Wisconsin Legislators Fail To Approve Budget Measures That Would Help Immigrants Thrive
The Final 2021-23 Budget for Immigrant Communities

The Wisconsin Legislature passed a state budget that stripped out several provisions introduced by Governor Evers that would expand opportunity for immigrant families and communities.

The Governor signed the budget passed by the legislature, and it is now law.

Driver Licenses for All

The Legislature removed a proposed change that would allow undocumented immigrants to obtain driver licenses. This change would have improved the well-being of immigrants and their families, resulted in insurance savings for a broad pool of drivers, and helped businesses connect with workers who have skill sets that match employer needs.

Expanding Opportunity for Undocumented Youth

The Legislature removed a proposed change that would allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates if they grow up in Wisconsin and graduate from a Wisconsin high school. Currently, undocumented youth who grow up in Wisconsin are charged out-of-state tuition rates that are more than three times the rate paid by other students who graduate from Wisconsin high schools, putting higher education out of reach for most.

Additional Resources for English-Language Learner Services in K-12 Schools

The Legislature removed the governor’s proposal to provide $28 million more over two years for bilingual and bicultural services in public K-12 schools, which would have improved the academic environment for students of color. The amount of aid the state provides for bilingual services has been mostly flat for more than a decade, even as the cost of living has gone up.

At a time when inequality is growing and businesses are having difficulty finding workers, state policymakers should remove obstacles that are holding back many immigrants by restricting their ability to participate in the workforce and contribute to their communities. Unfortunately, the Legislature’s budget fails to take any steps to remove the barriers that keep immigrants and our state from thriving.