



## 2025 ASSEMBLY BILL 974

January 30, 2026 - Introduced by Representatives NEUBAUER, VOS, ANDERSON, ANDRACA, ARNEY, BEHNKE, BILLINGS, DITTRICH, DONOVAN, EMERSON, FITZGERALD, GOEBEN, GOODWIN, GUNDRUM, HONG, HURD, HYSELL, JOERS, JOHNSON, KITCHENS, KNODL, KRUG, MAYADEV, MCCARVILLE, MELOTIK, MIRESSÉ, MURPHY, NOVAK, O'CONNOR, ORTIZ-VELEZ, PHELPS, PIWOWARCZYK, PRADO, RODRIGUEZ, ROE, SNODGRASS, SNYDER, SORTWELL, SPAUDE, STROUD, STUBBS, SUBECK, TAYLOR, UDELL, WITTKE, MADISON, KAUFERT, SINICKI and DESANTO. Referred to Committee on State Affairs.

1     **AN ACT** *to repeal* 16.004 (22) and 20.855 (4) (dt); *to create* 16.004 (22m),  
2           20.505 (1) (t), 25.17 (1) (m) and 25.79 of the statutes; **relating to:** a public  
3           affairs network trust fund, grants to the WisconsinEye Public Affairs  
4           Network, and making an appropriation.

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### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

Subject to approval by the Joint Committee on Finance, current law requires the Department of Administration to make grants, not to exceed a total of \$10,000,000, to the WisconsinEye Public Affairs Network, Inc., for the establishment of an endowment fund. DOA may not award any such grant unless WisconsinEye raises matching funds from nonstate sources, and the grant authorization sunsets on June 30, 2026. WisconsinEye currently operates a public affairs network in Wisconsin that broadcasts live state government proceedings, news conferences, and civic events and maintains digital archives of its broadcasts.

This bill eliminates the current-law provision for the endowment fund. Instead, the bill creates a trust fund from which DOA makes grants to WisconsinEye to be used for its operating costs to broadcast live events and maintain its archives.

The bill requires WisconsinEye to do all of the following as a condition for receiving the grants:

1. Appoint to its board of directors one designee each of the speaker of the

**ASSEMBLY BILL 974****SECTION 1**

assembly, minority leader of the assembly, majority leader of the senate, and minority leader of the senate. Under the bill, no such designee may be a member of the legislature.

2. Focus its coverage primarily on official state government meetings and business.

3. Provide free online public access, on a continuous basis, to the network's live broadcasts and digital archives.

4. Submit an annual financial report to the legislature and JCF.

Finally, under the bill, if WisconsinEye ceases operations and divests its assets, WisconsinEye must pay back the grants and transfer all of its archives to the state historical society.

For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

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*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

1           **SECTION 1.** 16.004 (22) of the statutes, as affected by 2025 Wisconsin Act 15,  
2 is repealed.

3           **SECTION 2.** 16.004 (22m) of the statutes is created to read:

4           16.004 (**22m**) GRANTS FOR WISCONSINEYE. (a) In this subsection,  
5 “WisconsinEye” means the WisconsinEye Public Affairs Network, Inc.

6           (b) From the appropriation under s. 20.505 (1) (t), the secretary shall make  
7 payments in the form of a grant to WisconsinEye to be used for WisconsinEye's  
8 operating costs to broadcast live state government proceedings, news conferences,  
9 and civic events and to maintain and provide free online public access to unedited  
10 digital archives of the broadcasts.

11           (c) As a condition for receiving any payment under par. (b), WisconsinEye  
12 shall meet all of the following requirements:

13           1. Appoint to its board of directors one designee each of the speaker of the  
14 assembly, minority leader of the assembly, majority leader of the senate, and

**ASSEMBLY BILL 974****SECTION 2**

1 minority leader of the senate, except that no designee under this subdivision may be  
2 a member of the legislature.

3 2. Focus its coverage primarily on official state government meetings and  
4 business.

5 3. Provide online public access, on a continuous basis, to WisconsinEye's live  
6 broadcasts and digital archives without any charge.

7 4. Submit an annual financial report to the chief clerk of each house of the  
8 legislature for distribution to the legislature under s. 13.172 (2) and to the joint  
9 committee on finance.

10 (d) If, after a payment under par. (b), WisconsinEye ceases operations and  
11 divests its assets, WisconsinEye shall do all of the following:

12 1. Pay to the secretary for deposit into the general fund an amount equal to  
13 the total amount paid under par. (b).

14 2. Transfer all of the WisconsinEye archives to the state historical society.

15 **SECTION 3.** 20.505 (1) (t) of the statutes is created to read:

16 20.505 (1) (t) *Grants to WisconsinEye.* All moneys received as interest  
17 earnings of the public affairs network fund to make grants to the WisconsinEye  
18 Public Affairs Network, Inc., under s. 16.004 (22m).

19 **SECTION 4.** 20.855 (4) (dt) of the statutes, as affected by 2025 Wisconsin Act  
20 15, is repealed.

21 **SECTION 5.** 25.17 (1) (m) of the statutes is created to read:

22 25.17 (1) (m) Public affairs network fund (s. 25.79);

23 **SECTION 6.** 25.79 of the statutes is created to read:

24 **25.79 Public affairs network fund.** There is established a separate

**ASSEMBLY BILL 974****SECTION 6**

1 nonlapsible trust fund designated as the public affairs network fund, to consist of  
2 all of the following:

3 (1) All appropriations and transfers of state funds to the fund.

4 (2) All donations, gifts, and bequests made to the fund.

5 (3) All income and interest earned by the fund.

6 **SECTION 7. Nonstatutory provisions.**

7 (1) No later than 30 days after the effective date of this subsection, the  
8 secretary of administration shall transfer any unencumbered balance in s. 20.855  
9 (4) (dt) to the public affairs network fund under s. 25.79.

10 **SECTION 8. Effective dates.** This act takes effect on the day after  
11 publication, except as follows:

12 (1) The treatment of s. 20.855 (4) (dt) takes effect on the day after the  
13 secretary of administration transfers funds pursuant to SECTION 7 (1) of this act.

14 (END)