



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

July 7, 2021-For Immediate Release:

Gov Evers Announces WI Emergency Rental Assistance Program Payment of Internet Bills

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced that the [Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) (WERA), which provides rental and utility assistance to households affected by the pandemic, will begin to include coverage of internet costs for qualifying households. To date, the state program has provided more than \$38 million to nearly 11,000 households and is working to distribute available funds to eligible households and individuals.

“The past year and a half has underscored the fact that access to affordable high-speed internet is a necessity to how we live, learn, and work,” said Gov. Evers. “This additional resource coupled with our recent announcement of Broadband Access funding across the state should go a long way toward helping folks remain connected, make ends meet, and bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Eligible applicants include Wisconsin residents who meet the following criteria:

- One or more individuals within the household has qualified for unemployment benefits or experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due, directly or indirectly, to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- One or more individuals within the household can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability; and
- A household income at or below 80 percent of [county median income](#).

“Internet connectivity is a vital service that allows renters to engage in distance learning, telework, telemedicine, and obtain essential government services,” said Public Service Commission Chairperson Rebecca Valcq. “These funds will ensure Wisconsinites are able to receive essential services.”

“We are approaching the end of the federal moratorium on rental evictions on July 31, and it is more critical than ever that households in need are aware of this assistance,” added Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) Secretary Joel Brennan. “We are determined to get assistance out to eligible households as quickly as possible through our network of partners across the state.”

The state received over \$322 million in the first round of Emergency Rental Assistance Funds. The effort is funded by the Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program through the U.S. Department of Treasury and administered in the state by the DOA.

The DOA has partnered with Wisconsin Community Action agencies and Energy Services, Inc. to accept applications and distribute rental, internet and utility assistance. Residents of Brown, Dane, Milwaukee, and Waukesha counties and the cities of Madison and Milwaukee can apply directly to their local government’s rental assistance provider.