



# ACE Newsletter

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Vision 2030 Update  
Physical Facilities and Remote Work

By

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The first Vision 2030 document was released in May 2021 and an update was released in March 2023. The Association of Career Employees (ACE) has communicated with the Department of Administration (DOA), Deputy Administrator several times since the document was released, first with Chris Patton and then

his successor, Paul Hammer.

The update makes it clear that DOA is serious about its plans to continue to allow for remote work, reorganize state office space, move employees to new spaces, and eventually sell existing state office buildings.

Nearly a dozen agencies will be affected by potential moves and consolidation efforts, affecting over 4,300 state employees, primarily in Madison and Milwaukee.

### **Status of agency staff relocations**

The updated vision included a timeline for moving various agencies from GEF2, GEF3, and the Department of Health Services (DHS) building overlooking Lake Monona. According to Paul Hammer, the timeline is still estimated and fluid and will be phased in with some moves completed in 6-12 months and some taking as long as five years to implement.

Renovations are currently underway at GEF1, 201 E Washington Ave, to allow transfer of various agencies including the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Department of Health Services (DHS). The renovation and relocation process may take up to five years.

Divisions within DOA are currently in the process of consolidating space making room for the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI) which will be housed at the DOA Building, 101 E Wilson St. The Division of Gaming has consolidated and is located at 3319 W. Beltline Hwy, Floor 4 in Madison. The State Lab of Hygiene has moved some IT employees to the Agriculture building, 2811 Agriculture Drive. The National Atmospheric Deposition Program will be moving to Hill Farms Building D adjacent to the UW soils lab.

GEF2 still currently houses the Division of Natural Resources, while GEF3 still

houses the Department of Public Instruction, the Child Abuse and Prevention Board, and OCI. A portion of DPI, Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning vacated their location at 2109 S. Stoughton Rd in April 2021. DOA maintains staff in GEF2 and 3 for management and transition purposes. DPI and the Child Abuse and Prevention Board will be moved to the Tommy G. Thompson Center, 201 W Washington Ave.

### **Remote work**

According to Paul Hammer, the policy declarations found in Wis. Stat. 230.215(1) and as reflected in the Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook (WHRH), Chapters 746 (Alternate Work Patterns) and 748 (Remote Work), the State of Wisconsin “recognizes the benefit of maximizing the employment options available to employees while still providing efficient and cost-effective services to the public and maintaining operational needs. The State has long allowed remote work in situations where work can be effectively performed remotely and presents advantages, such as improved service delivery, employee attraction and retention, or cost savings.”

The prevalence of remote work options for staff greatly increased in the last four years as technology improved and labor market expectations changed to demand greater work flexibility. Through the complexities of the pandemic, DOA was able to show how the transition to more flexible and alternative work patterns could support workforce solutions.

According to Paul Hammer, DOA does not believe the labor market’s demand for remote/hybrid work is going to decrease. Individual agency, program, or employee remote work arrangements will continue to be dependent on the ability to effectively perform the needed work at an alternate work site while effectively meeting agency and public needs. In general, cost concerns are addressed by the employing agency in alignment with the state’s compensation plan and other

agency fiscal responsibilities.

The Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) is conducting a program audit of the state's remote work program which could result in some modifications to the current approach.

The WHRH answers questions as to how remote or hybrid work operates in practice. For example, supplies continue to be purchased and paid for directly by the employee's department. Supplies, equipment, and information technology must be picked up in a state office building regardless of the employee's work location and will not be shipped to the employee's alternate work site. Employees generally do not receive financial compensation for any home office costs including, but not limited to, internet access, desks, chairs, work lights, or personal phone usage.

With respect to internet service, the Department is not responsible for and does not provide payment or reimbursement for internet connectivity. Employees who telecommute on an occasional or scheduled basis under an approved AWP must provide a non-metered, high-speed internet connection at their expense. For employees where the State's business needs require home headquartering, state agencies may allow for some of these expenses to be reimbursed.

### **Government documents management**

Employees working remotely from an approved alternate worksite have the same responsibility for managing records generated and received in the course of their work as they would have working in their official agency office. Records are defined in s. 16.61(2)(b), Wis. Stats., as, "all books, papers, maps, photographs, films, recordings, optical discs, electronically formatted documents, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any state agency or its officers or employees in connection with the

transaction of public business...”

Any applicable statewide General Records Schedule or agency specific Record Disposition Authorization must be followed. Employees are responsible for ensuring all records created or received while working remotely remain in their custody at all times, and that the proper safeguards are in place to protect records. Unauthorized individuals (e.g., non-government employees, family members, etc.) are not permitted to handle agency records. All business should be conducted utilizing state issued devices. In the instance work is completed using a device not issued by the State of Wisconsin, the employee must return or electronically transmit all records back to the official worksite and incorporate those records into the official recordkeeping of the agency.

### **Responsibility for liability at remote offices**

As clarified in WHRH Ch. 748, an employee injured in the course and scope of employment is covered by worker’s compensation. If an employee incurs a work-related injury while working remotely, worker’s compensation laws and rules apply just as they would if such an injury occurred in the main office; however, each situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine compensability by DOA Risk Management for any state agency employee and UW System Risk Management for University System employees. If an employee does incur an injury arising out of their employment and in the course of their employment, they should notify their supervisor as soon as practicable.

The introduction to the [Property and Liability Manual](#) states, “The State Self-funded Liability Program provides funding for payment of liability claims brought against state officers, employees and agents, whose negligent acts while acting within the scope of their employment result in bodily injury or property damage to a third party.” The state liability program would provide liability coverage as indicated in the manual, even at a home office. However, if an employee is not in

work status or out of scope of employment, a liability matter would be a personal issue and should be taken up with employee's homeowners or rental insurance company. Also of note, the WHRH provides that employees may not host business functions or visitors at their home during the hours of the Remote Work Agreement.

### **Sale of buildings**

The process to sell a state-owned building is bound by state statute. After the buildings are vacated, the buildings will be placed on the market for sale. Generally, internal pre-sale processes include verification of whether any other agency has a use for the building and whether it has historical significance, determination of the debt service owed on the building and the ownership stake in it, and an appraisal.

DOA considers all incoming offers and makes a recommendation if there are multiple bids. To accept an offer, DOA must submit a Recommendation Offer Report to the State Building Commission. If the State Building Commission approves the offer, DOA must then submit a Recommendation Offer Report to the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance for its approval as well. If the Joint Committee on Finance approves, DOA can move forward with the closing process. See [Wisconsin Statutes](#) for more detailed information.

The State completed a space consolidation study, which accounted for various State agency telework and remote work plans, agency current and future business needs, and the condition and debt service needs of the existing real estate portfolio. Twenty-six State agencies were included and surveyed in the study.

The Department of Human Services, 1 West Wilson, will likely be made available for sale first. GEF2 & 3 will likely be sold together, so it will be necessary to have both buildings vacated before being put up for sale. 1 West Wilson is on both the

State and National Registers of Historic Places. More information about [state preservation laws](#) is available from the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Members of the ACE Board have discussed negative issues surrounding the consolidation of employees in GEF1, a building with little physical appeal on East Washington Ave. The Department of Human Services building, which is on the lakefront, has historical significance and will have an important physical position within the future Monona lakefront development project. State employees will have a decreasing presence in the government area between the State Capitol and the lakefront in downtown Madison. Current plans would leave only the DOA building in such a good position.

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