Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Wireless Network Administrator (Military Affairs)

[LFB 2023-25 Budget Summary: Page 418, #12]

CURRENT LAW

Under the Department of Military Affairs (DMA), the Wisconsin National Guard, comprised of army and air units, provides soldiers and airmen prepared to deploy to support community, state, and federal missions. Additionally, the Wisconsin National Guard represents the primary combat reserve of the United States Army and Air Force, and the first military responders in Wisconsin in times of emergency.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1.   Armories across the state are used by the Army National Guard for training, administration, and material storage for the assigned military units. Armories provide assembly space, classrooms, storage for weapons and protective personal equipment, and training space. Service members go to armories when at "drill" or for "annual training." Staff may be stationed at armories to complete readiness requirements, administrative tasks, supply/logistical management, and facilities management. Additionally, some armories house recruiters who meet with individuals interested in joining the military. The attachment shows the location of DMA buildings across the state.

2.   The Department manages state information technology (IT) needs through its State Information Management (SIM) office, which is responsible for: (a) governance, the implementation of operational parameters for working units and individuals' use of IT systems, architecture, and networks; (b) infrastructure, the hardware components, network, circuitry, and all other equipment necessary to make the IT system function according to the established needs of the Department; and (c) functionality, the creation and maintenance of operational applications; developing, securing, and storing electronic data; and assisting in the use of software and data management. Currently, SIM has eight permanent positions that are responsible for all aspects of IT needs.

3.   The wireless network is an initiative which has provided wireless networking access to all 67 armories throughout the state, where both state employees and National Guard service members are located. Previously, DMA did not have a wireless network and relied on the physical network located at the DMA Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) and internet access provided by the Division of Enterprise Technology (DET) within the Department of Administration to access the state network. As a result, when internet outages occurred between DET and the physical network at the JFHQ, employees in the armories lost access to the state network. The creation of the wireless network is intended to ensure internet access at any of the 67 armories across the state in the event of an internet outage. Additionally, the creation of a virtual software-based daily management network associated with the wireless network will allow DMA to monitor wireless network outages that occur at armories across the state, which will reduce the need for travel in these situations. This project increases readiness and communication with all state employees working out of DMA's armories and National Guard members who use the facilities. The wireless network is intended to enable better access to required systems for staff, and improve the Department's continuity of operations and government abilities.

4.   The SIM manages IT operations for DMA employees requiring access to the state network and oversees the installation and maintenance of computer network systems within DMA. Its primary function is to ensure that the network runs smoothly. Currently, the SIM has one network administrator for the agency who is responsible for planning, developing, installing, configuring, maintaining, supporting, and optimizing all network hardware, software, and communication links. With the addition of wireless network management responsibilities, the Department indicates that another network administrator position is necessary to address the increased workload. Without another position, the duties of the current wireless administrator would exceed their capacity. According to DMA, there are no long-term GPR vacancies that could be reallocated and used as a wireless network administrator, and no other staff at DMA have the expertise or network skills to complete the necessary tasks.

5.   Assembly Bill 43/Senate Bill 70 (AB 43/SB 70), would provide $143,200 GPR in 2023-24, $156,900 GPR in 2024-25, and 1.0 GPR wireless network administrator position annually to manage the Department's wireless network throughout the state. The wireless network administrator would manage installation and maintenance of the wireless network for the armories, including daily monitoring and troubleshooting for any wireless issues. Additionally, the position would coordinate with vendors on software or hardware issues. The table below shows the components of the GPR increase under AB 43/SB 70. According to DOA, $47,300 of the supplies and services amounts each year would fund a secured-network connection, which provides a cloud-based firewall service/subscription for the network.

**Funding Components for a Wireless Network Administrator
and Secured-Network Connection Under AB 43/SB 70**

	2023-24	2024-25
Salary	$49,200	$65,600
Fringe	21,700	29,000
Supplies and Services		
Cloud-Based Firewall	47,300	47,300
One-time Staff Costs	10,000	
Ongoing Staff Costs	15,000	15,000
Supplies and Services Total	72,300	62,300
Grand Total	$143,200	$156,900

6.   According to DMA, cloud-based firewalls form a virtual barrier around cloud platforms, infrastructure, and applications, just as traditional firewalls form a barrier around an organization's internal network. With the increased use of the cloud at DMA for continuity of operations/government needs and teleworking, a secured-network connection would enable better protection of the overall network. Without a firewall, the wireless network could be at risk of intrusion and hacking attempts.

7.   Given that managing the wireless network in the state's armories are an additional, new duty for DMA's IT staff and that the Department does not currently have an administrator dedicated to the new network, the Committee could provide $143,200 GPR in 2023-24, $156,900 GPR in 2024-25, and 1.0 GPR position annually to DMA's general program operations appropriation. [Alternative 1]

8.   Alternatively, the Committee could provide funding of $47,300 GPR annually to support a secured-network connection. [Alternative 2] Under this alternative, no funding would be provided for increased staffing. Any additional workload associated with the wireless network would need to be addressed within DMA's existing resources.

9.   The Committee could choose to take no action. [Alternative 3] The Department would be required to manage the wireless network with existing resources.

ALTERNATIVES

1.   Provide $143,200 GPR in 2023-24, $156,900 GPR in 2024-25, and 1.0 GPR position annually to DMA's general program operations appropriation to support the wireless network at DMA armories.

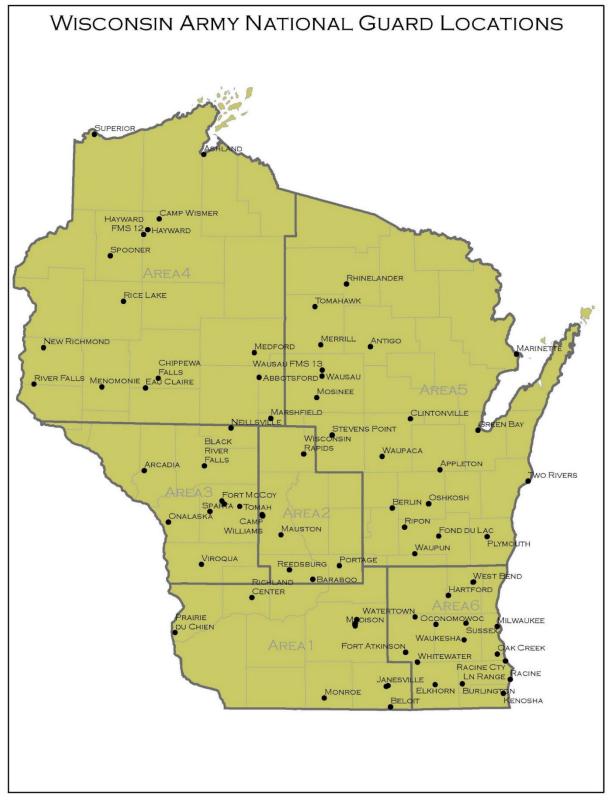| ALT 1	Change to Base	
	Funding	Positions
GPR	$300,100	1.00

2.	Provide funding of $47,300 GPR annually to support a secured-network connection for the wireless network at DMA armories.

ALT 2	Change to Base
GPR	$94,600

3.	Take no action.

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Attachment

ATTACHMENT

WISCONSIN ARMY NATIONAL GUARD LOCATIONS

Source: Department of Military Affairs