



**STATE OF WISCONSIN**

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**Office of the Secretary of State**

**2011-2013 Biennial Report**

October 2013

Dear Citizens of Wisconsin,

As required by Wisconsin Statute 15.04 (1) (d), I am submitting to you the 2011 - 2013 Biennial Report of the Office of the Secretary of State.

This report presents an overview of the functions of the Agency, the operations and performance of the Agency during the past biennium, and projected goals of the Agency.

Reflected here are the duties performed by the Agency's dedicated, service-oriented staff, as well as the volume of work handled. The people of Wisconsin have consistently praised this Agency for its effectiveness, user friendliness, and professionalism. It is our intention to continue in this tradition as responsively and thoroughly as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug La Follette". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Doug La Follette  
Secretary of State

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## OVERVIEW OF THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES, 2011 - 2013

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Wisconsin's Constitution requires the Secretary of State to maintain the official acts of the Legislature and Governor, and to keep the Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin and affix it to all official acts of the Governor. Since 1969, when the Legislature established that the Secretary of State would head an office, it assigned the Office a wide range of responsibilities, which have evolved over the years.

Recently many important responsibilities have been removed from the Office of the Secretary of State and placed in another agency which reports to the Governor. This has caused confusion for businesses and citizens attempting to obtain services from the State. In most other states in the nation core business services are housed in the Offices of the Secretary of State. These services are critical to Wisconsin's business, legal and real estate communities, as well as other members of the public – both in and outside the state of Wisconsin.

For example, across the nation, the Offices of the Secretary of State are responsible for the following:

- Handling Corporation Registration and business information – 43 other states
- Registering Trademarks and Trade names – 46 other states
- Administering Uniform Commercial Code – 42 other states
- Handling Notary Public Commissions – 47 other states

To make Wisconsin more business friendly and offer a “one-stop-shopping” approach to respond to citizens and businesses utilizing these services, it would make sense for Wisconsin government to do the following: consolidate all such “business functions” within the Office of the Secretary of State, including Notary Public Commission functions, Trademarks and Trade names functions, Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) administration, and Corporation registration. This will bring Wisconsin in line with other states in the nation, streamline service provision and make our State more competitive.

The Office of the Secretary of State is responsible for overseeing the Government Records Division. Legal assistance is provided to the Office by the Attorney General's Office, with information systems support provided by the Division of Enterprise Technology within the Department of Administration.

The Government Records Division administers program responsibilities set forth in approximately 100 sections of the Wisconsin Statutes, including issuing authentications and apostilles; recording annexations and charter ordinances of municipalities; recording official acts of the Legislature and the Governor; and filing oaths of office and deeds for state lands and buildings.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION CHART

SECRETARY OF  
STATE  
Douglas La Follette  
(1 FTE)

DEPUTY  
SECRETARY  
(1 FTE)

GOVERNMENT RECORDS DIVISION

- Records Management Supervisor  
(1 FTE)
- Apostilles/Authentications
  - Office Operations Associate (1 FTE)

## REVIEW OF AGENCY OPERATIONS AND WORKLOAD IN THE 2011- 2013 BIENNIUM

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The Office of the Secretary of State has been vigilant in its efforts to maintain performance, excellent customer service and responsiveness in light of staff cuts of 40% and budget cuts of 30% in the 2011-13 biennial budget. This has been accomplished through a successful reorganization of the Office and an on-going commitment to supporting agency employees in fulfilling the Office's mission by working across disciplines; seeking innovative ways to improve services; keeping abreast of technological advances; and exercising appropriate leadership. In addition this office continues to be one of the few State agencies that provide customers immediate telephone access to actual office personnel – offering real time responses to questions and inquiries, providing program information and instructions, and redirecting numerous calls to other agencies as appropriate.

During the 2011-13 budget cycle, the Office of the Secretary of State expanded use of its website. The Office digitalized oath and pardon records and launched electronic public access to those records for the first time. Approximately 5000 new oaths of state officers were added during the biennium. Almost 300 new annexations were processed and added to the on-line database. The Office website was revised to increase user-friendliness of on-line forms and instructions. New bi-lingual versions were added, and the Office improved and streamlined expedited processing services.

To continue to preserve important records, and maintain electronic public access to those records, and to maintain IT systems which meet industry standards and public expectations, on a very limited budget, will require ongoing efforts to optimize information technology systems. Efforts to maximize impact and effectiveness of available staff and fiscal resources will be ongoing. In addition, to support the aforementioned efforts, the Office of the Secretary of State will continue to regularly revise and update its website to reflect new systems, policies and offer enhanced service and accessibility to online documents for public access.

## PROJECTED GOALS AND CHANGES FOR THE 2013 - 2015 BIENNIUM

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Effectively managing workload volume in areas administered by the Office and building capacity through technology will be ongoing challenges. The Office will strive to meet these goals with current staffing and budget levels by continued cross-training of all employees and by working closely with the Division of Enterprise Technology in the Department of Administration to maximize efficiency of computer programs and systems.

In addition, the Office will make every effort to continue to provide the prompt, courteous and professional response our users have come to expect in person, on the phone, by mail and electronically. This will be accomplished by staying abreast of trends in information management and seeking unique approaches to improve service.

Currently all forms and applications available from the Office of Secretary of State are available on-line. These forms and applications will require updating and upgrading on the website to promote ongoing ease of use for customers. The Office will continue to explore and integrate new technologies as appropriate to most effectively utilize finite resources.

**APPENDIX-  
APOSTILLES/AUTHENTICATIONS  
BY MONTH/YEAR**

	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13
JULY	1496	1548	1377	1507
AUGUST	1383	1665	1697	1566
SEPTEMBER	1195	1500	1228	1049
OCTOVER	1157	1364	1135	1357
NOVEMBER	1111	1432	1356	1225
DECEMBER	1718	1349	1010	937
JANUARY	1378	1320	1257	1372
FEBRUARY	1400	1560	1363	1177
MARCH	1730	1778	1328	1116
APRIL	1177	1503	1258	1176
MAY	1477	1558	1375	1240
JUNE	1625	2023	1451	1482
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16847</b>	<b>18600</b>	<b>15835</b>	<b>15204</b>

