



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #149

Centralized Online Services to Residents (Administration -- Information Technology)

[LFB 2023-25 Budget Summary: Page 43, #5]

CURRENT LAW

Currently, Wisconsin state agencies host public-facing applications, data, and services from their own websites, many of which require different logins and passwords. There are approximately 700 datasets on various agency websites open to the public, not all of which require the creation of an account to gain access.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Under Assembly Bill 43/Senate Bill 70, an annual GPR appropriation to develop and maintain an online customer service hub would be created and provided \$2,000,000 GPR in 2023-24 (\$465,000 ongoing and \$1,535,000 one-time) and \$465,000 GPR in 2024-25. The Department of Administration (DOA) indicates that the customer service hub (also known as the "Wisconsin Front Door online services hub") would be a comprehensive portfolio of state resources in a consolidated and centralized format. The Wisconsin Front Door online services hub could potentially improve the online experience for individuals interacting with state government by: (a) requiring only a single login credential and account profile to access services from across state government; (b) developing a searchable, online centralized customer data hub that makes over 700 publicly-available datasets currently found on state agency websites accessible; and (c) developing online services and data-centric websites oriented around key resident issues and interests.

2. The Department indicates that an online customer service hub would enable the public to access state services and information using one account and password. The Department is presently undertaking a project to unify various state government applications that require user authentication by requiring users of all state government services to create a single username associated with their

persona, which is known as "MyWisconsin ID." The "single sign-on" technology is already being employed by a number of state applications requiring a user to create one MyWisconsin ID account by providing a first and last name, email address, and creating a password. A user would then log in using this single ID and password, and be permitted access to all software systems integrated into the platform without re-entering their login information each time. Beginning in 2024, this unified login will be required for all state employees, and any local government employees or retirees who are covered by a state Group Insurance Board-offered health plan, to enter benefits elections for health insurance and supplemental benefits for themselves and their dependents. Included among the goals of the MyWisconsin ID project is improved security, which entails encryption of user data as well as required multi-factor authentication for all applications. The project aims to migrate all compatible state applications to MyWisconsin ID over the next two biennia.

3. The Wisconsin Front Door online services hub would be intended to create a central location of state online services, including a new data portal which would consolidate more than 700 data sources across various state agencies to a single point of access using the MyWisconsin ID, eliminating the need for users to search specific agency websites to find certain data. For data sets that are currently available without user authentication, the Administration indicates the intent would be to maintain the data sets as publicly accessible without requiring a login. Site navigation for data access could include data categories such as economy, education, health, labor force, natural resources, public safety, taxes, and transportation data. The ultimate goal of creating a data portal would be to provide users with potential information on the hub necessary to make decisions. According to DOA, other states and federal agencies have completed similar data portal projects to facilitate effective sharing of information. It is expected that the data portal would be accessed from Wisconsin.gov and provide direct reference to the existing services, information, and data sources located across agency websites.

4. Another goal of the Wisconsin Front Door online services hub would be to eventually support notifications for subscribers of particular state services. For example, a product could potentially notify users of expiring licenses or plates, as is currently done through the State of Texas's website.

5. According to DOA, a total of \$2,000,000 GPR, including \$1,535,000 GPR in one-time funding in 2023-24 and \$465,000 GPR annually in ongoing funding in each year of the 2023-25 biennium, would be needed to develop and maintain an online customer service hub. Funding estimates were determined by estimating: (a) costs of comparable projects in other states; (b) costs of technology in the current market; and (c) costs of certain software and vendor products. The \$1,535,000 in one-time funding provided in 2023-24 would fund a software product and professional services to support implementation of a shared data solution and a governance framework for agency researchers and analysts. In both years of the 2023-25 biennium, \$465,000 would fund annual subscription costs and contractor staff. The Department indicates that contractor staff would support the IT solution's maintenance and licensing activities.

6. It could be argued that an online customer service hub could improve the online experience for individuals interacting with the state government by: (a) requiring only a single login credential and account profile to access services from across state government; (b) developing a

searchable, online centralized customer data hub that makes over 700 publicly-available datasets currently found on state agency websites accessible from one location; and (c) developing online services and data-centric websites oriented around key resident issues and interests. The Committee could, therefore, choose to create an annual GPR appropriation to develop and maintain an online customer service hub and provide \$2,000,000 GPR in 2023-24 and \$465,000 GPR in 2024-25. [Alternative 1]

7. Alternatively, the Committee could create an annual GPR appropriation to develop and maintain an online customer service hub, funded \$0 annually, and provide \$2,000,000 GPR in 2023-24 and \$465,000 GPR in 2024-25 to the Committee's supplemental GPR appropriation. Under this alternative, DOA could submit a request to the Committee for release of the funding under s. 13.10 of the statutes. [Alternative 2]

8. On the other hand, it could be argued that the quality of the user experience online varies according to individual preference and, depending on the execution of the proposal, could potentially be poorer for some users or certain applications. As an example, using a single username and password to access all state government services could be convenient if the interface is user-friendly, all technology involved works smoothly and consistently, and access is securely maintained at all times. However, if any of these elements is missing, the experience could range from less convenient (such as requiring multi-factor authentication to access information that is not sensitive and could be provided requiring less user effort) to extremely challenging (if a service outage occurs, for example, or a legitimate user is locked out of their account). In addition, although the technology may be more secure for some state-provided services than the technology currently utilized for those applications, the integration of all state services using single sign-on technology could present a security concern if a malicious actor were somehow able to gain entry to the system and more easily access information across applications.

9. If the Committee takes no action, according to DOA, it would not have sufficient funding to pursue the online customer service hub project as proposed. However, as indicated previously, the MyWisconsin ID initiative is currently being implemented and efforts will continue to integrate state applications using the single sign-on technology. In addition, under this alternative, DOA would continue to evaluate other data centralization-related solutions with state agencies. Its ability to do so would be more limited in scope and speed of implementation, depending on resource availability in DOA and any other impacted state agencies. [Alternative 3]

ALTERNATIVES

1. Create an annual GPR appropriation to develop and maintain an online customer service hub. Provide \$2,000,000 GPR in 2023-24 (\$465,000 ongoing and \$1,535,000 one-time) and \$465,000 GPR in 2024-25.

ALT 1	Change to Base
GPR	\$2,465,000

2. Create an annual GPR appropriation to develop and maintain an online customer service hub. Provide \$2,000,000 GPR in 2023-24 and \$465,000 GPR in 2024-25 to the Committee's supplemental GPR appropriation.

ALT 2	Change to Base
JFC	\$2,465,000

3. Take no action.

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