

CHECKLIST · WISCONSIN

Moving to Wisconsin Checklist: The First 60 Days (2026)

Ten days for the USCIS address report, sixty for the license. No electric deposit can be charged to a newcomer, a passport number alone is enough, and there is no local income tax.

SHORT ANSWER

Two deadlines are certain in the first two months: **10 days** for the USCIS address report, **5 days** if you have a pending immigration court case, and on the state side **60 days** for a regular driver license. On the home side, know three things up front. First, your bills sit in **three separate legal regimes**, and electric, gas and water all fall under the same state rule. Second, that rule limits the identity information that can be asked of you at sign-up to **four options**, and **a passport number alone is enough**; on top of that, **no deposit may be required of a newcomer, meaning zero**. Third, in renting, state law bars cities from interfering with how a landlord screens a tenant, which means **a landlord may ask for a number and the capital cannot prohibit that locally**. On your payroll there is one reassuring sentence: **there is no local income tax and there cannot be one**.

Deadlines: we separate the certain from the not-found

TASK	DEADLINE	WHERE
USCIS address report	10 days . Moving within the state also requires a report	From your online account or with Form AR-11
Notice to the immigration court	5 days , if you have a pending case	With Form EOIR-33/IC
Regular driver license or ID card	60 days after you establish residency	At a service center, by appointment
Commercial driver license	30 days	Same agency
Vehicle title and plates	An application is required once you are a resident; no separate day count written for newcomers was found	With Form MV1; the online service may be unavailable
If you move to one of the seven emissions counties	45 days after transferring the vehicle	Program stations or kiosks

Two rows in this table mislead readers often. First: **mail forwarding is not an AR-11**, and satisfying the AR-11 obligation **does not automatically update the address in a pending case**; do both, and enter the receipt number of every pending application. Second: someone moving here gives their address to **three state channels** in the first week (the transportation agency for the license, the state application system for health

coverage, and voter registration) but **none of those is an AR-11**; the 10-day federal clock runs independently of all three. A warning comes in the same breath on voter registration: on the transportation agency's new resident page, **voter registration** appears as one of the three tests for being considered a Wisconsin resident. That test is written for citizens; **if you are not a citizen you do not touch that box**. One more thing changed in 2026: account for the federal rule that **took effect on June 29, 2026** and reorganized the alien registration form and what counts as evidence of registration, readable at federalregister.gov.

The first thirty days

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ File the USCIS address report within 10 days	uscis.gov/addresschange ; separately update the address in your pending case, and if you have a court case, EOIR-33/IC within 5 days
☐ Open the electric, gas and water accounts with a passport number	The rule lists four options and the company must accept any of them ; a passport number alone is enough . The company must tell you every accepted form and let you choose
☐ Push back if a deposit is requested	No deposit may be required of a new customer who has no debt to a Wisconsin utility accrued in the past six years. If you just arrived you cannot have such a debt, so the answer is zero
☐ Open the municipal services bill yourself	In the capital, water, sewer, stormwater, urban forestry and refuse arrive on one bill ; billing office 608-266-4641
☐ Book the license appointment and have your interpreter request noted	Legal presence document plus two residency documents, originals; the knowledge test comes in eleven languages and Turkish is not one
☐ Read every deduction line on your first pay stub	A local income tax line should not appear ; check that the state withholding was actually taken
☐ Apply for health coverage right away	There is no open enrollment period , you can apply any day of the year; through the state's online system or the county income maintenance agency
☐ If you are enrolling a child, verify the school district from the address	District boundaries do not match city boundaries; handle the immunization file in your first weeks too
☐ Ride the bus on day one	Tapping a contactless bank card is enough; no number, application or proof of residency is requested and the fare caps itself
☐ Get the library card online	Applying online removes the address document entirely : receiving the card in the mail counts as the proof of address

Bills: four items, three separate legal regimes

SERVICE	LEGAL REGIME
Electric and natural gas	From an investor-owned company, under the public service commission's rule : the four identity options, the deposit prohibition and the shutoff rules all apply. Consumer line 1-800-225-7729

SERVICE	LEGAL REGIME
Drinking water	From the city water utility, but still under the commission's rule . The water chapter's own sentence says the rules are to be observed by "all water public utilities, both privately and publicly owned"
Refuse, recycling, urban forestry	From the city streets division, as a special charge on the bill. The commission's rules do not apply
Internet	Unregulated . The identity alternatives do not apply here; that is a private credit decision

- **This is a structure we meet for the first time in the series:** a municipally owned water utility is inside the state regulator's rule book too. So the city's own water utility is subject to the **same identity, deposit and shutoff rules** as an investor-owned electric company. The only divergence is one the regulator states itself: **municipally owned utilities are not required to offer deferred payment agreements to tenants**, though most still do.
- **The four accepted identity options:** a driver license number; a state ID card number; a **passport number**; or a Social Security number **or its last four digits**. The rule requires the company to **state every accepted form and leave the choice to the applicant**, which means "we cannot do it without a number" is contrary to the rule.
- **The most useful sentence in this section:** the rule lists one by one the omissions for which service may be refused (legal name and date of birth, service address, requested start date, most recent previous address) and **identity information is not on that list**. Not providing the number is not a **ground for refusal**, it is a **ground for verification**.
- **If you go into verification:** for identity verification a **valid passport alone** is accepted; for residency verification a **lease**, a current utility bill, a bank statement, a pay stub, or **an address verification issued by a social service or government agency**. The company must approve or deny **within 10 calendar days** and the rule closes one excuse in advance: an anticipated high volume of service requests is not an emergency. A denial must be **in writing** within **5 days**, and the writing must state **your right to have the denial reviewed by commission staff**.
- **The deposit is zero for a newcomer.** The rule states that if a customer has no debt to a Wisconsin utility accrued within the past six years and not covered by a payment arrangement, **no cash deposit or other security may be required as a condition of new residential service**. For water the rule is broader: the debt may be to any gas, electric, water or sewer utility. **There is no credit score test and no immigration status test**.
- The state energy assistance program covers emergency energy needs, emergency furnace repair and weatherization items: energybenefit.wi.gov or **1-800-506-5596**. The program depends on the federal budget and can change; confirm before you apply.

THE SHUTOFF MORATORIUM IS NOT ABSOLUTE, AND WE PRINT THE CONFLICT

- The rule concerns disconnection for nonpayment, between **November 1 and April 15**, of the service providing the home's primary heat. But the text does not set a prohibition, it sets a **condition**: a company may disconnect only households whose **gross quarterly income is above 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines**, and whose health and safety would not be endangered by the disconnection. The two tests work **together**.
- **The most important sentence: the burden of proving that a household is eligible for disconnection is on the utility.**
- **Here is the conflict:** the regulator's own press release describes the same period as one that "prohibits all utilities from disconnecting residential heating service for nonpayment." That describes an absolute prohibition; the rule text is conditional. Both are official and they do not say the same thing. **We take no side**, but this guide **treats the rule text as controlling**, because it is the safer advice: a household with income above the threshold should not consider itself untouchable.
- **If you receive a shutoff threat in winter, call 1-800-225-7729 immediately** and ask this: is there a commission order in effect today that authorizes any utility to disconnect occupied dwellings during the moratorium period?
- The procedural safeguards are concrete: **no disconnection on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays or holidays**; a representative must **speak personally with a responsible adult** in the household; every disconnection must be reported to the commission **by 3:30 p.m. the same day**; and **by the end of the next business day** the utility must visit the household and, if it sees a danger to health or life, **restore service immediately**.
- On the natural gas side we **saw the titles of the parallel sections but could not read their text**, and we also **could not read** the section on water disconnection; we print no separate figures for those two.

Renting: strong consumer rules, almost no local authority

ITEM	RULE
Return of the security deposit	21 days , and every item withheld must be stated in writing and itemized within that same period. Knowingly asserting a false claim against a deposit is separately prohibited
Normal wear and tear	Can never be withheld
Pre-tenancy inspection	Before accepting a deposit the landlord must notify you in writing that until a date set at least 7 days after the tenancy begins you may inspect the unit and report pre-existing damage, and that you may request the list of damages withheld from the previous tenant's deposit
The separately signed addendum	For anything outside the statutory list to be withheld, that item must appear in a separately signed document whose title is in capital letters . Read that document line by line before you sign
Cap on the deposit amount	We did not find one. The regulation governs the return and the withholdings, not the amount. We do not say there is none, we say we did not find one; treat the amount as negotiable

ITEM	RULE
Credit report fee	Actual cost, up to \$25 . There is an exit: if you supply your own report from a nationwide agency dated no more than 30 days ago , this fee cannot be charged at all
Background check for an applicant from out of state	Actual cost, up to \$25 , and there is no exit . So one single application can lawfully generate up to \$50 in screening fees
Cap on rent increases	We found no statewide cap, and a local cap cannot lawfully be created. The limit on an increase is your lease; if you can, spend the first year on a fixed-term lease

And we state a question of authority plainly. State law does not permit any city, village, town or county to prohibit a landlord from obtaining and using the following information about a prospective tenant: monthly household income, occupation, rental history, credit information, public records of court actions, and **a Social Security number or other proof of identity**. The same section also bars cities from imposing deposit, earnest money or inspection requirements beyond the state regulation, and a separate provision bars **local eviction moratoriums**. The result: **a landlord may ask for a number, may refuse an applicant who does not provide one, and the capital cannot prohibit that locally**. Another state in this series has a reform that bars landlords from asking about immigration status; here such a provision **could not lawfully be enacted locally**, because the legislature took that authority from cities. If such a rule is coming, it has to come **from the legislature**. So going to city hall and asking "why don't you protect us" has no answer; **the question is a state-level question**. What you do hold is the **national origin** protection: the protected classes under the fair housing law include national origin and ancestry, not immigration or citizenship status. A landlord who demands extra documents only from applicants born abroad is exposed under that law; **keep a written record of what you were asked, what others were asked, and the dates**. One more distinction: the law treats **lawful source of income** as a protected class and **expressly covers owner-occupied single-family homes**, so we found no small-landlord exemption. But the phrase "**lawful source of income**" is **nowhere defined in the statute** and the text never mentions a housing voucher; for that reason we **do not write** that a landlord must accept a voucher.

Payroll: no local income tax, and there cannot be one

State law provides that no county, city, town or village with taxing authority may **assess, levy or collect** a tax on or measured by income, and it continues: a tax so imposed is **void**. The section's history note goes back to 1999, so this is not a new measure. The practical result: no local income tax line appears on your pay stub beyond the state withholding, and you file **a single state return**. If a city sends you an income tax return, that is not normal; check its source first. Separate out the thing people confuse: no local income tax does not mean no local taxes; local money comes from the **property tax** and from certain local sales and use taxes, and on the vehicle side there is the **wheel tax**. The state rate has four brackets (**3.50, 4.40, 5.30 and 7.65 percent**) but we **could not verify the 2026 bracket schedule**; the agency's page was still publishing the 2025 schedule at the time of research, so we print no threshold table here. If you live in a neighboring state and work here, there are reciprocity agreements with four states, but **they do not operate automatically**: unless **Form W-220** is filed, the employer keeps withholding Wisconsin tax. The employee's state form is **WT-4**; we could not verify whether that form asks for a number, so ask your employer's payroll unit before you complete it. Someone who has no number but must file uses an **ITIN**, on Form W-7.

Health: the gap is about status, not income

- **There is no classic coverage gap by income.** The state did not adopt the full ACA expansion, but unlike the other non-expansion states in this series it covers childless adults too, up to **100 percent of the poverty line**; the **adult limit in a one-person household is \$1,330 a month** (the February 1, 2026 to January 31, 2027 period). Do not carry the "there is nothing in between" formula you read for another non-expansion state into this one. The limit in the adult column **already includes the 5 percent income disregard**.
- **The gap is about status.** From October 1, 2026, federal law pays states full Medicaid for only four groups: U.S. citizens and nationals, green card holders, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and those living here under a COFA agreement. The list is **closed**; refugees, people granted asylum and parolees are not on it. The law cuts not the person's coverage but **the federal payment to the state**. The text: [govinfo.gov](https://www.govinfo.gov), section 71109.
- **But the state took the option federal law left to it.** Its own page states that coverage continues for **people who are pregnant, those under 19, and those under 21 living in a mental health institution**. So the door stayed open for your children and for a pregnant spouse.
- **We state one omission as it stands:** after October 1, 2026 the state's table marks every listed status "No" and it **contains no row at all for Cuban and Haitian entrants or COFA migrants**. If you are in either group the table does not say you are eligible, it **says nothing**. Get the answer from the state's member services or the county income maintenance agency and **ask for it in writing**. We also **could not verify** how the five-year bar is applied here for green card adults.
- **Two doors remain for those whose status is not eligible or who lost coverage, and neither requires a number:** the **prenatal program** for people who are pregnant, and **emergency services** coverage. Neither is general health insurance.
- **January 1, 2027:** the marketplace premium tax credit narrows to the same three categories. The state has no marketplace of its own and uses the federal site: [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov). People granted asylum, refugees and temporary protected status holders can keep buying a plan but **without a subsidy**; DACA holders cannot enter marketplace coverage at all. Someone who lost coverage on October 1, 2026 could move to a subsidized plan through 2026; **that door becomes unsubsidized on January 1, 2027**, so the choice you make in the 2026 enrollment period determines your 2027 premium.
- **Hospital financial assistance is the broadest in the series, and closed to you for the first year.** The capital's large hospital system's policy has been in effect since January 1, 2026 and its threshold reaches **600 percent of the poverty line**; at 300 percent and below you may pay nothing for care. But the policy requires the patient to have **resided primarily in the eligibility area for at least one year**, and it states that "patients who are traveling or visiting internationally are not eligible for financial assistance for non-emergent treatment." The practical result is plain: **a newly arrived family is outside this door for the first twelve months**. In that first year, build the plan on the state's emergency services program, the community health center's sliding scale, and the hospital's own prompt-pay discount. The application window is **240 days** from the date of service; the financial counselor line is **(877) 278-6437**.
- **And one distinction:** a sliding-scale clinic is never free, and hospital financial assistance is not a clinic but a **bill discount**. The community health center states on its own page that **a minimum amount may be requested at the time of the appointment** and it does not describe any service as free. We **did not find** a genuinely free clinic with verified 2026 operations; we do not say there is none.



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