

Resource Guide for Renters and Landlords in Brown County



NeighborWorks Green Bay

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WI 54301

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How to Use This Guide

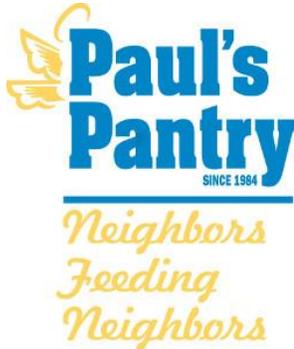
This Resource Guide provides resources that are useful for renters and landlords. Topics include financial assistance, eviction support, reporting unsafe or unhealthy conditions, and landlord and renter rights and responsibilities.

- Use the Subject Guide to find resources for specific issues.
- Use the Resource Directory to find full descriptions and contact information for each resource. Resources are listed alphabetically.
- Page numbers for each resource are listed in the Table of Contents.
- Use the Frequently Asked Questions and Appendix sections for extra information about renting.

This is not an exhaustive list of resources in Brown County. For further resources and information, contact United Way 211 by calling 211, texting your zip code to 898211, or visiting get211.org. An electronic version of Resource Guide for Renters and Landlords in Brown County can be found at nwgreenbay.org.

This guide is collaboration of
NeighborWorks Green Bay & Green Bay Neighborhood Leadership Council

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Subject Guide

Natural Supports

You may find that there are people that you already know who may be able to help you if you are trying to make a positive change or address a problem. This may include “**Natural Supports**,” or informal social networks such as family relationships, friendships, neighbors, co-workers, etc. To help identify the natural supports in your life, consider using the “You and Your Natural Supports” worksheet included in this booklet.

Advocacy/ Legal/ Rights

Legal representation for an individual or interest group. Support in understanding and advocating for rights related to renting. Support understanding and enforcing lease agreements.

Aging and Disability Resource Center

Apartment Association of Northeast Wisconsin

Brown County Sheriff’s Office

City of Green Bay- Residential Housing Investigator:
Landlord & Tenant Issues

Fair Housing Center of Northeast Wisconsin

Green Bay Police Department

Legal Action of Wisconsin

Mediation Center

Modest Means

NeighborWorks Green Bay

Options for Independent Living

Tenant Resource Center

Education

A class, workshop, or counseling to learn more about renting.

Apartment Association of Northeast Wisconsin

Brown County Veterans Service Office

Fair Housing Center of Northeast Wisconsin

Family Services Transitional Living Program

Integrated Community Solutions (ICS)

NeighborWorks Green Bay

Options for Independent Living

Tenant Resource Center

Eviction

Support in eviction process, either for prevention or next steps after eviction.

Forward Service Corporation

Legal Action of Wisconsin

Mediation Center

Micah Center

REACH

Salvation Army

St. Vincent de Paul

Tenant Resource Center

Financial Assistance or Equivalent

Grants, subsidies, vouchers, cash, or other resources that carry a direct monetary value.

Brown County Health & Human Services

De Pere Christian Outreach

Forward Service Corporation

HUD-VASH Vouchers

Integrated Community Solutions (ICS)

REACH

Rural Housing USDA

Salvation Army

St. Vincent de Paul

Informational

Books, websites, pamphlets, and other means of information.

Aging and Disability Resource Center

Apartment Association of Northeast Wisconsin

Brown County Veterans Service Office

City of Green Bay- Residential Housing Investigator:
Landlord & Tenant Issues

De Pere Christian Outreach

Fair Housing Center of Northeast Wisconsin

NeighborWorks Green Bay

Options for Independent Living

United Way 211

Tenant Resource Center

Reporting Unhealthy and Unsafe

Conditions- Inspections

Code Enforcement, Inspection, and other Municipal government departments responsible for interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, and other violations.

City of De Pere

City of Green Bay Housing and Zoning Inspection

Village of Allouez Code Enforcement

Village of Ashwaubenon Code Enforcement

Village of Bellevue

Village of Denmark

Village of Hobart

Village of Howard

Village of Pulaski

Village of Suamico

Village of Wrightstown

Finding a Place to Live

Places to live, defined by those that accept vouchers, are subsidized, or are part of another program.

Aging and Disability Resource Center

De Pere Housing Authority

Family Services Transitional Living Program

Green Bay Housing Authority

HUD-VASH Vouchers

Integrated Community Solutions (ICS)

Landlord Specific Supports

Organizations that have resources specifically for landlords.

Aging and Disability Resource Center

Apartment Association of Northeast Wisconsin

Brown County Home Builders Association: Multifamily Committee

Brown County Sheriff's Office

Fair Housing Center of Northeast Wisconsin

Green Bay Police Department

Resource Directory

Aging and Disability Resource Center

300 S. Adams Street
Green Bay, WI 54301

adrcofbrowncounty.org

920-448-4300

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) works specifically with older adults and adults that are disabled, or landlords that have tenants in those populations. They maintain listings of available housing options that are accessible and include details on the costs and features. They also accept referrals from landlords to help put supports in place to help tenants stay in their unit, and work with landlords to understand and best support their tenants.

Apartment Association of Northeast

Wisconsin

P.O. Box 1914
Green Bay, WI 54301

aanw.org

920-435-2269

nblue3@yahoo.com

Apartment Association of Northeast Wisconsin is a member based organization for landlords. They provide support for those who own or manage residential properties in Northeastern Wisconsin. They focus on advancing and improving the land lording industry through education, political activism, and networking. Members meet once per month for educational topics and discussions for landlords.

Brown County Health & Human Services

Sophie Beaumont Building- 2nd Floor
111 N. Jefferson St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

co.brown.wi.us/departments/?department=dd09bd30c78e

920-448-6000

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) provides assistance for heating costs, electric costs, and energy crisis situations.

Most types of fuel are eligible to receive assistance. Whether you use wood, propane, natural gas, electricity, or fuel oil to heat your home, energy assistance is available if you qualify.

Brown County Home Builders Association: Multifamily Committee

811 Packerland Drive
Green Bay, WI 54307

bchba.org

(920) 494-9020

The Brown County Multifamily Committee tackles issues that affect the real estate property management/multi-family industry, with an emphasis on advocacy. Working together as real estate property managers creates a greater presence and bring years of experience to the table when meeting with local municipal leaders and legislators. The Multifamily Committee is open to multi-family property owners who are members of the Brown County Home Builders Association, whether they own one duplex or 100+ apartment units.

Brown County Sheriff's Office

2684 Development Dr.
Green Bay WI, 54311

www.co.brown.wi.us/departments/?department=3377616beef

(920) 448-4200

The Brown County Sheriff Department is here to assist renters who have concerns about their neighbors. Additionally, the Sheriff Department has an officer who helps in enforcing evictions on behalf of landlords.

Brown County Veterans Service Office

305 E Walnut Street, Room 300
Green Bay WI 54301

www.co.brown.wi.us/departments/?department=a69257ed6aa6

920-448-4451

The mission of the Brown County Veterans Service Office is to provide education to veterans, and their dependents and beneficiaries on the state and federal benefits they may be eligible for. The Veterans Service Office also provides assistance with completing any necessary applications associated with these benefits. In addition to this, the Department of Veterans Affairs provides access to programs that deal with housing, training, education, counseling, and rehabilitation services needed to gain permanent housing and employment.

City of De Pere- Inspections

335 S. Broadway St.
De Pere, WI 54115

920-339-4050

webmaster@mail.de-pere.org

City of Green Bay Housing and Zoning Inspection

100 N. Jefferson St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

greenbaywi.gov/402/Housing-Zoning-Inspection

920-448-3300

inspmail@greenbaywi.gov

The Housing/Zoning division is responsible for questions regarding City ordinances relating to interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, litter, and other code violations.

City of Green Bay- Residential Housing Investigator: Landlord & Tenant Issues

100 N. Jefferson St., Room 608
Green Bay, WI 54301

greenbaywi.gov/csa/

920-606-3676

bobza@greenbaywi.gov

Bob Zaspell, Residential Housing Investigator: Landlord & Tenant Issues, with City of Green Bay, is responsible for investigating and enforcing violations of Wisconsin Administrative Code on Residential Rental Practices, otherwise known as the State's Landlord-Tenant Law. He provides education and advice to both landlords and tenants regarding all aspects of renting. He also provides mediation in landlord-renter disputes to achieve voluntary resolutions. He does provide referrals to the City Attorney's Office and District Attorney's Office for prosecution when applicable.

De Pere Christian Outreach

506 Butler St.
De Pere, WI 54115

deperechristianoutreach.org

(920) 339-1060

deperechristian2@wi.twcbc.com

De Pere Christian Outreach offers one-time monetary assistance to De Pere residents in need, after an in person meeting. They also offer a list of landlords in the De Pere area.

De Pere Housing Authority

850 Morning Glory Lane
De Pere, WI 54115

www.dphousing.org

920-336-0755

info@dphousing.org

The De Pere Housing Authority offers single family homes for rent. A five (5) year background check including (but not limited to) rental history, police/legal records, utility payments is completed on every adult household member to determine eligibility. Applications from eligible households will be placed on the appropriate waiting list as of the date and time the completed application is received. Length of wait will vary. Applicants will be notified via mail should they not pass the background screening. The De Pere Housing Authority will determine the number of bedrooms for which the household is eligible. Applicants are responsible for notifying the Housing Authority of any changes contact information (i.e. mailing address, phone numbers) or family composition during the wait.

Fair Housing Center of Northeast

Wisconsin

4650 W. Spencer Street, Suite 20
Appleton, WI 54914

fairhousingwisconsin.com

920-560-4620

Complaint Intake Line: 1-877-647-3247

Fair Housing of Northeast Wisconsin, has offices in Appleton and serves Northeast Wisconsin, including Brown County. Their main function as an organization is to field and investigate housing complaints about discrimination and to investigate those reports. They also provide outreach and education to renters and potential homeowners, and have staff committed to policy work and advocacy.

Family Services Transitional Living Program

815 Klaus St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

familyservicesnew.org

800-998-9609

The Transitional Living Program serves youth and young adults who are homeless or without safe and stable housing to find safe living arrangements, learn life skills and employability skills, and explore formal education opportunities.

Forward Service Corporation

726 Pine St.
Green Bay WI 54301

fsc-corp.org

1-800-771-8420

Forward Service Corporation offers an Emergency Assistance program for Brown County. Residents may qualify for Emergency Assistance if they cannot pay rent, have received an eviction notice, or have received a notice for or had heat or electricity shut off.

Green Bay Housing Authority

100 N. Jefferson St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

greenbaywi.gov/csa/housing/green-bay-housing-authority/

The Green Bay Housing Authority offers public housing units, including Mason Manor and other single family and duplex units throughout the city.

Green Bay Police Department

307 S. Adams St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

gbpolice.org

(920)448-3200

michellebe@greenbaywi.gov

The City of Green Bay and the Green Bay Police Department are committed to developing cooperative relationships with landlords. The Green Bay Police Department offers a class to landlords. Topics include how to monitor police activity at your property, signs of drug activity, completing a comprehensive background check on prospective tenants, Inspection code issues, the eviction process, and much more.

HUD-VASH Vouchers

www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash

877-424-3838

hudvet@hud.gov

The HUD-VASH (HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) merges the Housing Choice Voucher (HVC) with case management and clinic services supplied by the Department of Veterans Affairs. These services are given to VA medical centers and community outreach clinics in the area. The beneficiaries are chosen based on eligibility for health care, status of homelessness, and income. Continually homeless veterans are the target population for this program.

Integrated Community Solutions (ICS)

2605 S. Oneida St., Suite 106
Green Bay, WI 54304

ics-gb.org

920-498-3737

info@ics-gb.org

Integrated Community Solutions (ICS) offers the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, which is monetary rent assistance. There is a waitlist, which varies in length depending on certain qualifications. They offer a listing of some landlords that accept Section 8 Vouchers, though there are more landlords that accept vouchers outside of that list as well. ICS also offers education programs for both individuals using the Section 8 program, and for landlords. For landlords specifically a Landlord Committee meets twice per year to host sessions for on changes in the program and to answer questions.

Legal Action of Wisconsin

201 W. Walnut St.
Green Bay, WI 54303

legalaction.org/contact-us/green-bay-area-office

800-236-1127

Legal Action of Wisconsin offers free legal advice and representation in civil matters to eligible applications, including matters regarding housing law. Specific topics include legal help with subsidized housing, lockouts, security deposits, eviction, promises to repair, and earnest money.

Mediation Center

130 E. Walnut St., Suite 501
Green Bay, WI 54301

mediationcentergreatergreenbay.org

920-438-7067

mediationGGB@yahoo.com

The Mediation Center provides mediation between landlords and tenants. These services are typically court ordered in cases of eviction, though parties can reach out to the Mediation Center directly as well. The Mediation Center has staff or volunteers at the courthouse at the time of an eviction hearing in order to immediately mediate the issue with the intent to avoid eviction and find a solution through other means. Once the issue of eviction is resolved, they can also mediate other relevant issues such as past due rent, return of security deposit, or needed repairs. These services are provided at no cost to the tenant or landlord. Translators are available as needed.

Micah Center

700 E Walnut St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

<https://www.stjohnhomelessshelter.org/the-micah-center>

920-617-8700

The Micah Center provides screening and assistance to individuals that are at risk of eviction, or who have an eviction notice.

Modest Means

5302 Eastpark Blvd.
Madison, WI 53718

wisbar.org/forPublic/INeedaLawyer/Pages/Modest-Means.aspx

608-257-3838

service@wisbar.org

The Modest Means Program of the State Bar of Wisconsin is designed to assist people whose income is too high to qualify for free legal services, but too low to pay a lawyer's standard rate. The Modest Means Program is run by the Lawyer Referral and Information Service at the State Bar. Qualifying for services through the Modest Means Program is based on your income level and area of legal need. They may be able to help with legal representation in cases involving renting for individuals that qualify.

NeighborWorks Green Bay

437 S. Jackson St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

nwgreenbay.org

920-448-3075

info@nwgreenbay.org

NeighborWorks Green Bay is a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved housing counseling organization. It can provide information and referral services to its neighbors, which may include advice to people who are seeking housing options. NeighborWorks Green Bay also offers homebuyer education, individualized pre-purchase counseling, and may be able to offer Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance. NeighborWorks Green Bay has nearly 200 rental properties which are managed by Nelson Minahan Realtors, (920) 432-7176 .

Options for Independent Living

555 Country Club Rd.
Green Bay, WI 54304

optionsil.org

920-490-0500

Options for Independent Living is a non-profit organization that empowers people with disabilities to live independent and productive lives. Options may be able to assist renters and landlords with non-emergency help. This may include information and referral, independent living skills training, residential assessments for accessibility, and advocacy. The organization serves people with all types of disabilities. This is not a residential facility.

REACH

920-437-8124

trinity@netnet.net

REACH, Regional Ecumenical Assistance Community of Hope, is a community of churches that offer assistance to individuals, including rent, utilities, moving expenses, and eviction prevention.

Rural Housing USDA

usda.gov/topics/rural/housing-assistance

202-720-2791

USDA provides homeownership opportunities to individuals in rural areas, and home renovation and repair programs. USDA also provides financing to elderly, disabled, or low-income rural residents in multi-unit housing complexes to ensure that they are able to make rent payments.

Salvation Army

626 Union Ct.
Green Bay, WI 54303

sagreenbay.org

920-497-7053

The Salvation Army offers partial first month rent to individuals who are seeking housing after being homeless or living with others, partial payment for eviction assistance, and furnishing vouchers to their thrift store. Provides access to other organizations.

St. Vincent de Paul

920 Weise St.
Green Bay, WI 54302

svdpgb.org

920-432-2579

psc@svdpgb.org

St. Vincent De Paul offers partial first month rent to individuals who are seeking housing after being homeless. They also offer furniture and will deliver to first floor residences. Additionally, they offer monetary eviction assistance. Rental assistance is available up to one time per year, furniture assistance up to one time every two years.

United Way 211

112 N. Adams St., Suite 201
Green Bay, WI 54301

browncountyunitedway.org/2-1-1/

United Way 211 is a community database that compiles resources, information, and agencies within Brown County. Simply call 211 and a representative will connect you with resources.

Contact United Way 211 by calling 211, texting your zip code to 898211, or visiting get211.org

Village of Allouez Code Enforcement

1900 Libal St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

villageofallouez.com/depts/code-safety-enforcement/

(920) 448-2800 X121

mikelauder@villageofallouez.com

The Code Enforcement Officer is responsible for conducting field inspections and special investigations to ensure compliance with various municipal ordinances.

Coordinates inspections of buildings requiring joint inspection with other public agencies such as health department, building department, sheriff's department and other appropriate agencies. Assists in development or revision of current zoning ordinances. Receives and responds to complaints of alleged violations of local zoning code and advises owner or others in violation of the zoning code.

Village of Ashwaubenon Code Enforcement

2155 Holmgren Way
Ashwaubenon, WI 54304

ashwaubenon.com/government/departments/code-enforcement/

920-492-2309

jmolloy@ashwaubenon.com

Report unhealthy and unsafe conditions through Code Enforcement, Inspection, and other Municipal government departments responsible for interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, and other violations.

Village of Bellevue

2828 Allouez Avenue
Bellevue, WI 54311

(920) 593-5506

MDuChateau@villageofbellevue.org

Report unhealthy and unsafe conditions through Code Enforcement, Inspection, and other Municipal government departments responsible for interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, and other violations.

Village of Denmark

118 Main St.
Denmark, WI 54208

denmark-wi.org

920-863-6400

Report unhealthy and unsafe conditions through Code Enforcement, Inspection, and other Municipal government departments responsible for interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, and other violations.

Village of Hobart

2990 South Pine Tree Rd.
Hobart, WI 54155

hobart-wi.org/building-code-compliance

(920) 869-3809

allyn@hobart-wi.org

Report unhealthy and unsafe conditions through Code Enforcement, Inspection, and other Municipal government departments responsible for interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, and other violations.

Village of Howard Code Administration

2456 Glendale Ave.
Howard, WI 54313

villageofhoward.com/136/Code-Administration

(920) 434-4640

mhoff@villageofhoward.com

Report unhealthy and unsafe conditions through Code Enforcement, Inspection, and other Municipal government departments responsible for interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, and other violations.

Village of Pulaski

585 E Glenbrook Dr.
Pulaski, WI 54162

920-822-5182

info@villageofpulaski.org

Report unhealthy and unsafe conditions through Code Enforcement, Inspection, and other Municipal government departments responsible for interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, and other violations.

Village of Suamico Code Enforcement

12781 Velp Ave.
Suamico, WI 54313

[suamico.org/how_do_i_\(faq\)/code_enforcement/index.php](http://suamico.org/how_do_i_(faq)/code_enforcement/index.php)

(920) 434-2212

Report unhealthy and unsafe conditions through Code Enforcement, Inspection, and other Municipal government departments responsible for interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, and other violations.

Village of Wrightstown

352 High St.
Wrightstown, WI 54180

920.532.5567

info@wrightstown.us

Report unhealthy and unsafe conditions through Code Enforcement, Inspection, and other Municipal government departments responsible for interior and exterior housing conditions, improper disposal of waste material, and other violations.

Tenant Resource Center

1202 Williamson St., Suite 102
Madison, WI 53703

tenantresourcecenter.org/rights_in_wisconsin

The Tenant Resource Center offers free information to tenants, landlords, and service providers interested in learning more about their rental rights and responsibilities. They also have volunteer mediators that go to eviction court and negotiate agreements between landlord and tenant.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much can my landlord raise my rent?

There is no state law which limits how much your landlord can raise your rent. If you are on a month-to-month lease the landlord must give you at least 28 days notice before raising your rent. If you are on a six-month lease or one-year lease the landlord may not increase the rent during the lease term, unless the lease specifically states otherwise.

What are the reasons a landlord can deny my application?

Unsatisfactory references, eviction, frequent moves, bad credit, insufficient income, too many debts, drug use, conviction of a property crime and conviction of the manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance.

You cannot be denied because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability and the presence of children. Victims can look for resources in the [Advocacy/ Legal/ Rights](#) section or call the US Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-765-9372, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Equal Rights Division at 1-414-227-4384 and Fair Housing of Northeast Wisconsin at 1-920-832-6469 for assistance.

What does the landlord have to disclose to me prior to entering into a rental agreement?

All uncorrected building and housing code violations of which the landlord has received notice from code enforcement authorities, and which affect the individual dwelling unit and common areas of the premises. Disclosure shall be made by exhibiting the actual notices to the prospective tenant.

Any plumbing, heating, electrical, or any other structural conditions which constitute a substantial hazard to the health or safety of the tenant, or create an unreasonable risk of personal injury to the tenant.

Any charges for water, heat, or electricity that are not included in the rent. If individual dwelling units are not separately metered the landlord shall disclose the basis on which charges for utility services will be allocated among individual dwelling units.

I believe my lease has illegal provisions, what do I do?

Look for resources in the [Advocacy/ Legal/ Rights](#) section. Contact the City of Green Bay Residential Housing Investigator at 920-606-3676 or the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection at 1-800-422-7128.

What to do if I am having a hard time paying for my rent?

Communicate with the landlord and attempt to set up a payment plan to avoid a potential eviction process. Contact resources from the [Financial Assistance or Equivalent](#) section, including Integrated Community Services, the Salvation Army and other Social Service Agencies who may offer rental assistance.

What to do if my landlord is not fixing what I believe are pertinent issues?

The landlord is responsible for making any repairs necessary to comply with local housing codes and to keep the premises safe. If the landlord refuses to repair major building defects, the tenant may report the defects to the local building or health inspector. If the tenant makes such a report, the landlord may not retaliate by evicting the tenant. Find your local inspection in the [Reporting Unhealthy and Unsafe Conditions- Inspections](#) section.

What to do if my landlord will not give me back my security deposit?

If the landlord is going to deduct any or all of your security deposit, they must send a written, itemized statement to the tenant's last known address within 21 days after the surrender of the premises. If you disagree with the deductions, first contact the landlord, file a complaint with the City of Green Bay at 920-433-3300 and file a complaint with the

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection at 1-800-422-7128. You may also file a lawsuit against your landlord in Small Claims Court. See the resources in the [Advocacy/ Legal/ Rights](#) section.

What to do if I am having a hard time getting in contact with my landlord?

The landlord is required to disclose to the tenant in writing the person authorized to collect or receive rent, manage and maintain the property, and who can readily be contacted by the tenant. The landlord must also disclose the owner of the premises or other person authorized to accept legal process and other notices or demands on behalf of the owner. The address disclosed shall be an address within the state at which service of process can be made in person.

I got an eviction notice, what do I do now?

The first step in the eviction notice is usually a 5 day notice to remedy a breach of the rental agreement. You have 5 days to fix the problem. If the problem is not fixed, the landlord may proceed with filing an eviction action in Small Claims Court. The tenant does have the right to contest the eviction in Small Claims Court. For resources regarding eviction, see the [Eviction](#) section. For representation during eviction proceedings, see the resources in the [Advocacy/ Legal/ Rights](#) section.

What are rental practices that the landlord is prohibited from doing under the landlord tenant laws in Wisconsin?

Advertising or rental of a condemned premises. Confiscating a tenant's personal property. Evicting or pushing a tenant out by any means because the tenant has reported violations of landlord tenant law, or a building or housing code violation to any government authority, or filed suit alleging such violation. This includes shutting off or reducing heat, water, or electricity in retaliation against a tenant. Forcibly or constructively evicting a tenant from the dwelling unit other than by the lawful eviction process. If you feel your rights have been violated, see the resources in the [Advocacy/ Legal/ Rights](#) section.

What do I do if the power is out?

If your power has been shut off due to failure to pay your utility bill contact Brown County Health and Human Services to inquire about their energy assistance program. Contact WPS and try to work out a payment plan. See the [Financial Assistance or Equivalent](#) section for area Social Service Agencies and apply for energy assistance programs. If your power is out due to a power outage, call WPS at 800-450-7240 to report your power outage. For more general information, visit homeenergyplus.wi.gov

What do I do if the heat is out?

Having a safe and operable heat source in your apartment unit is a requirement of your local municipal building code. If your heat is out due to mechanical failure, contact your landlord or property manager to repair your heating unit. Wisconsin Public Service does not shut off heat during the winter months. If you are behind on your utility bill contact Brown County Health and Human Services to inquire about their energy assistance program.

What do I do if my air conditioning isn't working?

Having a working air conditioning unit is not a requirement of Green Bay's building code. That being said, if your landlord or property manager has included an air conditioning unit as part of your apartment unit you will want to refer back to your lease agreement to learn what the building maintenance responsibilities are for the tenant and landlord.

Who is responsible for snow removal?

The responsibility of snow removal should be stated in your lease agreement. If the lease agreement does not state who is responsible for snow removal then it is important to have a civil conversation with your landlord or property manager to discuss who is responsible for snow removal and lawn care.

My neighbor's make a lot of noise and seems to have drug activity but I am scared to call the police, what can I do?

Report these activities to your landlord. If there is illegal drug activity the police will work with the landlord to evict the tenants.

I have a tenant working hard but struggling to pay rent, what can I do as a landlord to help?

Try to work out a payment plan to help the tenant get current in the rent. Refer the tenant to Integrated Community Services, the Salvation Army and other Social Service Agencies listed in the See the Financial Assistance or Equivalent section that may offer rental assistance.

I discovered my tenants have people living in the unit not on the lease, what can I do?

Give the tenant a 5 day notice to remove the people from the dwelling unit. If this is not complied with the landlord can begin the eviction process through Small Claims Court.

Appendix A: Rights and Responsibilities

For more information or to file a complaint:

Bureau of Consumer Protection

2811 Agriculture Drive

PO Box 8911

Madison WI 53708-8911

E-MAIL: DATCPHotline@wi.gov

WEBSITE: datcp.wi.gov

(800) 422-7128

FAX: (608) 224-4677

TTY: (608) 224-5058

As a tenant in Wisconsin, you have rights and responsibilities. To avoid problems, it is important to understand your rights and responsibilities.

What you should know before you rent

Landlords may not advertise or rent condemned property.

Before entering into a rental agreement with a prospective tenant or accepting any earnest money or security deposit, landlords should disclose any building or housing code violation to which all of the following apply: the landlord has actual knowledge of the violation; the violation affects the dwelling unit that you will be renting or a common area of the premises; the violation presents a significant threat to your health or safety; and the violation has not been corrected.

Landlords must also disclose:

- If you are required to pay utilities.
- How utility charges will be divided if the dwelling is one of several not individually metered.
- The total amount of rent and other non-refundable fees.

You have the right to inspect the unit before you rent it. The landlord is required to notify you in writing, and provide you with seven days to inspect and notify the landlord of any pre-existing damages to the dwelling unit. We recommend you take along a flashlight, light bulb, hairdryer, pen, and the check-in sheet:

- Turn on each light switch to see if it works.
- Check outlets (use hairdryer) and sockets (use light bulb) – defects could cause fires.
- Turn on sink and bathtub faucets – check for leaks, proper drainage and water temperature.
- Flush toilets – check for leaks.
- Look for smoke detectors.
- Check ceilings and walls for cracks and water stains.
- Are there deadbolts on apartment and exterior doors?
- Push on the windows – are they secure? Are latches in good working order?
- Check for window storms and screens.
- Check condition of furnace. Even in summer, turn up thermostat to make sure it actually works.

- Look at water heater to see if it is leaking.

Promises of repairs by a landlord should be provided to you in writing, including a completion date, before you agree to rent the property.

Rental agreements are not required to be in writing. However, if there is a written rental agreement, the landlord must give you an opportunity to read it before you decide to rent. When renting, you must be furnished with a copy of the agreement.

If an earnest money deposit is required with your rental application, the landlord must return the entire deposit by the end of the next business day if your application is rejected. If for some reason you decide not to rent, the landlord may withhold from your deposit actual costs or damages.

If a security deposit is required, you have 7 days from the first rental date to inspect the premises and notify the landlord of any defects so that they will not be unfairly charged to you. You should notify the landlord of the defects by returning a completed information check-in sheet and keep a copy for your own records. **If you fail to return a check-in sheet within 7 days, you will be giving up your right to contest some security deposit withholdings for pre-existing conditions.** In addition, before accepting your security deposit, the landlord must notify you that you have the right to request a list of damages charged to the previous tenant.

The landlord may charge you the actual cost, up to \$20, to obtain a credit report from one of the three nationwide credit reporting agencies (not credit information resellers), provided the landlord has notified you in advance of the charge and also gives you a copy of the report. If you have a credit report that is less than 30 days old, you may give this report to the landlord to avoid paying for a new report.

What you should know while renting

At the start of a tenancy, the landlord must provide you with the name and address of a person who can be readily contacted regarding maintenance problems.

The landlord is responsible for making any repairs that are necessary to comply with local housing codes and to keep the premises safe. If the landlord refuses to repair major building defects, you may report the defect to your local building or health inspector. The landlord may not retaliate by evicting you.

Unless otherwise agreed, tenants are usually responsible for routine minor repairs. You are also required to comply with any maintenance and sanitation requirements imposed on tenants by local housing codes. You are financially responsible for any damages that you or your guests have caused.

A landlord has the right to inspect, repair, and show the dwelling unit at reasonable times. Except for emergency situations, the landlord may enter only after a 12-hour advance notice unless you allow entry on shorter notice or agreed to a different timeline in the rental agreement.

If you are a tenant renting by the month, the landlord may raise your rent by giving you written notice at least 28 days before the next rent due date. There are no state laws limiting the amount of a rent increase.

If you have a lease – for example, a six-month or one-year lease – the rent may not be increased during that time unless specifically stated in the lease.

What you should know about terminating a tenancy

If you are renting by the month, the landlord may terminate the rental agreement by giving you a written termination notice at least 28 days before the next rent due date. You must use the same procedure in notifying the landlord of your intent to terminate the rental agreement unless you agreed to give a longer notice. Tenants may deliver the written notice in person or by certified or registered mail.

A six-month or one year lease usually terminates automatically at the end of the lease, unless the rental agreement specifies otherwise. If the lease provides that it will be automatically renewed or extended unless you give advance notice of termination, the landlord must “remind” you of the provision at least 15-30 days in advance of the notice deadline. Otherwise, the landlord may not attempt to enforce the automatic renewal.

If you “break” a lease by moving out early, you may be obligated to pay for the remainder of the term unless another suitable tenant is found. However, the landlord must make reasonable efforts to find a substitute tenant and minimize any rent losses. When moving out, it is always a good idea to contact your landlord to arrange for a final checkout inspection.

If you are moving out at the end of your lease, the landlord must return your security deposit, less any amounts that may be withheld, within 21 days after you move out. If you move out before the end of your lease, the landlord has 21 days to return your security deposit from either the last day of your lease or the date a new tenant moves in, whichever comes first. The landlord may deduct from your security deposit for unpaid rent or damage caused by you or your guests.

While a lease may include a provision requiring the tenant to pay for routine painting or carpet cleaning, the cost for routine carpet cleaning may not be collected by the landlord in advance. All advance payments in excess of one month’s rent must be treated as “security deposit” which cannot be withheld for normal wear and tear. Deductions can also be made for your utility bills paid by the landlord.

If there are any deductions from the security deposit, the landlord must furnish you with a written statement itemizing the amounts withheld.

State law does not require payment of interest on security deposits.

Risk of eviction

Tenants who pay partial rent, no rent, or late rent (even one day late) put themselves at risk of eviction, as do tenants who break the rules or terms of the rental agreement or cause damage.

Termination – Nonpayment or lease breach

Tenants may be given either a written 5-day or 14-day notice to vacate the property.

- **5-day Pay Rent Notice.** This written notice from the landlord gives the tenant five days to pay rent or move out within five days. If the tenant pays, the tenancy continues.
- **5-day Remedy Breach Notice.** This written notice from the landlord gives the tenant five days to remedy a breach of the lease other than for non-payment of rent. If the breach is corrected within 5 days, the tenancy continues.
- **14-day Notice.** This written notice specifies that the tenancy has ended because the tenant failed to pay the rent, broke the agreement, or damaged the property. This notice does not offer the option of paying the rent or correcting the breach.

For month-to-month tenancies, a landlord may serve a 14-day Notice for either rent non-payment or for damage/lease breach, without first serving a 5-day Notice to pay or correct.

For tenants on a lease, the landlord must first provide a 5-day Pay Rent Notice and option to pay rent; if the tenant pays and is then late with rent again within 12 months, the landlord may then serve a 14-day notice with no option to pay and stay. Similarly, a 14-day Remedy Breach Notice (without an option to correct the breach and stay) can only be served to a leased tenant after a prior 5-day Remedy Breach Notice in the last 12 months.

If you refuse to leave the premises after your tenancy has been terminated, the landlord may start an eviction action against you in Small Claims Court. You will be served a summons. This is your notice to appear in court, but it does not mean you are evicted. In court, the judge asks you and the landlord to explain your sides and then will make a decision about your eviction. If you receive a summons for eviction, seek the help of a legal aid service (look up LEGAL AID in the yellow pages of your phone book), consult with a private attorney or call the State Bar of Wisconsin Lawyer Referral Service at: (800) 362-9082 or (608) 257-4666.

Removal from premises

The landlord may not confiscate your personal belongings, turn off your utilities, lock you out of your apartment, or use force to remove you.

If the small claims court judge rules in the landlord's favor, the judge may issue a court order requiring you to leave the property. If you do not, the county sheriff may remove you and your belongings from the premises. These steps may only be taken **after** the small claims court hearing and **after** the judge orders the eviction. If the court determines that you have wrongfully overstayed, the landlord could be awarded twice the amount of rent, prorated on a daily basis, for each day you unlawfully occupy the premises.

Unhealthy & unsafe conditions

Sometimes rental units become unhealthy, unsafe, or unlivable due to a landlord's failure to maintain the property. It would be wise to get legal advice to learn if the tenant is able to legally abate (adjust) the rent. A lawyer may indicate how to document the condition, what agencies to contact, and what should be put in writing. If not done legally, rent abatement could result in eviction.

If conditions are so bad that tenants feel they can no longer safely live in a rental unit, a lawyer should be contacted before the tenants officially move out to help prevent further financial obligation to the landlord.

If a problem develops

If a problem develops between you and your landlord, information and assistance may be available from various local groups and agencies, including housing code officials, landlord and tenant associations, and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

Landlord-tenant relations in Wisconsin are regulated by Wis. Stat. ch. 704, and by Wis. Adm. Code ch. ATCP 134. In addition, Wis. Adm. Code ch. ATCP 125 further regulates manufactured home community operator-tenant relations.

If a landlord violates Wis. Adm. Code ch. ATCP 134, for example, by refusing to return or account for your security deposit, you may be able to start an action in Small Claims Court. Wis. Stat. s. 100.20(5) enables you to recover twice the amount of any actual monetary loss, together with court costs and reasonable attorney fees if the court awards them.

Appendix B: You and Your Natural Supports

You and Your “Natural Supports”

You may find that there are people that you already know who may be able to help you if you are trying to make a positive change or address a problem. This may include “Natural Supports,” or informal social networks such as family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. Use this worksheet to identify your natural supports!

