



STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Tony Evers, Governor
Kathy Blumenfeld, Secretary

VIA EMAIL

March 1, 2024

State Senator Eric Wimberger
Co-Chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee
104 South, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

State Representative Robert Wittke
Co-Chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee
18 West, State Capitol
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

RE: Report 23-22

Dear Co-Chairs Wimberger and Wittke:

Enclosed you will find the Department of Administration's update on the recommendations made by the Legislative Audit Bureau in Report 23-22: Telework, Space Management, and Risk Management.

DOA is appreciative of LAB's work to develop Report 23-22 and agrees with the Bureau's recommendations made in the report.

I am pleased to share that work is well underway at DOA to implement the recommendations made, building on work DOA had already been undertaking to improve telework practices, space management, and IT security defenses. In fact, DOA has already addressed and implemented many recommendations. We are making fast progress toward implementation of the remaining recommendations.

We are grateful for this opportunity to continue our efforts to modernize our workforce and workplaces, as we strive to provide effective and efficient services at the best value to taxpayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Blumenfeld".

Kathy Blumenfeld
Secretary

Enclosure

TELEWORK POLICIES

LAB Recommendation: Biennially obtain from each agency an alternative work pattern plan, as required by s. ER 42.03, Wis. Adm. Code.

DPM has implemented a new Standard Operating Procedure to direct biennial submissions of each agency's alternative work plans consistent with statutory requirements. The first round of agency submissions in this new process were due to DPM by end of January 2024 and responses from all agencies were received by February 2024.

LAB Recommendation: Either review and approve each alternative work pattern plan or execute written agreements with agencies to delegate this responsibility, as required by s. ER 42.05, Wis. Adm. Code, and statutes.

DPM will review each alternative work plan submitted under the new Standard Operating Procedure in this biennium and will execute a delegation agreement for future biennia. DPM's review was completed in February 2024, and delegation of review to other agencies is now beginning with expected completion in April 2024.

LAB Recommendation: Monitor and evaluate each agency's progress toward achieving its alternative work pattern goals and objectives, as required by s. ER 42.06, Wis. Adm. Code.

DPM's updated SOP and the upcoming adoption of delegation agreements will facilitate the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of each agency's progress.

TELEWORK IN EXECUTIVE BRANCH AGENCIES

LAB Recommendation: Require supervisors to document in writing their reviews of all telework agreements at least annually.

DOA is updating the functionality of ePerformance, within STAR, to allow supervisors to affirm that they have reviewed employee remote work agreements during the annual performance review. Work to build and implement this module update is ongoing, and DOA aims to launch by the end of April 2024.

LAB Recommendation: Require agencies either to provide written documentation to justify the travel reimbursements we question or require the employees to repay the unallowable travel reimbursements.

The State Controller's Office has collected and reviewed information regarding potentially ineligible travel reimbursements paid to the four employees LAB identified. DOA agrees that agencies should be diligent in their oversight of employee travel reimbursements, and as stated in the Wisconsin Accounting Manual, agencies should require employees to repay travel reimbursements if they are found to be unallowable. SCO has identified and will be implementing training opportunities to ensure taxpayer funds are spent appropriately.

LAB Recommendation: Review the State's expenditure data to determine whether additional employees may have been reimbursed for unallowable travel costs, and then require the repayment of any unallowable reimbursements that are identified.

The State Controller's Office has reviewed the State's expenditure data and, based on the information gathered, is working to develop a post-audit plan. As stated in the Wisconsin Accounting Manual, agencies should require employees to repay unallowable travel reimbursements. SCO is also recommending that agencies conduct and attend training to ensure travelers, supervisors, and pre-pay auditors are aware of all requirements for reimbursement.

LAB Recommendation: Create written policies requiring agencies to maintain accurate and up-to-date headquarters information in the State's human resources system.

DOA is taking steps to ensure agencies maintain accurate headquarter data in STAR. DPM has launched a cross-functional workgroup to evaluate the best approach to ensure agencies maintain accurate and up-to-date headquarters information with a focus on developing operational practices that will adhere to policy updates. DPM anticipates the workgroup will present policy recommendations in May 2024.

SPACE MANAGEMENT

LAB Recommendation: Require all agencies to provide DOA with accurate information on the extent to which employees work in the office.

The DOA Division of Facilities and Transportation Services (DFTS) updated its enterprise space standards and guidelines in February 2024. Now, in addition to submitting their programming needs to DFTS, agencies must now include a summary of workstation and office information, including on whether they are assigned to specific employees, are shared or used for hoteling, and provide the remote work agreement data that support their designated use. The work underway by other divisions to ensure remote work agreements are accurate and up to date will also improve the accuracy of information provided under these updated standards and guidelines.

LAB Recommendation: Ensure all agencies follow DOA office space standards and assign workstations only to employees who typically work in the office at least three days per week or require agencies to document why employees who typically work in the office less frequently are assigned workstations.

The recently updated Space Standards and Guidelines from DFTS will help ensure workstations and office space are appropriately allocated based on agency needs and remote work plans. Under standards and guidelines updated in February 2024, DFTS revised its exemption process to accommodate agencies' unique needs as they arise. DFTS expects to implement the revised exemption process in March 2024.

LAB Recommendation: Independently assess information provided by agencies that are planning to consolidate their office space.

DFTS assesses agency space usage and related information as a part of its standard operations and interactions with agency customers during the project process. The updated Space Standards and Guidelines, as well as more accurate information about office space usage gathered through other initiatives in progress, will help DFTS in its efforts to ensure that office space is used efficiently and effectively across the enterprise.

LAB Recommendation: Help agencies to determine the amount and types of office space to request.

DFTS regularly consults with agencies about their office space use when space or vacancy requests are submitted, and through office-related design and development projects. DFTS will continue this work as it implements Vision 2030 and as other related right-sizing efforts progress. Better telework agreement data, combined with the Space Standards and Guidelines will result in a better space planning process.

IT RISK MANAGEMENT

LAB Recommendation: Comply with s.16.971(2)(a) Wis. Stats., by developing and executing a plan to oversee and monitor state agency compliance with the State of Wisconsin IT Security Policy Handbook and work with state agencies to achieve compliance in a timely manner when noncompliance is identified.

As DET provided in Finding 2023-003 of the Audit Report 23-26 "State of Wisconsin FY 2022-23 Financial Statements," since December 2023, DET has been working with the executive branch agency Chief

Information Security Officers (CISOs) monthly via the Wisconsin Information Sharing and Analysis Committee, to develop a monitoring plan for the effectiveness of all agency-reported compliance with controls identified in the State of Wisconsin IT Security Policy Handbook and related standards. Additionally, on a quarterly basis, executive branch agencies are required to report to DET their adherence with the controls listed in the State of Wisconsin IT Security Policy Handbook and related standards, through the IT Policies, Standards, Procedures and Controls (PSPC) dashboard process. The monitoring plan will review the effectiveness of agency-reported compliance to ensure that the controls are fully implemented, or, when allowed, a security exception is documented. The monitoring plan will be communicated to executive branch agencies by May 31, 2024.

LAB Recommendation: Develop and execute plans to address the 35 specific concerns we identified related to data classification and encryption, security awareness, identification and authentication, and audit logging.

In January and February 2024, DET met with the agencies for which it is responsible for oversight and monitoring to address each of the specific concerns identified by LAB. In collaboration with these agencies, DET developed an individualized corrective action plan for each agency, which has already begun strengthening the agencies' data classification and encryption, security awareness, identification and authentication, and audit logging. As these corrective action plans are further implemented, DET will continue to assist agencies in achieving compliance with these controls and all other controls listed within the State of Wisconsin IT Policy Handbook and related standards.