More than 1,100 women served on local School Boards in 2015. Still, four percent of WI School Boards had no women members (same as in 2005).

Nearly 550 women served on City Councils in 2015. Yet, 31 cities had no women on their City Council, representing nearly 400,000 people.

2021 was a Year of Record Growth* for Women Serving on City Councils.**

Women hold 29% of seats (+90) in 2021, up 23% in 2015.

Based on reports issued in 2005, 2010, 2015. **City Council and Common Council are used interchangeably.

*13% of Mayors are Women

Women hold 24 of Wisconsin’s Mayoral seats (13%)—the first increase in a decade, up from 21 (12%) in both 2015 and 2010.

**40 Cities have Gender Parity

Cities where women account for half or more of the Council Members has nearly doubled, up from 22 cities in 2015.

***23 Cities have No Women Council Members

23 Cities (12%) have no women on the City Councils, down by one-third, from 31 (16%) in 2015.

Nationally

Women hold 30.5% of municipal offices (city and village combined).³

### THE POWER OF THREE¹

One woman on a board is a token, two is a presence, three is a voice.

About one-third of WI City Councils (68) have three or more women members.

Statewide, the number of seats on a City Council ranges from 4 to 20. Overall, the median number is 7; the median number of seats held by women is 2.

### HERSTORY: Wisconsin’s First Women Alders (1924)

Clintonville • Libbie Hyde
Janesville • Emma H. Manning
Marshfield • Anna Lathrop
Mellen • Mrs. C.F. Peterson
Phillips • Mary Bieberstein
Platteville • Mrs. V.M. Russell
Waukesha • Elsie McFarlane
Wausau • Helen Ohm
Whitewater • Matilda Fowler

The 1921 Wisconsin Equal Right Act affirmed women’s new right to hold any public office. In 1924, UW Extension Municipal Information Bureau surveyed municipalities, identifying over 400 women in elected and appointed office—including nine female City Council members.²

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
FOOTNOTES
   https://milwaukeewomeninc.org/

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Wisconsin Association of School Boards; Wisconsin Clerks of Circuit Courts Association; Wisconsin Counties Association; Wisconsin County Clerks Association; Wisconsin County Treasurers Association; Wisconsin League of Municipalities; Wisconsin Register of Deeds Association; Wisconsin Sheriffs & Deputy Sheriffs Association; and Wisconsin Towns Association.

Madelyn Adler, Research Assistant

CITIES WITH NO WOMEN ON THE CITY COUNCIL

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as of November 1, 2021