



Salaries of Wisconsin State Elected Officials, 2023



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How salaries are determined

The process for setting the salaries of elected state officials begins with the administrator of the Division of Personnel Management in the Department of Administration submitting proposed changes to the state compensation plan, which includes the salaries of elected state officials, to the Joint Committee on Employment Relations. The state compensation plan is typically submitted after enactment of the biennial budget act, usually in the summer of the odd-numbered year. If approved by the committee, the plan goes into effect. The committee may modify the administrator's proposal, but these modifications are subject to the governor's veto and may be disapproved by the governor within 10 calendar days; a vote of six members of the committee may set aside the governor's action. On December 22, 2021, the Joint Committee on Employment Relations approved the 2021–23 state compensation plan.

Wis. Stat. §§ 20.923 and 230.12 (3) (a) and (b) provide the procedure for establishing the pay levels of elected state officials. Prior to 2015, the administration of the compensation plan was performed by the Office of State Employment Relations. The office was eliminated by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, and its powers and duties were transferred to the Division of Personnel Management.

Wis. Const. art. IV, § 26 (2), provides that “the compensation of a public officer may not be increased or diminished during the term of office.” Constitutional amendments have created two exceptions:

1. An April 1992 constitutional amendment provided that all legislators, including those elected in special elections, must receive the same salary throughout the legislature's biennial session. This allows holdover senators in the middle of a four-year term to receive an adjustment when the new legislature is inaugurated, so their salary matches that of newly elected senators and representatives to the assembly.
2. Since 1967, the constitution has provided that the salaries of the entire judicial branch are adjusted to reflect the salary schedule in effect when any new justice or judge takes office.

Constitutional officers in the executive branch

Constitutional officers in the executive branch may not receive a pay raise during their terms of office. All elected officers in the executive branch, except the state superintendent of public instruction, began serving four-year terms in January 2023. Thus, they will receive the salaries in effect at that time until the expiration of their terms in January 2027. If an incumbent resigns, dies, or is removed, the officer assuming the office through appointment or election—or succession if the lieutenant governor assumes the office of the governor—will receive the salary provided in the compensation plan that is

applicable at the time he or she takes office. The salaries of all constitutional officers were increased by approximately 4 percent from the previous term.

Since the current state superintendent of public instruction began serving a four-year term of office in 2021, the salary of \$132,351 for that office will remain the same in 2023. If the superintendent does not complete the current term and a new state superintendent of public instruction assumes office before 2025, the salary will adjust to the 2023 compensation level of \$137,696. Salaries for officers in the executive branch are as follows:

Salaries of constitutional officers in the executive branch, 2023

Officer	Salary (\$)
Governor	165,568
Lieutenant governor	87,423
Secretary of state	78,583
State treasurer	78,583
Attorney general	160,680
State superintendent of public instruction	132,351

Members of the 2023 Wisconsin Legislature

The salary of all legislators serving in the 2023 Wisconsin Legislature is \$57,408, which increased by approximately 4 percent from the previous biennium. The Speaker of the assembly receives an additional stipend of \$25 per month.

Wis. Stat. § 13.123 (1) and Joint Rule 85 authorize legislators to claim a per diem allowance for food and lodging expenses for each day spent in Madison on legislative business except Saturdays or Sundays. If a legislator is in Madison on a Saturday or Sunday attending a session of the legislature or a meeting of a standing committee as a member of the committee, the per diem amount may be claimed for that day. Members may also receive reimbursement for actual expenses incurred in attending committee meetings outside of Madison.

2001 Wisconsin Act 16 set the legislative per diem at 90 percent of the rate established by the U.S. General Services Administration for travel by federal employees to Madison. However, under Wis. Const. art. IV, § 8, which provides that each house of the legislature may determine the rules of its own proceedings, the organization committee of each house sets the actual maximum per diem rates that may be claimed by members.

In the 2023–24 legislative session, the per diem rate for representatives to the assembly is \$155.70 per overnight stay, and the rate for a day visit is \$77.85. The maximum

number of days that may be claimed for per diem in 2023 is 153, and the maximum number of days that may be claimed in 2024 is 80. In the senate, the maximum per diem rate is \$115 per day for senators who do not reside in Dane County. Senators who reside in Dane County may choose to be reimbursed for up to half of that amount.

Judicial branch

The salaries of all justices and judges are adjusted to match the amounts listed in the schedule in the state compensation plan whenever any member of the judicial branch takes office. The following judicial branch salaries are applicable beginning on January 1, 2023:

Judicial branch salaries, applicable January 1, 2023

Position	Salary (\$)
Supreme court justice	184,819
Court of appeals judge	174,357
Circuit court judge	164,487

District attorneys

The compensation plan also sets the salaries of district attorneys, who are elected in each prosecutorial district but are paid by the state. The salaries vary depending upon the population of the prosecutorial unit and currently range from \$145,288 in prosecutorial units with populations above 750,000 to \$126,173 in prosecutorial units with populations of 75,000 or below. As with the salaries of constitutional officers, the salaries of district attorneys may not be increased during their four-year terms of office. However, a district attorney who takes office by special election or appointment will receive the updated rate of pay provided in the compensation plan.¹ ■

1. Div. of Personnel Management, Wis. Dept. of Administration, *State of Wisconsin Compensation Plan: 2021–2023* (Madison, WI: Division of Personnel Management), <http://dpm.wi.gov>.