

Report calls for overhaul of Wisconsin state management practices

By [Kathleen Gallagher](#) of the Journal Sentinel

June 23, 2011 | [\(49\) Comments](#)

Wisconsin state government is bloated and inefficient because antiquated management practices fail to incorporate realistic goal-setting and performance measurement, according to a [report](#) released Thursday by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute.

Robin Gates, the author of the report, has been invited to brief Gov. Scott Walker and his cabinet about recommendations for strengthening management, said George Lightbourne, the institute's president.

"Robin has laid out very clearly what is needed to bring the management of state agencies into the 21st century," Lightbourne said.

Comparing state government to a Fortune 200 company that is using management practices from 30 years ago, the report lays out a three-step action plan.

Create a "State Agency Management Excellence Council" that would provide advice and oversight. The council would review ideas for developing managers and making other improvements.

Give the Department of Administration lead responsibility for the effort.

Make the Office of State Employment Relations responsible for building management strength in areas such as assessment, training and recruiting.

The report recommends specific moves such as creating a management training program, giving managers more opportunity to rotate jobs, and doing more to identify management talent among the ranks of state employees.

It also recommends restructuring the civil service system to develop an accountability structure and use multiyear, performance-based employment contracts, along with a new emphasis on practices such as strategic and operational planning.

"We Wisconsinites need fundamental change from the top to the bottom of these agencies and across the breadth of state and local governments if we are to succeed the way this country's more innovative corporations have - with top-notch management," Gates said in a statement. Gates has been a division administrator in several state agencies and a vice president at Alliant Energy.

The conservative think tank's report is called "An Essential Turnaround Project: Reform of State Government Operations."

The state has 74,000 employees and an annual budget of \$31 billion, the report said.

ascript language="JavaScript" src="http://js.adsonar.com/js/adsonar.js">

Find this article at:

<http://www.jsonline.com/business/124422579.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.