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Gov. Tony Evers Announces \$322 million Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance (WERA) Program

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) supports Gov. Tony Evers for his announcement of the \$322 million Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance (WERA) Program. The program will provide financial assistance for rent, rental arrearages, utility costs, utility arrearages, and wrap around services for eligible households who have experienced impacted income resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

From June through November 2020, WISCAP's network, in partnership with the Department of Administration (DOA), distributed over \$28 million in rental assistance through the Wisconsin Rental Assistance Program (WRAP). Building off that experience, the partnership between DOA and WISCAP's network is now helping to distribute WERA funds. Eligible applicants include Wisconsin residents who demonstrate a risk of experiencing housing instability, have seen their income impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and earn a household income at or below 80 percent of the county median income. Rental and utility assistance payments are made directly to the landlord or utility provider on behalf of the tenant.

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.

The pandemic has put an additional strain on an already fragile situation for low-income households in Wisconsin where, prior to COVID-19, over 306,000 low-income renters in the state paid more than half their income on housing, "Our communities throughout the state -- rural, suburban and urban -- are struggling with the effects of this public health emergency, and it is with respect to housing security where so many Wisconsinites are especially vulnerable," said WISCAP Executive Director Brad Paul. "The Governor's announcement of this new round of rental assistance is extremely encouraging as it provides critical resources to prevent eviction, homelessness, and ensure greater housing stability."

"Eviction has long-lasting, devastating effects on a family's future wellbeing and on the community as a whole," says Hetti Brown, executive director of Couleecap, a Community Action Program in Southwestern Wisconsin. "Housing stability creates a feeling of safety and security, a foundation for a child's educational success, and sense of community. The WERA program is an investment in these fundamental needs that we all share."

The WERA program is coordinated by WISCAP, local community action agencies, and Energy Services, Inc. The program is administered by the Department of Administration (DOA) and funded by the Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury. You can stay up-to-date regarding WERA by visiting: <https://wiscap.org/wera/>.

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About WISCAP: The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) is a member association serving the statewide network of sixteen locally controlled Community Action Agencies (CAA) and two single purpose agencies.