



Local Government & Finance Basic Resources List

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Books, Manuals & Guides

Handbook For Wisconsin Municipal Officials, A League Manual (2002), by Curt Witynski, Claire Silverman and Dan Olson of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities staff, with 12 other contributors. This 13-chapter, 316-page handbook covers a wide variety of topics on city and village government. Ordering information may be found on the League website below under “Publications.”

The Wisconsin County Supervisor’s Handbook (2004), by the staff of the Wisconsin Counties Association and outside partners (including D. Elsass, D. Hill and J. Schneider of the Local Government Center). This 10-chapter, 142-page book covers various topics, including the history, organization and financial management of county government, open government laws and meeting guidelines. The Local Government Center has sent a complimentary copy to each UW-Extension county Community Resource Development educator’s office. Additional copies may be ordered from the WCA; see their website below for information.

Wisconsin Town Officers’ Handbook, by James H. Schneider, published by the Wisconsin Towns Association. This handbook covers organization of towns, open government laws, finance and taxation, public works, public safety, planning and land use and other topics. The 1994 edition is out of print. A 2005 revised and expanded edition is being prepared and a copy will be sent to every county Community Resource Development educator’s office. When available, additional copies may be ordered from the Wisconsin Towns Association.

Wisconsin Legislator Briefing Book 2005-06 (November 2004), by the Wisconsin Legislative Council staff. This 369-page book is divided into two parts. Part 1 covers “The Legislature and Laws Related to the Legislature” and includes chapters on open

meetings, public records and “Wisconsin’s Legal Framework.” Part 2, on “Selected State Programs and Laws,” contains chapters on a wide variety of topics, including agriculture, economic development, education, environmental protection, housing, municipal and county government, natural resources, state and local revenue system, state-tribal relations, transportation, and utilities and energy. It is available on-line at the Wisconsin Legislative Council website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/> (click on “Publications” if it is not linked on the main page).

The Framework of Your Wisconsin Government (16th ed. 2001), by the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance. This eight-chapter, 140-page book has a background chapter on the state, a chapter on influencing government, and chapters on state and local government, including separate chapters for counties, towns, cities and villages, and school districts. A complimentary copy has been distributed by the Local Government Center to each county office with a Community Resource Development educator. Inexpensive copies may be ordered from the Taxpayers Alliance website below.

A Guide to Parliamentary Procedure for Local Governments in Wisconsin (1998), by Larry E. Larmer, University of Wisconsin-Madison, who works part-time for the Local Government Center. This seven-chapter, 85-page book covers rules for deliberation, local government meetings, the agenda, and the role of the chair, as well as rules relating to discussion and debate, motions, and decision-making. It includes appendices of motions and may be purchased from the Local Government Center.

Wisconsin Open Meetings Law, A Compliance Guide (2003), Wisconsin Department of Justice, Peggy A. Lautenschlager, Attorney General. This 17-page guide also has two appendices that include a copy of the law and a sample complaint form. Available on the DOJ website: <http://www.doj.state.wi.us/>. Click on “Open Meetings/Public Records.”

Wisconsin Public Records Law, A Compliance Guide (2005), Wisconsin Department of Justice, Peggy A. Lautenschlager, Attorney General. This 32-page guide has two appendices that include a copy of the law and a public records notice. Available on the DOJ website, as indicated in the previous item.

State of Wisconsin 2003-2004 Blue Book, compiled by the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. Published biennially in odd-numbered years. This book contains extensive information on Wisconsin state and local government. The statistical section contains population information on local units of government, including a listing of population figures for each county and for each city, village and town within the county. Available from Document Sales Unit, Department of Administration, 202 South Thornton Avenue, P.O. Box 7840, Madison, WI 53707. Telephone: (608) 266-3358. Also available on the internet: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/bb/index.htm>. Alternatively, from the Local Government Center website, click on “Internet Resources” to find the link in the list following the icons.

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets on numerous basic local government topics have been prepared by the Local Government Center and may be downloaded from the “Publications” page of the Center’s website. (Go to <http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/> and click on “Publications.”) Titles include the following:

Fact Sheet #1 Wisconsin Open Meetings Law

Fact Sheet #2 The Property Assessment and Tax Process for Towns, Villages and Cities

Fact Sheet #6 The Annual Meeting

Fact Sheet #7 The Wisconsin Public Records Law

Fact Sheet #8 Self-Organized Counties

Fact Sheet #10 State Shared Revenues

Fact Sheet #12 How to Interpret an Ordinance

Fact Sheet #17 Financial Management in Local Government: Frequently Used Terms

Fact Sheet #18 Village Powers for Town Boards

Fact Sheet #19 County Government in Wisconsin

Two fact sheets produced by the Wisconsin Ethics Board provide short, useful references. They may be downloaded from the Ethics Board website. From the Board’s sitemap, <http://ethics.state.wi.us/SiteMap.htm>, click on “guidelines.” The fact sheets are:

Eth #219 Local officials’ receipt of food, drink, favors, services, etc.

Eth #240 Mitigating Conflicting Interests: Private Interest vs. Public Responsibility

FAQs & Reports

The Local Government Center has produced documents on frequently-asked questions on certain topics. A copy may be obtained by contacting the author.

Ethics & Conflicts of Interest—FAQs (frequently-asked questions). This 12-page paper, written by Jim Schneider, Local Government Center, is used at the Center’s annual WisLine on Ethics & Conflicts of Interest, in the Basics of Parliamentary Procedure & Open Government series, and at the Center’s spring workshops for county officials (even-numbered years) and town officials (odd-numbered years). Contact Jim for a copy.

A Few FAQs on Parliamentary Procedure. This recent paper by Dan Hill, Local Government Center, is used at Center workshops. Contact Dan to obtain a copy.

Wisconsin’s Local Government Finance, A Policy Primer (November 2002), by Andrew Reschovsky, LaFollette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison. This twelve-page booklet discusses municipal revenues (including state aids) and expenditures. Available on the Internet at:

<http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/publications.html>. Next, click on “Other Publications” to bring up the link for this primer (and others).

Websites

Local Government Association Websites

League of Wisconsin Municipalities

<http://www.lwm-info.org/>

This website's "Quick Links" include the following: Legislative Bulletins, Legislative Bills, Legal FAQs, the Municipality (monthly magazine) and the League Letter (monthly newsletter). The bar on the left has links to legislative, legal, municipal and internet information, conferences and publications.

Wisconsin Alliance of Cities

<http://www.wiscities.org/>

This website includes an e-newsletter, archives on task forces, and information the Alliance's legislative activities.

Wisconsin Counties Association

<http://www.wicounties.org/>

This website has links to featured articles in the monthly magazine, information concerning legislative activities, publications, upcoming featured events, access to audio files and a series of web links that describe ongoing initiatives.

Wisconsin Towns Association

<http://www.wisctowns.com/>

This website has descriptions of current events and programs, links to Town Law Forms and links to monitor state capitol and state agency developments. The top bar has a link to websites of the state, federal government and towns; the bar at the left margin includes links to a calendar and information on the WTA.

State Government Websites

Wisconsin Legislature: Infobases

<http://folio.legis.state.wi.us>

This website includes links to the following: state statutes and state constitution, bills, acts and state administrative code. The link to the statutes allows the viewer to see an updated version of the statutes, incorporating the most recent changes, and to conduct searches by key words and statutory provisions.

Wisconsin Department of Administration

<http://www.doa.state.wi.us/index.asp>

The Intergovernmental Relations page on this website contains links to numerous topics related to local government. From the DOA homepage, click on "Division Menus" in the right column to find the link to Intergovernmental Relations. Headings for this division include the following: Census and Population Information; Coastal Management; Comprehensive Planning; DOA Local Government Report; Federal

Procurement, Grants and Loans; Land Subdivision Plat Review; and Municipal Boundary Review.

Wisconsin Department of Revenue

<http://www.dor.state.wi.us/>

This agency website, on its “Government” page, has links organized under the following headings: Assessors; Property Owners; County Officials; Town, Village and City Officials. The “Publications” link under any of these headings leads to publications on the property tax (e.g., assessments, board of review, taxes levied and collected) and other topics, including tax incremental financing.

Wisconsin Ethics Board

<http://ethics.state.wi.us/>

This state agency website’s link entitled “Standards of Conduct-Local Officials” connects to a statutory overview, a link to an online PowerPoint tutorial (at the top), as well as links (at the bottom of the page) to statutory provisions and “Guidelines for Local Officials” (linking a fact sheet, Eth 219, on “Local officials’ receipt of food, drink, favors, services, etc.”) and to the digest of Ethics Board opinions. Click on the “Publications” link on the main page and then on “Guidelines” to find other material of interest, including a fact sheet (Eth 242) on “Mitigating Conflicting Interests: Public Interest vs. Public Responsibility.”

Wisconsin Legislative Council

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/>

The “Publications” link on this legislative service agency’s website connects to “Act Memos by Act Number.” Also, the main page links the *2005-06 Wisconsin Legislator Briefing Book*. For more information on this book, see the above section on “Books, Manuals & Guides.”

Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/>

The “Publications” link on this legislative service agency’s main page allows access to recent publications, budget information and informational papers. The “Informational Papers” are organized under the following 10 headings: General Fund Taxes; Property Taxes and Local Finance Property Tax Relief to Municipalities; Property Tax Relief to Individuals; Education; Transportation; Health, Family Services and Corrections; Environmental Programs; State Budget and Finance; and Selected State Programs. The second and third headings, which are of particular interest, include papers on local government expenditure limits, the property tax, local government revenue options, municipal and county finance, tax incremental financing, shared revenue, and other municipal aid programs.

Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/>

The “LRB Publications” webpage of this legislative service agency links the *Wisconsin Blue Book* (described above under “Books, Manuals & Guides”), budget

information, census information and informational bulletins. The “Wisconsin Legislative District Almanac,” which contains demographic information for each of the state 33 senate districts and 99 assembly districts, is linked under “Special Publications,” at the bottom of the publications page. The “Publications by Subject” link takes the viewer to a number of topic headings including Business, Industrial Development; Elections, Referenda, Redistricting; Environment, Recycling, Land Use; and Taxation.

UW and Additional Internet Resources

Local Government Center, UW-Extension, Madison

<http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/>

This website, which is referenced throughout this list, contains information on Local Government Center (LGC) programs and publications, as well as links to the internet resources cited in this list.

govtraining.org

<http://www.govtraining.org>

The govtraining.org website is the University of Wisconsin’s online catalog of educational programs for government officials and managers. Its links are organized into two categories. The first option is to browse by general management topic (e.g., Budget and Finance, Local Government and Elections, Public Policy Issues). The second option is to find programs sorted by categories such as Sponsoring UW Member, Date, Who Should Attend.

LaFollette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin, Madison

<http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu>

The “Quick Links on the “Publications” page of this website has links to Workshop Papers, Special Commissions and Other Publications. The Special Commissions page links the reports of the SAVE Commission and the Commission on State and Local Partnerships (the “Kettl Commission”). The Other Publications page includes “Wisconsin’s Local Government Finance-A Policy Primer” (see FAQs & Reports, below) and a paper on the “Taxpayer Bill of Rights” (TABOR).

The Wheeler Report

<http://www.thewheelerreport.com/>

On this website you will find links to information on state government matters (e.g., legislation, state agency and gubernatorial information), plus links to the latest news releases, newspaper stories and editorials on a number of different government issues.

Wisconsin Taxpayer’s Alliance

<http://www.wistax.org>

On this website you will find WTA news releases, information on its publications, resource links and “Facts & Figures,” which include state and local tax rankings.

Periodicals

Information on ordering these publications may be obtained from each organization's website; see the section on "Websites" for the "urls" or internet addresses.

The Municipality. A monthly magazine published by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities.

Wisconsin Counties. A monthly magazine published by the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Wisconsin Towns. A monthly magazine published by the Wisconsin Towns Association.

The Wisconsin Taxpayer. A monthly review of Wisconsin government, taxes and public finance published by the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance.

LGC WisLine Programs & Workshop Materials

The Local Government Center's WisLines and workshops all include packets of information which may be ordered by those who do not attend the programs. UW-Extension county educators may attend LGC programs and receive the materials at either no cost or reduced cost. See the Center's website (<http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/>) for more information or contact the Center.

WisLines

Basics of Parliamentary Procedure & Open Government

Conducting the Annual Board of Review

Conducting Local Elections

Current Issues Affecting Local Government Officials

Local Land Use Planning & Zoning

Local Transportation Issues

Workshops

Budget Workshops (each fall)

County Officials Workshops (spring of even-numbered years)

Town Officials Workshops (spring of odd-numbered years)

LGC Videotapes

A variety of videotapes on basic local government topics, including the following, have been developed by the Local Government Center and are available from the Cooperative Extension Media Collection, as specified on the Center's website (see previous item). Go to the Center's "Publications" page and scroll down.

Chairing a Public Board or Committee #17759. 15 min. Videotape/Color (1995)
Conducting the Annual Board of Review #17205. 31 min. Videotape/Color (2002)
County Government: A Brief History #17613. 11 min. Videotape/Color (1992)
Ethics and Conflict of Interest: Seven Vignettes #17634. 25 min. Videotape/Color (1994)
Open Meeting Law in Action: Seven Vignettes #17211. 21 min. Videotape/Color (1992)
Parliamentary Procedure in Local Government: Six Vignettes #17389. 28 min. Videotape/Color (1992)

Other LGC Publications (G.R.E.A.T. Program)

Graphing Revenues, Expenditures and Taxes (G.R.E.A.T.) is a software package, developed by Kate Lawton, Local Government Center, and Steve Deller, Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison, which contains statewide databases for all counties and municipalities. The CD includes the software and a manual, pocket guide and eight tutorials. For more information, go to the “Local Government Finance” page on the Local Government Center website (<http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/>). To order a copy, contact Kate Lawton.

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