



# Property Tax Level in Wisconsin

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# Property Tax Level in Wisconsin

The property tax is the largest source of combined state and local tax revenue in Wisconsin. Local governments levy over 99% of the tax, and the remainder is collected by the state. Prior to 1900, the property tax was the state government's largest tax. As the state's economy has diversified, state government has come to rely on other tax sources and has established various aid programs to reduce local reliance on the property tax. The only remaining state property tax is the state forestation tax, which was levied in 2015(16) at a rate of \$0.17 per \$1,000 of value. The resulting revenue (\$83.3 million in 2015-16) is segregated for use in state forestry programs.

The following sections describe seven aspects of Wisconsin's property tax system: (1) reliance of local governments on the property tax; (2) measures of property tax levels in Wisconsin and other states; (3) property tax distribution by type of taxpayer; (4) changes in state taxes, state assistance, property taxes, and inflation since 1970; (5) changes in property tax levies by taxing jurisdiction; (6) property tax rates; and (7) property taxes paid on a median-valued home.

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## Local Government Reliance on Property Tax Revenues

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The property tax is the major source of tax revenue for local governments in Wisconsin, and the tax accounts for over 50% of all local government tax revenue in Wisconsin and 46 other states. Local governments in Arkansas and Louisiana display a greater reliance on general and selective sales taxes, than on the property tax. Based on the most recent data available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Table 1 compares the composition of local government revenue in

**Table 1: Composition of Local Government Revenues (Wisconsin Versus U.S. Average, 2013-14)**

	Wisconsin	U.S. Average
Property Tax	36.4%	29.8%
Sales and Gross Receipts Taxes	1.8	6.9
Income Tax	N.A.	2.5
Other Taxes	0.8	1.9
Charges and Miscellaneous	<u>17.0</u>	<u>22.6</u>
Total Own Source Revenues	56.0%	63.7%
Intergovernmental Revenues	<u>44.0</u>	<u>36.3</u>
Total Revenues	100.0%	100.0%

Wisconsin to the U.S. average. As shown, Wisconsin local governments rely on the property tax more than the U.S. average for local governments. Wisconsin governments also have a greater reliance on intergovernmental revenues, while "own source" revenues are more significant, on average, for local governments in other states.

Wisconsin local governments may not levy a property tax unless authorized by state law. Each of the types of local units with taxing authority is described below. Table 2 reports the composition of revenues for all but special purpose districts.

**Towns, Villages, and Cities.** There are 190 cities, 407 villages, and 1,255 towns in Wisconsin. They are sometimes called "general purpose governments" because they provide a variety of public services, including police and fire protection, sanitation, transportation, and recreation. Municipalities rely on a more diverse array of revenue sources than other local governments to fund these services. However, the property tax represents the most significant tax available to municipalities and, on average, it represents 29.2% of all municipal revenue. Other taxes that municipalities may impose include the room tax,

**Table 2: Revenue Sources for Local Governments (\$ in Millions)**

	Gross Property Tax	Other Taxes	Intergov- ernmental Aids	Other Revenues	Total
<b>Towns (2015)</b>					
Amount	\$401.5	\$23.8	\$244.0	\$238.4	\$907.7
Percent	44.2%	2.6%	26.9%	26.3%	100.0%
<b>Villages (2015)</b>					
Amount	\$543.9	\$61.1	\$166.4	\$903.2	\$1,674.6
Percent	32.5%	3.7%	9.9%	53.9%	100.0%
<b>Cities (2015)</b>					
Amount	\$2,031.5	\$229.8	\$1,126.7	\$4,214.4	\$7,602.4
Percent	26.7%	3.0%	14.8%	55.5%	100.0%
<b>Counties (2015)</b>					
Amount	\$2,047.5	\$420.9	\$1,673.9	\$3,072.4	\$7,214.7
Percent	28.4%	5.8%	23.2%	42.6%	100.0%
<b>School Districts (2014-15)</b>					
Amount	\$4,754.3	\$0.0	\$5,921.0	\$465.0	\$11,140.3
Percent	42.7%	0.0%	53.1%	4.2%	100.0%
<b>Technical College Districts (2014-15)</b>					
Amount	\$407.1	\$0.0	\$568.1*	\$590.6	\$1,565.8
Percent	26.0%	0.0%	36.3%	37.7%	100.0%

\*Does not include duplicative revenues from federal student aid used to pay tuition and fees.

motor vehicle registration fee ("wheel tax"), mobile home fees, premier resort area tax, and special assessments.

**Counties.** Like municipalities, the state's 72 counties perform a variety of services that may be characterized as "general purpose." However, 35.5% of all county expenditures are dedicated to health and human service functions. In addition to the property tax, counties may impose sales and use taxes, which represent the majority of other county taxes, and a "wheel tax."

**Elementary and Secondary School Districts.** In 2014-15, the state contained 424 elementary and secondary school districts. Unlike municipalities and counties, these districts perform a single function -- education. Prior to 1996-97, the property tax was the most significant revenue source of school districts and com-

prised almost half of all school district revenues. However, increases in state aid resulting from a state commitment in 1996-97 to provide two-thirds of partial school revenues on a statewide basis caused intergovernmental aids to become the most significant revenue source for school districts. Even though the state discontinued the "two-thirds" requirement after 2002-03, intergovernmental revenues continue to be the largest revenue source for school districts.

**Technical College Districts.** There are 16 technical college districts in the state. They provide post-secondary education through courses leading to associate degrees and vocational diplomas, college parallel courses, and continuing education courses. The property tax accounts for 26.0% of their revenues. The percentage of revenues attributable to the property tax decreased significantly beginning in 2014-15 as a result of

2013 Act 145, which provided \$406 million annually in property tax relief for technical college districts.

**Special Purpose Districts.** In addition to the districts described above, other special purpose districts are authorized to levy property taxes. These include seven metropolitan sewerage districts, 300 town sanitary districts, and 233 inland lake rehabilitation districts. Although they may have a tax levy, many special purpose districts raise most of their revenues through user fees.

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### Measures of Property Tax Level

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Wisconsin local governments' heavy reliance on the property tax has contributed to above-average property tax levels. Two widely used measures of tax levels are property taxes per \$1,000 of personal income and property taxes per capita. Table 3 shows Wisconsin's ranking under these measures since 1970. Wisconsin's property tax level exceeded the U.S. average under both measures in all periods examined. This comparison is based on the most recent data provided by

the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

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### Property Tax Distribution by Type of Taxpayer

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This section provides estimates of the percent of total property taxes borne by different types of property over the last 45 years. The analysis examines taxes levied in 1970 (payable in 1971), 1975(76), 1980(81), 1985(86), 1990(91), 1995 (96), 2000(01), 2005(06), 2010(11), and 2015 (16). The Department of Revenue annually reports gross property tax levies by class of property. Two adjustments have been made to the Department's figures. First, taxes on personal property have been allocated by type of taxpayer. Second, state property tax credits have been apportioned to distinguish between the gross and net tax burdens.

Table 4 reports property tax levies net of state property tax credits by type of taxpayer between 1970(71) and 2015(16). Over this period, taxes increased more rapidly on residential and com-

**Table 3: Wisconsin State and Local Property Taxes Per \$1,000 of Personal Income and Per Capita Compared to Other States\***

	Property Taxes Per \$1,000 of Personal Income			Property Taxes Per Capita		
	Amount	Rank	Percent of U.S. Average	Amount	Rank	Percent of U.S. Average
1970	\$63.35	4	138.5%	\$220.50	6	131.6%
1975	52.13	13	116.6	271.09	14	112.2
1980	35.43	19	119.7	360.45	16	119.2
1985	43.46	10	137.2	571.81	12	131.1
1990	43.24	13	126.2	736.13	16	118.1
1995	47.73	8	137.6	1,018.49	11	133.3
2000	38.58	10	122.4	1,058.69	12	119.9
2005	43.24	11	127.9	1,405.66	12	123.7
2010	46.15	9	123.9	1,694.34	13	118.7
2014	38.89	12	117.3	1,657.12	14	113.3

\*Including the District of Columbia.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis.

**Table 4: Net Property Tax by Type of Taxpayer (\$ in Millions)**

	1970(71)	1975(76)	1980(81)	1985(86)	1990(91)	1995(96)	2000(01)	2005(06)	2010(11)	2015(16)
Residential	\$526.1	\$699.3	\$1,124.1	\$1,617.5	\$2,458.9	\$3,370.5	\$4,079.3	\$5,465.0	\$6,506.9	\$6,411.9
Commercial	202.0	279.4	361.2	573.8	971.3	1,205.9	1,321.8	1,630.9	2,072.3	2,255.0
Real Estate	169.0	231.4	311.6	487.8	822.6	1,023.6	1,166.5	1,478.2	1,880.3	2,057.9
Personal Property	33.0	48.0	49.6	86.0	148.7	182.3	155.3	152.7	192.0	197.1
Manufacturing	184.1	119.3	128.0	173.4	239.2	275.1	280.8	281.4	321.1	363.1
Real Estate	115.0	77.8	93.3	128.1	166.6	196.8	227.9	234.9	266.1	298.1
Personal Property	69.1	41.5	34.7	45.3	72.6	78.3	52.9	46.5	55.0	65.0
Other	127.2	164.9	287.8	379.7	399.5	416.1	364.8	362.6	442.4	433.2
Agricultural/Other	108.6	148.1	257.5	335.5	342.6	352.8	255.2	208.1	235.2	231.7
Swamp/Waste/										
Forest	5.9	10.1	26.1	42.2	53.5	59.3	105.6	150.6	202.3	196.4
Other Personal	12.7	6.7	4.2	2.0	3.4	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.9	5.1
Total	\$1,039.4	\$1,262.9	\$1,901.1	\$2,744.4	\$4,068.9	\$5,267.6	\$6,046.7	\$7,739.9	\$9,342.7	\$9,463.2

*Percent of Total*

Residential	50.6%	55.4%	59.1%	58.9%	60.4%	64.0%	67.5%	70.6%	69.7%	67.8%
Commercial	19.5	22.1	19.0	20.9	23.9	22.9	21.9	21.1	22.2	23.8
Real Estate	16.3	18.3	16.4	17.8	20.2	19.4	19.3	19.1	20.1	21.7
Personal Property	3.2	3.8	2.6	3.1	3.7	3.5	2.6	2.0	2.1	2.1
Manufacturing	17.7	9.4	6.7	6.4	5.9	5.2	4.6	3.6	3.4	3.8
Real Estate	11.1	6.1	4.9	4.7	4.1	3.7	3.7	3.0	2.8	3.1
Personal Property	6.6	3.3	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.5	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.7
Other	12.2	13.1	15.2	13.8	9.8	7.9	6.0	4.7	4.7	4.6
Agricultural/Other	10.4	11.8	13.6	12.2	8.4	6.7	4.2	2.7	2.5	2.4
Swamp/Waste/										
Forest	0.6	0.8	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.1
Other Personal	1.2	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

mercial property than on manufacturing and other property. As a result, residential and commercial property have borne increasing shares of the tax burden, while decreasing shares have been borne by manufacturing and other property. Several factors explain the shift in tax shares.

First, some types of property have been exempted through state law changes. Manufacturers' machinery and equipment (M&E) was exempted in 1974. In 1977, the Legislature chose to gradually exempt farmers' livestock and commercial and manufacturing inventories by assessing them at increasingly lower percentages of

full value until they became entirely exempt in 1981. The exemption for computers and related equipment took effect in 1999 and removed \$2.3 billion in tax base. At the time of their enactment, these three exemptions collectively represented 18% of the remaining statewide taxable value. Much of the reduction in agricultural taxes between 1995(96) and 2005(06) was caused by phasing-in use value assessment for agricultural land.

Second, property has been added or removed since 1970(71). The majority of new construction has been for residential and commercial uses. As

that tax base has been added, residential and commercial taxpayers have borne an increasing percentage of total taxes. Other properties have been demolished or converted to other uses. This accounts for some of the reduction in the percent of taxes borne by manufacturing property. Similarly, farmland has been converted to other uses as the number of farms has declined from about 110,000 in 1970 to 68,900 in 2015.

Finally, economic conditions explain some of the shifts. For example, national economic conditions caused some reductions in manufacturing, commercial, and agricultural tax base during the 1980s and residential tax base in the late 2000s and early 2010s. As a result, taxes on that property either declined or grew at a slower rate.

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### State Taxes, Local Assistance, Net Property Taxes, and Inflation Since 1970

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Since its adoption of the state income tax in 1911, Wisconsin has used state tax collections to provide assistance to local governments. One of the major goals of the local assistance programs has been to reduce local reliance on the property tax and provide property tax relief. Tables 5 and 6 examine changes in state taxes, local assistance, and net property tax levies over five-year intervals from 1970-71 to 2015-16. In addition, the totals in the table are converted to per capita amounts.

The tables show that total state taxes have

**Table 5: State Taxes, Local Assistance, and Net Property Tax Levies (Total \$ in Millions)**

	1970-71	1975-76	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1995-96	2000-01	2005-06	2010-11	2015-16
<b>State Taxes</b>										
Total	\$1,381.3	\$2,440.1	\$3,659.0	\$5,799.0	\$7,056.8	\$9,440.5	\$11,537.2	\$13,928.1	\$15,164.9	\$17,324.7
Per Capita	313	572	773	1,211	1,434	1,836	2,136	2,479	2,663	3,000
<b>Local Assistance</b>										
Total	899.4	1,644.6	2,091.7	3,100.9	4,190.3	5,530.1	7,590.9	8,308.5	8,912.6	9,000.0
Per Capita	204	386	442	647	852	1,075	1,406	1,479	1,565	1,558
<b>Net Property Tax Levy</b>										
Total	1,039.4	1,262.9	1,901.1	2,744.4	4,068.9	5,267.6	6,046.7	7,739.9	9,342.7	9,463.2
Per Capita	235	296	402	573	827	1,024	1,120	1,378	1,641	1,639

**Table 6: Annualized Percent Change in State Taxes, Local Assistance, and Net Property Tax Levies**

	1970-71 to 1975-76	1975-76 to 1980-81	1980-81 to 1985-86	1985-86 to 1990-91	1990-91 to 1995-96	1995-96 to 2000-01	2000-01 to 2005-06	2005-06 to 2010-11	2010-11 to 2015-16	1970-71 to 2015-16
<b>State Taxes</b>										
Total	12.1%	8.4%	9.6%	4.0%	6.0%	4.1%	3.8%	1.7%	2.7%	5.8%
Per Capita	12.9	6.2	9.4	3.4	5.1	3.1	3.0	1.4	2.4	5.2
<b>Local Assistance</b>										
Total	12.8	4.9	8.2	6.2	5.7	6.5	1.8	1.4	0.2	5.3
Per Capita	13.6	2.8	7.9	5.6	4.8	5.5	1.0	1.1	-0.1	4.6
<b>Net Property Tax Levy</b>										
Total	4.0	8.5	7.6	8.2	5.3	2.8	5.1	3.8	0.3	5.0
Per Capita	4.7	6.3	7.4	7.6	4.4	1.8	4.2	3.6	< 0.0	4.4
<b>Consumer Price Index</b>										
All Urban Consumers	7.0	9.8	3.9	4.4	2.9	2.6	2.7	2.2	1.3	4.0

grown at a slightly higher rate during the 45-year period than local assistance and net property taxes. However, the relationship between the three categories has varied over that period. Further, as indicated in Table 6, the average annualized rate of growth over the entire 45-year period has exceeded the five-year growth rates for each category in recent years. Growth of state taxes has not exceeded the 45-year average growth rate (5.8%) since the five-year period beginning in 1990-91. Growth of local assistance has not exceeded the 45-year average growth rate (5.3%) since the period beginning in 1995-96. Growth of the net property tax has not exceeded the 45-year average growth rate (5.0%) since the period beginning in 2000-01.

Table 6 reports the change in the CPI-U to reflect whether local assistance dollars have been used to maintain or increase local service levels. Although growth in local assistance failed to keep pace with inflation and population growth combined between 1975-76 and 1980-81, growth in per capita local assistance exceeded the inflation rate in each of the four five-year periods be-

tween 1980-81 and 2000-01. However, since 2000-01, growth in per capita local assistance has lagged the inflation rate. Since 1980-81, per capita property tax increases have been higher than inflation in every period except the five-year periods beginning in 1995-96 and 2010-11.

Table 7 presents funding levels since 2008 or 2007-08 for the local assistance programs with appropriations over \$100 million in each of these years. The amounts for 2017 and 2016-17 reflect budgeted totals, rather than final payments. While total reported funding increased 10.5% over this period, funding changes have varied according to type of assistance. Funding for tax credits was emphasized, increasing 48.2%, while funding for aid payments was generally less favored. Direct aid for counties and municipalities decreased 2.5%, and aid to school districts increased 2.0%. However, aid for technical college districts increased 275.3%, due largely to the 2013 Act 145 aid increase for 2014-15. Prior to the Act 145 increase, aid for technical college districts declined 23.5% between 2007-08 and 2013-14.

**Table 7: Selected Major State Aid Programs (\$ in Millions)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2008 to 2017
<b>Direct Aid to Counties and Municipalities</b>											
Shared Revenue & Related Programs											
General Transportation Aid	400.1	412.1	420.3	432.9	403.5	403.5	403.5	419.7	419.7	419.7	19.6
Community Aids*	<u>261.5</u>	<u>261.5</u>	<u>255.5</u>	<u>257.4</u>	<u>256.4</u>	<u>256.4</u>	<u>254.9</u>	<u>256.7</u>	<u>276.2</u>	<u>275.9</u>	<u>14.4</u>
TOTAL	\$1,619.4	\$1,648.6	\$1,623.1	\$1,641.4	\$1,538.9	\$1,540.3	\$1,540.4	\$1,560.3	\$1,580.1	\$1,578.2	-\$41.2
% Change		1.8%	-1.5%	1.1%	-6.2%	0.1%	-0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	-0.1%	-2.5%
<b>Tax Credits</b>											
School Levy Credit**	\$672.4	\$820.1	\$889.4	\$895.0	\$894.7	\$895.8	\$894.1	\$895.4	\$1,001.4	\$1,003.0	\$330.6
Lottery Credit	<u>129.6</u>	<u>118.1</u>	<u>113.2</u>	<u>129.2</u>	<u>134.8</u>	<u>141.5</u>	<u>168.8</u>	<u>166.6</u>	<u>158.2</u>	<u>185.3</u>	<u>55.7</u>
TOTAL	\$802.0	\$938.2	\$1,002.6	\$1,024.2	\$1,029.5	\$1,037.3	\$1,062.9	\$1,062.0	\$1,159.6	\$1,188.3	\$386.3
% Change		17.0%	6.9%	2.2%	0.5%	0.8%	2.5%	-0.1%	9.2%	2.5%	48.2%
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2007-08 to 2016-17
<b>Aid to School Districts and Technical Colleges</b>											
General School Aid	\$4,731.7	\$4,811.5	\$4,671.2	\$4,671.2	\$4,285.0	\$4,310.5	\$4,398.4	\$4,492.8	\$4,492.8	\$4,600.9	-\$130.8
Categorical School Aid	608.5	650.9	644.1	653.8	608.5	653.9	680.8	748.9	751.4	843.6	235.1
Technical College Aid	<u>138.4</u>	<u>138.4</u>	<u>139.5</u>	<u>140.2</u>	<u>105.0</u>	<u>105.8</u>	<u>105.9</u>	<u>509.0</u>	<u>513.9</u>	<u>519.4</u>	<u>381.0</u>
TOTAL	\$5,478.6	\$5,600.8	\$5,454.8	\$5,465.2	\$4,998.5	\$5,070.2	\$5,185.1	\$5,750.7	\$5,758.1	\$5,963.9	\$485.3
% Change		2.2%	-2.6%	0.2%	-8.5%	1.4%	2.3%	10.9%	0.1%	3.6%	8.9%
GRAND TOTAL	\$7,900.0	\$8,187.6	\$8,080.5	\$8,130.8	\$7,566.9	\$7,647.8	\$7,788.1	\$8,373.0	\$8,497.8	\$8,730.4	\$830.4
% Change		3.6%	-1.3%	0.6%	-6.9%	1.1%	1.8%	7.5%	1.5%	2.7%	10.5%

\* Amounts reflect transfers to Family Care and adjustments for Milwaukee County's contribution for child welfare services. Beginning in 2009, a portion of Community Aids is distributed by the Department of Children and Families as Children and Families Aid.

\*\*Includes funding for the first dollar credit beginning in 2009.

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### Changes in Property Tax Levies by Taxing Jurisdiction

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Changes in property tax levies have varied by type of taxing jurisdiction between 1970(71) and 2015(16). Table 8 reports that gross tax levies increased by an average, annual rate of 5.0% over that period.

Elementary and secondary school levies comprised half, or more, of total levies between 1970 and 1995. State funding of two-thirds of partial school revenues on a statewide basis between 1996(97) and 2002(03) and school district revenue limits have caused the school percentage to decrease since 1995(96), and school taxes equaled only 45.7% of all property taxes in 2015(16). Since 1970, school levies increased at the lowest average, annualized rate (4.5%), although school levies increased at the highest rate from 2005 to 2010 (5.5%). Since 2010, statewide school levies increased slightly (0.7%).

In Table 8, the growth rates for school levies may be overstated for 1980 to 1985 and understated for 1985 to 1990 because the table reflects 1985(86) tax levies prior to the application of \$155 million in school aid tax credits. Subsequently, funding for the credits was converted to direct school aids. If the credits are subtracted from the 1985(86) levy, average annual school tax increases of 5.4% from 1980 to 1985 and 8.3% from 1985 to 1990 result.

Technical college district levies increased at the highest annual growth rate between 1970 and 2015 (6.3%). Above average growth rates throughout the 1970s coincided with the trans-

formation of the vocational education system from a municipal basis to a statewide system (see the Legislative Fiscal Bureau's informational paper entitled "Wisconsin Technical College System"). From 1980 through 1990, growth in technical college levies was lower than that for other taxing jurisdictions, but the pattern between 1990 and 2005 was for levy increases greater than that for other taxing jurisdictions. In 2015, the technical college district levy decreased from the 2010 levy, while all other jurisdictions' levies increased. This decrease was in response to the additional state aid provided through 2013 Act 145.

County levies changed at annual rates below the state average between 1970 and 1975 and between 1980 and 1985. During those periods, the state assumed county costs for certain health and social services programs (1972 and 1973) and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District assumed levying authority for its taxes from Milwaukee County (1982 and 1983). Until the 2005 to 2010 period, growth in county levies exceeded the rate of change for total levies during each other period examined. Behind schools, counties had the second lowest average, annualized growth rate between 1970 and 2015 (4.8%).

Municipal and special purpose district levies increased at rates below the growth rates for total levies for the 1975 to 1980, 1990 to 1995, and 2005 to 2010 periods. They increased at a more rapid rate than the rate of change for total levies during each other period examined. Over the 45-year period, municipalities and special districts posted the second highest average, annualized rate of increase (6.1%). Levies for tax increment districts are included in this category.

**Table 8: Total Property Tax Levy by Taxing Jurisdiction (\$ in Millions)**

Year Levied	Gross Property Tax*	Municipal & Special District	County	Elementary & Secondary (K-12) Schools	Technical College Districts
<b>1970(71)</b>					
Amount	\$1,179.0	\$220.8	\$251.1	\$674.0	\$26.2
% of Total	100.0%	18.7%	21.3%	57.2%	2.2%
<b>1975(76)</b>					
Amount	\$1,601.3	\$369.9	\$241.4	\$899.5	\$78.9
% of Total	100.0%	23.1%	15.1%	56.2%	4.9%
<b>1980(81)</b>					
Amount	\$2,210.0	\$479.6	\$355.5	\$1,219.9	\$133.4
% of Total	100.0%	21.7%	16.1%	55.2%	6.0%
<b>1985(86)</b>					
Amount	\$3,203.5	\$765.2	\$489.8	\$1,738.3	\$185.6
% of Total	100.0%	23.9%	15.3%	54.3%	5.8%
<b>1990(91)</b>					
Amount	\$4,388.2	\$1,070.6	\$697.5	\$2,356.4	\$235.4
% of Total	100.0%	24.4%	15.9%	53.7%	5.4%
<b>1995(96)</b>					
Amount	\$5,738.9	\$1,379.2	\$964.5	\$3,023.6	\$331.3
% of Total	100.0%	24.0%	16.8%	52.7%	5.8%
<b>2000(01)</b>					
Amount	\$6,604.5	\$1,837.1	\$1,316.1	\$2,927.8	\$466.3
% of Total	100.0%	27.8%	19.9%	44.3%	7.1%
<b>2005(06)</b>					
Amount	\$8,326.7	\$2,361.1	\$1,671.1	\$3,592.3	\$622.0
% of Total	100.0%	28.4%	20.1%	43.1%	7.5%
<b>2010(11)</b>					
Amount	\$10,364.6	\$2,878.9	\$1,951.4	\$4,692.9	\$757.2
% of Total	100.0%	27.8%	18.8%	45.3%	7.3%
<b>2015(16)</b>					
Amount	\$10,620.2	\$3,180.9	\$2,086.5	\$4,852.9	\$416.7
% of Total	100.0%	30.0%	19.6%	45.7%	3.9%
<b>Annualized Average Growth Rates</b>					
1970-75	6.3%	10.9%	-0.8%	5.9%	24.6%
1975-80	6.7	5.3	8.0	6.3	11.1
1980-85	7.7	9.8	6.6	7.3	6.8
1985-90	6.5	6.9	7.3	6.3	4.9
1990-95	5.5	5.2	6.7	5.1	7.1
1995-00	2.8	5.9	6.4	-0.6	7.1
2000-05	4.7	5.1	4.9	4.2	5.9
2005-10	4.5	4.0	3.1	5.5	4.0
2010-15	0.5	2.0	1.3	0.7	-11.3
1970-2015	5.0%	6.1%	4.8%	4.5%	6.3%

\*The state forestry tax is not individually reflected and accounts for the remainder of the total levy.

## Property Tax Rates

Table 9 shows the cyclical nature of changes in the state average property tax rate. Over the 45-year period displayed, the rate peaked in 1971(72). During the 1970s, the state average tax rate declined as growth in property values exceeded tax levy increases. However, that relationship reversed in the 1980s, causing increases in the state average tax rate. Increases continued through 1992(93), when the average rate approached the 1971(72) level. Beginning in 1992(93), the state average rate fell in 14 successive years and equaled \$18.56 per \$1,000 of value in 2006(07). Increases have occurred in each of the next nine years. Since 2007(08), values have decreased by 1.5% while gross levies have

increased by 14.8%, resulting in a gross tax rate of \$21.65 per \$1,000 of value in 2015(16).

## Estimated Property Tax Bills

Table 10 provides estimates of tax bills for a median-valued home for the ten-year period from 2006(07) through 2015(16). The amounts were calculated by multiplying statewide average tax rates by estimated home values. The home values are based on the 2000 median home value for Wisconsin, which was determined in the 2000 decennial, U.S. census. The values for the other years were calculated by adjusting the 2000 value according to the change in residential property values caused by economic factors, as reported by the Department of Revenue. The Department

**Table 9: Change in the State Average Property Tax Rate -- 1970(71) to 2015(16)**

Year Levied (Collected)	Full Value of All Property	Statewide Property Tax Levy		Tax Rate Per \$1,000 of Value		
		Gross	Net	Gross	Net	
1970(71)	\$34,790,499,300	\$1,178,975,199	\$1,039,383,102	\$33.89	\$29.88	
1975(76)	58,549,890,092	1,601,263,271	1,262,918,209	27.35	21.57	
1980(81)	108,480,469,889	2,210,004,212	1,901,104,090	20.37	17.52	
1985(86)	123,021,487,280	3,203,487,573	2,744,387,590	26.04	22.31	
1990(91)	141,370,307,160	4,388,165,512	4,068,860,512	31.04	28.78	
1995(96)	201,538,109,000	5,738,930,868	5,267,648,137	28.48	26.14	
2000(01)	286,321,491,800	6,604,531,375	6,046,744,052	23.07	21.12	
2005(06)	427,933,562,000	8,326,736,844	7,739,898,537	19.46	18.09	
2010(11)	495,904,192,300	10,364,621,246	9,342,723,540	20.90	18.84	
2015(16)	490,602,544,050	10,620,155,004	9,463,188,832	21.65	19.29	
<b>Annualized Average Growth Rates</b>						
1970 - 1975	11.0%	6.3%	4.0%	-4.2%	-6.3%	
1975 - 1980	13.1	6.7	8.5	-5.7	-4.1	
1980 - 1985	2.5	7.7	7.6	5.0	4.9	
1985 - 1990	2.8	6.5	8.2	3.6	5.2	
1990 - 1995	7.3	5.5	5.3	-1.7	-1.9	
1995 - 2000	7.3	2.8	2.8	-4.1	-4.2	
2000 - 2005	8.4	4.7	5.1	-3.3	-3.1	
2005 - 2010	3.0	4.5	3.8	1.4	0.8	
2010 - 2015	-0.2	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.5	
1970 - 2015	6.1%	5.0%	5.0%	-1.0%	-1.0%	

Net tax levies and rates include reductions for credits that were not extended to all property owners: personal property tax relief (PPTR) for owners of Line A personal property in 1970(71) through 1980(81); the lottery credit for property used as the owner's principal residence in 1995(96) and subsequent years; and the first dollar credit for improved property in 2010(11) and 2015(16).

**Table 10: Estimated Property Tax Bills for a Median-Valued Home\* Based on Statewide Average Tax Rates**

	2006(07)	2007(08)	2008(09)	2009(10)	2010(11)	2011(12)	2012(13)	2013(14)	2014(15)	2015(16)
Value	\$164,118	\$170,305	\$171,840	\$167,974	\$161,355	\$157,692	\$151,148	\$147,989	\$150,505	\$152,719
Type of Tax										
School	\$1,364	\$1,436	\$1,475	\$1,537	\$1,575	\$1,552	\$1,541	\$1,533	\$1,543	\$1,563
Municipal	756	777	793	804	813	822	827	833	847	859
County	621	636	640	649	655	659	657	657	664	672
Technical College	234	240	246	252	254	258	260	260	132	134
Other	<u>62</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>61</u>
Gross Tax	\$3,037	\$3,151	\$3,216	\$3,303	\$3,358	\$3,351	\$3,344	\$3,342	\$3,246	\$3,289
Tax Credits										
School Levy	-208	-230	-250	-245	-243	-242	-240	-237	-235	-266
First Dollar			-33	-65	-67	-67	-67	-66	-67	-67
Lottery and Gaming	<u>-96</u>	<u>-85</u>	<u>-77</u>	<u>-74</u>	<u>-85</u>	<u>-89</u>	<u>-94</u>	<u>-113</u>	<u>-113</u>	<u>-107</u>
Net Tax Bill	\$2,733	\$2,836	\$2,856	\$2,919	\$2,963	\$2,953	\$2,943	\$2,926	\$2,831	\$2,849
Change from Prior Year										
Gross Tax										
Amount		\$114	\$65	\$87	\$55	-\$7	-\$7	-\$2	-\$96	\$43
Percent		3.8%	2.1%	2.7%	1.7%	-0.2%	-0.2%	-0.1%	-2.9%	1.3%
Net Tax										
Amount		\$103	\$20	\$63	\$44	-\$10	-\$10	-\$17	-\$95	\$18
Percent		3.8%	0.7%	2.2%	1.5%	-0.3%	-0.3%	-0.6%	-3.2%	0.6%

\* Based on the 2000 U.S. Census, adjusted for the annual change in residential property value due to economic factors.

calculates that change annually as a component of equalized values, which it certifies each August 15. Changes to the state's housing stock due to demolitions and new construction probably cause the estimated home values to differ from the actual median value for the state in all years except 2000.

Over the ten-year period, the gross property tax bill increased from \$3,037 for 2006(07) to \$3,289 for 2015(16), and the net tax bill increased from \$2,733 to \$2,849. These amounts represent increases of 8.3% in the gross tax bill and 4.2% in the net tax bill. Over the same period, the consumer price index increased by 17.6%.

State tax credits account for the distinction between gross tax bills and net tax bills. When

tax credit funding is unchanged from year to year and the statewide tax base increases, the amount of tax credits distributed to each taxpayer will decline, on average. For example, slight reductions in the average school levy credit, from \$250 in 2008(09) to \$235 in 2014(15), occurred while statewide funding for the credit remained unchanged at \$747.4 million. Conversely, the average credit has increased when additional tax credit funding has been provided. After 2006(07), funding for the school levy credit increased in each of the two succeeding years, from \$593.1 million in 2006(07) to \$672.4 million in 2007(08), and \$747.4 million in 2008(09). By 2008(09), the average school levy credit had increased \$42, from \$208 in 2006(07) to \$250 in 2008(09). A similar increase occurred between 2014(15) and 2015(16) when funding for the

school levy credit increased from \$747.4 million to \$853.0 million. The average school levy credit increased \$31 from \$235 in 2014(15) to \$266 in 2015(16).

Over the ten-year period, the net tax bill increased at an average annual rate of 0.5%, while the average annualized rate of change for the consumer price index was 1.8%. The tax bill

experienced below average rates of change in each of the four years from 2011(12) to 2014(15) when local government fiscal controls were made more restrictive. For 2013(14) and 2014(15), additional school aid funding was provided for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Also for 2014(15), additional technical college funding was provided beginning in the 2014-15 school year.