



**WISCONSIN
BUILDERS
ASSOCIATION**

2023-2024 LEGISLATIVE summary



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Wisconsin
Coalition

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Improving the homebuilding landscape

Advocacy plays a crucial role in supporting the housing industry by promoting policies that ensure access to safe, affordable housing for all.

In an era where housing affordability and accessibility remain key challenges, advocacy efforts play a pivotal role in shaping legislative agendas and policies that impact the homebuilding industry. This summary document provides an overview of recent advocacy initiatives and legislative efforts aimed at addressing critical issues facing

the housing sector. From advocating for affordable housing solutions to promoting fair housing practices, these efforts are instrumental in shaping the future of housing policy. This document highlights victories, ongoing challenges, and the importance of continued engagement in advocating for a more equitable housing landscape.





What Passed?

Thanks to bipartisan efforts and joint efforts with industry partners, we have accomplished much in the area of pro-housing legislation.

Workforce Housing Package

- 2023 WI Act 14:** created loan program at state level to fund infrastructure for residential developments
- 2023 WI Act 15:** provides low-interest loans for rehabilitation of second and third story apartments over main-level businesses
- 2023 WI Act 16:** requires political subdivisions to approve certain permit conditions related to residential housing developments
- 2023 WI Act 17:** allocates funds to WHEDA to ensure qualified applicants are given their approved low or no-interest loans for rehabilitation of certain residential properties
- 2023 WI Act 18:** offers low-interest loans for the version of demolition of vacant commercial buildings to workforce housing

STATE BUDGET WINS

Additional funding for equipment and technology upgrades at DSPS
 16 new positions for new DSPS staff
 Complete phase out of personal property tax



Other Notable Items

- 2023 WI Act 157: relating to highway setback areas and DOT's authority to approve subdivision plats
- 2023 WI Act 143: a person may claim tax benefits of an amount up to 15% of the person's investment in workforce housing for eligible employees and up to 15% of investment of establishing child care program for employees
- 2023 WI Act 135: applicant can use grant money for enhancement or improvement for technical education facility relating to construction; previously could only be used for manufacturing

What Didn't?

There were some efforts we were successful in stopping during this last legislative session, that would have been harmful to housing in Wisconsin had they moved forward:

- The ability for towns to become *Urban Towns*; would have likely stopped future annexations that would provide more housing choices.
- A bill allowing municipalities to create *Stretch Codes*; exceeding state energy code
- The ban forbidding munis from banning gas hookups to homes

The below listed items are ones we advocated for but did not pass:

- Allowing builders to list spec homes on platforms like Zillow
- Awards program and individual income tax credit for apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship program completion

Unfortunately, Governor Evers vetoed three pieces of legislation which passed and would have provided relief to commercial plan review; SB186/AB197, SB187/AB198, and SB188/AB199. In total, the measures would have expanded the approval authority to local units of government and allowed construction to begin before plan approval, both of which would have allowed an expedited process, thus lessening of red tape for project starts.

These and other pro-building measures will be considered in 2024 as WBA constructs the next legislative agenda.



ELMER MOORE JR.
CEO
Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development Authority

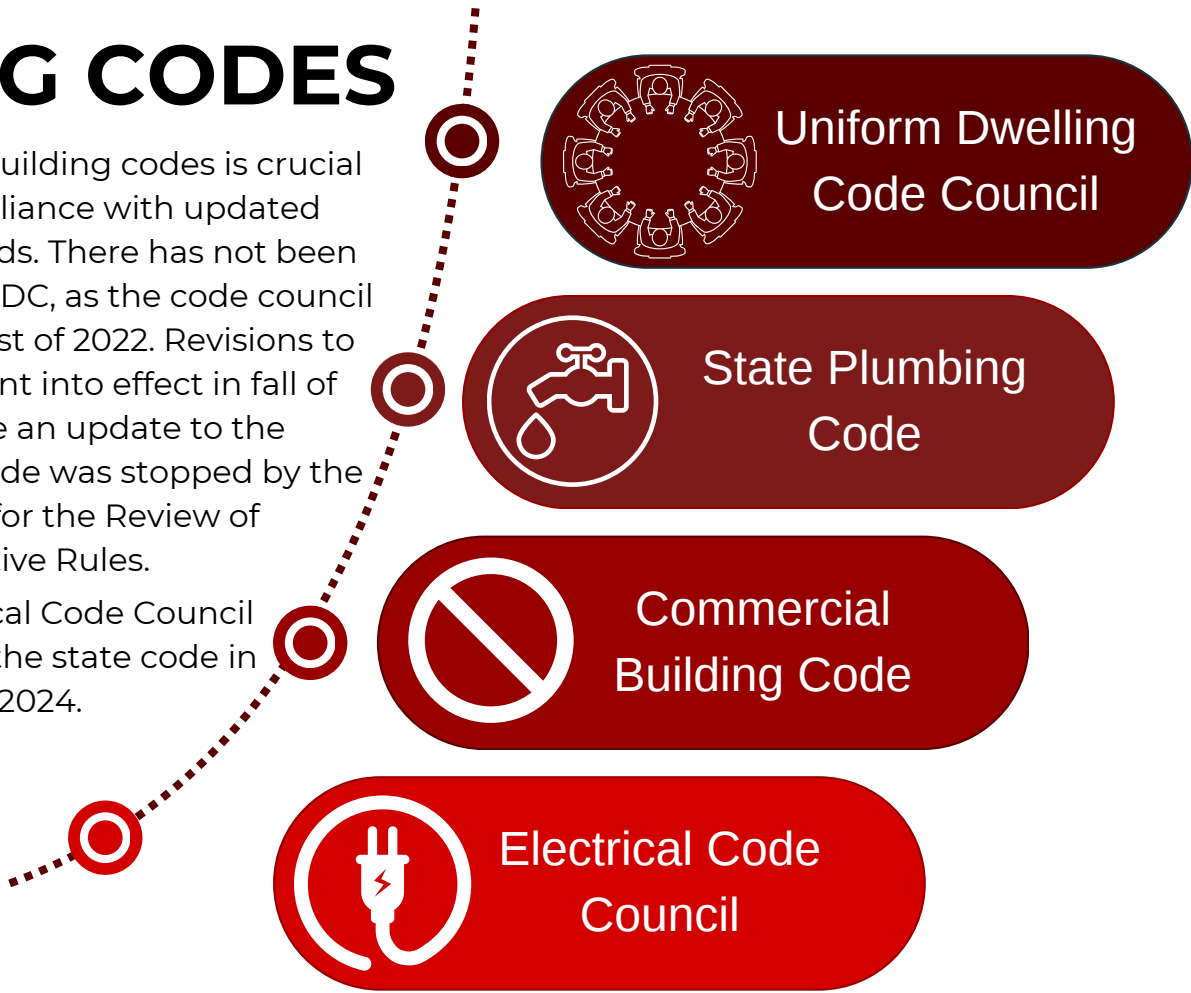
“The resources in the amount of \$525M are an unprecedented investment in workforce housing as a result of bipartisan efforts.”



BUILDING CODES

Monitoring changes in building codes is crucial for maintaining compliance with updated regulations and standards. There has not been much in the way of the UDC, as the code council has not met since August of 2022. Revisions to the plumbing code went into effect in fall of 2023, the same time an update to the Commercial Building Code was stopped by the Joint Committee for the Review of Administrative Rules.


Lastly, the Electrical Code Council began reviewing the state code in March 2024.




Uniform Dwelling Code Council



State Plumbing Code



Commercial Building Code



Electrical Code Council

The BLAR Fund

The Builders Legal Action and Research Fund (BLAR Fund) is one of the great success stories of the Wisconsin Builders Association (WBA).

This fund, which was established by the WBA Board of Directors in 1993, is an important tool for advancing policies that benefit housing in Wisconsin. The fund is financed every year by all WBA members, and is administered by the WBA Executive Committee.

BLAR funds were used to support:

- Challenged bird glass lawsuit in Madison
- Research for setback bill
- Software for local HBA's to track agendas and minutes of local gov't
- Helped fund Fasset v. City of Brookfield
- Funded successful Village of Sussex case with MBA and MABA



MORE HOUSING WISCONSIN

It is not news to any of us that Wisconsin is experiencing a significant housing shortage. A recent study estimates Wisconsin will need to build 200,000 housing units by 2030 to accommodate all the people who want to live and work here. The Wisconsin Builders Association has proudly joined forces with the Wisconsin Realtors Association and the League of Wisconsin Municipalities to create More Housing Wisconsin. Our coalition seeks to educate and inform Wisconsin city and village leaders and staff about zoning changes and other strategies communities can use to help address this state's housing shortage. The ultimate goal is to bring tools, resources, and best practices to municipalities to help communities initiate housing solutions that meet their unique needs and strengthen our economy.

At the direction of Curt Witynski, of Witynski Consulting, LLC., More Housing Wisconsin will create and provide monthly briefing papers throughout the year that will serve as a toolkit to local governments with ideas and solutions to help solve the workforce housing shortage. Witynski will also conduct monthly interviews with those in the field who have been successful implementing housing initiatives, allowing leaders to share best practices and explain how municipal staff and officials have partnered with the private sector with strong ideas and plans for successful projects.

For more information on More Housing Wisconsin, or to spread the resources with municipalities where you live and work, visit lwm-info.org/1706/More-Housing-Wisconsin



JIM DOERING, WBA PRESIDENT

"The vision of WBA is Affordable, Innovative, and Environmentally Conscious Homes for All, and through this partnership, we continue to dedicate resources to achieving that goal statewide."