County Board Size and Redistricting



Facts Regarding County Board Size

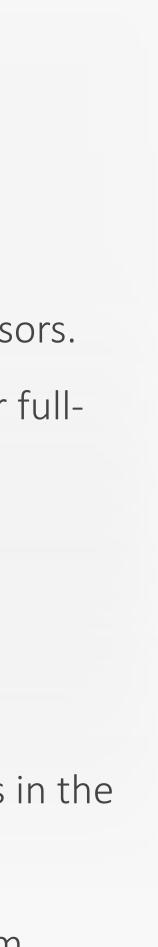
WCA does not hold a position on the size of county boards. This decision should be made at the local level.



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Wisconsin adopted the New York model:

- > Made up of larger citizen boards of volunteers called county supervisors.
- Some use the Pennsylvania model smaller boards with part-time or fulltime paid commissioners.
- Wisconsin counties provide services on behalf of the state government
- ie: Law enforcement, record keeping, courts, human services, road maintenance, emergency government and land conservation.
 Wisconsin requires counties to perform more services than most states in the
- nation.
 - Wisconsin is one of 13 states nationally requiring counties to perform human and social services.



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To reduce or increase the size of the county board, redistricting has to occur.

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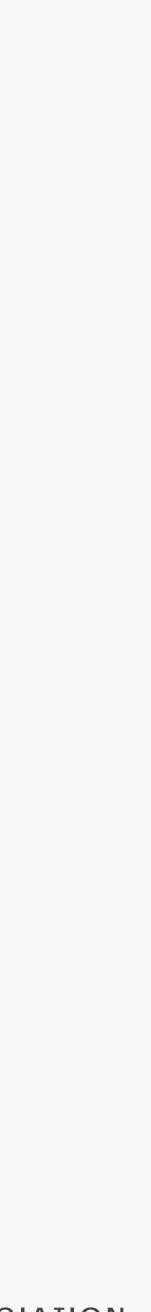
Redistricting

- Every 10 years with the federal census, governments are required to go through the redistricting process.
 - \succ Will occur again following the 2020 census.
- 2005 Wisconsin Act 100 created a procedure:
 - Electors may initiate a reduction in county board size through a petition and referendum process.
- Under 2005 Act 100, the county board may reduce its size under its own initiative once during a ten (10)-year interim between regular rounds of redistricting.
- Reducing the size of the county board does nothing to reduce the
 - statutory and constitutional mandates that are placed on counties.



- Reapportionment and redistricting are mandated by federal and state law.
- Under Wisconsin statute 59.10, county governments in Wisconsin are required
- to redistrict following the federal decennial census ("decennial redistricting").
- Section 59.10 also allows for redistricting one additional time in the period between decennial redistricting.
- Redistricting more than once every ten (10) years will require additional county resources.
- Redistricting is a very complex process.
- Redistricting must meet many legal requirements.
- Redistricting requires intergovernmental cooperation.
- Counties must determine early in the process the size of the board and appoint a redistricting committee.
- WCA is in the process of updating a county decennial redistricting handbook
 - for 2021 which will be distributed to all counties.

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Basic Procedure for Decennial Redistricting Under Wis. Stat. § 59.10(3). Step 1 - Adoption of A Tentative County Supervisory District Plan. The county is required to adopt a tentative county supervisory plan within *sixty (60) days* after the results of the federal census (including the publication of maps showing the location and numbering of census blocks) become available from the federal government or are published by a state agency, but no later than July 1, 2021.



Anticipated timeline is April 2021 through May 2021

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- propose a tentative county supervisory district plan establishing the number
- of supervisory districts proposed by the board and tentative boundaries for
- each district
- hold a public hearing on the proposed plan; and
- adopt a tentative plan.

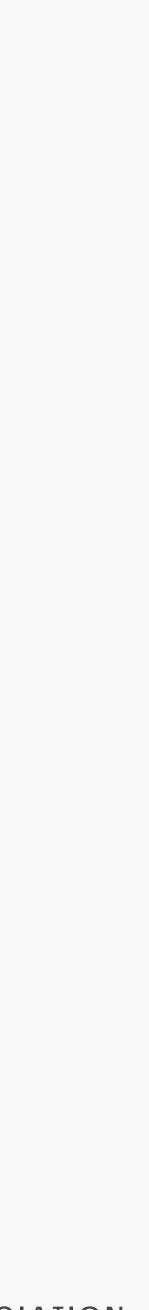


Step 2 – Creation of Wards/Adjustment of Ward Lines by Municipalities. Upon receipt of the tentative plan and written statement regarding the creation of a ward, if any, from a county, a municipality has sixty (60) days to create wards or adjust its ward lines in accordance with the tentative county supervisory redistricting plan. A municipality is required to:

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Anticipated timeline is June 2021 through July 2021

- Make a good faith effort to accommodate the tentative plan for the
- county or counties in which it is located; and
- To divide itself into wards in a way that permits the creation of
- supervisory districts that conform to the population requirements of the tentative plan.
- The municipal clerk is required to forward a copy of the ward plan to the county within five (5) days after the municipality has enacted or adopted an ordinance or resolution creating wards in accordance with the tentative supervisory redistricting plan.



Step 3 – Adoption of a Final County Supervisory District Plan.

Anticipated timeline is August 2021 through September 2021

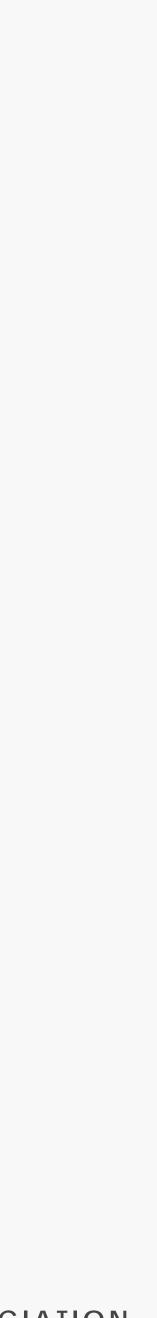
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• A county board is required to hold a public hearing and to adopt a final supervisory district plan within *sixty (60) days* after every municipality in the county adjusts its wards. The final plan must establish numbers for each district. • Territory within each supervisory district created by the plan must be contiguous, except that one or more wards located within a city or village which is wholly surrounded by another city or water, or both, may be combined with one or more noncontiguous wards, or one or more wards consisting of island territory as defined in Wis. Stat. § 5.15(2)(f)3 may be combined with one or more noncontiguous wards within the same municipality, to form a supervisory district..

• The county board chair is required to file a certified copy of the final supervisor districting plan with the Secretary of State. Once the plan is enacted and filed with the Secretary of State, including any authorized amendment that is also enacted and filed, the plan remains in effect until it is superseded by a subsequent plan enacted under Wis. Stat. § 59.10 and a certified copy of that plan is filed with the Secretary of State.



- Increases the opportunity for violations of the open
- meetings law.
- Can create difficulties meeting quorum requirements.
- Full county board may have additional work otherwise done
- at the committee level.

Things to Consider

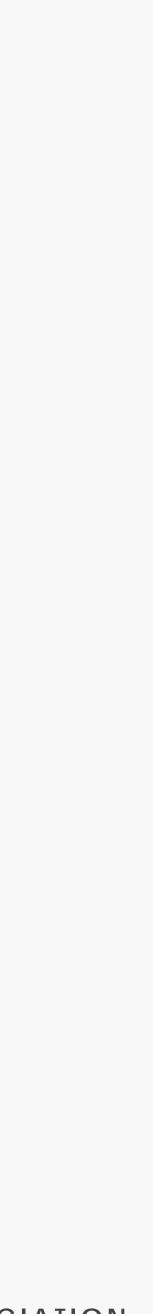
Wisconsin Counties

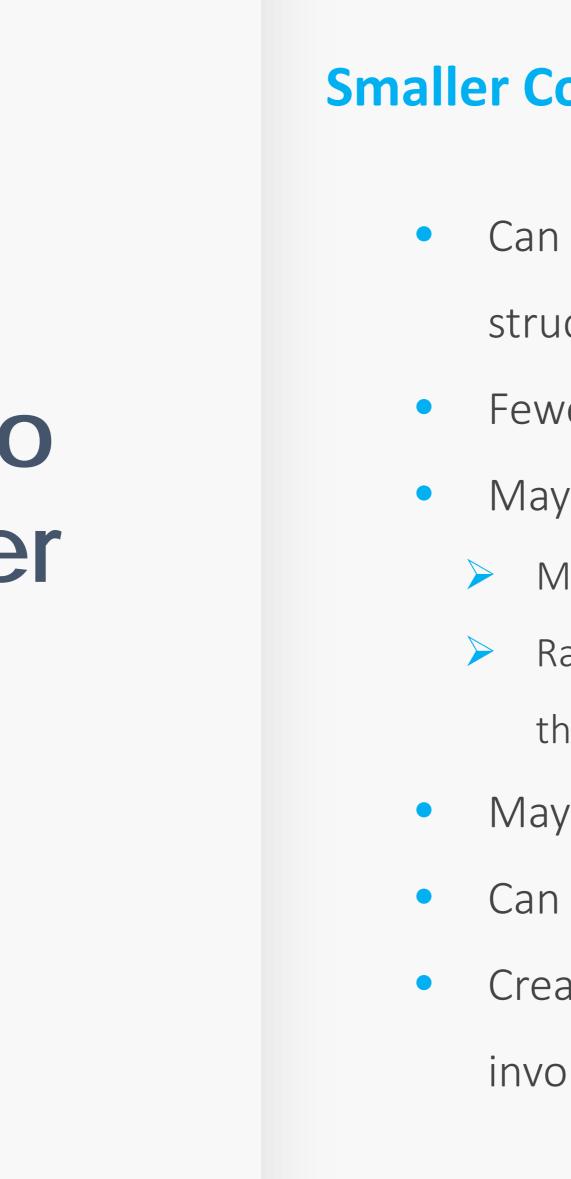
Association

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Smaller County Board Size

- Time commitment may increase.
- May require higher compensation.
- Could exclude people from running for office.





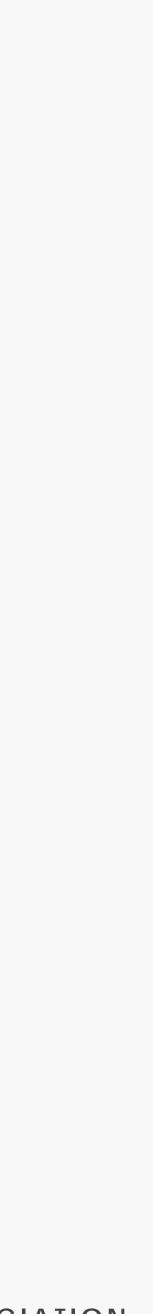


Things to Consider

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Smaller County Board Size

- Can provide efficiencies if the county reviews committee
- structure concurrently with board size reduction.
- Fewer meetings = more staff time for daily responsibilities.
- May broaden elected officials' perspectives.
 - More aware of the full scope of county operations.
 - Rather than serving on multiple department-specific committees,
 - they set policy for more county departments and programs.
- May reduce representation in rural areas.
- Can make the redistricting process more difficult.
- Creates opportunities for special interest groups to get more
- involved and have less people to lobby or influence.



Larger County Board Size

Things to Consider



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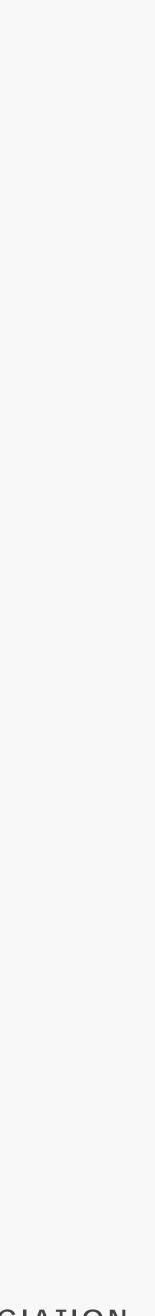
Lessens the opportunity for violations of the open meetings law.

Can help meet quorum requirements.

More work can be done at the committee level vs. by the full board.

Workload can be spread over a larger group of people.

- Time commitment may decrease.
- May reduce overall expenses.
- Could allow more people to run for office.









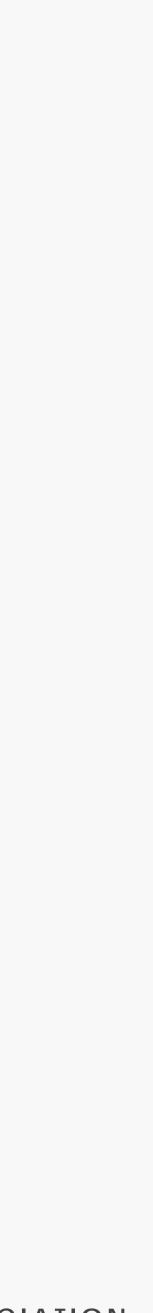
Things to Consider



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Larger County Board Size

- Can create duplication of efforts or overlap with more committees.
- More meetings = less staff time for daily responsibilities.
- May bring more expertise and life experience to the debate.
- May increase rural representation
- Special interest groups have more people to lobby and may lessen their influence.



Common Misconceptions

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Misconception	Truth
ller board size creates more mpetition for board seats.	Counties that have reduced their size in the past decade have not experienced greater competition for supervisor elections.
maller boards cost less	Compensation (per diem or salary) increases may be warranted because of increased workload.
aller boards require members to become full-time supervisors.	Smaller board size does not require full- time supervisors, but supervisor responsibilities may increase.
maller boards offer the same rtunity for diversity, background, d experience as larger boards.	Larger boards may provide more opportunities for diversity of backgrounds and experiences that may be beneficial to the public.
ler board size allows the public to ore easily identify their elected representative	Smaller board size may result in less accountability for elected officials. If an elected official represent fewer people, the public is more likely to know the elected official personally and may be more comfortable to contact them.



Since the passage of **2005 Act 100**: •

- Eight counties had referendums regarding board size all in 2006 07
- Five referendums passed, and three failed.
 - Douglas County had a referendum that failed in April 2007, 28 7
 - Fond du Lac County had a referendum pass in November 2006, from 36 to 18. In 2012, the board increased their size to 25
 - Jackson County had a referendum that failed in April 2007, 19 11
 - In Price County, the first referendum to go from 21 7 failed in April 2006, however in November 2006, the second referendum to go from 21 – 13 passed.
 - Rusk County had a referendum that failed in April 2007, 21 to 13
 - Walworth County had a referendum pass in April 2007, 25 to 11
 - Waushara County had a referendum pass in November 2006, from 21 to 11
 - Wood County had a referendum pass in November 2006, from 38 to 19
- At the same time, a few counties reduced their board size on their own.
- In 2005, there were a total of 1,789 county supervisors statewide.
- In 2010, there were a total of **1,680** county supervisors statewide.

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Recent Changes to **Board Size**



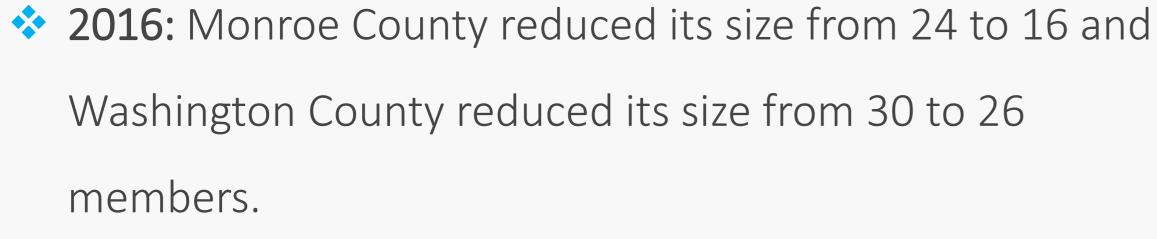
- In 2012, following the federal required redistricting:
 - 14 counties reduced their county board size ranging from 1 member (Milwaukee County) to 14 members Chippewa County.)
 - Buffalo County 16 to 14
 - Chippewa County 29 to 15
 - Columbia County 31 to 28
 - Dodge County 37 to 33
 - Douglas County 28 to 21
 - Fond du Lac County 18 to 25 (increased the board by 7)
 - Kenosha County 28 to 23
 - La Crosse County 35 to 29
 - Milwaukee County 19 to 18
 - Ozaukee County 31 to 26
 - Portage County 29 to 25
 - Racine County 23 to 21
 - Rusk County 21 to 19
 - Shawano County 30 to 27
 - Sheboygan County 34 to 25
 - \succ In 2012, there were a total of 1,620 county supervisors statewide.

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Recent Changes to **Board Size**







- No changes in board size in **2018**.
- Currently there are 1,600 elected county board supervisors statewide.

Recent Changes to **Board Size**



Thank you! Ouestions?



Wisconsin Counties Association (866) 404-2700

