

Aging and Disability Policy Forum

October 13, 2026



50% of Wisconsin residents are touched by aging and disability issues

- **1.4 million** people are age 60 or over right now.
- By 2050, nearly **3 in 10 Wisconsinites** will be aged 60 or older.
- **1.1 million** people are family caregivers.
- **450,000** people with disabilities are under age 64.
- **1 in 4** people in the United States **has a disability**.

Home care is a civil right and costs less than institutional care

- People with disabilities and older adults don't want to be in institutions.
- **Home care costs less than institutional care.**
- About 120,000 people are in Wisconsin Home Care Medicaid waiver programs.
- These programs (Family Care, IRIS, and CLTS) keep older adults, children with disabilities, and adults with disabilities **out of more costly Medicaid-funded nursing homes and state-run institutions.**

There is not enough housing designed to work for everyone

- People with disabilities can't find affordable accessible housing to gain independence.
- Older adults want to age in place but have trouble modifying their existing homes.
 - Modifications to make a home accessible is about the same cost (\$10-20K) as two months in a skilled nursing facility (\$10-11K)
- Some older adults want to downsize but can't find affordable places that have the accessibility features they need.
- Families need properties that can accommodate multi-generational caregiving responsibilities.

The state does not fund the actual cost of special education

- Puts student safety at risk
- Less access to quality therapeutic services
- Students with disabilities secluded or restrained at a much higher rate than their peers
- Not enough classroom support
- Inadequate training and pay for support staff
- A lack or shortage of assistive technology that supports learning
- Insufficient preparation to transition to life in the community