



ROBERT W. WIRCH

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

(262)694-7379

Constituent Resource Guide



Homestead Credit

- Designed to soften the impact of property taxes and rent for lower-income individuals and families
- You can claim the homestead credit if: You own or rent a home, apartment or other dwelling in Wisconsin; you are a legal resident of Wisconsin; you are 18 or older; your household income for the year was less than \$24,680; either you or your spouse have earned income, you or your spouse are disabled, or you or your spouse are 62 or older; you do not live for the entire year in housing that is exempt from property taxes
- The maximum allowable credit is \$1,168
- <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Individuals/homestead.aspx>

EARNED
INCOME
CREDIT

A tax credit designed for
taxpaying workers who make
a low to moderate income.

Earned Income Tax Credit

- The Wisconsin earned income tax credit is a special tax benefit for certain working families with at least one qualifying child. The credit is refundable, which means that even workers who did not earn enough wages to have Wisconsin taxes withheld can receive the credit.
- You must first qualify for the federal earned income credit (Must have worked and earned income under \$59,187; have investment income below \$10,300; have a valid

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Toll-Free Office Hotline: 1-888-769-4724

Email: Sen.Wirch@legis.state.wi.us • Website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen22/news> •

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Social Security Number; be a U.S. citizen or resident alien; and file using the statuses Married filing jointly, head of household, qualifying surviving spouse, single, or married filing separate; have at least one dependent child)

- Must be a Wisconsin resident and must file a joint return if you are married
- The Wisconsin earned income credit is based on a percentage of the federal credit: 4% of the federal credit for filers with 1 child; 11% for 2 children; 34% for 3 or more
- <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/FAQS/ise-eic.aspx>



Wisconsin Help for Homeowners Program

- Statewide program that can help with overdue bills like mortgage payments, property taxes, and utilities
- Applicants must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for assistance:
 - Be a Wisconsin homeowner living in a primary residence, such as a single family home, duplex or condo, or manufactured home
 - Can demonstrate financial hardship after January 21, 2020
 - Meet income requirement of 100% area median income or less (check incomes at https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2021/select_Geography_haf.odn)
- A maximum award of \$40,000 per eligible household may be available; funding awards go directly to financial institutions, local treasurers, utility companies, or other entities to pay for overdue bills
- The Help for Homeowners call center, 1-855-2-HOME-WI, is available from 8:30 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday



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- For questions in the Racine and Kenosha areas, contact the Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency at www.rkcaa.org, 262-637-8377 (Racine office), 262-657-0840 (Kenosha office)
- <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Homeowner-Assistance.aspx>



Wisconsin Veterans Rental Assistance Program

- Provides rental assistance for veterans who are struggling because of their limited or fixed incomes
- Eligibility criteria:
 - Complete a WI Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) application, either online at heat.help or by phone at 833-947-8727
 - Must have a gross income at or below 80% of the county's medium income (Check income guidelines <https://energyandhousing.wi.gov/Documents/Housing/WERA/Wisconsin%200%20CMI%20-%20Monthly%20Values%20.June%202022.pdf>)
 - Provide proof of all household income for the prior month
 - If requested, provide a copy of your lease and/or proof of rental payments
 - Must be a veteran
 - Complete a pre-application at vrapwi.com



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Legal Action of Wisconsin

- Provides free civil legal services to low-income clients
- Some of their areas of practice including helping clients: maintain safe and affordable housing; remove barriers to employment; resolve consumer finance issues; access and maintain public benefits; address children and family law matters; secure victim support and protection
- They also provide legal services for specialized populations, including veterans, seniors, and those near release or recently released from prison
- <https://www.legalaction.org/>
- Racine office #: 855-947-2529



State Bar of Wisconsin – Lawyer Referral & Information Service

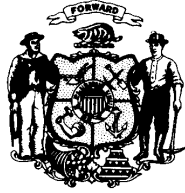
- Some attorneys in Wisconsin choose to participate in the State Bar's Lawyer Referral & Information Service (LRIS). LRIS is a public service to help identify the most appropriate resource for consumers with legal problems. Callers may be referred to an attorney or given information about contacting other community or government agencies that may be able to help them with their legal problems. They do NOT give legal advice.

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- Call 1-800-362-9082 or submit a request online at <https://www.wisbar.org/forPublic/INeedaLawyer/Pages/i-need-a-lawyer.aspx>

disability**rights** | WISCONSIN

Disability Rights Wisconsin

- A private, nonprofit that protects the rights of people with disabilities statewide
- DRW helps people across the state gain access to services and opportunity through its advocacy and legal expertise by: promoting self-advocacy and serving as a legal advocate for people w/disabilities; independently monitoring public and private institutions and programs serving people with disabilities; serving as a watchdog over the government, business and not-for-profit sectors
- <https://disabilityrightswi.org>
- 800-928-8778



Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP)

- Assists eligible households with their heating and electric bills
- Two basic components – regular benefits and crisis assistance
- Benefits are not guaranteed to eligible households; when funds have been exhausted for a program year, there are no benefits issued to households regardless of eligibility



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- Income guidelines and more found at <https://energyandhousing.wi.gov/Pages/AgencyResources/energy-assistance.aspx>



FoodShare

- The program formerly known as “food stamps” provides enrollees with a card to purchase certain types of foods; the benefits can also be used at farmers’ markets to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables
- Eligible applicants must be low-income; the incomes of everyone living in your household count toward the limit; income guidelines can be found at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/fpl.htm>
- Call the Wisconsin Racine Kenosha Partnership (WKRP) for more information or one-on-one help (888-794-5820)
- Application for this and other state assistance programs can be completed through the ACCESS site, <https://access.wisconsin.gov/access/>



Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

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- To get WIC benefits, you must: live in Wisconsin; meet income guidelines (find them at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic/income-guidelines.htm>); need help with health and nutrition; and meet one of the following:
 - be pregnant or have had a baby in the past six months
 - be breastfeeding a baby under 1 year of age
 - care for a baby or child younger than 5 years of age
- You also may be able to get WIC benefits if you are enrolled in BadgerCare, FoodShare, or W-2
- WIC applicants must go through a health screening, which includes height and weight; questions about your health and diet; and a finger stick to see how much iron is in your blood
- If you are approved for WIC, you get an eWIC card, which lets you buy healthy foods from the grocery store
- <https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic/index/htm>



BadgerCare/Medicaid

- Provides health care coverage for people age with limited income (eligibility and potential premiums/co-pays varies based on age, income, disability, etc.)
- Call the Wisconsin Racine Kenosha Partnership (WKRP) for more information or one-on-one help (888-794-5820)
- Application for this and other state assistance programs can be completed through the ACCESS site, <https://access.wisconsin.gov/access/>



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Covering Wisconsin

- Nonprofit outreach program focused on helping people understand and sign up for health insurance and other programs that support health
- Employ navigators who help clients compare plans and prices across coverage options; submit applications; answer health insurance questions; resolve billing and coverage problems; file eligibility appeals and more
- Call (608)261-1455 or (414)400-9489 or visit www.coveringwi.org



WisCovered

- State agency that educates Wisconsinites about their insurance options
- Can also help file complaints if you have trouble with your insurance
- WisCovered will match you with a health insurance expert, who can help you find the right plan for you
- <https://wiscovered.com/>



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County Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)

- An ADRC is a one-stop shop for older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers and families
- ADRC staff provide confidential, unbiased information and options to help individuals make informed choices at no cost regardless of income.
- Some of the services provided include long-term care options counseling; health and wellness; nutrition information; transportation options; dementia care options; family caregiver support programs; and benefits counseling
- Kenosha County ADRC: 262-605-6646; Racine County ADRC: 262-833-8777



Lifeline

- Programs provides low-income Wisconsin residents affordable access to essential telecommunications services by discounting the cost of phone, cell and internet services
- You are eligible if you participate in one of the following qualifying programs: Medicaid (BadgerCare); FoodShare; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); federal public housing assistance (Section 8); veterans and survivors pension benefit; OR if your income is at or below 135% of federal poverty level guidelines (find them at



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<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/01/2021-01969/annual-update-of-the-hhs-poverty-guidelines>)

- Only one person per household can receive a Lifeline discount
- You can check your eligibility for Lifeline using the FCC Lifeline National Verifier at <https://www.usac.org/lifeline/national-verifier/>
- You can also apply using a paper application found at <https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/ForConsumers/Lifeline.aspx>. You will also find a list of LifeLine service providers at this site.



2-1-1

- When you need help and don't know where to turn, 211 is a one-stop connection to the local services you need, like utility assistance, housing, food, elder care, crisis intervention, alcohol and other drug recovery and more
- 211 Wisconsin provides referrals to specific agencies and organizations based on caller eligibility; crisis intervention for families in need of food, shelter, and natural disaster relief; an up-to-date online database of community resources; advocacy for callers struggling with language, comprehension, anxiety and other barriers; follow-up with callers to ensure they are getting the help they need



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**Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
(DATCP)**

- DATCP is the state's primary consumer protection agency. The Department's Bureau of Consumer Protection has authority to regulate unfair business practices.
- Those with a consumer complaint can call the Consumer Protection Hotline at (800)422-7128 or email DATCPHotline@wi.gov