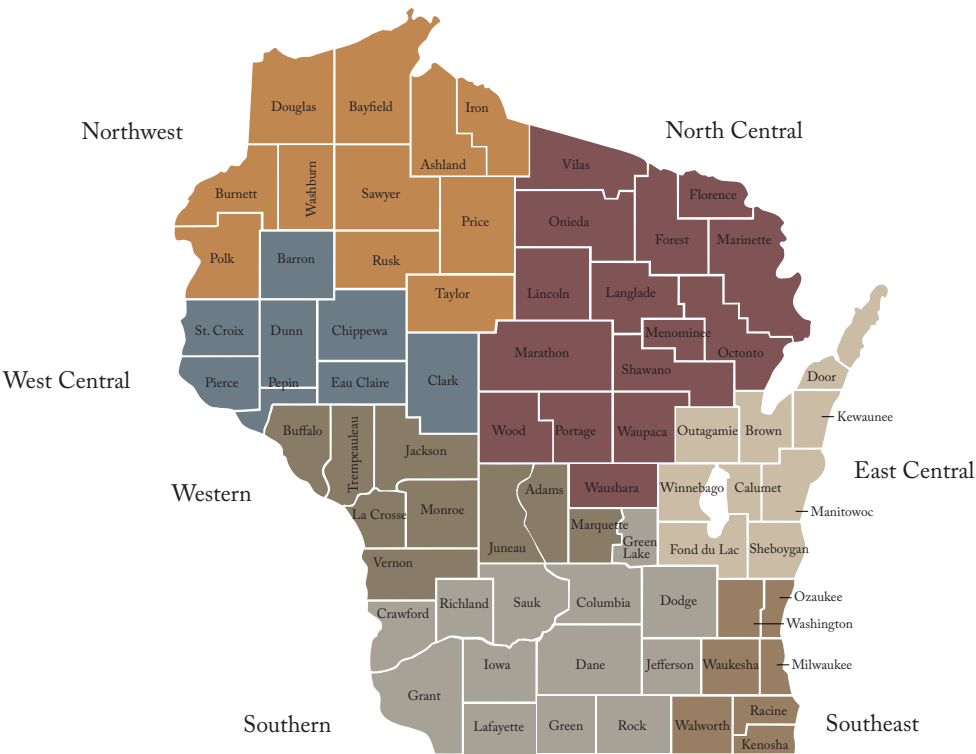
Executive Committee

The board’s executive committee consists of the officers of the board of directors and the NACo representative. Officers of the board include the chair, vice-chair, second vice-chair, and secretary/treasurer. Officers serve for a four-year term and are elected at the board of directors’ quadrennial organizational meeting from the board’s membership. Officers must be county supervisors or county executives.

Board Meetings

The board of directors meets regularly as determined by the chair.

WCA DISTRICT MAP



POLICY CREATION

Policy positions contained in the WCA Platform provide the framework for the association's legislative agenda. The platform includes positions adopted at the WCA Annual Business Meeting and by the WCA Board of Directors.

Annual Business Meeting

The WCA Annual Business Meeting establishes policy positions through the adoption of official resolutions. Member counties submit resolutions to be considered at the meeting.

WCA steering committees review the resolutions and make recommendations to the Resolutions Committee, which then makes recommendations to the annual business meeting.

The committees ask the following questions when debating resolutions:

1. Is the resolution timely?
2. Is the resolution of statewide concern?
3. Does the resolution address a county issue?



County officials convene for the WCA Annual Business Meeting at a recent WCA Annual Conference.

COMMITTEES

Steering Committees

The WCA has six steering committees that review and develop policy recommendations for the board of directors. Through the steering committees, county-elected officials, county-appointed officials and county employees debate and develop policy positions for the association. Each steering committee can have up to 50 members. The steering committees are appointed biennially by the chair of the board. The six steering committees are as follows:

1. Agriculture, Environment and Land Use
2. Health and Human Services
3. Judicial and Public Safety
4. General Government and Finance
5. Transportation and Public Works
6. UW Madison, Division of Extension and Education

Each county has one vote on official resolutions; however, a county may request the use of weighted voting for the consideration of official resolutions at the annual business meeting.

Between annual business meetings, the board reviews and takes action on issues brought before it.

Board of Directors

While annual business meeting resolutions are submitted directly by member counties, policy recommendations presented to the board of directors are developed in a number of ways. First, any director can request that an issue be placed on a board meeting agenda for consideration.

Second, any member county can request that the board consider an issue. Third, actions taken by steering committees are automatically referred to the board for disposition. Finally, government affairs staff can submit issues to the board for consideration.



Standing Committees

The chair of the board appoints standing committee members with the approval of the board of directors. The Audit Committee examines each audit or review by the association's auditors. The Resolutions Committee reviews and makes recommendations on resolutions submitted for consideration at the annual business meeting. The chair may also appoint a Constitution Committee, on an as-needed basis, to propose amendments to the WCA Constitution and/or to review and make a recommendation to the members on any amendment proposed by a county or the board of directors.

Special Committees

The chair, with the approval of the board of directors, may create such other committees as necessary or useful to the conduct of association business.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Lobbying

The WCA's primary function is lobbying on issues in all areas in which influencing the decision-making process can assist county government. Lobbying efforts include meeting with state legislators, legislative staff, and members of the executive branch of government. It also involves reviewing legislation and administrative rules, testifying before legislative committees, and negotiating with the state on county contracts.

WCA government affairs associates specialize in specific county-related issue areas. Each lobbyist is subsequently assigned to work with each issue area's corresponding steering committee. Other duties include conducting research in support of lobbying efforts and advancing the association's goals.

Government affairs staff also regularly network with their peers from other county-related organizations, municipal organizations, state associations from around the country, and other groups to help advance common goals.

Legislative Outreach

The WCA government affairs staff attend county board meetings, committee meetings, and multi-county meetings upon request to provide updates on issues affecting counties under consideration by the Wisconsin State Legislature and/or state agencies.

Federal Lobbying

The WCA partners with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to ensure that the needs of Wisconsin counties are met at the federal level. The government affairs staff is regularly in contact with Wisconsin's congressional delegation and other federal officials to address issues facing county government.

Legislative Agenda

The WCA Legislative Agenda is approved by the board of directors and is published every two years at the beginning of each legislative session. This publication outlines the association's priorities for that legislative session.



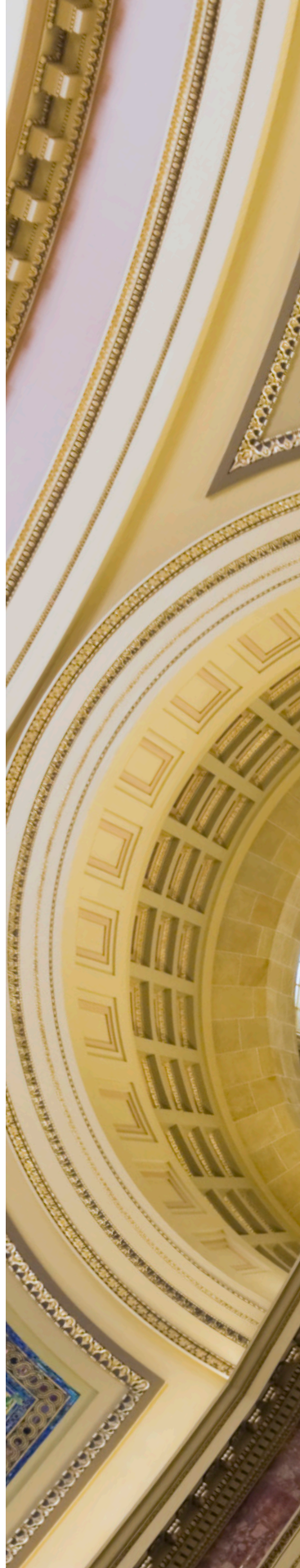


County Ambassador Program

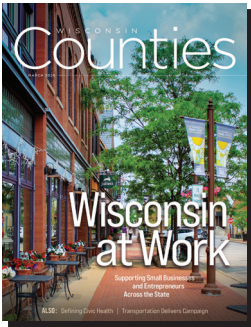
The WCA County Ambassador Program, or CAP Team, provides member counties the opportunity to work in conjunction with the government affairs staff promoting WCA's legislative initiatives to the Wisconsin State Legislature and state agency officials. CAP Team members include county board chairs and supervisors, executives, administrators, administrative coordinators, constitutional officers, and department heads. CAP Team meetings are held in Madison to allow for visits with legislators at the state Capitol.

Legislative Updates

The WCA government affairs staff provides weekly updates during the County Leadership Meetings, held online every Monday at 11 a.m. for members. Call-to-action alerts and important updates are sent via email as needed.



PUBLICATIONS

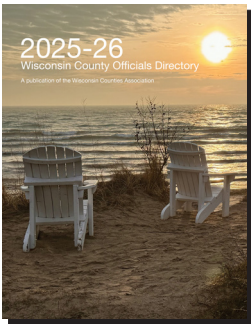
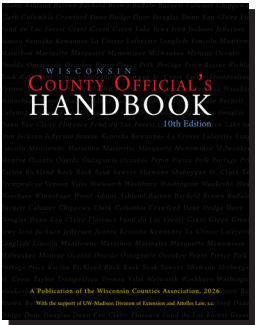


Wisconsin Counties

The official publication of the Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Counties is a monthly magazine published in print and digitally. First published in 1938, it has a readership of over 10,000. The magazine features in-depth articles covering issues affecting local and state government, as well as news, events and continuing education for government officials.

Wisconsin County Official's Handbook

The most comprehensive document to date on county government operations, the Wisconsin County Official's Handbook is updated every two years following the spring election. Currently in its 10th edition, the handbook is comprised of in-depth chapters covering the duties and responsibilities of county officials, personnel policies, county budgeting, the Open Meetings law, parliamentary procedure, and much more.

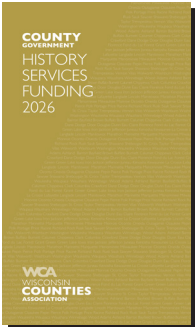


Wisconsin County Officials Directory

Each year, the WCA compiles a directory of all county government officials, both elected and appointed, in an easy-to-use, spiral-bound book. Each county's entry also features a snapshot of the county's history, geography and census data. The directory is a member benefit distributed to all member counties each summer.

County Government: History, Services, Funding

The WCA's most popular brochure, this publication is updated every two years following the spring election. Designed for use by county officials and other interested parties across the state, it includes a summary of the history of county government, a look at the extensive services counties provide, and an in-depth look at the funding mechanisms utilized by county government.



COMMUNICATIONS

Media/PR

The association raises awareness of county issues to influence the legislative process as well as inform members and the public of critical issues. These activities include media releases, editorial columns, radio and television interviews, podcasts, appearances on statewide radio shows, public service announcements, and web- and social media-based strategies.

Website

The WCA's website at wicounties.org is a 24/7 resource. The site is updated regularly and contains a wealth of information, including news, legislation affecting county government, events, publications and more.

Social Media

The WCA uses social media to connect members with up-to-date information about happenings at the association and in the Legislature. Follow the WCA on Facebook at [facebook.com](https://facebook.com/WisCounties); on X, at twitter.com/WisCounties; and on LinkedIn at "WCA: Wisconsin Counties Association."

Podcast

Highlighting key topics important to county members and featuring state and local guests, the "#LocalGovMatters" podcast hosted by the WCA can be found at wicounties.org and on popular podcast players like iTunes.

WCA Updates

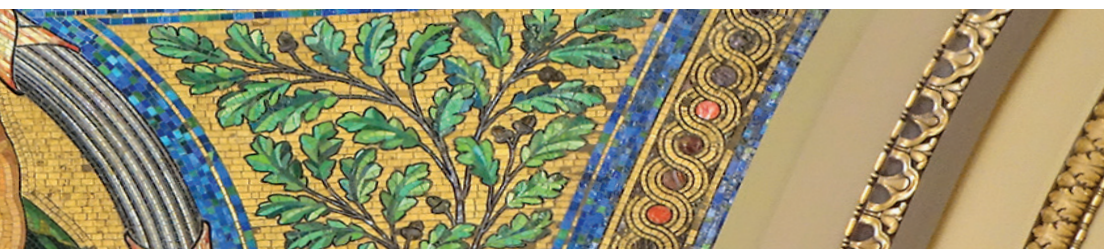
Stay informed with timely updates delivered directly to your inbox. The WCA regularly shares association news, topics of interest, and important legal and legislative updates.

Coverage includes:

- State and local government updates
- Legislative activity
- Important calls to action
- Legal updates
- Upcoming trainings
- General association news

News Services

The WCA offers county officials free subscriptions to two statewide news services: The Wheeler Report and [WisPolitics.com/State Affairs](http://WisPolitics.com/StateAffairs). They provide up-to-date information on legislative activity via email on a daily basis. County officials can keep track of bill introductions, legislative hearings, and floor action by the Legislature. Members may also access WisconsinEye for gavel-to-gavel, unedited video coverage of state proceedings. County officials can tailor notifications of WisconsinEye coverage on topics of interest to them.



EDUCATION



County officials gather for the Opening General Assembly at the WCA Annual Conference.

Annual Conference

The WCA Annual Conference and Exhibit Hall provides an opportunity each fall for county officials to learn, network and gain access to vendors serving county government. With more than 1,000 attendees, the annual conference features outstanding educational workshops and keynote speakers.

Educational workshops have included topics such as youth justice, transportation, county budgets and financing, and parliamentary procedure. The WCA Exhibit Hall is held in conjunction with

the conference and allows county officials a chance to see cutting-edge products and services from businesses and organizations serving county government.

Legislative Conference

Every February, the WCA holds its annual Legislative Conference in Madison. This two-day event draws government officials from around Wisconsin and includes discussion on legislative proposals affecting counties, reports by WCA government affairs staff and state officials, and updates on other key issues facing county government.



At the WCA Legislative Conference, WCA President & CEO Mark O'Connell (left) sits down with Gov. Tony Evers for a wide-ranging conversation.

County Board Chairs Forum

In the summer of even-numbered years, the WCA hosts a two-day training session specifically designed for county board chairs. The County Board Chairs Forum provides board chairs with information they need to effectively lead their county boards.

Topics include running effective meetings, county roles and responsibilities, Wisconsin's Open Meetings and Public Records laws, and ethics and conflicts of interest. The forum allows board chairs to learn from each other through networking opportunities.

Webinars

The WCA offers free, educational webinars on current issues impacting county officials. In addition to specially scheduled, topic-specific webinars, the WCA hosts regular webinars for all county officials. They include:

- County Leadership Meetings each Monday at 11 a.m. The virtual meeting includes government affairs, legal and other association updates, as well as guest speakers.
- "In the Board Room" webinar each month with Attorney Andy Phillips and Attolles Law, s.c. The topics include a wide range of the most pressing issues facing county officials and the laws that pertain to county governance.

Workshops & Meetings

Following the county board supervisor elections in the spring of even-numbered years, the WCA co-hosts County Officials Workshops across the state with the UW–Madison Division of Extension – Local Government Education. These biennial workshops provide an in-depth look at county board roles, running effective meetings, open meetings and public records laws, budgeting, and more. At around the same time, the WCA also hosts biennial District Meetings, which provide legal and legislative updates, along with other timely content.

Outreach & Engagement

The WCA is an educational and training resource. The goal of the outreach and member engagement effort is to effectively communicate and interact with county officials with regard to how the association can best serve county needs.

WCA staff is available to meet with county officials at county board or committee meetings, as well as at conferences and other regional meetings. Individual training opportunities are also available to member counties at no cost. Frequently requested topics include roles and responsibilities, agendas and minutes, parliamentary procedure, running effective meetings, ethics and conflicts of interest, and county board rules.



SERVICES

FORWARD ANALYTICS



Created in 2019 as the research arm of the Wisconsin Counties Association, Forward Analytics (FA) publishes reports on a variety of issues critical to the state. Its staff talks to county officials and county boards about the findings of their research and what it means for individual counties. They also provide other data assistance to counties.

The research findings from the FA reports have been reported on by newspapers and radio stations around the state. Among the topics covered have been the state's demographics, changing migration patterns, job creation, rural Wisconsin, child care, and housing affordability.

The FA annually publishes "The Green Book, A Book of County Facts," which is distributed to county board members, department heads and others. The book includes information on a variety of measures related to county government organization, finances, demographics, economics, and development. The FA also provides county officials with annual sales tax forecasts to aid in budgeting.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

FORWARD-ANALYTICS.NET

WCA GROUP HEALTH TRUST



In 1991, counties joined together to create the WCA Group Health Trust (GHT) to provide employee benefit programs with a high level of quality and service. GHT provides health benefits to county, municipal and school district employees.

GHT is a leader in the health benefits industry, providing a quality program with great service. It offers flexibility by custom designing an employee benefit program for each group, including one of the most comprehensive and dynamic wellness programs available. GHT is committed to empowering its members to make healthy choices and works closely with them to accomplish these goals. GHT contracts with the WCA for corporate management services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

WCAGHT.ORG

WCA SERVICES, INC.



WCA Services, Inc. (WCASI), a wholly owned subsidiary of the WCA, provides programs and services that assist local governments in operating more efficiently

and cost effectively. The company partners with reputable private sector companies that provide those solutions. The success of WCASI is due in part to its insistence on high standards from companies that provide counties and other public entities with meaningful solutions. Since 1997, every county in the state has benefited from the programs, products and services offered.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WCASI.COM

WISCONSIN COUNTY MUTUAL INSURANCE CORP.



The Wisconsin County Mutual Insurance Corporation (County Mutual) provides general liability, automobile, police professional, and errors and omissions insurance to counties. Owned by 54 of

Wisconsin's 72 counties, the company provides property insurance, excess workers' compensation insurance to self-insured counties, cyber liability coverage, as well as coverages for county nursing homes. County Mutual also offers:

- Owner-Direct Insurance Program (ODIP), a cost-saving product that allows counties to take control of their insurance needs on building projects. County Mutual risk management consultants provide over 500 on-site safety training sessions annually to its county members.
- Advanced Law Enforcement Risk Training (ALERT) program, which provides safety training for law enforcement officers.
- County Mutual Care Line, a 24/7 telephone nurse triage line available to injured employees from workers' compensation-insured members.
- Annual Highway Safety Days, where over 1,000 transportation employees are trained on common risks they face daily on the job.
- Cyber-Resilience & Education Coordination Services (C-RECS) program, which is designed to assist members in creating a stronger cybersecurity program and risk-aware culture at all levels of their organization.

County Mutual contracts with the WCA for corporate management services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WISCONSINCOUNTYMUTUAL.ORG



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