Falls Prevention Grants

Preserving Independence. Reducing costs. Improving Quality of Life.

Aging is a lifelong process that connects us all. Today, one in four Wisconsinites is age 60 or older—and by 2040, it will be one in three. Now is the time to invest in systems that promote health, connection, and independence throughout our lives—strengthening the foundation for well-being in every community.

Falls Prevention Grants can do just that!

Research has demonstrated that no matter our age, we can learn and carry out effective strategies to increase resilience, therefore reducing our risk of falls and improving our quality of life. Preventing falls is one way we can collectively make a significant positive impact in our communities.

The Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) and its community partners support legislation to fund the researched and proven strategies that give older adults, families, and caregivers the tools to protect our health.

Preventing Older Adult Falls

Falls are the number one cause of injuries as we age and are a key driver of emergency department (ED) visits, hospitalizations, and nursing home admissions. One in four older adults has a fall each year and, sadly, Wisconsin has the highest rate of deadly falls in the nation.[1] Yet, there is no state investment in falls prevention.

- $1 billion is spent annually on falls-related health costs in Wisconsin which includes Medicare, Medicaid, and out-of-pocket expenses.[2]
- Falls have a major impact on emergency medical service (EMS) and health care providers. EMS providers responded to over 140,000 falls across the state making falls the top injury response in 2025. EMS falls responses are increasing by nearly 8,000 a year statewide. Over 20% of EMS responses were for older adult falls in 2025. The majority of these falls happened in the home.[3]
- More than 55,000 older people went to the emergency department due to a fall in 2024; over 12,900 were hospitalized.[4]

The **good news** is that while common, falls are not inevitable as we age. Many can be prevented with state investment in prevention efforts.



Ask: $450,000 per year
State investment in community falls prevention will:

Improve health and quality of life through evidence-based programs proven to reduce falls and increase resiliency for older adults.

31%

Reduction in falls for Stepping On program participants

$2M

average healthcare cost savings per year through Wisconsin's evidence-based health promotion programs

Falls Free Wisconsin – Launched in 2023, the Falls Free Wisconsin initiative provides:

- Virtual falls-risk assessments and interactive resources to educate and empower older adults to maintain independence.
- State and local public awareness campaigns to help Wisconsinites find and access falls prevention resources.
- Support and funding for local falls prevention programs and initiatives.
- Coordination of Wisconsin's statewide falls prevention coalition.
- Support and resources for emergency service and health professionals.
- Sustainability and expansion of Stepping On — an evidence-based program reducing falls by 31%. 5
- To date, over 23,000 people in Wisconsin have participated in the Stepping On program.

State investment in Falls Prevention Grants will:
Sustain the infrastructure needed to support local program providers and ensure that programs are accessible to all people throughout the state.

Local grants will be awarded annually to enhance community falls prevention programming and initiatives, with priority given to rural communities.

Together, we can reduce falls, increase resiliency, and preserve independence — all while reducing the burden and costs to health care and public safety.

1.CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/falls/data/fall-deaths.html
2.WI DHS, Office of Health Informatics, 2023 data
3.WI DHS, Wisconsin EMS and Falls Report (2025). https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03493-2025.pdf
4.WI DHS WISH - Injury-related health outcomes, Unintentional fall-related injuries.https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/injury-ed/query.htm
5.Clemson, Lindy, et al., "The Effectiveness of a Community-Based Program for Reducing the Incidence of Falls in the Elderly: A Randomized Trial," Journal of American Geriatrics Society, 52:1487-1494, 2004.

About WIHA

The Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging — a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization — provides leadership to falls prevention and social connection efforts – and offers evidence-based health promotion programs through a provider network that includes Aging & Disability Resource Centers, public health agencies, health care, and other community-based organizations.

To date, over 51,000 people have participated in WIHA programs statewide. But programs would not be available without WIHA engaging new providers, training new facilitators, providing technical assistance, collecting and managing data, and promoting healthy aging statewide.

Falls Prevention Grants are key to the sustainability and growth of these efforts.

wiha
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