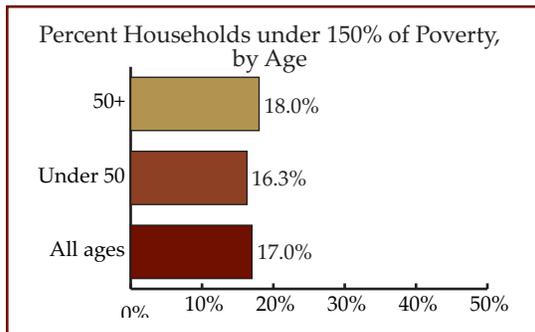


Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

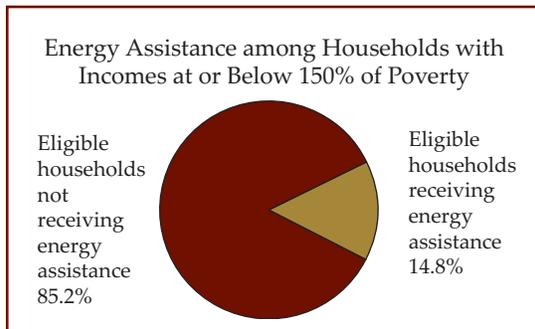
Wisconsin

Wisconsin in Brief (2006)

Total state population:	5,556,506
State median income:	\$69,010
Percent households age 50+:	45.7%

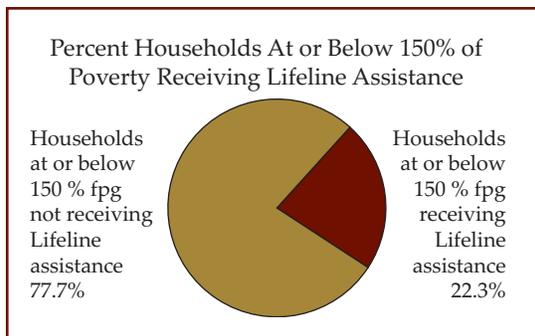


Energy Assistance



Telephone Assistance

Telephone penetration rate in state: 93.7%



Telephone Assistance

Lifeline and Link-Up are the primary sources telephone assistance for low-income households in Wisconsin.

Lifeline

Lifeline provides participating low-income households with a monthly credit toward the price of basic local telephone service.

Benefits (2006)

Maximum monthly credit: \$10.00

Basic federal support: \$8.25

State support: \$1.17

Federal match: \$0.58

Funding (2005)

Federal: \$8,082,905

State: \$2,144,945*

* From 2005-06 NRRI Survey

The Wisconsin Universal Service Fund provides the state contribution of \$1.17 per month per subscriber. The fund receives its income from a separate line charge billed monthly to each non-Lifeline customer by the telephone service provider.

Eligibility (2006)

To receive Lifeline assistance, state residents must complete an application with their local telephone provider and prove they are enrolled in any of the following programs:

- Wisconsin Works or W2
- Medical Assistance (MA)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Food stamps
- Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Wisconsin Homestead Tax Credit Badger Care

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The local phone company verifies customer eligibility through a state database. Local phone providers reverify eligibility annually.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 75,000

Participation rate: 19.6% (based on 150% of the federal poverty guideline)

Link-Up

Eligible subscribers receive a discount toward the installation of new telephone service.

Benefits (2006)

In Wisconsin LinkUp recipients pay no connection fee for connecting to new telephone service. Subscribers receive a federal discount of 50% (up to a maximum of \$30), and the Wisconsin Universal Service Fund pays remaining costs.

Funding (2005)

Federal: \$764,808

State: \$808,507

Eligibility (2006)

Eligibility requirements are the same as for Lifeline.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 30,501

Energy Assistance

Low-income energy assistance programs in Wisconsin include the following:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
- Reliability Law—Low-income Assistance Program
- Housing Cost Reduction Initiative
- Rental Assistance

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides the state of Wisconsin with a block grant to help eligible low-income households meet their immediate home energy needs. With this grant, Wisconsin distributes payments under two categories of assistance: heating and crisis. The state also uses a portion of the grant to supplement funding for Wisconsin's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

Benefits (FY2006)

Heating: \$1,200 maximum per household

\$358 average per household

Crisis: no program maximum

Clients receive one heating benefit a year for heating, but may receive more than one crisis assistance benefit per year. Benefits are paid to the energy provider unless the client's home energy costs are included in rent, in which case the payment is sent directly to the client. Heating assistance is available from October 1 to May 15. Crisis heating assistance is available year-round; crisis cooling is available from May 15 to October 15.

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$138,068,742

Federal: \$112,662,362

Regular net block grant: 69,733,174

One-time additional net block grant:

\$804,378

Total emergency/cont.: \$ 29,299,912

FY05 Leveraging incentive funds: \$825,133

Training and technical assistance: \$3,199,574

DOE funds: \$8,800,191

State : \$22,000,000

State public benefits funds: \$16,000,000

Appropriation: \$6,000,000

The Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Energy, partners with county offices of the Department of Human and Social Services to accept applications. The Department of Social

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Services determines eligibility, notifies clients, and make payments to energy providers and client.

Wisconsin allocates LIHEAP funding in the following manner:

- Heating Assistance: 67%
- Crisis assistance: 8%
- Weatherization: 15%
- Administration, etc.: 10%

Eligibility (FY2006)

State residents with household income at or below 150% of poverty are eligible for assistance.

Participation (FY2006)

Households served by program component:

- Heating: 137,618
- Winter/Year-round crisis: 39,821
- Weatherization: 8,032

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the U.S. Department of Energy provides Wisconsin with a formula distribution grant to help low-income residents—especially those 60 years or older, disabled, or living with young children—increase the energy efficiency of their homes, reduce their energy expenditures, and improve health and safety.

Benefits (FY2006)

Weatherization technicians use energy audits to identify and implement energy-saving measures for each home. Examples of these measures include the following:

- Insulating attic, floors, water heater, and exposed pipes
- Tuning up, repairing, or replacing the furnace or heating unit and/or air conditioner
- Stopping air infiltration by weather-stripping and caulking around doors and windows, replacing broken glass panes, and installing storm windows

Funding (FY2006)

- Total: \$44,741,387
- Federal: \$19,741,387
- Department of Energy: \$8,800,191
- Additional LIHEAP funds: \$10,941,196
- State: \$25,000,000 (State Reliability Law)

The Wisconsin Weatherization Assistance Program also received funding totaling \$25,000,000 in FY2006 from the Wisconsin public benefits program which is captured in the Reliability Law - Low Income Assistance Program funding totals and description below. The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services distributes grants to 21 community action, local government, and local government agencies. These agencies accept applications, determine eligibility, and provide weatherization services, such as performing energy audits and implementing suggested measures.

Eligibility (FY2006)

Persons eligible for LIHEAP assistance (150% of the federal poverty guideline) are also eligible for weatherization assistance in Wisconsin

Participation (2005)

Households served: 8,032

Reliability Law—Low-Income Assistance Program

The State of Wisconsin passed the “Reliability 2000” law in 1999, creating a public benefits fund to support low-income energy programs and other energy-related activities. Programs covered under this law include low-income weatherization and bill payment assistance, energy conservation, and renewable energy development.

Benefits (FY2006)

\$153 (average) toward payment of electric bill
 In 2006, eligible households also received electric-crisis assistance payments and extended weatherization services, including refrigerator replacements, water heater conversions, and air conditioning efficiency measures.

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Funding (FY2006)

Utilities: \$66,507,425

- \$40,000,000—Funding that major investor-owned natural gas and electric utilities in Wisconsin must continue to provide for low-income programs
- \$26,507,425—Funding that all investor-owned electric utilities and some municipal utilities and cooperatives collect from a new charge on customers' electric bills

New Fee—In FY2005, most residential customers paid a fee of 3% of the total bill. The formula-based charge is adjusted each year to ensure that funding matches the total “low-income need,” defined as the amount by which the annual energy bills of low-income households in the state exceed 2.2% of the households' annual incomes.

The State Division of Energy in the Department of Administration administers the Public Benefits Fund, establishing eligibility requirements annually through needs assessments.

Eligibility (2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty guideline are eligible for assistance.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 124,104

Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI)

Rental Assistance

The Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI) is a competitive program that provides grants to local governments, nonprofits, and other organizations for projects that reduce the cost of housing for low-income renters and home buyers.

Benefits

Grants of up to \$450 are provided to households when housing costs are more than 35% of the

total income, and all other sources of assistance have been exhausted.

HCRI grants may be used for security deposits, first and last months' rent, and utility payment assistance.

Funding (2006)

Total: \$2,800,000

State: \$2,800,000

Eligibility (2006)

The following types of organizations are among those eligible to apply for HCRI funds: nonprofit and for-profit housing organizations (including limited-equity cooperatives), housing authorities, local governments, tribal governments, community action agencies, and religious organizations.

These local organizations are able to provide direct assistance to resident households with incomes of up to 80% of the state median, and no other available sources of assistance.

Participation

Not Available

Seasonal, Health-, and Income-Related Disconnection Policy

Seasonal

From November 1 to April 15, Wisconsin prohibits disconnection of natural gas or electric service to households with incomes at or below 250% of poverty. Utilities are allowed to disconnect services to other residential customers during this period only if the household does not include members who because of age, developmental or mental disabilities, illness, or infancy, would have their health or safety endangered by such an action.

Health

The state requires utilities to delay for up to 21 days disconnection of residential service for nonpayment if a licensed Wisconsin physician

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certifies that such an action would aggravate an existing medical condition of the customer or a household member. During the delay the utility must work with the customer to make a reasonable payment arrangement. The delay may be extended to facilitate completion of such an agreement.

Deferred Payments

Wisconsin requires utilities to offer residential customers the opportunity to avoid disconnection by negotiating a deferred payment arrangement. Disconnections are prohibited when customers agree and adhere to such an arrangement.