

The 2023-25 State Budget Should Support Wisconsin Families Who Are Struggling to Get By

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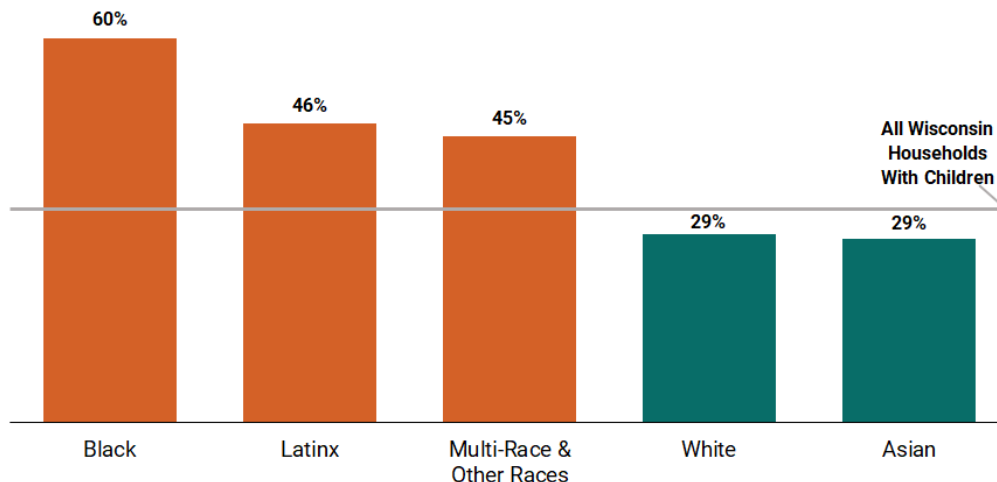
From Racine to Rice Lake, Wisconsinites work hard to provide for their families. In the wake of the pandemic, the rising cost of goods and services has made it difficult for many to make ends meet. And for too long, certain politicians have created barriers and made cuts that have left programs and services unable to help people when they need it most. The 2023-25 state budget offers the opportunity to strengthen programs that help meet the basic needs of our neighbors and communities.

Struggling to Pay Basic Expenses

In the last two years, 1 in 3 Wisconsin households with children have struggled to pay for basic expenses like food, housing, and child care. Some households of color with children were far more likely to face hardship—reflecting historic and ongoing forms of racism and oppression in education, employment, housing, and health care that make it harder to get ahead. From March 2021 to February 2023, 6 in 10 Black households with children struggled to pay for basic expenses.

1 in 3 Wisconsin Households With Children Are Facing Hardship

Share of Households With Children Reporting Difficulty Paying for Basic Expenses, March 2021 to February 2023



Note: Difficulty paying for basic expenses = somewhat or very difficult to pay for usual household expenses in the last 7 days. Data exclude individuals who did not respond to the question. Race and ethnicity categories are mutually exclusive. Due to small sample sizes, some demographic groups were combined into the Multi-Race and Other Races category, including American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or multi-racial respondents.

Source: Kids Forward analysis of US Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey microdata from weeks 26 through 54

Long-lasting Negative Impacts

[Economic hardship has a long-lasting negative impact on children](#)—affecting their health and wellness over the course of their lives. Ensuring families can meet their basic needs should be a key goal for the 2023-25 state budget. Yet, some lawmakers want to pass income tax cuts that would mostly benefit the wealthy. These cuts would [do nothing to strengthen the economy](#) nor put more money into everyday families' wallets. In fact, large income tax cuts could lead to fewer resources available for programs that lift up children and families furthest from opportunity.

Lawmakers should instead come to an agreement on a state budget that builds a foundation for children and families by boosting access to child care and health care, increasing affordable housing, and adequately supporting schools and teachers. To truly create a just society where people have the freedom to thrive, we must ensure everyone has enough to eat, a safe place to live, and health care when they need it.

Contact

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About Kids Forward

Kids Forward inspires action and promotes access to opportunity for every kid, every family, and every community in Wisconsin, notably children and families of color and those furthest from opportunity. We envision a Wisconsin where every child thrives. Using a research- and community-informed approach, we advocate for effective, long-lasting solutions that break down barriers to success for children and families.