



Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance

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NEWS

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Property Taxes Estimated to Rise 1.8% Statewide This Year *1.1% Net Increase Projected After State Credits*

MADISON—Property taxes in Wisconsin are projected to rise 1.8% statewide this year, according to the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization devoted to public policy research and citizen education.

Taxes levied by K-12 schools, counties, municipalities, and technical colleges this December and payable in 2018 will total roughly \$11 billion, WISTAX estimates.

K-12 school taxes, which comprise 45% of the tax bill statewide, increased 1.8%, more than the 0.1% increase in 2016-17, but less than the 2.0% increase in 2015-16.

Counties, which make up another 20% of the tax bill, raised levies by 3.0%, up from 2.2% last year. The increase is the highest since 3.2% in 2010.

Municipal levies are still being compiled by the state, but WISTAX estimates they likely increased an average of 3.5%, up slightly from last year's increase of 3.1%. The total tax levy for all cities, villages, and towns would be almost \$2.85 billion, or about 25% of the entire bill.

Taxes for technical colleges, which account for only about 4% of the bill, rose 3.0%, to \$446.6 million. Technical college levies have declined by nearly 50% since 2015, when the state provided \$406 million to “buy them down” and imposed revenue limits on districts. From 1990 to 2010, “tech college” property tax increases averaged 6.4% annually, more than any other type of local government in Wisconsin.

Missing from this year's property tax bill is the state forestry tax. The 2017-19 state budget eliminated it, at a cost of about \$90 million annually; forestry programs will be funded from state income and sales taxes in the future.

WISTAX notes there are wide variations in local property tax levies. Of the state's 422 school districts, 263 increased taxes, while 159 reduced them. Overall, 27 had hikes of 10% or more, although almost 81 raised taxes

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The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, founded in 1932, is the state's oldest and most respected private government-research organization. Through its research, publications, civic lectures, and school talks, WISTAX aims to improve Wisconsin government through citizen education. Nonprofit, nonpartisan, and independently funded, WISTAX is not affiliated with any group—national, state, or local—and receives no government support.

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by 5% or more. The largest increases—25% or more—came in four districts (Abbotsford, Beaver Dam, Mayville, and Weyauwega), the last three of which had voters approve referenda for new building projects.

Among counties, five raised their levies by more than 10%: Iron, Monroe, Pierce, Richland, and Trempeleau. Twelve others increased taxes by more than 5%.

After roughly \$1.1 billion in state credits are applied, net property taxes will rise an estimated 1.1%, to \$9.9 billion statewide.

For a free copy of the WISTAX studies, “Property taxes 2017-18 (I) and (II),” visit www.wistax.org; email wistax@wistax.org; call 608.241.9789; or write WISTAX at 401 North Lawn Ave., Madison, WI 53704-5033.

(Editor’s Note: An electronic version of this release is available at www.wistax.org.)