



Women's Council
· Wisconsin ·

WOMENSCOUNCIL.WI.GOV

For Immediate Release

Contact: Christine Lidbury, Executive Director

608.266.2218 or christine.lidbury@wi.gov

**NEW REPORT FINDS FEMALE CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE
AMONG THE STATE'S FASTEST GROWING ELECTED OFFICES FOR WOMEN.**

Women now hold 1 out of 4 seats on the Wisconsin Circuit Court.

December 3, 2019 (Madison, WI) The Wisconsin Women's Council released a new factsheet today, *Women on the Wisconsin Circuit Court, 2019*, as part of its research series benchmarking women in state and local government in Wisconsin. The factsheet is available online at <http://womenscouncil.wi.gov>.

The percentage of female judges on the Wisconsin Circuit Court increased from 19% in 2017 to 26% in 2019. This year-over-year increase puts female Circuit Court Judges among the state's fastest growing elected offices for women. Since the Council's first benchmark report in 2005, the number of female Circuit Court judges has nearly doubled— from 33 (1-in-7 judges) in 2005 to 64 (1-in-4 judges) in 2019. Even so, Wisconsin lags the national average of 33%.

Despite the higher percentage of judicial seats filled by women, 43 Wisconsin County Circuit Courts (62%), representing 81 judicial seats, have no female judges. It is not until a County Circuit Court has 5 or more judges, that it is common to have a female judge.

“Wisconsin has long been a national leader for women serving on the Supreme Court, but this has not been reflected in the Circuit Courts,” said Christine Lidbury, Executive Director. “Gender diversity on the bench is often cited as an important factor in public confidence, and perceptions of fairness and equality in the justice system. By bringing more qualified women to the bench, across the state, the system becomes more representative of our population and reflective of the goals and values of all of our citizens.”

Also included is a timeline of women's judicial firsts in these courts, dating back to the County Court system that predated formation of the Circuit Courts.

About the Women's Council | Patty Cadorin Chair • Christine Lidbury, Executive Director

The Wisconsin Women's Council, established in 1983, is Wisconsin's statutory commission on the status of women and girl. The Council promotes initiatives that empower women, serves as a clearinghouse for information on programs and resources, provides research and advocacy, and promotes unique partnerships to address barriers and inequalities affecting Wisconsin women. The Council operates under the guidance of a 15-Member Board appointed by the Governor and Legislative leaders.