

# 2013-2015 LIFE Steering Committee

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The LIFE Steering Committee operates independently to oversee that the LIFE project and its purpose continually serves to meet the need of the community. For continuity and fiscal management, the project is coordinated at United Way of Marathon County.

## The purpose of the LIFE Report is to:

- Acknowledge community strengths.
- Identify community challenges.
- Serve as a catalyst for change by advancing community conversations and partnerships around the Calls for Action.

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# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2013-2015

## Report Sponsors

This is the ninth edition of the LIFE Report, which has been published every two years since 1997. The LIFE Report project is guided by the LIFE Project Steering Committee and made possible through the support of the organizations listed below.

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# Introduction

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In 1996, community leaders representing Marathon County began to meet to discuss ways to create community efficiencies and identify a common agenda. The result was the first edition of the LIFE Report in 1997. Published every two years, this is the ninth edition of the LIFE Report. United Way of Marathon County continues to serve as the lead agency for the project—coordinating the work, housing staff, acting as fiscal agent and overseeing project activities. The LIFE Steering Committee guides all aspects of the report development. The continued commitment of our sponsors and committee members are essential to the report's success.

## **Purpose of the LIFE Report:**

- Acknowledge community strengths.
- Identify community challenges.
- Serve as a catalyst for change by advancing community conversations and partnerships around the Calls for Action.

## **Ninth Edition LIFE Report Updates:**

- The LIFE Steering Committee is dedicated to continually improving the report. Changes in this edition include:
  - \* An assessment of each indicator's relevance and appropriate placement. Indicators were evaluated based on their helpfulness in determining community priorities and the ability to establish goals and track progress toward those goals. As a result of that process, some indicators were eliminated, while other more relevant indicators were added. Some sections were also reorganized and renamed.
  - \* Modifying survey questions to address gaps in data and subcommittee priorities.
- Section summary pages continue to bring attention to community successes, challenges, and opportunities.
- The report involved subcommittee experts to write indicator pages and to clarify the implications for our community.
- To enable readers to do additional research, the report continues the use of online links to information sources.
- Over the history of the report, the process that determines priorities or Calls to Action has evolved. The LIFE Steering Committee selected these Calls to Action by doing the following:
  - \* Becoming familiar with the data, survey results, and section summaries.
  - \* Using agreed upon criteria to select top issues of concern.
  - \* Then together, reviewing and discussing the data and rationale for top issues and coming to a consensus about the top Calls to Action.
- The report relies on a staff manager to coordinate the work of the volunteer subcommittees, to update data, to pull together the demographics, and to analyze data results.



# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2013-2015

## Executive Summary

To live in Marathon County is to join in the collective visioning that considers and works to achieve a high standard of living. The LIFE Report was developed to further this objective. The biennial assessment collects trending indicators in order to compare that common vision to the reality of life in the county, highlighting both the strengths and challenges that can move us closer to our goals. The people of Marathon County have demonstrated a commitment to providing their neighbors with the resources necessary to live a high-quality life. Thus the data collected in the LIFE Report highlights areas of resource richness as well as opportunities for further investment, all with the hope of inspiring further engagement. As always, we hope this ninth edition of the LIFE Report will serve as a call to action for the residents of Marathon County. We urge readers to take ownership of the data herein and to think about what we can do together to maintain our commitments to each other and to our county.

### *Where We Are...*

Community improvement is slow and complex. It involves an interplay of factors that are each challenging to pin down. While the indicators included in the LIFE Report are neatly organized into six categories, the causes and impacts of those data are much harder to catalogue. The data is a byproduct of a complex web of cause and effect. For example, lead poisoning is considered a health issue, but its cause is often economic. Moreover, its negative effects can play out in school and criminal justice systems, often leading to decreased economic resources that can limit opportunities and increase the possibility of exposure for future generations. Thus, we offer these “Calls to Action” with this caveat in mind: without a long-term, holistic approach, it is nearly impossible to have a serious impact on any of these issues. The structure of this executive summary seeks to emphasize this interplay while drawing attention to best practices for community impact. It includes the following sections:

- Highlights of Community Strengths
- A Long-term Vision for Greatest Impact
- Immediate Concerns for Action
- Issues to Watch



# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2013-2015

## A Strong Foundation

It is easy to highlight a community's challenges when reading through a report like this, but to do so is to miss the greater message in this report, that Marathon County is a great place to live with bountiful resources producing impressive results. Marathon County generally exceeds state and national averages through all the subcategories of this report. Life in the county is good, and our best path to growth is not in focusing on our shortcomings, but in expanding the scope of our strengths. Ideally, such efforts will impact the community more broadly, growing the overall quality of life in the county. The highlights below are just a few of the many strengths that came out of this report.

### ***Great Schools***

The public schools in Marathon County consistently perform above state and national averages across almost all metrics. Moreover, residents have strong, varied, and growing educational options from pre-school through graduate school. By growing and sustaining our investments in schooling for all ages, Marathon County will continue to nourish a healthy, informed, and involved citizenry.

### ***Advancement and Entrepreneurship***

Marathon County is home to a progressive employer community with a commitment to innovation and a labor force with a matchless work ethic. This combined entrepreneurial spirit has made Marathon County the launching pad for a variety of strong businesses that have local, state, national, and international impacts. By cultivating these strengths, Marathon County will continue to support, attract, and create forward-thinking companies.

### ***Strong Healthcare***

The role Marathon County plays as a regional service provider is most apparent in the healthcare sector, which has seen growth in both the services and jobs it provides the county. Marathon County residents are fortunate to have not only access to great healthcare but also invested healthcare professionals eager to increase the awareness and practice of the healthy behaviors necessary for a long and active life.

### ***Family Focused***

In the 2013 LIFE Community survey, proximity to family received the highest rate of selection for the question about why people choose to live in Marathon County. We are family people. By claiming and enhancing the benefits of this family-driven culture, Marathon County will always be an attractive place to live.

### ***Activities for All Souls and Seasons***

Marathon County offers great activities and recreation for artists and athletes alike. This investment has not only made Marathon County a top-ten tourist county within the state, but it provides great opportunities to residents year-round. From Granite Peak to the Grand Theater, there is always something to do in Marathon County.

### ***A Sense of Safety***

A sense of safety plays an essential role in community development. People who feel safe are all the more likely to get involved in the commerce and recreation their community offers. People feel safe in Marathon County, and our emergency services and community support groups work hard to maintain and improve upon that sense of safety.

### ***Abundant Natural Resources***

From the recreation that takes place on lakes and trails to the water we use to grow crops and nourish our bodies, Marathon County has an abundance of great natural resources. As neighboring states and counties see their own lifestyles challenged by less abundance, the importance of our natural resources will become all the more apparent. We must continue to protect, invest in, and use wisely the natural resources we have.

# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2013-2015

## A Great Start for Kids: A Long-term Call to Action

It is a goal of the LIFE Report to look beyond issues of immediate concern to identify not only root causes of those challenges to the county, but also long-term solutions that have the greatest potential for positive impact. Such thoughtful study was the catalyst behind the addition of this long-term Call to Action: **to ensure that every child in Marathon County gets off to a great start.** The benefits of a supportive and healthy childhood are hard to overstate. According to the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, 85% of the foundation of a child's intellect, personality, and skills is formed by age 5. The experiences of early childhood affect our physical and mental health and lay the groundwork for our academic accomplishments and our economic and civic contributions. If Marathon County residents hope to improve the health of their communities, the greatest return will come from investments that seek to guarantee this necessary foundation.

### *Educational Investments*

Marathon County has strong public and post-secondary school options that require continued and expanded support. However, the community could further benefit from investments that expand the scope of educational programs, especially as they relate to early childhood development. Such programs include:

- Raising the standard of early-years childcare through professional development and training for caregivers and improving access to those providers.
- Investing in programs that focus on early literacy.
- Encouraging expectant mothers to begin prenatal care in their first trimester and offering parent education courses to encourage best practices and to share vital healthcare information.
- Raising awareness community-wide about the importance of a strong, healthy childhood and the real and continued impact of childhood trauma.



### *The Impact of Childhood Trauma*

Research is uncovering greater links between the impact of childhood trauma and the challenges, from decreased economic productivity to increased criminal behavior, facing many communities. Marathon County can decrease the impact of these costs faced often decades down the road by investing in great starts for our children through:

- Ensuring that resources and services are available for children suffering from abuse or other trauma.
- Expanding maternal mental healthcare screenings and providing proper dental, medical, and mental healthcare to families.
- Safeguarding children against the impact of economic hardship on their parents by addressing increases in unmet basic needs.



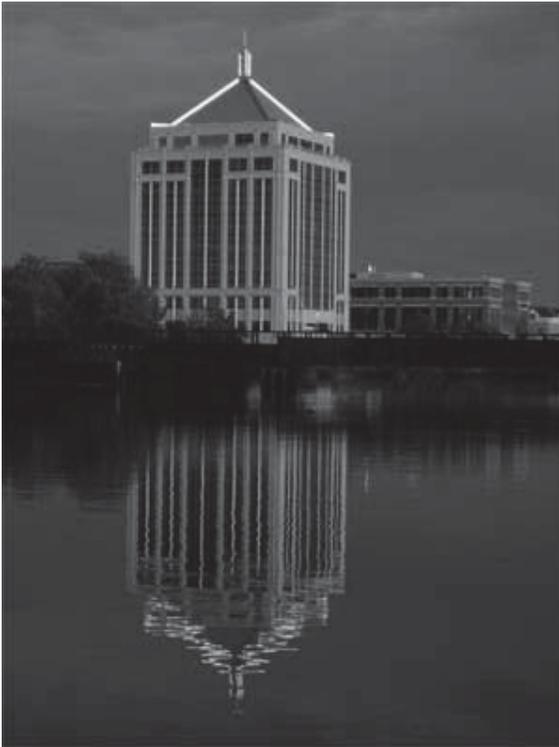
### *Interested in More Information?*

Readers interested in further reading on the community-wide benefits of investments in early childhood development should visit The Heckman Equation at [heckmanequation.org/heckman-equation](http://heckmanequation.org/heckman-equation). Those interested in efforts at the local level should visit the Early Year's Coalition at [www.unitedwaymc.org/earlyyearscoalition.htm](http://www.unitedwaymc.org/earlyyearscoalition.htm).

# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2013-2015

## Immediate Concerns

Even with investment in a long-term strategy, Marathon County will continue to face immediate concerns that require our attention. The two challenges below—issues regarding unemployment and underemployment and the use, abuse, and misuse of alcohol and other drugs—were the two immediate concerns that most stood out in this report.

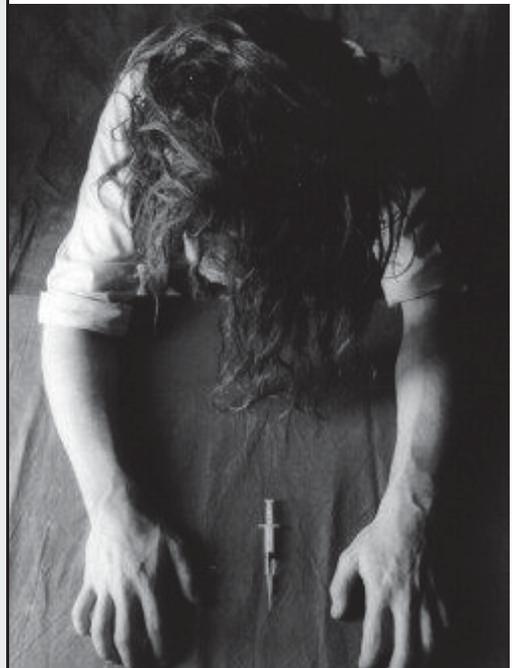


### *A Challenged Economy*

According to 2013 LIFE Community survey respondents, the chief concern facing Marathon County is the lack of high-wage jobs and opportunities for advancement in our current economy. Marathon County was hit harder by the recession than many other counties in Wisconsin, a reality made worse by specific hits to sectors that have historically supplied the bulk of employment in the county. The global economy is in transition, and we are feeling that transition in Marathon County. While new metalwork manufacturing is replacing some of the jobs lost by plant closings in wood and paper manufacturing, the manufacturing sector is still below pre-recession employment levels. Unemployment and underemployment are at the heart of many of the other challenges facing the county, from spikes in substance abuse and related crimes to increased basic needs requests. While this transition is certainly challenging, the county also has a rare opportunity to redefine its economy by investing in and attracting business and industry that will continue to diversify the employment available to residents.

### *Alcohol and Drug Use, Misuse, and Abuse*

Alcohol plays a large role in Wisconsin culture and entertainment, and that is no different in Marathon County. Consequently, rates of alcoholism, binge drinking, and drunk driving are higher both state and countywide than other state and national averages. Marathon County is also seeing a steep increase in recreational drug use, specifically the use of meth and heroin. The costs of these behaviors aren't limited to the abuser, nor are they entirely immediate. Illegal drug use has led to spikes in other types of crimes, and the misuse and abuse of alcohol and other drugs can impede a person's ability to hold down a job or raise children in a healthy environment. Those environmental factors can lead to academic and economic challenges for those children if the cycle isn't broken. Alcohol and other drug misuse and abuse isn't just a symptom of larger problems. It often becomes a cause if those addictions aren't properly treated. Marathon County is shifting to more treatment-based programs in hopes of reducing recidivism rates; however, given that many substance abusers have co-occurring mental health disorders that complicate the addiction, the county would benefit from better investment in mental health resources.



# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2013-2015

## Issues to Watch

The priorities setting that determines the LIFE Report Calls to Action is a difficult process as each indicator included in the report contributes to the quality of life in the county in both unique and interconnected ways. To select which issues deserve our greatest attention can imply an unintended satisfaction with our progress on other issues that are also vital to our community. Although each facet of our community requires our attention, below are four additional issues to watch, whose trends urged us to make special note of their current or impending impact.

### *Unmet Basic Needs*

While the total number of people requesting assistance began to decline in recent years, the total amount of need continued to rise as those people affected by hard times are requesting greater support for a longer duration than in the recent past. This expanded need is straining community support systems, especially as reductions in federal and state aid have further limited their resources.

### *Obesity*

An obesity epidemic has been gaining traction as one of our most significant health and wellness challenges. Health professionals are still gathering information to understand the causes and consequences of unhealthy weights, but we know that an active lifestyle and a balanced diet provide long-term benefits for individuals and the community. This growing concern will benefit from community organization, not only to increase awareness about healthy behaviors but also to encourage people to adopt those behaviors.



### *Healthy Aging*

The baby boomer generation is predicted to produce an aging population at percentages communities have never before seen. This demographic shift will challenge communities, especially if they are not proactive in addressing the shift in need this change will produce. More research is needed not just to recommend behaviors that will help individuals to age healthily but also to ensure that communities have the infrastructure—in transportation, healthcare, etc.—to support people through this phase of their lives.

### *Intimate Partner Violence*

It is with serious caution that domestic abuse was shifted from a Call to Action to an issue to watch. While various coalitions have done great work to increase awareness and resources regarding intimate partner violence, this is and always will be an issue that requires persistent vigilance. There is still much work to do to dispel the stigma that often prevents victims from seeking the justice and support they deserve. Moreover, communities are seeing an increase in abuse among school-age couples and social media has created easy access to destructive relationships like cyber-bullying.







# Demographic Highlights

*Antigo Flats* – Encompassing the towns of Harrison and Plover, Antigo Flats earns its name for its regional connection to Antigo and its subsistence on family potato farms. In addition to these largely generational farms, this region is characterized by large tracts of publicly-owned land and outdoor recreation areas including the Bitzke Bird Walk, the Dells of the Eau Claire, the Ice Age Trail, and the Plover River State Fishery.

*Eastern Lakes* – The southeastern corner of Marathon County is spotted with lakes around which communities have developed. People from this region tend to value a more remote lifestyle, which gives this region the longest average commute and the farthest travel times to other services.

*Heart of America* – The Heart of America is fueled by Marathon County's commercial dairy farms, giving western Marathon County that Americana appeal. A number of small towns—Athens, Marathon City, Spencer, Stratford, Edgar—are more than just service and commercial centers; they are foundational to the community identities within this region.

*Lumberjack* – With the relocation of Wausau East High School, the Lumberjack region has seen an increase in residential development. Surrounding much of the metro area, especially to the north and east, reconstituted farmland is turning into larger lots for commuting professionals wanting the commercial amenities of the metro area but the residential benefits of more rural parts of the county.

*Wisconsin Central* – Wisconsin Central combines the various communities that make up the Wausau Metro Area, offering higher density residential living and the amenities of a more urban lifestyle—arts and culture, restaurants and retail. Its central location with easy access to highways 51 and 29 make it a regional service provider for the greater northwoods as well as the rest of the county.

*Wisconsin River Influence* – Offering more than pick-your-own berry farms, this south-central region provides its residents access not only to the benefits of Wausau, Stevens Point, and Marshfield but also to the flowages of the Wisconsin River, making this region an attractive place to live and giving it the highest per capita income in Marathon County.

We encourage you to consider these regions as you read through the data provided in this report. Understanding the county's regional difference may lead to different approaches and strategies to more effectively serve our communities.

## *The Elusive Young Professionals*

## *Generational Population Trends*

Back in June of 2010, a group of twenty- and thirty-something "young professionals" met with Next Generation Consulting in a meeting room at the Granite Peak Ski area to discuss the priorities of their age demographic. This was just one of the many initiatives designed to study the young professional demographic that have taken place in Marathon and surrounding counties in hopes of attracting and retaining higher percentages of that age group to Central Wisconsin. Younger generations—Generations X and Y, specifically—are living out different lives in a world different from their predecessors. As such, they are drawn to communities for different reasons.

Consider marriage alone. In 1972, the average age for first marriage in the U.S. was 21 for women and 23 for men. Now, more and more people are spending their initial professional years living outside of the traditional family structure, pushing median age for first marriages back to 27 for women and 29 for men, with a demonstrated correlation between educational attainment and later marriages. Moreover, the 2010 census was the first in which married couples did not make up the majority of American households, with almost 30% of the over-18 population having never been married. Coupled with trends regarding dual-income households, a changing family structure is just one of the factors pushing young professionals to seek out communities with different economic and social amenities.

Younger generations are more environmentally conscious and less likely to drive. They are job-hoppers, too, with the average worker today staying at his or her job for only 4.4 years. At current rates, Millennials could have over fifteen different jobs during the course of their professional careers. These changes have led to increased

# Demographic Highlights

re-urbanization as high-density living offers greater professional and social variety while accommodating a car-free lifestyle.

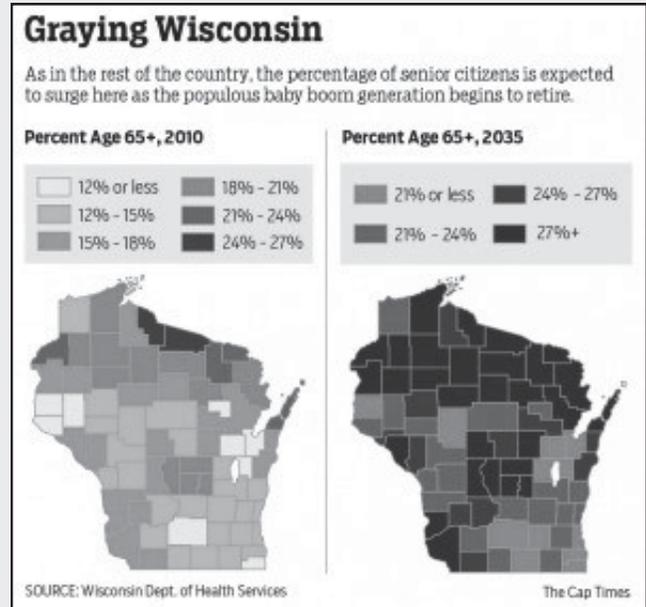
## Aging Population Trends

According to the National Institute on Aging, the number of people over 65 in the U.S. is projected to double over a 25-year span, reaching nearly 72 million by 2030 and making up roughly 20% of the U.S. population. As Baby Boomers age and life expectancy continues to increase, the general population is, in a sense, aging too. This shift is clear in Wisconsin. While all but six of Wisconsin's 72 counties had less than 20% of their population over the age of 65 in 2010, only ten counties are predicted to maintain such low percentages through the year 2035. In Marathon County, people over 65 could make up almost a quarter of the population by 2035—a significant increase from current percentages (12 – 15%).

This shift will come with a need for increased services.

Healthcare spending alone is projected to increase by 25%, but other basic needs will also be impacted. According to AARP, the rate of food insecurity for adults over 50 has been on the rise since 2006. In 2009, 15.6 million faced the threat of hunger. Moreover, as Wisconsin adopts policy initiatives designed to keep aging seniors in their homes, communities will need infrastructure improvements. People will rely more heavily on public transportation to move both services into these homes and these people around the community.

Communities that understand the implications of these impending generational shifts and reimagine their communities with these lifestyle changes in mind will be most likely to avoid negative consequences and costs that such changes could otherwise create.



## A Multicultural Community

While 2010 Census data—at 8.7% non-white residents, up from 6.2% just ten years ago—seems to indicate that a culture change is just beginning in Marathon County, a closer look at our school-age population suggests that this shift has already taken place. It is younger people and families who are most transient as the aging population is much less likely to have the capacity to move or to face the conditions that encourage relocation. Similarly, it is our homogenous aging population that is disguising the shift to our own demographics. At 20%, Marathon County as a whole has already enrolled more than twice the number of students of color in its schools than the at-large population—Wausau, at 30%, more than three times. Like nationwide trends, it is expanding diversity—with Hispanic and multiracial populations growing most quickly—that is responsible for Marathon County's recent population growth.

Creating an inclusive and welcoming community that actively seeks out diversity could positively impact efforts to maintain the vibrancy that has made Marathon County a thriving community by encouraging new growth. It is more than just being attractive to growing minority populations. A study completed by the business school at the University of Connecticut listed "Social Capital"—defined as "[making] the city a more welcoming place by embracing diversity"—as the first want of the young professional demographic. Communities that recognize the positive opportunity at the heart of this change are more likely to foster an atmosphere attractive to future generations of Americans.

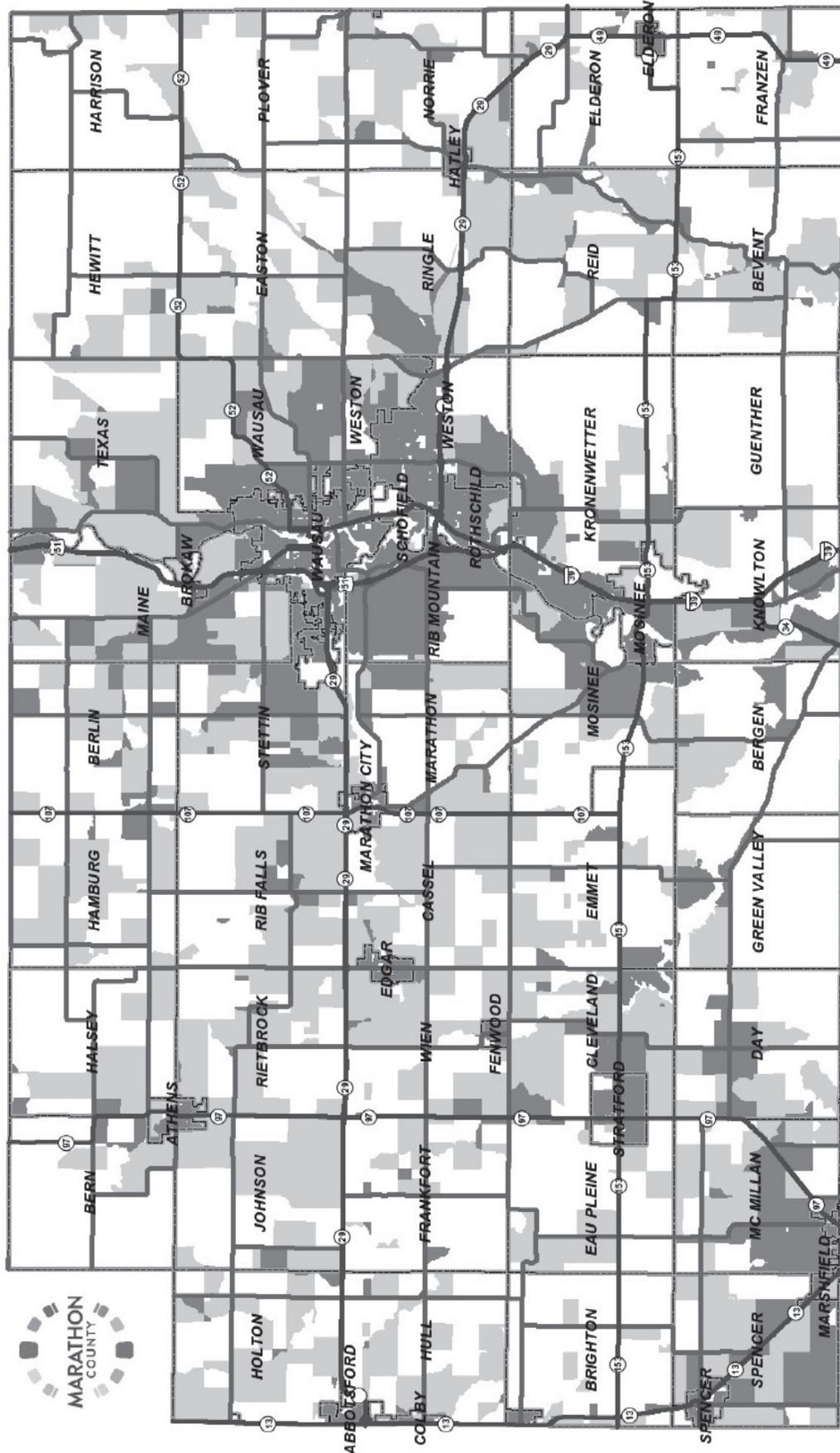
Given this shift, we encourage readers to view the indicators included in this report not just in terms of the people who have populated this region historically, but in terms of the people we have welcomed recently and hope to welcome in the future.

# Community Demographics

Description	Marathon County			Wisconsin			United States		
	2000	2010	2012	2000	2010	2012	2000	2010	2012
Population	125,836	134,063	134,735	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,726,398	281,421,906	308,745,538	313,914,040
Median Age (Years)	36.3	37.9	40.1	36.0	38.5	38.9	35.3	36.5	37.4
Minority Population	6.6%	9.7%	10.0%	13.1%	16.7%	18.0%	31.8%	36.3%	38.9%
Families in Poverty	4.3%	5.0%	7.6%	5.6%	7.2%	8.9%	9.2%	9.9%	11.8%
Median Household Income	\$45,165	\$53,150	\$52,419	\$43,791	\$51,569	\$51,059	\$41,994	\$51,425	\$51,371
Average Household Size	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.6
Language Other Than English Spoken in Home	7.4%	7.8%	9.8%	7.3%	8.2%	8.8%	17.9%	19.6%	21.0%
In Labor Force (16+)	71.7%	72.1%	70.7%	69.1%	69.0%	67.3%	63.9%	65.0%	63.8%
AGE	Under 5	6.4%	6.6%	6.4%	6.4%	6.3%	6.1%	6.8%	6.9%
	5 to 14	15.5%	13.5%	13.3%	14.6%	13.1%	12.9%	14.6%	13.4%
	15 to 24	13.1%	13.3%	12.1%	14.3%	13.8%	13.6%	13.9%	14.1%
	25 to 44	29.5%	25.9%	24.7%	29.4%	25.4%	25.0%	30.3%	27.6%
	45 to 64	22.5%	27.2%	28.5%	22.1%	27.7%	27.9%	21.9%	25.2%
65+	13.0%	13.7%	15.0%	13.1%	13.7%	14.4%	12.4%	12.6%	13.7%
RACE	White	93.8%	91.3%	90.1%	88.9%	86.2%	82.8%	75.1%	72.4%
	Black or African-American	0.3%	0.6%	0.8%	5.7%	6.3%	6.5%	12.3%	12.6%
	American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%
	Asian	4.5%	5.3%	5.5%	1.7%	2.3%	2.5%	3.6%	4.8%
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
	Hispanic or Latino	0.8%	2.2%	2.2%	3.6%	5.9%	6.2%	12.5%	16.3%
	Two or More Races	0.7%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.8%	1.7%	2.4%	2.9%

Source:  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
 American FactFinder  
[factfinder2.census.gov/](http://factfinder2.census.gov/)

# MARATHON COUNTY, WI POPULATION DENSITY



**2010 Census**

- 0 - 25.0 Persons/SqMile
- 25.1 - 50.0 Persons/SqMile
- > 50 Persons/SqMile

— State & US Highways  
 — County Roads  
 □ Municipal Boundary



Map Date: November 3, 2011

# 2013 LIFE Community Survey Results

1. In thinking about the quality of life in Marathon County, how SATISFIED are you with the following in your community?	Strongly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Strongly Dissatisfied	Don't Know/Not Applicable
Accessibility of child care.	48	181	75	24	4	520
Accessibility of elder care.	52	282	145	48	17	307
Accessibility of services for adults and/or children who are victims of family violence or abuse.	60	243	110	31	9	392
Accessibility of health care.	273	431	62	38	15	28
Accessibility of mental health services.	72	244	121	76	34	289
Accessibility of dental care.	245	420	66	57	24	29
Availability of information about community services.	111	413	194	66	10	52
Quality of public K-12 education.	184	354	74	60	6	171
Availability of post high school education.	160	427	96	35	9	117
Maintenance of streets, roads and highways.	45	346	172	221	56	8
Availability of public transportation.	41	247	203	94	36	221
Availability of arts and entertainment opportunities.	152	417	165	50	8	52
Availability of area parks and recreation.	233	497	73	28	7	12
My community is open and welcoming.	153	429	176	56	16	15
Availability of walking and biking opportunities.	143	433	117	96	16	46
Cleanliness of our lakes and rivers.	72	394	194	125	29	35

2. In thinking about the quality of life in Marathon County, how CONCERNED are you about the following in your community?	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Neither Concerned or not concerned	Not concerned	Don't Know/Not Applicable	Top-Three Concern
Affordability of child care.	97	164	98	50	434	21
Affordability of elder care.	250	255	86	30	224	88
Affordability of health care.	431	269	67	45	29	225
Affordability of mental health care services.	232	225	132	36	208	41
Affordability of dental care.	317	323	99	75	20	55
Availability of assistance programs for those in need.	201	319	145	76	98	46
Affordability of post high school education.	214	264	166	86	106	46
Misuse of alcohol.	304	277	142	68	58	93
Illegal drug use.	478	214	74	31	51	175
Abuse and misuse of prescription drugs.	388	256	112	37	50	54
Drinking and driving.	454	247	85	39	27	152
Unhealthy eating and/or the lack of physical activity.	210	397	149	63	20	46

Family violence or abuse of adults and/or children.	256	364	135	29	58	65
Acceptance of people of different backgrounds, races and life-styles	155	318	228	119	21	29
Availability of good paying jobs.	457	291	57	24	23	241
Amount of quality time that parents spend with their children.	263	331	143	42	65	42
My personal safety in my home.	138	212	212	268	13	51
My safety when alone in my neighborhood in the daytime.	97	164	218	355	11	18
My safety when alone in my neighborhood after dark.	139	243	210	230	13	64

**a. Please circle the top 3 issues that concern you the most in question 2.**

<b>3. I am employed:</b>	Full Time: 384	Part Time: 93	Not Employed: 63	Retired: 316
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**a. If employed – I am satisfied with my full time or part time job.**

Strongly Agree: 172	Agree: 234	Disagree: 56	Strongly Disagree: 9
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**b. If you are not satisfied with your job, what best describes why? (check all that apply)**

Job Does Not Use Educational Background: 9	Low Wages: 37	Lack of Benefits: 15	Lack of Advancement: 11	Not Enough Hours/Part Time: 7	Poor Work Environment: 23	Other: 14
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**4. Was there a time in the past 12 months you had no health care coverage or insurance (private, Medicare, Medicaid, or BadgerCare)?**

Yes: 68	No: 754	Don't Know/Not Sure: 3
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**a. If yes, what was the most important reason?**

Not Offered by Employer: 11	Chose Not to Have it Do to Cost: 24	Not Working: 11	Not Eligible: 14	Other: 9
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**5. Was there a time in the past 12 months when you or someone in your household needed to see a doctor/ medical provider but could not?**

Yes: 88	No: 745
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**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

Did Not Know How/Where to Find a Provider: 5	Distance/Transportation: 2	Did Not Have Insurance: 45	No Available Appointments: 8	Had No Means to Pay for Service: 33	Other: 15
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**6. Was there a time in the past 12 months when you or someone in your household needed to see a dentist but could not?**

Yes: 111	No: 732
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**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

Did Not Know How/Where to Find a Provider: 3	Distance/Transportation: 2	Did Not Have Insurance: 82	No Available Appointments: 6	Had No Means to Pay for Service: 53	Other: 8
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**7. Was there a time in the past 12 months when you or someone in your household did not take their medication as prescribed?**

Yes: 88	No: 761
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**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

Did Not Have Insurance: 9	Distance/Transportation: 1	Had No Means to Pay for Medication: 31	Chose Not to Take Medication: 19	Did Not Understand Prescription Directions: 2	Did Not Remember: 31	Did Not Know How/Where to Get Prescription Filled: 3	Other: 11
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**8. Was there a time in the past 12 months when you or someone in your household needed to see a mental health provider but could not?**

Yes: 39	No: 813
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**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

Did Not Know How/Where to Find a Provider: 7	Distance/Transportation: 1	Did Not Have Insurance: 14	No Available Appointments: 8	Had No Means to Pay for Service: 18	Other: 6
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<b>9. Does your family/household have medical debt?</b>	Yes: 232	No: 611
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**a. If yes, check the amount:**

\$999 or Less: 94	\$1,000 - \$4,999: 99	\$5,000 - \$10,000: 25	\$10,000+: 12
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**10. In the last 12 months, was there a time your household did not have enough food?**

Yes: 47	No: 792	Don't Know: 19
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**a. If yes, did you seek food assistance?**

Yes: 23	No: 21
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**b. If no, why not?**

Did Not Know How to Get Help: 5	Did Not Want to Ask for Help: 8	Already Received Help: 2	No Transportation: 0	Not Eligible: 8	Other: 0
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**11. Do you spend 30% or more of your total household income on housing? (Housing includes rent or mortgage plus utilities, insurance, and property taxes.)**

Yes: 368	No: 362	Don't Know: 57	Prefer Not to Say: 55
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**12. In a typical month, how difficult is it to cover your household expenses and bills?**

Very Difficult: 51	Somewhat Difficult: 327	Not at All Difficult: 380	Don't Know: 11	Prefer Not to Say: 78
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**13. Have you set aside emergency or rainy day funds that would cover your expenses for 3 months, in case of sickness, job loss, economic downturn, or other emergencies?**

Yes: 482	No: 291	Don't Know: 17	Prefer Not to Say: 56
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**14. In the last 12 months have you: (check all that apply)**

Donated Items or Made a Financial Contribution to Charity: 714	Helped Individuals Outside My Household and/or Volunteered in the Community: 469
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**a. If you volunteered, approximately how many total hours in the past 12 months did you volunteer or help individuals outside your household?**

1 - 10 Hours/Year: 117	10 - 50 Hours/Year: 164	50 - 100 Hours/Year: 78	>100 Hours/Year: 61
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**15. Do you have a private well?**

Yes: 321	No: 523
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**a. Do you have your water tested annually?**

Yes: 62	No: 244
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**b. If no, why not?**

Not Concerned about Taste, Odor, or Look: 94	Cost: 30	Do Not Know Where to Get it Tested: 27	Did Not Know I Should: 73	Other: 40
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**16. Which of the following actions have you taken to reduce your amount of trash?**

Composting: 227	Recycling: 791	Proper Disposal of Hazardous Materials: 403	Pay Attention to Packaging When Buying Items: 185	Donating Items: 591	Reusing Materials: 413	None: 18
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**17. Was there a time in the last 12 months when you or someone in your household had no transportation to get to critical activities such as work, medical appointments, shopping, etc.?**

Yes: 57	No: 789	Not Sure: 9
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**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

No Car/Unreliable Car: 24	No Access to a Bus: 15	Couldn't Afford Gas: 13	Couldn't Afford Taxi or Special Transportation: 8	Unable to Drive Due to My Health: 10	No Family, Friends, or Volunteers were Available to Take Me: 16	Other: 6
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**18. What do you like best about living in Marathon County? (check up to 5)**

Affordable Place to Live: 303	Good Place for Kids: 305	Rural Living: 272	Size of the Community: 338	After-hours Activities: 63	Good Schools: 322	Parks and Natural Areas: 378
Open and Welcoming: 101	Job Opportunities: 84	Location: 201	Near Friends and Family: 569	Sense of Community: 152	Other: 29	

**19. Considering all types of alcoholic beverages, how many times have 5 or more drinks been consumed on one occasion during the past 30 days? (A standard drink is defined as a 12 oz beer, 4 oz wine, 1½ oz liquor)**

	None	Once	2 Times	3 - 5 Times	6 - 9 Times	10 or More	Don't Know
<b>By you?</b>	649	70	41	60	16	11	8
<b>By most other adults?</b>	143	62	89	174	60	33	249

**20. In the past 30 days, how many times has a motorized vehicle been operated after consuming 2 or more drinks of alcohol in an hour?**

	None	Once	2 Times	3 - 5 Times	6 - 9 Times	10 or More	Don't Know
<b>By you?</b>	759	41	20	15	2	4	13
<b>By most other adults?</b>	154	70	95	120	38	45	285

**21. In a typical week, how many days per week do you participate in physical activity for at least 30 minutes?**

None: 130	1 - 2: 260	3 - 4: 254	5 - 7: 193	Don't Know: 16
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**22. In a typical week, how many times do you eat an evening meal at a table with family and/or friends?**

None: 130	1 - 2: 260	3 - 4: 254	5 - 7: 193	Don't Know: 16
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**23. What is your weight classification?**

Underweight: 2	Normal: 249	Overweight: 295	Obese: 222
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**24. Do you live in an urban or rural location (urban: Wausau, Weston, Rothschild, Schofield, Rib Mountain)?**

Urban: 497	Rural: 327
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**24. My gender is:**

Male: 318	Female: 526
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**25. What is your current marital status?**

Single: 85	Married: 584	Separated: 6	Widowed: 95	Divorced: 73	Other: 13
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**26. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

No High School Degree: 64	High School Diploma: 245	GED or Alternative: 16	Some College: 129	Associate's Degree: 134	Bachelor's Degree: 164	Master's Degree: 79	Doctorate: 17
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**27. What is your age group?**

18 - 24: 8	25 - 34: 90	35 - 44: 106	45 - 54: 162	55 - 64: 192	65 - 74: 173	75 - 84: 91	85+: 33
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**28. How long have you lived here?**

Less than 1 Year: 7	1 - 5 Years: 66	6 - 15 Years: 164	More than 15 Years: 361	Life-long Resident: 256
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**29. What is your race or ethnic background?**

White: 773	Black/Afr-American: 0	Asian: 38	Hispanic/Latino: 31	American Indian: 5	2 or More Races: 3	Other: 5
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**30. What was your gross annual household income, before taxes, last year?**

<\$14,999: 50	\$15,000 - \$24,999: 99	\$25,000 - \$34,999: 87	\$35,000 - \$49,999: 130	\$50,000 - \$74,999: 126	\$75,000+: 180	Prefer Not to Say: 169
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*We strive to live in a community where...*

a strong sense of connection, respect, and support  
makes it a great place to live and raise a family.



Basic Needs and Supports Subcommittee

Ralph Illick, Chair	Marathon County Public Library
Jeff Sargent	North Central Community Action Program
Jane Graham-Jennings	The Women's Community
Julie Grip	United Way of Marathon County
Vicki Tylka	Marathon County Social Services
MaiGer Moua	United Way of Marathon County
Mary Fisher	Community Development Authority
Jennifer Cummings	Aging and Disability Resource Center of Central Wisconsin
Kelly Zagrzebski	Wisconsin Public Service Corporation
Shannon Crowell	Energy Assistance
Jane Huebsch	Marathon County Social Services
Tom Rau	The Neighbors' Place
JoAnn Janikowski	United Way of Marathon County
Deb Hoppa	Catholic Charities
Jacob & Melinda Tripp	The Salvation Army
Greg Seubert	Metro Ride City Transit
Joanne Leonard	Marathon County Transportation Coordinating Committee
Phil Valitchka	Metro Planning's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Diane Wessel	Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning

*"Marathon County has a long history of supporting the infrastructures that enhance the quality of life in its communities. Our continued support for families in need is a logical extension of this tradition."*

*Ralph Illick, Director  
Marathon County Public Library*

# Basic Needs and Supports

## Section Summary

### Community Success and Progress:

- Marathon County has compassionate service providers with a willingness to collaborate and partner using a client-focused approach.
- Community initiatives such as the Marathon County Hunger Coalition and the Marathon County Housing and Homelessness Coalition bring together 50 organizations collaborating to serve the community.
- In 2013, the need for an additional resource to provide shelter from the cold weather led to the creation of the Warming Center operated by Catholic Charities.
- Marathon County Food Pantries provided needed food to over 8,000 people in 2012.



### Challenges and Opportunities to Improve:

#### Challenges

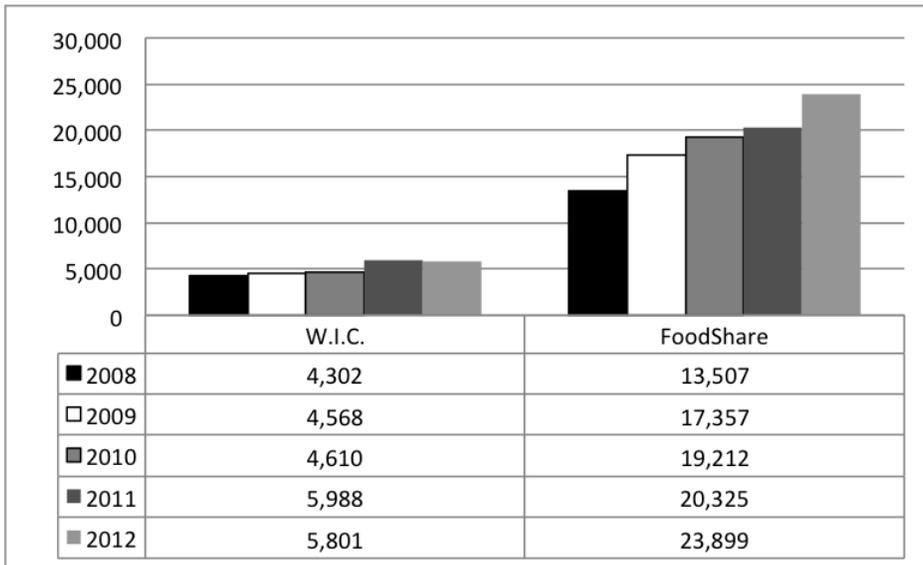
- Requests for basic needs assistance continue to rise as community resources diminish, challenging the county's ability to serve all persons in need.
- The amount and duration of homelessness and housing assistance has strained the limited resources of affordable housing, emergency shelters, and voucher programs.
- Public transportation services including paratransit are limited, and rural transportation services are non-existent.

#### Opportunities to Improve

- Awareness programs about basic needs concerns can emphasize the importance of working together for solutions.
- Coordinating services in innovative ways can open up creative solutions.
- Research could identify root causes to basic needs challenges such as housing, homelessness, and hunger.



**Key Measure:** Individuals Served Through Food Assistance in Marathon County, 2008—2012



## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

When tough economic times create scarce resources, individuals and families can find themselves needing assistance in making ends meet, including assistance with food. Hunger continues to be a significant and growing problem. In spite of indications at the national level that the economy is improving, more Marathon County individuals and families are experiencing budgetary challenges. This is especially true for the unemployed, the underemployed, and senior citizens.

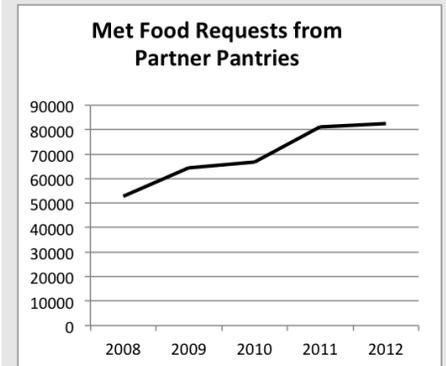
More than five years ago, Marathon County recognized this need and began working to address these challenges. The Marathon County Hunger Coalition unites over 40 organizations and feeding programs with county and local nutrition agencies, businesses and other interested groups. This coalition has created a process by which to proactively deal with this challenge.

The Marathon County Hunger Coalition collects and distributes an ever-increasing amount of local food, promotes awareness of the root causes of hunger, provides more access to nutritious food, and encourages healthy food choices throughout Marathon County. A collective, county-wide acceptance of this responsibility for ensuring that no one goes to bed hungry



in Marathon County continues to be central to the efforts of the Marathon County Hunger Coalition and its work in meeting this challenge.

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS



**8 Partner Pantries:** AIDS Resource Center, Covenant Community Presbyterian Church, Community Center of Hope, First Presbyterian Church, The Neighbors' Place, the Salvation Army, Wesley United Methodist Church, and The Women's Community.

- Marathon County Hunger Coalition's Partner Food Pantries have seen an increase in requests for food since 2008.
- In 2012, Marathon County's FoodShare program distributed \$22,103,649 in assistance, up from \$17,504,064 in 2010.
- As of June, 2013, Marathon County's FoodShare program has distributed \$11,324,497 in assistance. Wisconsin has distributed \$605,062,576 in benefits through June 2013.

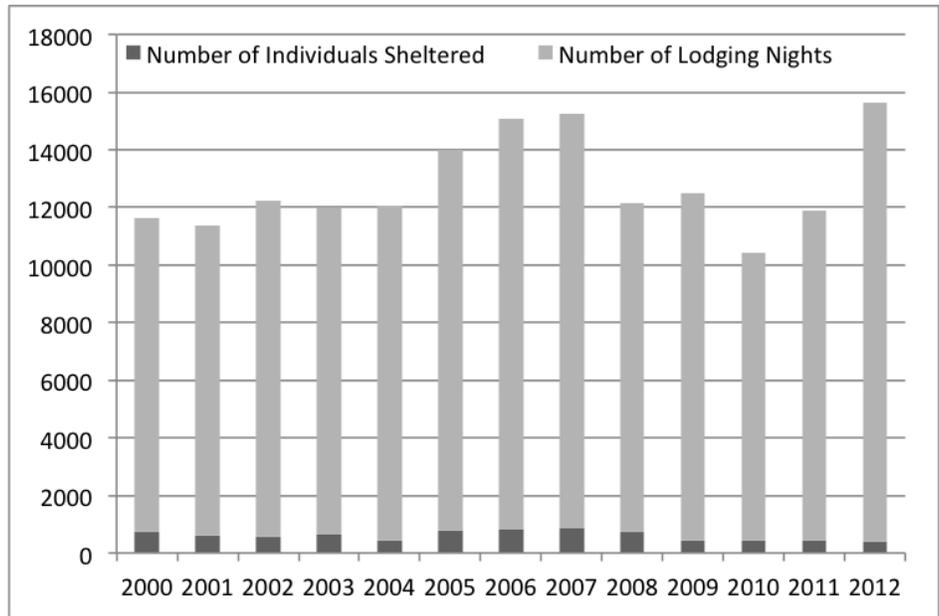
## SOURCES

- **State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/em/rsdata](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/em/rsdata)
- **2010 US Census**  
[www.2010.census.gov](http://www.2010.census.gov)
- **United Way of Marathon County**  
[www.unitedwaymc.org](http://www.unitedwaymc.org)

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In Wisconsin during the first quarter of 2013, 6,607 people used shelters, vs. 6,523 in 2012 and 6,397 in 2011, a 1.3% increase from 2012 and a 3.3% increase from 2011.
- The Emergency Housing Assistance Fund (EHAF) provided 2,020 nights of emergency lodging at local hotels in 2012, an increase of 288% from the 520 nights provided in 2010.
- The Warming Center, operated by Catholic Charities, was open from February 1 to April 15, 2013. 94 people stayed at least one night. The center could accommodate 15 people per night. The average number per night was 10.3.
- A Homeless Street Count on January 2013 found 9 homeless people in the Wausau area.

**Key Measure:** Total Number of Individuals Sheltered and Lodging Nights in Marathon County, 2000—2012



## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Homeless shelters provide temporary residences for vulnerable individuals and families that seek protection from the often-devastating effects of homelessness. Shelters have the common goal of providing shelter for people who are unable to acquire or maintain housing that they can afford, who are fleeing abusive environments, or who need protection (i.e. the warming center) from extreme weather conditions. Shelters tend to have similar functions but can vary in their specific outreach and their target populations.

shelters, such as The Salvation Army and The Women’s Community; transitional housing operated by Randlin Homes; and the Warming Center opened in early 2013 and operated by Catholic Charities. In 2012, the Marathon County Housing and Homelessness Coalition was also created. This community collaboration, supported by the United Way of Marathon County, exists to raise awareness, define needs, and find solutions for housing challenges in hopes of eradicating homelessness in Marathon County.

In Marathon County individuals and families face homelessness every day. While recent trends have seen a decrease in the number of individuals needing shelter, shelters continued to see an increased use in their facilities, indicating that, while the scope of homeless in Marathon County may be decreasing, those impacted are affected to a greater degree than in recent years.

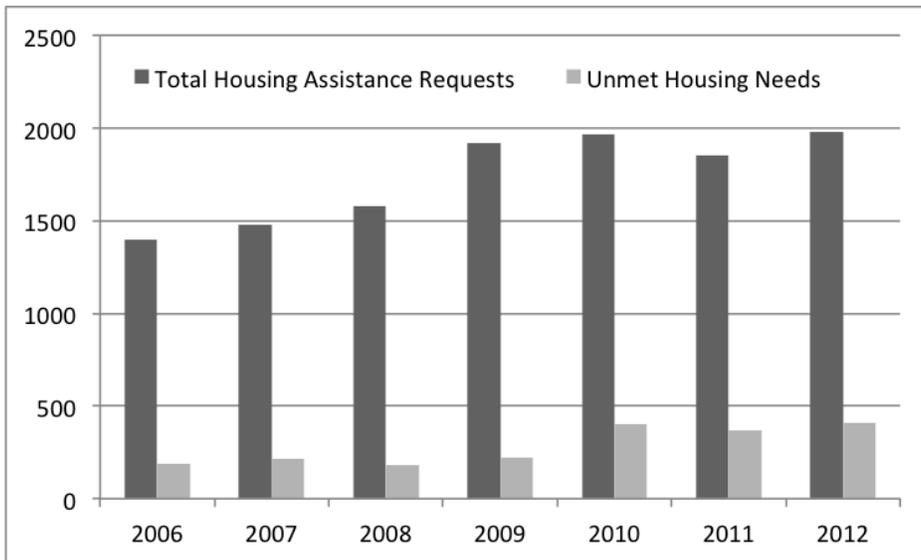


Marathon County has an array of programs and services that address homelessness including emergency

## SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Commerce**  
<http://commerce.wi.gov/>
- **The Salvation Army**  
<http://www.salvationarmy.org>
- **The Women’s Community, Inc.**  
[www.womenscommunity.org](http://www.womenscommunity.org)
- **Catholic Charities**  
[www.cclse.org/wausau/php](http://www.cclse.org/wausau/php)
- **Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP)**  
<http://www.wiscap.org>

**Key Measure:** Total and Unmet Housing Assistance Requests from United Way's 2-1-1, 2006—2012



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Housing needs are complex. With affordable housing rates defined as no more than 30% of income, housing costs are the largest budgetary concern for many families. Housing needs are further exacerbated by a number of factors including monthly income, previous housing experiences, physical health, mental health, AODA issues, transportation, availability of affordable housing, financial literacy, other financial responsibilities, and the availability of assistance. Thus, finding safe and affordable housing can be a challenge for many residents in Marathon County, and for some, housing is simply not affordable.

There are programs in Marathon County designed to provide housing assistance. The Emergency Housing Assistance Fund (EHAF) funded through the United Way of Marathon County provides rental assistance and the City of Wausau manages several different public housing options. Forward Services also provides housing assistance through the Emergency Assistance Program, which can assist families with minor children when there has been a crisis within the last 90 days.

Consistent with trends tracked since United Way's 2-1-1 first reported an increased need in 2006, 26% of all unmet needs were for housing in 2012. The

scale of that need has also been a growing challenge for the county. For example, Marathon County's Section 8 housing program has seen participants requesting greater assistance to meet rent; thus even the same number of dollars is impacting fewer participants. Coupled with cuts to funding, these programs are struggling to meet the need.



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2012, 26% of all unmet needs were for housing (404 of 1,524 unmet requests).
- The City of Wausau provides public housing through Riverview Terrace, Riverview Towers, Scattered Site Public Housing and Section 8 Rental Assistance.
- The Section 8 Program's waiting list has been closed since it reached 600 people in February 2010. More than three years later, there are still over 150 waitlisted families.
- Marathon County has 435 allocated Section 8 vouchers; however, the average amount of need per voucher has increased such that the \$83,000 of funding meets the need for only 253 vouchers.
- The Emergency Housing Assistance Fund (EHAF) provided 431 months of rental assistance in 2012. In 2011, 289 months of rental assistance were provided.
- The 2013 Living Wage in Marathon County (calculated using affordable housing statistics) is \$12.27, more than \$5 more than the minimum wage.

### SOURCES

- **United Way of Marathon County**  
United Way's 2-1-1 2011 & 2012 Caller Unmet Needs Snapshot  
[www.unitedwaymc.org/211.htm](http://www.unitedwaymc.org/211.htm)
- **US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**  
[portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD)
- **City of Wausau**  
Community Development Authority  
[www.ci.wausau.wi.us/](http://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/)

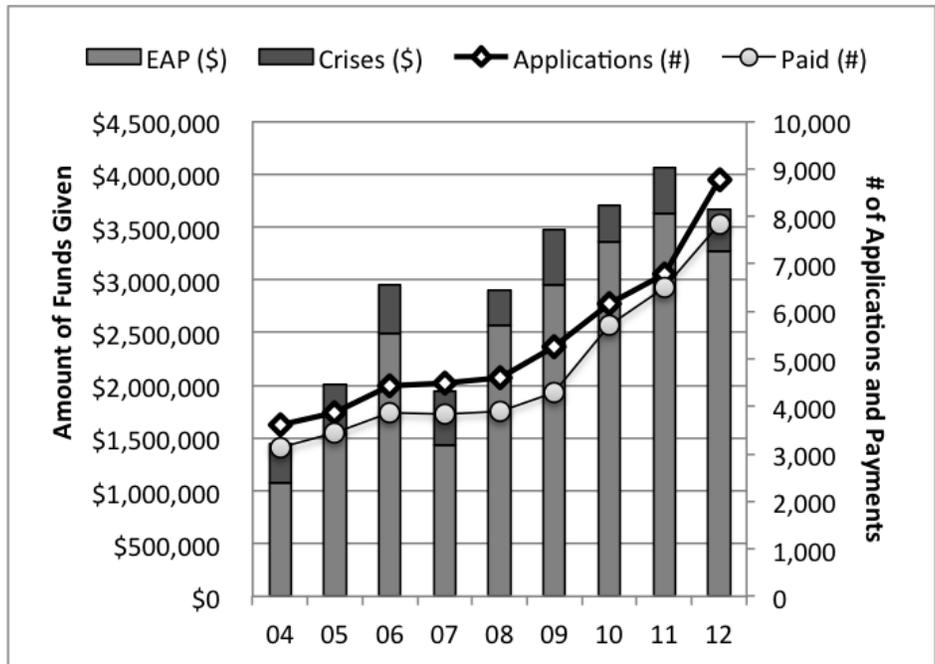
## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Temporary financial assistance requests to United Way’s 2-1-1 program regarding utilities have increased over the last three years, from 1,313 in 2010 to 3,709 in 2012.
- Wisconsin’s average electric use per household is 687 kWh per month at \$0.12061 per kWh.
- Quarterly rates for water range from \$15.45 to \$32.00; for sewer, \$12.50 to \$32.00 with the additional volume charge of \$1.69-\$2.80 per 100 cubic feet of water.
- The national average cost of home heating oil is \$4.01/gallon. Wisconsin averages \$3.67-\$3.71/gallon, while the cost of propane in Marathon County is \$1.99-\$2.48/gallon.
- Average cost of natural gas is 77 cents per therm compared to the average cost of propane and oil at \$1.90 per therm.
- Over the past three years, the following numbers of residents in Marathon County have been in danger of having their power disconnected:
  - \* 2010: 7,953
  - \* 2011: 7,588
  - \* 2012: 7,630

## SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP)**  
[www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov/](http://www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov/)
- **Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund**  
[www.keepwisconsinwarm.org](http://www.keepwisconsinwarm.org)
- **Wisconsin Public Service**  
[www.wisconsinpublicservice.com](http://www.wisconsinpublicservice.com)
- **U.S. Department of Energy**  
<http://energy.gov/>

**Key Measure:** Wisconsin Energy Association Program Applications and Payments in Marathon County, 2004—2012



## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The costs associated with a household are numerous including telephone, water and sewer, electricity, and heating fuel. The rising costs of these combined services have placed a greater burden on family budgets, causing an increase in families seeking assistance funds for heat and electricity.

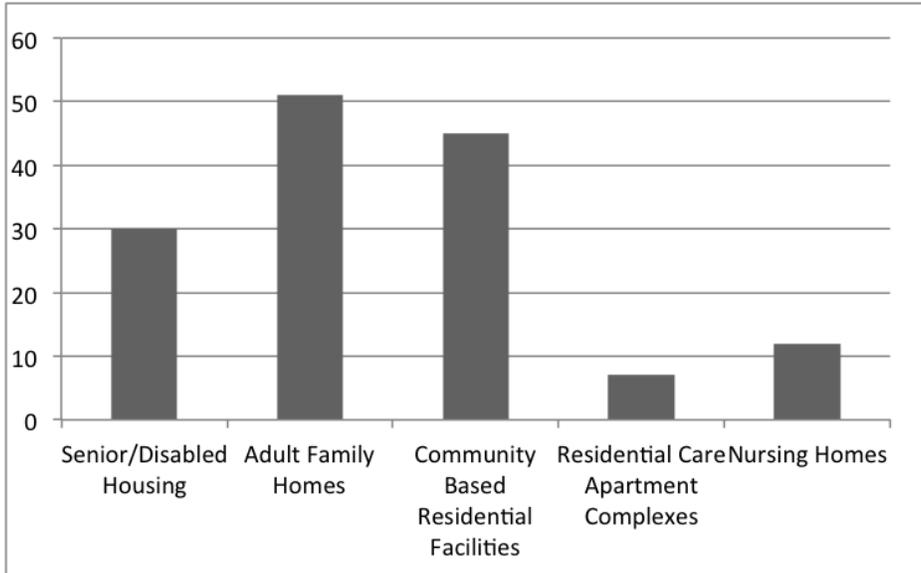
While the demand for assistance has increased every year in Marathon County, households that received actual energy assistance grants from 2011 to 2012 showed an increase of 5.5%. The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (administered by Energy Services, Inc. on behalf of the County) facilitates the two major energy assistance programs available to families most in need. These include the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and the state funded Public Benefits Energy Assistance Program. In

combination, these programs helped approximately 267,000 Wisconsin households in 2012 with more than 5,700 families in Marathon County receiving benefits totaling \$3,266,124.

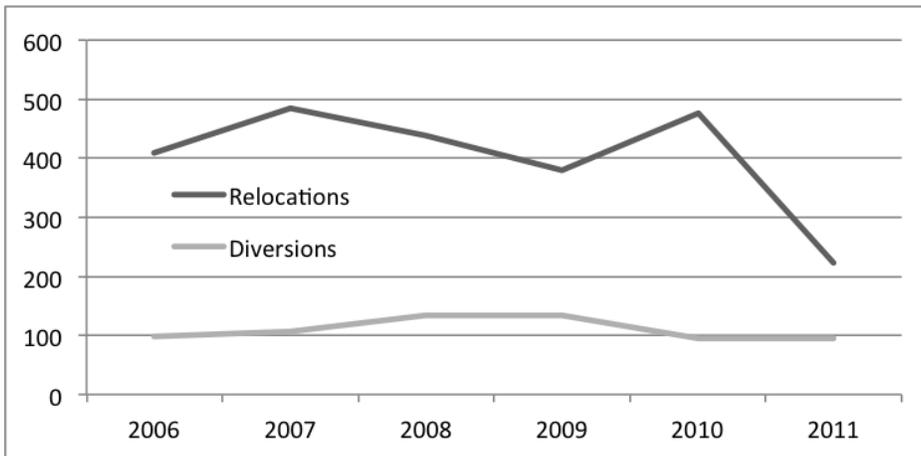
The Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund—an Energy Services, Inc. initiative—was established to keep the heat and power on for families in crisis. Through public, private, and community partnerships, the fund provides the preventative services and financial assistance necessary to alleviate potentially life-threatening energy-related emergencies during winter.



### Key Measure: Assisted Living Facilities by Option in Marathon County, 2013



### Key Measure: Frail Elders in Wisconsin Relocated or Diverted from Nursing Homes Back to the Community, 2006—2012



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The state of Wisconsin promotes housing for the aging population that provides the “least restrictive option that meets an individual’s care needs.” This shift advocates for increased in-home and community-based long-term care as a more fiscally and emotionally responsible method of service delivery. As such, nursing homes are increasingly utilized as temporary rehabilitation facilities rather than long-term housing options. This shift, coupled with the expanding aging population, requires different infrastructure to support those people staying in their homes.

Choices of suitable housing alternatives depend on a number of factors, including lifestyle preferences, the level of support

needed, cost and the options available in a particular community. Some of the options are subject to specific government regulation, while others are not. While Marathon County is generally satisfied with the accessibility of elder care, there is a significant concern about the affordability of care.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 61.4% of LIFE Community survey respondents were either satisfied or strongly satisfied with access to elder care. Only 9.6% were strongly satisfied.
- 81.3% of LIFE Community survey respondents were either somewhat or very concerned with the affordability of elder care. 40.3% were very concerned.
- There are currently 937 beds available in nursing homes in Marathon County. In 2011, there were 939.
- From its inception in 2006 to 2011, the Community Relocation Initiative has moved 2,410 frail elders living in Wisconsin nursing homes back among family and friends.
- During the state fiscal year 2011, these relocation efforts saved \$2.2 million for the Medical Assistance Program.

### SOURCES

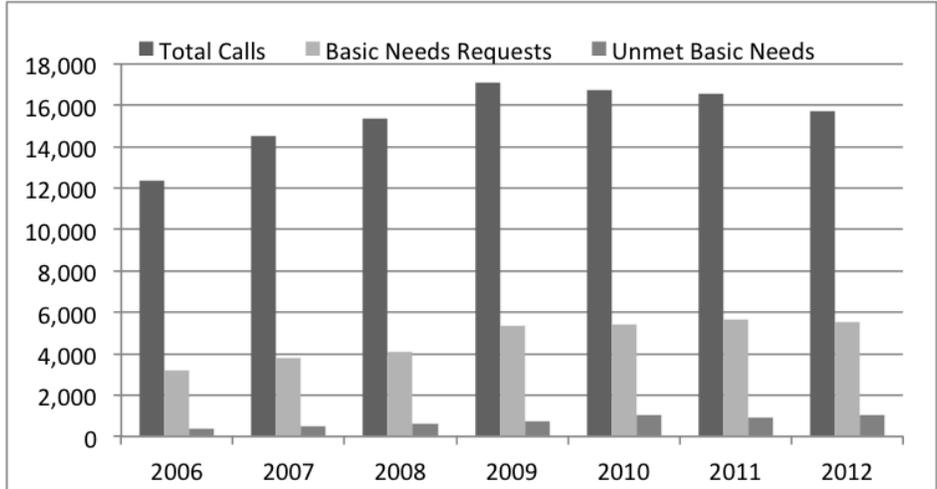
- **Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services**  
Wisconsin Assisted Living Facilities <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/bqaconsumer/AssistedLiving/AsLivindex.htm>  
Wisconsin Nursing Homes <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/bqaconsumer/NursingHomes/NHindex.htm>  
State of Assisted Living <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/bqaconsumer/assistedliving/altrends12.pdf>  
Connections to Community Living <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ccl/reports-pubs/index.htm>

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

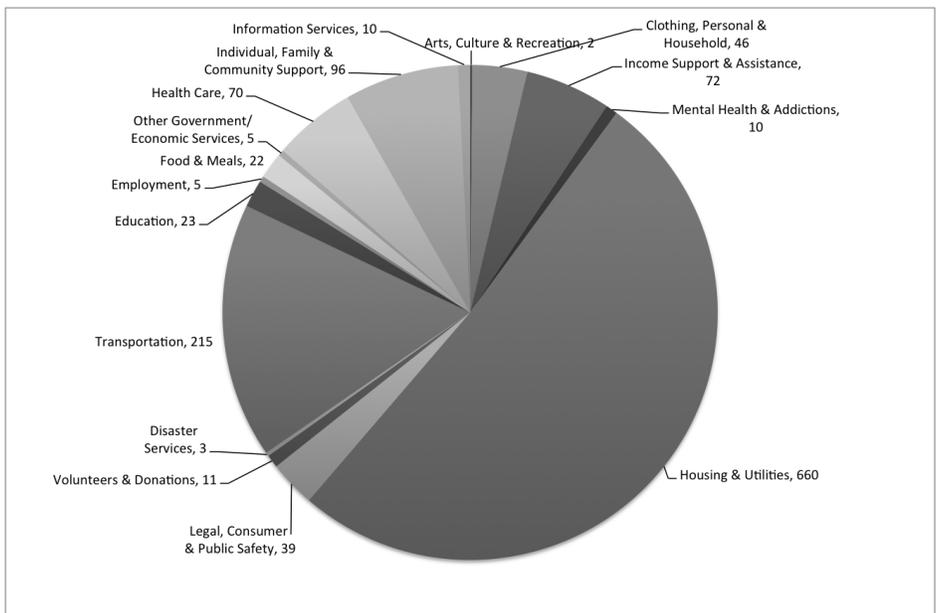
**BASIC NEEDS** are those items essential to sustaining life, such as housing, utilities, transportation, food, material resources (i.e. clothing and personal and household items), and other miscellaneous expense assistance related to meeting basic needs.

- In 2012, United Way’s 2-1-1 served 15,705 Marathon County callers with a total of 18,155 needs. 8% of callers—up from 6% in 2011 and an average of 5% over prior years—had needs for which the community’s resources were insufficient.
- 84% of needs requests in 2012 fell into the “basic needs” category.
- Requests for basic needs help have almost doubled between 2006 and 2012 and unmet needs requests have almost tripled.
- At 51% of 2012 requests, housing and utilities assistance was the most prevalent area of need, remaining unmet 25% of the time.
- Transportation needs emerged as the fastest growing area of need in 2012, remaining unmet 26% of the time.

Key Measure: United Way’s 2-1-1 Unmet Basic Needs, 2006—2012



Key Measure: United Way’s 2-1-1 Unmet Basic Needs by Category, 2012



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The unmet basic needs identified above reflect the needs of United Way’s 2-1-1 callers whose basic needs went unmet because no local agencies or programs were available or equipped to respond to their needs. The unmet-basic-needs data points to gaps in services, informing the United Way and the community at large in hopes of better responding to those needs.

Past LIFE Reports noted a significant increase in requests for basic needs assistance since 2006. While 2012 continued the downward trend of total calls since 2009, it maintained similar basic needs requests and saw the

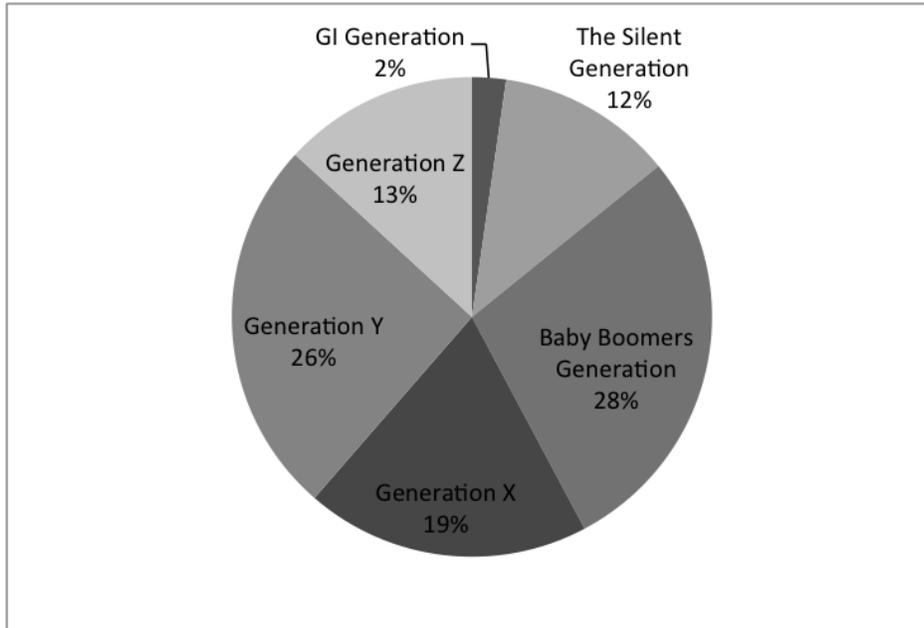
proportion of unmet needs rise an additional two percentage points for 2011, now almost doubling traditional averages.

United Way’s 2-1-1 has experienced not only an increase in the number of calls, but also in the level and urgency of the needs of the callers. The struggling economy continues to affect local working families, job seekers, and special needs populations. In Marathon County, the gaps in service are increasing and existing systems are overwhelmed by requests for assistance in meeting needs.

SOURCES

- **United Way of Marathon County**  
United Way’s 2-1-1  
[www.unitedwaymc.org/211.htm](http://www.unitedwaymc.org/211.htm)  
2012 Marathon County Caller Unmet Needs  
[www.unitedwaymc.org/PDFs/211/2012MarCoUnmetNeeds.pdf](http://www.unitedwaymc.org/PDFs/211/2012MarCoUnmetNeeds.pdf)

**Key Measure:** Marathon County Population by Generation, 2010



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

For the first time since the advent of the automobile, travel is on the decline. Thought to be a function of the declining economy, people are making fewer discretionary trips and living closer to service centers. However, vehicle travel is declining more than any other means and is expected to continue declining after the economy recovers.

Compared with recent generations, Generation Y is more likely to choose not to drive, wanting alternative transportation options instead as part of their choice to re-urbanize. This generation prefers bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit. Generation Z is waiting even longer than previous generations to drive. Concurrently, more members of the G.I. and Silent Generations are “aging in place.” These generations face limited access to transportation for medical, nutritional, shopping, and social needs. As life expectancy is increasing, the years of transportation dependency are increasing as well. For aging Baby Boomers, who currently travel more than any other generation, this poses additional challenges. 83% live outside of the urban centers where public transportation is usually more accessible.

A transportation system includes the infrastructure, the vehicles, the technologies, the transported people and goods, the environment that affects and is affected by transportation, and the policies that govern transportation. Past transportation policies were established to build infrastructure to facilitate the fast transport of people and goods over long distances. However, the existing transportation system and policies no longer meet our needs and wants. To meet the needs of these changing generations, policy will need to shift from infrastructure construction and repair to planning for multiple transportation modes, transportation-related technology, increased demand for public transit, and changing land-use patterns.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

Generation Birth Years	
GI Generation	1912 - 1926
The Silent Generation	1927 - 1945
Baby Boomers	1946 - 1964
Generation X	1965 - 1983
Generation Y	1984 - 2002
Generation Z	2003 - Present

- State budget cuts have reduced funding of public transit by 10%.
- About 80% of seniors live in areas that are car-dependent.
- As life expectancy increases, the difference between life expectancy and driving expectancy increases. Seniors are estimated to be dependent on others or public transit for transportation for a period of 7 to 10 years.
- In Wisconsin metropolitan areas, 50% to 90% of seniors have poor access to transportation.
- In a 2013 study by New Urban Land Institute, 52% of Baby Boomers, half of Generation Y, and 45% of Generation X respondents indicated that they place a high priority on public transportation options.
- Over 25% of Generation Y does not have a driver's license.

### SOURCES

- **American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)**  
Public Policy Institute  
[www.aarp.org/research/ppi/](http://www.aarp.org/research/ppi/)
- **Urban Land Institute**  
[www.ulii.org/](http://www.ulii.org/)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/)
- **Wisconsin Department of Transportation**  
[www.dot.state.wi.us](http://www.dot.state.wi.us)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

*Personal Vehicle*

- The average household has 2.4 vehicles.
- 4.5 % of households have no vehicles.
- There are 3,365 miles of roads in the county
  - \* 274 miles of state highway
  - \* 614 miles of county roadway
  - \* 2,477 miles of local streets

*Bike & Pedestrian*

- 100 miles of newly signed bike routes are in the Wausau metro area.
- The Cities of Wausau, Schofield, and Mosinee and the Villages of Rothschild and Weston have ordinances regarding sidewalks.
- All federal and state funded road projects must have bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

*Public Transit*

- Marathon County has 8 fixed routes and 10 school (express) routes.
- Metro Ride has 630,000 annual riders and 12,025 annual paratransit and human-services riders.

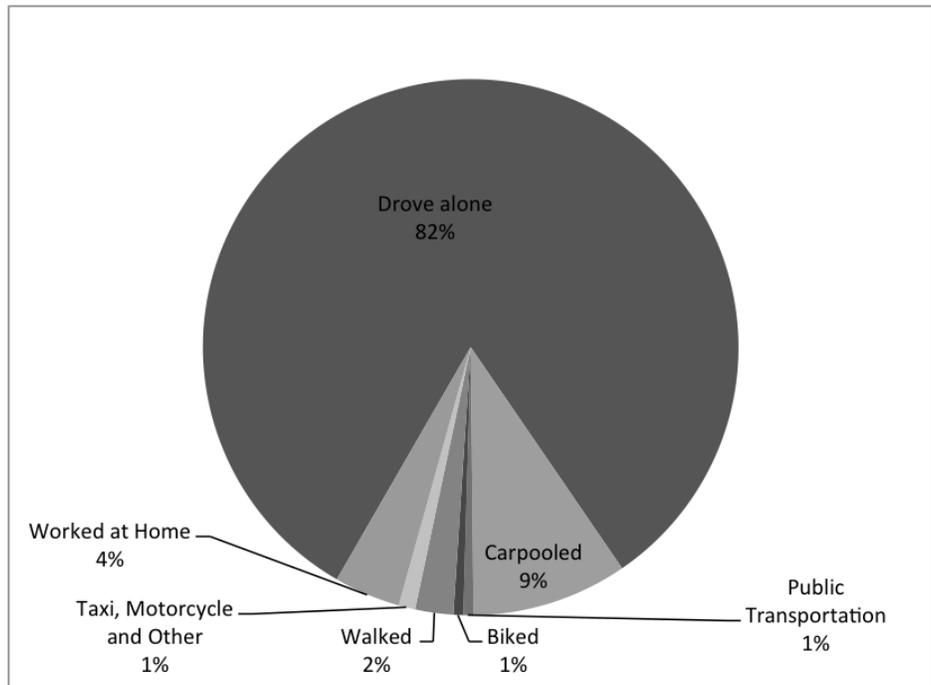
*Air*

- CWA has 10 flights per day with 20-25,000 passengers per month.

SOURCES

- **American Public Transit Association**  
[www.apta.com/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.apta.com/Pages/default.aspx)
- **Central Wisconsin Airport**  
[www.fly-cwa.org/](http://www.fly-cwa.org/)
- **City of Wausau**  
MetroRide Transit System  
[www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/MetroRide.aspx](http://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/MetroRide.aspx)
- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
[www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)

**Key Measure:** Choice of Transportation to Work in Marathon County, 2006—2010



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

An adequate variety of transportation choices is key to the functioning of a desirable community. As demographic and environmental factors challenge traditional transportation norms, residents are increasingly expecting their communities to provide transportation alternatives to the roadways that carry personal vehicles. An attractive community considers public transportation routes as well as foot- and bike-traffic paths and lanes in hopes of providing its residents options that fit their needs and lifestyle choices. For those who can't or choose not to drive, a variety of transportation choices is essential to their daily functioning.

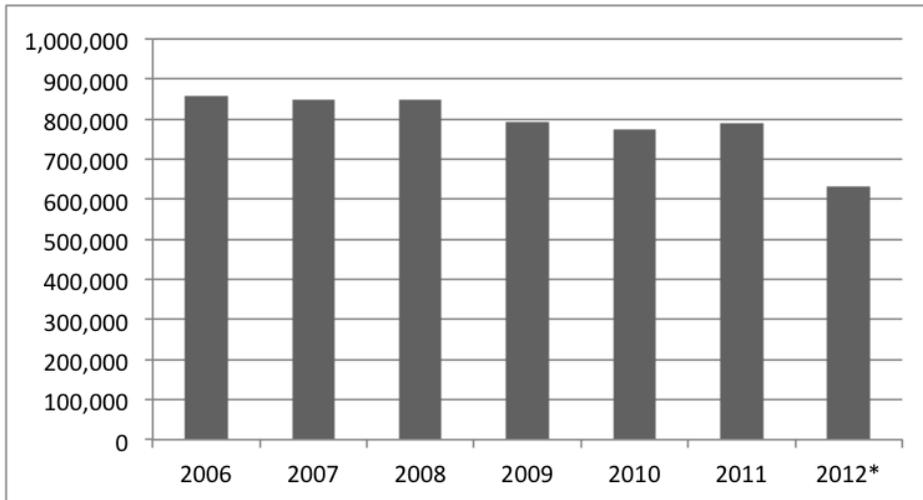
Even for drivers, these increased options provide benefits. Everyone is a pedestrian at some time during the day, as people walk to and from other modes of transportation to their final destinations. Sidewalks and bike paths provide added safety for pedestrians and cyclists as well as recreational opportunities that improve public health and increase economic value.

A well-maintained, established roadway infrastructure is still the backbone to all transportation in Marathon County, providing not only for personal and

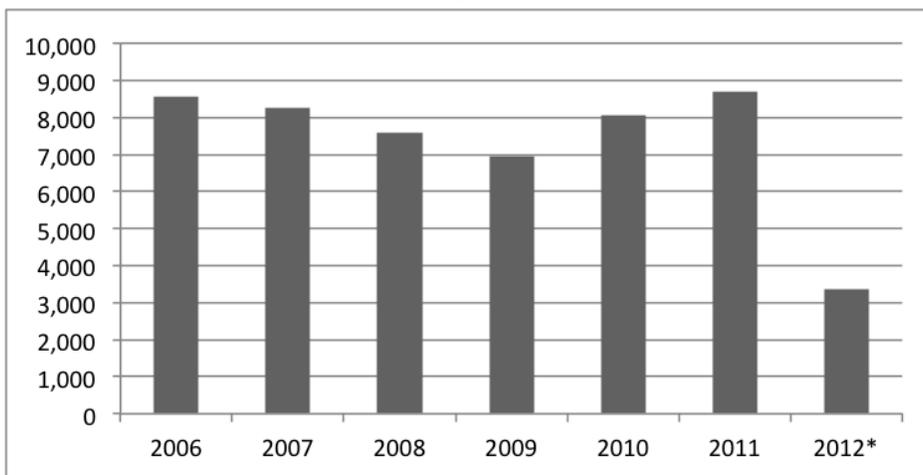
commercial vehicle traffic, but giving access as well to bike lanes, sidewalks, and transit routes. However, the state of Wisconsin is now encouraging more comprehensive road planning that considers multiple uses and factors sidewalks and bike lanes in the design.

The City of Wausau recently added 100 miles of newly signed bikes routes across the metro area. Still, a vast majority (82%) of Marathon County residents choose to drive alone when making their daily commute to and from work. As awareness of and access to transportation options increases, residents will likely take advantage of the economic, health, and environmental benefits of these alternatives.

**Key Measure:** Total Rides Taken on Metro Ride Buses, 2006—2012



**Key Measure:** Total Rides Taken Using Metro Ride Paratransit, 2006—2012



\* 2012 drops in totals are the result of decreases in funding.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

When people don't drive or are dependent on others for transportation, the potential exists to become immobile, homebound, and socially isolated. Public transportation, therefore, is an essential service for a healthy community. Adequate public transit has many benefits including the promotion of social interaction, improved access to healthcare, encouragement of active lifestyles, reductions in air and noise pollution, and decreases in infrastructure development and maintenance costs.

While travel in Marathon County is conducted primarily by either personal or commercial vehicle, there are limited alternatives; however, transit services

have been significantly diminished and are unlikely to expand, given the current budget environment, without an alternative source of local funds. Such cuts are evident in the significant decreases in services provided in 2012 and in the growing 2-1-1 needs requests related to transportation.

Public transit is poorly positioned to meet the increasing transportation demands predicted by demographic trends. Moreover, beyond the Wausau metro area, living independently in one's home may lead to isolation particularly for individuals in rural areas who plan to age in their homes unless transit services are expanded.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- The Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program serves persons over 60 and disabled persons without income thresholds. Riders must be traveling for medical, employment, or nutritional reasons. The program served 6,800 riders in 2012.
- The Metro Ride is an ADA compliant public transportation system with 8 fixed routes, covering an area that encompasses the homes of 38% of Marathon County's residents. This program had 631,360 fixed route riders and 3,370 Paratransit riders in 2012.
- Significant decreases in funds led to a 20% decrease in Metro Bus riders and a 61% decrease in Paratransit riders from 2011 to 2012.
- For Marathon County residents, transportation was the fastest growing category of need with 17% of 2-1-1 calls. High gas prices, bus fares, and taxi fares were common causes, and there were not enough social programs to meet the needs.

### SOURCES

- **City of Wausau**  
Metro Ride Transit System  
[www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/MetroRide.aspx](http://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/MetroRide.aspx)
- **United Way of Marathon County**  
United Way's 2-1-1  
[www.unitedwaymc.org/211.htm](http://www.unitedwaymc.org/211.htm)
- **North Central Healthcare**  
[www.norcen.org/](http://www.norcen.org/)



*We strive to live in a community where...*

people make healthy choices and have access to services that support a long, healthy, and happy life.



Health and Wellness Subcommittee

Joan Theurer, Chair	Marathon County Health Department
Michael Blick, MD	Retired Physician
Katie Burgener	Aspirus, Inc.
Judy Burrows	Marathon County Health Department
Brad Jourdan	Diagnostic and Treatment Center
Pat Kinney	Marshfield Clinic
Roger Lucas	Aspirus, Inc.
Ruth Marx	Marathon County Health Department
Andy Napagezek	Aspirus, Inc.
Laura Scudiere	Bridge Community Health Clinic
Rachel Yaron	Ministry Saint Clare's Hospital
Katie Zientara	Healthy Marathon County

*"Our personal health is influenced by our families, neighborhoods—the places where we live, learn, work, and play. The economic vitality of Marathon County along with our community social norms and sense of safety contributes greatly to the health of our community."*

*Joan Theurer, RN, MSN, Health Officer  
Marathon County Health Department*

# Health and Wellness

## Section Summary

### Community Success and Progress:

- Marathon County has set up our children for a healthy start in large part due to dedicated and sustained efforts regarding prenatal care and services in support of families with young children.
- Marathon County is establishing the needed community infrastructure to promote preventive care and wellness in lieu of treatment and to ensure all residents have access to healthcare.
- The community is engaging in important conversations around various healthy behaviors:
  - \* Tobacco use is down but is still a challenge given new products like e-cigarettes and flavored cigarillos.
  - \* More residents are aware of the impact of alcohol consumption, and drunk driving rates are going down.
  - \* The community is embracing the idea of a healthy lifestyle and beginning the effort to achieve healthy weights.
- Although the data set is small, the suicide rate is down and has been for a few reports.



### Challenges and Opportunities to Improve:

#### Challenges

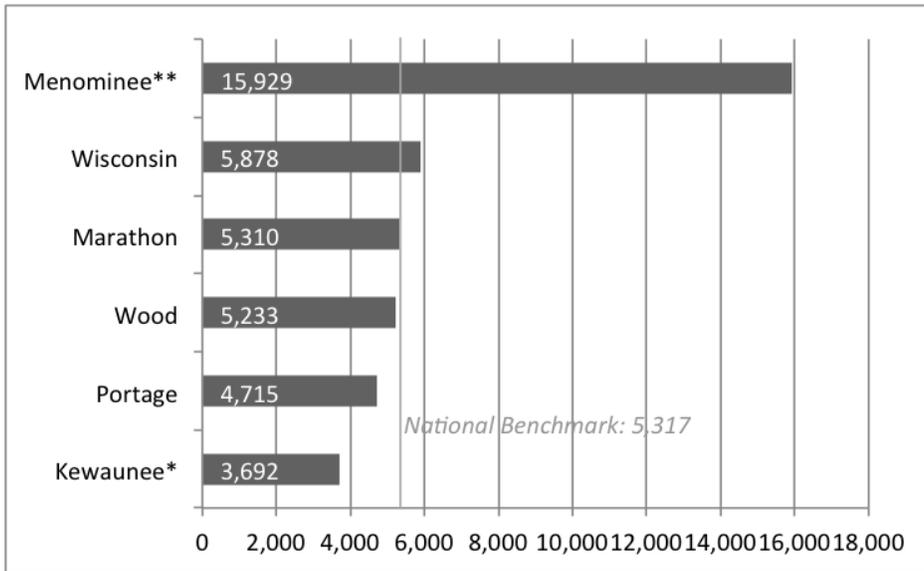
- Marathon County still has significantly higher rates of binge drinking and drunk driving than national averages. In recent years we have also seen spikes in heroin, meth, and prescription drug use. The need for affordable and accessible mental health services, and psychiatric services specifically, is intertwined with the county's ability to address alcohol, drug, and other substance misuse and abuse.
- The percentage of children and adults who are at a healthy weight continues to decline in Marathon County and Wisconsin, increasing the risk for related chronic diseases.
- The aging population of Marathon County will require continual expansion of services to enable them to live well with chronic conditions. In addition, falls among the aging are associated with increased hospitalization and death rates.

#### Opportunities to Improve

- The Affordable Care Act increases preventive care and access to affordable health insurance, moving us closer to the National Healthy People 2020 goal that all Americans have health insurance. The expansion of the Bridge Community Health Clinic will help close the gap for residents not having access to affordable or available dental care.
- Communitywide initiatives have increased the community's awareness of health challenges facing Marathon County, making inroads in creating needed change in community social norms and public policy.



**Key Measure:** Year of Potential Life Lost (YPLL) per 100,000 Age-Adjusted, 2008 - 2010 (\*\* indicates the highest rate per county in Wisconsin; \* indicates the lowest)



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Premature death is one way to assess progress in improving the overall health of Marathon County. It is described as the years of potential life lost before the age of 75 per 100,000 population. Every death that occurs in a defined community before the age of 75 contributes to the total number of years of potential life lost. For example, a person dying at 20 contributes 55 years of potential life lost, whereas a person dying at 72 contributes 3 years of potential life lost. The measure is age-adjusted to accommodate for different age distributions so that county comparisons can be made.

The trend in U.S. life expectancy since 1900 has steadily improved. From 1900-1999, the average lifespan in the U.S. was extended by greater than 30 years, from 47.3 years in 1900 to 76.8 in 2000. U.S. life expectancy for someone born in 2010 is 78.7 years.

Premature death focuses attention on deaths that could have been prevented. Achievements in the development of vaccinations, motor-vehicle safety, safer workplaces, the control of infectious diseases, food quality and safety, healthier mothers and babies, family planning, fluoridation of drinking water, and the recognition of tobacco use as a health hazard contributed to 25 of the 30

years gained during the 1900s. Continual advances in clinical care and increased adoption of healthy behaviors will impact future projections of life expectancy.

In addition to health advancements, social and economic factors (educational level, unemployment, poverty, crime, social support) along with physical environments impact an individual's health. Communities with low unemployment, poverty, crime and higher educational levels are more likely to have individuals living healthier, longer lives. Marathon County's ability to increase life expectancy is dependent on our sustained efforts to ensure a high quality of life in terms of education, employment, clinical care and healthy behaviors.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- From 2008-2010, Marathon County residents lost 5,310 years of potential life. Marathon County ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> out of Wisconsin's 72 counties.
- Life expectancy in Wisconsin has gradually increased. During 1989-1991, a person 50 to 54 years old could expect to live another 30.3 years. By 2009-2011, a person in this age group could expect to live another 32.7 years.
- Wisconsin life expectancy for someone born in 2009-2011 is 80.2 years for the total population, 77.8 years for males, and 82.2 years for females.
- From 2000 - 2010, Marathon County's premature death rate declined 12.3%. This compares with a 16.8% decline for Wisconsin.
- The Healthy People 2020 goal is for communities to improve 10% over a 10-year period. All counties have an opportunity to improve premature death rates.

### SOURCES

- **County Health Rankings**  
[www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)
- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov)

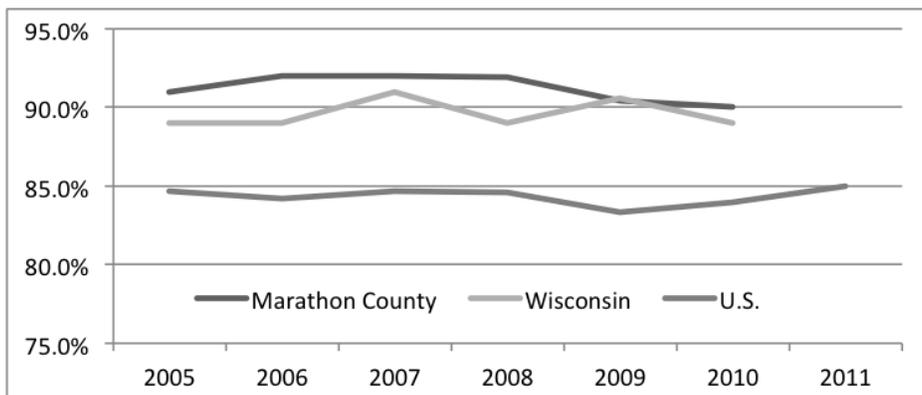
**DATA HIGHLIGHTS**

- 8% of the respondents to the 2013 LIFE Community Survey reported a time in the past 12 months when they had no healthcare coverage or insurance. 39% chose not to have it because of costs, 23% were not eligible, 18% were not offered it by their employer, and 18% were not working.
- 83% of respondents reported they were satisfied or strongly satisfied with the accessibility of healthcare.
- 83% of respondents reported they were somewhat concerned or very concerned regarding the affordability of healthcare.
- 11% of respondents reported there was a time in the past 12 months when they or someone in their family needed to see a doctor but could not. Most accredited this to a lack of either insurance or the means to pay for service.
- 10% of respondents reported there was a time when they or someone in their family did not take their prescriptive medication. 36% reported cost as a factor.

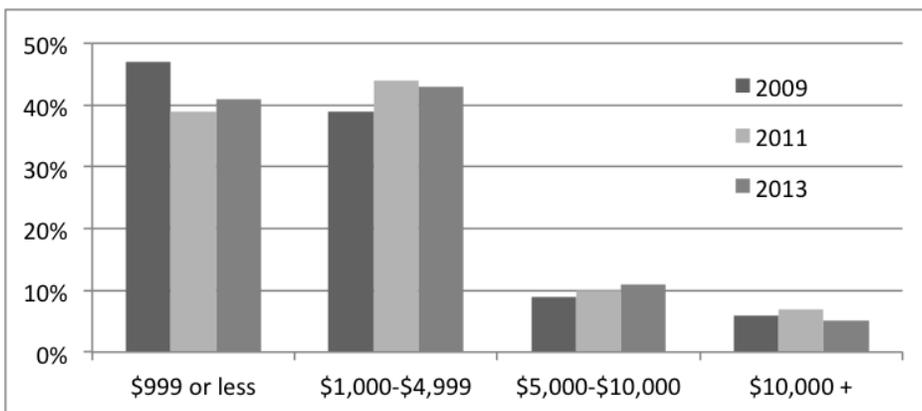
**SOURCES**

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
Wisconsin Health Insurance Coverage, 2010  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov)
- **County Health Rankings**  
[www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)

**Key Measure: Percent of People with Health Insurance Coverage, 2005—2011**



**Key Measure: LIFE Community Survey Respondents' Medical Debt, 2009, 2011, 2013**



**COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES**

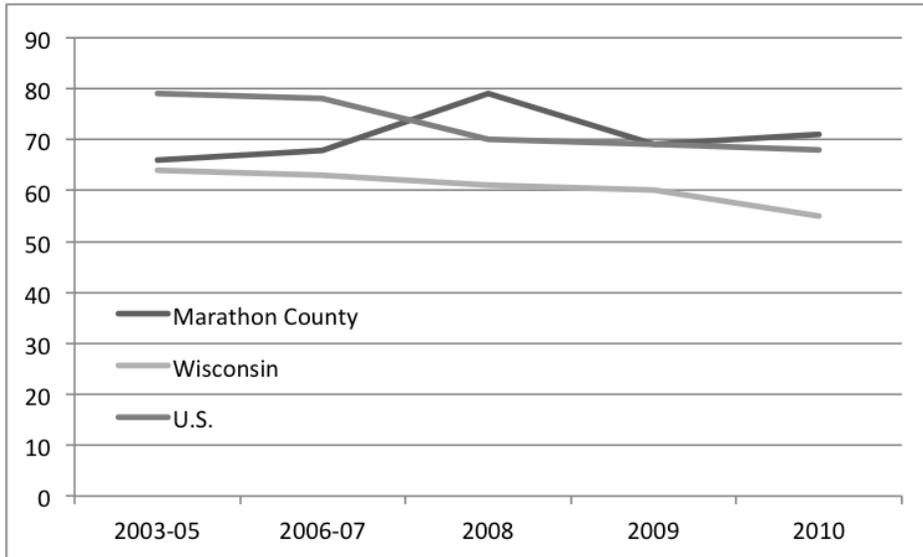
An individual's and family's ability to access high-quality health services is influenced by a number of factors including but not limited to the cost of services, insurance coverage, finding a provider, travel distance, transportation, and timeliness of services. Currently, 8% of respondents to the 2013 LIFE Community Survey reported a time in the past 12 months when they had no healthcare coverage or insurance. Cost and the inability to obtain insurance through an employer were common factors.

Improving access and effectiveness of health care is a national and state priority. The national Healthy People 2020 goal is that 100% of persons have health insurance and 84% of people have a usual primary care provider. Currently in Wisconsin, the number of residents for every primary care provider is 1,067:1, compared to Marathon County 1,176:1. Both are above the national benchmark

of 1,247:1.

The Affordable Care Act is intended to decrease the number of individuals and families without health insurance by providing Americans affordable plans. The new Health Insurance Marketplaces are expected to expand health insurance coverage to millions of uninsured Americans. Access to affordable and high-quality health services ensures not only the health of Wisconsin's families, but also their economic security. Here in Marathon County, 28% of respondents to the 2013 LIFE Community Survey reported having medical debt.

**Key Measure:** Preventable Hospital Stays per 100,000 Population, 2003—2010



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Many health problems and chronic diseases can be treated more effectively if identified early. Preventive health screenings are a cost-effective way to



identify and treat potential health problems before they develop or worsen. The medical community has established age- and gender-specific prevention screening recommendations in hopes of ameliorating the impact of certain conditions and diseases. Individuals are most commonly screened for blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, breast cancer, cervical cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer, skin cancer, tobacco use, alcohol misuse, depression, hepatitis B/C viruses, and osteoporosis in addition to general physical exams.

Moreover, vaccinations protect children and adults against infectious diseases.

Preventable hospitalization is a measure that assesses the access and effectiveness of primary healthcare. Preventable hospital stays are measured as the hospital discharges patients for ambulatory care that could have been diagnosed and treated in a clinical setting. The rate is calculated per 1,000 Medicare enrollees. Higher rates of preventable hospitalization may identify potential areas to improve the quality of healthcare systems through improvements to preventive clinical care.

One of the barriers to preventive care for individuals and families is the out-of-pocket costs. The Affordable Care Act expands coverage for preventive services, eliminating cost-sharing for proven preventive services such as mammograms, flu shots, smoking cessation counseling, and many more services. It has been estimated that 71 million Americans received expanded coverage for preventive health services in 2011 and 2012.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2013, Marathon County ranked 19<sup>th</sup> of Wisconsin's 72 counties in clinical care.
- Marathon County has a higher percentage of Medicaid patients who received mammography screening and diabetic screening than the state of Wisconsin.
  - \* 76% compared to 73% for mammography screening
  - \* 93% compared to 90% for diabetic screening (HbA1c)
- 86% of Marathon County female adults reported having a cervical cancer screening in the last 3 years. The national Healthy People 2020 goal is 93%.
- 69% of Marathon County adults 50 years or older have ever had a colon cancer screening. The national Healthy People 2020 goal is 70.5%.
- 79% of Marathon County adults have ever had their cholesterol checked. The national Healthy People 2020 goal is 82%.

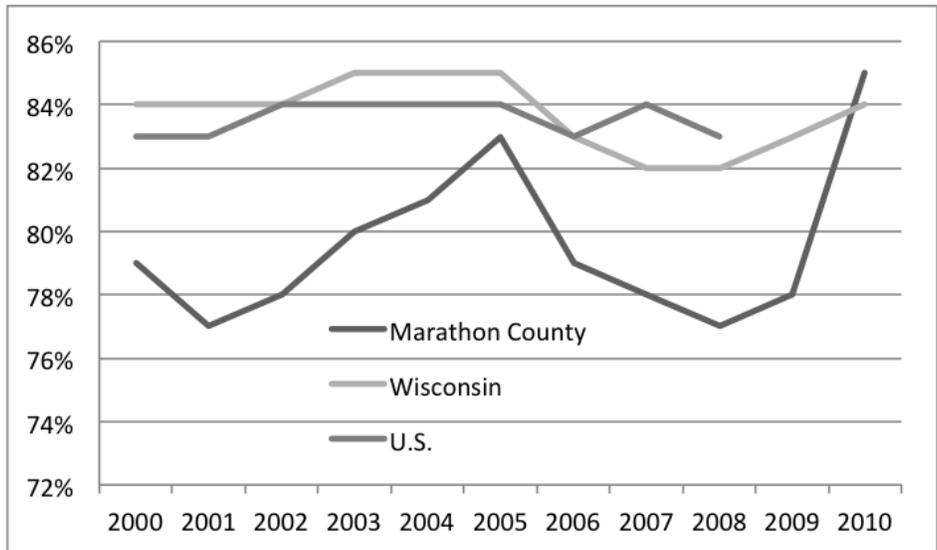
### SOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
[www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov)
- County Health Rankings  
[www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2009, Non-Hispanic white females (at 87%) were more likely to receive prenatal care during the first-trimester of their pregnancy than females from other racial/ethnic backgrounds (67%). The percentage for other racial/ethnic populations has steadily increased from 57% in 2007.
- Females between the ages of 25-34 were more likely to seek prenatal care during the first trimester in 2010.
- Females who are married (at 88%) were more likely to receive prenatal care during the first trimester than unmarried females (78%) in 2010.
- Females who have some college or college or post graduate degrees (at 91%) were more likely to receive prenatal care during the first trimester than females with less than a high school degree (59%) in 2010.
- In 2010, there were 1,656 births among Marathon County female residents, keeping with previous years.

**Key Measure:** Percent of Mothers Who Received First-Trimester Prenatal Care, 2000–2010



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Prenatal care is the medical care provided to expectant mothers and their developing babies. Early and regular prenatal care increases the likelihood babies are born healthy by detecting medical complications and providing information on nutrition, rest, and the need to avoid alcohol, tobacco and other choices that could harm the mother and her baby. Early and regular care is also linked to improved birth weight and decreased risk of preterm delivery.

national Healthy People 2020 goal of 77.6%. This measure takes into account the month that prenatal care began and the number of prenatal visits, adjusting for gestational age. In 2010, less than 2% of females in Marathon County, compared with 2.85% for Wisconsin, received prenatal care starting in the third trimester or received no prenatal care.

Early prenatal care provides a means for referrals to community programs and services—WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), Food Share, treatment services, tobacco cessation programs, etc.—to support the expectant mother and her family members throughout the pregnancy. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born low birth weight and five times more likely to die than those mothers who receive prenatal care.

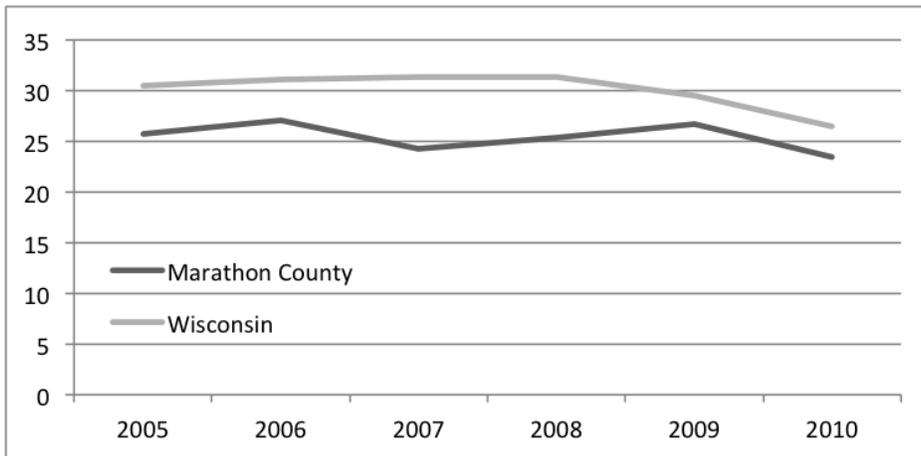


In 2010, 85% of expectant mothers in Marathon County, compared with 84% in Wisconsin, received prenatal care in the first trimester, achieving the national Healthy People 2020 goal of 77.9%. 81% of Marathon County babies born received adequate care as measured by the Kotelchuck Adequacy of Prenatal Care Utilization Index, also achieving the

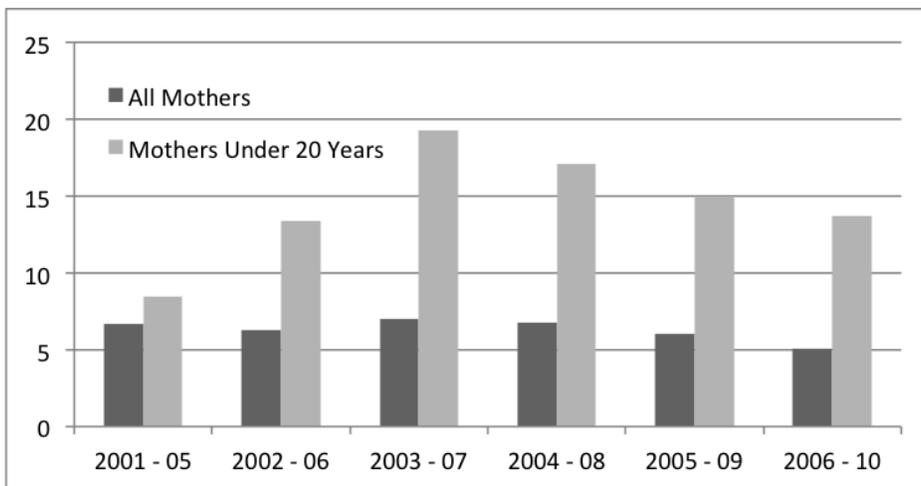
SOURCES

- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
[mchb.hrsa.gov/chusa12/hsfu/pages/pc.html](http://mchb.hrsa.gov/chusa12/hsfu/pages/pc.html)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
WI Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH)  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov)
- **March of Dimes**  
[www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)

**Key Measure:** Rate of Births per 1,000 Females Ages 19 and Younger, 2005–2010



**Key Measure:** Infant Mortality Rates in Marathon County by Age of Mother



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Nationally, the rate of teenagers having children has steadily declined over the past 20 years—from 1991 to 2010, down 71% for 10- to 14-year-olds and down 45% for 15- to 19-year-olds. While the reasons for the decline are not clear, teens seem to be less sexually active and sexually active teens seem to be using birth control more than in previous years.

Teen pregnancy results in health, social, and economic costs to the mother, the child, the father, and the community. Infant mortality is higher among babies born to teen parents. Additionally, only 50% of teen mothers earn a high school diploma by age 22 compared with 90% of teen girls who do not give birth. Children of teenage mothers are also more likely to have lower school achievement and drop out of high

school, have more health problems, be incarcerated at some time during adolescence, give birth as a teenager, and face unemployment as a young adult. It is estimated that teen childbearing costs the U.S. taxpayers \$9 billion each year.

Marathon County's teen pregnancy rate in 2010 remained stable at 23.46 per 1,000 females between 15-19 years of age and continues to be below the state (26.48) and the nation (34.2).

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- At 7.64 per 1,000 females ages 15 to 17, Marathon County's birth rate in 2010 remains stable and lower than the state rate of 12.21 and the U.S. rate of 17.3.
- At 52.77 per 1,000 females ages 18 to 19, Marathon County's birth rate in 2010 remains stable and higher than the state rate of 47.06 and lower than the U.S. rate of 58.2.
- From 2006-2010, there were fewer than 5 births to females under the age of 15 years, averaging less than 1 birth per year.
- In 2010, 6% of all county births were among females under the age of 20, accounting for 104 of the 1,656 births. In Wisconsin, 7.5% of births were among females under the age of 20.
- In 2010, 8 of the 104 births (7.7%) to females under the age of 20 years were low birth weight babies. For all births in Marathon County, the rate of low birth weight was 4.77%.

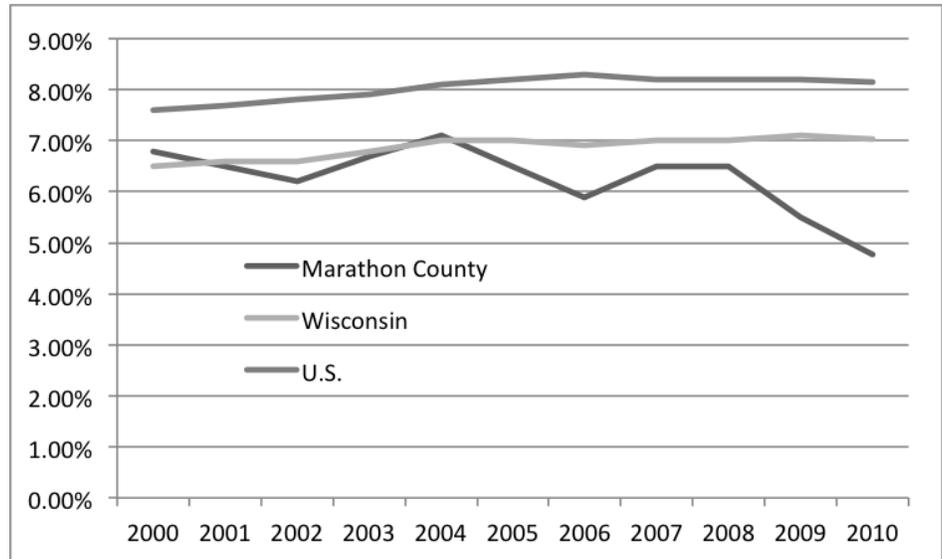
### SOURCES

- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH)  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov)

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2010, 79 of 1,656 births (or 4.77%) were low birth weight in Marathon County, compared with 7.04% in Wisconsin and 8.15% across the U.S.
- Of those 79 low birth weight babies, 68% were preterm—born before 37 weeks of pregnancy.
- In 2010, the percentage of low birth weight babies born to Marathon County females under the age of 20 was 7.68. In comparison, 4.57% were born to females over 20.
- For females who used tobacco during their pregnancy, 7.17% of babies were low birth weight in 2010, compared with 4.17% born to non-users.
- In 2010, 17.7% pregnant women in Marathon County smoked during their pregnancy, higher than the state rate of 13%. This percentage has not decreased in the past 12 years even though smoking rates among adults and youth have declined.
- In 2009, 4.66% of non-Hispanic white females delivered low birth weight babies compared with 5.4% for females from other races and ethnicities.

## Key Measure: Percent of Low Birth Weight Babies, 2000—2010



## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Low birth weight babies are those babies born weighing less than 5.5 lbs. (2,500 grams). Babies born low birth weight are at an increased risk for health problems, long-term disabilities, and death.

35 are also at a higher risk. Women can reduce their risk for having a low birth weight baby by having a preconception check-up, controlling chronic health conditions, stopping smoking, getting early and regular prenatal care, and seeking medical care for preterm labor.



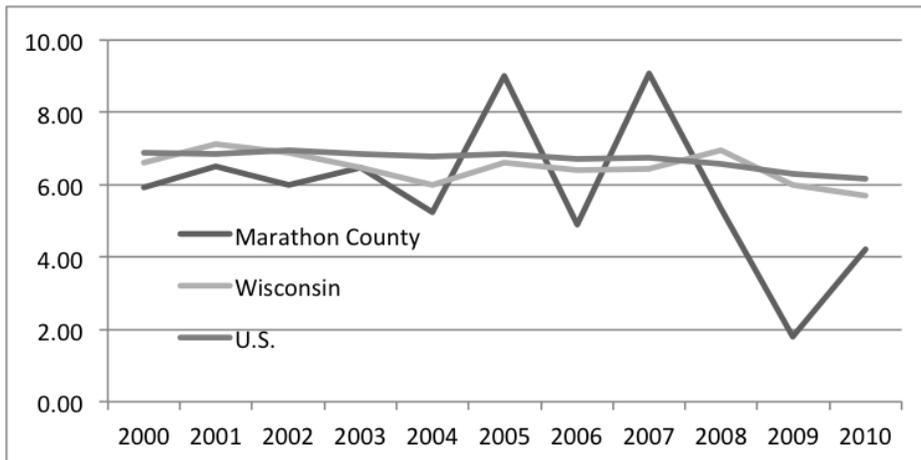
The national Healthy People 2020 goal is to reduce low birth weight babies to 7.8%. For Wisconsin, the 2020 Healthiest Wisconsin objective is to reduce the racial and ethnic disparities in poor birth outcomes including infant mortality. The percentage of low birth weight babies born to Marathon County females has remained below the state and national averages over the past five years.

Premature birth (babies born before 37 weeks of pregnancy) is a cause of low birth weight babies. Factors that increase a women’s risk for delivering a baby prematurely include but are not limited to a multiple birth, birth defects, smoking, alcohol and illicit drug use, infections in the mother or fetus, and chronic health problems of the mother. Low-income women, women with low educational attainment, black women, and women under the age of 17 and over

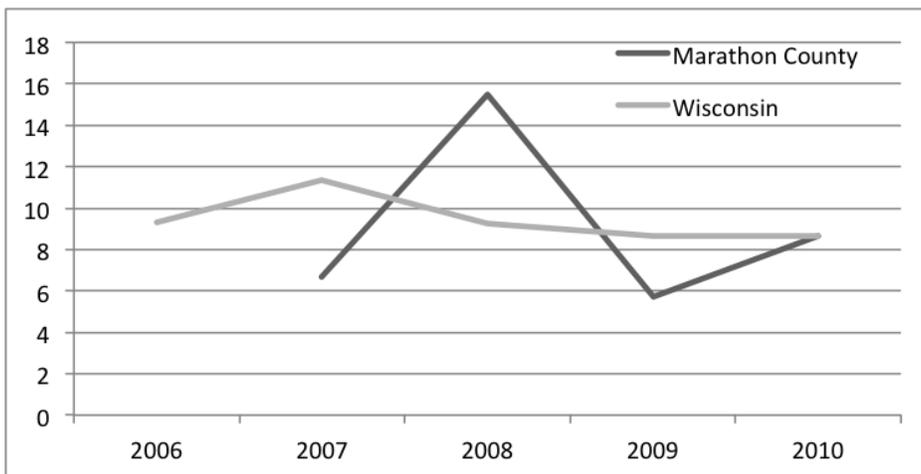
## SOURCES

- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
[www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
WI Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH)  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov)
- **March of Dimes**  
[www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)

**Key Measure:** Infant Mortality Rates per 1,000, 2000—2010 (Infant < 1)



**Key Measure:** Child Mortality Rates per 100,000, 2006—2010 (1 < Child < 18)



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The death of infants and children is tragic, impacting their families and communities. The death of an infant is associated with a variety of factors including the health of the infant, the quality of and access to medical care, sleep practices, injuries, and child abuse and neglect. Preterm birth (birth at less than 37 weeks of gestation) is a key risk factor for infant deaths. In the U.S., infants born preterm accounted for 35 percent of all infant deaths in 2008, the largest single cause.

Infant mortality is measured by the number of deaths during the first year of life per 1,000 live births. The death of an infant is viewed as an important indicator in measuring the health of a community. Despite declines overall in the infant mortality rate, disparities persist among racial/ethnic groups, most

notably among black females here in Wisconsin and the U.S.

From 2006 to 2010, infant deaths accounted for 55% of the combined deaths for infant and children under 18. For deaths among children (>1 year to <18 years of age), unintentional injuries including drowning, falls, poisoning, and motor vehicle accidents are the leading causes. In Marathon County, unintentional injuries accounted for 43% of all childhood deaths from 2006 to 2010.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2010, the infant mortality rate in Marathon County was 4.2 deaths per 1,000 infants, compared with the Wisconsin rate of 5.7.
- From 2006-2010, the rate of infant mortality was 5.1 for Marathon County, compared with 6.3 for Wisconsin.
- The U.S. infant mortality rate declined throughout the 20th century. In 1900, the U.S. infant mortality rate was approximately 100 infant deaths per 1,000 live births; in 2000, the rate was 6.89 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.
- The national Healthy People 2020 goal is to reduce the rate of infant deaths to 6.0 per 1,000 live births.
- From 2006 – 2010, the child mortality rate in Marathon County was 8.65 per 100,000 population. This compares with Wisconsin's rate of 9.46 for the same time period.

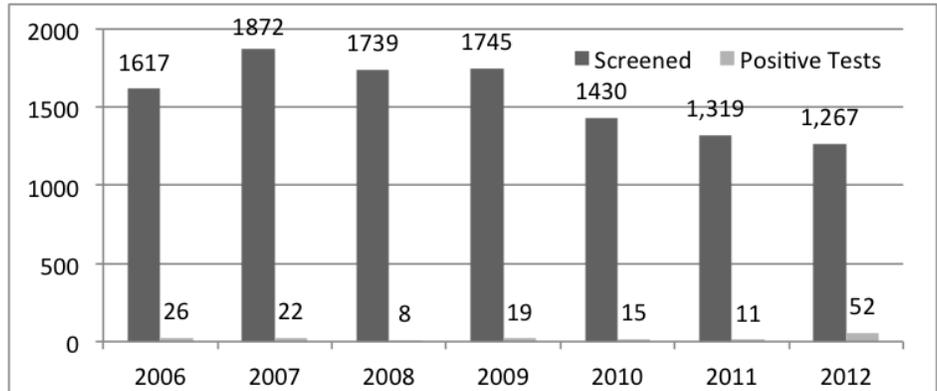
### SOURCES

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
WI Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH)  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov)

**DATA HIGHLIGHTS**

- In May of 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) narrowed their guidelines for public health intervention to 5 ug/dl as no blood lead level in children is considered safe.
- In 2012, 39 children in Marathon County were identified as meeting the new level for intervention, having a blood lead level 5 to < 10 ug/dl, resulting in an increase in the number of children identified as having elevated blood lead levels.
- The national Healthy People 2020 has set a goal to eliminate elevated blood lead levels in children.
- From 2008-2012, 28 homes in Marathon County reduced lead hazards.
- Lead poisoning has been linked with juvenile delinquency and eventual criminal behavior.

**Key Measure: Marathon County Childhood Blood Testing, 2006—2012**



Activities	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total Number of Lead Tests	1,739	1,745	1,430	1,319	1,267
Results less than 10 ug/dl	1,720	1,717	1,403	1,303	1,197
Results 5 to 10 ug/dl	~	~	~	~	49 (39)
Results 10 to 19 ug/dl	14 (6)	22 (17)	17 (9)	17 (10)	16 (11)
Results 20 ug/dl and greater	5 (2)	6 (2)	10 (6)	1 (1)	5 (2)
Hazard Reduction Housing Units	6	4	3	2	3
Lead Property Inspections	19	25	20	20	25

**COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES**

Lead is toxic to everyone, particularly to children under the age of 6. Lead exposure to young children can cause reduced IQ and attention span, impulsivity, learning disabilities, developmental delays, and a range of other health and behavioral effects.

Childhood lead poisoning happens when children swallow or inhale lead dust causing elevated levels of lead in the blood. The most common route of exposure for children is ingesting lead dust through normal hand-to-mouth activity. Lead dust is created by lead-based paint deterioration or renovation activities that cause dust to stick to fingers, toys, soil, food, and other surfaces. Family members' hobbies, parent's occupations, food, and products including toys can also be sources of lead exposure.

Pre-1950 buildings are commonly associated with exposures. Although lead paint was banned in 1978, the health risk still persists today. Approximately 84% of houses in the City of Wausau and 71% in Marathon County were constructed prior to 1978.

Childhood lead poisoning can be prevented by eliminating lead-based

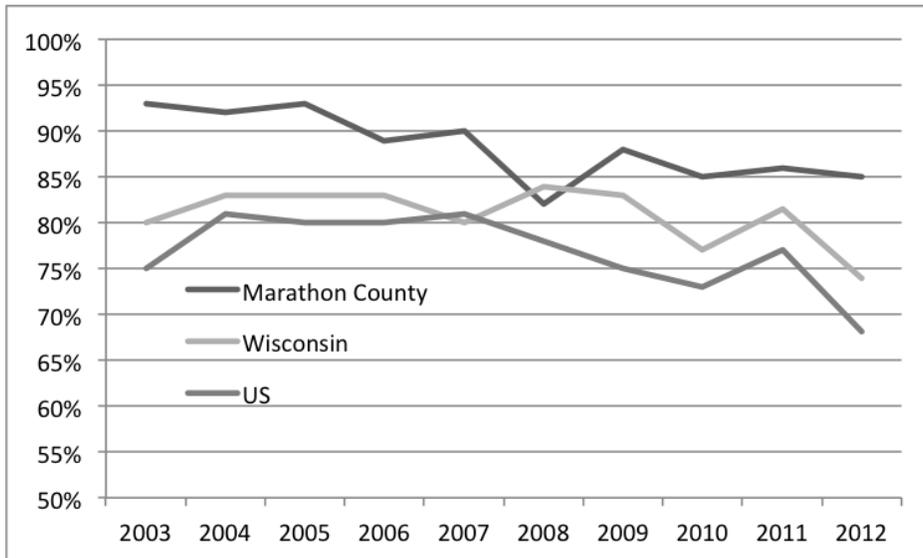
paint hazards before children are exposed. Wisconsin's goal is to have all housing lead-safe. Wisconsin also recommends that children ages of 6 months through 5 years be screened for the risk of lead exposure. Children who are at increased risk for lead exposure are to be tested at ages 1 and 2. When children are identified as having elevated blood lead levels, parents receive public health intervention to identify the source and reduce further exposure.



**SOURCES**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/)
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/)
- Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin [www.chawisconsin.org](http://www.chawisconsin.org)
- Marathon County Health Department [www.co.marathon.wi.us](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us)

**Key Measure:** Percent of Children with Up-to-date Immunizations at Age 2, 2003—2012 (Immunization Series 4:3:1:3:3:1)



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Immunizations are one of the greatest public health advancements of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and continue to be one of the most cost effective measures to prevent communicable diseases. Immunizations benefit the recipient as well as the community as a whole. If community immunization rates are high enough, the resulting “herd immunity” protects individuals who are unable to be vaccinated or who have compromised immune systems.



Following a low point in immunization rates in 2008, due to a shortage of Hib vaccine, the number of age-appropriately-vaccinated 2-year-olds in Marathon County has remained fairly stable, between 85% and 88%. Several factors affect immunization rates being lower in recent years, including the increasing number of vaccines a child receives by age 2, alternative vaccine

schedules, and the mistaken belief that vaccines are not safe despite repeated studies that have shown no link between childhood vaccines and autism and other neurologic problems.

In 2012, the state of Wisconsin recorded the highest number of cases of pertussis, a vaccine-preventable disease, since the last pertussis outbreak in 2004-2005; Marathon County had 312 cases. Many of the cases occurred in 10 and 11 year olds who were due for their TDaP (Tetanus, Diphtheria, acellular Pertussis) booster within the next year. The pertussis vaccination prevents most cases of the disease, and immunized individuals who do develop pertussis generally exhibit a milder case with fewer complications.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2012, the immunizations of 85% of Marathon County children were up-to-date when those children turned two.
- Marathon County health care providers use one of two immunization registries available in Wisconsin: the Registry for Effectively Communicating Immunization Needs (RECIN) and the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR).
- The national Healthy People 2020 has set a goal that 90% of the nation’s children will be fully immunized by their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday. In support of this goal, Marathon County uses a county-wide reminder system with all families that have children under the age of two.
- High rates of immunization result in “herd immunity”, protecting both immunized and unimmunized individuals.

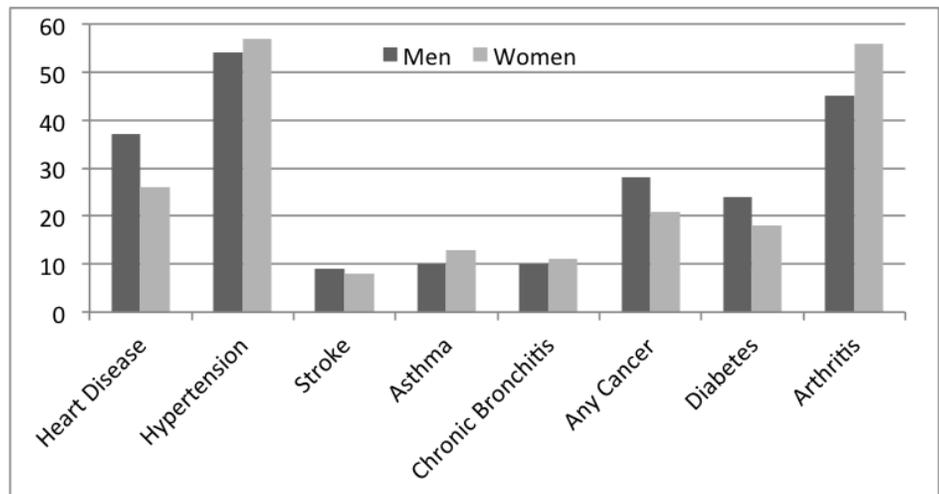
### SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR)**  
<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/wir.htm>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>
- **Marathon County Health Department**  
[http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/dep\\_detail.asp?dep=20](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/dep_detail.asp?dep=20)

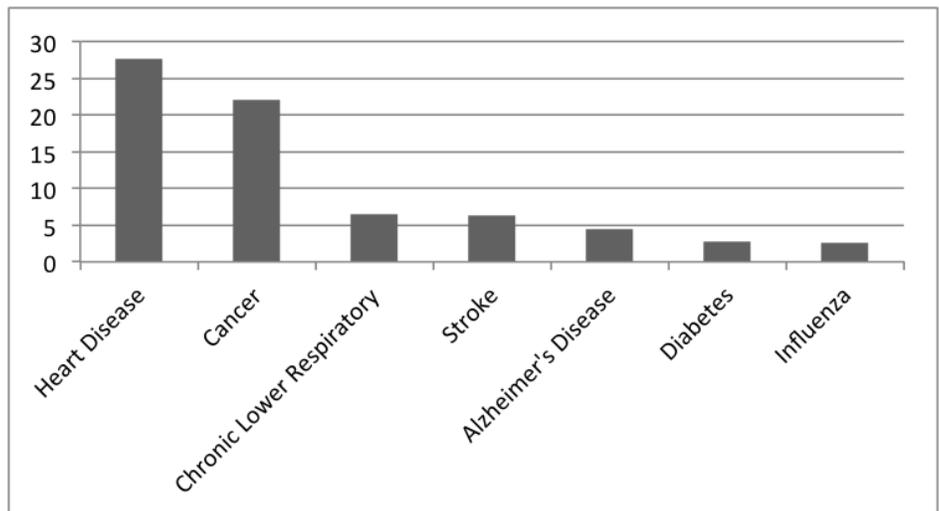
DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 80% of older Americans are living with at least one chronic condition, and 50% have at least two.
- 63% of people 65 to 74 had two or more chronic conditions; that percentage climbs to 78% for people 75 to 84 and to 83% for people 85 years or older.
- 53% of caregivers who said that their health had gotten worse due to care giving also said the decline in their health has affected their ability to provide care.
- 26.9% of persons 65+ are living alone in Marathon County compared to 29.9% for Wisconsin.
- 39% of LIFE Survey respondents indicated they were strongly satisfied or satisfied with accessibility to elder care.
- 60% of LIFE Survey respondents were very concerned or concerned with affordability of elder care.

**Key Measure:** Percent of People 65 and Over with Selected Chronic Conditions, 2009—2010



**Key Measure:** National Leading Causes of Death for People 65 or Older, 2007—2009



SOURCES

- **Administration on Aging** Older Americans 2012 [www.agingstats.gov](http://www.agingstats.gov)
- **Wisconsin Department on Health Services** [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aging/demographics/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aging/demographics/)
- **Center for Disease Control** Healthy Aging [www.cdc.gov/aging](http://www.cdc.gov/aging)

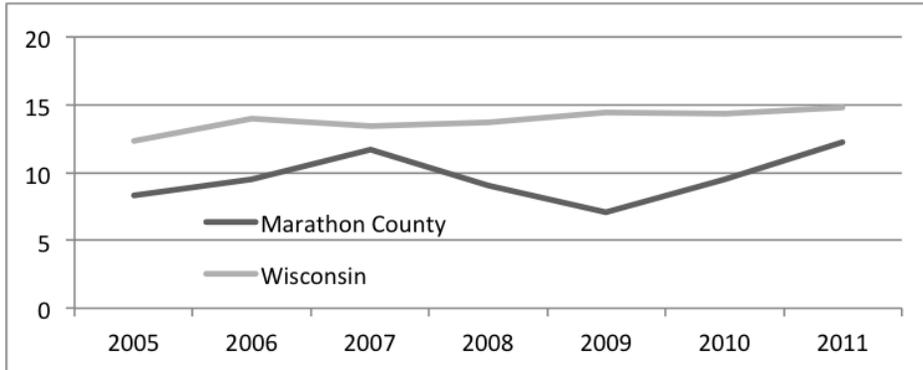
COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The past century has seen a shift in leading causes of death from infectious diseases and acute illnesses to chronic conditions and degenerative illnesses. According to the Center for Disease Control's report, *The State of Aging and Health in America 2013*, "two out of every three older Americans have multiple chronic conditions, and treatment for this population accounts for 66% of the country's healthcare budget."

"Living well" with chronic conditions will be key to ensuring quality of life for Marathon County residents as they age. In order to live well with chronic conditions as one ages, individuals will need to be able to access a full range of healthcare services that includes mental

health, along with social support for the individual and their caregivers. Also, living and transportation options will need to be further developed to enable aging adults to stay living in their community.

**Key Measure:** Rate of Death Due to Falls per 100,000 Population, 2005—2011



**Key Measure:** Leading Causes of Injury Related Deaths in Wisconsin 2008

Rank	0-14	15-44	45-64	65+	All Ages
1	Suffocation 27	Suicide 340	Suicide 302	Falls 789	Falls 918
2	Motor Vehicle Crashes 22	Motor Vehicle Crashes 296	Poisoning 210	Motor Vehicle Crashes 106	Suicide 737
3	Homicide 19	Poisoning 259	Motor Vehicle Crashes 157	Suicide 93	Motor Vehicle Crashes 581
4	Drowning 13	Homicide 97	Falls 105	Suffocation 48	Poisoning 481
5	Fire 9	Falls 23	Homicide 24	Poisoning/Homicide 11	Homicide 151

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Injury is a leading cause of death and disability among Wisconsin residents, accounting for approximately 72 deaths in Marathon County annually. Injuries are divided into categories: unintentional (falls, poisoning, motor vehicle crashes) and intentional injuries (homicide, suicide, sexual assault). Unintentional injuries account for approximately 72% of injury deaths among Marathon County residents.

In Wisconsin, falls have surpassed motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of unintentional, injury-related death. Falls result in a substantial number of emergency department visits, inpatient hospitalizations, and nursing home admissions.

Fall-related injuries disproportionately impact older adults. For adults 65 and older, falls are the leading cause of hospitalizations and emergency room visits. Falls are not a normal part of aging and can be prevented. Statewide,

falls prevention programs are in place through which primary care providers can identify individuals who are at risk for falling and refer them to community programs to increase their knowledge and skills (muscle imbalance, fear of falling, hazards inside and outside the home) to prevent falls.



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- From 2007-2011, 52 Marathon County residents died on average each year from unintentional injuries. Falls are the leading cause, followed by motor vehicle crashes and poisoning.
- Marathon County's fall-related deaths are consistently below the state, 12.23 per 100,000 compared with 14.8 in 2011. The national Healthy People 2020 goal is 7.0 deaths per 100,000.
- For Marathon County adults 65+, the rate of fall-related deaths was 68.22 per 100,000. The national Healthy People 2020 goal is 45.3.
- In 2011, the rate of fall-related emergency department visits for Marathon County residents was 1,801 per 100,000, compared with 2,196 for Wisconsin. Falls accounted for 2,422 ED visits. The average age was 40 years.
- In 2011, the rate of fall-related hospitalizations for Marathon County residents was 401 per 100,000, compared with 427 for Wisconsin. Falls accounted for 539 hospitalizations. The average age was 72 years, with 4.46 days the average length of hospital stay.

### SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
The Burden of Falls in Wisconsin  
WI Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH)  
[www.dhs.wi.gov](http://www.dhs.wi.gov)
- **Healthy Marathon County**  
[www.healthymarathoncounty.org](http://www.healthymarathoncounty.org)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Marathon County experienced a large outbreak of Pertussis in 2012.
- Chlamydia continues to be the most frequently reported of all reportable diseases, both in Marathon County and nationwide.
- Changes in the reporting criteria for Lyme disease implemented June 1, 2012 resulted in significantly fewer cases reported in 2012. Only cases exhibiting the characteristic bulls-eye rash are now reported to local health departments in Wisconsin.
- Anaplasmosis continues to be a significant tick-borne illness in Marathon County.
- Cases of Hepatitis C continue to increase in Marathon County. The most significant risk factors for Hepatitis C are IV drug abuse and needle sharing.
- The Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) continues to facilitate more accurate and timely reporting of reportable diseases.

Key Measure: Reported Communicable Disease Cases and Rates, 2007–2010

Marathon County *Rates are per 100,000 people.	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'12 Rates*	'08-12 Rates*	2020 Goals
<b>Reportable Diseases</b>								
Blastomycosis	23	25	60	16	15	11.1	20.6	
Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis	12	21	37	57	36	26.7	24.2	
Hepatitis C	23	34	34	50	62	46.0	30.2	0.25
HIV/AIDS	4	5	2	2	2	1.5	2.2	3.5
Influenza Associated Hospitalizations	NA	NA	2	9	39	28.9	12.4	
Lyme Disease	133	122	211	206	84	62.3	112.3	
Meningitis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mycobacterial Disease (Non-Tuberculosis)	14	13	13	24	18	13.4	12.2	
Streptococcal Disease – Invasive/Groups A & B	16	19	12	18	25	18.6	13.4	
Streptococcus Pneumoniae – Invasive	18	25	10	19	13	9.6	12.6	
Tuberculosis/Active Disease	1	1	1	1	3	2.2	1.0	1.0
West Nile	1	0	0	1	0	0	0.3	
<b>Sexually Transmitted Diseases</b>								
Chlamydia	270	220	294	342	290	215.2	210.3	
Gonorrhea	26	23	40	24	16	11.9	19.2	257-198
Syphilis	1	0	1	4	5	3.7	1.9	1.4-6.8
<b>Food- and Waterborne Diseases</b>								
Hepatitis A	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.1	0.3
Hepatitis B	27	28	29	13	16	11.9	16.8	1.5
Campylobacteriosis	41	38	41	27	39	28.9	27.6	
Cryptosporidiosis	30	24	62	60	70	52.0	36.5	
Shiga Toxin Producing E Coli (STEC)	5	9	10	9	12	8.9	6.7	
Giardiasis	14	21	27	21	21	15.6	15.4	
Salmonellosis	16	18	20	17	32	23.8	15.3	
Shigellosis	0	1	4	2	0	0	1.0	
<b>Vaccine-Preventable Diseases</b>								
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	17	12	17	12	316	234.5	55.6	0
Mumps	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.1	0
Haemophilus Influenzae – Invasive	1	1	4	3	1	0.7	1.5	0
Varicella (Chickenpox)	4	5	4	12	6	4.4	4.6	0
Others (Measles, Rubella, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Polio)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SOURCES

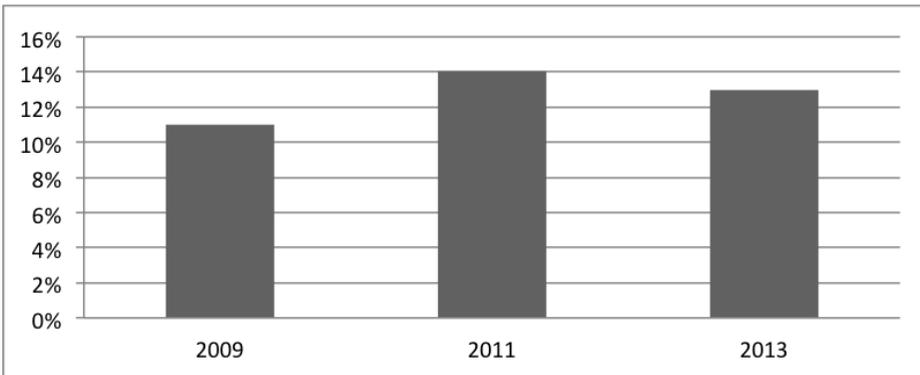
- Marathon County Health Department**  
[www.co.marathon.wi.us](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us)
- Wisconsin Division of Public Health**  
Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wiphin/WEDSS.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wiphin/WEDSS.htm)
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

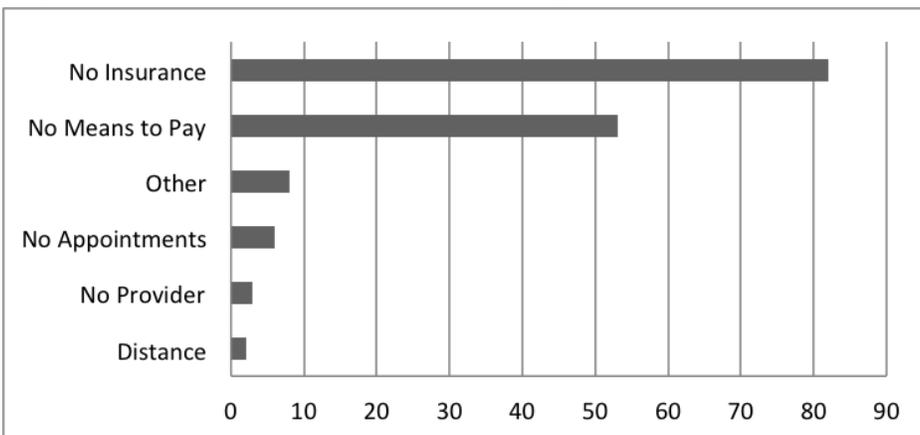
Communicable diseases continue to have a significant impact on our county, state, and nation. The national Healthy People 2020 initiative has set specific goals to reduce sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS because of the gravity of these diseases nation-wide. Communicable diseases spread in numerous ways, including through contaminated food and water, insect vectors, animals, and person-to-person contact.

In 2012, the State of Wisconsin, including Marathon County, experienced the largest outbreak of pertussis since 2004-05. Statewide, 6,462 cases were reported in 2012, with the highest incidence in children aged 10 to 14 years and infants less than 1 year old. Pertussis can be life threatening in infants, especially those less than 6 months of age. Statewide, 3 children under 1 year old died. There were no pertussis-related deaths in Marathon County.

**Key Measure:** Percent of LIFE Community Survey Respondents that Did Not Access Dental Care When Needed, 2009, 2011, and 2013



**Key Measure:** Reasons Given for Not Accessing Dental Care, 2013



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Oral health is integral to an individual's overall health. The most common oral diseases among children and adults are dental cavities and gum disease. Oral diseases can affect basic functions like eating and talking and can decrease attendance and productivity at work and school. Recent studies indicate that infections of the mouth may increase the risk for heart disease, premature delivery, low-weight babies and complicate control of blood sugar for people with diabetes.

It is estimated that one in three children in Wisconsin are living with untreated dental decay. Dental caries is the most common chronic disease among children, five times more frequent than asthma. Proven strategies to prevent oral disease include the effective use of fluoride products, community water fluoridation, and school-based and school-linked dental sealant programs.

Dental decay disproportionately impacts minority and low-income populations and those with disabilities due to unmet dental needs. Nationally, 80% of dental decay affects 20% of children. Limited access to adequate insurance or dentists that accept Medicaid often prevents children and adults from receiving dental care. In Wisconsin, the ratio of dentists to population is 1:1,799 – similar to the United States. Here in Marathon County the ratio of dentists to population is 1:1,616. Wisconsin has 33 dental facilities that target health professional shortage areas in order to give access to underserved populations – Bridge Community Health Clinic and Family Health Center of Marshfield are designated facilities.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 80% of respondents to the 2013 LIFE Community Survey were satisfied or strongly satisfied with the accessibility of dental care.
- 77% of respondents to the 2013 LIFE Community Survey were somewhat concerned or very concerned about the affordability of dental care.
- 51% of respondents who reported being unable to see a dentist indicated a household income of less than \$25,000.
- The national Healthy People 2020 goal is to decrease untreated dental decay in children and adults.
- Bridge Community Health Clinic serves the uninsured and underinsured, including the Medicaid population within 7 census tracts in Wausau. Family Health Center of Marshfield serves parts of western Marathon County.
- Bridge Community Health Clinic's dental expansion in the fall of 2013, is anticipated to serve an additional 5,840 patients.

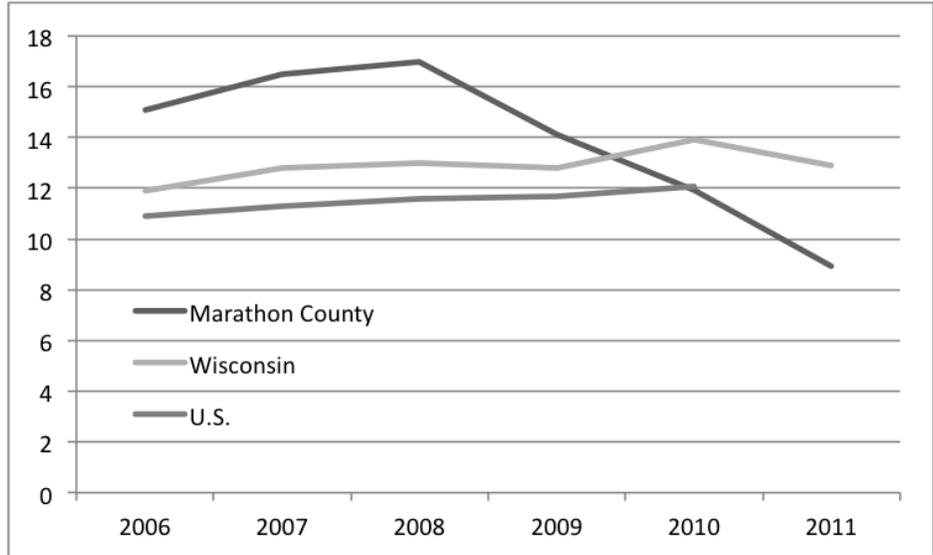
### SOURCES

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
2010 Burden of Oral Diseases in Wisconsin  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/)
- **Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin**  
[www.chawisconsin.org](http://www.chawisconsin.org)
- **County Health Rankings**  
[www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 55% of LIFE survey respondents are somewhat or very concerned about the affordability of mental health services.
- Nationally, 44.7 million adults aged 18 or older experienced *any mental illness* in the past year, corresponding to a rate of 19.8% of the adult population; the Wisconsin rate was 21.01%.
- Among adults aged 18 or older, the rate of *serious mental illness* in the past year in WI was 4.91 per 100,000 compared with 4.62 nationally.
- Approximately 8.9 million adults have co-occurring disorders (i.e. both a mental and substance use disorder).
- Only 7.4% of individuals receive treatment for both conditions with 55.8% receiving no treatment at all.
- Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the nation. Since 2008, Marathon County's suicide rate has steadily declined.

Key Measure: Suicide Rates per 100,000, 2006—2011



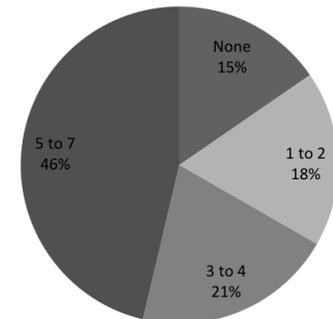
COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Often carrying over into adulthood, mental health and substance use disorders among children, youth, and young adults are major threats to the health and well-being of younger populations. The costs of treatment for mental health and addictive disorders—which create an enormous burden for the affected individuals, their families, and society—have increased the interest in prevention practices that can impede the onset or reduce the severity of the disorders.

Mental and substance use conditions often co-occur. In other words, individuals with substance use conditions often have a mental health condition at the same time and vice versa. Integrated treatment or treatment that addresses mental and substance use conditions at the same time is associated with lower costs and better outcomes, such as reduced substance use, improved psychiatric symptoms and functioning, decreased hospitalization, increased housing stability, fewer arrests, and improved quality of life.

Because suicide is closely linked with mental illness, suicide prevention was often viewed as an issue that mental health agencies and systems should address. However, the vast majority of persons who may have a mental disorder do not engage in suicidal behaviors.

Times per Typical Week LIFE Survey Respondents Eat an Evening Meal with Friends or Family



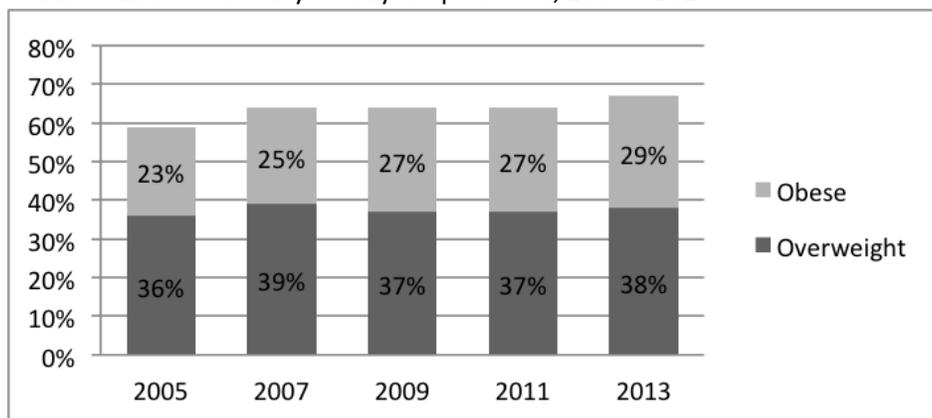
*Eating meals together is considered a protective factor not just for mental health, but also for healthy weight and alcohol and other drug misuse.*

Moreover, mental health is only one of many factors that can influence suicide risk. For example, enhancing connectedness to others is an identified strategy for preventing suicidal behaviors and other problems. It is a *health* issue that must be addressed at many levels by different groups working together in a coordinated and synergistic way. There is no single path that will lead to suicide. Rather, throughout life, a combination of factors, such as a serious mental illness, alcohol abuse, a painful loss, exposure to violence, or social isolation may increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

SOURCES

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**  
[www.samhsa.gov/data/Short\\_Reports.aspx](http://www.samhsa.gov/data/Short_Reports.aspx)  
[www.samhsa.gov/co-occurring/](http://www.samhsa.gov/co-occurring/)
- **Institute of Medicine of the National Academies**  
[www.iom.edu/](http://www.iom.edu/)
- **Surgeon General**  
[www.surgeongeneral.gov/](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/)
- **Center for Disease Control Injury Prevention and Control**  
[www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
WI Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH)  
[www.dhs.wi.gov](http://www.dhs.wi.gov)

**Key Measure:** Percentage of Overweight and Obese Marathon County Adults—Life Community Survey Respondents, 2005—2013



**Obesity Table:** At What Weight (by Height) is a Person Considered Obese

HEIGHT	WEIGHT	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
5'0"	153	5'6"	186	6'0"	221
5'1"	159	5'7"	191	6'1"	227
5'2"	164	5'8"	197	6'2"	234
5'3"	169	5'9"	203	6'3"	240
5'4"	175	5'10"	209	6'4"	246
5'5"	180	5'11"	215		

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The prevalence of obesity in the United States, including Wisconsin, has increased during the last decades. The LIFE Community Survey data reflect the same trend in Marathon County. Obesity is a complex health issue to address as behavior, environment, and genetic factors all have an effect in causing people to be overweight and obese. In the simplest terms, overweightness and obesity result from an energy imbalance. This involves eating too many calories and not getting enough physical activity.

Eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables is associated with a decreased risk of many chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, and some cancers. The health benefits of physical activity include prevention of disease and reductions in risk factors associated with a range of diseases and conditions. Research also has found that replacing foods of high energy density (high calories per weight of food) with foods of lower energy density, such as fruits and vegetables, can be an important part of a weight-management strategy.

Research shows that changes to our physical and food environments that provide daily opportunities for people to



eat healthfully and to be physically active can improve the overall health of the community. Reducing screen time, increasing breastfeeding (both participation rates and duration), and organizing wellness efforts that engage the whole community are also effective strategies to reduce obesity.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 74% of LIFE survey respondents agree that unhealthy eating and/or the lack of physical activity is a concern in the community.
- Only 23% of LIFE respondents get an average of 30 minutes of physical activity 5-7 days per week.
- According to the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, adults need at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity per week and muscle strengthening exercises twice per week.
- Fruits and vegetables are part of a well-balanced and healthy eating plan. Among WI adults the median intake of fruits is 1.1 times/day and median intake of vegetables is 1.5 times/day.
- Marathon County has 17 farmers markets.
- The obesity rate in WI was 27.7% in 2011, and 26.3% in 2010.
- During the past 20 years, there has been a dramatic increase in obesity in the United States and rates remain high. More than one-third of U.S. adults (35.7%) and approximately 17% of children and adolescents aged 2—19 years (12.5 million) are obese.

### SOURCES

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/adultobesity/](http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/adultobesity/)  
[www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html)
- **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
 Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity  
[www.dpi.state.nd.us/child/ffvp/indicator-FV.pdf](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/child/ffvp/indicator-FV.pdf)

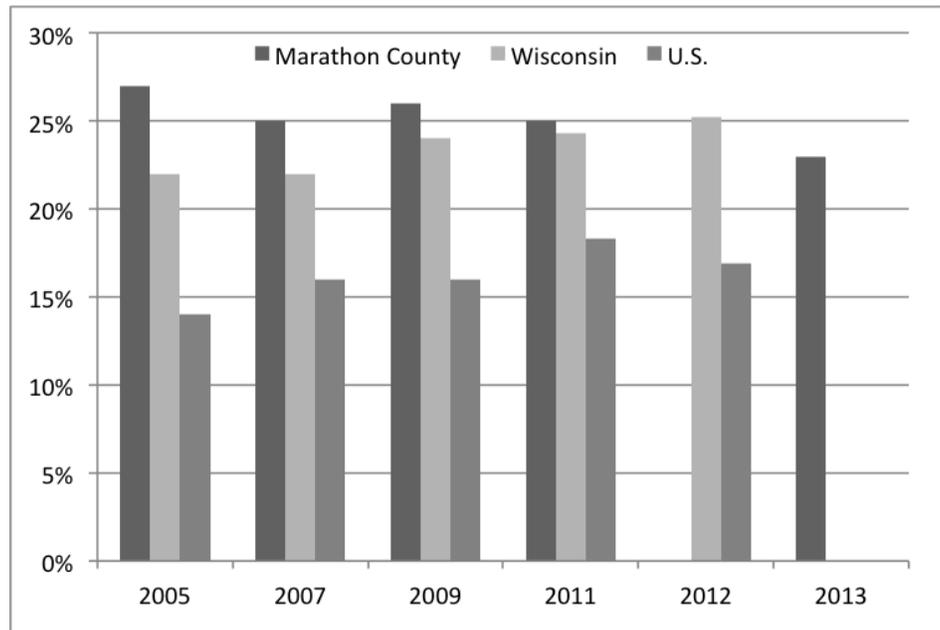
## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 82% of LIFE survey respondents are very or somewhat concerned about drinking and driving.
- 69% of LIFE survey respondents are very or somewhat concerned about the misuse of alcohol.
- 81% of LIFE survey respondents are very or somewhat concerned about illegal drug use.
- 76% of LIFE survey respondents are very or somewhat concerned about abuse and misuse of prescription drugs.
- Wisconsin's per capita alcohol consumption is notably higher than the national average every year.
- The annual cost of excessive alcohol use in Marathon County is \$152.4 million per year, or \$1,137 per county resident.
- In 2011, excessive alcohol consumption in Marathon County contributed to at least:
  - \* 31 alcohol related deaths
  - \* 1,1318 alcohol related hospitalizations
  - \* 1,392 alcohol related arrests

## SOURCES

- **University of Wisconsin**  
Population Health Institute  
[uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu/publications/other/burden-of-excessive-alcohol-use-in-wi.pdf](http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu/publications/other/burden-of-excessive-alcohol-use-in-wi.pdf)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
Alcohol and Other Drug Use Statistics  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/stats/aoda.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/stats/aoda.htm)
- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention**  
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.htm>

## Key Measure: Prevalence of Binge Drinking, 2005—2013



## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Wisconsin's rates of alcohol use and misuse have been among the highest – if not the highest – in the nation, exceeding national per capita averages for both alcohol consumption and the rate of underage drinking (ages 12 – 20). As of 2010, Wisconsin adults continue to have the highest rate of binge drinking among all U.S. states and territories.

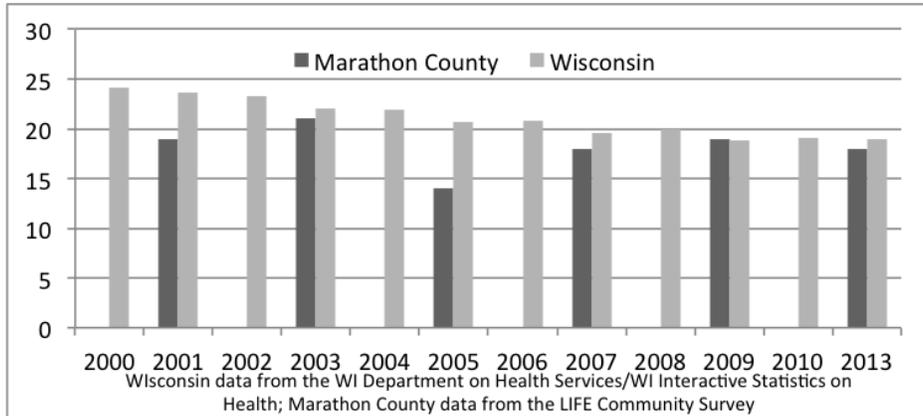
The rate of drinking among Wisconsin high school students declined from 2001 to 2011. Combined with a steadily increasing age of initiation and falling rates of underage binge drinking, Wisconsin continues to show improvement in youth alcohol use. Despite this encouraging trend, in 2011 WI high school youth had the eighth highest prevalence of current alcohol use in the nation.

Excessive alcohol consumption is associated with many negative health, economic, and social consequences borne by individuals, families, and the entire community. Costs include healthcare for treatment stemming from excessive alcohol use, lost productivity either at work or due to premature mortality, criminal justice systems costs, and motor vehicle crashes.

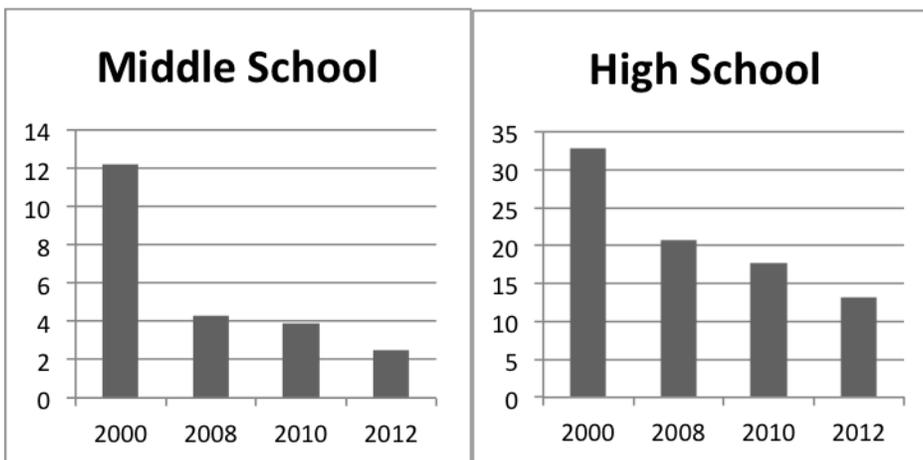
As a whole, consumption patterns of illicit drugs in Wisconsin mirror national

trends. Both lifetime and current use of marijuana in the United States and Wisconsin decreased for most of the past decade, although the latest data for Wisconsin show an upturn. Both nationally and in Wisconsin, the misuse of prescription drugs for non-medical purposes continues to be a serious problem, especially among young adults. In 2008-2009, 13% of Wisconsin adults ages 18-25 reported using pain relievers for non-medical purposes. Among high school students in 2011, 18% reported illicit use of prescription drugs at some point in their lives. Most notably, Marathon County has seen a tremendous increase in heroin use, trafficking, and crime related to illegal drug sales. For more information about this see Indicator 28: Alcohol and Drug Arrests.

### Key Measure: Percent of Adult Smokers, 2000—2013



### Key Measure: Percent of Wisconsin High School and Middle School Smokers, 2000—2012



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2013, the County Health rankings estimate 18% of Marathon County adults were current smokers.
- Adults with income below \$24,999/year are significantly more likely to smoke.
- 61.5% of smokers have stopped smoking for one day or longer because they were trying to quit.
- 82.8% of households with children do not allow smoking inside the home.
- 45.1% of students have used a tobacco product in their lifetime.
- 16.9% of students who reported ever smoking tried their first whole cigarette before age 11.
- 19.4% of high school students currently use a tobacco product; 13.1% use cigarettes.
- Flavored and smokeless tobacco product use is on the rise among youth.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable death in our country, followed by obesity, even as the rates of smoking have declined in recent years. Research indicates a number of interventions are successful in reducing tobacco use, including price increases, smoking bans and restrictions, and community mobilizations that educate retailers and actively enforce retailer sales laws.

The best intervention is preventing children from ever starting to use tobacco products; however, new products like cigarillos and e-cigarettes challenge those efforts. Cigarillos are often grape, cherry, chocolate, or watermelon flavored, and their packaging makes them look like candy. Also, these other tobacco products are typically less expensive to buy because they are taxed differently than cigarettes, which are currently taxed at a

rate of \$2.52 per pack in Wisconsin. The percentage of high school students who reported ever using an e-cigarette rose from 4.7% in 2011 to 10.0% in 2012. According to an opinion poll conducted by Health First Wisconsin, 71% of Marathon County residents are concerned about smoking and other tobacco use among young people in Wisconsin.

The WI Smoke-free Workplace Law was implemented on July 5, 2010. People overwhelmingly agree that smoke-free restaurants and bars are healthier for employees and customers (87%), more enjoyable to patronize (86%), and necessary to protect employees (84%). Nine out of ten Wisconsinites go out the same or more often now that bars and restaurants are smoke free.

### SOURCES

- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention**  
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.htm>  
The Community Guide  
[www.thecommunityguide.org/tobacco/](http://www.thecommunityguide.org/tobacco/)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
Tobacco Prevention and Control  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tobacco/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tobacco/)
- **County Health Rankings**  
[www.countyhealthrankings.org/](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/)
- **Tobacco Free Kids**  
[www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org)



*We strive to live in a community where...*

people are safe.



Community Safety Subcommittee

Deb Hager, Chair	Marathon County Administration
Steve Hagman	Marathon County Emergency Management
Jeff Hardel	Wausau Police Department
Ken Heimerman	Marathon County District Attorney
Craig McEwen	Marathon County Board of Supervisors
Scott Parks	Marathon County Sheriff's Department
Lisa Rasmussen	Wausau City Council
Phil Rentmeester	Wausau Fire Department
Laurie Yarie	Marathon County Justice System
Jane Graham Jennings	The Women's Community
Jennifer Cummings	Aging and Disability Resource Center of Central Wisconsin
Vicki Tylka	Marathon County Social Services

*"I think property crime is up in 2013—at least the first seven months. The drug addicts turned burglars, and check forgers have been busy lately."*

*Ken Heimerman  
Marathon County District Attorney*

# Community Safety

## Section Summary

### Community Success and Progress:

- Marathon County has enacted and implemented a number of programs designed to improve community safety:
  - \* The “Real Happy Hour” encourages dinnertime as family time.
  - \* OWI Treatment Court addresses legal, mental health, and alcohol issues to reduce the likelihood of repeat offenders.
  - \* An integrated reporting and treatment system for sexual assault victims increases the likelihood of reporting.
  - \* The Social Host Ordinance imposes liability on those serving alcohol to minors.
  - \* The Pushback Campaign raises awareness about local drug use.
  - \* The integration of multiple AODA initiatives focuses efforts to increase awareness about drug and alcohol issues in our community.
- The City of Wausau has increased efforts to address blight in the community.



### Challenges and Opportunities to Improve:

#### Challenges

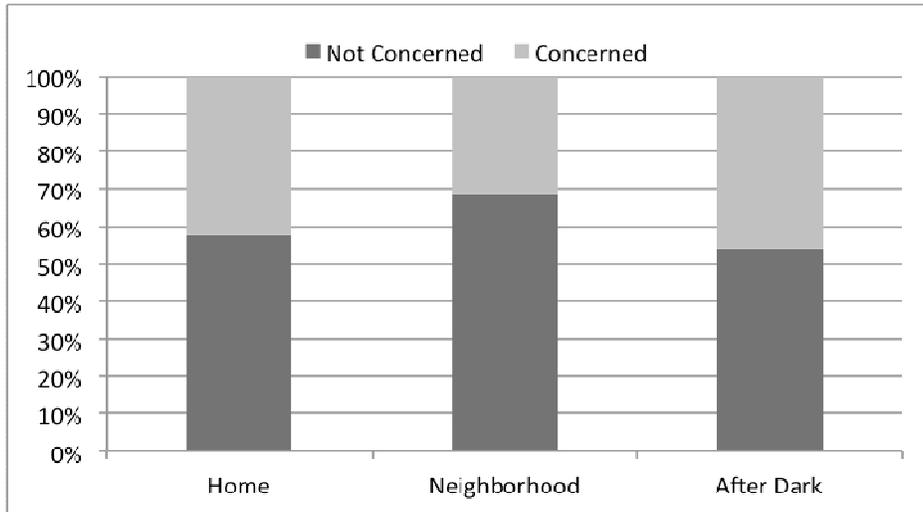
- Marathon County has seen a rise in drug use.
- The lack of a uniform addressing system in rural areas impedes emergency response services.
- 75% to 82% of fire and EMS calls occur in four metro communities, all with their own departments.

#### Opportunities to Improve

- The potential consolidation of public safety, fire, and EMS services could have a positive impact on the delivery of those services.
- Increasing the use of evidence-based best practices in criminal justice has the opportunity to reduce jail bed days and recidivism rates.
- The expansion of treatment courts would target root causes, producing a reduction in incidents related to drug use, domestic violence, and other crimes.



**Key Measure:** 2013 LIFE Community Survey Responses to Questions Regarding Concerns of Personal Safety



Note: In 2013, the LIFE Community Survey changed its language to capture the community's concerns about safety rather than the percentage of individuals who feel safe.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The extent to which county residents feel safe in their communities and neighborhoods is an important measure of public safety and the quality of life.

Individuals' perceptions of personal safety are subjective. However, if people feel comfortable walking in their neighborhoods, they are also more likely to participate in community life and establish healthy commercial centers. A positive perception promotes not only commercial activity but also the use of Marathon County's natural and cultural resources.

Many factors influence an individual's perception of safety. If someone has been a victim of crime they are more likely to be concerned about their personal safety. Income also influences concerns about personal safety with high-income earners (\$50,000+) 20+% less likely to have concerns about personal safety. Additionally, confidence in personal safety increases when one's vehicle, home, and personal property are respected and free from tampering, vandalism or theft.

The level of care and maintenance of public and private properties also influence individuals' concerns about safety. Community members have raised concerns about urban decay and

its impact on the perception of personal safety in segments of the metro area. The increased frequency of illegal drug use, transient tenants, absentee landlords, and the decay of certain neighborhoods appear to be correlated. Efforts are underway by the City of Wausau to curb decay of neighborhoods.



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- The Eastern Lakes Region was 8% less concerned about safety in their neighborhoods.
- Men were 4+% less concerned about their safety in their neighborhoods during the day and 6.5+% less concerned after dark than total respondents.
- Women however were +4.3% more concerned after dark than the total respondents.
- Non-married residents expressed greater concerns of safety in their homes—single persons (56%), separated (80%), widowed (60%), divorced (52.1%)—than persons who are married (40.2%).
- During the day, safety in one's neighborhood was consistent with total responses except for widows (50%) and the separated (40%) who report more concern for safety in their neighborhood.
- Only divorcees report more concern (52.6%) about their safety after dark in their neighborhoods.
- Respondents who had less education were almost twice as likely to be concerned about their personal safety.

### SOURCES

- 2013 LIFE in Marathon County Community Survey
- Database of the Greenspaces and Neighborhoods in the heart of Boston  
Heart of the City - Perceptions of Public Safety  
<http://ksgaccman.harvard.edu/hotc/DisplayIssue.asp?id=40>

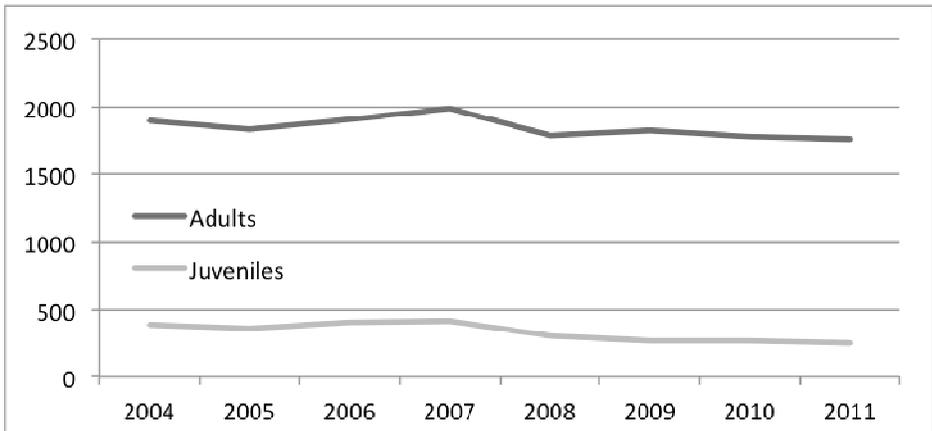
**DATA HIGHLIGHTS**

- Wisconsin has the highest rate of drunk driving in the nation.
- 9.8% of LIFE Community survey respondents reported driving under the influence in 2013, compared with 5.8% in the 2011 LIFE survey.
- 26% of Wisconsin adults admitted they had driven under the influence of alcohol in the previous year.
- In 2011 drug arrests in Wisconsin decreased by 1% with 82% of arrests being for possession and 18% for sale/manufacture.
- From 2003 -2012 Marathon County DA's office experienced a 2300% increase in heroin referrals, 860% increase in meth referrals and 60% decrease in cocaine referrals.
- Of LIFE Community survey respondents:
  - \* 68.3% are concerned about misuse of alcohol
  - \* 81.9% are concerned about illegal drug use
  - \* 76% are concerned about abuse and misuse of prescription drugs
  - \* 73.9% are concerned about drinking and driving

**SOURCES**

- **LIFE in Marathon County Community Survey**
- **Marathon County District Attorney's Office**  
[www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/DistrictAttorney.aspx](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/DistrictAttorney.aspx)
- **Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance**  
[www.oja.wi.gov](http://www.oja.wi.gov)
- **Wisconsin Department of Transportation Drunken Driving**  
[www.dot.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov)

**Key Measure: Alcohol and Drug Arrests in Marathon County, 2004-2011**



Adults	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Driving While Intoxicated</b>	935	861	937	952	912	914	760	722
<b>Drug Possession</b>	342*	367*	308*	410*	271*	209	230	235
<b>Sale &amp; Manufacture of Drugs</b>	--	--	--	--	--	40	90	310
<b>Liquor Law Violations</b>	618	604	657	596	601	660	701	489
<b>Total</b>	<b>1895</b>	<b>1832</b>	<b>1902</b>	<b>1958</b>	<b>1784</b>	<b>1823</b>	<b>1781</b>	<b>1756</b>
Juveniles	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Driving While Intoxicated</b>	18	13	14	13	11	12	15	6
<b>Drug Possession</b>	78*	50*	58*	86*	64*	47	38	56
<b>Sale &amp; Manufacture of Drugs</b>	--	--	--	--	--	13	13	14
<b>Underage Drinking</b>	295	296	329	319	233	199	205	175
<b>Total</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>251</b>

\* Possession & Sale of Drugs were combined into one number from 2000-2008

**COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES**

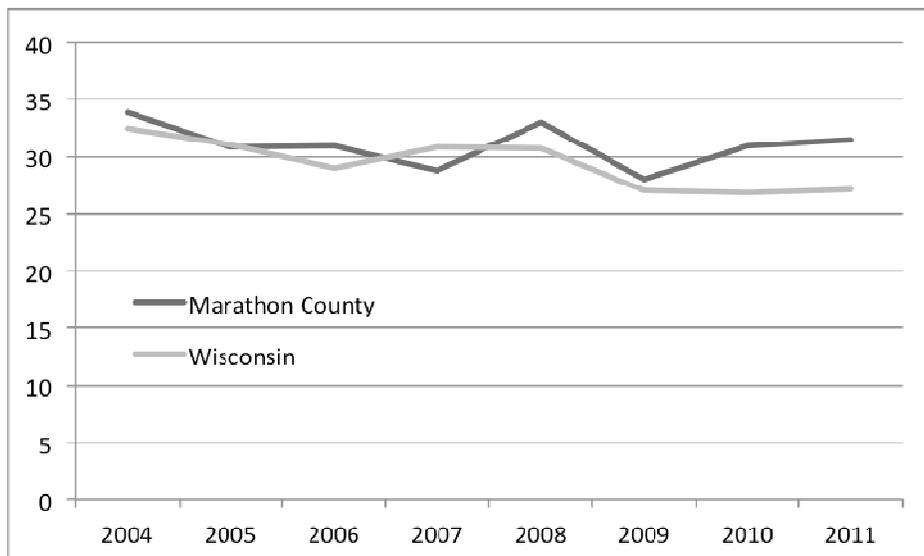
Drug and alcohol abuse are serious problems that reduce the quality of life by negatively affecting individuals' and the public's physical and socio-economic health. In Marathon County, while the overall data shows a continued downward trend in total arrests for alcohol and drugs, a closer look at the data reveals that the metro area has experienced an increase of 6% to 26% in adult drug arrests over the last year with an explosion in the use of heroin and meth over the last decade. Moreover, the county as a whole experienced an increase of 23% in juvenile drug arrests for the same time period.

Concurrently, the number of adults arrested for OWI decreased by 5% from 2010 and 26% from the high in 2007. Juvenile underage drinking arrests also decreased by 15% from 2010 and 47% from the high of 2006. The

implementation of a Social Host ordinance and the promotion of the Real Happy Hour have both proven effective strategies to reduce alcohol use among juveniles.

Drug arrests do not tell the whole story. Drug-related crimes include violent behavior resulting from the drug's effects, violence between rival drug dealers, and stealing to obtain the money necessary to buy drugs. Additionally, the lack of legitimate employment and exposure to situations that encourage crime are common lifestyle consequences.

**Key Measure:** Rate of Traffic Crashes per 1,000 Licensed Drivers, 2004—2011



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Marathon County's streets and highways are vital to both the health of the economy and the sense of community. As they become busier, the risk of traffic crashes resulting in injury, disability, property damage and even death also increases. Thus, the safety of those roadways is an essential component to a healthy community.

A number of factors contribute to the risk of traffic crashes, including vehicle design, speed, road design, driver impairment by alcohol or drugs, animals and weather conditions. In 2009, alcohol contributed to 45% of Wisconsin's fatal crashes and 40% of motorcycle fatalities.



Males between the ages of 21-40 make up the majority of fatalities with high alcohol contents.

Responding to traffic crashes is the responsibility of several branches of law enforcement – State Patrol, County Sheriff, and local law enforcement. In the course of making roads safer for residents, officers issue citations for various offenses that cause accidents.

Of the 3,060 crashes in Marathon County in 2011, the following factors were involved:	
Alcohol	594
Deer	574
Hit & Run	176
Motorcycles	44
Work Zone	36
Bicycle	23
Pedestrian	18
School Buses	12

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 82.3% of LIFE Community survey respondents were very concerned or concerned about drunk driving in their community.
- 68.8% of Marathon County crashes were related to speed in 2011.
- In 2011, Marathon County had 15 traffic fatalities including 1 bicycle and 1 motorcycle fatality compared with 21 traffic fatalities in 2010.
- 41.8% of crashes and 20% of fatalities occurred on state roads in Marathon County. While 39.8% of all crashes and 10% of fatalities occurred on local roads or streets.
- Probability of a crash increases significantly with alcohol content of .05% and climbs rapidly after about .08%.
- While only 9.8% of LIFE Community survey respondents admitted to driving under the influence of alcohol in the last 30 days, 70.5% assumed most other adults had.
- In 2011 Marathon County economic losses due to traffic crashes totaled \$19,046,600.

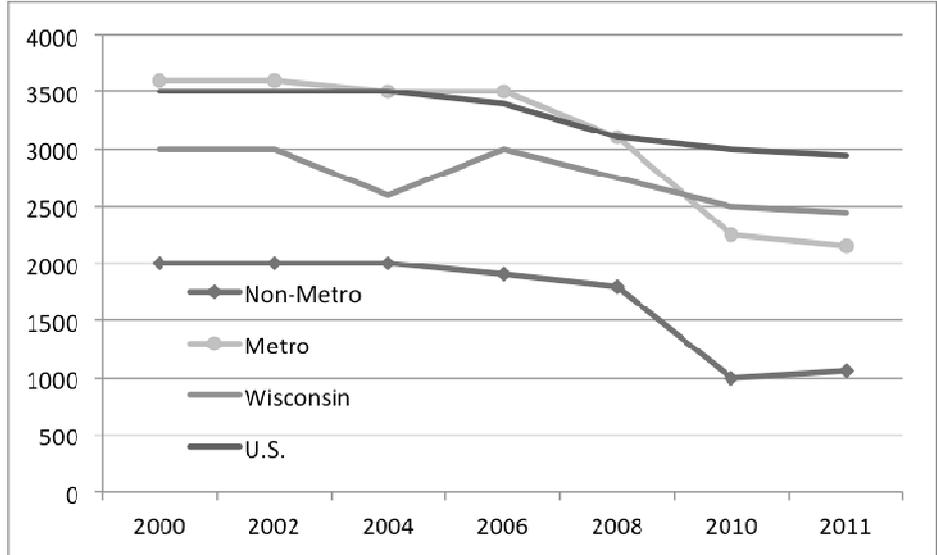
### SOURCES

- LIFE in Marathon County Community Survey
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation 2011 Crash Facts <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/safety/motorist/crashfacts/crashfacts-archive.htm>

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2011, the property crime rate in Marathon County was 1,808 per 100,000 people indicating a slight increase from 2010.
- Arson in Marathon County decreased between 2010 and 2011 while the arson rate for Wisconsin increased 2.4%. In 2011, the total property loss for arsons in Marathon County was \$4,685 compared with \$90,400 in 2010.
- From 2010 to 2011 Marathon County experienced an increase in theft by 3% and decreases in arson by 20%.
- Burglary in Marathon County decreased by 3% while the state experienced a 1.4% increase.
- In 2011, the total value of property stolen in Marathon County was in excess of \$2 million.

Key Measure: Property Crime Rate Per 100,000, 2000—2011



Key Measure: Reported Property Crimes in Marathon County by Type, 2011

PROPERTY CRIMES	Metro	Non-Metro
Burglary	347	141
Theft	1325	488
Motor Vehicle Theft	58	19
Arson	7	1
Total	1737	649

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Property crime focuses on four offenses: burglary, theft, vehicle theft, and arson. Theft is the taking of money or property without force or the threat of force against the victim. Local law enforcement feels that theft and burglary occurrences are good lead indicators of safety within a community.

The District Attorney and law enforcement are concerned that property crime, fostered by drug buyers and sellers stealing from each other or stealing items that can be pawned or sold for cash, is on the rise in 2013 with a perceived increase in burglary, check forgery, and theft from vehicles.

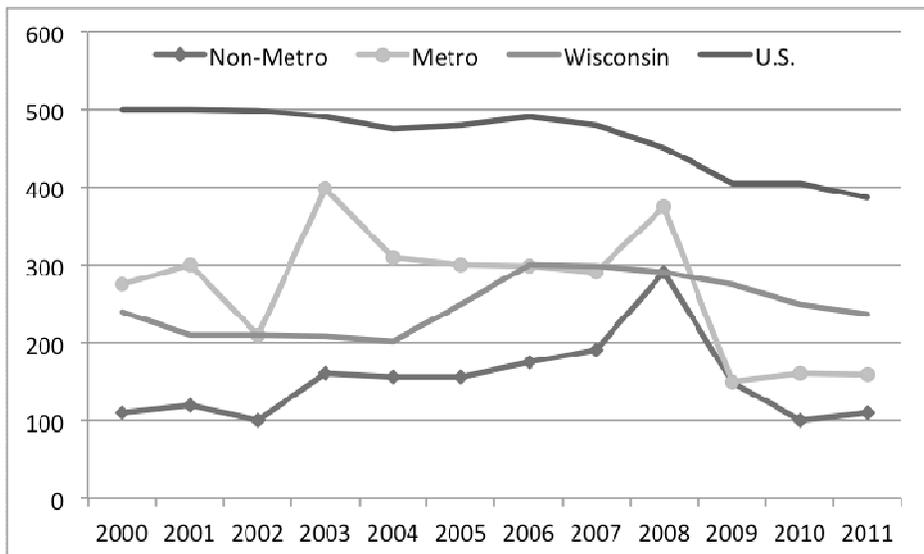
Marathon County continues to experience lower property crime rates than the state and nation. While our more densely populated areas experience higher crime rates than the non-metro areas, there has been a significant increase in property crime in the non-metro area. Burglary increased by 12%, theft by 30% and motor vehicle theft by 18% from 2010 to 2011. The metro area experienced a decrease in all areas except for motor vehicle theft, which increased by 28% during this same time. The county rates by type of property crime continue to be lower than the state and national rates.



SOURCES

- **Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
Crime Statistics  
<http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats>
- **Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance**  
Crime in Wisconsin  
[oja.wi.gov/sites/default/files/Crimes\\_2011.pdf](http://oja.wi.gov/sites/default/files/Crimes_2011.pdf)

### Key Measure: Violent Crime Rate Per 100,000, 2000–2011



### Key Measure: Reported Violent Crimes in Marathon County by Type, 2011

VIOLENT CRIME	Metro	Non-Metro
Murder	0	0
Forcible Rape	43	7
Aggravated Assault	102	20
Robbery	25	3
Total	170	30

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The violent crime rate is comprised of murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault and robbery. Violent crimes by their definition involve force or threat of force against the victim. These are crimes against persons.

while Marathon County is at 37.9 per 100,000 people. Similar to property crime, there is a difference between metro and non-metro areas with more densely populated areas experiencing a higher rate of violent crime.



In 2011, Marathon County experienced a significant increase in the categories of rape and robbery while maintaining its murder and aggravated assault rates. All of Marathon County's crime rates continue to be below the state and national averages except for forcible rape. The forcible rape rate is 20.7 per 100,000 in Wisconsin and 26.8 nationally

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- The violent crime rate in Marathon County increased by 24% from 2010 to 2011 with substantial increases in rape (72%) and robbery (40%).
- The violent crime rate decreased by 4.5% nationally and by 4.8% in the state from 2010-2011.
- The violent crime rate of 152 per 100,000 people in Marathon County is still significantly lower than the state and nation.
- From 2010 to 2011 robberies increased 1.8% statewide.
- Marathon County's robbery rate per 100,000 people is 21, compared with a state rate of 82 and a national rate of 113.7.
- Robberies cost Wisconsin victims nearly \$4 million dollars with the average loss per robbery of \$855.
- Firearms were used in 57% of murders in Wisconsin.
- Personal weapons such as hands, fists and feet were used in 11% of forcible rapes and firearms were used in 1%.
- In 2011, the number of rape crimes reported to law enforcement statewide decreased by 2%.

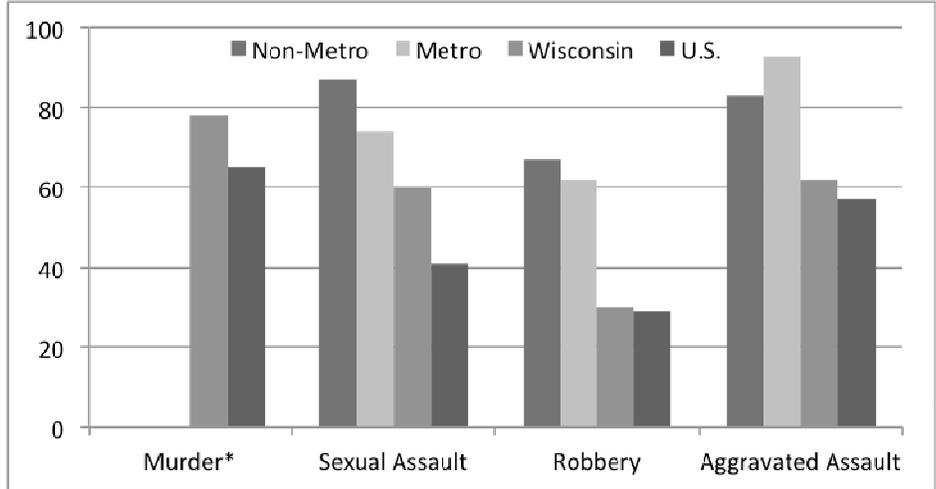
### SOURCES

- **Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
Crime Statistics  
<http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats>
- **Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance**  
Crime and Arrests  
<http://oja.wi.gov/category.asp?linkcatid=1324&linkid=709&locid=9>

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

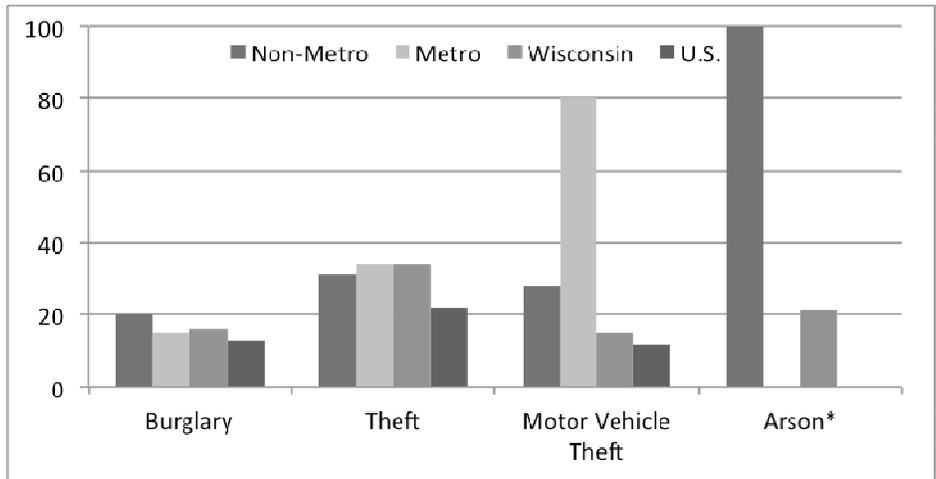
- In 2011, Marathon County cleared 76% of the violent crime committed and 31% of property crimes. These rates compare favorably with the state rate of 52% for violent crime and 26% for property crimes.
- In 2011, Marathon County's clearance rate for sexual assault was 64% compared with the state rate of 60%.
- There was a 2% decrease in the clearance rate for violent crime in Marathon County from 2010 to 2011, while property crime clearance rates remained steady at 31%.
- In 2011, \$483,764 of property was recovered in Marathon County.
- Nationally in 2011, 47.7% of violent crimes and 18.6% of property crimes were cleared, murder had the highest clearance rate at 64.8%, and theft had the highest clearance rate of property crimes at 21.5%.

Key Measure: Clearance Rates of Violent Crimes (Percent), 2011



\*Marathon County had no murders in 2011.

Key Measure: Clearance Rates of Property Crimes (Percent), 2011



National clearance rates for arson in 2011 were not available.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

While no single measure can predict whether a specific case will be solved, clearance rates represent the ability of law enforcement to solve crime and apprehend offenders. Different factors contribute to the varied rates across types of offenses. The sheer volume of crimes challenges limited law enforcement resources; thus violent crimes typically take priority over lesser property crimes. Moreover, some crimes like burglary and theft tend to lack the witnesses and evidence often present in violent crimes.

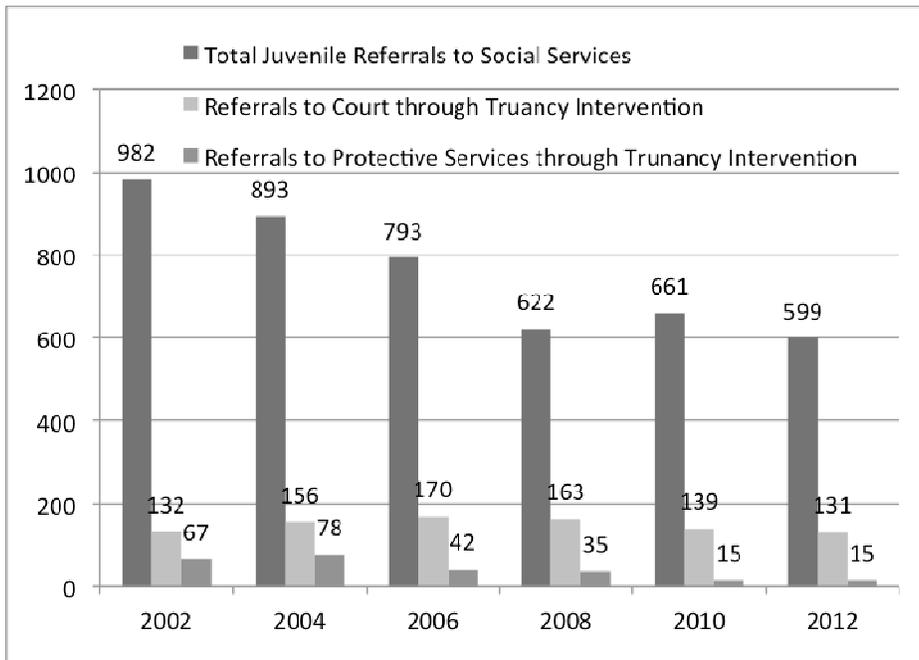
sexual assault cases have the highest solve rates in the County.

Clearance rates for violent and non-violent crimes in Marathon County are at or above the clearance rates for the state and nation. Aggravated assault and

SOURCES

- **Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
Crime Statistics  
<http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats>
- **Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance**  
Crime and Arrests  
<http://oja.wi.gov/category.asp?linkcatid=1324&linkid=709&locid>

**Key Measure:** Juveniles Referred to Social Services, Court, and Protective Services in Marathon County, 2002—2012



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Youth (under age 17) who violate the law or are status offenders (juveniles charged with or adjudicated for conduct that would not, under Wisconsin law, be a crime if committed by an adult) are referred from schools, law enforcement agencies, and the courts to Social Services. The most common status offenses are chronic or persistent truancy, running away, being ungovernable or incorrigible, violating curfew laws, or possessing tobacco or alcohol.

The noncriminal behaviors that lead to status offenses are often caused by poor family dynamics and dysfunction, school problems, youth characteristics, or community problems. Risk factors for potential truancy include domestic violence, academic problems, substance abuse, lack of parental involvement in education, and chronic health problems. Many youth who run away were physically or sexually abused at home in the year prior to their runaway. Family dysfunction and drug use in the company of the child also increase the risk of youth runaways.

Marathon County Social Services assesses the risk level of youth

committing another offense and targets interventions based on that level of risk. These interventions include court ordered victim restitution, supervision services, electronic monitoring, and group or individual treatment.



In the fall of 2012 an At Risk Youth Coalition was created to provide early intervention to youth to divert them from entering the juvenile justice system and to identify services for youth that are more extreme and already involved in the justice system. The Coalition is expanding and coordinating training and communication among community members in pursuit of better outcomes for youth.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

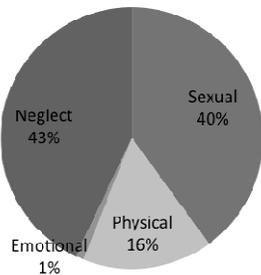
- 39% of the youth with whom Social Services works are considered to be at a moderate to high risk of relapsing back into criminal behavior.
- In 2011, 1,519 juveniles were arrested in Marathon County, down 2% from 1,552 in 2010.
- Juvenile jurisdiction is between the ages of 10 and 16. Any youth 17 or older is automatically tried as an adult.
- A child can be tried as an adult as early as 10 years of age based on criteria for crimes ranging from first degree murder to any violation of state criminal law, including property theft or drug distribution.
- Once transferred to adult court, youth remain under adult criminal jurisdiction for all future crimes committed.

### SOURCES

- **Marathon County Social Services Juvenile Justice**  
<http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/SocialServices/JuvenileJustice.aspx>
- **Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance**  
<http://oja.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=21896&locid=97>
- **Act 4 Juvenile Justice Juvenile Justice Status Offenses Fact Sheet**  
[http://act4jj.org/media/factsheets/factsheet\\_17.pdf](http://act4jj.org/media/factsheets/factsheet_17.pdf)  
Wisconsin Fact Sheet  
[http://act4jj.org/media/factsheets/factsheet\\_46.pdf](http://act4jj.org/media/factsheets/factsheet_46.pdf)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

**2011 Marathon County Child Maltreatment by Type**

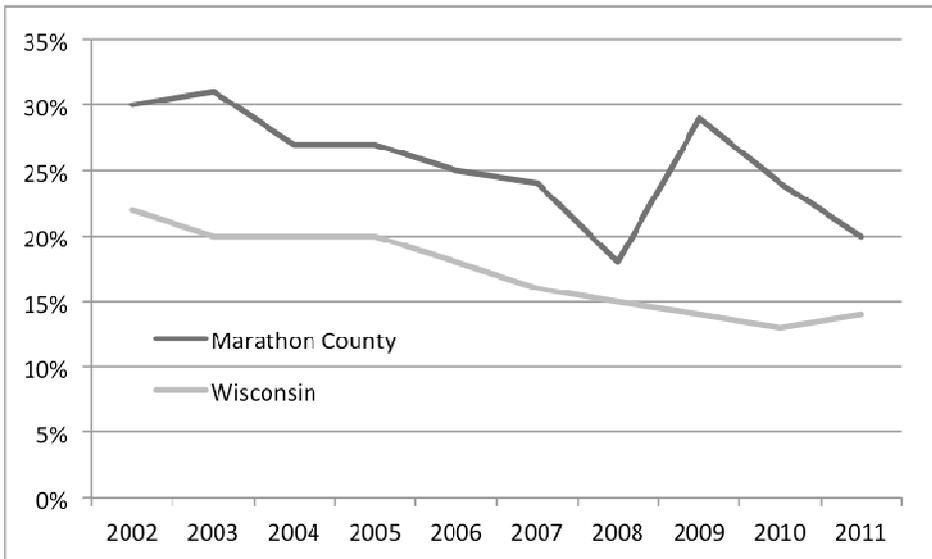


- In 2011, the population in Marathon County included 32,505 children. 197 (0.6%) were in out-of-home placements.
- Marathon County had 110 victims of child maltreatment in 2011, which equates to a rate of 3.4 victims per 1,000 children. The overall rate for the state is 3.5 victims per 1,000 children.
- Neglect is the most frequent form of substantiated maltreatment in Marathon County and Wisconsin.
- At 17%, educational personnel are the most frequent reporters of child maltreatment followed by law enforcement (15%) and social service workers (14%).

SOURCES

- **Marathon County Social Services**  
[www.co.marathon.wi.us](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us)
- **Wisconsin Department of Children and Families**  
[dcf.wi.gov/](http://dcf.wi.gov/)
- **US Department of Health & Social Services**  
[www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)

**Key Measure: Substantiated Cases of Child Maltreatment, 2002—2011**



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The sense of safety that children feel in their homes has a significant impact on their development. Children raised in abusive or neglectful environments are more likely to experience physical and emotional health issues and to display social, cognitive, and behavioral impairments. Moreover, child maltreatment does not impact the child alone. Abused and neglected children have both immediate and long-term costs for hospitalization, mental health services, educational supports, and legal intervention that often fall to the community.

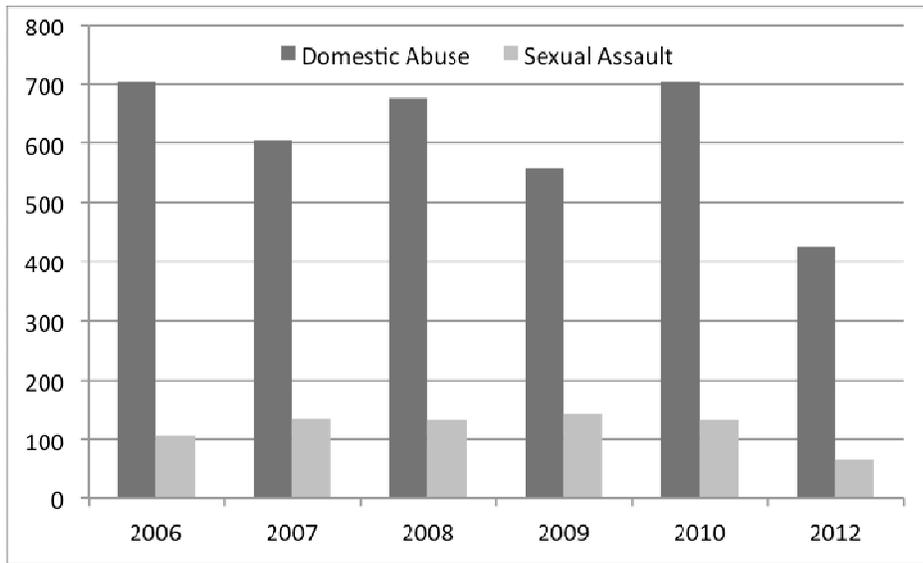
increases in street drug use. The subsequent downswing is likely a byproduct of the county’s adoption of the Alternative Response program, which engages families to develop positive plans for improvement in lieu of the traditional child protective service response.

Mandated reporters are those individuals who are required by law to report any suspected child maltreatment seen in the course of their professional duties. However, anyone who suspects child maltreatment may make a report. Persons making referrals in good faith are immune from criminal or civil liability. Wisconsin’s Child Protective Services (CPS) delivery system requires any concerned individual to report suspected child maltreatment directly to the local CPS agency or law enforcement.



Marathon County strives to support children and families through the child protective services system. Over the past ten years, Marathon County has seen a decrease in rates of substantiated child maltreatment from 11.7 maltreated children per 1,000 in 2000 to 3.4 children in 2011. However, there was a spike in substantiated cases in 2009, which experts link both to the recession and to

**Key Measure:** Reported Incidents of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault in



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as “physical, sexual, or psychological harm caused by a current or former partner or spouse.” Partnerships include heterosexual and same-sex couples and do not require sexual intimacy. This preventable public health issue affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men in the United States. IPV can have long-term effects including substance abuse, depression, and long-term health consequences. Moreover, the impact extends beyond those directly affected as recent studies have estimated the annual costs of these crimes in the United States to be as high as \$12.6 billion.

Data regarding reports of domestic violence and sexual assault are complex. This category of crimes is the most under-reported both nationally and locally; thus, rate fluctuations can mislead the public. It is important to remember that an increase in reported cases does not necessarily equate to greater incidence of IPV, and that a decrease in reporting does not necessarily equate a decrease in incidents. Victims often feel ashamed and don’t report because of the fear of other people finding out, or they see how the community responds to other victims when they report and decide that

the risk of reporting is too great. This is particularly true of sexual assault victims.

Various groups in Marathon County are working to remove the shame from victims and place it on the perpetrator where it belongs. This increased sense of safety encourages more victims to report. When a community provides support to victims and does not blame them for the assault, more victims feel comfortable reporting and communities can work from a place of greater awareness to reduce these incidents. Understanding the dynamics of abuse and helping debunk the myths that surround assault is the best way a community can address the issues.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2003, the CDC estimated the costs of IPV including rape, physical assault, and stalking at \$8.3 billion for direct medical and mental healthcare services and lost productivity. This figure does not include costs associated with the criminal justice system.
- In 2012 the Marathon County District Attorney’s office received 450 referrals for domestic abuse arrests; 426 cases were charged.
- The Women’s Community provided shelter to 75 women and 80 children in 2012.
- The Women’s Community provided support services to 492 sexual assault victims (299 women, 140 children, 53 men) and 1,188 domestic violence victims (969 women, 171 children 48 men) and their non-offending family.
- 65 victims of sexual assault reported to emergency departments in Marathon County in 2012.

### SOURCES

- **Center for Disease Control**  
Intimate Partner Violence  
[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/)
- **The Advocates for Human Rights**  
Stop Violence Against Women  
[www.stopvaw.org/](http://www.stopvaw.org/)
- **National Network to End Domestic Violence**  
[www.nnedv.org/](http://www.nnedv.org/)
- **National Sexual Violence Resource Center**  
[www.nsvrc.org/](http://www.nsvrc.org/)

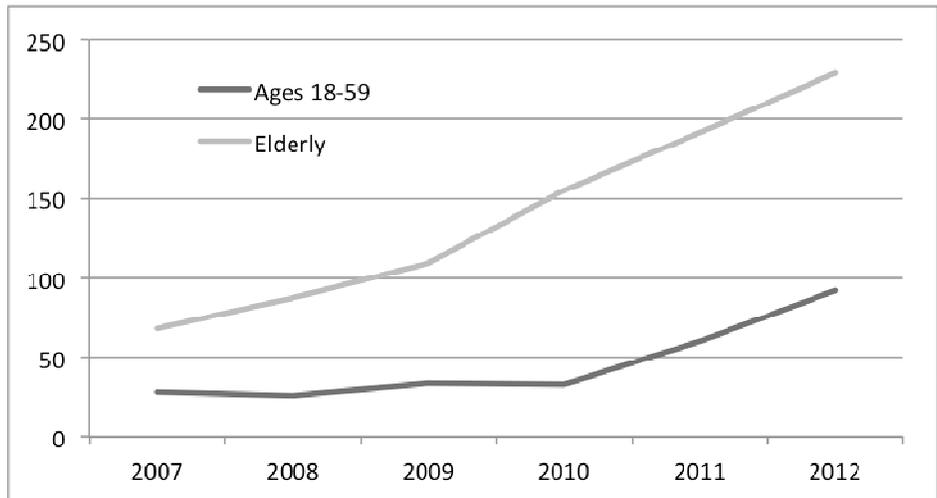
## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2012, the most frequently reported reason for protective services for persons 18-59 was self-neglect at 39.6%.
- In 2012 the most frequently reported reasons for protective services for elders-at-risk were self-neglect at 38.3% and financial exploitation at 18.9%.
- Referrals for potential protective placement have risen from 188 in 2010 to 321 in 2012.
- The most common location for neglect or abuse is in one's place of residence. The most common alleged abuser is a family member.
- For persons 18-59, the most frequently reported cases involved persons between the ages of 40 and 59 at 75%; for the elderly, ages 70 to 89 at 70%.
- In 2012, there were 445 emergency detentions.
- In 2012, there were 92 reports for adults-at-risk, with 73.2% of those reports substantiated. For elders, 71.1% of 229 reports were substantiated—an increase in both reports and substantiation from 2010.

## SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/)
- **National Center for Elder Abuse**  
[ncea.aoa.gov/](http://ncea.aoa.gov/)
- **Wisconsin Incident Tracking System (WITS)**  
WITS Statistical Summary Reports  
Adults-at-Risk Age 18-59  
Elders-at-Risk Age 60+  
Marathon County Reporting Year 2008-2012  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/APS/wits/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/APS/wits/index.htm)

**Key Measure:** Protective Services Cases Reported in Marathon County, 2007—2012



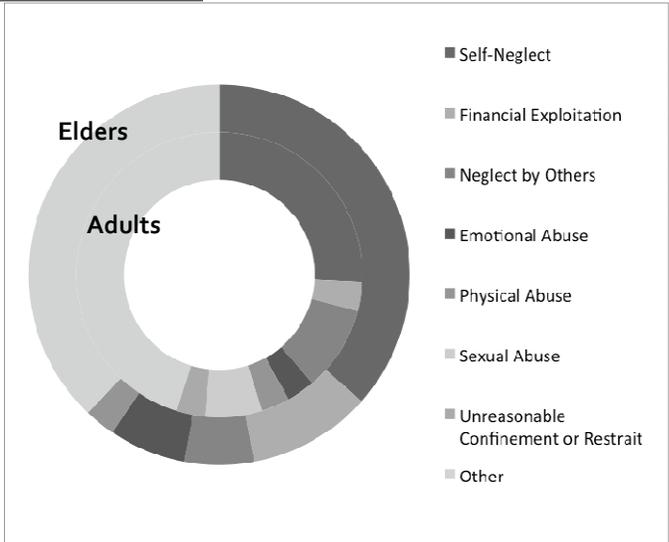
## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Unlike juvenile populations, adults are legally considered to be their own person, capable of making decisions for themselves, unless it is determined under state law that they are no longer capable of acting in their best interests. Given its importance, the right to self-determination is only taken away if persons are not capable of

understanding the consequences of their decisions due to either cognitive or mental impairments or the frailties of aging. When persons are found to no longer be competent, they are placed under protective services and assigned a guardian who makes decisions on behalf of the protected person.

The characteristics most frequently reported for elders at risk are Alzheimer's or dementia, frailty, and impairments in mobility. At 66.5%, the majority of elders at risk are female. For persons between ages 18 and 59 the characteristics are more diverse, but the most frequently reported reasons include mental illness, impaired mobility, and other medical conditions.

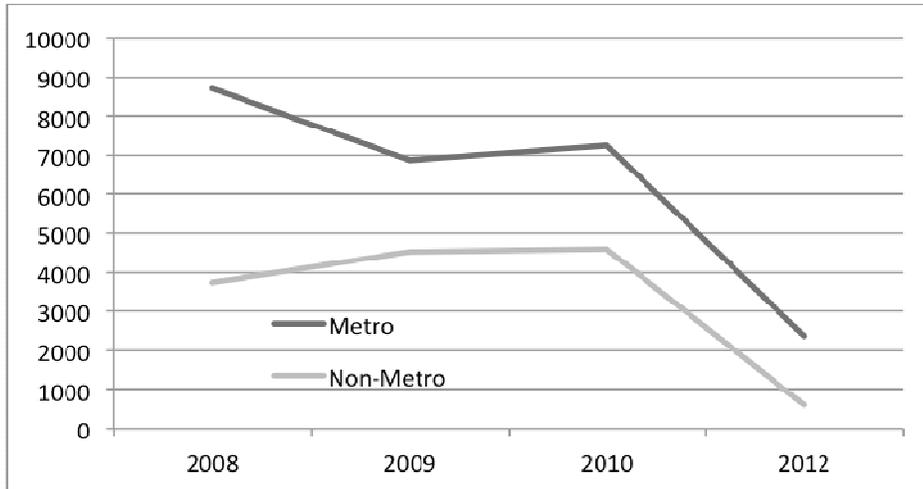
The most commonly reported abuser for



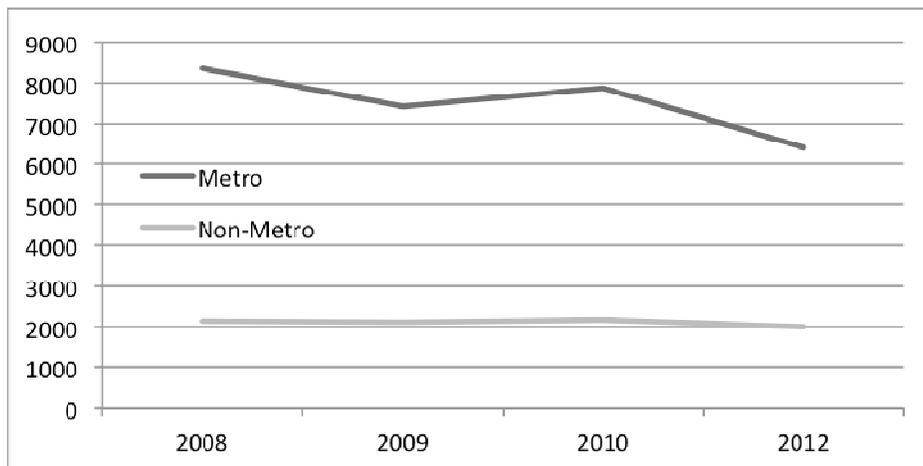
elders at risk is a son or daughter. For a younger person it is a friend, neighbor, or parent. In 2012, the number of reported cases of at-risk elders increased 147% from 2010, and the number of reported cases of at-risk adults increased by 279%.

Emergency detentions occur when individuals are threats to themselves or others. Persons are held for up to 72 hours to determine whether the presenting condition was acute or whether the adult protective service process needs to begin. Emergency detentions and adult protective services are projected to continue to increase in future years due to the increased use of highly addictive illegal drugs.

**Key Measure:** Number of Fire Calls Dispatched by 911, 2008—2012



**Key Measure:** Number of Fire Calls Dispatched by 911, 2008—2012



In 2012, the county adopted a new method of collecting information regarding emergency calls. The drop shown on the graphs above is a result of this new system.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Across the United States, citizens have come to demand high quality fire, emergency medical, and law enforcement responders as a part of routine public services. Resources must be adequate to meet the demands of unpredictable events. People expect emergency response to be efficient, effective, and financially feasible whether responding to an individual request for help or a community response to a natural disaster.

The EMS system faces many challenges, including the increasing demand for emergency medical services as Marathon County ages. Additionally, mobile technology has impacted emergency response. 80% of the calls to 911 Dispatch are by cell phone, which can

present a problem as dispatchers determine the location of the caller. Moreover, Marathon County's rural areas have multiple addressing grids, which lead to duplicate addresses and variance in numbers along the same road or highway, making it difficult to ensure that the right emergency response team is dispatched. With the continued move for 911 to have the capacity to respond to text and Twitter as well as cell phone calls, a uniform addressing system may be needed to meet the expectations of citizens for timely responses in emergencies.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Wausau and Weston accounted for 82.8% of all metro EMS calls.
- Wausau and Rothschild accounted for 77.5% of all metro Fire calls.
- Mosinee accounted for the most EMS and Fire calls in the non-metro area.
- The average response time for the Marathon County Sheriff's Department is 17 minutes for non-metro calls and 9 minutes for metro calls.
- Statewide the average response time in a metro area is between 6 and 7 minutes.
- In addition to emergencies that require fire or EMS response, other emergencies include alarms, mental health crises, family disturbances, juvenile issues, fights, and threats with a weapon.
- Sheriff's Department responded to 5,695 non-emergency calls in 2012 with a response time average ranging from 27 to 30 minutes.

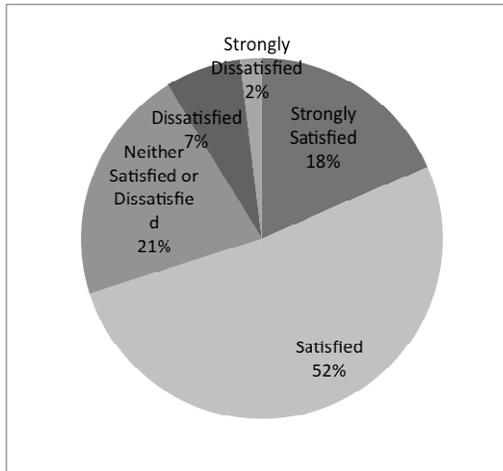
### SOURCES

- **Marathon County Sheriff's Department** 911 Dispatch [www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/Sheriff.aspx](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/Sheriff.aspx)

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 8.7% of white respondents to the LIFE Community survey were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with the openness of the community compared with 7.1% of Hispanic respondents and 2.6% of Asian respondent.
- 57.7% of LIFE Community survey respondents were somewhat or very concerned about the "acceptance of people of different backgrounds, races, and lifestyles; 31.0% of Hispanic respondents were not concerned compared with 13.4% of white respondents and 13.2% of Asian respondents.
- 11.2% of obese respondents to the LIFE Community survey were dissatisfied with the openness of the community compared with 8.3% of overweight respondents and 5.3% of healthy weight respondents.
- At 13.1%, LIFE Community survey respondents in the 55 to 64 age group were most dissatisfied with the openness of the community. Younger residents were less likely to indicate dissatisfaction.

**Key Measure:** LIFE Community Responses to "My Community is Open and Welcoming," and Best Features of Marathon County



## What Do You Like Best About Living in Marathon County?

1. Near Family and Friends (69.7%)
2. Parks and Natural Areas (46.3%)
3. The Size of the Community (41.4%)
4. Good Schools (39.5)
5. Good Place for Kids (37.4%)

**Key Measure:** Top Five Areas of Satisfaction and Concern Among LIFE Community Survey Respondents\*

Areas of Satisfaction		Areas of Concern	
Availability of Area Parks and Recreation	87.1%	Availability of Good Paying Jobs	90.2%
Accessibility of Healthcare	86.0%	Illegal Drug Use	86.8%
Accessibility of Dental Care	81.9%	Affordability of Healthcare	86.2%
Availability of Post High School Education	80.7%	Drinking and Driving	85.0%
Quality of Public k-12 Education	79.4%	Affordability of Elder Care	81.3%

\* Percentages include "satisfied" and "strongly satisfied"; "somewhat concerned" and "very concerned"

## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The long-term health of a community is strongly tied to the attitude residents share about its offerings. Pride in one's community not only encourages residents to make lives there, but it also attracts non-residents to the area to visit or to live. Moreover, a sense of community and belonging has a positive impact on community safety and economic development.

People generally find Marathon County to be an open and welcoming place, with 70% of respondents indicating satisfaction. Disaggregated data showed a general consensus across race and ethnic groups in regard to community openness.



Generally, Marathon County residents view their community favorably. Access to resources from schools and clinics to parks and entertainment was consistently designated as a benefit of the county, even as costs of those resources drew concern. The economy and its ability to produce living wages topped the list of concerns, followed by various concerns about drug and alcohol misuse and abuse.

## SOURCES

- 2011 LIFE in Marathon County Community Survey**  
Question 3, Refer to Survey Section
- US Census Bureau**  
2010 Census Summary File 1  
[http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC\\_10\\_SF1\\_QTP5&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_SF1_QTP5&prodType=table)

*We strive to live in a community where...*

people value and protect the natural  
resources for future generations.



Environment and Energy Subcommittee

Rebecca Frisch, Chair	Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning
Dale Grosskurth	Marathon County Health Department
Meleesa Johnson	Marathon County Solid Waste Department
Joanne Leonard	Marathon County Solid Waste Department
Diane Wessel	Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning
Kelly Zagrzebski	Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

*"Take care of the environment and it  
will take care of you."*

*Elroy Zemke, Chair  
Marathon County Environmental  
Resources Committee*

# Environment and Energy

## Section Summary

### Community Success and Progress:

- Low cost drinking water testing is available to residents at multiple locations.
- Marathon County has a sufficient supply of high quality groundwater to meet current needs.
- Communities are proactive in protecting the groundwater supply, and community surveys indicate a high public awareness of the importance of protecting water quality.
- Through KEEP and conservation teams, schools and businesses have demonstrated their commitment to energy conservation.
- 93% of Marathon County residents self-reported that they recycle.
- Regional air quality has improved from 2002-2008.



### Challenges and Opportunities to Improve:

#### Challenges

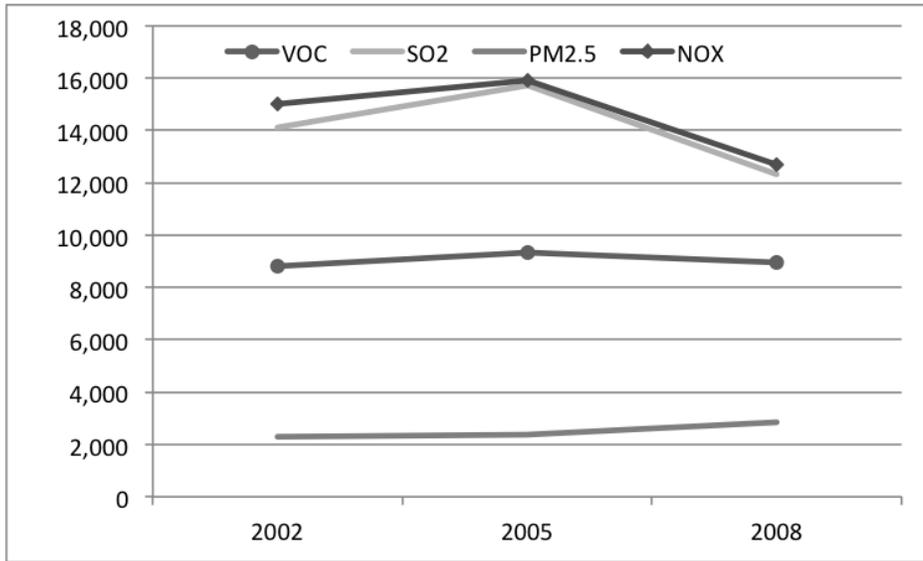
- Marathon County is a natural hot spot for unsafe levels of indoor radon and sources of water contamination are not readily noticeable.
- Groundwater quantity does not meet growing demands, especially in western Marathon County, and there are concerns that outside interests may tap into supplies in the future.
- Urban and rural runoff is contaminating water and increasing flooding issues as decreased wetlands struggle to filter water pollution.
- Waste hauling and recycling services are inconsistent, resulting in dramatically varied services and cost of services for residents.

#### Opportunities to Improve

- Increase energy conservation; participation in conservation programs; and composting, recycling, reusing, and proper disposal of waste through education.
- Influence legislation and increase collaboration with communities and county, state, and other agencies to achieve the greatest natural resource protection.



**Key Measure:** Air Pollutant Emissions (Tons) in Marathon County, 2002—2008



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Air pollution can lead to chronic health problems. Air quality standards are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Wisconsin to protect human health and the environment.



Outdoor air quality is affected by vehicle exhaust, smoke, dust, and home and factory emissions. The Department of Natural Resources measures regional air quality and issues air quality advisories when air pollutants reach unhealthy levels. Based on ozone and fine particles, outdoor air quality in Marathon County is good. Air quality is also based on trends in air emissions. Sources of emissions include stationary sources (facilities with significant emissions), mobile sources (vehicles), and area sources (households, wood burning). Annual emissions of nitrogen oxide (NOX) and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in Marathon County have decreased between 2002 and 2008. Levels of fine particles (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) have remained fairly

stable. These trends reflect that air pollution controls are working to keep emissions from increasing significantly. Local air quality can be affected by local air emissions. For example, smoke from outdoor wood burners (OWB) contains ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and carcinogens. Since there are no federal or state regulations governing OWBs, it is up to the local government to implement regulations.

Radon is the primary indoor air quality concern in Marathon County. Because of Marathon County's geology, the area has some of the highest rates of elevated radon levels in the state. It is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. There is no method of removing the source of radon because it is found in the soil. Radon levels can be reduced with a radon mitigation system, which costs approximately \$1,000.



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 90% of days in Marathon County see a good air quality ranking.
- 10% of days see a moderate air quality ranking.
- There have been 12 Marathon County Air Quality Notices from 2007 to 2013.
- Marshfield, the City of Mosinee, Rib Mountain, and the City of Wausau are the only communities in Marathon County with ordinances regulating outdoor wood burners.
- It is estimated that about 25% of homes in Marathon County have radon levels that exceed EPA guidelines, compared with 5-10% statewide.
- In 2012, 67% of radon tests had elevated radon levels. This figure represents tests, which some homes completed multiple times.

### SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**  
Current and Historical Statewide Air Quality  
[dnr.wi.gov/topic/AirQuality/](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/AirQuality/)
- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**  
Radon in Wisconsin  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/radiation/radon](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/radiation/radon)

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

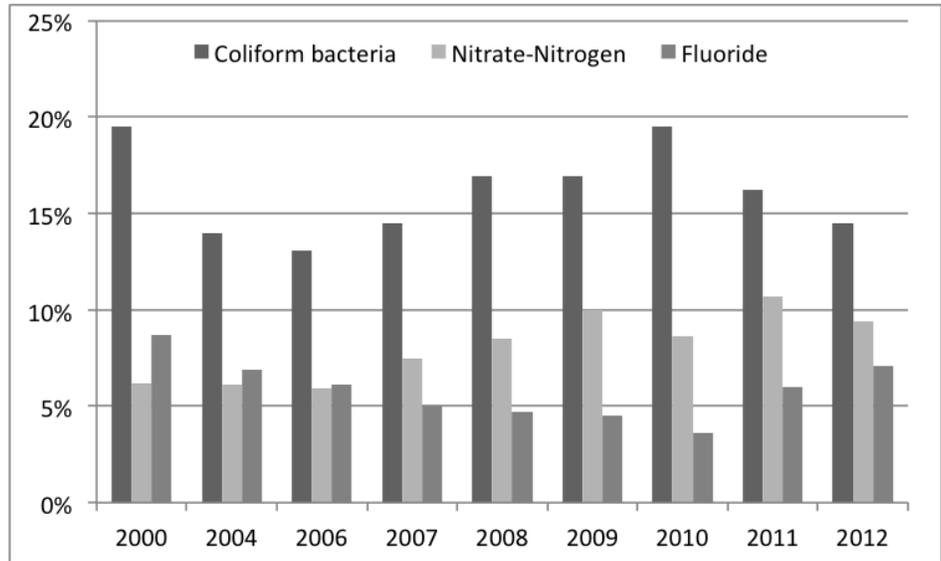
According to 2013 LIFE Community Survey respondents:

- 40% reported having private wells.
- Only 20% of these have their drinking water tested annually.
- They reported these reasons for not testing:
  - \* No taste, odor, or look: 40%
  - \* Cost: 13%
  - \* Unsure of where to have test: 11%
  - \* Didn't know it was necessary: 31%
- Water test fees vary by lab and by what tests are performed. Lab fees are about \$40 for bacteria, nitrates, and fluoride combination tests.
- Flooding can cause elevated coliform bacteria in well water.
- Area testing labs:
  - \* Stratford: 715-687-4165
  - \* Wausau: 715-261-1900
  - \* Antigo: 715-623-9257
  - \* Stevens Point: 715-346-4078
  - \* WI Rapids: 715-423-6300

## SOURCES

- **Marathon County Health Department**  
Water Testing Lab  
[www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/HealthDepartment/WaterTestingLab.aspx](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/HealthDepartment/WaterTestingLab.aspx)
- **Marathon County Municipal Drinking Water Systems**  
[wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/find/marathon/watersystems.html](http://wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/find/marathon/watersystems.html)
- **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**  
Water Quality and Contamination in Private Wells  
[dnr.wi.gov/topic/Wells/WaterQuality.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Wells/WaterQuality.html)

## Key Measure: Unsafe Private Well Test Results in Marathon County, 2000—2012



## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Marathon County residents rely on groundwater for drinking water. While municipal drinking water safety and sampling is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), private well owners are responsible for ensuring the safety of their own drinking water. Testing is important, given water is used every day. Water testing should occur annually even if there is no taste, odor, appearance, or suspected illness problem. Contamination may not create such problems immediately. If there's an unsafe sample, the contamination cause can be determined and corrections made. Well professionals can assist if needed.

Primary contaminants in Marathon County are coliform bacteria, nitrate-nitrogen, and fluoride. Coliform bacteria can be found everywhere. Any amount in drinking water is unsafe. Coliform bacteria serve as an indicator of the potential presence of other disease-causing organisms, such as E. coli (fecal coliform) which can cause severe intestinal illness. E. coli is usually the result of contamination by sewage (failing septic system) or animal waste from farmlands.

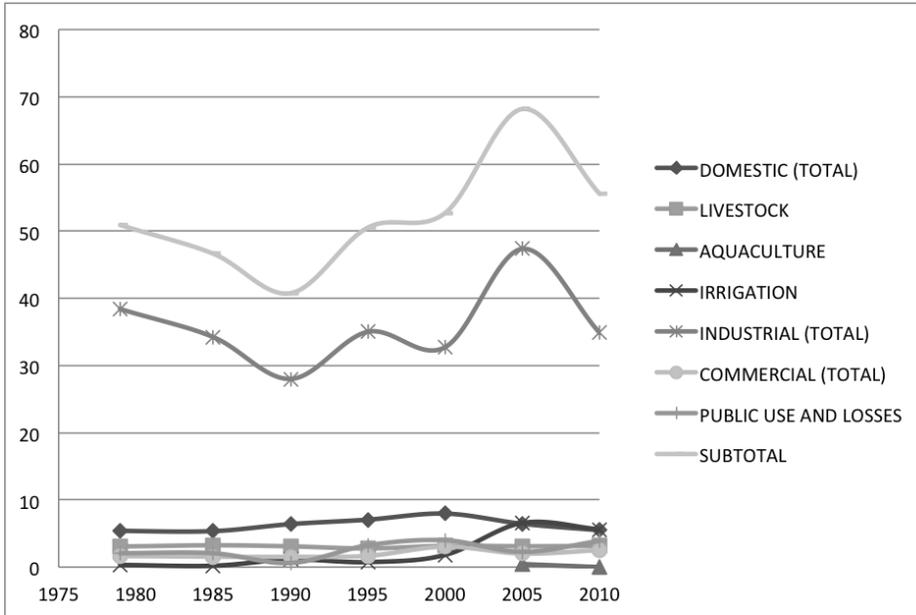
Nitrate-nitrogen levels at or above 10 ppm pose significant health risks to infants and pregnant women. These levels reduce the blood's ability to carry

oxygen, which could lead to coma or death. Nitrate-nitrogen is colorless, odorless, and has no taste, so testing is the only way to determine its presence. Nitrate-nitrogen sources may include lawn and farm field fertilizers, livestock facilities, and sewage treatment plants. It is also naturally occurring.

Fluoride occurs naturally in water and is safe and effective to reduce tooth decay. However, fluoride levels above 2.0 mg/liter may increase the risk of staining and pitting of tooth enamel in children. Levels over 4.0 mg/liter can result in bone disorders.



### Key Measure: Marathon County Water Use by Category, 1975—2010



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

In general, Wisconsin enjoys an abundance of groundwater. However, as usage increases, concerns about water quantity and quality grow. Groundwater quantity is affected both naturally and by human activity.

Comprehensive legislation addressing groundwater quantity has existed for many years, working towards ensuring adequate groundwater quantity for users. The Department of Natural Resources regulates high capacity wells (wells with a capacity to pump more than 100,000 gallons per day). High capacity wells include municipal water supply systems, energy producers, paper manufacturers, and agricultural irrigation systems. The Great Lakes Compact requires Wisconsin to establish water conservation goals within the Great Lakes Basin.

Low groundwater levels can result in increased concentrations of carcinogens and other elements that are detrimental to public health and are costly to remove. High groundwater levels can result in extended flooding in areas where the water table rises above the surface. This long-term flooding can disrupt transportation and result in property loss and the displacement of people.

Wellhead protection plans and ordinances regulate land use activities in areas around municipal wells to protect the supply from contamination. With the exception of Athens, all Marathon County municipal water systems have wellhead protection plans in place.



Groundwater issues facing Marathon County include dairy expansion and concentration, climate change, well contamination, localized groundwater flooding (Kronenwetter), and demand in excess of supply, especially in western Marathon County.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In a 2013 survey of Marathon County residents, 43% of the respondents ranked "Protect Groundwater" as the most important environmental policy Marathon County should pursue.
- There are 97 existing DNR-approved high-capacity wells in Marathon County.
- 70% of Wisconsin residents and 97% of Wisconsin communities rely on groundwater as their drinking water source.
- In 2008, Brokaw began buying drinking water from Wausau after one of Brokaw's wells became contaminated.
- In 2007, an industrial customer in Abbotsford more than tripled water usage. The city's water supply cannot meet growing demands. Abbotsford has been exploring additional water sources ever since.

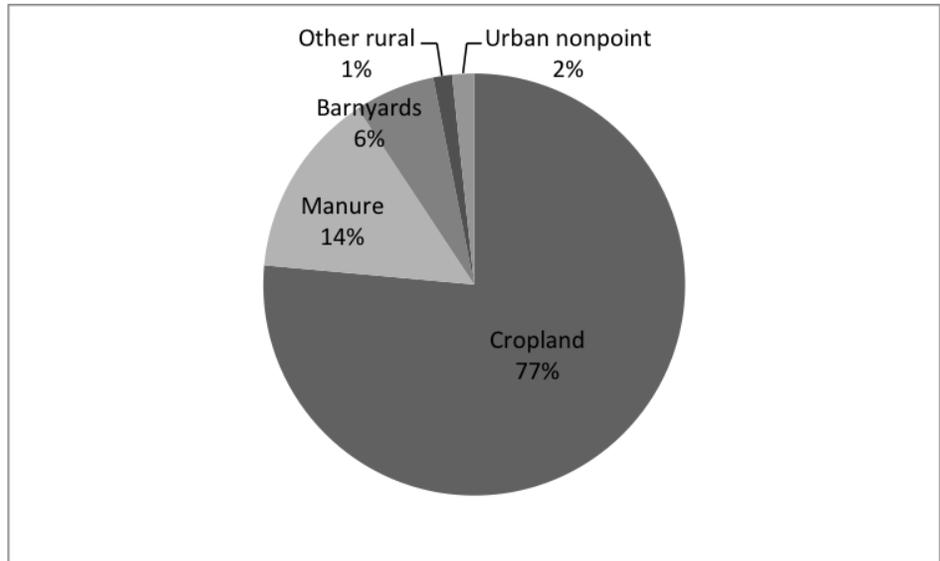
### SOURCES

- **Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network**  
[sustainruralwisconsin.net](http://sustainruralwisconsin.net)
- **Wisconsin Water Science Center**  
[wi.water.usgs.gov](http://wi.water.usgs.gov)
- **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**  
[dnr.wi.gov/topic/DrinkingWater](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/DrinkingWater)

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In a 2011 survey of water front property owners in eastern Marathon County:
  - \* Over 80% felt that invasive species were a severe problem.
  - \* Almost 75% felt that leaky septic systems were a severe problem.
- The EPA has identified 2 lakes, parts of 5 rivers and streams, and the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir as degraded from non-point runoff.
- Soil erosion loss from cropland fields is the number one source of non-point pollution to streams in the County.
- Phosphorus is the nutrient of most concern regarding the quality of water in Marathon County.
- Of the Marathon County wetlands that were here after the lumber era, only 50% remain today.

**Key Measure:** Sources of Phosphorous (Pounds Per Year) in Marathon County's Surface Water, 2012



## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Lakes, reservoirs, streams and wetlands represent the important surface water features of Marathon County. These resources are vital to our recreational and sportsman offerings, and the health and quality of these surface waters affects the environment, public health, and economic prosperity, influencing the overall health of the community.

Soil erosion, pesticides, farm fields, wastewater treatment plants, storm sewer systems, invasive species, leaky septic systems, and acid rain can contribute to water quality degradation. Nutrients and sediments entering our surface waters primarily from agricultural activities, as evidenced by the 2009 and 2013 fish kills in the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir, make up the biggest surface-water-quality challenge facing Marathon County.



Compromised surface water quality contributes to many community challenges. Seasonal fish kills, reduced aquatic-life reproduction, reduced function of wetlands, invasive species,

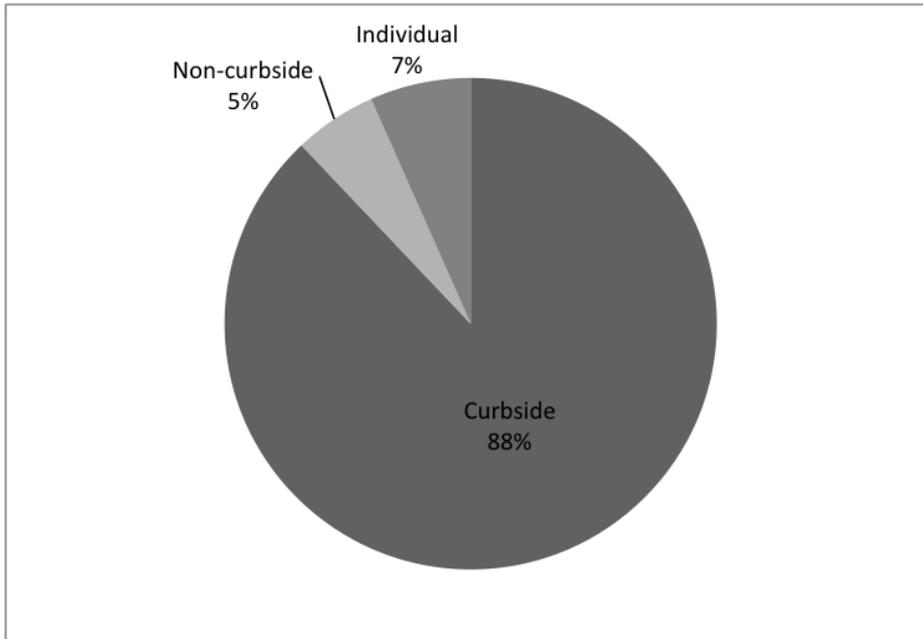
and decreased diversity are signs of environmental damage. Unsafe swimming beaches and consumption of unsafe fish impact public health. And, costs of clean-up efforts, wastewater treatment, and pollution controls in addition to reduced tourism affect the economic prosperity of a community. Conversely, good water quality has been shown to increase property values.

Water quality is protected and improved through local regulations and regulations set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act, which the DNR administers. Also, cleanup efforts and citizen activities can have a positive impact. In Marathon County, current efforts to improve surface water quality include lake management planning, storm water pollution control, municipal waste water pollution control, soil and water conservation programs on farmland, land use planning, citizen lake and river cleanups, grass-roots efforts of lake association groups, failing septic system replacement, and household practices.

## SOURCES

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**  
Surface Water  
[dnr.wi.gov/topic/surfacewater/](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/surfacewater/)
- Eastern Marathon County Lakes Project**  
Resident Survey Final Report  
[www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/ConservationPlanningZoning/ConservationServices/LakePrograms.aspx](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/ConservationPlanningZoning/ConservationServices/LakePrograms.aspx)
- Marathon County**  
Land & Water Resource Management Plan  
[www.co.marathon.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/CPZ/Documents/lwrm2010\\_final\\_PostedVersion.pdf](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/CPZ/Documents/lwrm2010_final_PostedVersion.pdf)

**Key Measure:** Percent of Marathon County Residents with Municipal-Coordinated Solid Waste Management, 2013



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

#### Actions Taken to Reduce Trash by LIFE Community Survey Respondents



- Composting
- Recycling
- Proper Disposal of Hazardous Materials
- Pay Attention to Packaging
- Donating Items
- Reusing Materials
- None

- On average, Marathon County recycles about 100 pounds per capita. By comparison, the state average is about 140 pounds per capita.
- 93% of LIFE Community survey respondents participated in recycling programs to reduce trash.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Environmentally-sound integrated solid waste resource management options are vital to a community's health, safety, and prosperity. The community looks to a network of integrated solid waste resource professionals to reduce the amount of waste produced, to recycle more, and to safely dispose of that which remains. Business and industry rely on affordable solid waste management strategies for their day-to-day operations, and residents use convenient solid waste management services to dispose of household waste.

such diversion has economic benefits as it increases the life of a landfill and may decrease construction, operating, and monitoring costs by minimizing the need for expansion of existing landfills or construction of new landfills. Furthermore, recycling is critical to economic development as local, state, and regional companies use these materials to keep production costs down.

Marathon County residents self-report high participation rates in recycling programs, with 93% of LIFE Community survey respondents indicating that they recycle.



Integrated solid waste resource management includes programs and services that reduce, recycle, beneficially reuse, repurpose, collect, transport, and dispose of waste. Reducing materials landfilled benefits the environment by reducing greenhouse gases. Moreover,

### SOURCES

- 2013 LIFE Community Survey
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Waste Management <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Waste/>
- Wisconsin Chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America [www.swana-wi.org/](http://www.swana-wi.org/)
- Marathon County Solid Waste Management Department [www.marathoncountysolidwaste.org/](http://www.marathoncountysolidwaste.org/)

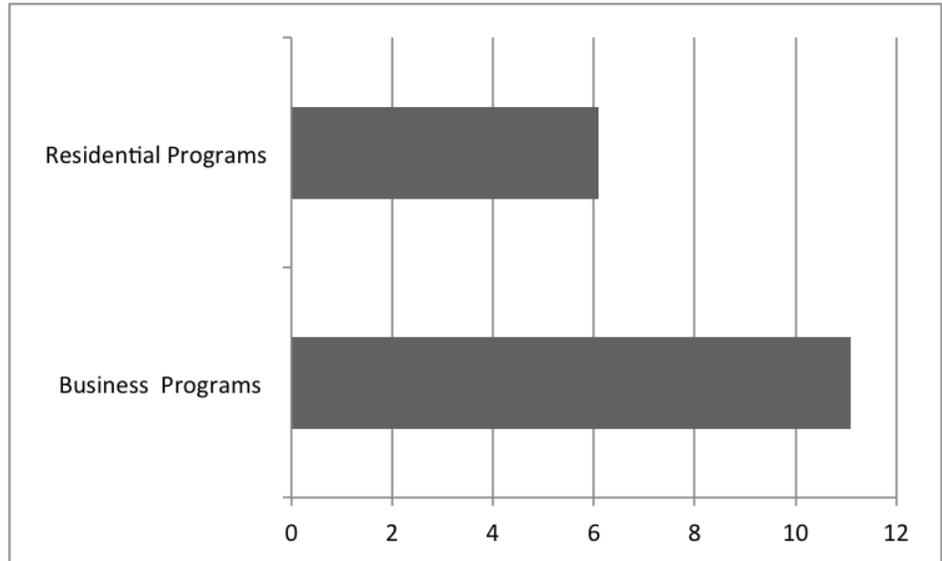
DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- The Weston power plant, a traditional coal plant, has a base load generation of 975MW.
- Marathon County has three commercial sources of renewable energy generation:
  - \* Wausau Hydroelectric Dam: 5.4 MW
  - \* Domtar BioMass Power Plant: 99 MW (when in service)
  - \* Ringle Landfill: 2.4MW
- In 2012, 20 Marathon County residents had a generation capacity of 129KW using private renewable energy sources. In 2013, 30 residents had the generation capacity of 210 KW.
- In 2012, Focus on Energy incentive dollars to Marathon County residents and businesses totaled \$927,422.
- In 2012, Focus on Energy conserved 17,202,614 kWh through residential and business programs.
- All 19 public school districts in Marathon County have teachers with KEEP training.

SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Public Service**  
[www.wisconsinpublicservice.com/](http://www.wisconsinpublicservice.com/)
- **Focus on Energy**  
[www.focusonenergy.com](http://www.focusonenergy.com)
- **UW: Stevens Point**  
K-12 Energy Education Program  
[www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/wcee/keep/](http://www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/wcee/keep/)
- **RENEW Wisconsin**  
[www.renewwisconsin.org/](http://www.renewwisconsin.org/)
- **Public Service Commission of Wisconsin**  
[psc.wi.gov/](http://psc.wi.gov/)

**Key Measure:** Energy Conserved (in Million kWh) through Focus on Energy Programs in Marathon County, 2012

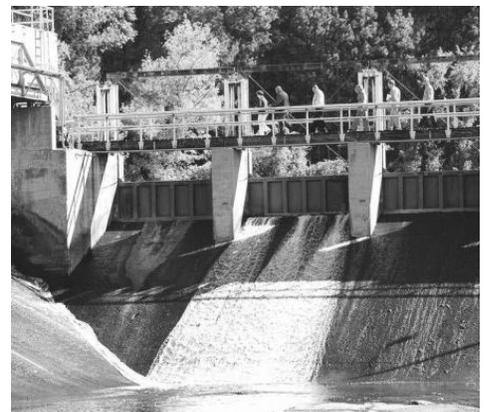


COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Economic growth requires labor, capital, and energy. Business and industry specifically need energy at competitive costs to operate; thus, energy is vital to attracting the employers that make Marathon County a desirable place to live. Electricity supports productivity, safety, convenience, and comfort. However, as we grow, demand increases, and, as demand increases, additional generation is added to meet demand. Generation requires infrastructure, which results in increased cost per unit of energy. Additionally, unlike labor and capital, traditional energy (fossil fuels) has a limited source supply, so as usage increases, the longevity of the resource decreases.

Marathon County governments, businesses, and residents are working towards consistent, affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy by following energy conservation principles that incorporate traditional energy sources, renewable energy, and energy conservation programs. 63% of power in Wisconsin is generated from coal. Renewable energy in Marathon County includes the biomass plant completed in 2013, the Wausau hydroelectric dam, the Ringle landfill, and private wind and solar power generation.

Focus on Energy is a statewide energy efficiency and renewable resource program. The program works with residents and businesses on projects such as appliance recycling, upstream lighting (discounts at time of purchase), and installation of energy efficient equipment and other upgrades to help increase the efficiency of homes and other buildings. Many businesses and organizations have developed Energy Teams to review and improve building energy efficiency. K-12 Energy Education Program (KEEP) teaches faculty and students how to reduce energy consumption in school and at home.



Focus on Energy is a statewide energy efficiency and renewable resource

*We strive to live in a community where...*

quality education is valued  
and available for people of all ages.



Education Subcommittee

Jim McCluskey, Chair	UW Marathon County
Julie Burmesch	Wausau School District
Laurie Borowicz	Northcentral Technical College
Mai Xiong	Ministry Healthcare
Micki Krueger	Child Care Connection

*"We are fortunate to live in a county where quality educational opportunities are readily available for people of all ages. An educated population is the key to Marathon County's future economic success in an ever shrinking and complex world."*

*Jim McCluskey, Associate Professor  
UW Marathon County*

# Education

## Section Summary

### Community Success and Progress:

- Programs and infrastructure—like the Early Years Coalition and the YoungStar rating system—are being developed to ensure successful early childhood development.
- Every school district in Marathon County exceeds the state average for kindergarten readiness.
- All county school districts exceed the state average in combined-grade reading comprehension and mathematics proficiency scores.
- High school graduation rates for all Marathon County school districts remain well above the state average, even as Wisconsin continues to have the highest national graduation rate.
- The Marathon County average ACT composite score has exceeded the state average since the 2009-2010 school year.



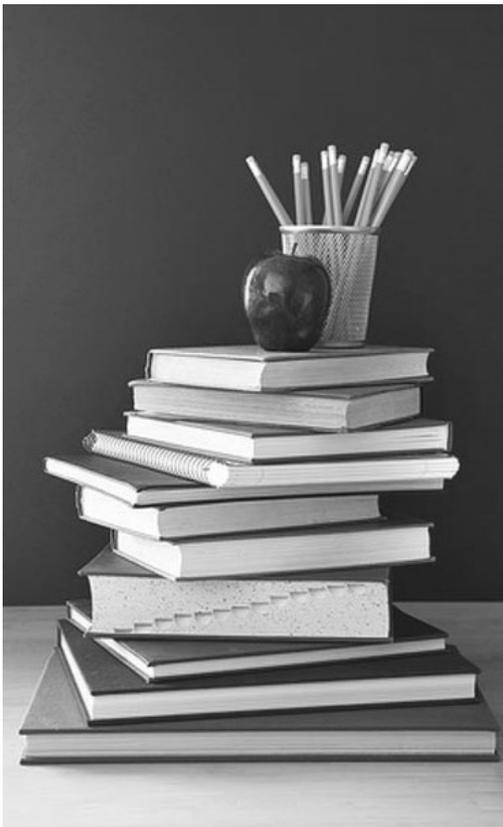
### Challenges and Opportunities to Improve:

#### Challenges

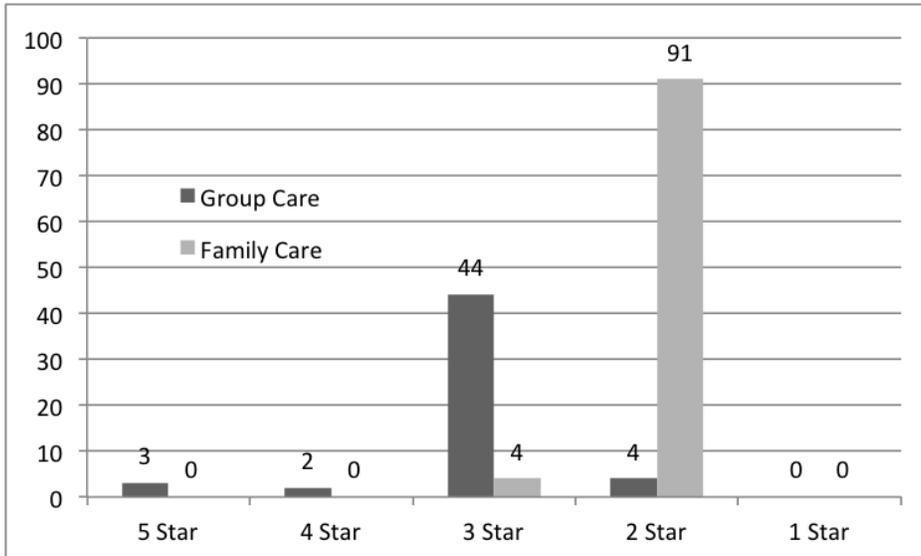
- Marathon County generally has sufficient regulated childcare, but access is limited in some rural areas of the county, sometimes forcing parents to make choices that may not be in their child's best interest.
- School districts, especially in the urban districts, saw deep revenue cuts for the 2012-13 school year.
- There has been a significant increase in economically disadvantaged students in all districts across Marathon County.
- Compared with state averages, fewer Marathon County residents are attaining post-secondary education. With the loss of manufacturing and construction jobs and a significant rise in healthcare and education employment, this could impact the future job market of the county.

#### Opportunities to Improve

- Given the role early childhood education has on child health and wellbeing, Marathon County recognizes the need to make childcare affordable for all working parents.
- While Marathon County residents believe that higher education is available to them, over half of the residents are concerned with its affordability.



### Key Measure: YoungStar Childcare Rankings in Marathon County, 2013



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Early experiences determine whether a child will have the foundation necessary to live a healthy and productive life. Given the number of Wisconsin families that rely on childcare and the amount of time Wisconsin children spend in these environments, the quality of available childcare is receiving increased scrutiny. Investments and initiatives that improve the services provided have the potential to strengthen communities and to decrease future costs.

In an effort to incentivize best practices in childcare, the state of Wisconsin adopted the YoungStar childcare rating system on July 1, 2012. Providers who



accept Wisconsin Shares subsidies are rated on education qualifications and training, learning environment and curriculum, professional and business

practices, and child health and wellbeing practices. Ratings are linked to reimbursements with higher-rated providers earning a higher percentage of Wisconsin Shares funds. Currently, 148 facilities in Marathon County have been rated using the YoungStar system, with the majority of group care providers receiving 3-star ratings and the majority of family care providers receiving 2-star ratings.

Marathon County recognizes the need to ensure that parents have access to high-quality childcare. The Marathon County Early Years Coalition is working to improve YoungStar ratings by increasing supports for family and group providers that seek to improve their education and training. In collaboration with the United Way, NTC, and the TEACH Early Childhood Scholarship program, the coalition is offering financial supports so that providers can obtain their Infant and Toddler Credential in hopes of increasing not only the YoungStar ratings but also the quality of childcare in the county.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

YoungStar Subsidy Rates	
5-star	25% increase
4-star	10% increase
3-star	full reimbursement
2-star	5% decrease
1-star	not qualified

- Children who participate in childcare programs spend on average 10 hours a day with their providers.
- 72% of Wisconsin's children under age six have all parents in the workforce—the 4<sup>th</sup> highest rate in the U.S.
- 90% of a child's brain is developed by the age of four.
- The average YoungStar rating for childcare providers in Marathon County is 3.0 for group care and 2.0 for family care. The state average in 2013 was 2.5.
- 3 Childcare facilities in Marathon County are participating in the YoungStar program but have yet to be rated; 30 providers are not participating.

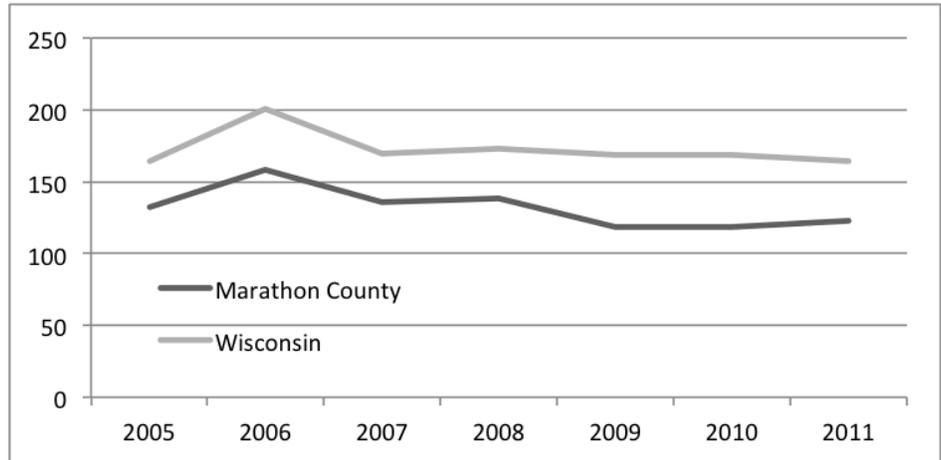
### SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Children and Families**  
YoungStar  
[dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/)
- **Child Care Connection**  
[www.childcareconnectioninc.org/](http://www.childcareconnectioninc.org/)
- **Wisconsin Council on Children and Families**  
[www.wccf.org](http://www.wccf.org)
- **TEACH Early Childhood**  
[wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/](http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/)

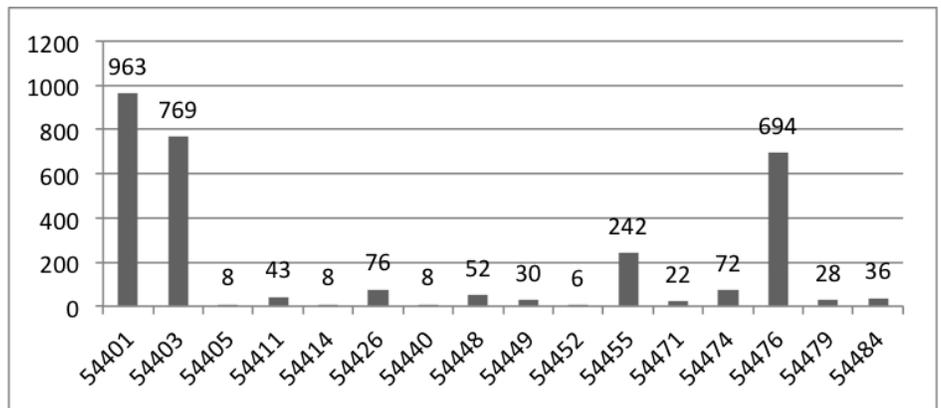
DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 8.4% of LIFE Community Survey respondents were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with the accessibility of childcare, up from 6.5% in 2011.
- 3 of the 4 Marathon County Zip Code regions with the fewest regulated childcare slots had the lowest kindergarten readiness scores in 2012.
- In 2012, the average cost per week for full-time childcare in Marathon County was \$140.20.
- 86% of families served by Wisconsin Shares have monthly incomes less than \$2,500. Currently, families eligible for subsidy must have a gross income at or below 200% of poverty.
- In 2012-13, 217 children were enrolled in Head Start in Marathon County, an 11% decrease from 2011.

**Key Measure:** Rate of Wisconsin Shares Subsidies Per 1,000 Children Ages 0—7, 2005—2011



**Key Measure:** Availability of Regulated Childcare by Zip Code, 2012



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Many factors can impact the accessibility of childcare including cost, location, services, and training. While regulated childcare doesn't ensure quality, it does ensure that care providers have had training and passed site inspections regarding basic health and safety needs of the children they serve. Lack of local regulated care options sometimes forces parents to make unregulated childcare choices that may not be in their child's best interest. Marathon County generally has sufficient regulated childcare, but access to regulated care is limited in some outer regions of the county. Historically, the county has also seen gaps in services in infant and school-age care and second- or third-shift care.

of subsidies has seen a slight decline. For example, Head Start, a federally funded program for children at or below 100% of the poverty line, saw a decrease in available slots from 241 in 2010-11 to 217 in 2012-13.

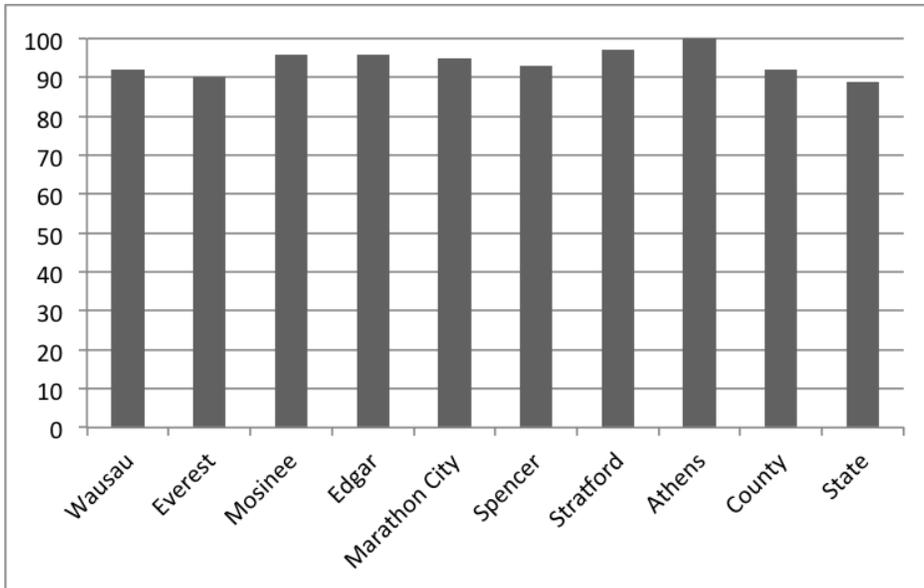
Federal and state subsidies are available to offset the costs of childcare; however, even as the percentage of economically disadvantaged families in the county has increased over the past decade, the rate



SOURCES

- Kids Count Data Center [datacenter.kidscount.org/data#WI/2/o](http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#WI/2/o)
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Early Childhood [ec.dpi.wi.gov/](http://ec.dpi.wi.gov/)
- Wisconsin Shares [dcf.wi.gov/childcare/wishares/](http://dcf.wi.gov/childcare/wishares/)

**Key Measure:** Percent of Students Meeting the PALS-K Benchmark, Fall 2012



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The experiences children have during their first 5 years of life have dramatic effects on their abilities to learn, to interact socially, and to attain life-long success. Gaps in achievement are often ascribed to deficits in learning acquired during pre-school years that then follow students and grow throughout their education.

is a measure of the quality of early childhood development within a community as it identifies the percentage of students entering school with a literacy deficit. Marathon County on average had a 92% rate of kindergarten readiness, with every district exceeding the state average of 89%.



The Marathon County Early Years Coalition was formed in 2012 to serve young children and their parents in hopes of improving early childhood development in Marathon County. The coalition seeks to recognize and strengthen the role the community plays in helping children grow and learn by supporting the development of pre-birth through school-age children.

In 2012, the state of Wisconsin administered the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergarteners (PALS-K) for the first time, in hopes of ascertaining the preparedness of students entering the public schools. This exam, in many ways,

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

PALS-K # of Students Screened	
Wausau	663
Everest	436
Mosinee	134
Edgar	45
Marathon City	43
Spencer	55
Stratford	59
Athens	20

- Measures of accomplishment at age 3 predict measures of language skills at age 9-10. Nationally, 22% of children who have lived in poverty do not graduate from high school compared with 6% of those who have never been poor.
- Beginning in the fall of 2013, every district in Marathon County will offer four-year-old kindergarten.
- 69% of LIFE Community survey respondents are satisfied or strongly satisfied with the accessibility of childcare in Marathon County.
- 64% of LIFE Community survey respondents are somewhat or very concerned about the affordability of childcare in Marathon County.

### SOURCES

- Wisconsin Council on Children and Families**  
[www.wccf.org/](http://www.wccf.org/)
- PALS Wisconsin**  
[www.palswisconsin.info](http://www.palswisconsin.info)
- Marathon County Early Years Coalition**  
[www.raisegreatkids.org](http://www.raisegreatkids.org)
- Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners**  
[www.collaboratingpartners.com/](http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

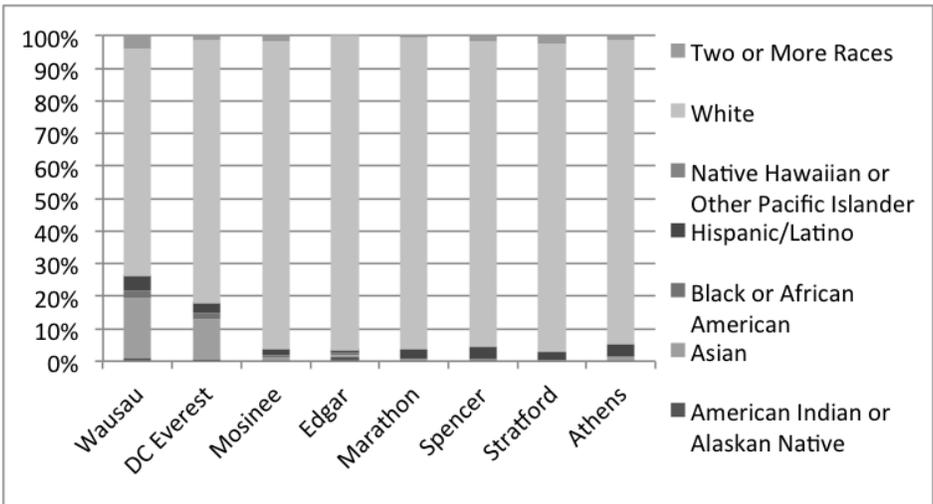
District Enrollments	
Wausau	8,623
Everest	5,639
Mosinee	2,082
Edgar	648
Marathon City	696
Spencer	776
Stratford	910
Athens	485

- 71.8% of Marathon County students attended the urban districts of Wausau or D. C. Everest in 2012-13.
- More than 30% of Wausau students and 20% of Marathon County students identified as a race or ethnicity other than white in 2012-13.
- While Asians remain the second largest ethnicity in county schools, Hispanics are the fastest growing, followed by students of two or more races.
- While Marathon County continues to have lower minority populations than state averages, it continues to serve almost twice the number of LEP students.

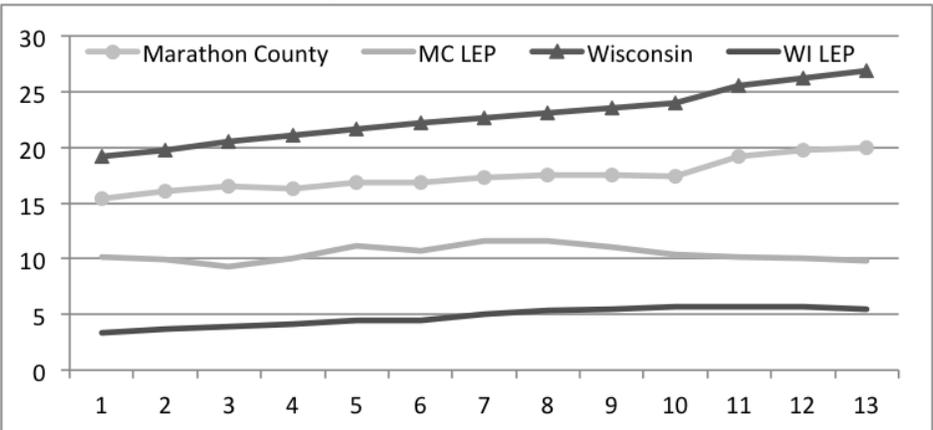
SOURCES

- **WI Department of Public Instruction**  
Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS)  
[winss.dpi.wi.gov](http://winss.dpi.wi.gov)
- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
[www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)

Key Measure: District Enrollment by Race or Ethnicity, 2012—2013



Key Measure: Percent of Students Identifying as a Race or Ethnicity Other than White and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students, 2000—2013



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

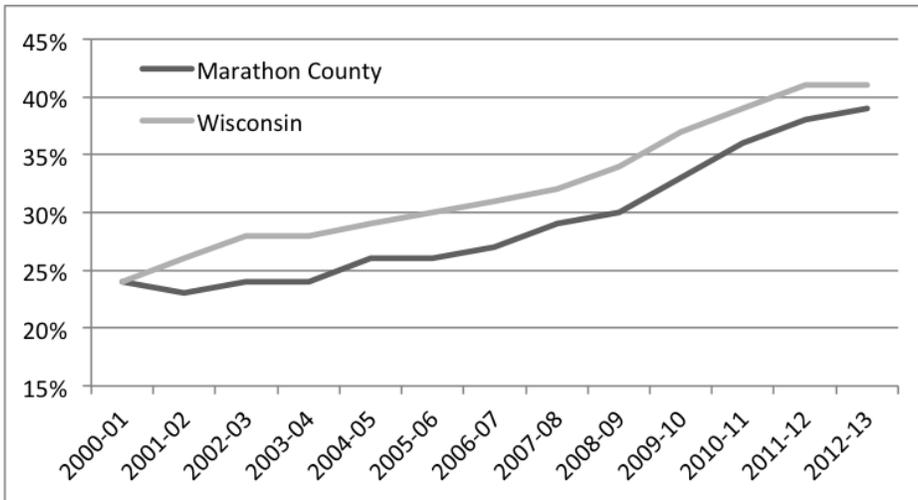
Marathon County serves students in eight different school districts. Two—Wausau and D. C. Everest—are considered urban districts, while the other six are considered rural. Populations within those districts range from under 500 to more than 8,500 and serve a wide range of students from a variety of circumstances.

Following statewide trends, the students attending Marathon County schools increasingly identify as a race or ethnicity other than white. While this trend is visible in countywide census data, these demographic shifts are happening more drastically and more rapidly among the school-age population. While only 8.7% of the entire Marathon County population identified as non-white in the last census, 20% of county students do, 30%

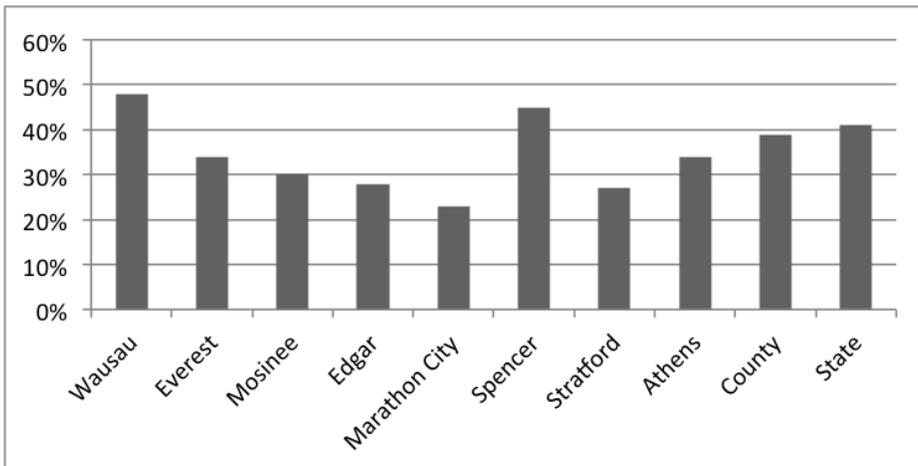
in Wausau.

While Marathon County remains below statewide percentages for non-white students, it continues to serve a higher percentage of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, although that percentage is trending slightly down, dropping below 10% for the first time in a decade.

**Key Measure:** Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students, 2000—2013



**Key Measure:** Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students by District, 2012-13



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Students that qualify for free and reduced-price lunches are considered economically disadvantaged. To qualify for free lunches, students' families must live at or below 130% of the poverty level; to qualify for reduced-price lunches, they must live below 185%. Such statistics are important measures for communities as there are research-supported correlations between economic security and academic success. Economically disadvantaged students are more likely to be considered "at risk."

Marathon County has traditionally had a population of economically disadvantaged students that is 4% lower than the state percentages; however, that gap narrowed to 2% in 2012.

Moreover, the state of Wisconsin and Marathon County both have seen significant increases in disadvantaged students, jumping to 164% of its 2000 levels.



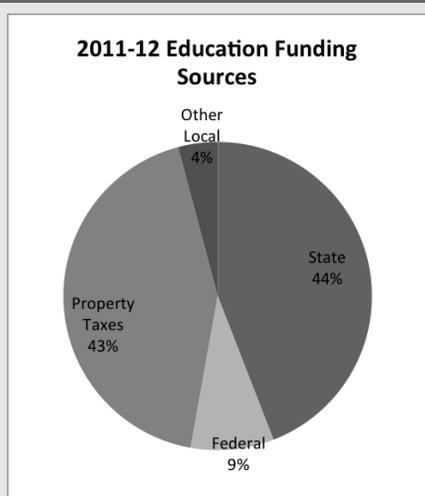
### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Marathon County has seen a 64% increase in economically disadvantaged students since 2000, impacting more than 3,000 additional students countywide.
- Every district in Marathon County has seen a significant increase in economically disadvantaged students, with Spencer seeing the largest jump from 5% in 2000-01 to 45% in 2012-13.
- At 48%, the Wausau school district has the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students, 7% higher than the state average.
- 7 Marathon County schools have economic disadvantage percentages higher than 60%; 4, higher than 70%. All of these schools are in the Wausau school district where economic disparities are most noticeable at the elementary level.

### SOURCES

- **WI Department of Public Instruction**  
Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS)  
[winss.dpi.wi.gov](http://winss.dpi.wi.gov)
- **USDA**  
Food and Nutritional Service  
National School Lunch Program  
[www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/)
- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates  
[www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/statecounty/index.html](http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/statecounty/index.html)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

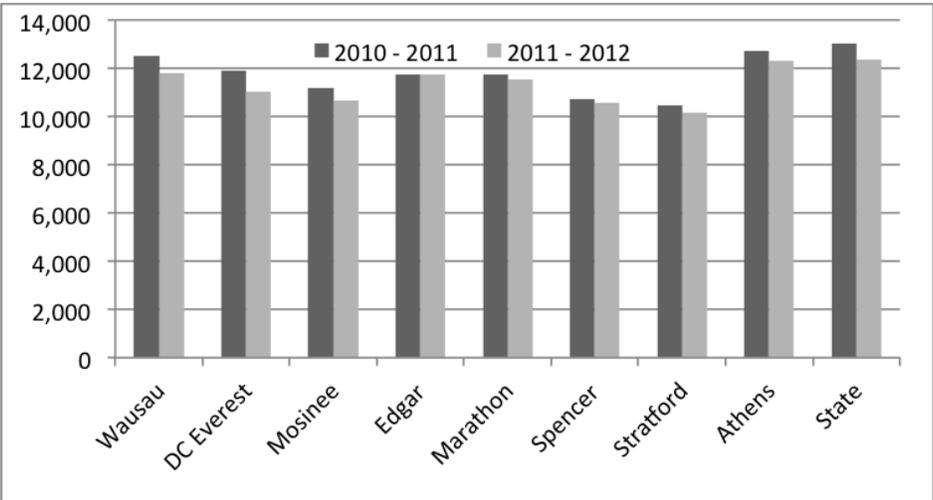


- TEC per pupil do not include the cost of food service, fee-funded community service activities, or capital projects funded through long-term debt.
- The average TEC per pupil in Marathon County was \$11,337 for the 2011 – 2012 school year.
- At \$12,301, Athens continues to have the highest per pupil TEC in the county. Stratford had the lowest at \$10,167.
- Everest, at \$892, and Wausau, at \$724, saw the largest decrease in per pupil funds in 2011 – 2012, costing \$5.0 million and \$6.2 million in decreased total revenues respectively.

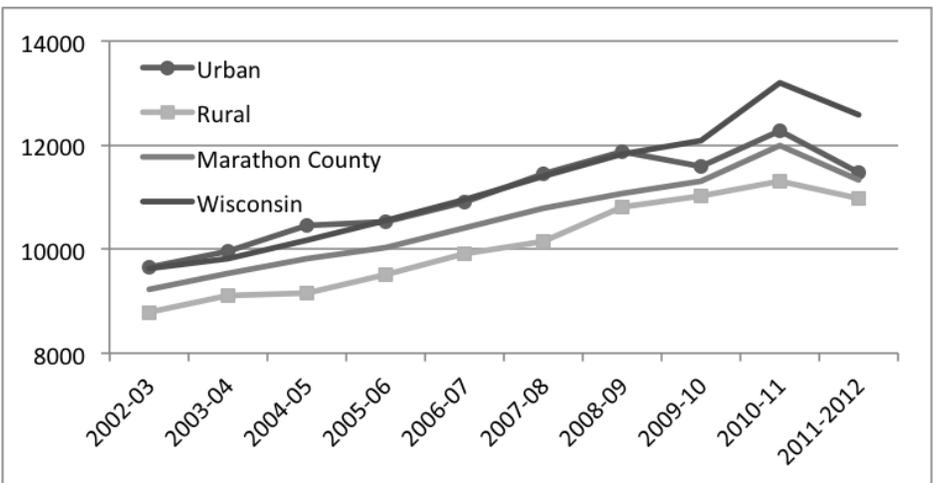
SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools  
[winss.dpi.wi.gov/](http://winss.dpi.wi.gov/)

Key Measure: Total Education Costs (TEC) Per Pupil by District, 2010—2012



Key Measure: Total Education Costs Per Pupil, 2002—2013



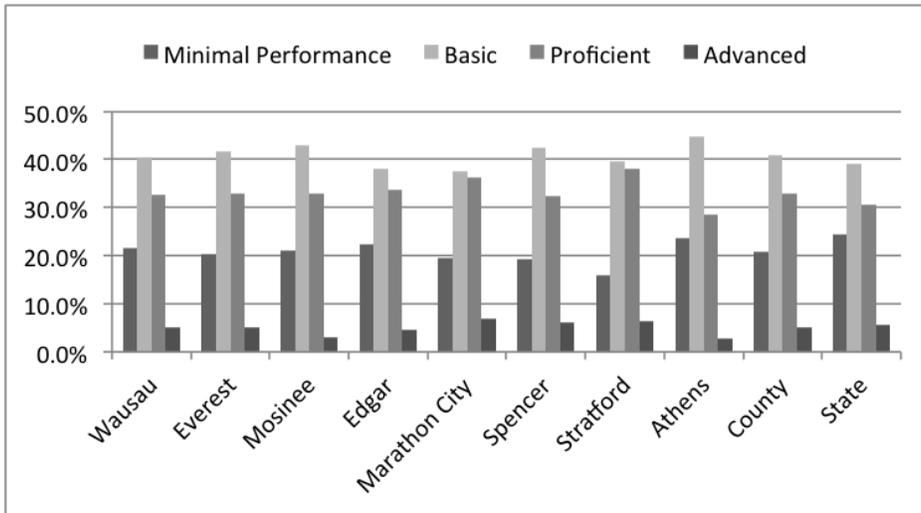
COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Public education spending is shared as a per-pupil spending ratio that divides total education costs for a district by the number of students enrolled. While this calculation isn't actually a measure of monies spent on an individual student, as most costs from textbooks to teachers can serve multiple students, the figure is a way to compare costs across districts of varying sizes.

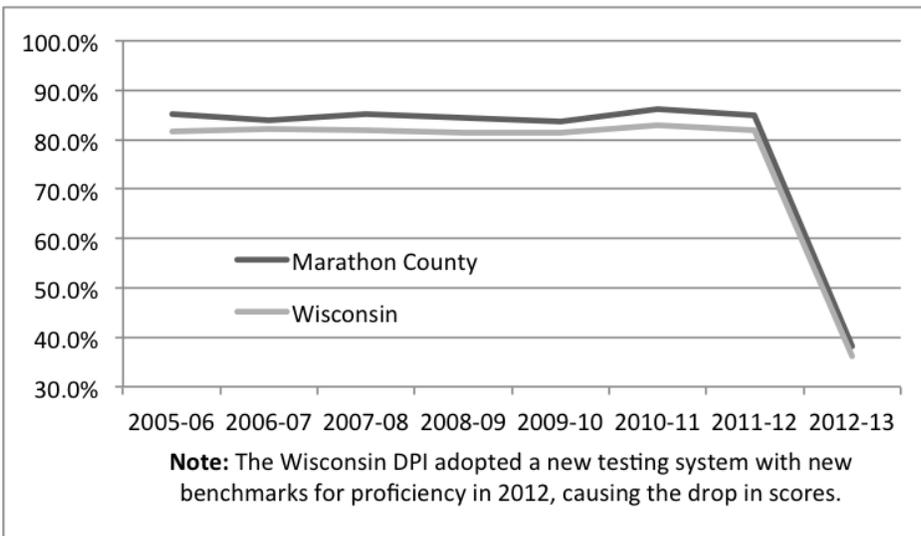
Schools in Wisconsin are funded through a mix of federal, state, and local tax revenues, mostly funded through state taxes and local property taxes each contributing more than 40%. Costs generally rise with inflation, but spending levels across Wisconsin decreased in 2012 due to legislative action. In Marathon County, the urban districts (Wausau and Everest) have

traditionally maintained spending levels similar to state averages but those dropped off in 2009 and that gap has widened every year since. Urban districts saw a greater decrease in funds in 2012. The average decrease in per pupil expenditures for Marathon County was \$657, accumulating to total decrease of more than \$12.5 million dollars of education funding for students in the county.

**Key Measure:** Reading Comprehension for Combined Grades (3—8 & 10), 2012



**Key Measure:** Reading Comprehension for Combined Grades, 2005—2013



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Since 2005, the average reading comprehension score for combined grades in all Marathon County districts has exceeded those of the state. However, not all individual districts have performed above average at all grade levels.
- In 2012 – 2013, five of the eight school districts had scores for tenth grade reading comprehension that exceeded the state average, with Marathon City scoring highest at 51.7%.
- Four of the eight school districts exceeded the state average for eighth grade reading comprehension, with Stratford the highest at 50.8%.
- Five of the eight school districts exceeded the state average for fourth grade reading comprehension, with Stratford the highest at 43.8%.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Reading Comprehension skills are critical not only to the success of an individual in school and later in life, but they are vital to the health of the community. Literacy rates as early as third grade have been used as predictors for criminal behavior later in life. Providing supportive services, remedial help, and programs that promote reading and literacy will have an impact on all curriculum areas and test scores and increase the likelihood of contributions to society later in life as they afford people better educational opportunities and access to higher paying jobs.

regards to reading comprehension. However, only three school districts in the county (Marathon City, Spencer, and Stratford) have a higher percentage of advanced readers than the state average and over 20% of the county's readers are functioning at a minimal performance level considered below basic. While that percentage decreases as students advance through the grades, there is still the opportunity for the community to benefit from increased literacy initiatives.

Marathon County students on average perform better than state averages in

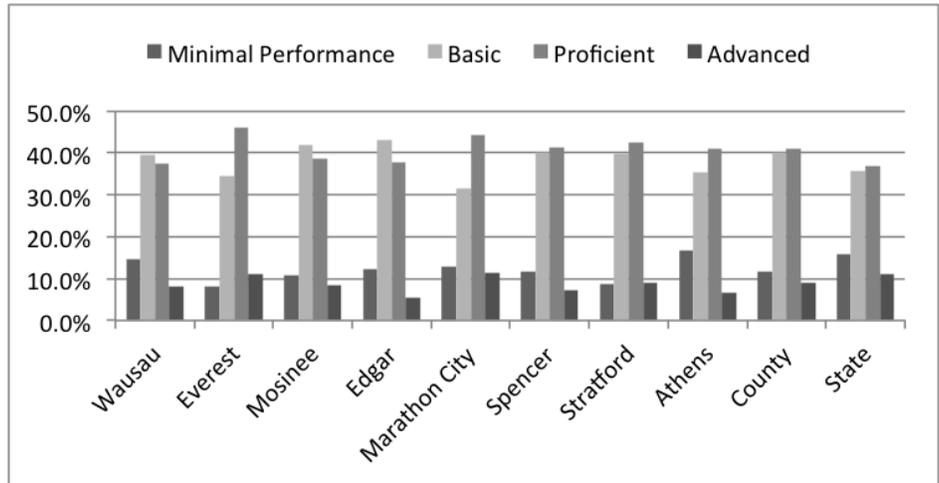
### SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
Report: Wisconsin District and School Performance Reports  
[apps2.dpi.wi.gov/sdpr/spr.action](http://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/sdpr/spr.action)  
Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools  
[winss.dpi.wi.gov](http://winss.dpi.wi.gov)

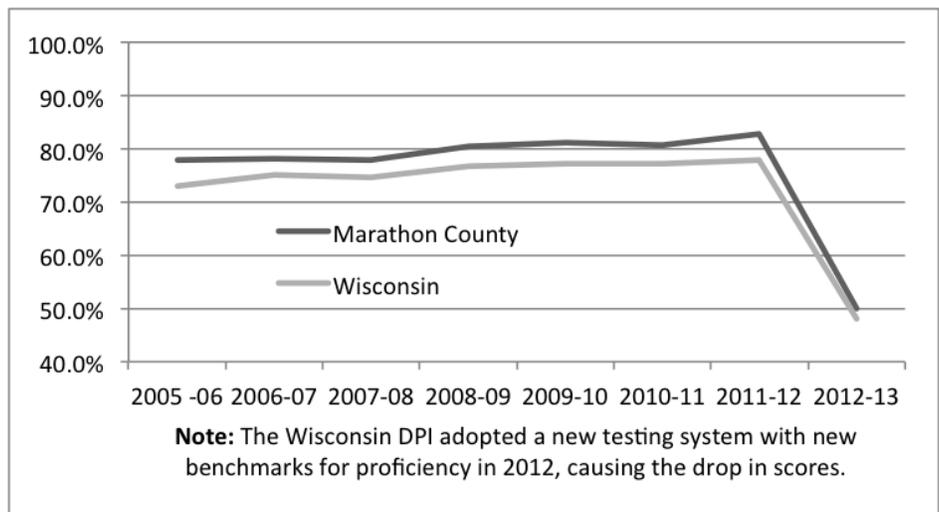
## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Since 2005, the average mathematics proficiency score for combined grades in all Marathon County districts has exceeded those of the state. However, not all individual districts have performed above average at all grade levels.
- In 2012 – 2013, four of the eight school districts had scores for tenth grade mathematics proficiency that were higher than the state average. The DC Everest School District had the highest average score at 63.7%.
- Five of the eight county school districts had scores for eighth grade that were higher than the state average. The Stratford District had the highest average score at 61.0%.
- Six of the eight county school districts had scores for fourth grade that were higher than the state average. The Marathon City School District had the highest average score, 60.5%.

**Key Measure:** Mathematics Proficiency for Combined Grades (3–8 & 10), 2012



**Key Measure:** Mathematics Proficiency for Combined Grades, 2005–2013



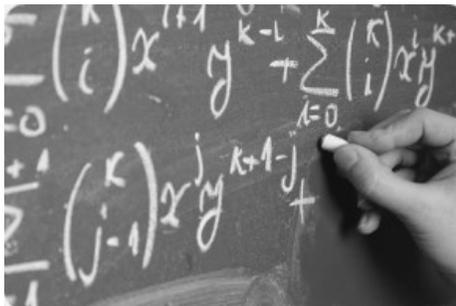
## SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
Report: Wisconsin District and School Performance Reports  
[apps2.dpi.wi.gov/sdpr/spr.action](http://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/sdpr/spr.action)  
Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools  
[winss.dpi.wi.gov/](http://winss.dpi.wi.gov/)

## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Students who gain necessary skills in mathematics in elementary and middle school are better prepared for high school coursework. While the state of Wisconsin requires two years of

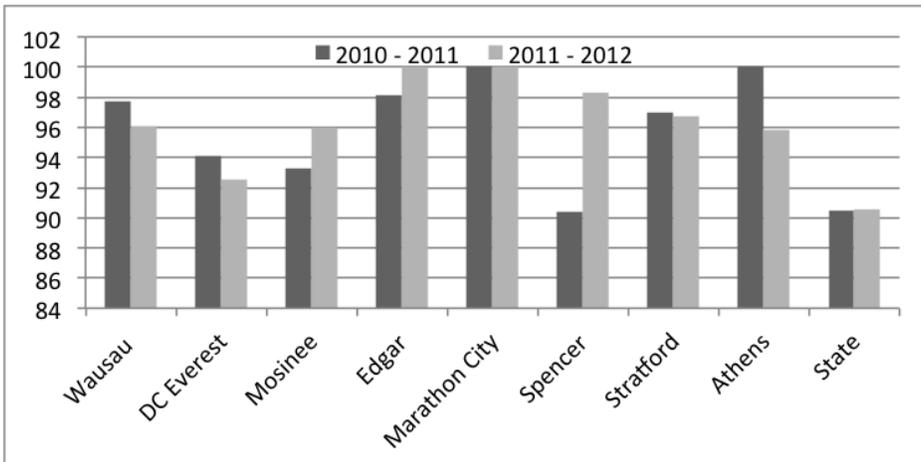
preparations, most adults use some level of mathematics to make change, figure percentages, convert weights and measures, compute interest, and complete other required daily tasks.



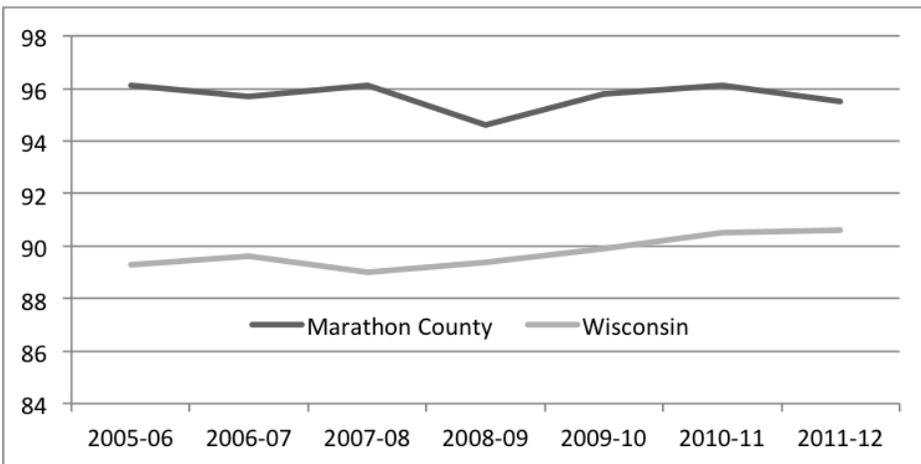
mathematics for graduation, most colleges recommend three or four years to prepare students for college-level work. Beyond future academic

Marathon County students have maintained a slight edge above state averages in regards to mathematics proficiency, indicating that the school districts herein are better preparing students on the whole. However, only two districts have a higher percentage of advanced math students than state averages, indicating the potential to identify more students for advanced mathematics courses.

**Key Measure:** Percentage of Seniors Graduating with a Regular Diploma, 2010—2012



**Key Measure:** Percentage of Students Graduating with a Regular Diploma, 2005—2013



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

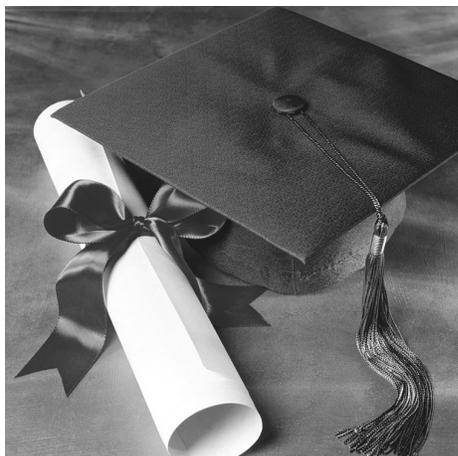
- With 90.6% of high school freshmen graduating, Wisconsin continues to be ranked first in the country for high school graduation rates.
- Marathon City and Edgar both had 100% graduation rates for 2011 – 2012, Marathon City for the fourth year in a row.
- Marathon County had a 95.5% graduation rate in 2011 – 2012, graduating 1,661 seniors.
- At 92.5%, Everest had the lowest graduation rate in Marathon County in 2011 – 2012; however, all districts had a higher rate of graduation than the state average of 90.6%.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

In the modern economy, a high school diploma is an essential accomplishment as it opens doors not only to further education but also to certain job opportunities. As such, the high school graduation rate is not only a measure of the strength of education programs in a community, but also a predictor of future economic security.

Wisconsin continues to have strong graduation rates, consistently outranking all other states in the percentage of ninth graders that graduate both in four years and with extra years of schooling. Marathon County further outpaces Wisconsin rates with all eight districts having a higher percentage of graduates than the state average. While that gap is narrowing, Marathon County has remained

consistently around the 96% rate for years.



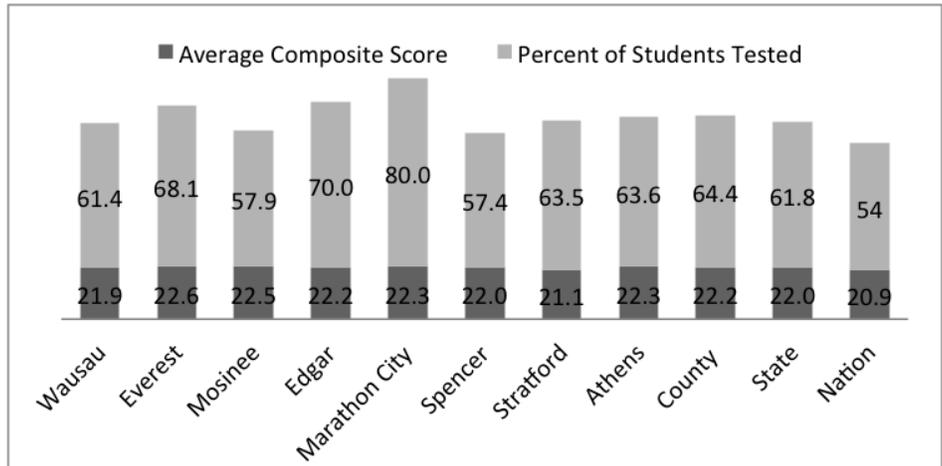
### SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
Report: Wisconsin District and School Performance Reports  
[apps2.dpi.wi.gov/sdpr/spr.action](http://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/sdpr/spr.action)  
Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools  
[wins.dpi.wi.gov/](http://wins.dpi.wi.gov/)

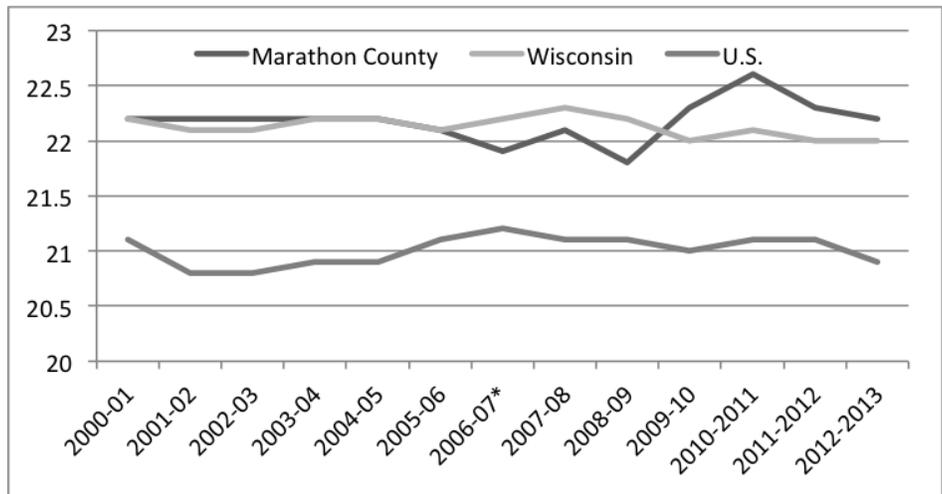
DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 64.4% of students in Marathon County took the ACT during 2012-13 school year, earning an average composite of 22.2, higher than both state and national averages at 22.0/61.8% and 20.9/54% respectively.
- In 2009-10, the Marathon County average ACT score exceeded the state average. Marathon County has maintained that advantage for four consecutive school years.
- D.C. Everest had the highest average composite score in 2012-13 with a score of 22.6. Marathon City had the highest percentage of test takers at 80.0%.

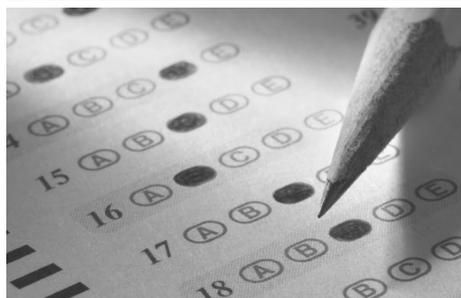
Key Measure: American College Test (ACT) Results, 2012-13



Key Measure: Average ACT Composite Score, 2000—2013



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES



The ACT is typically taken by college-bound students in their junior or senior year in order to assess their educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. ACT results are one of the primary measures of college readiness relied upon by colleges and universities to predict a student's future educational and work-life successes. These averages accordingly serve as a measure for educational

effectiveness at national, state, and local levels.

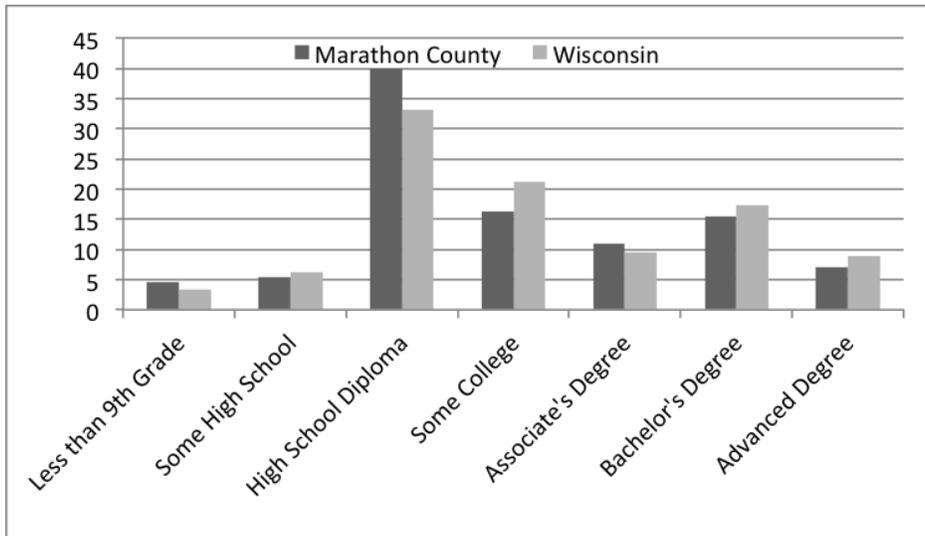
In the 2009-10 school year, Marathon County saw its ACT composite average jump above the state average after trending with or below state averages for a number of years. While the gap has narrowed, Marathon County has maintained that slight edge for four consecutive school years. Wisconsin averages continue to be well above national averages.

The state of Wisconsin has recently adopted the ACT as part of its state-wide testing program in hopes of measuring the preparedness of all students, rather than those that select to take the test because of their future college plans. This shift may impact future averages.

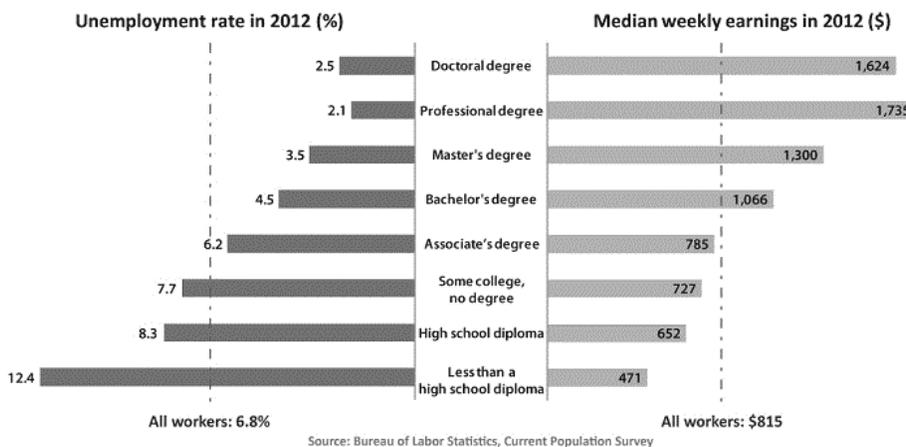
SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
Report: Wisconsin District and School Performance Reports [apps2.dpi.wi.gov/sdpr/spr.action](http://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/sdpr/spr.action)  
Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools [winss.dpi.wi.gov/](http://winss.dpi.wi.gov/)
- **The American College Test (ACT)**  
[www.act.org/](http://www.act.org/)

**Key Measure:** Educational Attainment Percentages for the Population over 25, 2011



### Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- With 22.5% of residents having a bachelor's degree or higher in 2011, Marathon County falls short of the state percentage of 26.5%.
- Marathon County experiences brain gain as residents born out of state, at 35.9%, are more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher than residents born in Wisconsin at 19.3%. Similarly, 12.1% of out-of-state-born residents have graduate or professional degrees compared with 5.5% of Wisconsin-born residents.
- In 2011, the most educated adult age group in Marathon County included residents ages 35 to 44, with 28.3% having a bachelor's degree or higher. The least educated group was residents 65 and over, with 15.7%, having a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Women in Marathon County are more likely to attain higher education with 23.8% having a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 21.3% of men.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Education is the great social equalizer, providing people with the skills they need to earn a living wage. Research has long supported positive correlations between educational attainment and income levels. Thus, the percentage of residents with post-secondary degrees is an indicator of the economic health of a community.

Marathon County—home to UW: Marathon County, Northcentral Technical College and two for-profit campuses, Globe and Rasmussen—provides many post-secondary opportunities. Moreover, other colleges—including Concordia University, Edgewood College, Lakeland College, Marian University, Silver Lake College, Upper Iowa University, UW: Green Bay, UW: Stevens Point, UW:

Stout, and Viterbo University—offer bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree programs to county residents. The Medical College of Wisconsin will also be offering programs in Marathon County starting in 2015.

However, Marathon County attainment rates remain below state averages with 22.5% of residents in 2011 possessing a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 26.5% statewide. County residents believe that higher education is available to them, but over half of the residents are concerned with the affordability of education. As public funding of higher education has decreased, costs have continued to shift to students, increasing the need for financial aid.

### SOURCES

- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
American Community Survey  
[www.census.gov/acs/www/#](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/#)
- **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics**  
[www.bls.gov/](http://www.bls.gov/)
- **2013 LIFE Community Survey**



*We strive to live in a community where...*

diverse economic opportunities and  
a skilled workforce build prosperity.



Economic Environment Subcommittee

Ann Lucas, Chair	Marshfield Clinic
Jeff Zriny, Chair	Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce
Thomas Walsh	Department of Workforce Development
Rene Daniels	North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
Ann Werth	Wausau Community Development
Todd Toppen	Integrity First Bank
Mark Borowicz	Northcentral Technical College
Larry Jakubowski	Civil Rights Bureau
Tony Yaron	Central Wisconsin Airport
Deb Hager	Marathon County Administration

*"There is a concerted effort underway to work with area employers to identify their employment needs, establish the applicable training programs, and promote regional career opportunities within the educational system. Supporting our existing business community's workforce needs while seeking opportunities to nurture new startup businesses will establish an environment that retains and attracts a strong workforce."*

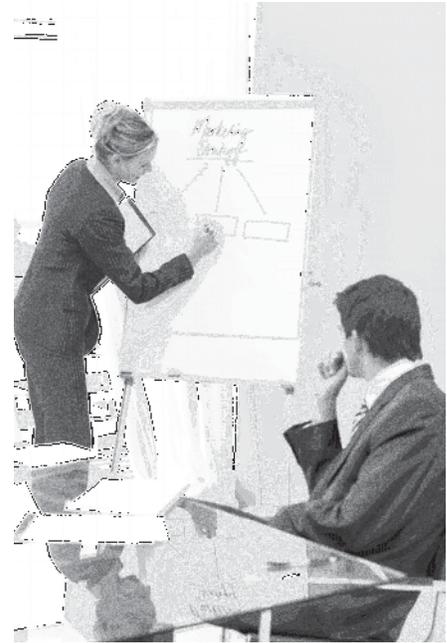
*Lori Weyers, President  
Northcentral Technical College*

# Economic Environment

## Section Summary

### Community Success and Progress:

- Job satisfaction and work ethic among those employed remains high, and consumer spending is continuing to increase from its 2009 low bringing new retail and service-sector businesses to the area.
- Coordinated local and regional organizations are working to improve the employment and economic opportunities in the county.
- The healthcare service sector continues to serve as a major employer with good paying jobs. Recruiting new high tech and medical training facilities will create opportunities for additional growth.
- Metal fabrications, a subsector of manufacturing, is creating job opportunities for skilled workers, helping to fill the void left by two large plant closings.
- Northcentral Technical College continues to work closely with area employers to train and prepare workers for industries from information technology to advanced manufacturing.
- New sporting venues offer increased opportunities to bring in external revenues to the community.
- A countywide branding program is in place as part of an ongoing promotional program.



### Challenges and Opportunities to Improve:

#### Challenges

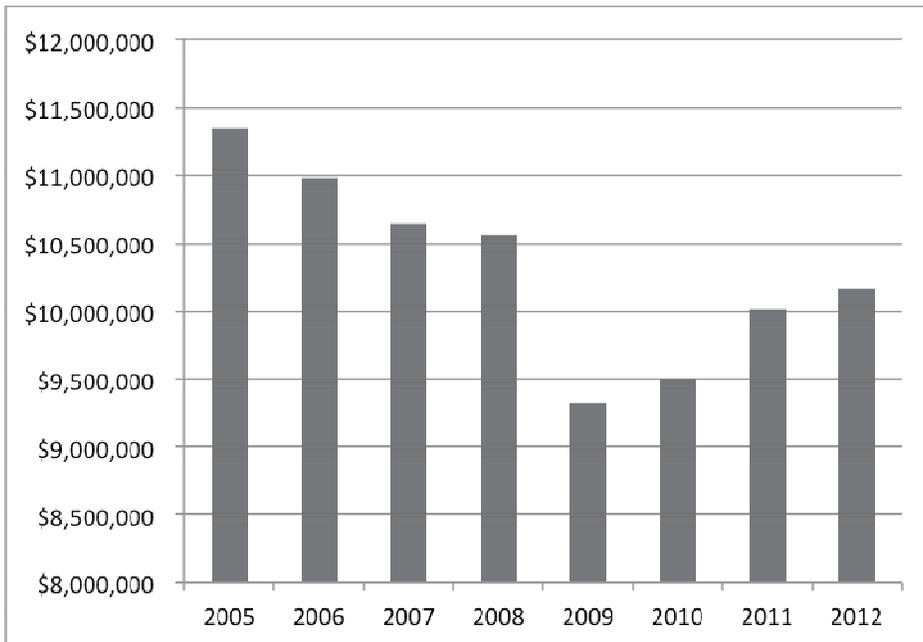
- Unemployment remains fairly high despite employer needs in select industries, and residents are concerned about jobs providing living wages and career advancement.
- High unemployment has placed a strain on county services, and programs are needed to assist the unemployed with the necessary job training and soft skills to gain employment and grow in their positions.

#### Opportunities to Improve

- Continue collaborative efforts with the K-12 systems, colleges and universities, and employers to provide the necessary knowledge and skills regarding the career opportunities available and the training required in this region.
- Instill an entrepreneurial understanding in the emerging workforce.
- Function as a multi-county economic region.
- Develop a community-based program that addresses issues of multi-generation poverty.



**Key Measure:** Marathon County Reported County Sales and Use Tax Revenues, 2005-2012

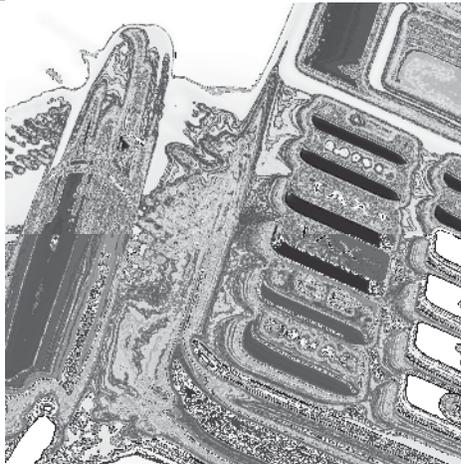


### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Sales tax is the revenue generated by all goods, services, and merchandise taxable under Wisconsin sales tax law. Examples of taxable items include automobiles, appliances, clothing, furniture, jewelry, electronics, and repair or landscaping services. The state sales tax in Wisconsin is 5%, and Marathon County, along with 61 of Wisconsin's 72 counties, levies an additional sales tax of 0.5%.

Consumer spending represents about two-thirds of our national economy; thus, sales tax revenue is an indication of the state and county economic climates. Decreases in sales tax revenue result from constricting consumer spending, which translates to declining business income and lower state and county revenues.

Through July 2013 Marathon County's sales tax total was \$6,008,554 on pace for a slight but steady increase from 2012. County revenues have been increasing since 2009, suggesting that Marathon County is beginning a slow but steady recovery, but the county still hasn't surpassed its peak revenues generated in 2005.



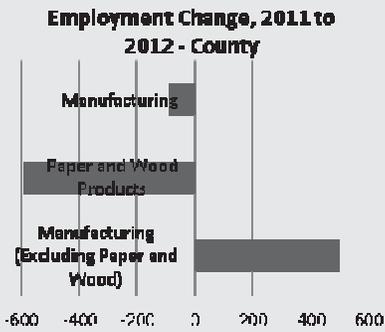
### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- County sales tax revenue has declined 10.4% since 2005.
- From the low of 2009 to 2012 there has been an increase of 8% in county sales tax.
- Taxable sales and purchases in 2005 produced state sales and use taxes of \$4.025 billion. In 2012 sales and purchasing in Wisconsin amounted to \$4.175 billion in state sales and use taxes, a 5.7% increase from 2010.
- Retail trade accounts for 47% of reported state sales and use tax in Wisconsin. In Marathon County it accounted for 53.5%.
- Of retail trade, the top three contributors to county sales and use tax in Marathon County are general merchandise stores 24.4% (a 1.6% decline from 2010), motor vehicles and parts dealers 22.1% (a 3.1% increase from 2010) and building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers 8.2% (a decrease of 6.8% from 2010).
- County sales tax produced a total of \$295.6 million in 2012 for the 62 counties that impose the levy. This was a 7.6% increase from 2010.

### SOURCES

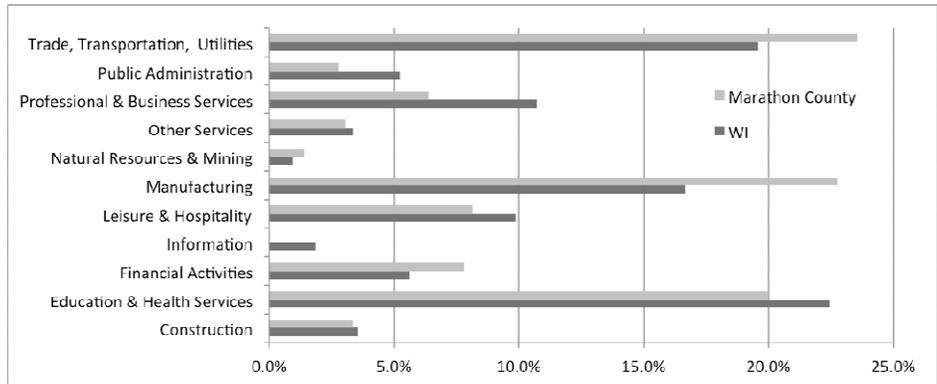
- **Wisconsin Department of Revenue**  
State and Local Sales and Use Tax Report: Revenues from Sales in Calendar Year, 2005-2012  
[www.revenue.wi.gov/report/s.html#sales](http://www.revenue.wi.gov/report/s.html#sales)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

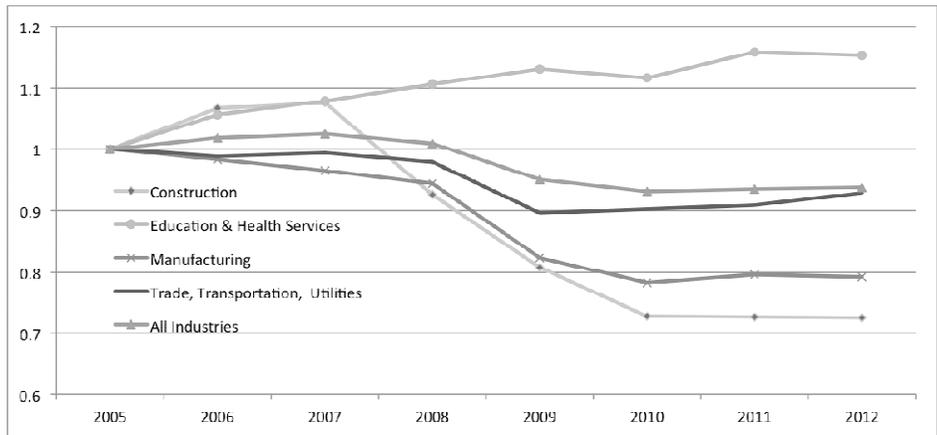


- Employment in paper manufacturing and wood products manufacturing declined by 13.5% (-592 jobs) between 2011 and 2012. Excluding paper and wood, manufacturing employment grew by about 5% (501 jobs).
- Almost half of the jobs in Marathon County are concentrated in trade, transportation, and utilities and in manufacturing.
- Manufacturing and construction remained 18.0% and 32.6% below pre-recession peaks, respectively.
- Education and health services, the county's third largest industry supersector, grew by 6.9% from 2007 to 2012.

Key Measure: Share of Employment by Sector, 2012



Key Measure: Indexed Employment in Marathon County, 2005-2012



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Annual employment in 2012 remained 8.4% (about 6,000 jobs) below 2007 employment. As a comparison, the total employment in Wisconsin was about 3% below the pre-recession peak. Industry composition has been a key factor in

continue to provide a number of opportunities for county residents. Paper and wood products employment levels have likely stabilized, and wood products should benefit from steady improvement in the national housing market. Additionally, other industry subsectors including fabricated metal manufacturing and equipment manufacturing grew substantially between 2011 and 2012. Future job opportunities will be created both by growth and by the need to replace retiring workers.



Marathon County's slow job growth. The county has a large share of employment in manufacturing, which remains well below pre-recession levels. Heavily concentrated in paper manufacturing and wood product manufacturing, Marathon County has seen employment decline substantially in both industry subsectors over the past five years.

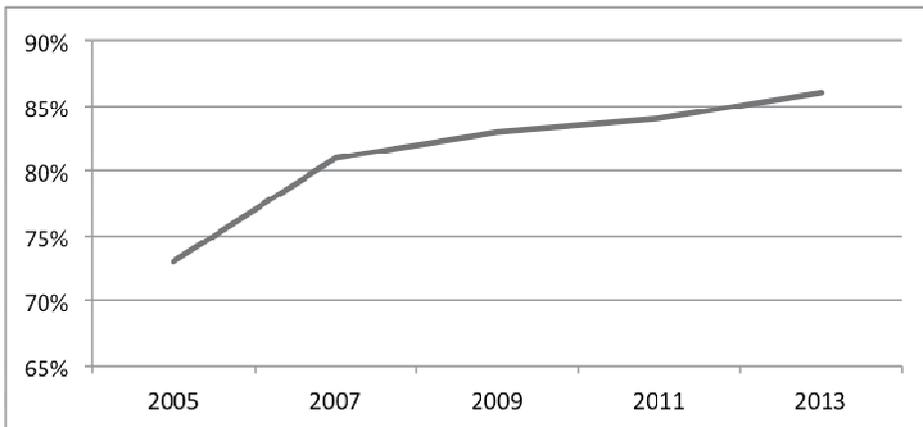
The county would also be well suited to cultivate strengths in other high paying industries such as financial activities and health care. A diversified industry mix helps mitigate the impacts of economic downturns that disproportionately affect different sectors of the economy. Also, job opportunities in high paying industries outside of manufacturing would attract young professionals to the area.

Moving forward, manufacturing will

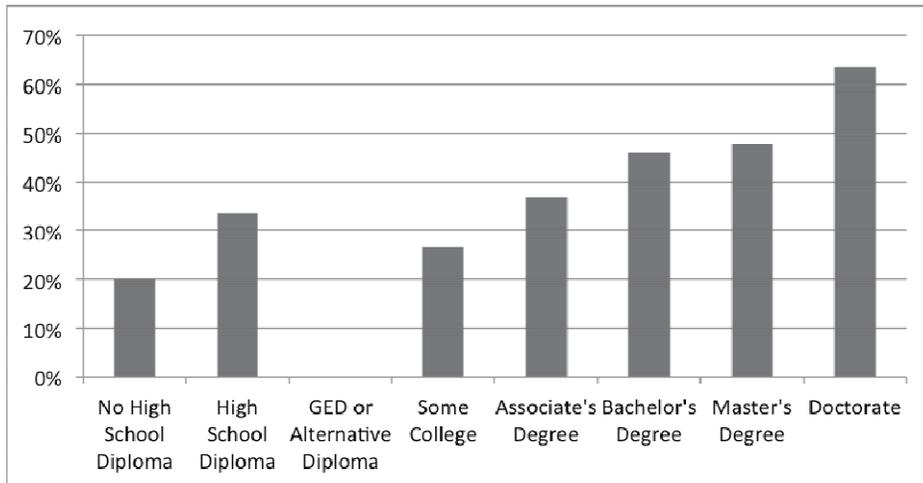
SOURCES

- **Bureau of Labor Statistics**  
Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages  
<http://www.bls.gov/cew/>
- **Wisconsin WORKnet**  
[worknet.wisconsin.gov/worknet/](http://worknet.wisconsin.gov/worknet/)
- **Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development**  
[http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/oea/unemployment\\_rates\\_and\\_labor\\_force\\_estimates/](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/oea/unemployment_rates_and_labor_force_estimates/)

**Key Measure:** Percent of LIFE Community Survey Respondents Satisfied with



**Key Measure:** Percent of Life Community Survey Respondents Strongly Satisfied with Their Jobs by Education Level, 2013

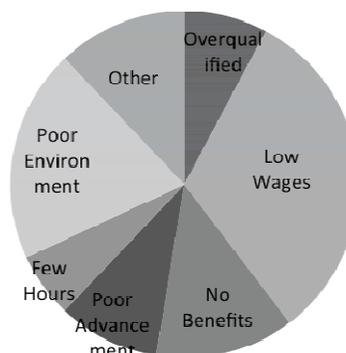


### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average American ages 25 to 54 spends 8.8 hours or 53.7% of their waking day at work. As such, job satisfaction plays a key role in a person's perceived quality of life.

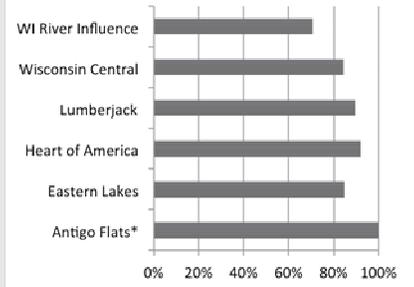
Marathon County residents, according to the LIFE Community survey, have been increasingly satisfied with their jobs as the measure has seen consistent increases over the past eight years, reaching 86.2% in 2013. The highest percentage of dissatisfied employees cited low wages as their reason. According to the 2013 LIFE Community survey, the availability of good paying jobs is the highest concern to Marathon County residents as 90.2% of respondents expressed concern. 55.1% were very concerned.

### Reason for Job Dissatisfaction



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

#### Job Satisfaction by County Region



\* Antigo Flats had only one respondent.

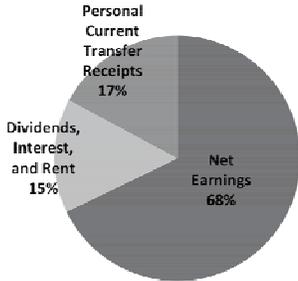
- There is a correlation between educational attainment and strong job satisfaction.
- Of LIFE Community survey respondents:
  - \* 36.5% are strongly satisfied
  - \* 49.7% are satisfied
  - \* 11.9% are dissatisfied
  - \* 1.9% are strongly dissatisfied

### SOURCES

- Bureau of Labor Statistics American Time Use Survey [www.bls.gov/tus/charts/](http://www.bls.gov/tus/charts/)
- 2013 LIFE Community Survey

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

**Total Personal Income (TPI) by Type, 2011 - County**

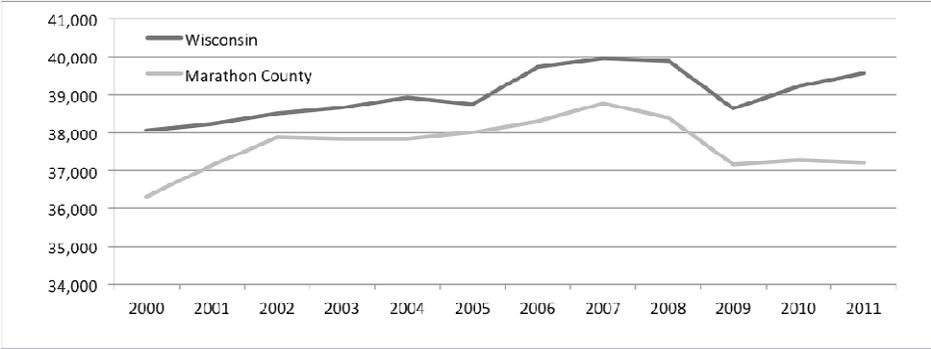


- The three major sources that make up TPI are net earnings (68%); dividends, interest, and rent (15%); and transfer receipts (17%).
- Inflation adjusted (real) total personal income increased by about 4% over the decade, but declined by about 2% between 2007 and 2011.
- Transfer receipts increased at a rate of 6.5% per year between 2007 and 2011. Although social assistance spending will decline as the economy improves, transfer receipts will continue to increase as baby-boomers reach retirement age.

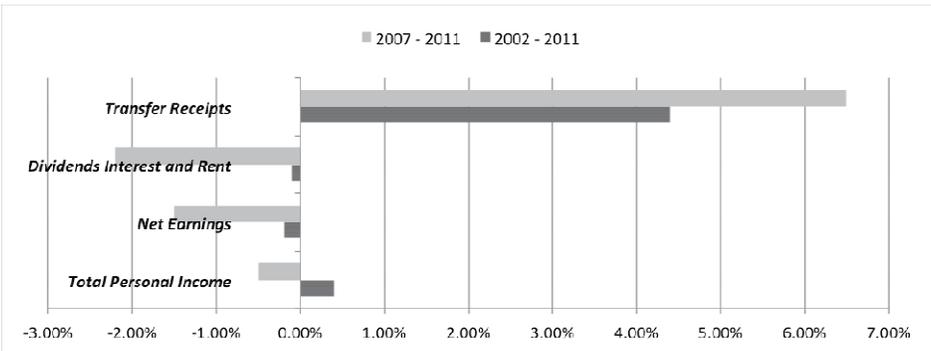
SOURCES

- Bureau of Economic Analysis [www.bea.gov/regional/index.htm](http://www.bea.gov/regional/index.htm)
- Bureau of Labor Force Statistics [www.bls.gov/](http://www.bls.gov/)
- Wisconsin WORKnet [worknet.wisconsin.gov/worknet/](http://worknet.wisconsin.gov/worknet/)

**Key Measure: Real Per Capita Personal Income, 2000—2011**



**Key Measure: Annual Rate of Change by Income Component**



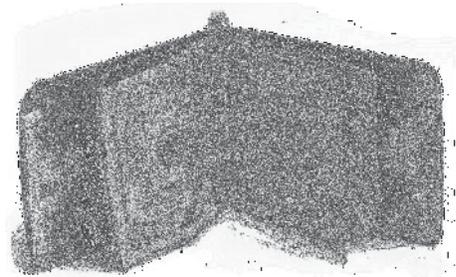
COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Per capita personal income (PCPI) is total personal income (TPI) divided by the total population. This average income figure is a useful indicator for comparing income dynamics across geographic areas. At \$37,214, 2011 PCPI in Marathon County was about 6% lower than the statewide average.

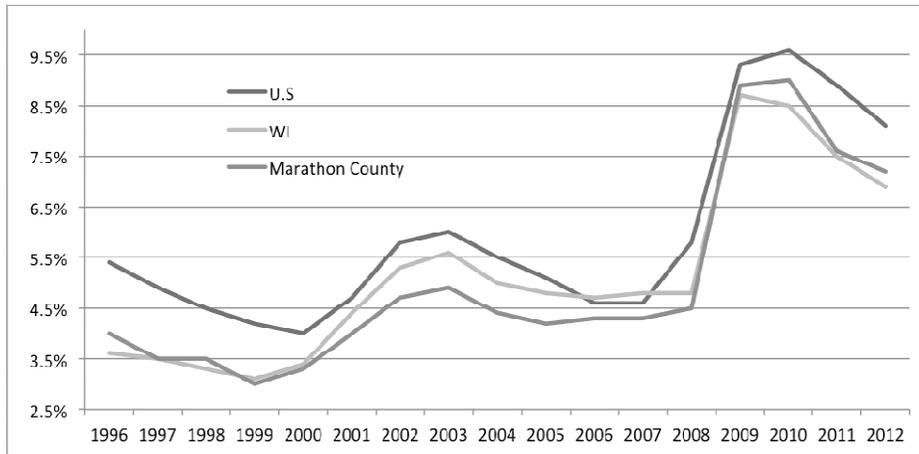
PCPI below the state average is not surprising or concerning. The statewide average is skewed by high income and high population counties in the Milwaukee and Madison areas. A more concerning point of interest is the essentially flat PCPI growth since 2009. After hitting a low in 2009, the state as a whole has seen an increase that Marathon County hadn't seen as of 2011. The county ranked 18<sup>th</sup> out of 72 in 2009 but dropped to 24<sup>th</sup> in the most recent rankings. The county's stagnant personal income growth is largely attributed to lagging employment growth, which impacts the earnings component of personal income.

The terms income and earnings are sometimes used interchangeably, but earnings are only one part of TPI. The three major sources that make up

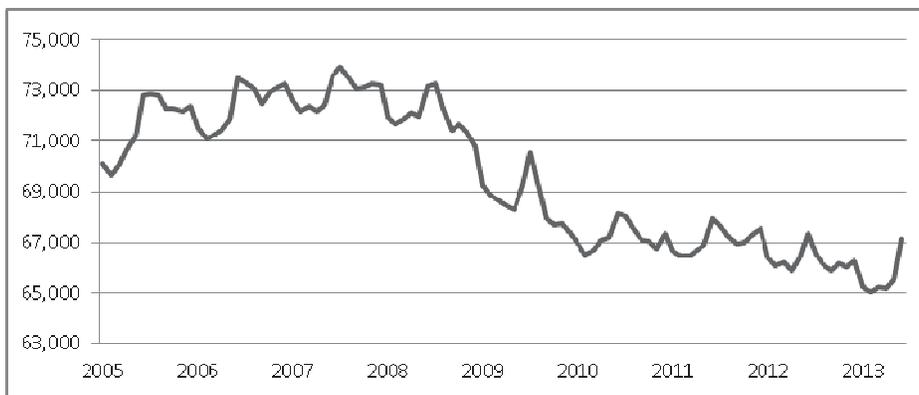
personal income are net earnings; dividends, interest, and rent; and transfer receipts. Inflation adjusted, "real", TPI declined in recent years because the recession reduced net earnings and income related to the stock market and real estate (dividends, interest, and rent). Although social assistance spending increased as a result of the recession, long-term growth in transfer receipts has been primarily driven by an aging population. The trend will continue as baby-boomers steadily retire over the next 20 years, and employers will have difficulty replacing the accumulated skills and knowledge of these experienced workers. Additionally, the county's economy will need to accommodate the market demands of the older population.



### Key Measure: Yearly Unemployment Rates, 1996—2012



### Key Measure: Monthly Employment in Marathon County, 2005—2013



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

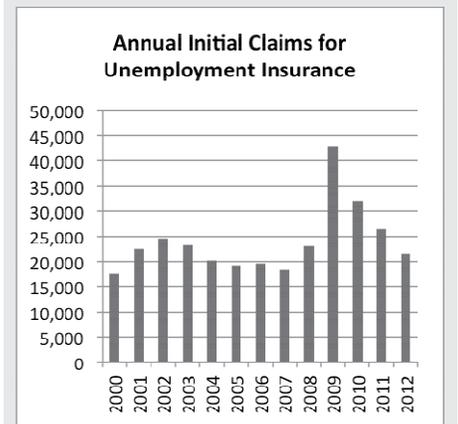
The “Great Recession” started in December of 2007, and job loss among Marathon County residents soon followed, peaking in 2010 and still remaining above pre-recession levels. Manufacturing, one of the county’s most prominent industries, was hit particularly hard. Required notices to the Department of Workforce Development indicate that almost 3,000 Marathon County workers, two-thirds of which were in manufacturing, were affected by business closures or mass layoff events between 2008 and 2012.

The County’s unemployment rate has declined steadily over the past three and a half years, but the total number of employed residents living in the county has also declined, a phenomenon caused by a declining labor force. The labor force is defined as the number of residents at work or actively seeking work. Residents without a job are not included in the labor force or the

unemployment rate if they are not actively seeking employment. In other words, the county’s unemployment rate declined because fewer residents actively sought employment. Marathon County’s declining labor force is likely tied to the large number of business closures and mass layoffs that occurred over the past five years. The data supports anecdotal evidence of experienced workers taking a “semi-voluntary” early retirement after being laid off from previously stable manufacturing jobs.

Although the unemployment situation has been gloomy over the past five years, prospects for seekers appear to be improving. Signifying hiring, initial claims for unemployment insurance, which typically serve as a proxy for layoffs, have declined steadily.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS



- Unemployment rates peaked at 10% in 2010 and remain above pre-recession levels.
- Almost 3,000 Marathon County workers were affected by a business closure or a mass layoff between 2008 and 2012, more than two-thirds formerly employed in manufacturing.
- Compared to 2010, 1,500 fewer Marathon County residents are unemployed. However, the number of employed residents also declined over the same time frame (-940).
- Initial claims for unemployment insurance in 2012 were about 50% of claims filed in 2009, and they continued to decline through the first half of 2013.

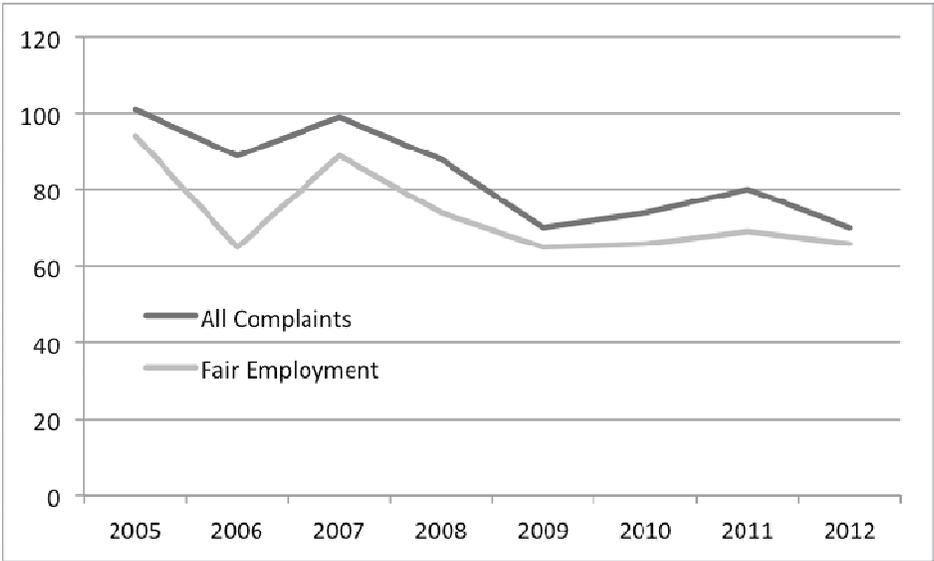
### SOURCES

- **Bureau of Labor Force Statistics**  
[www.bls.gov/](http://www.bls.gov/)
- **Wisconsin WORKnet**  
[worknet.wisconsin.gov/worknet/](http://worknet.wisconsin.gov/worknet/)
- **Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development**  
Unemployment Insurance Statistics  
[dwd.wisconsin.gov/uistats/](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uistats/)

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2012, there were 3,801 civil rights complaints in the state of Wisconsin. In 2011, there were 4,391.
- Fair employment concerns continue to be the leading cause of civil rights complaints.
- In 2012, there were 99,412 individual charge filings with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in the U.S. In 2011, there were 99,947 charge filings.
- In 2012, charges filed with the EEOC in the U.S. involved these types of discrimination at the following rates:
  - \* Race: 33.7%
  - \* Sex: 30.5%
  - \* National Origin: 10.9%
  - \* Religion: 3.8%
  - \* Color: 2.7%
  - \* Retaliation: 38.1%
  - \* Age: 23.0%
  - \* Disability: 26.5%
  - \* Equal Pay Act: 1.1%
  - \* GINA: 0.3%

**Key Measure:** Total Civil Rights Complaints and Fair Employment Complaints in Marathon County, 2005—2012



COMPLAINT CATEGORY	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12
Fair Employment	94	65	89	74	65	66	69	66
Open Housing	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Public Accommodations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family and Medical Leave	5	15	7	4	4	6	10	2
Health Care Retaliation	1	4	2	2	1	0	0	1
Other Laws	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>70</b>

## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Civil Rights Law exists to ensure that discrimination does not prevent residents from participating in the opportunities necessary to live a complete life. Among others, these laws

Marathon County has seen a downward trend in civil rights complaints over the past decade. While numbers fluctuate from year to year, 2012 saw a 31% decrease from total complaints in 2005. As in past years, the overwhelming majority of civil rights complaints fell into the category of fair employment, making up 94.3% of 2012 complaints.

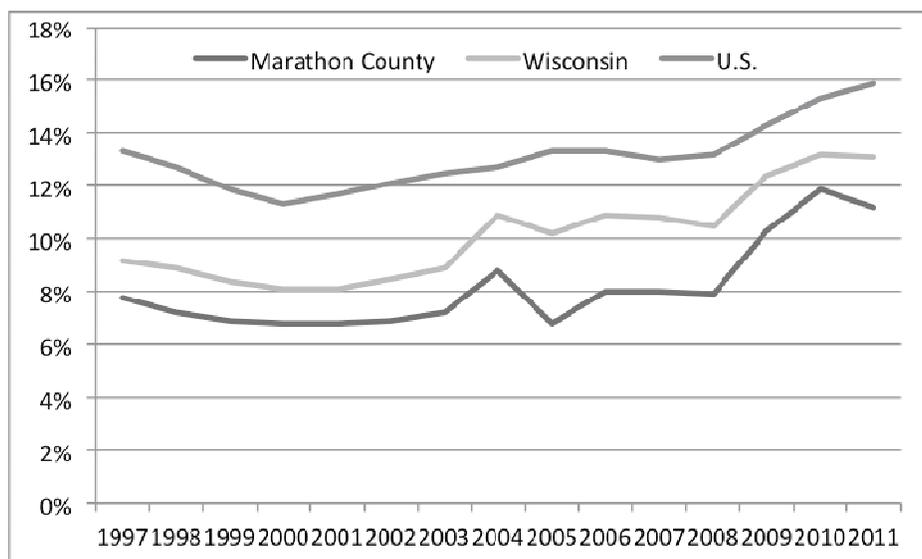


prohibit discrimination based on race, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, marital status, age, ability, sexual orientation, military status, and medical and genetic history. These protections are designed to ensure that people have appropriate access to employment, housing, education, healthcare, and other recognized benefits of public life.

## SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development**  
Equal Rights  
[dwd.wisconsin.gov/er/](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/er/)
- **U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**  
[www.eeoc.gov/](http://www.eeoc.gov/)

**Key Measure:** Percent of the Population Living At or Below the Federal Poverty Line, 1997—2011



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The poverty threshold represents the costs of all essential goods and services needed by a family. The share of the population living at or below 100% of the federal poverty level jumped in the nation, state, and county as a result of the “Great Recession.” The jump went along with large-scale declines in employment as a number of families lost their primary sources of income. The share of population living in poverty in Marathon County (11.2%) is better than both the state (13.1%) and the nation (15.9%). Also, the gap between the county and the state and nation has remained essentially the same even as employment levels in the county remain further below state and national levels.

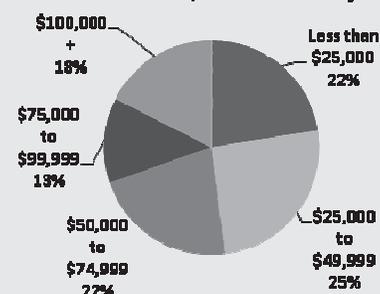
Still, many families with income above the poverty threshold struggle to pay their bills and meet essential needs such as food, shelter, and basic healthcare. About 30% of the Marathon County population fell below 200% of the federal poverty line – a common benchmark for “low-income”. As a comparison, 35.2% of United States and 31.1% of Wisconsin residents were at or below the low-income threshold. The share of population living below 200% of the poverty line increased in the nation, state, and county following the recession.

Workforce and economic development efforts often focus on developing jobs or placing workers in positions that pay adequate wages. While specific income needs vary among individuals, county-level fair market rents can be used to calculate a rough estimate of adequate wages. The adequate or “livable” wage threshold for Marathon County is currently about \$12.30/hour based on fair market rents.

The standard of living improves when families move out of poverty or “low-income” categories. The increased financial stability from higher earnings levels might allow children to focus more on school and extracurricular activities. The community and local economy as a whole also benefit if more families move above poverty and low-income levels. Families with income above 200% of the poverty line are more likely to spend more money in the local economy, helping to support local businesses.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

#### Share of Households by Income Level, 2011 - County



- The federal poverty level in 2011 was \$11,484 for a single person and \$22,811 for a family with two adults and two children.
- In 2011, 11.2% of the Marathon County population lived at or below the federal poverty threshold.
- 15.9% of children in Marathon County lived at or below the poverty level in 2011.
- About 30% of Marathon County residents live at or below low-income and poverty levels.
- Median household income in 2011 in Marathon County was \$51,908

### SOURCES

- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates  
[www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/statecounty/](http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/statecounty/)
- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
American Fact Finder  
[factfinder2.census.gov/](http://factfinder2.census.gov/)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

2013 Fair Market Rents

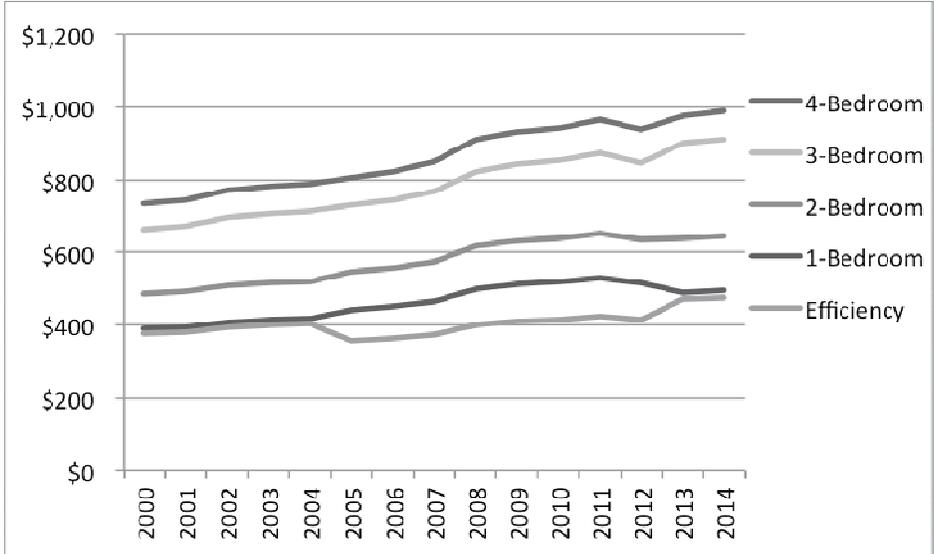
Efficiency	\$471
1-Bedroom	\$489
2-Bedroom	\$638
3-Bedroom	\$901
4-Bedroom	\$977

- 2012 saw a drop in FMRs across all rental types except efficiencies.
- 2012 also saw the gap between efficiencies and 1-bedrooms close again.
- According to HUD projections, a Marathon County resident must earn 12.27/hour, working 40 hours/week for 52 weeks/year to have adequate income to afford a 2-bedroom apartment costing \$638/month. The Wisconsin living wage projection is \$14.67 /hour for a 2-bedroom costing \$763/month.
- The term "poverty wage" applies to federal poverty levels displayed in terms of hourly rates for full-time employment instead of yearly incomes.
- Trolleycar Flats and The Federal Building lofts were recently added to the housing stock, resulting in the growth of units of FMR available for renters.

SOURCES

- **Housing and Urban Development**  
Fair Market Rent Documentation  
[www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/fmr.html](http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/fmr.html)
- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**  
Living Wage Calculator  
[livingwage.mit.edu/counties/55073](http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/55073)

Key Measure: Fair Market Rent in Marathon County, 2000—2014\*



\* 2014 amounts are projections.

Key Measure: Living, Poverty, and Minimum Wages by Family Size for

MARATHON COUNTY	Minimum Wage	Poverty Wage	Living Wage
1 Adult	\$7.25	\$5.21	\$8.06
1 Adult/1 Child	\$7.25	\$7.00	\$19.18
1 Adult/2 Children	\$7.25	\$8.80	\$25.88
1 Adult/3 Children	\$7.25	\$10.60	\$33.80
2 Adults	\$7.25	\$7.00	\$13.57
2 Adults/1 Child	\$7.25	\$8.80	\$16.55
2 Adults/2 Children	\$7.25	\$10.60	\$18.00
2 Adults/3 Children	\$7.25	\$12.40	\$21.14

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

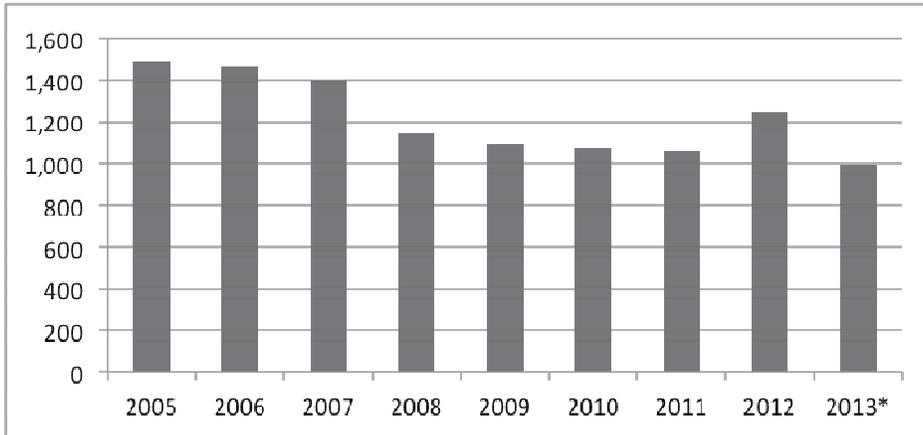
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) calculates Fair Market Rents (FMRs) to determine both the eligibility and appropriate subsidy amounts for housing assistance programs. FMRs are set at the dollar amount including basic utilities below which 40% of the standard-quality rental units are leased. Thus, as FMRs track trends in housing, they also show the impact of other economic factors on the rental market.

Marathon County saw a bump in FMRs across all non-efficiency rental types during the peak years of the recession. The bump started in 2007 and stayed above the trend line until they leveled back off in 2012. This is likely due to greater demand for rental properties as homeownership decreased due to

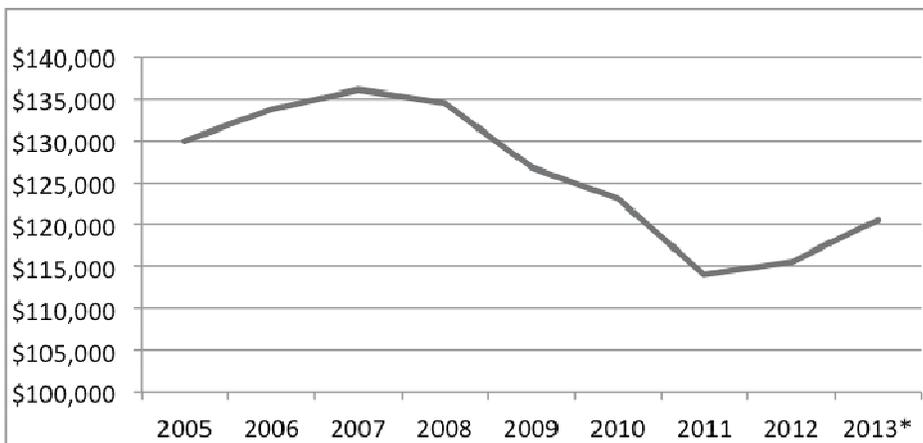
increased foreclosures, consumer reluctance to purchase a home, and tightened financing standards during the housing crisis.

FMRs are also tied to calculations of living wages as it is generally accepted that affordable housing should not exceed 30% of a person's wages. A living wage is considered the necessary income for people to meet their basic needs. Specific income needs vary among individuals, but workforce and economic development efforts that focus on "adequate wages" often need a single number when designing, implementing, or tracking the initiatives. The living wage threshold for Marathon County, based on FMRs, is currently about \$12.30/hour

### Key Measure: Number of Homes Sold in Marathon County, 2005—2013\*



### Key Measure: Median Prices of Homes Sold in Marathon County, 2005—2013\*



\* 2013 figures include home sales through August.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

After sustaining decreasing housing prices from 2008 through 2011, housing prices have begun to appreciate again. This rebound is a function of general improvements in the economy along with the impact of pent up demand, which has been building since the recession. Additionally, banks have moved away from very conservative lending standards, returning to a more moderate stance that has made it easier to acquire financing. Moreover, an extended period of low rates has motivated consumers, who see the risk of higher rates, to make a purchase while rates are very affordable.

Compared with the prior year, Wisconsin home sales rose 11.4% over the first half of 2013. Marathon County tracked close with an increase of 10.7% over the same period. As home inventories have

declined, the added pressure at certain price points has positively impacted sale prices within those ranges. Median home prices continue to increase statewide, up 8.3% as of August, 2013. At \$120,500, Marathon County has seen median prices rise 4.3% from 2012; however, prices still lag more than \$15,000 behind the 2007 peak of \$136,000. Compared with state averages, homes typically are more affordable in Marathon County.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Marathon County is on track to sell 1,491 homes in 2013 if sales in the final quarter match the monthly average through August.
- In 2012, Marathon County saw a 17.7% increase in number of homes sold compared with 2011.
- The median price of homes sold in Marathon County dropped \$22,000 (16.2%) from 2007 to 2011.
- The median sales price of a home at \$122,000 is returning to 2010 levels, an increase of 7.0% in the last 3 years.
- Home sales have increased 16.7% between 2010 and 2012, and are tracking even higher in 2013.
- In 2011, the median value of all homes in Marathon County was \$139,500; in Wisconsin, it was \$166,700.

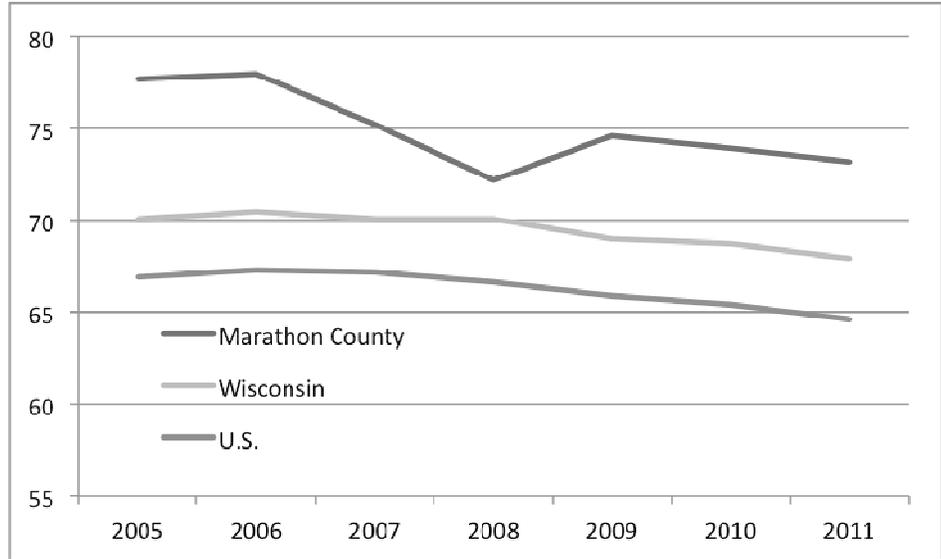
### SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Realtors Association**  
Housing Statistics  
[www.wra.org/HousingStatistics/](http://www.wra.org/HousingStatistics/)
- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
[www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- While Marathon County saw a bounce back in owner occupied housing units in 2009, census data through 2011 still shows a clear negative trend line.
- In 2011, 7.8% of homes in Marathon County were vacant compared with 13.6% statewide.
- Of owner-occupied units in 2011, 40.4% were owned free and clear with no mortgage compared with 33.1% statewide.
- In 2011, 26.8% of housing units in Marathon County were renter occupied compared with 32.1% statewide.
- Increases in both the number of homes sold and the median price of those sold homes in both 2012 and early 2013 may indicate a reversal in this negative owner occupancy trend.

Key Measure: Percent of Owner Occupied Housing Units, 2005—2011



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Owning a home is more than symbolically connected to the American dream. For most middle-class families, their home is their largest financial investment, often accounting for more

appearance of their property, improving both the aesthetics and the sense of safety in that community.

2007 and 2008 saw drastic drops in the percentage of owner occupied homes. While this percentage rebounded in 2009, the two years since have seen a less drastic decrease and the general trend line over the past six years is still moving down, from a peak at 78% in 2006 down almost five percent to 73.2% in 2011.

However, recent home sales statistics indicate that rates of occupancy may be picking up again. 2012 saw increases in both the number of homes sold and the median sale price in Marathon County.

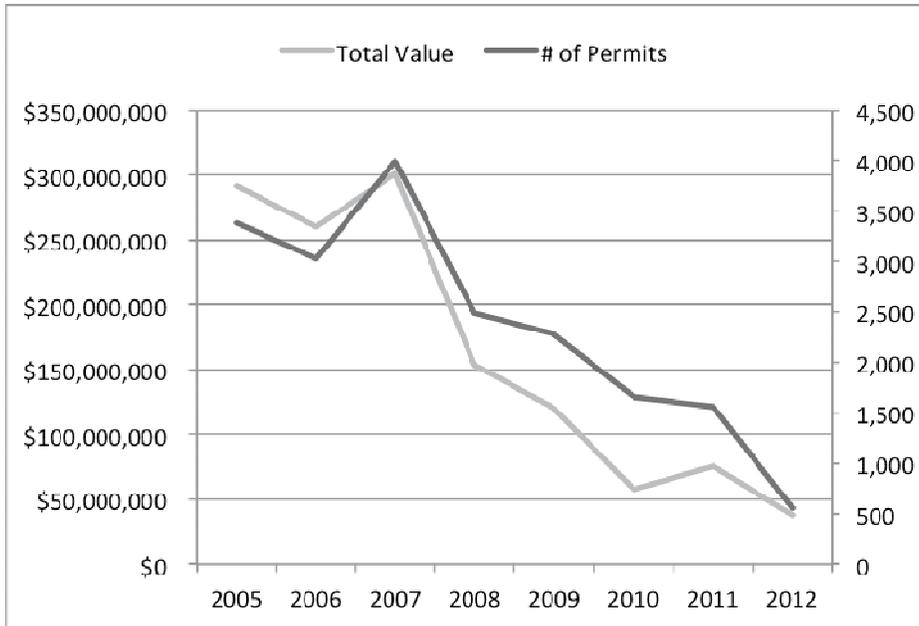


than two-thirds of the average family's wealth. As such, legislation often incentivizes home buying, and the percentage of owner occupied homes can serve as a metric of economic security. Moreover, increased home ownership can have community wide impact as homeowners tend to take greater pride in the upkeep and

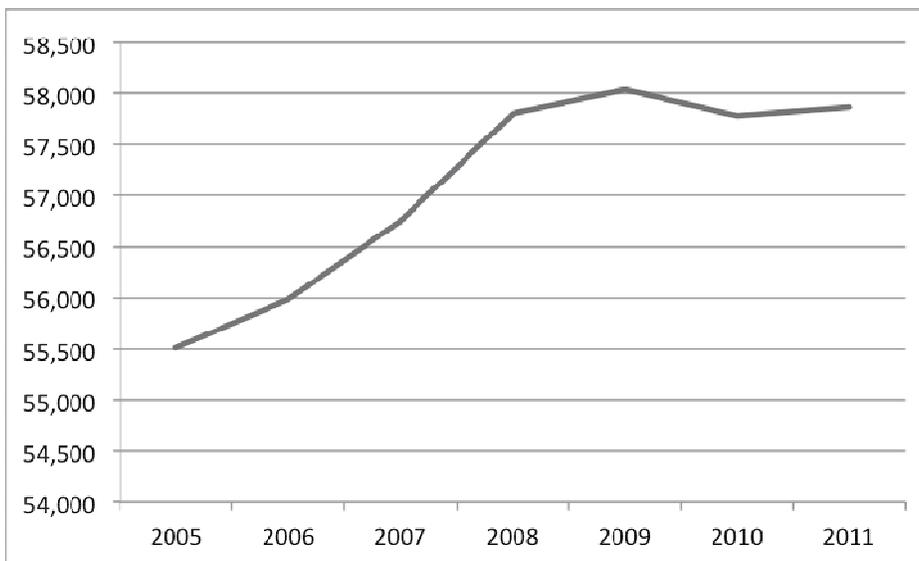
SOURCES

- **US Census Bureau**  
American Community Survey  
2005-2011  
<http://factfinder.census.gov/>  
General Housing Characteristics:  
2011  
[http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC\\_10\\_SF1\\_QTH1&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_SF1_QTH1&prodType=table)

**Key Measure:** Number and Total Value of Building Permits, 2005—2012



**Key Measure:** Number of Housing Units in Marathon County, 2005—2011



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The impact of the housing crisis and the 2008 recession was not only felt by homeowners; economic insecurity and low demand for new homes also had a drastic impact on construction projects. Requests for building permits have fallen sharply since 2007, and 2012 revenues from new construction, additions, and updates was in total only 12.5% of the economic impact of construction in 2007.

The decrease in construction projects is visible in both residential and non-residential categories as commercial and public institutions also have built,

expanded, and updated fewer facilities over the past five years. The decreased demand for construction has had an adverse impact on construction jobs, which are down 32.6% from their pre-recession peak.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

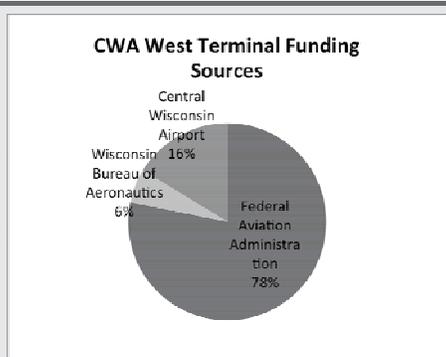
RESIDENTIAL		
Type of Permit	2011	2012
New Single Family	69	108
Mobile Homes	4	3
New Multi-family	6	9
Garages	86	72
Additions/Alterations	1115	220
NON-RESIDENTIAL		
Agricultural	0	40
Commercial & Industrial	29	8
School & Public Buildings	1	0
Additions/Other	244	92

- The request for building permits in Marathon County has fallen drastically, from 4,000 in 2007 to 552 in 2012.
- This drop has caused an 87.5% decrease in construction-generated revenues for Marathon County, from \$301 million in 2007 to \$38 million in 2012.
- The number of housing units in Marathon County actually decreased from 58,039 in 2009 to 57,785 in 2010.
- Marathon County saw a net increase of 70 housing units from 2008 to 2011. In contrast, the county added 2,293 units from 2005 to 2008.

### SOURCES

- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
[www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)
- **Wausau Chamber of Commerce**  
[www.wausauchamber.com](http://www.wausauchamber.com)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

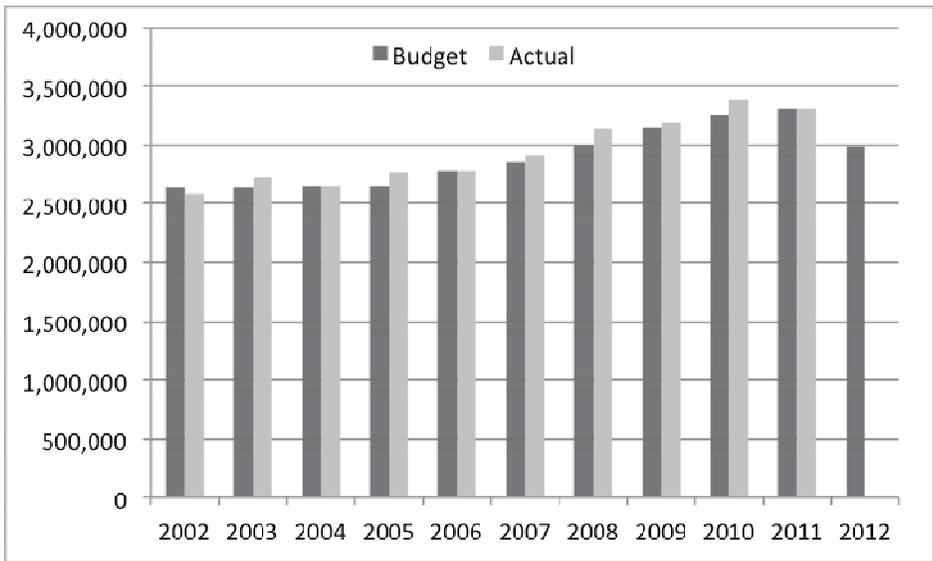


- For each direct rail job, 4 to 5 jobs are created.
- Central Wisconsin Airport produced \$71.5 million in economic output in 2012, supporting 564 jobs and generating \$16.5 million in wage income.
- A survey of home buyers showed that trails ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> of 18 choices as the most important community amenity.
- Homes near or adjacent to bike trails tend to sell faster and for a higher value than equivalent homes not near trails.
- Passenger fares amount to 14% of the cost of operating Metro Ride buses. 86% of costs are supported by tax-payer dollars.
- It will take Marathon County 23 years to repave its roads at the current spending rate of \$4 million/year.

SOURCES

- **Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin**  
[www.tdawisconsin.org/](http://www.tdawisconsin.org/)
- **Wisconsin Department of Transportation**  
[www.dot.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov)
- **Wisconsin Transportation Information Center**  
[tic.engr.wisc.edu/](http://tic.engr.wisc.edu/)

**Key Measure:** Marathon County Transportation Revenues (Gas Taxes) Distributed by the State of Wisconsin, 2002—2012



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

A transportation system is essential to a community’s economy. Transportation moves goods, supplies, and people. Access to transportation services is a key factor when businesses and industries choose where to locate or expand. Businesses and industries rely on transportation to provide access to markets, meet with customers and associates, receive supplies, transport employees, and attract customers. An efficient transportation system creates jobs, generates tax revenues, facilitates business, draws tourism, increases public safety, and increases public health. In turn, these outcomes increase a community’s quality of life, improving competitiveness when attracting and retaining industries, businesses, and people.

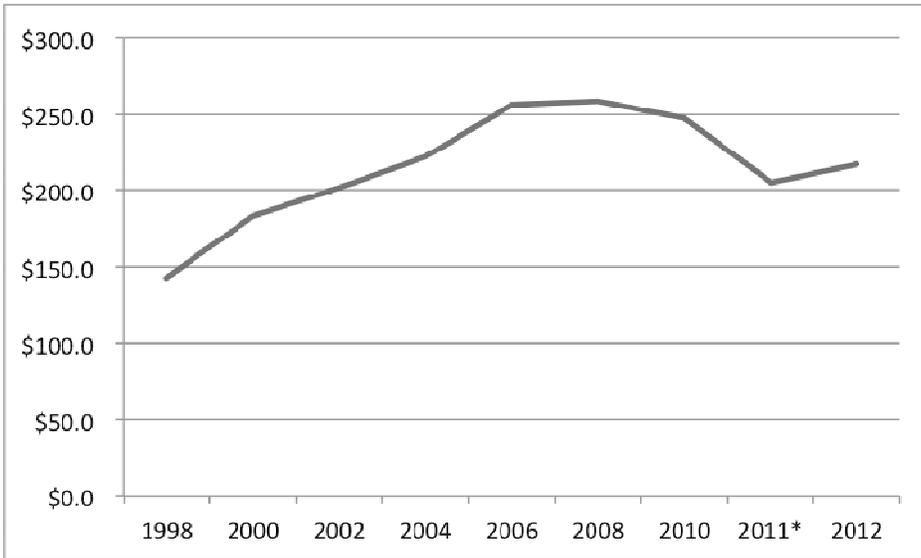
Marathon County is a “crossroads” due to north/south running I 39/US 51 and east/west running State Highway 29. These facilities are vital to our economy. By 2020, the Highway 29 expansion alone is projected to grow disposable personal income by \$312 million for the region, and it created 4,871 jobs along its corridor from 1996—2001. Efficient highway traffic is essential to the local economy as the Wisconsin Department of Transportation estimated an average of 54,900 vehicles drove daily on the busiest stretch of roadway in Marathon

County in 2010.

The county is also home to other key transportation programs. Central Wisconsin Airport is one of the state’s 8 commercial airports and is jointly owned with Portage County. Freight rail facilities run along I 39/US 51 and in the southwestern corner of the county connecting Marshfield and Spencer. Several bicycle and pedestrian routes in urban areas connect to the Mountain-Bay trail that runs from Green Bay to Rib Mountain. Finally, MetroRide provides general transit in Rothschild, Weston, Schofield, and Wausau and specialized services to eligible elderly and disabled people beyond those areas.

Funding transportation systems becomes more challenging as consumer behavior changes, construction inflation exceeds general inflation, infrastructure ages, population ages, transportation needs increase, lower fuel consumption results in decreased gas tax revenues, and state funds for transportation are diverted to general funds. Wisconsin is more challenged than other states that tap into sources such as toll ways, higher vehicle registration fees, local taxes, and vehicle-related sales tax. Marathon County saw decrease in funds in 2012, making it more difficult to invest in transportation.

**Key Measure:** Tourism Spending (in Millions) in Marathon County, 1998-2012\*



\* In 2011, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism switched to a measure of Direct Visitor Spending, resulting in what appears to be a dip in tourism dollars even though revenues related to tourism increased.

## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

In 2012, tourism was a \$16.8 billion industry for the state of Wisconsin. According to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, Wisconsin saw more than 97 million visits from travelers in 2012, who contributed \$1.3 billion in state and local tax revenues and \$977 million in federal taxes, saving the average Wisconsin family \$575 on their tax bill.

Marathon County is a strong contributor to Wisconsin's tourism economy. Up 5.9% from 2011, Marathon County was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> of Wisconsin's 72 counties for total direct visitor spending, bringing more than \$217 million of revenue to the county. This countywide spending funded 4,066 jobs in 2012, an increase of 16.5% from 2010.

Much of the growth in tourism revenues has been attributed to investments in sports tourism. Events supported or funded by the Sports Authority have contributed to a \$14.5 million increase in tourism dollars spent in the Wausau

area. Further investments—with the recently opened Wausau Curling center, the 2014 Athletic Park renovation, and the Holtz Krause Athletic complex scheduled to open in 2015—should continue this trend.



## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2012, Marathon County jumped two places to 9<sup>th</sup> of Wisconsin's 72 counties, passing Racine and Winnebago Counties, in regards to the economic impact of tourism. In 2000, Marathon County was ranked 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Marathon County saw \$217.2 million in direct visitor spending in 2012, up 5.9% from 2011.
- In 2012, tourism accounted for 4,066 jobs in Marathon County, attributing to total incomes of \$91.4 million.
- Visitor spending sustains approximately 1 in 13 jobs in the state of Wisconsin.
- Visitors to Marathon County generated \$27.6 million in state and local taxes in 2012, up 3.9% from 2011.
- Sports tourism, specifically those events funded or supported through the Sports Authority, added \$14.5 million of impact to the Wausau area.

## SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Tourism**  
The Power of Tourism  
[industry.travelwisconsin.com/The+Power+of+Tourism.aspx](http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/The+Power+of+Tourism.aspx)
- **Wausau/Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
[www.visitwausau.com/index.cfm](http://www.visitwausau.com/index.cfm)

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