



STATE OF WISCONSIN

Legislative Audit Bureau

Joe Chrisman
State Auditor

22 East Mifflin Street, Suite 500
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Main: (608) 266-2818
Hotline: 1-877-FRAUD-17

www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab
AskLAB@legis.wisconsin.gov

DATE: February 1, 2023

TO: Senator Eric Wimberger and
Representative Robert Wittke, Co-chairpersons
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

FROM: Joe Chrisman
State Auditor 

SUBJECT: Proposed Audit of Telework, Space Management, and Risk Management—Background Information

At your request, we have gathered some background information that the Joint Legislative Audit Committee may find helpful in considering an audit of telework, space management, and risk management for executive branch agencies.

In fiscal year (FY) 2022-23, Wisconsin's executive branch agencies are authorized approximately 70,000 full-time equivalent positions. In some cases, employees of these agencies were permitted to telework prior to the public health emergency. However, the use of telework in state government has become more common since the public health emergency began.

Some agencies may have established agencywide policies to govern the use of telework and manage risk, including IT security and data security risk. In other agencies, the opportunity to telework and the approach to risk management may vary throughout the agency, based on the nature of specific employee job duties. Therefore, questions have arisen about the extent to which agencies make telework available to employees, the sufficiency of the policies created to manage risk, and the extent to which employees telework.

With an expansion of telework in state government, questions also have been raised about the amount of underutilized or unutilized office space, which may represent a potential for cost savings. The Department of Administration (DOA) indicates that it oversees, maintains, and manages approximately 30 facilities that have a combined total of approximately six million square feet of space. DOA's Division of Facilities and Transportation Services provides building management and real estate management services to state agencies that occupy this space. DOA also sets and charges agencies rent based on the type and amount of space occupied. Agencies may also occupy space leased from a private entity.

In May 2021, DOA released *Vision 2030 for Wisconsin State Government Facilities and Workforce*. This report identified several goals for state government over the next decade, including reducing the backlog of deferred maintenance of state buildings by \$100 million and decreasing general office space in state buildings by 10 percent (400,000 square feet). In addition, DOA has opened "hoteling suites" at certain facilities, such as the 26-cubicle secured suite located at the Hill Farms State Office Building in Madison.

An audit of telework, space management, and risk management could:

- determine which agencies offer telework to employees, the form and extent of telework offered, and the frequency with which employees telework;
- assess the extent to which any agency requires its employees to telework and determine the extent to which employees telework from locations outside the state;
- analyze the policies implemented by agencies to manage risk associated with telework, including cybersecurity, data security, physical environment, and the use of state-owned IT resources;
- evaluate the training provided by agencies on their risk management policies;
- determine how agencies monitor the use of telework by employees and ensure compliance with risk management policies;
- evaluate the effect of telework on agency operations;
- analyze the effectiveness and benefits agencies attribute to the use of telework, including employee recruitment and retention;
- assess agency use of alternative space management strategies, such as “hoteling”;
- analyze the amount of space that is underutilized or unutilized by an agency that permits its employees to telework, review any space management requests agencies have submitted to reduce assigned space, and determine the potential for cost savings, including for space leased from a private entity;
- review implemented changes to space management policies, needs assessment procedures, and rental rates related to the use of telework and determine what additional changes may be needed;
- evaluate the implementation of *Vision 2030*, assess future plans, and determine the potential for cost savings; and
- review best practices for oversight and monitoring of telework, including for space management and risk management.

This audit effort will extend beyond cabinet-level agencies to other executive branch agencies, including, but not limited to, the Department of Justice, the Department of Public Instruction, the University of Wisconsin System, the Wisconsin Technical College System, the State of Wisconsin Investment Board, and the Department of Employee Trust Funds. Some of these agencies are in DOA-operated facilities, while others may occupy privately leased space and operate under policies approved by governing boards.

I hope you find this information helpful. Please contact me with any questions.

JC/ak

cc: Members, Joint Legislative Audit Committee