



Locating Support Services

All of us at some point in our lives find ourselves in the position of needing support and resources from others. When this occurs, it is important to know where to turn for assistance and support.

Whether you are already aware of the many services that may be available to you and your family, it is always helpful to know what's out there just in case you or someone you know may be in need of support resources. Luckily for all of us, there are several great programs that are designed to assist families and individuals.

How to Apply for Services Through Access

For many programs available through the State of Wisconsin, there is a helpful website called Access; which is available in English and Español. Once you have entered your information into Access—either through the website or by talking to a customer service specialist on the phone—it will let you know which programs you are eligible for and how to receive assistance.

In addition, your information is forwarded to your county so that you can receive follow-up assistance and schedule an appointment with a worker. If you do not feel comfortable

searching on the Internet or if you have any additional questions, contact your local county for further assistance.

<http://www.access.wisconsin.gov/>

A listing of some programs that may be helpful for you are:

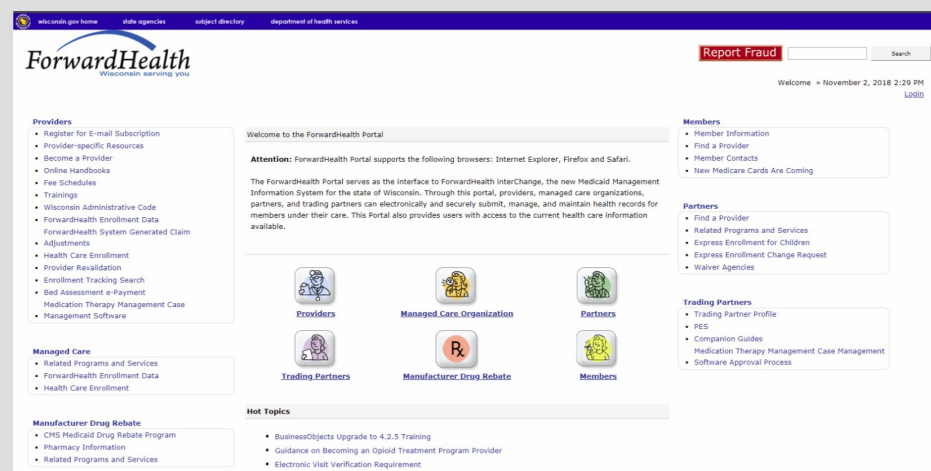
- Wisconsin Shares—Child Care Subsidy Program
- Birth to Three
- Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP)
- Early Childhood Special Education Services
- Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA)
- Community Action Programs (WISCAP)

Common Local Community Programs

Whether it is someone ringing a bell at a local business during the holiday season, or an agency providing a homeless shelter, local community and non-profit organizations

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Forward Health is a comprehensive website featuring many resources.



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provide a tremendous amount of support, services, and resources for people in need.

Some of the most common resources you will find in your telephone book or by searching the web and include:

- Salvation Army
- Goodwill Industries
- Headstart
- Unemployment Services
- The American Red Cross
- The United Way's 211 Service

Reaching Out

Sometimes life throws you an unexpected curve ball, or maybe you just never had the opportunity to save for a rainy day. Know that it is okay to ask for and receive help. A lot of people know that already, but then find it's another thing to actually ask for help.

Why does that occur? Just by admitting that we may need help can mean a lot of things to a lot of different people. For some it means a sense of failure and loss of pride, while for others there are feelings of fear, guilt and shame.

So what is the best way to work through those feelings and emotions? For some, they are able to write down why they are uncomfortable asking for assistance. Others are able to reach out to a good friend or family member and talk about their options and opportunities.

Regardless of how you are able to work through those feelings, once you do, you often realize how your decision can positively impact you and your loved ones lives.

Lifting the Weight off Your Shoulders

Once you have learned about the various programs and organizations and made your decision about which service or services best

meet your needs, it may feel as if a weight has been lifted off of your shoulders.

Through this experience you probably have begun to change your viewpoint and look at things differently. Some people learn to focus on what they *do* have versus what they don't, especially when finances are tight or life circumstances have taken an unexpected turn.

Perhaps you will remind yourself that what we truly need are people in our lives who we love unconditionally and who love us back in the same manner. This is most likely the reason that you became a relative caregiver or foster parent in the first place.

The next time you have a minute to yourself, take some time to create an inventory about the people and things that matter the most to you. Reaching out to others in need has been your calling and there are

times in which you may also need to reach out to others for support.

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