

Wisconsin Aging and Disability Resource Directory Inclusion and Exclusion Policy

Last Revised: March 2025

This policy applies to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) statewide aging and disability resource directory, herein referred to as “resource directory” or “directory.” Aging and disability resource centers (ADRCs), aging units, and Tribal aging and disability resource specialists (Tribal partner agencies) are herein referred to as “staff.”

Purpose

Access to accurate information about programs, supports, and services is essential to successfully plan for needs related to aging, living with a disability, and caregiving. Wisconsin’s resource directory is designed to assist people in accessing reliable and comprehensive information about long-term care, programs, and services available throughout the state.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the statewide resource directory, to develop and maintain a directory of comprehensive information, and to ensure it is accessible to individuals, caregivers, families, and staff.

Disclaimer

Inclusion in the resource directory does not imply endorsement or recommendation of an organization, service, support, or program. Omission from the directory does not indicate disapproval of an organization, service, support, or program. The quality of an organization, service, support, or program is not guaranteed by DHS. DHS, ADRCs, aging units, and Tribal partner agencies are not responsible for programs, supports, or services provided by any organization or provider included in the directory.

General guidelines

- The resource directory includes public, private, and nonprofit resources that relate to the health and wellness of older adults, adults with disabilities, their families, and caregivers.
- The resource directory will be updated annually, at a minimum, to ensure accuracy of information. If any entity fails to respond to a request for updated information within the specified time frame, its listing may be removed from the directory.
- Experience, fiscal stability, length of service, and other factors, including but not limited to whether a program, service, or support is deemed critical for meeting an emergency or unmet need, will be considered when determining whether a program, service, or support satisfies the requirements for inclusion in the directory.

- To be considered for inclusion in the directory, a provider or organization must supply to DHS, at minimum, their name, address, phone number, locations served, and services provided.
- This policy allows the inclusion of programs, services, or supports that provide service to people based on age, gender, health, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or other characteristics. The programs, services, or supports must be open to all people in those identified populations. For example, senior centers for older adults or community centers for people of a specific ethnicity may be included.

Requirements for inclusion of a program, support, or service

- Licensure, certification, and accreditation through Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services are used to ensure that organizations and providers meet minimum standards of quality and safety. DHS will not monitor compliance with regulatory standards but will verify good standing with the appropriate regulatory entity.
- Resources must be available to residents of Wisconsin.
- Resources must serve older adults, adults with disabilities, their families, or their caregivers.
- Organizations or providers must not be discriminatory.
- DHS retains the discretion to include any program, support, or service based on the needs of older adults, adults with disabilities, their families, or their caregivers.

Organization and provider types considered for inclusion

- Nonprofit, government, or for-profit entities that offer a community program, support, or service
- Programs, supports, or services that benefit older adults or adults with disabilities
- Faith-based organizations and service clubs that offer a program, support, or service to the community at large (not just to their own members)
- Crisis lines, hotlines, helplines, information lines, and information and referral lines administered by nonprofit organizations or governmental entities
- Statewide and national toll-free phone services that can be accessed by callers in Wisconsin, provide socially beneficial services, and are administered by nonprofit organizations or governmental entities
- Specialized information and referral providers

- Programs, supports, or services that are temporary in nature and are active in response to special circumstances, such as disasters, seasonal and holiday programming, or any other event or situation in which people need to be connected to resources
- Independent programs, such as mutual support groups, that may or may not be affiliated with a professional, governmental, or other entity
- For-profit organizations providing social services not adequately met by other resources and that accept Wisconsin Medicaid or offer free programs, supports, or services; scholarships; reduced fees; or a sliding fee scale
- For-profit organizations offering programs that provide unique programs, supports, or services that are otherwise difficult to access
- Organizations that offer volunteer opportunities to older adults, people with disabilities, and/or to community members who are interested in helping these populations
- Medical, dental, mental health, and substance use disorder association websites that identify individual practitioners and organizations (for example, the American Medical Association's website)
- State and local websites that identify state and national political representatives (for example, the Wisconsin State Legislature)
- Any organization or provider that DHS determines may be relevant to older adults, adults with disabilities, their families, or their caregivers.

Exclusion criteria

The resource directory may exclude organizations or providers that:

- Deny services based on age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, health, race, religion, national origin, disability, or other characteristics in violation of federal or state law.
- Do not offer programs, supports, or services that serve older adults, adults with disabilities, their families, or their caregivers.
- Are not licensed, certified, or accredited in areas where licensing, certification, or accreditation standards are required.
- Provide programs, supports, or services only to their own members.
- Do not meet the inclusion criteria.
- Are advocacy and lobbying organizations with platforms that are not focused on issues related to aging or living with a disability.

- Are local community events (for example, county fairs, circus, or fireworks).
- Are private, for-profit legal services that can be located through attorney referral sources (for example, the State Bar of Wisconsin, the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, or the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives).
- Are available through another comprehensive directory (for example Medicare plans and providers, ForwardHealth authorized providers, Marketplace plans, or other licensed insurance products or agents). This directory will link to those comprehensive directories (for example, Medicare.gov, healthcare.gov, and the ForwardHealth Find Care directory).
- Fail to respond to a request for updated information within the specified time frame.

Any program, support, service, organization, or provider may be removed from the directory for non-delivery of service; fraud; misrepresentation; criminal activity; non-compliance with federal, state, or local laws; complaints filed with any regulatory board; or lack of response to requests for current information. DHS retains the ability to exclude any service, support, program, organization, or provider that does not support the mission or role of ADRCs or Tribal partner agencies.

Process for requesting inclusion

Inclusion in the directory is not guaranteed. Organizations or programs may be intentionally or inadvertently left out of the directory.

- When an organization or program would like to be considered for inclusion in the resource directory, they must complete an application.
- All required fields on the application, denoted by asterisks, must be completed.
- The application must be submitted electronically through the [statewide resource directory feedback form](#), or by email to DHSRCTeam@dhs.wisconsin.gov.
- The local ADRC or Tribal partner agency will review applications within 30 days of receipt.
- The local ADRC or Tribal partner agency will respond to the requestor within 45 days of receipt, indicating whether the resource has been added to or excluded from the directory. If the resource is excluded, the local ADRC or Tribal partner agency will provide the reason for its exclusion and the process for appealing the decision.

Process for reconsideration of the exclusion or removal of a resource from the directory

- When an organization or service requests to be added to the directory, then the local ADRC, Tribal partner agency, or DHS will respond with a written notice of decision to the organization or program's address, as listed on the application.
- If an organization or provider is notified by an ADRC, Tribal partner agency, or DHS that they will not be added to the directory, that organization or provider may ask to be reconsidered by submitting a new request on the [statewide resource directory feedback form](#) or by emailing DHSRCTeam@dhs.wisconsin.gov.
- The request for reconsideration should include an explanation of the program, support, or service and a statement as to why the program, support, or service meets the DHS resource directory inclusion criteria.
- DHS will respond to all requests for reconsideration with an email decision within 30 days of receipt.