

# Advocacy Days 2022

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**Wisconsin Council of the  
Blind & Visually Impaired**

# Mission & Values

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The Council promotes the **dignity and empowerment** of the people of Wisconsin who are blind or visually impaired through legislative advocacy, vision services and education.

Values are inclusivity, integrity & uncompromising respect.

# About Us

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- Founded in **1952**
- Governed and led **by** people who are BVI
- Nearly half of staff members are BVI

# What We Do

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- Advocacy
- Education
- Vision Services

# Advocacy Priorities

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- Accessibility & Civil Rights
- Education
- Employment
- Health Care & Long-Term Care
- Transportation

# Learn More

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Find our advocacy priority documents at:

<https://wcblind.org/advocacy/>

# Legislative Lay of the Land

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**Governor Tony Evers (D)**

**State Assembly:  
61-38 Republican Majority**

**State Senate:  
20-12 Republican Majority**

# 2021-22 Legislative Session Wrap Up

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## Signed into Law

**ABLE Accounts:** 2021 WI Act 119 requires DFI to study the pros and cons of establishing a Wisconsin ABLE program.

**Lions Club Eyeglasses:** 2021 WI Act 257 establishes a liability exemption for charitable organizations for damages arising out of providing previously owned eyeglasses.



# 2021-22 Legislative Session Wrap Up

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## Vetoed by the Governor

**Indefinitely Confined Voters:** SB 937 would have clarified indefinitely confined voting rules.

**Absentee Voting:** SB 939 would have made a host of changes to absentee voting in Wisconsin, including ending the automatic mailing of absentee ballots and limiting who can return an absentee ballot for a voter.

# 2021-22 Legislative Session Wrap Up

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## Failed to Pass

**Steve's Law:** AB 421/SB 422 would have allowed people to use state ID cards to access the DNR Go Wild site.

**Registry:** AB 490/SB 467 would have created a voluntary registry for children who are blind or visually impaired.

**Pedestrian Safety:** AB 853 would have required a driver to stop their vehicle and remain stopped until a pedestrian crossing at a crosswalk has completed crossing the roadway.

# The State Budget

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Now that the 2021-22 Legislative Session has adjourned, the focused has turned to:

- Election
- State Budget

# The State Budget Impacts Everyone

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It is an \$89 billion plan that funds:

- Mass transit
- DVR Services
- OBVI Services
- Education and Special Education
- Election Administration
- And much more!

# The State Budget Timeline

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- Agencies and Governor Work on Budget Ideas April - August 2022
- State Agencies Send Budget Requests to Governor September 2022
- Governor Works on Budget Bill October 2022 - January 2023
- Budget Bill Introduced and referred to Joint Finance January or February 2023

# The State Budget Timeline (continued)

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- Public Hearings on Budget Bill March or April 2023
- Joint Finance Committee Votes on Budget April – June 2023
- Full Legislature Vote on Budget June – July 2023
- Governor Signs, Partially Vetoes or Fully Vetoes Budget Bill June – July 2023

# Big Question...

## Who Introduces Next Budget?

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**Governor Election: November 2022**



Governor Evers



Rebecca  
Kleefisch



Kevin  
Nicholson



Rep. Timothy  
Ramthun

# Joint Finance Committee

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**"Budget Writing" Committee: 16 members**

**Can add, remove or modify any budget item**



Co-Chair  
Sen. Howard Marklein



Co-Chair  
Rep. Mark Born



# How You Can Impact the State Budget

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1. Ask Candidates Where They Stand



2. Attend a Public Hearing on State Budget



3. Contact Your State Senator and State Representative

# How to Communicate Your Ask

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Make sure you cover your elevator pitch:

- Who are you?
- What is your issue?
- Why does this matter?
- What's your ask?

# Connect Your Story to Your Ask

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- Candidates and lawmakers want to hear from REAL PEOPLE--like you
- Share stories and examples about:
  - Your challenges with transit
  - Importance of vision rehabilitation services
  - Experience with DVR

# Examples of Questions You Can Ask

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- It would take me a full day to get to Madison using transit. What is your plan to improve transit services in Wisconsin?
- I had to wait months before seeing a vision service provider through OBVI. How will you ensure that all people who are visually impaired have access to vision rehabilitation services?

# Be an Advocate

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**Educate:** Help policymakers learn.

**Advocate:** Express what you need.

Consider the policymaker as a **partner** in achieving your goals.

# Make the Most of Your Meeting

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- Know your subject & audience.
- Figure out your outcome.
- Tell your story grounded in factual information.
- Listen, learn & respond.

# “On the Ground” Ideas

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- In-office meetings
- “Neutral ground” meetings
- Forums & townhalls
- Extend an invitation (Lions Club, low vision support group, senior center lunch, etc.)
- Do something together (ride the bus, walk audits, etc.)

# Advocate at All Levels

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- Personal
- Local & Regional
- State
- National



# Find Out Who Represents You

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- Legislative Hotline: 800-362-9472
- Website: <https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/results.aspx>

# Vote in Every Election

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Vote as if your **life depended** on it... **because it does.**

-Justin Dart, disability rights advocate who was a key voice in advocating for the Americans with Disabilities Act

# Comments? Questions?

Contact us at:

(800) 783-5213

(608) 255-1166

[info@WCBlind.org](mailto:info@WCBlind.org)



# Follow the Council

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Website: [WCBlind.org](http://WCBlind.org)



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