

RESIDENTIAL RELOCATION INFORMATION

Residential Owner

(For at least 90 days)

As a homeowner who is required to relocate due to a highway construction project, you may be eligible for relocation advisory services, benefits, and payments through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). This informational brochure outlines those services and benefits.

RELOCATION ADVISORY SERVICES

A relocation specialist will be assigned to you to discuss your relocation and your eligibility for various benefits. Your relocation specialist will provide information about the general relocation process during several personal visits and contacts and review the timeframe you may remain at your current location. He or she will be available during the relocation process to answer your questions and assist you in your relocation efforts. At a minimum, you will be provided at least 90 days' notice prior to the date you will be required to move. You will not be displaced unless at least one available, comparable replacement property is presented to you.

Interview and Market Study

As a first step in the relocation process, your relocation specialist will interview you as part of a project-wide relocation plan about your residential relocation needs.

The relocation plan provides a market study of available residential properties considered comparable to your home (subject property). A comparable property is a property that is adequate for the needs of your residence; reasonably similar in all major characteristics; functionally equivalent; meets applicable federal, state, and local codes; within reasonable proximity of the subject site; and, suited for your individual or family needs.

During the interview, your relocation specialist will review project timelines and possible relocation benefits and provide you with his/her contact information.

Legal Citizen Certification

Under federal law, in order to qualify for relocation services and payments, you must certify that you are a legal citizen or lawfully present in the United States. Your relocation specialist will review this policy with you and ask you to sign a WisDOT certification form. Any person who is not lawfully present in the U.S. is not eligible for relocation advisory services and payments, unless ineligibility would result in exceptional and unusual hardship to a qualifying spouse, parent, or child. Please contact your relocation specialist for further information.

Relocation Package

Once the appraisal for your property has been approved, WisDOT will initiate negotiations for the purchase of your property by providing you with a written financial offer. **Please advise your relocation specialist if you are considering moving prior to the initiation of negotiations or you could risk losing your benefits.** At this time (or soon afterwards), you will be provided a relocation package that includes a summary of all relocation benefits available in the program. It will also include a replacement housing payment (RHP) calculation; available comparable homes; a 90-day notice letter; and, other important information. You will be asked to sign a form acknowledging your receipt of these documents.

Once your eligibility is established, you must purchase and occupy a replacement property within one year from the date you received the final payment for your property or the date you vacated the property, whichever is later. You will have two years from either the date of closing on the property or the date you vacate your property to file a claim for the payments described in this handout.

RELOCATION BENEFITS

Replacement Housing Payment

In addition to the amount you receive from WisDOT for the purchase of your home, you may qualify for a replacement housing payment (RHP). You must have owned and occupied your home for at least 90 days prior to the initiation of negotiations to qualify.

Your relocation package will include a calculation of a RHP. WisDOT calculates the payment by subtracting WisDOT's offering price for your home from the list price of a comparable home. This calculation establishes the maximum benefit amount to which you are eligible. However, the actual payment amount depends on the final negotiated acquisition amount for your home, comparable properties, and documentation verifying your purchase (or rental) of a replacement home.

For example:

- You received \$140,000 for your home (subject property).
- An available, comparable home priced at \$155,000 is presented to you in your relocation package.
- The difference of \$15,000 is your maximum eligible RHP ($\$155,000 - \$140,000 = \$15,000$).
- If you decide to purchase a home for at least \$155,000, you will be eligible to receive this maximum amount.

A RHP can also be used to rent a comparable home, if you prefer. The basis for this payment is the same as if you were purchasing a home except the price is based on what your relocation specialist calculates as the market rent of your home over a four-year period compared to the total amount of rent of an available comparable rental home. The maximum eligible RHP is the same as what you would be eligible for if you chose to purchase a home.

Here is an example for renting, rather than purchasing, a comparable home:

- Your current home has 1,000 square feet. WisDOT prepares a market rent study of area rental homes and finds that rental homes are rented at an average of one dollar per square foot. WisDOT determines the rent for your home would be \$1,000/month.
- An available, comparable rental home rents for \$1,200/month.
- The difference of \$200 multiplied by 48 months or \$9,600.
- The maximum payment for your RHP is \$15,000 (the amount you are eligible if you chose to purchase a home).

You are not required to purchase the comparable home your relocation specialist selects in order to receive an RHP. However, both the price you receive from the state for the acquisition of your existing home and the purchase price of your new home will affect the RHP amount you receive as a payment.

- If you buy (or rent) a home *for less* than the comparable home used to calculate the maximum RHP amount, you will only receive what you use.
- If you buy (or rent) a home *for more* than the comparable home, you are responsible for the additional cost.

The replacement home you select must be inspected by WisDOT or its representatives. The home must meet Wisconsin building and code requirements and be certified as decent, safe, and sanitary (DSS) by your relocation specialist.

Refinancing Payment

You will be reimbursed for any increased mortgage interest costs you might incur if the interest rate on your new mortgage exceeds the interest rate on the property acquired by WisDOT. The payment computation is based on prevailing interest rates and terms of your existing loan and your new loan. To be eligible to receive this payment,

the acquired property must have been encumbered by a verified mortgage, which was a valid lien prior to the initiation of negotiations. Your relocation specialist will discuss your eligibility for this payment.

Incidental Costs

You may be reimbursed for incidental costs (also referred to as closing costs) you paid at the closing of your replacement home. These costs are normally paid by you, the buyer, and may include items such as: the cost of title policy; notary fees; surveys; loan origination or assumption fees that do represent prepaid interest; home inspection fees; appraisal fees; credit report fees; legal fees to review closing documents; and, costs of recording documents. Your relocation specialist will review eligible incidental costs with you.

Actual and Reasonable Moving Costs

You are eligible to receive reimbursement for the actual, reasonable cost of moving personal property to your new home. Moving expenses may include:

- Transportation within a radius of 50 miles or less;
- Packing and unpacking personal property;
- Disconnecting and reconnecting household appliances;
- The replacement value of stolen, lost or damaged items in moving (not caused by the fault or negligence), if insurance coverage was not reasonably available; and,
- Temporary storage of personal property up to 12 months, if WisDOT determines it is necessary.

You have two options for moving your personal property for which you may be reimbursed:

- *Commercial Move* – This option provides reimbursement for a licensed commercial mover to move your personal property to your new home. Based on moving estimates, WisDOT will reimburse you for a commercial mover for actual costs from a maximum reimbursement of the lowest estimate received.
- *Self-Move* – This option allows you to move your personal property yourself instead of using a commercial mover. If you choose this option, you will be responsible for all aspects of your move. Reimbursement of your costs is based on either:
 1. Fixed payment schedule - The total amount paid is based on the number of rooms in your acquired home according to WisDOT’s payment schedule. If you believe you are experiencing a financial hardship, you may receive this payment before you move. Please contact your relocation specialist if you feel this applies to you.OR
 2. An actual cost move supported by receipted bills for labor and equipment. Hourly labor and equipment rates may not exceed the cost paid by a commercial mover.

WisDOT is available to assist you in every aspect of your move. You are strongly encouraged to work closely with your assigned relocation specialist in planning your move to your new home. As discussed above, your relocation package identifies the date by which you need vacate your current home. Prior to proceeding with a move, you must notify your relocation specialist of your intention to move, including the date, and approximate time required to accomplish the move.

REQUESTING REIMBURSEMENT FOR ELIGIBLE ITEMS – RELOCATION CLAIMS

The relocation program is a reimbursement program with many requirements and eligibility criteria. You are encouraged to work closely with your relocation specialist prior to incurring an expense regarding your potential

eligibility for reimbursement. Documentation is very important – make sure you keep all documentation for moving expenses, such as paid invoices, receipts, and photos.

To receive reimbursement for eligible relocation items, WisDOT will review your claim (a signed claim form, plus supporting documentation) and determine whether the request is reasonable and necessary. WisDOT claim forms will be provided in your relocation package. While you may submit a claim to WisDOT, it is not a guarantee that reimbursement will be provided.

Reimbursement depends on many factors including:

- The item is eligible under state and federal laws, codes, and WisDOT policies.
- WisDOT considers the claim for reimbursement of incurred costs to be actual, reasonable and necessary.
- Adequate documentation that verifies payment and provides details of the type of service/item, copies of taxes, paid invoices/receipts and photographic documentation. Estimates are not considered a verification of payment.

Legal fees are generally ineligible for reimbursement in the relocation program. A one-time reimbursement for up to \$100 may be paid for service fees to prepare and document a claim for a residential relocation payment.

Your relocation specialist will assist you to file relocation claims for reimbursement including identifying the necessary documentation. You have two years from the date you vacate to file claims for reimbursement of relocation benefits.

APPEAL RIGHTS

Under Wis. Stat. § 32.20, you have the right to appeal a WisDOT decision that you disagree with, including a claim denial or a reduction from your claimed amount. There are three different ways to appeal a WisDOT decision.

1. You may appeal directly to WisDOT’s statewide relocation facilitator, who will review the specific request and facts of the situation. The agency may be able to work with you directly to resolve issues.
2. You may appeal to the Wisconsin Department of Administration for an informal review outlined in Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter Adm § 92.18.
3. You may file an appeal to the Circuit Court of the county where the displacement took place.

Information on the appeals process will be provided by your relocation specialist with any claim denial or reduction.

RELOCATION PROGRAM GOAL

WisDOT will work closely on your relocation to a new home. Our goal is to assist you in any way we can to ensure the process goes as smoothly as possible for you.

We want you to be fully aware of the relocation process and the benefits you are eligible to receive. Your relocation specialist will also identify the supporting documentation needed to secure your payments and assist you in preparing your relocation claim submittal. Please contact your relocation specialist with any questions.