

Criteria for Selecting Marathon County 2021-2024 Community Health Priorities

Adapted from Healthiest WI 2020 Mid-Course Objectives Criteria

Feasibility

- Is there sufficient community and political interest, informed by the LIFE Report, the Marathon County Comprehensive Plan, and Marathon County Strategic Plan?
- Is there capacity to address the problem/issue?
- Are current conditions conducive to achievement?
- Will efforts be sustainable?

Impact

- Will addressing the problem/issue impact large numbers of the population?
- Will addressing the problem/issue reduce costs associated with illness, injury and disability across the lifespan?
- Will addressing the problem/issue significantly decrease premature death?
- Will addressing the problem/issue improve quality of life across the lifespan?

Health Equity

- Will addressing the problem/issue address one or more health disparity? (Note: Health disparities refer to differences in the health status of different groups of people. Some groups of people have higher rates of certain diseases, and more deaths and suffering from them, compared to others. Source: Centers for Disease Control (CDC))
- Are there social and economic factors influencing the health problem/issue that can be addressed?

Measurability

- Are there reliable and valid measures for evaluating success?
- Are there existing data sources for measuring success?
- Are there opportunities to develop shared measurements?
- Do we have baseline or data available to establish a baseline?
- Can the information be easily explained or understood?

Effective Strategies

- Are there evidence based strategies or best/promising practices to address the problem/issue?
- Are there partnerships in place or able to be developed?

Timeliness

- Is the problem/issue serious?
- Is the problem/issue getting worse or more severe?

**2021-2024 Marathon County Community Health Priorities
Preliminary Selection – Top 10**

NAME: _____

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**
- 4.**
- 5.**
- 6.**
- 7.**
- 8.**
- 9.**
- 10.**
- 11.**

Why is this Important?

Marathon County has a declining **labor force**. As a result of lack of population growth combined with an already aging population, Marathon County's labor growth has also come to standstill.

Part of the challenge for Marathon County is an economy driven by the traditional industries of manufacturing and agriculture. The Wausau region was affected deeply by the Great Recession since many local manufacturers make supplies and products upstream of the real estate and construction industries, two of the hardest-hit sectors of the U.S. economy.

The County's most recent unemployment rate is under 3 percent, significantly lower than the U.S. rate of 4.2 percent and a historic low compared to the county's unemployment rate since 2007. In addition, the County's **labor participation rate** (people aged 16 and over that are working or looking for work) is 69 percent, higher than the U.S. rate of 63 percent.

Key Takeaways

Marathon County has an aging population, which has a direct impact on our workforce.

Marathon County has a **tight labor market** with historically low unemployment.

The **manufacturing industry** is a major economic driver for the Wausau region.

Unemployment in Marathon County remains at historic lows, better than the state and nation.

Unemployed Workers in Civilian Labor Force

2.4%

(October 2019)



WI Counties



WI Value

(2.8%)



Prior Value

(2.5%)



U.S. Counties



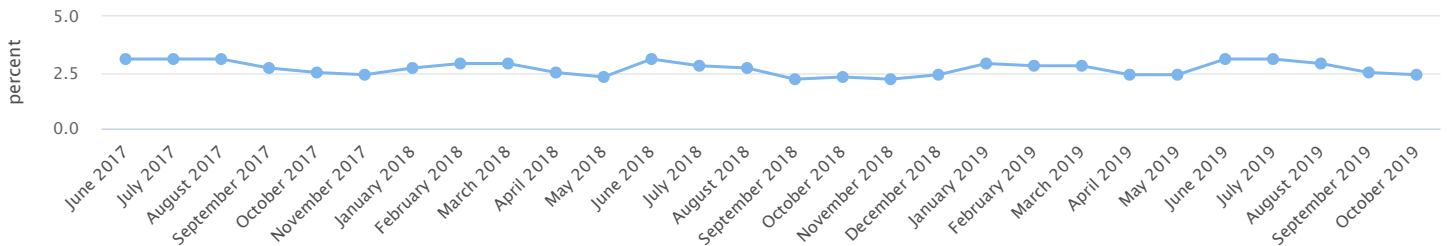
US Value

(3.3%)

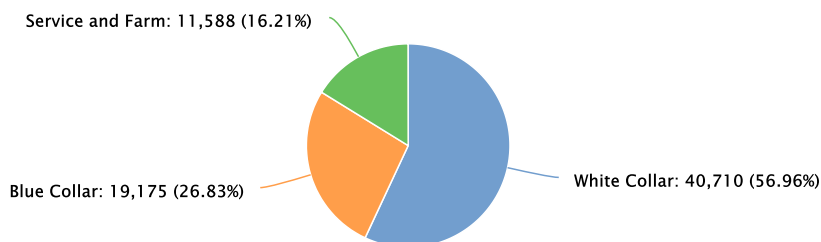


Trend

Unemployed Workers in Civilian Labor Force



Employed Civilian 16+ by Occupation Group



Why is this Important?

Marathon County's median household income, which has been increasing significantly, is \$56,509; is slightly lower than Wisconsin and the U.S.

Whether an individual or family, having a sufficient income is vitally important to support basic needs like transportation, housing, and food.

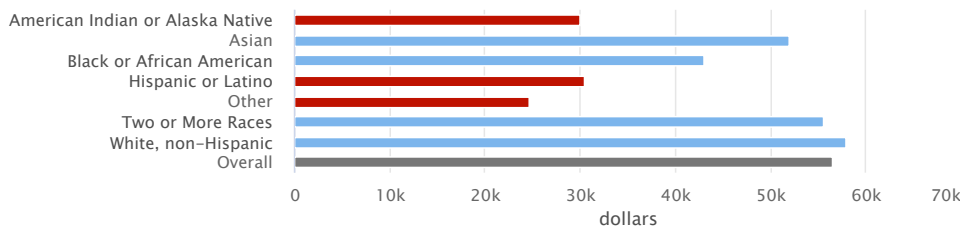
Wages and benefits are important, but encouraging local employers to provide non-traditional benefits (child care, healthcare, and retirement packages) for talent retention is also vital. Wage is one piece of the puzzle when it comes to job satisfaction, a healthy lifestyle, and work/life balance.

Key Takeaways

- Marathon County's **median household income** continues to be lower than Wisconsin and the U.S.
- Marathon County has **moderate wage levels**, often falling below national wage rates for many occupations.
- Although **women's earnings in Marathon County** are higher than Wisconsin and the U.S., they are still less than 75% of men's earnings.

Significant household income disparities exist among racial/ethnic groups in Marathon County.

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



Significantly **worse** than the overall value
 No significant difference with the overall value

Marathon County's per capita income is increasing, but continues to be lower than Wisconsin and the U.S.

Per Capita Income

\$30,151
(2013-2017)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(\$30,557)



US Value
(\$31,177)



Prior Value
(\$28,773)



Trend

Median household income varies greatly based on where you live in Marathon County.

Median Household Income

Location	Dollars
County: Marathon	\$56,509
Census Place: Elderon	\$32,353
Census Place: Birnamwood	\$38,438
Census Place: Wausau	\$40,260
Census Place: Unity	\$40,417
Census Place: Abbotsford	\$41,205
Census Place: Athens	\$42,596
Census Place: Dorchester	\$44,286
Census Place: Brokaw	\$45,000
Census Place: Colby	\$45,000
Census Place: Marshfield	\$46,978
Census Place: Spencer	\$48,600
Census Place: Schofield	\$50,159
Census Place: Stratford	\$50,750
Census Place: Fenwood	\$51,250
Census Place: Edgar	\$55,000
Census Place: Marathon City	\$58,516
Census Place: Rothschild	\$58,654
Census Place: Weston	\$60,192
Census Place: Mosinee	\$63,973
Census Place: Knowlton	\$67,857
Census Place: Hatley	\$79,531
Census Place: Kronenwetter	\$83,553
Census Place: Rib Mountain	\$84,551

Why is this Important?

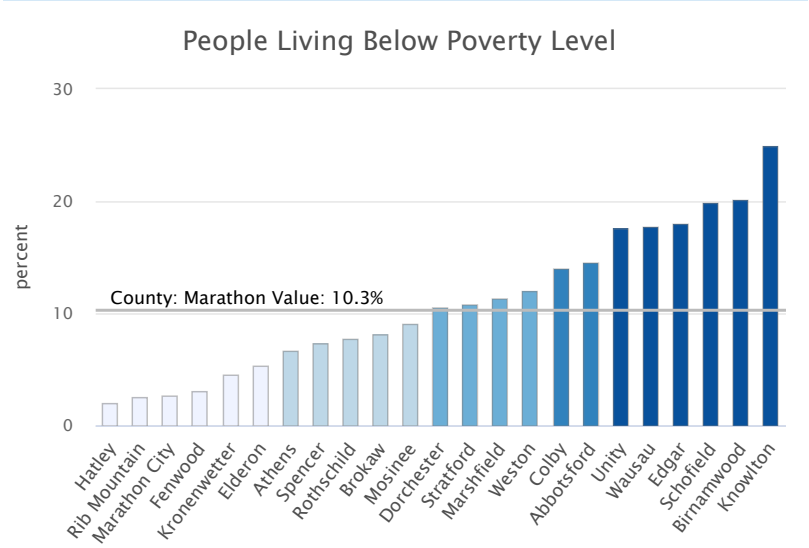
Social and economic factors are drivers of the conditions in which people live, learn, work, and play. Factors such as employment, community safety, income, housing, transportation, educational attainment, social support, and discrimination **account for roughly 40% of a person's overall health & wellbeing.**

Living wage for 1 adult with 2 children living in Marathon County is considered to be \$28.88 per hour, which is \$60,068 per year. The **average annual wage for the Wausau region** was \$44,681 in 2017, compared to the U.S. average annual wage of \$55,390.

Key Takeaways

- Poverty impacts **children, families, people age 65+, veterans, and persons with disabilities.**
- 3,069 families** and **2,217 children** are living in poverty in Marathon County.
- Marathon County has lower poverty rates than the state of Wisconsin.

Poverty varies greatly across Marathon County.

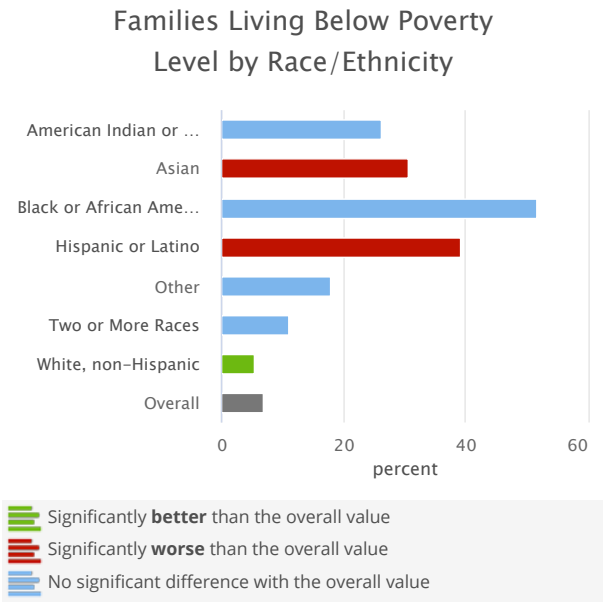


People Living Below Poverty Level

10.3%
(2013-2017)

WI Counties	U.S. Counties	WI Value (12.3%)
US Value (14.8%)	Prior Value (11.1%)	Trend

Racial and ethnic minorities are significantly more likely to live in poverty.



Children Living Below Poverty Level

14.8%
(2013-2017)

WI Counties	U.S. Counties
WI Value (16.7%)	US Value (20.3%)
Prior Value (17.0%)	Trend

Less children are living in poverty here than the rest of Wisconsin and the U.S.

Why is this Important?

Parents are often forced to stop working or are unable to look for work because they can't find child care. Affordable, quality child care programs are a critical piece of infrastructure for successful communities. A strong economy needs great child care: we can't work without it.

A goal of the Wausau Area is to attract skilled workers and talented individuals – many of which have young families. These individuals have a choice where to live and work; Marathon County needs to have accessible, affordable, quality child care programs for these young families to choose Marathon County.

The quality of care provided makes a big difference in the lives of children and families. Maintaining a safe, healthy place for children to learn and grow isn't easy. It takes hard work and dedication. **YoungStar** is designed to help child care providers succeed. The 5 Star rating system gives providers an objective measure of program quality.

Decades of research have documented the far-reaching effects of early learning and caregiving experiences. (**Child Care Aware**)

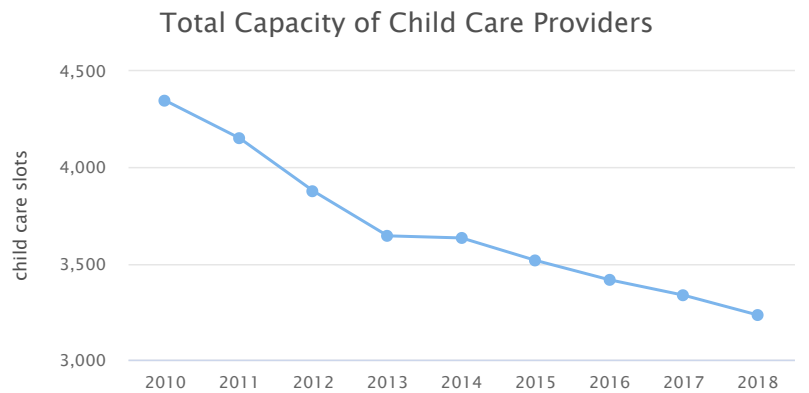
Key Takeaways

Finding affordable, quality child care has become a huge burden for some Marathon County families.

Marathon County has seen a 49% decrease in regulated child care providers since 2010. Outside investments are needed to retain providers.

45% of child care programs in Marathon County have a **YoungStar** Score of 3 stars or higher, which meets or exceeds quality standards.

The number of child care openings decreasing rapidly.



This is the total number of children that can be served by regulated child care providers in Marathon County.

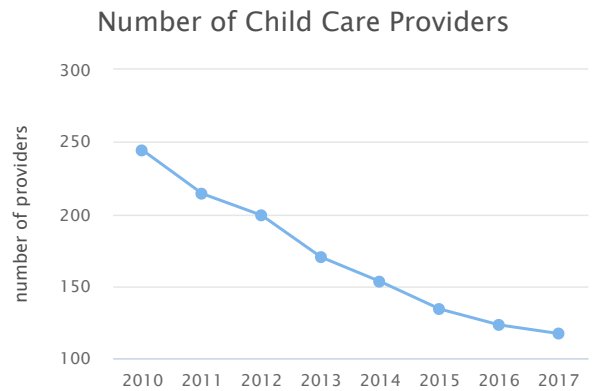
Total Capacity of Child Care Providers

3,232
Child care slots

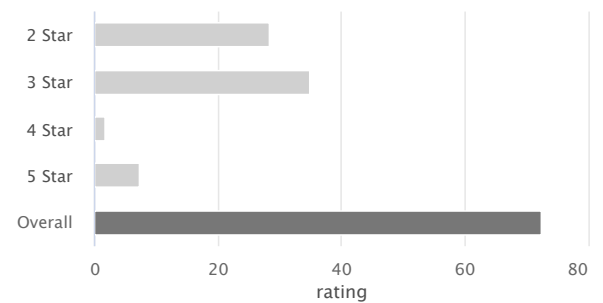
Prior Value: 4,350
Trend: Decreasing

Generated by www.healthymarathoncounty.org/pulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

Regulated child care providers have decreased significantly.



YoungStar Ratings in Marathon County by YoungStar Rating



YoungStar is a five-star quality rating system for child care providers based on education, learning environment, business methods, and practices around child health and well-being.

Why is this Important?

Child care can be a significant burden for some Marathon County families, forcing them into working an extra job, picking up more hours, or sacrificing quality child care. In Wisconsin, single parents pay 48.9% of their income for infant center-based care. Married parents with two children living in poverty pay 90.3% of their household income for center-based child care ([Child Care Aware](#)).

The average wage a child care provider earns is inadequate for the critically important work they provide. Child care is labor intensive and requires low teacher to child ratio for quality interactions. Many child care providers do not receive benefits. As a result, many choose to leave the field. Outside investment is needed to support our early childhood teachers and our children. 2,191 families and 3,535 children were served by WI Shares in Marathon County in 2018.

“Supporting families with the cost of quality preschool and child care will result in a more efficient and productive American workforce in both the short and long-term.” ([First Five Years Fund](#)) Wisconsin provides an assistance program called, Wisconsin Shares. This program supports low-income families by subsidizing a portion of the cost of child care based on income level.

[Good Start Grants](#) provided financial assistance to 111 Marathon County children in 2018 that do not qualify for WI Shares however the demand for this funding is much greater. Many families served by Good Start Grants are just over the eligibility guidelines for Wisconsin Shares, yet still cannot afford a quality child care program.

Key Takeaways

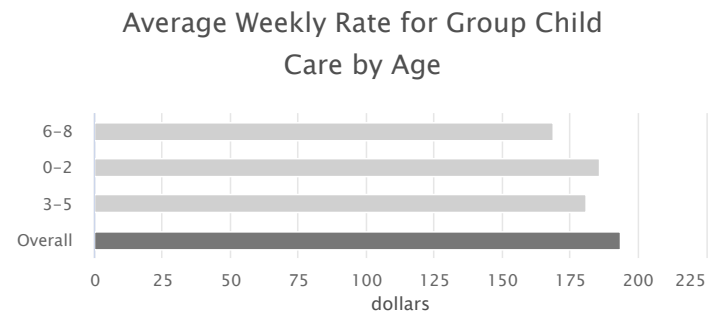
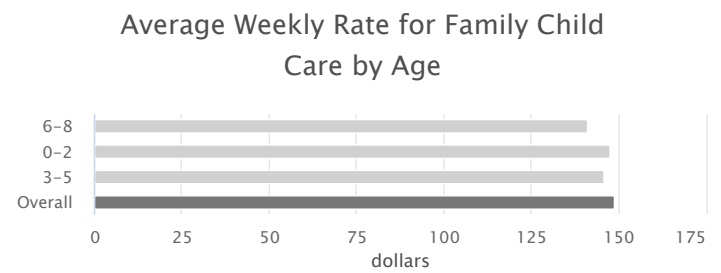
The average annual cost for full-time child care for one child is between \$7,400 - \$9,500 in Marathon County.

In 2018, 111 children were able to attend a quality child care program with the help of Good Start Grants. 73 families did not have to choose affordability over quality child care.

Child care professionals with an associate or bachelor degree make less than a typical factory worker whose job may not require higher education.

Average Wage for Child Care Teacher	Average Wage for Child Care Director
\$10.91	\$15.26
<hr/>	
Lead Cook	Factory Worker
\$12.63	\$13.23

Infant care continues to be the most expensive.



Child care is one of the largest monthly expenses for families.

Average Weekly Rate for Group Child Care	Average Weekly Rate for Family Child Care
\$193.74	\$149.09

Why is this Important?

Access to higher education in Central Wisconsin is better than it's ever been. Barriers to higher education have been greatly reduced with more young people getting degrees than previous generations. Higher education institutions have improved accessibility for all aspiring students, from earning dual credits in high school to obtaining a bachelor's degree online.

The majority of industry sectors, including manufacturing and health care, face shortages of skilled workers in Marathon County, across the state, and nationwide. Colleges have responded by focusing efforts to increase opportunities for individuals to obtain post-secondary credentials to fill job demand. High school dual credit and Youth Apprenticeship, adult credit for prior learning, apprenticeships, stackable credentials, and articulation agreements with 4-year universities are strategies colleges are using to increase the pool of skilled workers, and to support students to advance their educational or employment pathway.

Key Takeaways

Marathon County has relatively **low higher education attainment**, which impacts our workforce.

Marathon County has significantly fewer professionals with Bachelor's Degree or higher than both Wisconsin and the U.S.

People 25+ with a High School Degree or Higher

91.8%
(2013-2017)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(91.7%)



US Value
(87.3%)

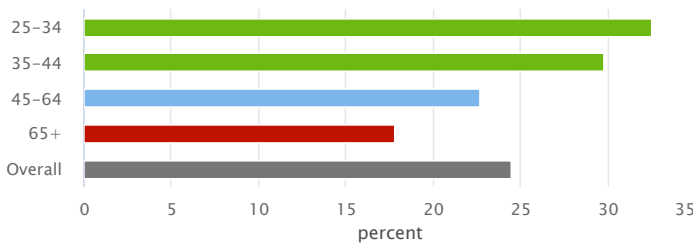


Prior Value
(91.1%)



Trend

People 25+ with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Age



- Significantly **better** than the overall value
- Significantly **worse** than the overall value
- No significant difference with the overall value

People 25+ with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

24.5%
(2013-2017)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(29.0%)



US Value
(30.9%)

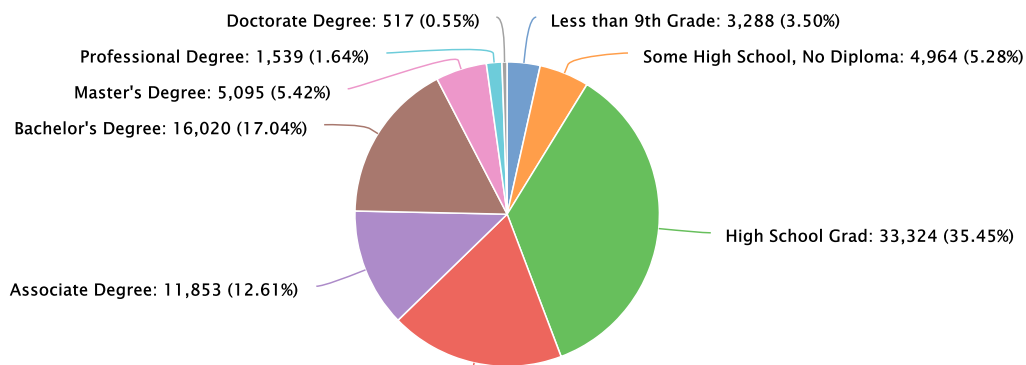


Prior Value
(23.9%)



Trend

Population 25+ by Educational Attainment



ENERGY CONSERVATION & GENERATION

Indicator 14

Why is this Important?

Energy such as electricity is a key requirement in our life that supports productivity, safety, convenience, and comfort. Energy is also vital to continuing our economic growth, creating jobs, and attracting businesses, industries and other employers that make Marathon County a desirable place to live.

Focus on Energy, a program coordinated by the State of Wisconsin with utility providers, offers statewide energy conservation and renewable energy programs for residents and businesses. These programs provide financial incentives, education and consultative services to encourage and implement projects such as appliance recycling, lighting upgrades, and installation of energy efficient equipment and renewable energy. The continued support of Focus on Energy helps increase energy efficiency at homes and businesses and diversify sources of energy production.

Marathon County government has also implemented a significant number of energy conservation and efficiency projects in their various departmental buildings and facilities. The energy efficiency improvement measures helped keep the county utility budget steady in terms of electricity and natural gas usage between 2008 and 2018.

Key Takeaways

In 2018, about 3884 residential participants in Marathon County saved about \$213,309 in their energy bills through Focus on Energy programs. Only 7.3% of Marathon county residents participated in the program.

Most of the electricity generated in Marathon County comes primarily from fossil fuels such as coal (1,027 megawatt (MW)) and natural gas (81 MW) and fuel oil (1.3 MW).

Until mid-year 2017, Marathon County residents, schools and businesses installed and completed 47 Solar photovoltaic (total 237 KW), 3 Wind (140 KW) and 2 Solar thermal renewable energy projects.

Number of Residents Receiving Focus on Energy Incentives

3,884

Number of Residents
(2018)



Prior Value
(4,019)



Trend

Number of Residents Receiving Focus on Energy Incentives



Generated by www.healthymarathoncounty.org on January 8, 2020.

Energy Bill Savings for Focus on Energy Participants

\$55

(2018)

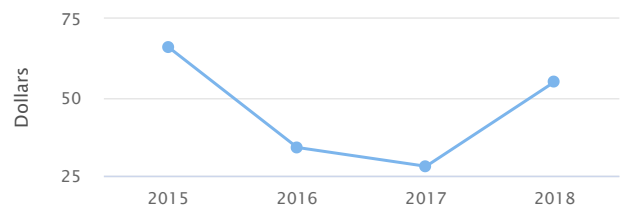


Prior Value
(\$28)



Trend

Energy Bill Savings for Focus on Energy Participants



Types of Fuel Used in Electricity Generation in Marathon County

Types of fuel	Capacity (Megawatt)
Coal	1,027
Hydro	16.4
BioMass	50
BioGas	.8
Fuel Oil	1.3
Natural Gas	81
Solar	<1
Wind	<.5

Why is this Important?

Hunger continues to be a significant issue within Marathon County. Keeping our community healthy and fed remains an important goal of the organizations that assist with this issue. In recent years, two definite segments of the population have shown an increase in need, these being students of all ages and our ever increasing senior population.

In Marathon County the utilization of free and reduced lunches range from 13.08% usage to 81.34% usage. Over 2/3 of the schools in Marathon County have at least 25% usage of this program. All schools are seeing the hunger needs of students increasing and are opening food pantries within schools to assist with meeting this need.

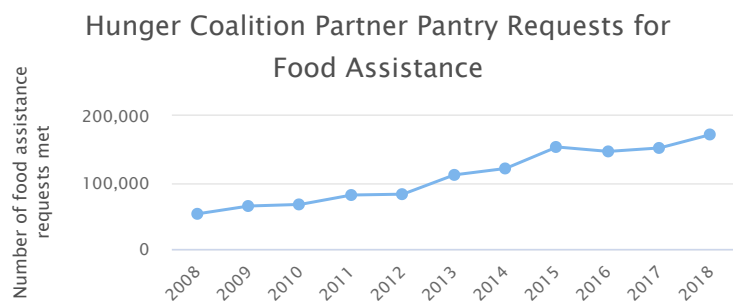
Our senior population continues to grow daily, with one in every five individuals over the age of sixty and an additional 12,000 more turning sixty each day within the United States. One in four seniors live alone with nearly 9 million seniors in the United States facing the threat of hunger. Food pantries within Marathon County are seeing an increased usage of seniors accessing their pantries, knowing there are many more that are incapable of accessing services due to transportation issues or basic pride.

Key Takeaways

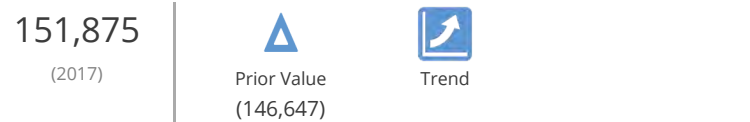
In Wisconsin, one in ten individuals struggle with hunger, and of these, one in six are children.

Pantry hours and lack of transportation limits the ability for some individuals to access these services. Some pantries are assisting with this issue by allowing a 3rd party to access services for those in need.

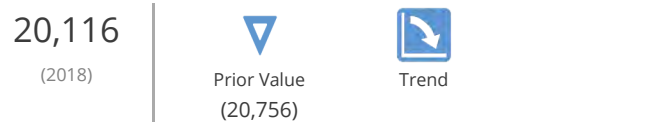
Larger pantries are located within the Wausau metro area while many of the outlying smaller communities provide pantry services within their communities.



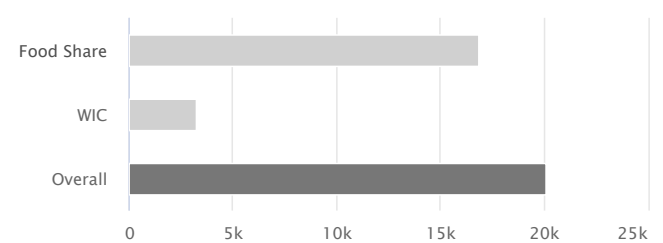
Requests for Food Assistance Met



Number of Individuals Served Through Food Assistance



Number of Individuals Served Through Food Assistance by Type of Food Assistance



LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

LIFE Survey respondents reported that 15% skipped one or more meals to save money in the past year.

7% of LIFE Survey respondents reported using a food pantry and/or eating at a free community meal in the past year.

Why is this Important?

According to national guidelines, a family should spend less than 30% of their income on housing for it to be considered affordable. Housing assistance is needed for community members whose income and earnings make housing unaffordable.

Per the Marathon County Housing Availability and Affordability Study, a person's annual income must be at least \$24,120 to be able to afford a one bedroom unit. When you move up to a four bedroom unit the family needs to be earning at least \$46,240.

There are resources available to assist with housing cost, but the needs continue to outweigh the available resources. Public Housing and Section 8 wait lists, the limitations of both Section 8 voucher funds and emergency housing funds, and limited resources of individuals all factor into a less than ideal situation for those needing housing assistance.

The Housing and Homelessness Coalition focuses on increasing the amount of quality, affordable housing in Marathon County.

Key Takeaways

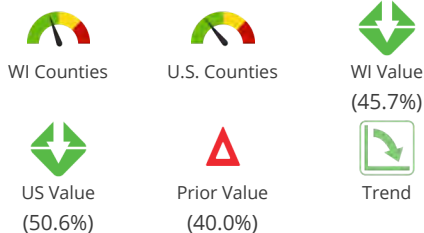
In 2018 there were 2742 request for housing assistance through United Way's 211. 321 of those requests resulted in an unmet need.

The Wausau Community Development Authority is currently utilizing 250 of their 435 vouchers based on current funding allocation. The average unit cost per voucher is based on family size and other factors, with the recipient paying the balance of the rent.

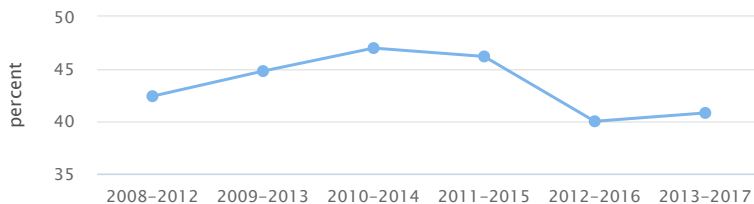
100 families are currently on the Section 8 wait list. Families can only be added to the wait list when it is officially open. There is usually between 250 to 400 applications received at the time the wait list is opened.

Renters Spending 30% or More of Household Income on Rent

40.8%
(2013-2017)



Renters Spending 30% or More of Household Income on Rent



Number of Households Receiving Emergency Housing Assistance Funds (EHAF)



Average monthly rents for home/apartments in Marathon County.

Type of Apartment	Monthly Rent
Overall Average Rent	\$1,034
Studio Apartment	\$497
1 Bedroom	\$605
2 Bedroom	\$774
3 Bedroom	\$970
4 Bedroom	\$1,178

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

49% of LIFE Survey respondents state they spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

The number of individuals spending more than 30% of their income on housing has increased by 3% since the 2017 survey.

40% of LIFE Survey respondents state they do not have 3 months of savings to cover their expenses in the event of an emergency.

Why is this Important?

Homelessness can be caused by life experiences such as job loss, domestic violence, unexpected medical bills, inability to pay rent, or impairments such as depression, untreated mental illness, physical disabilities, alcohol/drug abuse or PTSD. Homelessness includes those individuals/families in shelters, unsheltered (non-traditional housing), couch surfing and motel stays funded by local programs. For those living in poverty or close to the poverty line, an “everyday” life issue can be the final factor in placing them on the street.

Homelessness affects many families with children. This causes school attendance to drop and the performance of the student can be affected due to the unstable housing environment.

Marathon County has a limited number of shelter facilities to house the homeless. In Wausau there is only one family unit available. The number of lodging nights and length of stays remain high as options for quality, affordable housing is limited.

The Housing and Homelessness Coalition continues working on the many issues of homelessness and looks at new innovative programs to address these needs with the goal of eradicating homelessness in Marathon County.

Key Takeaways

Seven families were turned away from the Salvation Army Shelter in December of 2018 as there was no available family unit to house them in.

Point-in-time homeless street counts increased to 194 individuals in 2018. Of these, 28 individuals were living in places not meant for human habitation.

Individuals are staying longer in shelters, with the average stay being 41.7 nights.

Number of Individuals Sheltered

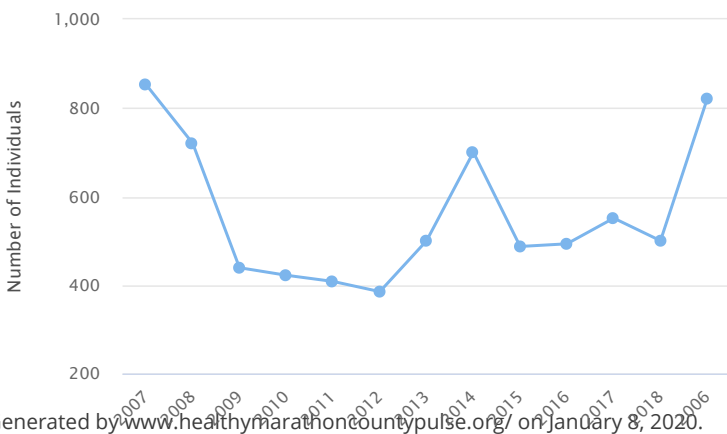
500.0
Number of
Individuals
(2018)

▼
Prior Value
(551.0)



Trend

Number of Individuals Sheltered



Average Number of Nights Sheltered

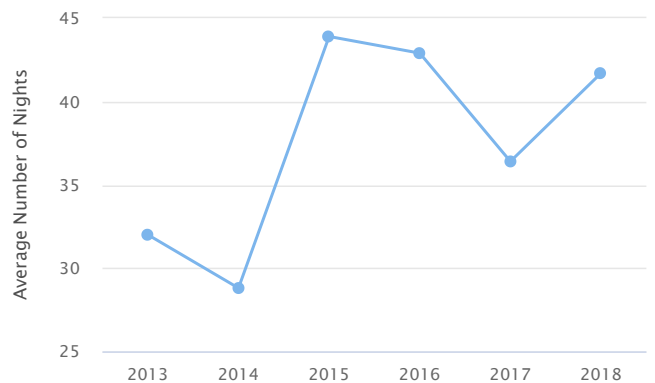
41.7
Average
Number of
Nights
(2018)

▲
Prior Value
(36.4)



Trend

Average Number of Nights Sheltered



Number of Lodging Nights

135
Number of
Nights
(2018)

▲
Prior Value
(73)

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

8% of LIFE Survey respondents state they missed paying their rent one or more months in the past year.

Why is this Important?

As the aging population in Marathon County continues to grow, available housing options need to be considered. Nursing homes are no longer the only option available, and today's trends show that aging adults are staying in other housing options for most, if not all, of their lives. Examples of physical locations that are being utilized are: their own home or apartment with or without supportive assistance, subsidized/accessible apartments, adult children's homes, and various levels of assisted living.

Two important factors come to play in allowing an older adult the choice as to where they want to live. These are their finances and the availability of quality caregiver support. If an individual does not have the private funds to insure their choice of living situation, Medicaid funds are available to assist with helping to keep individual out of costly nursing home situations.

There is a consistent lack of paid caregivers in Marathon County and Wisconsin. Individuals that could privately pay for services to come into their own living situation or perhaps are enrolled in a Medicaid program to bring in the services are simply running out of options because there is no one to hire. Assisted living facilities as well as nursing homes are having this very same struggle.

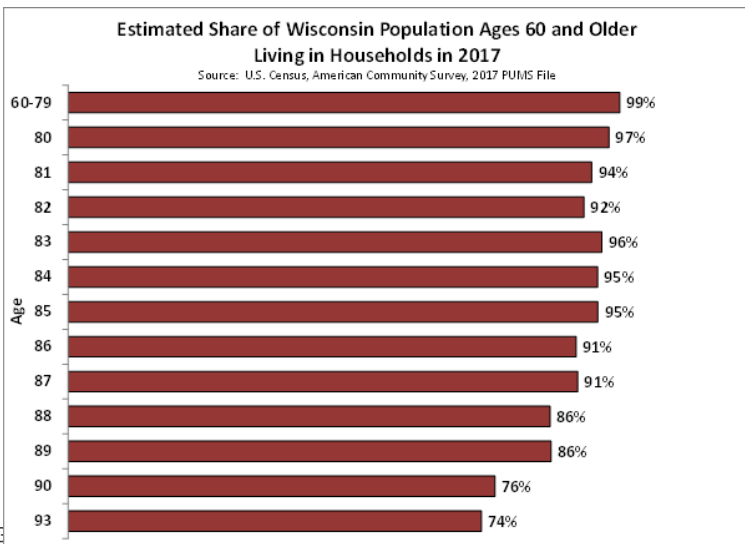
Key Takeaways

By 2040, the percent of population in Marathon County that is anticipated to be 60 or older will be 29.2%.

In Wisconsin if all current caregiver positions are fully staffed, it's projected that there will be a 30% increase in the number of caregivers needed by 2026.

Job titles vary for caregivers: Certified Nursing Assistant, Home Care Aide, Home Health Care Providers, Medication Aide, Patient Care Assistant, Resident Care Assistant, Personal Care Assistant.

Caregivers | 91% are female, 41% are under the age of 29, 50% work less than 36 hours per week, the average wage is \$12.60 for Home Health Aides and \$13.30 for Nursing Assistants.



Population Over Age 65

17.7%
(2018)



WI Value
(17.0%)



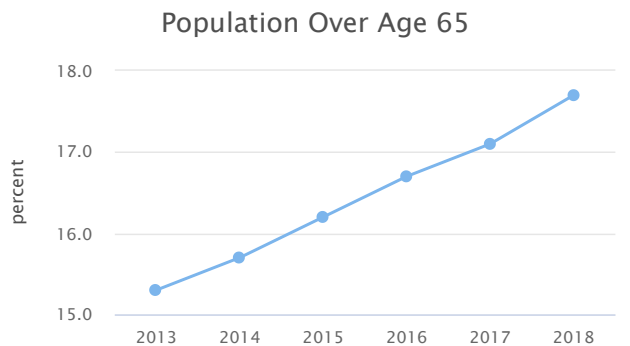
US Value
(16.0%)



Prior Value
(17.1%)



Trend



LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

22.15% of LIFE survey respondents are concerned about the availability of elder care. 32.53% of the responses were unsure of this topic.

In 2013 the satisfaction rate of individuals responding regarding elder care was 66%, in 2019 it has dropped to 45%.

Why is this Important?

When individuals and families are able to meet their basic needs, they are more likely to work towards and maintain financial stability. They are also more likely to be able to focus on improving their overall wellbeing. However, when people's basic needs are not met, challenges can arise related to housing instability and homelessness, food insecurity, inadequate clothing for different types of climate, and isolation. Stable and safe housing, food security, proper clothing, and access to transportation are interconnected. For example, in order to be able to afford proper clothing, a home, and an adequate supply of food, individuals and families need to have a form of transportation to get to a job that pays a living wage. Communities can help close basic needs gaps by working together to connect individuals and families to the support they need, and explore ways to increase access to, and availability of, services.

Key Takeaways

In 2016, 872,561 households, or 37.5% of households, in Wisconsin could not afford basic needs such as housing, childcare, food, transportation, and health care.

In 2018, 37% of Marathon County requests to United Way's 211 were for basic needs assistance, such as housing, food, utility assistance, clothing, and transportation.

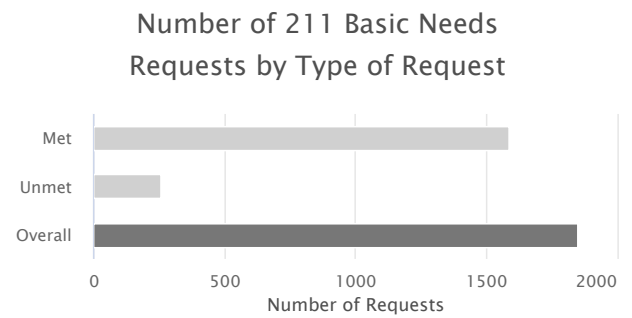
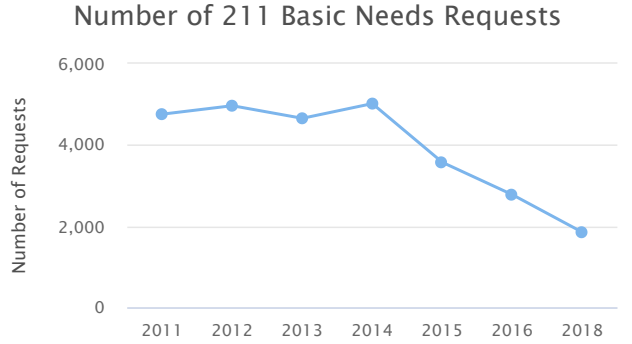
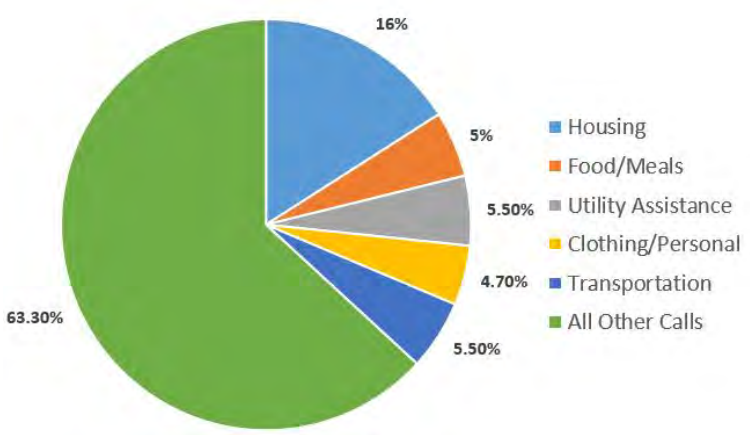
In 2018, United Way's 211 connected people to basic needs services meeting 86% of total requests from Marathon County residents.

Number of 211 Basic Needs Requests

1,849
Number of Requests
(2018)

▼
Prior Value
(2,774)

↩
Trend



LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

49% of LIFE Survey respondents indicate they spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

17.8% of LIFE Survey respondents experience transportation challenges, which includes not having a car or a reliable car, unable to drive, and not having access to public transit.

19.2% of LIFE Survey respondents indicate that they are dissatisfied with their jobs because of low wages.

21.48% of LIFE Survey respondents have household income between \$25,000 and \$49,999.

Why is this Important?

Overall, Marathon County is doing well compared to Wisconsin counties in terms of life expectancy and premature death, however there are several causes of death that are significantly higher in Marathon County. **Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, and falls** are causes of death that are impacting Marathon County at greater rates than the rest of Wisconsin and the U.S.

Premature Death shows the Years of Potential Life Lost before age 75 per 100,000 population. Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL) is an estimate of premature mortality. It represents the number of years a person would have lived if he or she had not died before the predetermined age of 75 years. This measure of mortality is important to help understand the leading causes of premature deaths.

Key Takeaways

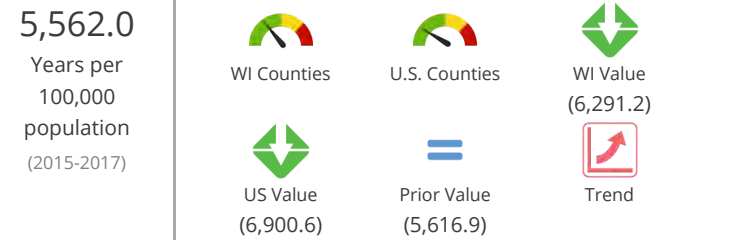
Marathon County is ranked 18th out of Wisconsin's 72 counties for overall length of life.

Marathon County's life expectancy is greater than that of Wisconsin and the U.S.

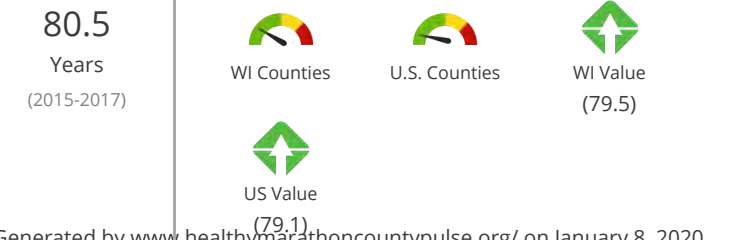
Marathon County's **age-adjusted death rate due to Cancer** was significantly lower than Wisconsin and the U.S.

Premature death is lower in Marathon County than Wisconsin and the U.S.

Premature Death



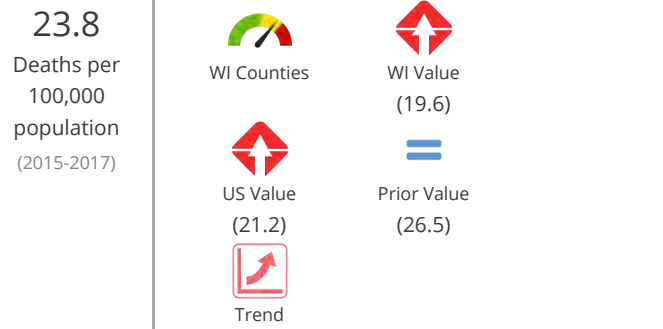
Life Expectancy



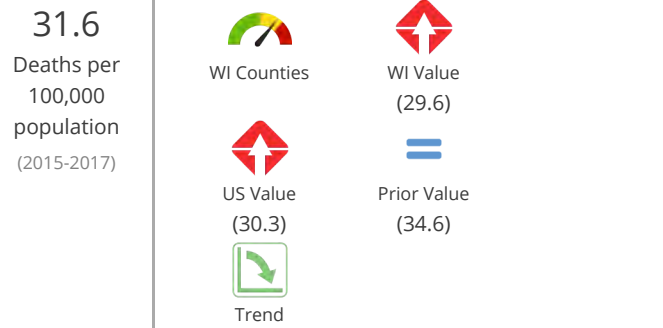
Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

Several death rates in Marathon County were significantly higher than Wisconsin and the U.S.

Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Diabetes



Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Alzheimer's Disease



[View all Age-Adjusted Death Rates for Marathon County](#)

Why is this Important?

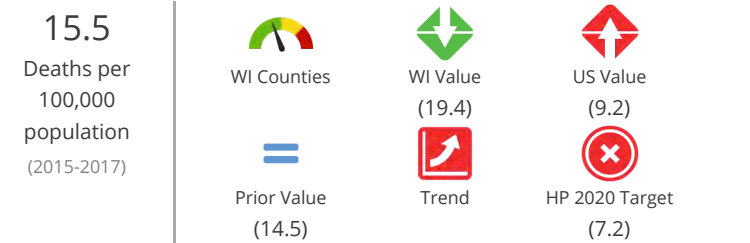
Unintentional injuries are a leading cause of death for Americans of all ages and accounted for 93 deaths in Marathon County in 2017. In Marathon County, falls are the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death, emergency department visits, and inpatient hospitalizations. Fall-related injuries disproportionately impact older adults. For adults 65 and older, falls are the leading cause of emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

Marathon County has experienced an increase in deaths due to unintentional poisoning, which is the unintentional harm to oneself as a result of consuming drugs or chemicals in excessive amounts. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, unintentional poisonings are largely due to drug overdoses, which commonly involve prescription pain medications.

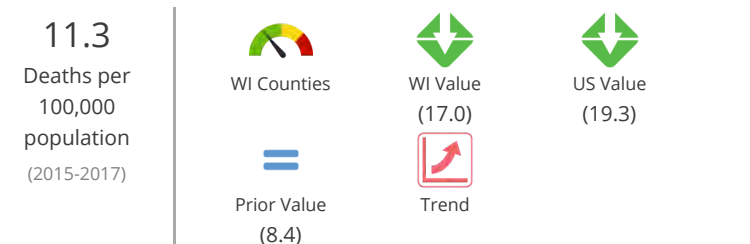
Key Takeaways

- Unintentional injury death rates in Marathon County are lower than the state and nation, but have increased significantly.
- Falls continue to be the leading cause of injury-related death in Marathon County.
- Nearly all unintentional poisoning deaths in the United States are attributed to the abuse of prescription and illegal drugs.

Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Falls

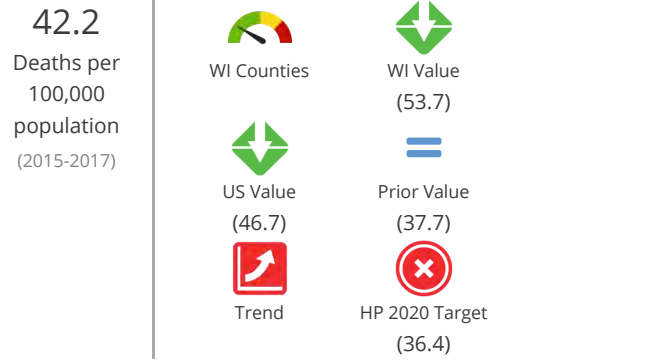


Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Unintentional Poisonings

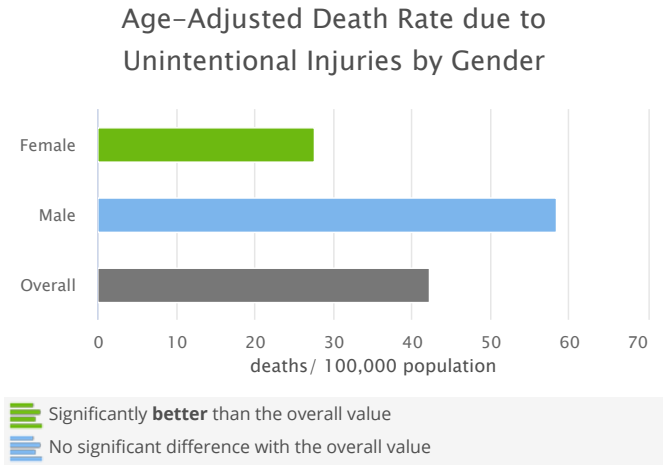


Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Unintentional Injuries



Men are more likely to die from unintentional injuries.



Why is this Important?

The quality and accessibility of clinical care impacts the health of a community. People with access to high-quality care are more likely to receive effective treatment for their conditions and enjoy better health. The vast majority of Marathon County residents have health insurance coverage whether through private or public sources, but gaps still exist for children and adults. Marathon County is resource-rich when it comes to access to quality health care, but according to the 2019 LIFE survey, 36% of residents reported not going to the doctor when they should have. The top responses were they couldn't afford it, chose not to, or didn't have insurance. With many private health insurance plans moving to high deductible plans, many individuals are faced with a difficult choice between medical care and high costs.

Key Takeaways

Marathon County is ranked 14th out of Wisconsin's 72 counties for clinical care.

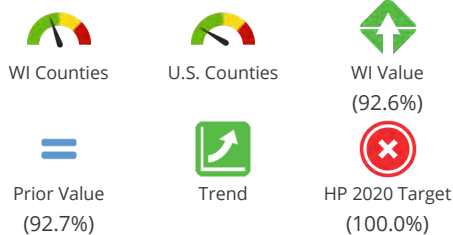
Marathon County's life expectancy is greater than that of Wisconsin and the U.S.

Marathon County's **age-adjusted death rate to due Cancer** was significantly lower than Wisconsin and the U.S.

The majority of Marathon County adults have health insurance coverage.

Adults with Health Insurance: 18-64

92.8%
(2017)



Children with health insurance is lower than the state and nation.

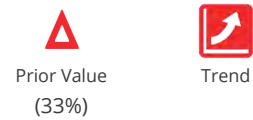
Children with Health Insurance

93.2%
(2017)

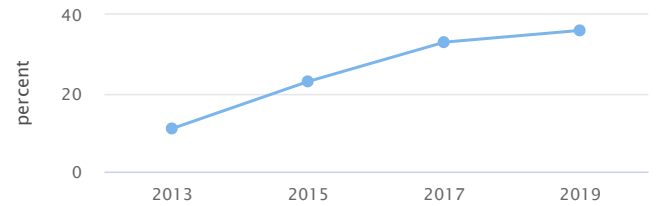


Marathon County Residents That Didn't Go to the Doctor

36%
(2019)



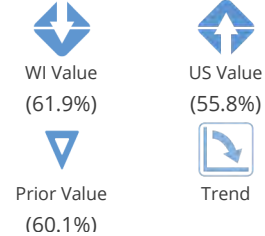
Marathon County Residents That Didn't Go to the Doctor



The percentage of LIFE Survey respondents that reported they or someone in their family should have seen a doctor, but did not has been increasing.

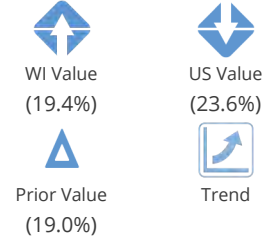
Persons with Private Health Insurance Only

59.7%
(2017)



Persons with Public Health Insurance Only

19.5%
(2017)



PREVENTIVE CLINICAL CARE & HOSPITALIZATIONS

Indicator 24

Why is this Important?

The measure of preventable hospitalizations in a community indicates the quality and accessibility of primary health care services. If the access and quality of care in the outpatient setting is poor, people may be more likely to overuse the hospital as a main source of care and be hospitalized unnecessarily. An area with a higher density of primary care providers usually has lower rates of hospitalization for ambulatory care-sensitive conditions. If access to high quality primary care is increased, a community may be able to reduce its preventable hospitalizations.

In Marathon County, rates of some **chronic disease conditions in the Medicare population (age 65+)** are significantly higher than the state of Wisconsin and U.S. Chronic kidney disease, depression, hyperlipidemia, and osteoporosis are all higher rates in Marathon County.

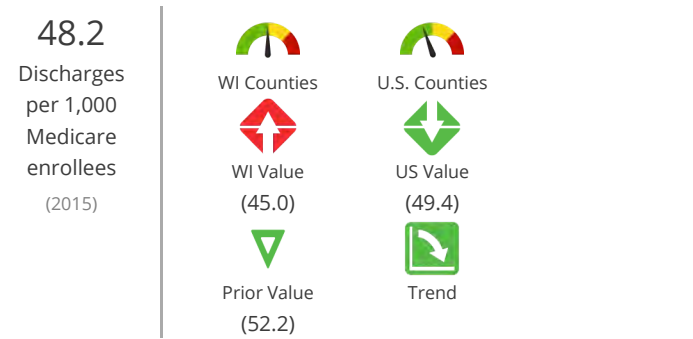
Key Takeaways

Marathon County is ranked **14th** out of Wisconsin's 72 counties for clinical care.

Marathon County's **age-adjusted death rate due to Cancer** was significantly lower than Wisconsin and the U.S.

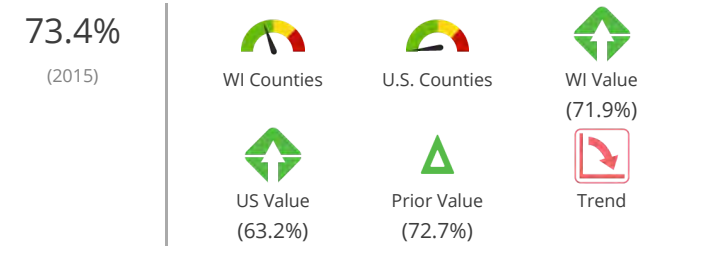
Preventable hospital stays are higher in Marathon County than the rest of Wisconsin.

Preventable Hospital Stays: Medicare Population

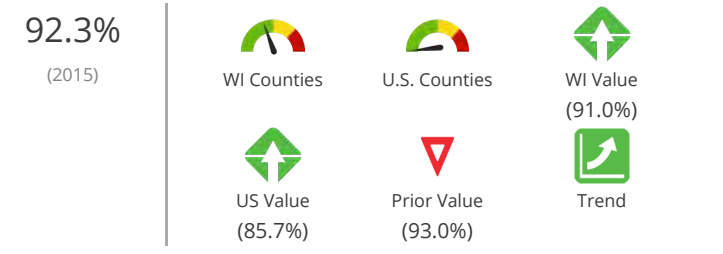


Preventive screening rates are higher in Marathon County than Wisconsin and the U.S.

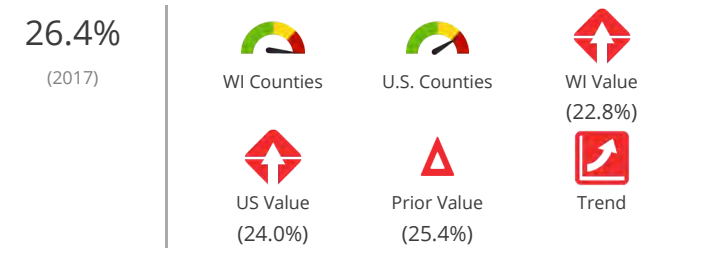
Mammography Screening: Medicare Population



Diabetic Monitoring: Medicare Population



Chronic Kidney Disease: Medicare Population



Why is this Important?

Poor oral health can lead to poor overall health of the body. Oral health affects our ability to speak, smile, eat, and show emotions. Oral diseases—such as cavities, gum disease, and oral cancer—cause pain and disability to millions of Americans each year and costs billions of dollars to treat annually. Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic diseases in the United States. Receiving regular dental care is important for all. Even baby teeth need proper care to prevent cavities from forming.

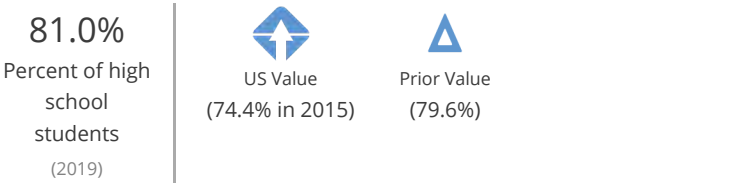
While Marathon County currently has an adequate dental provider rate, this could be impacted in the coming year by the national reset of Health Provider Service Area (HPSA) scores. The new scores will affect the ability of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to offer loan forgiveness programs, which boosts recruitment and retention of dentists.

A key strategy that is very cost effective in preventing tooth decay is community water fluoridation. Currently 92% of Marathon County residents on a public water system have optimal levels of fluoridation.

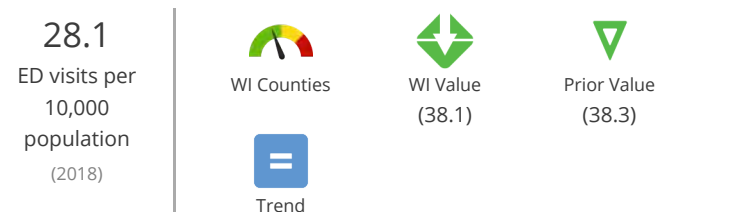
Key Takeaways

- There is currently an adequate dentist rate in Marathon County.
- A majority of Marathon County residents have access to a fluoridated water system.
- School-based oral health programs are effective in youth prevention of dental caries and negative health outcomes.

Teens Who Saw a Dentist (High School)

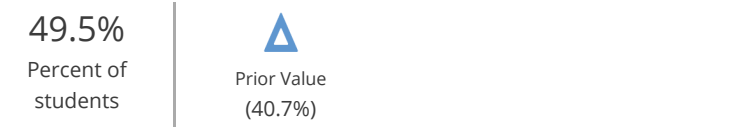


Non-Traumatic Oral Health Emergency Department Visit Rate



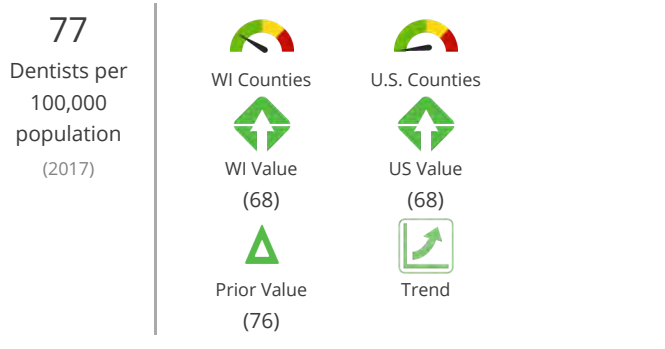
The percentage of students served by Bridging Brighter Smiles that were referred to a dentist for treatment.

Students Referred to a Dentist for Treatment

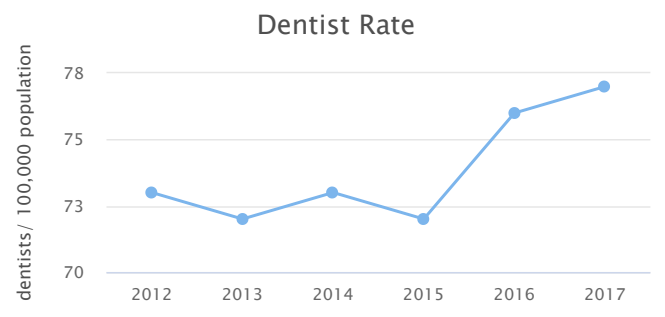


Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

Dentist Rate



Access to dental care is adequate in Marathon County.



LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

- 35% of residents** that needed to go to the dentist didn't go.
- 18% of residents who did not go to the dentist when they needed to could not afford it and 7% did not have insurance.
- 6% of residents who did not go to the dentist when they needed to chose not to go.

Why is this Important?

A communicable disease is a disease that can be spread from person to person. Communicable diseases impacting Marathon County include sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis C, tuberculosis, pertussis, and tickborne, foodborne, and waterborne diseases.

The number of sexually transmitted gonorrhea cases have increased significantly within the past two years in Marathon County as well as the state and nation. It is important for medical providers to follow the recommended treatment protocol because gonorrhea can become resistant to treatment. Chlamydia continues to be the most prevalent communicable disease in Marathon County, as well as Wisconsin and the United States. It often has no symptoms so it is important for people to be tested as it could cause damage to your reproductive system and be spread without knowing.

Hepatitis C is most often spread through injection drug use in Marathon County. Most people who have this virus develop a chronic, lifelong infection that can cause serious health problems of the liver.

Key Takeaways

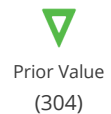
The number of Gonorrhea cases are increasing significantly in Marathon County.

Chlamydia has consistently been the most prevalent communicable disease in Marathon County.

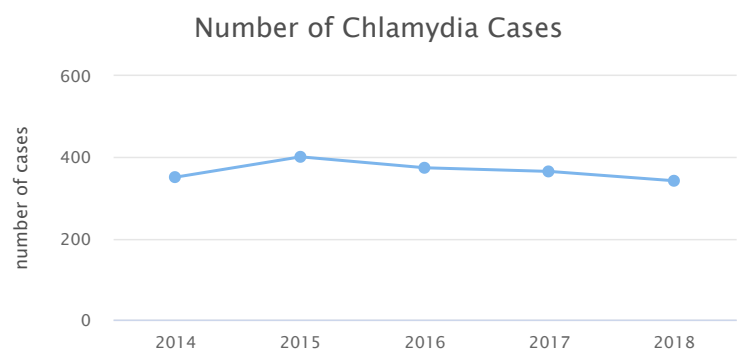
Most Hepatitis C cases can be attributed to injection drug use.

Chlamydia Incidence Rate

286
Cases per
100,000
population
(2016)

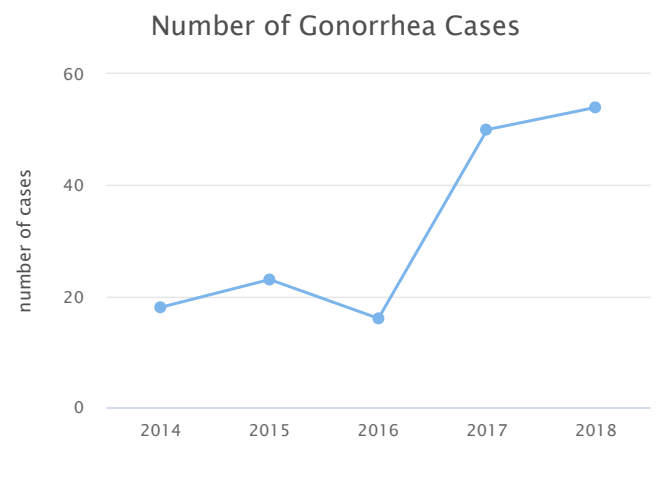


Chlamydia cases are steady in Marathon County, remaining lower than the state and nation.



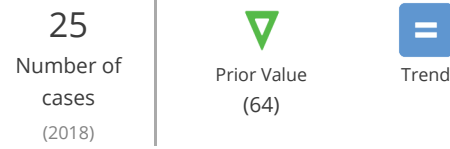
Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

Gonorrhea has increased significantly.



Hepatitis B & C cases have remained steady.

Number of Hepatitis C Cases



Number of Hepatitis B Cases



Why is this Important?

Immunizations continue to be one of the most effective ways to prevent communicable disease. On-time vaccination throughout childhood is essential because it helps provide immunity before children are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. Vaccines are tested to ensure they are safe and effective for children to receive at the recommended ages. Repeated scientific studies have shown no link between childhood vaccines and autism or other neurologic problems.

If community immunization rates are high (90-95%), it creates what is called “herd immunity” which protects individuals who are unable to be vaccinated and those with compromised immune systems. When the immunization rate of a population decreases, it causes the entire community to be more susceptible to the diseases vaccines prevent. Marathon County has a higher immunization rate than most surrounding counties. A higher immunization rate regionally would better protect the residents of Marathon County and surrounding counties.

Waivers that allow students to attend school without vaccines due to religious or personal convictions have continued to increase statewide, with four times more waivers now than 20 years ago. A majority of the waivers are for personal convictions, fewer for religious beliefs.

Key Takeaways

Children with up-to-date immunizations at age 2 is being maintained and not decreasing.


Marathon County has a higher immunization rate at age 2 than surrounding counties.

Personal conviction waivers allowing children to attend school without being immunized are increasing statewide.

Childhood Immunization Rate (by 24 months of age)

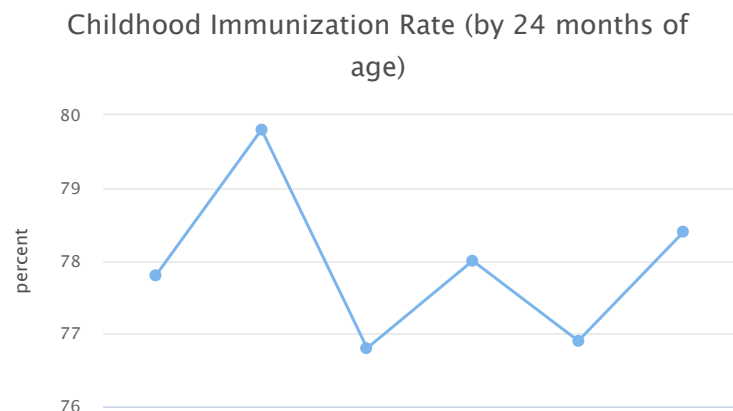
78.4%
(2018)

 WI Value
(72.93% in 2017)

 Prior Value
(76.9%)

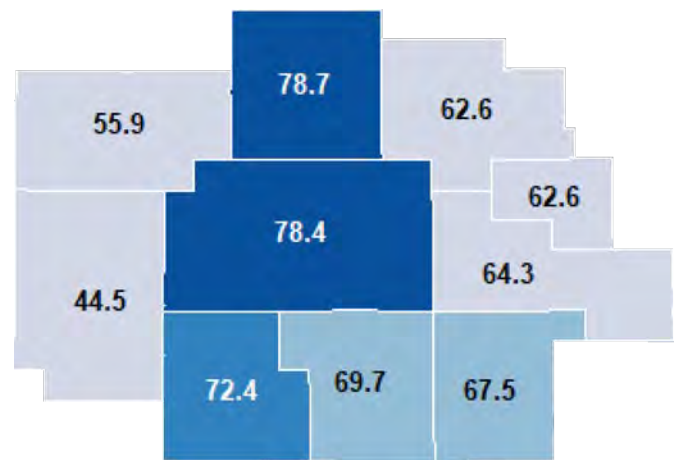
 Trend

Most Marathon County 2 year olds are up-to-date with vaccines.



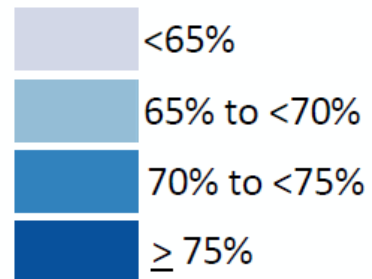
Generated by www.healthymarathoncounty.org on January 8, 2020.

Marathon County has more children with up-to-date vaccines at age two than most surrounding counties.



2018

% up-to-date



Why is this Important?

The health and well-being of infants is a key indicator for the health of a community. Infants with poor birth outcomes are at increased risk for health problems later in life. Accessing regular prenatal care beginning early in the first trimester of pregnancy increases the likelihood babies will be born at a healthy weight. Mothers age 18-19 or who are Laotian/Hmong are significantly less likely to receive prenatal care when compared to other ages or ethnic groups.

Nicotine negatively affects fetal development. Smoking tobacco or vaping nicotine products of any kind during pregnancy can increase the likelihood of a baby with underdeveloped lungs and low birth weight. It is estimated that use of these products while pregnant causes up to ten percent of all infant deaths. The most important things a mother can do to prevent prematurity and low birth weight are to take prenatal vitamins, stop tobacco and nicotine use, stop drinking alcohol and using drugs, and getting prenatal care. The smoking rate during pregnancy is decreasing, but mothers younger than age 25 are smoking at a higher rate during pregnancy than other age groups. There has been a decrease in teen pregnancy over the past several years.

Currently, there are not significant disparities in babies with low birth weight by maternal age or race of the mother in Marathon County. Overall, Marathon County has better birth outcomes when compared to state and national rates.

Key Takeaways

- Access to early prenatal care is critical for the health of babies.
- Tobacco use during pregnancy is more common in mothers under age 25.
- Marathon County has better birth outcomes that state and national comparisons, with decreases in teen pregnancy, low birth weight babies, and infant mortality.

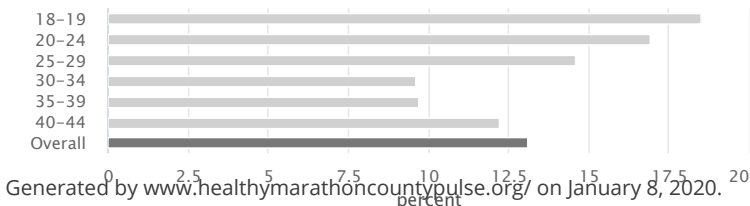
Mothers who Smoked During Pregnancy

13.1%
(2017)



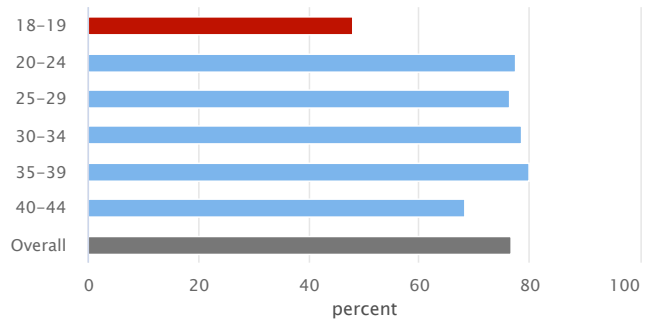
Younger mothers are more likely to smoke during pregnancy.

Mothers who Smoked During Pregnancy by Maternal Age



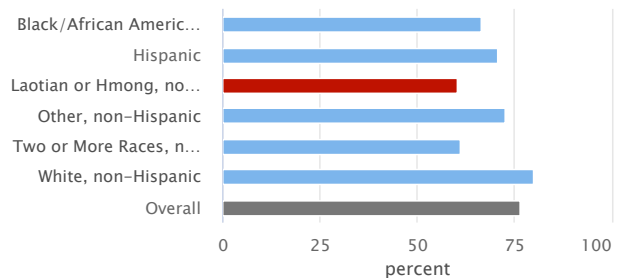
Young mothers and those who are Laotian/Hmong are less likely to start early prenatal care.

Mothers who Received Early Prenatal Care by Maternal Age



Red bar: Significantly worse than the overall value
Blue bar: No significant difference with the overall value

Mothers who Received Early Prenatal Care by Maternal Race/Ethnicity



Red bar: Significantly worse than the overall value
Blue bar: No significant difference with the overall value

Why is this Important?

Infant mortality is one of the most widely used indicators of the overall health status of a community. Infant mortality is the death of a baby within the first year of life. The infant mortality rate in Marathon County is decreasing and is lower than the state and nation. Congenital malformations, deformations & chromosomal abnormalities remain the leading causes of infant death in recent years. Other causes include preterm and low birth weight, pregnancy complications, accidents, and unsafe sleep environments as a contributing factor in a death. Infant death is more common if the mother is younger than 25.

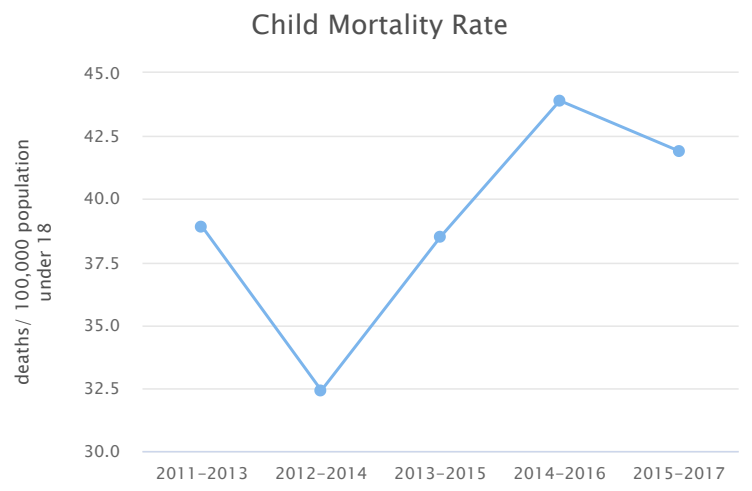
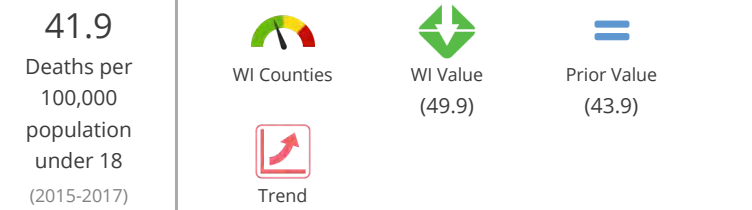
Child mortality is the death of a child aged 1-17. Losing a child affects the immediate families and the broader community. Child mortality in Marathon County is trending upward at this time. Leading causes of child death include accidents (unintentional injuries) and birth defects.

Overall, Marathon County infant and child mortality is lower than the state and nation. While not all infant and child deaths are preventable, it is important to look at how deaths can be prevented when possible.

Key Takeaways

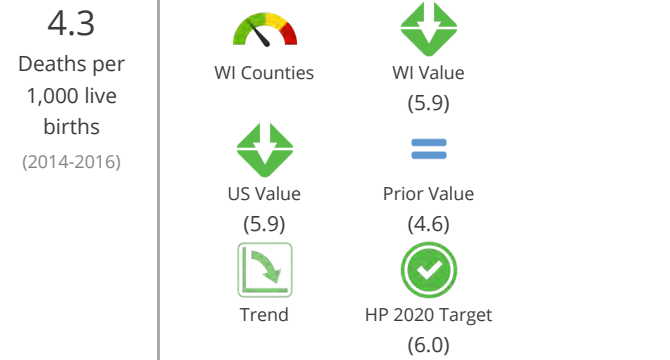
- Infant mortality is decreasing over time in Marathon County.
- Child mortality is increasing over time in Marathon County.
- Every year Marathon County has an infant death with unsafe sleep as a contributing factor.

Child Mortality Rate

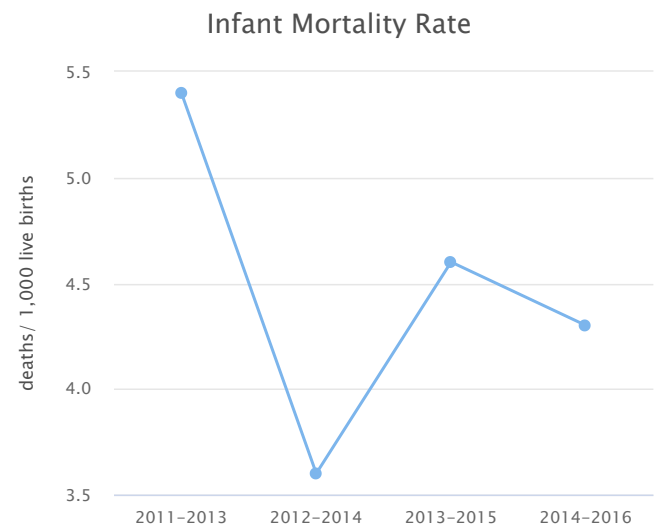


Child deaths in ages 1-17 are increasing.

Infant Mortality Rate



Infant deaths before age 1 are decreasing.



Why is this Important?

Lead is poisonous, and exposure to lead has a number of health effects, from causing high blood pressure and anemia to permanent damage to the nervous system. A child with lead poisoning is at risk for lowered IQ and attention span, learning disabilities, and developmental delays. A person cannot see physical symptoms of the initial exposure and rising levels, so it is important to have children tested who have risk factors for exposure. A common source of exposure is lead paint that was used in homes prior to being banned in 1978.

Marathon County intervenes with child blood lead levels at five micrograms/deciliter as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (mandates begin at 10 micrograms/deciliter). It is critical to identify child lead exposure at a lower level with early prevention, because there are few contractors to do lead abatement of properties once levels reach a higher amount. There can be a one to two year waitlist to get a lead abatement contractor onsite and it is very expensive.


Overall, there are fewer children testing above five micrograms per deciliter and more children are living in newer housing stock than ten years ago. Children's blood lead levels are monitored until the child's levels return to less than four micrograms/deciliter.


Key Takeaways

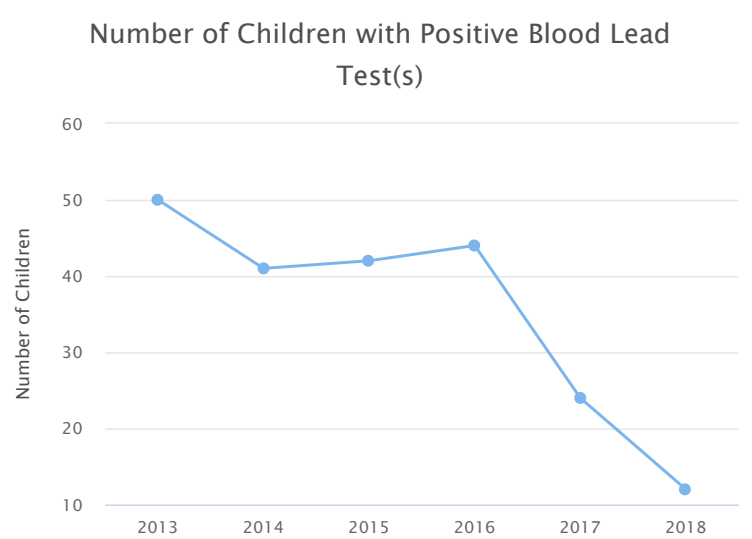
- The number of children screening positive for lead is decreasing.
- Early intervention is critical for preventing lead numbers increasing to over 10 micrograms/deciliter.
- Lead abatement contractors have long wait lists so it is important to catch lead poisoning early.

Number of Children with Positive Blood Lead Test(s)

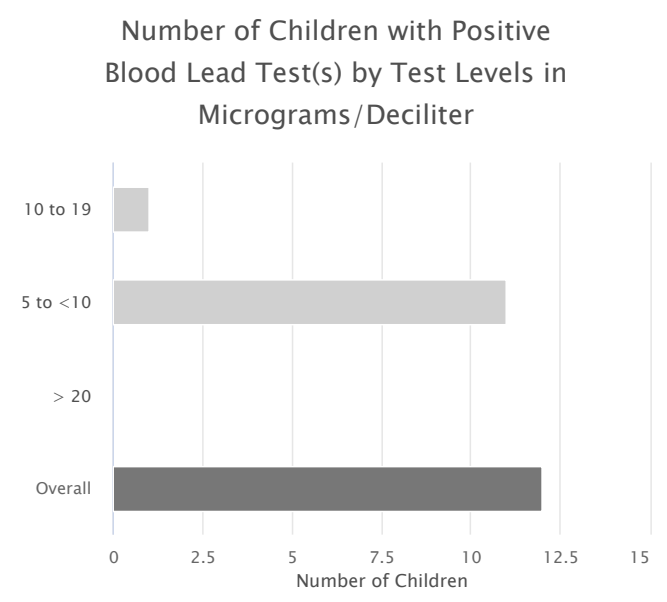
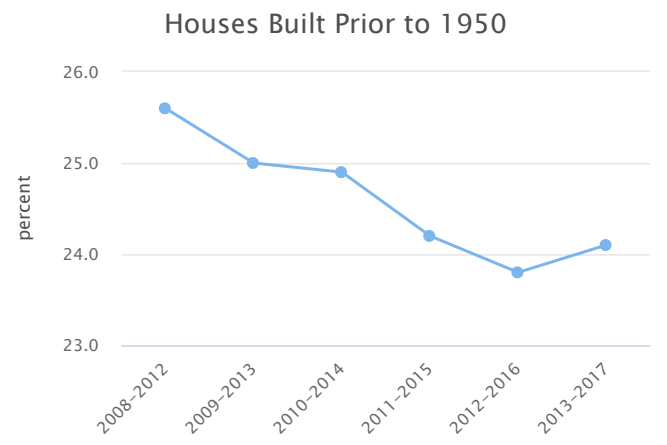
12
Number of Children
(2018)

 Prior Value (24)

 Trend



Older housing stock in the area is decreasing.



Why is this Important?

Good mental health is a state of balance in our thoughts, emotions and behaviors. Mental health matters and it's okay to ask for help and talk with someone you trust about your feelings or worries can help you feel better. In Marathon County, 1 in 3 teenagers reported **having poor mental health** and 1 in 4 reported **feeling depressed**. Treating mental health concerns is just as important as treating physical health concerns.

Mental health is one of many factors than can influence suicide risk. Suicide is a complex health issue influenced by a variety of factors such as mental illness, substance abuse, social isolation, lack of support from family or friends, or exposure to violence. Marathon County has been experiencing an increase of deaths by suicide.

Key Takeaways

- Mental health is among the top concerns reported by Marathon County teens in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
- Collecting local data on youth mental health is critical to raising awareness and reducing stigma.
- Youth who have a trusting adult they can talk to when they have a problem is critical to their mental health.

Teens Who Reported Feeling Depressed (High School)



Teens Who Have an Adult to Talk to (High School)

74.0%

Percent of high school students

Teens Who Feel They Belong at School (High School)

65.0%

Percent of high school students

Teens Who Considered Suicide (High School)

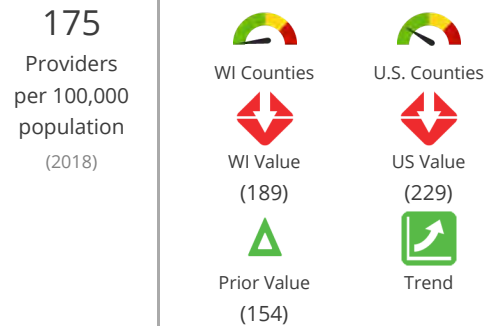


Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

On average adults report poor mental health 3 days per month.



Mental Health Provider Rate



Mental health providers are significantly increasing in Marathon County, but remain at a lower rate than Wisconsin and the U.S.

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

Marathon County Residents That Didn't Go to a Mental Health Provider

20%

Marathon County Residents Who Have Someone to Talk to

96%

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES & RESILIENCE

Indicator 32

Why is this Important?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences that happen to children before the age of 18 and result in ongoing activation of a stress response. ACEs negatively impact childhood brain development and influence how a child interacts with and behaves in the world.

Adults who have a history of ACEs are much more likely to have negative health outcomes, such as higher rates of alcoholism, illegal drug use, depression, suicide, smoking, obesity, cancer, and heart disease.

Child neglect, which is an ACE, is the number one reason for **substantiated child maltreatment** cases in Marathon County. There is a correlation with rising child neglect cases and the number of **drug charges** which also continue to rise in the county. There is also a wide range of **economically disadvantaged children** in the schools throughout the county that at times is correlated with **single-parent households** which can add financial and other stress to a family.

Resilience is the ability to be healthy and hopeful after these bad experiences happen. Resilience is not about the child “getting over it”, rather it means that a caring, loving adult has the power to buffer rather than cement the effects of ACEs in a child’s life.

Key Takeaways


Child neglect is the number one reason for substantiated child maltreatment in Marathon County.

There is a wide range of economically disadvantaged children in Marathon County schools.

More teens feel they have an adult to talk to at school than in the past.

Teens Who Have an Adult to Talk to (High School)

74.0%
Percent of high school students
(2019)


Prior Value
(73.2%)


Substantiated Child Abuse Rate

5.7
Cases per 1,000 children
(2017)


WI Counties

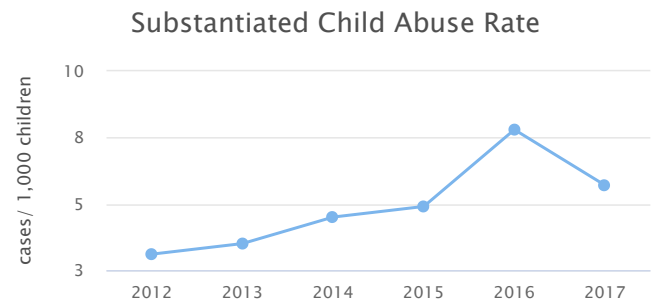

WI Value
(3.9)


US Value
(9.1 in 2016)

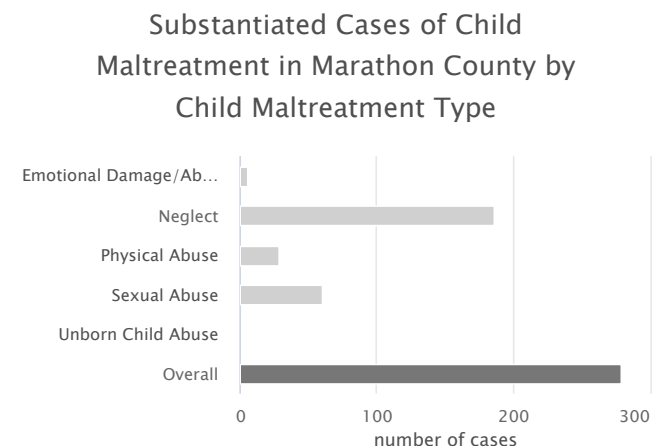

Prior Value
(7.8)


Trend

Child abuse has had a significantly increasing trend the past five years.



Neglect is the number one type of child maltreatment.



Why is this Important?

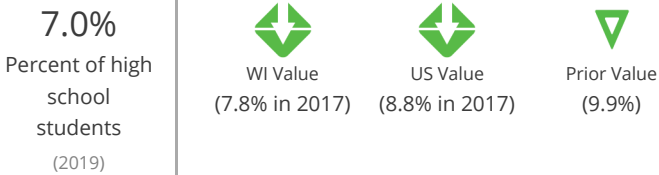
Youth smoking rates are at an all-time low, however, 1 in 5 Wisconsin high school students use e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes are electronic devices that heat a liquid and produce an aerosol, or mix of particles in the air. As commercial tobacco and nicotine products continue to change, so does the health impact on individuals with nicotine addiction and those exposed to secondhand smoke or aerosol. Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine which is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development. E-cigarettes contain other harmful substances besides nicotine and do not produce a harmless “water vapor”. These products have been rapidly produced and marketed. JUUL is a brand of e-cigarette that consumes a majority of the market and has as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes.

The percentage of Marathon County teens who have ever tried smoking cigarettes or used other tobacco products has remained stable and not increased. However, the adult smoking rate is significantly higher than the state value. The number of illegal sales of tobacco products to minors in compliance checks has decreased over the past several years.

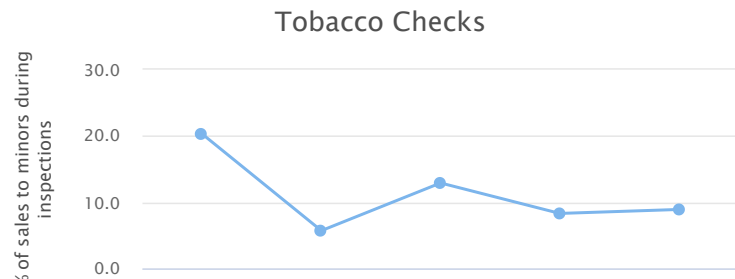
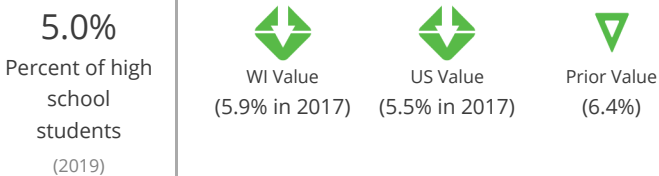
Key Takeaways

- The use of e-cigarettes is unsafe for kids, teens, and young adults.
- Overall teens are smoking less, but the use of e-cigarettes is steadily rising.
- Adult smoking in Marathon County is significantly higher than Wisconsin or national values.

Teens Who Smoked Cigarettes In the Past 30-days (High School)

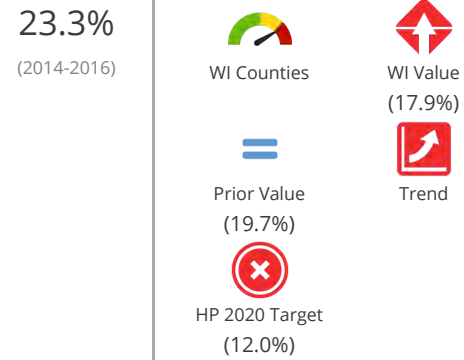


Teens Who Chewed Tobacco in the Past 30-days (High School)

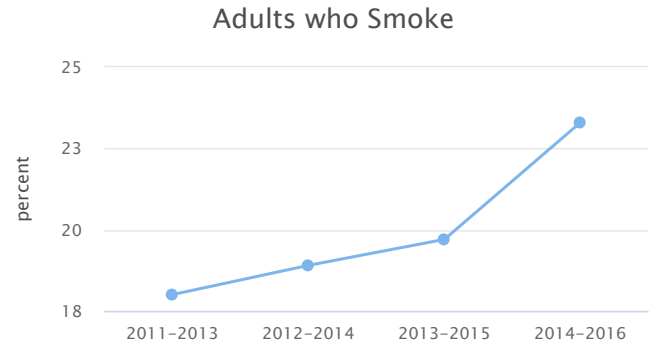


Generated by www.healthymarathoncounty.org/pulse on January 8, 2020.

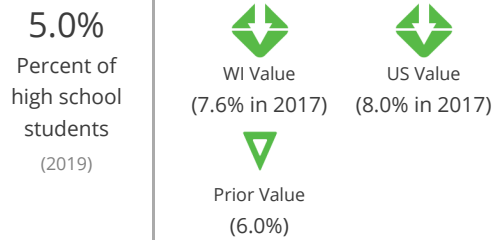
Adults who Smoke



Adult smoking is increasing.



Teens Who Smoked Cigars, Cigarillos, or Little Cigars (High School)



Why is this Important?

Alcohol continues to be the most frequently consumed substance of use and misuse in Marathon County, among both teens and adults, contributing to consequences that affect all residents. Underage drinking, adult binge drinking, and **drinking and driving** have potential devastating impacts families and safety of the community.

Marathon County adults binge drink more than the rest of Wisconsin and set an example for our youth. More youth in Marathon County begin drinking before the age of 13 compared to Wisconsin. 1 out of 3 Marathon County high school students said their parents didn't think it was wrong for them to drink alcohol underage.

Wisconsin's pervasive alcohol culture combined with the availability and accessibility continue to drive high local alcohol use and abuse.

Key Takeaways

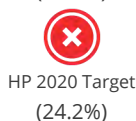
Alcohol continues to be the number one substance of abuse in Marathon County.

Only **65% of Marathon County high school students** said their parents felt it was wrong or very wrong for them to drink alcohol.

Teen drinking habits in Marathon County have not changed from 2015 to 2019.

Adults who Binge Drink

27.0%
(2014-2016)



Adult binge drinking is above the state average.

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

30% of LIFE Survey respondents binge drank (consumed 5 or more drinks on one occasion) in the past 30 days.

Rates of **reported drinking and driving** is not getting worse.
Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

Marathon County teens begin drinking at younger ages than the rest of Wisconsin.

Teens Who Drank Alcohol Before Age 13 (High School)

33.0%
Percent of high school students
(2019)



Teens Who Drank Alcohol in the Past 30-days (High School)

28.0%
Percent of high school students
(2019)



Teen Binge Drinking (High School)

11.0%
Percentage of high school students
(2019)



Why is this Important?

Methamphetamine, prescription and illicit opioids, and marijuana are having a significant impact on the community. As a result of this growing national epidemic, Marathon County is experiencing significantly higher **drug arrest rates, felony and misdemeanor drug charges, and cases of child maltreatment**. The burden on local law enforcement, social services, healthcare organizations, and treatment providers due to the increased rates of illegal drug use has never been higher.

Drug overdose deaths are the leading cause of injury death in the United States, with over 100 drug overdose deaths occurring every day. The death rate due to drug overdose has been increasing over the last few decades. The majority of deaths due to pharmaceutical overdose involve opioid analgesics (prescription painkillers).

In Wisconsin, THC-based marijuana continues to be illegal to possess and use, but surrounding states have legalized medicinal and/or recreational marijuana which will impact our local communities.

Key Takeaways

Illegal drug use in Marathon County has increased significantly, with more overdose deaths and **drug arrests** than ever before.

3 out of 4 Marathon County residents are aware of the medication disposal sites in the community and **43% disposed of medications there**.

Locally, teen marijuana use is on the rise, but still remains below state and national levels.

Teen - Ever Used Marijuana (High School)

19.0%
Percent of high school students (2019)

WI Value (30.2% in 2017)	US Value (35.6% in 2017)	Prior Value (17.8%)

Teens Who Used Marijuana in the Past 30-days (High School)

10.0%
Percent of high school students (2019)

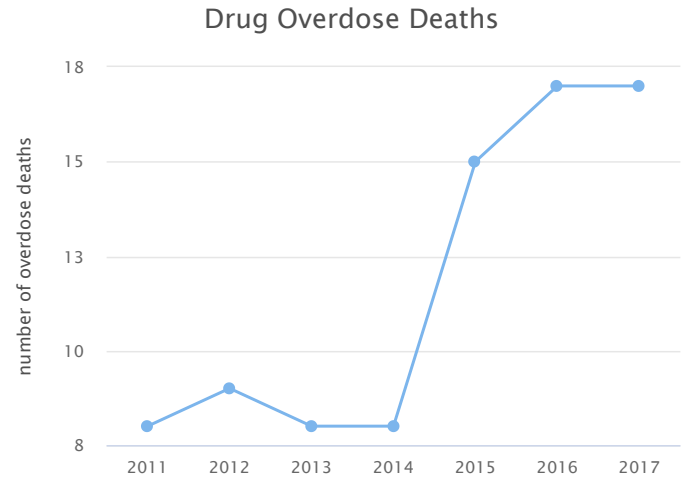
WI Value (16.0% in 2017)	US Value (19.8% in 2017)	Prior Value (9.6%)

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

Illegal drug use was the top concern for Marathon County residents.

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

Drug overdose deaths are increasing significantly.



Death Rate due to Drug Poisoning

12.3
Deaths per 100,000 population (2015-2017)

WI Counties WI Value (18.0)	U.S. Counties US Value (19.3)

Teen Drug Use at High School

6.0%
Percent of high school students

Teens - Ever Used Prescription Drugs without a Prescription (High School)

9.0%
Percent of high school students

Why is this Important?

Obesity is a complex health issue that impacts people throughout the lifespan. Being overweight or obese can lead to high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, sleep apnea/breathing problems, mental illness such as clinical depression, and other negative health outcomes. The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is not about short-term dietary changes, but rather about living a healthy lifestyle that supports overall physical and mental well-being, as well as healthy eating with regular physical activity.

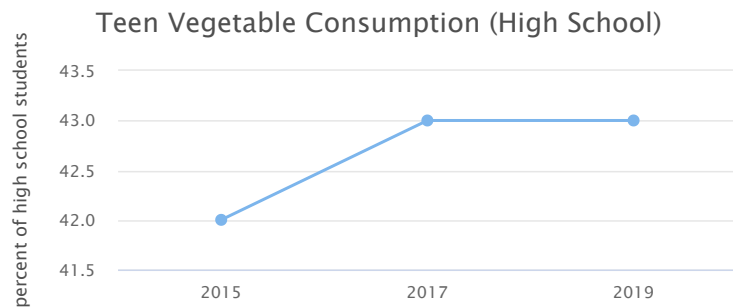
Research shows the link between **Adverse Childhood Experiences** and the increased risk for being overweight or obese. Individuals with traumatic childhoods or chaotic homes, often find it more difficult to live a healthy lifestyle that supports good mental and physical health. Creating healthy community environments and supporting overall mental well-being is critical to ensure residents have an opportunity to have a healthy weight.

The places in which we live, learn, work, and play are essential to our overall health. Marathon County has abundant outdoor physical activity opportunities during all seasons and has a farmers market every day of the week.

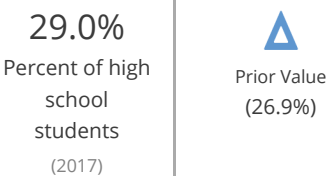
Key Takeaways

- Fruit and vegetable consumption is increasing among youth.
- Marathon County has an abundant amount of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Several complex factors contribute to the obesity problem.

Teen fruit and vegetable consumption is increasing.



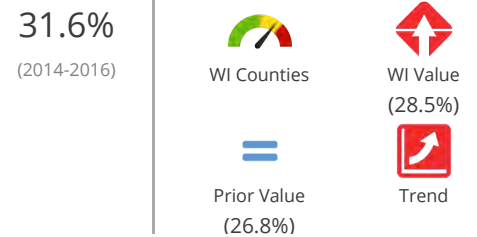
Teen Fruit Consumption (High School)



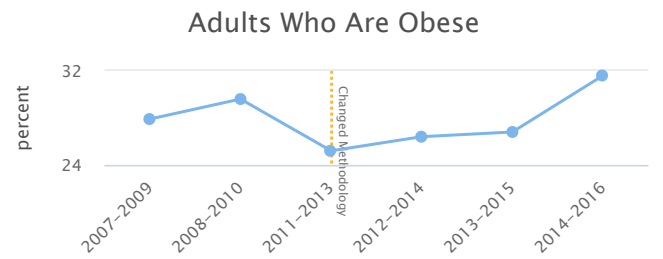
LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

- 63% of residents** ate a meal at a table with family and/or friends at least 3 days per week.
- 71% of residents** reported being overweight or obese.

Adults Who Are Obese

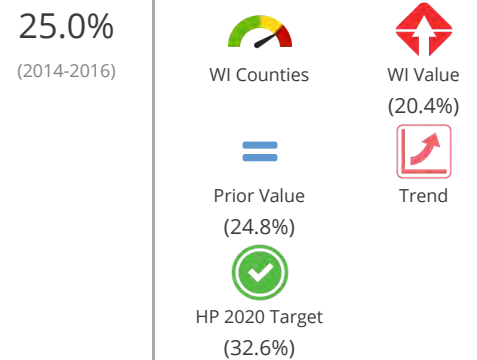


Adult obesity continues to increase.



Change in methodology for 2011-2013:
The BRFSS 2011-2013 prevalence data should be considered a baseline year for data analysis and is not directly comparable to previous years of BRFSS data because of the changes in weighting methodology and the addition of the cell phone sampling frame.

Adults who are Sedentary



Why is this Important?

Currently in Marathon County, 17.1% of the population is over the age of 65, which continues to trend upward. People over age 65 experience a large burden of chronic conditions and disabilities.

People with an independent living difficulty encounter challenges performing instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition. Examples of IADLs include grocery shopping or visiting a doctor's office alone. Older adults may have more difficulty accessing food or health services due to inability to drive or navigate public transportation, physical limitations (walking, reaching, lifting, etc.), and financial limitations. Without assistance, older people with an independent living difficulty may not be able to successfully perform daily activities and can experience a decline in quality of life.

People over age 65 who live alone may be at risk for social isolation, limited access to support, or inadequate assistance in emergency situations. Living alone should not be equated with being lonely or isolated, but many older people who live alone are vulnerable due to social isolation, poverty, disabilities, lack of access to care, or inadequate housing.

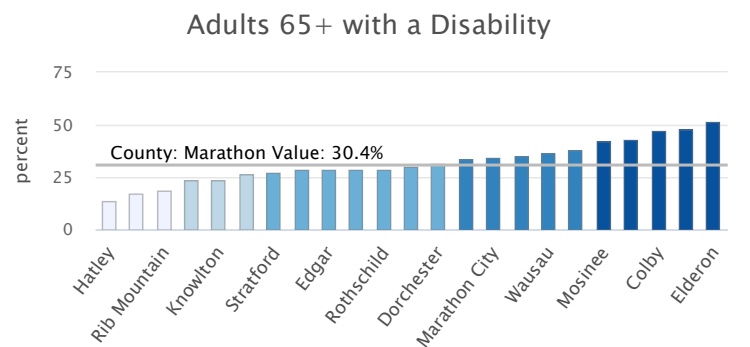
Key Takeaways

Marathon County's 65+ population continues to increase.

1 in 4 people over the age of 65 live alone in Marathon County.

Medicare beneficiaries in Marathon County are treated for a variety of chronic conditions.

Adults age 65+ are impacted by living difficulties.



Hearing Difficulty

15.7%

Vision Difficulty

5.8%

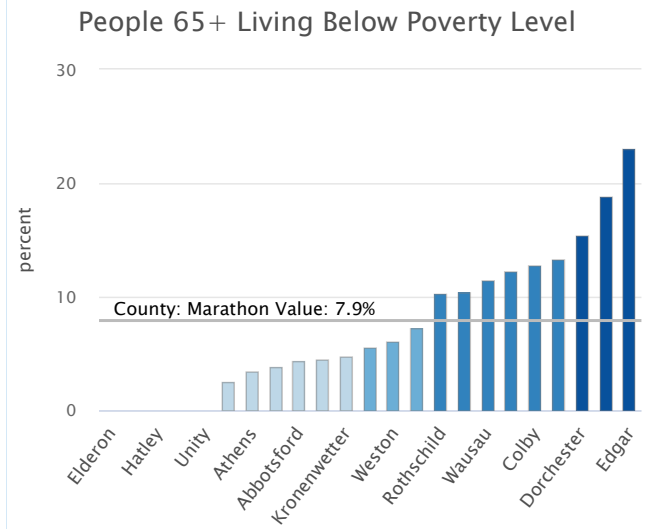
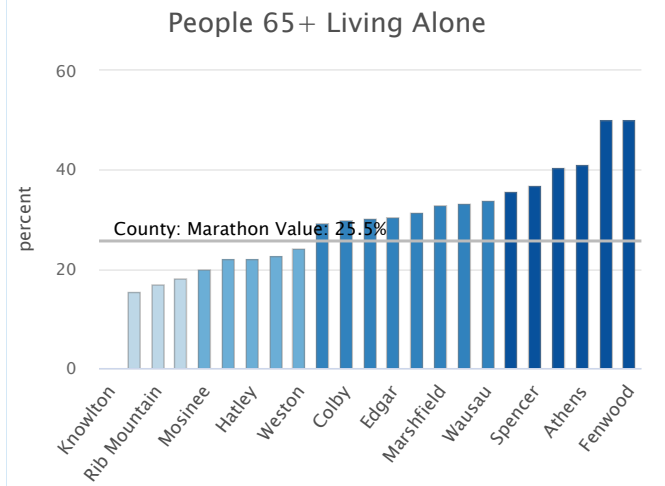
Self-Care Difficulty

5.8%

Independent Living Difficulty

5.8%

Aging differs greatly throughout Marathon County.



Why is this Important?

Overall air quality is based on trends in air emissions. People with asthma, particularly children and the elderly are sensitive to the effects of air pollution emissions. Those who are vigorously exercising or performing outdoor work may be affected. Sources of these emissions include stationary (facilities), mobile (vehicles), and area (households, wood burning). Air pollutant emissions for [nitrogen oxide](#), [volatile organic compounds](#), and [sulfur dioxide](#) decreased from the prior years.

[Radon](#) is the largest indoor air quality concern in Marathon County and the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. Radon is an odorless radioactive gas that cannot be seen or smelled so it is important to test homes to determine the amount of radon. Marathon County's geology contributes to the area having some of the highest rates of elevated radon levels in the state. Household radon mitigation systems cost around \$1,000.

Sulfur dioxides are produced by coal or gas power plants and other industrial facilities such as petroleum refineries, cement manufacturing, paper pulp manufacturing, and metal smelting and processing facilities.

Nitrogen dioxide is a gas produced from cars, trucks and buses, power plants, and off-road equipment exhaust emissions.

Volatile organic compounds react with nitrogen oxides in the presence of sunlight to produce ground level ozone.

Particulate matter is solid particles or liquid droplets suspended in air. Fine particulate matter, PM 2.5, is particles smaller than 2.5 microns. The average human hair is 70 microns or 30 times larger. PM 2.5 can be emitted into the air from forest fires and wood burning appliances or be present

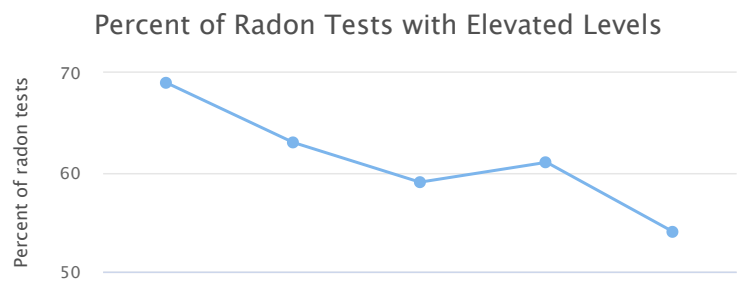
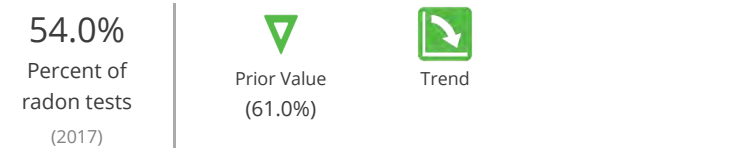
Key Takeaways

In 2017, 54% of the radon tests done in Marathon County were over the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action level of 4pCi/L.

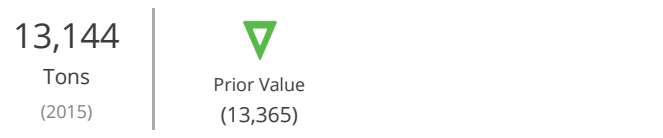
Test your home for radon—it's easy and inexpensive.

Air pollutant emissions of volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxide, and sulfur dioxide have decreased in Marathon County.

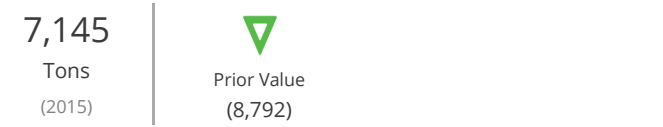
Percent of Radon Tests with Elevated Levels



Air Pollutant Emissions- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)



Air Pollutant Emissions- Nitrogen Oxide (NOx)



Air Pollutant Emissions- Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)



Air Pollutant Emissions- Fine Particulate Matter (PM 2.5)



Why is this Important?

Clean, safe drinking water is one of the most important elements of good health. Private well owners are responsible for testing their drinking water.

Coliform are a group of bacteria that are common in nature. Some coliform bacteria can cause illness while others do not. Drinking water should not have coliform bacteria in it. When coliform are present, the well may have been contaminated by soil or feces and could indicate the presence of a disease-causing organism called E. Coli.

Nitrate can enter groundwater from fertilizers and from animal and human waste. If the nitrate level is less than 10 parts per million (ppm) it is safe for drinking, preparing food, or showering. High levels of nitrate can cause birth defects, thyroid problems, and certain kinds of cancer. For infants on formula made with high nitrate water, the nitrates interfere with the ability of the blood to carry oxygen.

Fluoride naturally occurs in water and is a safe and effective way to reduce tooth decay. While rare, too high of levels could harm your health so regular testing of water is advised.

Key Takeaways

Fewer coliform samples tested safe than in prior years.

Nitrate levels were safe for 90 % of the water samples in 2017.

The right amount of fluoride is a safe, effective means to prevent tooth decay. Fluoride supplements can be used to ensure children get the right amount of fluoride when private well water fluoride is below the optimal level.

Percentage of Private Well Water Samples Testing Safe for Coliform Bacteria

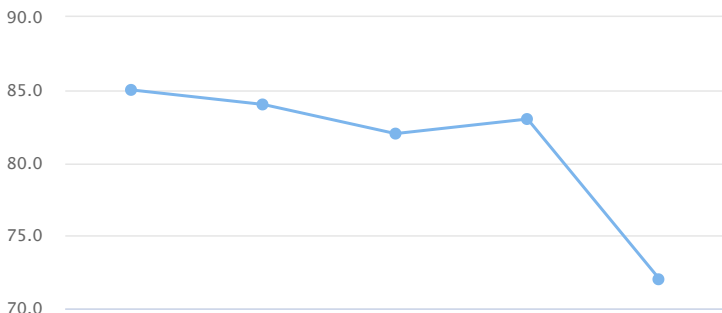
72.0
(2017)

Prior Value
(83.0)



Trend

Percentage of Private Well Water Samples Testing Safe for Coliform Bacteria



Percentage of Private Well Water Samples Testing Safe for Nitrate

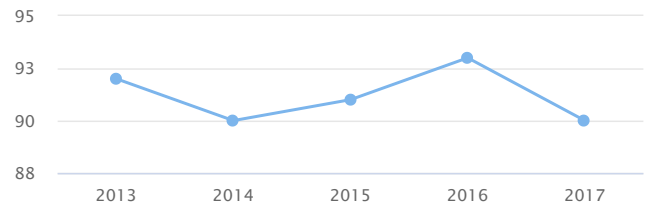
90.0
(2017)

Prior Value
(93.0)



Trend

Percentage of Private Well Water Samples Testing Safe for Nitrate



Percentage of Private Well Water Samples Testing Safe for Fluoride

92.0
(2017)

Prior Value
(95.0)



Trend

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

59% of LIFE Survey respondents feel concerned or very concerned about drinking water quality (2019).

13% of LIFE Survey respondents did not have their private well tested in the last year because they did not know how or it was too costly (2019).

GROUND WATER QUALITY

Indicator 40

Why is this Important?

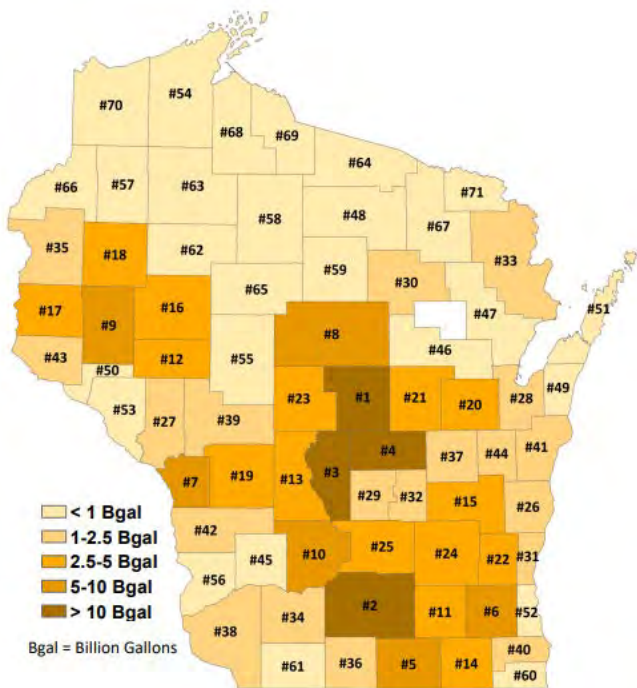
Ground water quantity and quality is vital for the sustainability, growth, and health of local communities. The need for clean ground water is not only a health issue, but it is also an economic issue. Where ground water becomes polluted, property values drop and land development may become adversely affected. Business, industry, and agricultural growth rely on clean and abundant ground water for expansion and development. In Marathon County, most of the general public depend on ground water as a source of clean drinking water. According to the [2017 DNR Wisconsin Water Use Summary](#), Marathon County ranked 8th out of 72 counties in terms of total groundwater withdrawals.

Key Takeaways

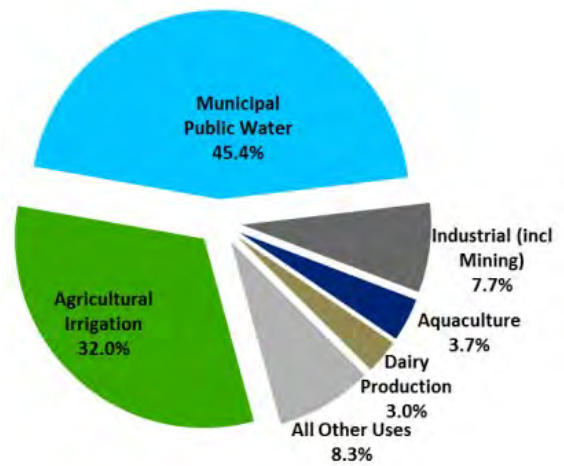
According to the [2017 DNR Wisconsin Water Use Summary](#) - Marathon County ranked 8th out of 72 counties in terms of Total Groundwater Withdrawals by County.

There are 425 approved DNR high capacity wells in Marathon County, serving communities, industries, and agriculture.

Marathon County is 8th in the State for Average Groundwater Withdrawals by County



Agricultural Irrigation is the Second Largest Withdrawer of Groundwater in the State



Marathon County identified as a groundwater deficient region in Wisconsin (region labeled 2).

LIFE SURVEY: Resident Perspectives

In the 2019 LIFE survey, 24.7% of the respondents indicated that they are very concerned about drinking water quality.

Why is this Important?

Phosphorus is an essential nutrient for plant and aquatic life; however, elevated concentrations of phosphorus in rivers and lakes primarily from agricultural runoff can lead to nuisance algal blooms impacting aquatic life and recreational activities. High phosphorus levels cause algal blooms in Lake DuBay, Big Eau Pleine, Pentenwell and Castle Rock Reservoirs that deplete oxygen levels which stresses aquatic life and fish communities, and on occasion, cause large fish kills.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources maintains a list of surface waters that do not meet specific water quality standards in the state, and is required to update the list every two years by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The 2019 Wisconsin River Total Maximum Daily Load Report identifies the number of river miles in Marathon County considered to be impaired by high levels of phosphorus concentrations.

Key Takeaways

Marathon County streams are a major source of phosphorus in the Wisconsin River Basin.

The Big Eau Pleine River and Little Eau Pleine River significantly exceeded the phosphorus criteria.


Runoff from land use activities, primarily from agricultural sources mobilize and transport phosphorus to water bodies in the Wisconsin River watershed.

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

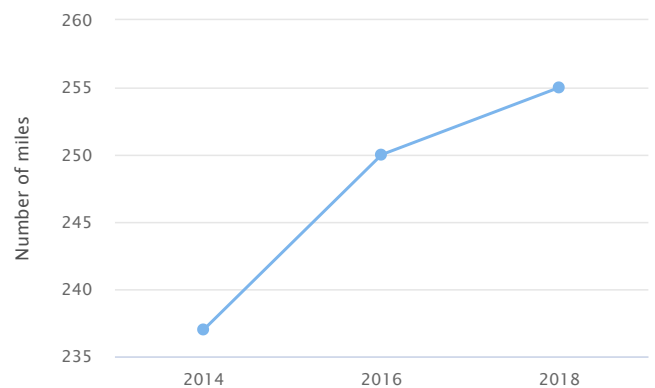
78% of 2019 LIFE survey respondents indicated they are concerned or very concerned about cleanliness of local lakes/ivers.

Number of Miles of Phosphorus Impaired Streams

255
Number of
miles
(2018)


Prior Value
(250)

Number of Miles of Phosphorus Impaired Streams



Why is this Important?

Waste management services are essential to a community's health, safety, and prosperity. The collection of garbage and recycling from local businesses, industries and households occurs almost unnoticed every day, yet it is essential to protecting human health and the environment. It is also essential to economic development. The Marathon County Solid Waste Department not only provides landfill disposal services for the central Wisconsin region, but also a wide variety of environmental education, waste reduction and consulting services to help us all reduce waste and recycle more.

View the [Marathon County Community Assessment on Prevalence and Perceptions of Medication Abuse](#) dashboard for data on medication disposal.

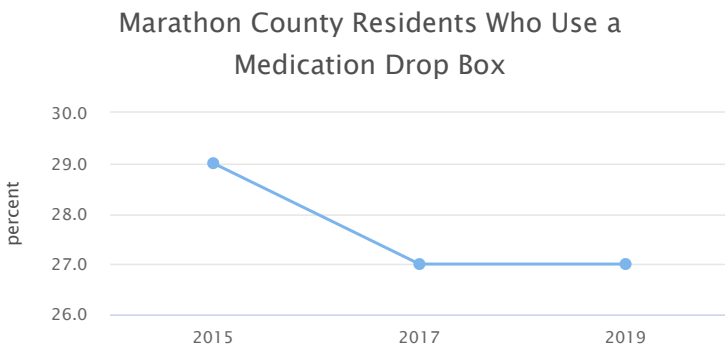
Key Takeaways

Providing residents medication disposal sites for unused or unwanted medications helps protect community safety.

Proper disposal and management of hazardous waste is vital to protect the environment and public health.

Providing easily accessible, affordable and convenient landfill disposal services helps drive economic development and expansion of a wide array of businesses.

Marathon County Residents Who Use a Medication Drop Box

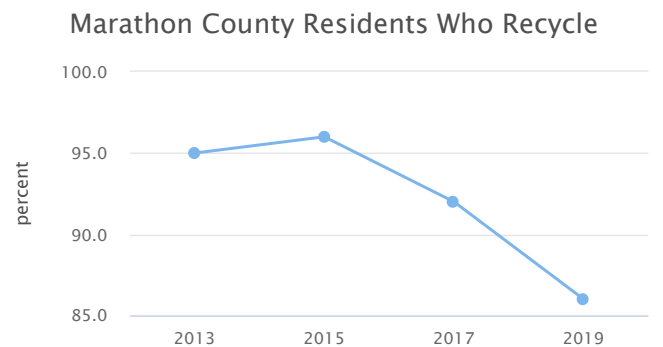
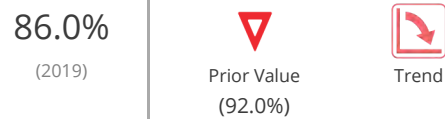


Marathon County Residents Who Compost

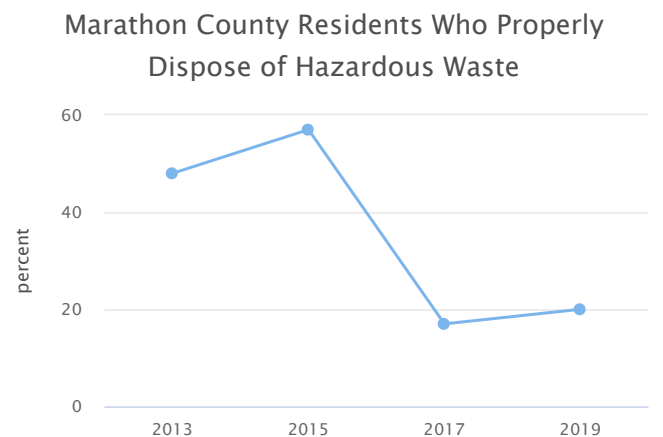
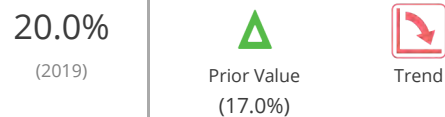


Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

Marathon County Residents Who Recycle



Marathon County Residents Who Properly Dispose of Hazardous Waste



Why is this Important?

The psychological barrier of fear and awareness of our personal safety is not new. People frequently express concern for their personal safety. Personal safety focuses on how comfortable or safe one feels in any given situation under any circumstances whether in urban or rural environments. If one perceives the threat of violence or intimidation caused by others, this causes people to be less likely to enjoy life. In reality, crime can occur in any neighborhood no matter how safe it is deemed. Depending on economic times people are more distressed about rising crime.

Being vigilant will aid individuals and law enforcement in maintaining the safety of a community. A recent survey conducted by the Wisconsin Professional Police Association indicated 76% of State residents feel being safe from crime is a high priority. In that same survey, 73% thought the police spend the right amount of time in their neighborhoods.

Inclusive communities displaying a practice of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as persons having physical or mental disabilities and members of minority groups, can lessen preconceived notions or fear and lower a person's personal safety concern.

Key Takeaways

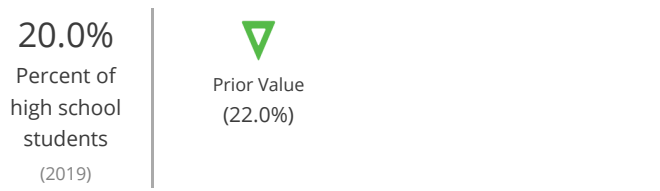
Marathon County residents are **experiencing discrimination** in our community.

Be cognizant of what you share on social media as you could be setting yourself or your property to targets for crime.

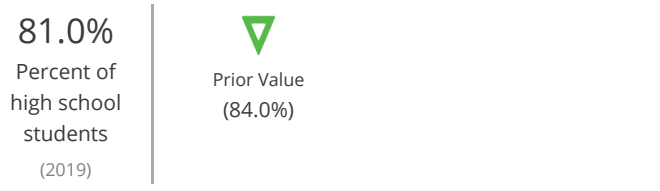
Knowing who lives in your neighborhood will aid in recognizing when a suspicious person is in the area.

Marathon County teens have concerns about their personal safety at school.

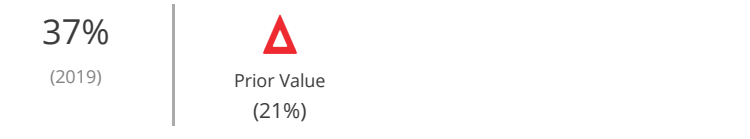
Teens - Violence is Problem at School (High School)



Teen - Physical Harm at School (High School)



Marathon County Residents who Experienced Discrimination

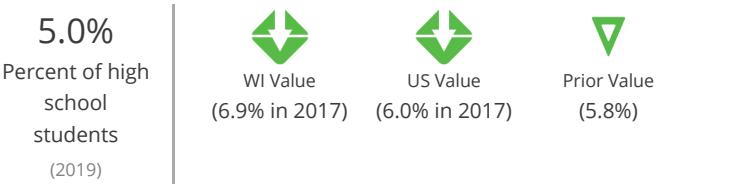


LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

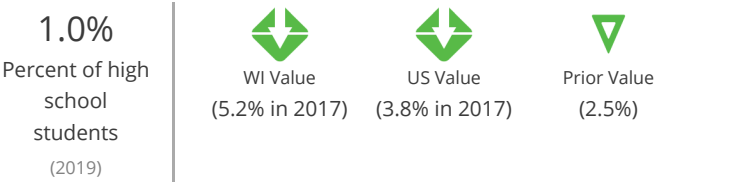
9% of LIFE Survey respondents were very concerned about their personal safety in their home.

9% of LIFE Survey respondents were very concerned about their safety when alone in their neighborhood after dark.

Teens Who Were Threatened or Injured with Weapon at School (High School)



Teen - Carried A Weapon on School Property (High School)



Why is this Important?

Marathon County is an urban and rural County depending on the geographic location where one is located. In January 2019, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported higher rates of opioid use and prescriptions in rural communities than seen in urbanized areas. Further information from CDC noted an increase in overdose fatalities in rural areas with those figures surpassing deaths in urban areas. The Marathon County Medical Examiner's Office reports from 2008 to 2018, indicate 88 overdose fatalities from alcohol, illegal drugs and prescription drugs. Marathon County's location in the center of the state makes us attractive to those plying the illegal drug trade.

Alcohol abuse remains an issue. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported the most frequently recorded blood alcohol level among persons driving while intoxicated in 2017 was .16% BAC. This is twice the legal limit in nearly every state. NHTSA notes in 2016 there was a 42% increase in driver fatalities who tested positive for drugs. Local law enforcement uses community education, high visibility enforcement and officer training to help keep impaired drivers off roads. This includes having officers trained as drug recognition experts who can perform intensive evaluations of suspected impaired drivers.

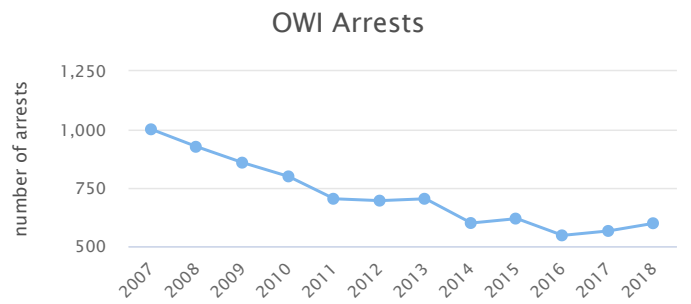
Key Takeaways

Methamphetamine, opioids, cocaine and marijuana are the controlled substances impacting Marathon County the most.

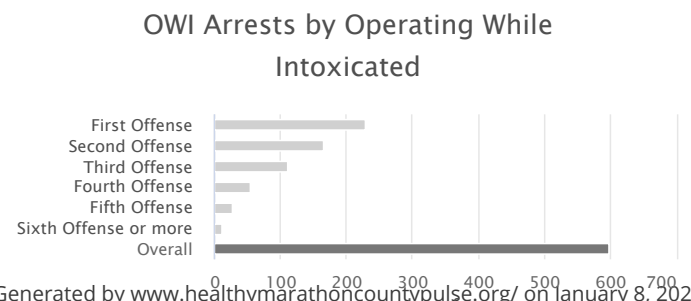
Impaired driving is unsafe driving whether the impairment is the result of alcohol or drugs.

New ad campaigns are "If You Feel Different, You Drive Different. Drive High, Get a DUI."(Driving Under Influence)

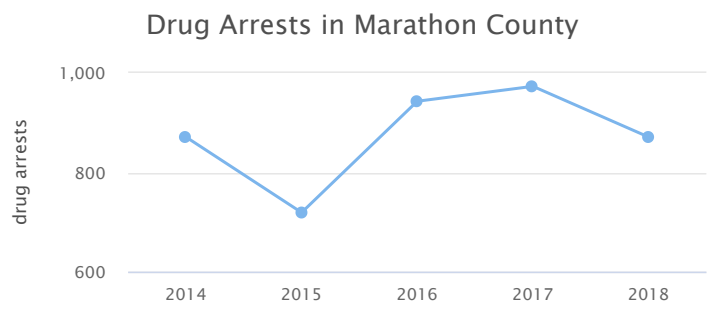
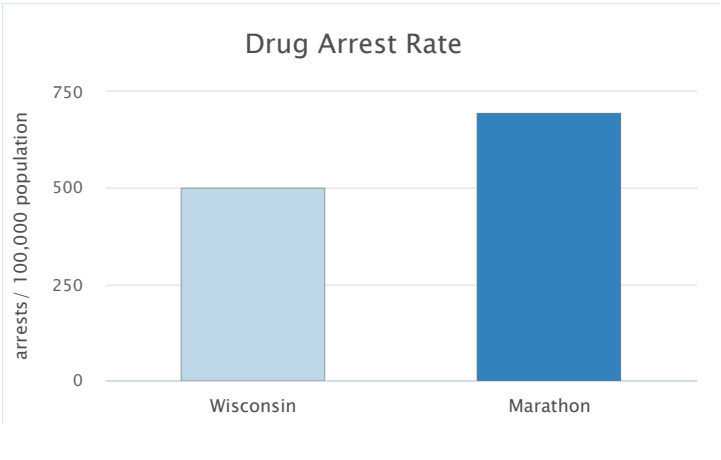
Drunk driving arrests continue to decrease significantly in Marathon County.



Most drunk driving arrests are first time offenses.



Marathon County has a significantly higher drug arrest rate than Wisconsin.



LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

Illegal drug use, prescription drug abuse and operating a vehicle while intoxicated were in the Top 5 Concerns of 2019 LIFE survey respondents.

8% of LIFE survey respondents admitted to operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol in the past month.

Why is this Important?

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. Abused and neglected children have both immediate and long-term costs for hospitalization, mental health services, educational supports, and legal intervention. Marathon County Department of Social Services provides training to community partners on mandated reporting to ensure that those required by law to report suspected child maltreatment do so when seen in the course of their professional duties.

Anyone who suspects child maltreatment may make a report and is immune from criminal or civil liability. Citizens concerned with a child's safety are encouraged to report suspected child maltreatment directly to Child Protective Services (CPS) at (715) 261-7556 or local law enforcement. You could be the voice for a vulnerable child.

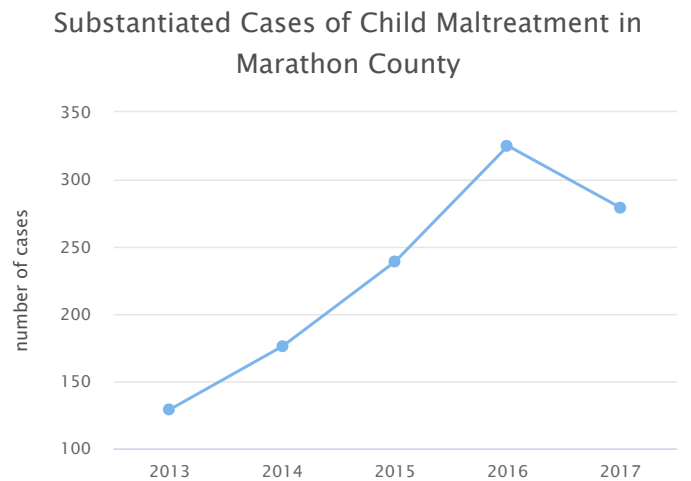
Key Takeaways

At the close of 2017, Marathon County Department of Social Services had 85 children placed in foster homes and 119 children placed in the homes of relatives due to concerns for child abuse and neglect.

Neglect is the most frequent form of substantiated maltreatment in Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin. In Marathon County from January 2016 to January 2018, approximately 70% of children were placed in out of home care as a result of the drug epidemic.

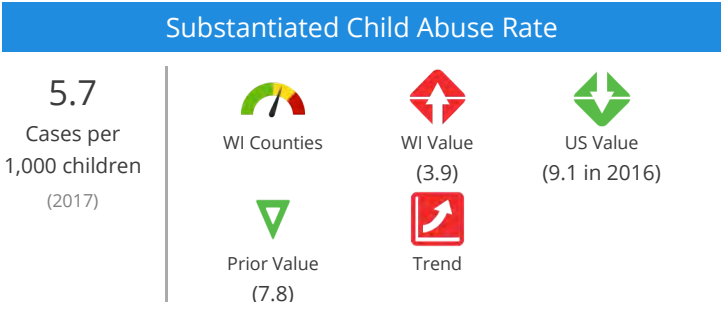
From January 2016 through the end of 2017, Marathon County Department of Social Services completed 1,327 CPS Initial Assessments (this is 44% of the reports that were called in). Of those assessments, 45% of the children that were involved in the assessments were found to have a preponderance of evidence to support that child maltreatment, according to WI Statute Chapter 48, occurred.

Child abuse has decreased for the first time in five years.

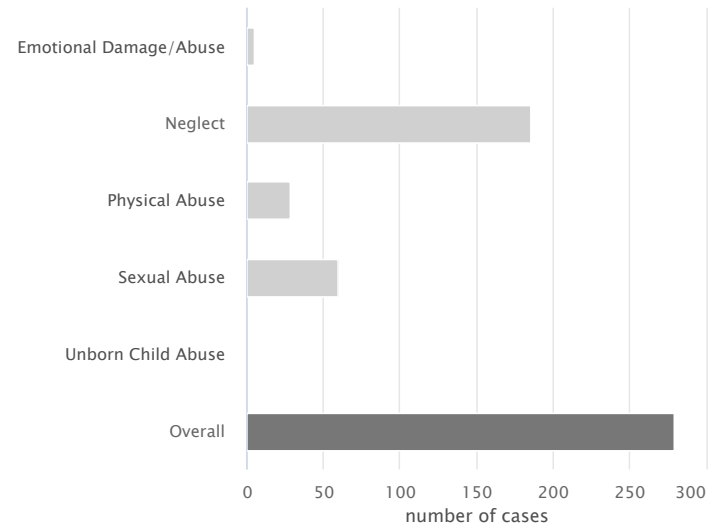


Marathon County has a higher rate of child abuse than the rest of Wisconsin.

Substantiated child abuse rate shows the number of children under 18 years of age that experienced abuse or neglect in cases per 1,000 children.



Substantiated Cases of Child Maltreatment in Marathon County by Child Maltreatment Type



Why is this Important?

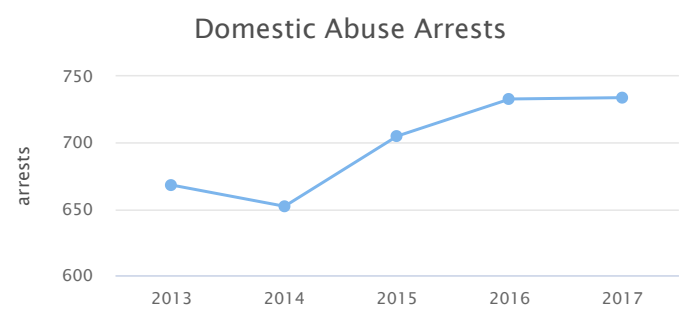
Domestic violence does not discriminate. It occurs in every economic environment, ethnic or religious background, age and community status. Alcoholism or other substance addictions, threats and physical abuse are common factors. Domestic violence devastates lives, families and communities. Yet, many times, domestic violence remains a dirty little secret not to be discussed or shared. This needs to change if impacts are going to be made in the prevention of domestic violence.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), across the U.S. domestic violence has an estimated \$8.3 billion annual cost to the economy. Other NCADV statistics relate an average of 20 people are physically abused by their intimate partners every minute in the U.S. 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have been physically abused by an intimate partner. 1 in 3 female and 1 in 20 male murder victims were killed by their intimate partner. Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime. The numbers are tragic, but they are more than statistics. Those numbers represent real people and families who are suffering. Public support and partnerships with local advocacy groups and victim shelters affirms the commitments communities should have in protecting and serving victims.

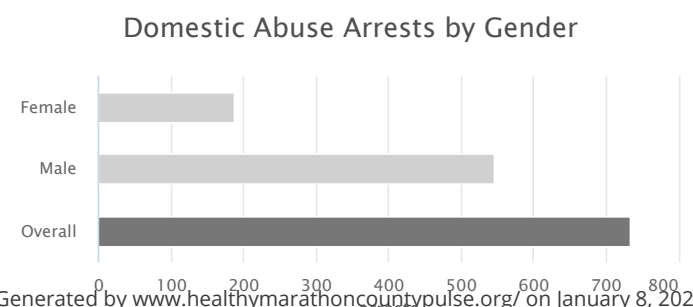
Key Takeaways

- Intimate partner violence is on the rise in Marathon County.
- In 2018, The Women's Community provided support services to 1765 people (1458 females, 296 males, 6 transgender and 5 undisclosed).
- The Women's Community provided shelter to 62 women, 0 men, 63 children and 1 transgender for a total of 7803 nights of shelter.

Domestic abuse arrests are increasing.



2 out of 3 domestic abuse arrests are male.



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The number of individuals sheltered and served at The Women's Community continues to increase.

The Women's Community (TWC) is a non-profit organization serving victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault throughout Marathon County, Wisconsin.

<p>Number of Individuals Sheltered at The Women's Community</p> <p>170 Individuals</p>	<p>Number of Individuals Served by The Women's Community</p> <p>1,925 Individuals</p>
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<p>Teen Partner Violence (High School)</p> <p>7.0%</p> <p>Percent of high school students</p>	<p>Percentage of high school students who were physically injured one or more times in the 12 months before the survey by their partner.</p>
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<p>Teen Sexual Abuse (High School)</p> <p>12.0%</p> <p>Percent of high school students</p>	<p>Percentage of high school students who were forced to take part in a sexual activity.</p>
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LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

23% of 2019 LIFE Survey respondents are very concerned about domestic violence.

49% of 2019 LIFE Survey respondents were satisfied with the availability of services for victims of family violence or abuse.

Why is this Important?

A vulnerable adult or an "adult-at-risk" is an adult who has a physical or mental condition that substantially impairs his or her ability to care for his or her needs; and has experienced, is currently experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation.

Crimes against the elderly (age 60+) target some of the most vulnerable people in society. Victims often lose thousands of dollars with the cost especially high due to the victim's stage in life. The crimes effect not only the elderly or vulnerable, but their caregivers. Financial abuse impacts society, because as individuals lose funds, they rely on public funds for support.

The most common characteristics of adults-at-risk that are 60 years of age or older are Alzheimer's or dementia, mobility impairment, and medical conditions.

The most common characteristics of adults-at-risk that are 18-59 years of age are developmental disabilities and mental illness.

Adult protective services are present to aid elders and vulnerable adults at risk, who have been abused, neglected or exploited.

Key Takeaways

Elder adults-at-risk are most likely to live alone.

Adults at risk age 60 and older were 58% female and 42% male.

The most common abusers to at-risk adults of any age are family members.

People 65+ Living Alone

25.5%

(2013-2017)



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At-Risk Adult Abuse Cases

34

Number of at-risk-adult abuse cases (2018)



Prior Value (33)



Trend

The number of at-risk adult (ages 18-59) abuse cases with alleged abuser(s) in Marathon County.

Elder Abuse Cases

77

Number of elder abuse cases (2018)



Prior Value (97)



Trend

The number of elder (age 60+) adults-at-risk abuse cases with alleged abuser(s) in Marathon County.

Why is this Important?

A sense of community, or feeling of belonging, is important to our physical and emotional well-being as human beings.

Government, community groups, businesses and individuals have invested in a number of new opportunities for citizens to connect and engage in Marathon County over the past several years. Those efforts include Riverlife Park, newly developed trails along the Wisconsin River, a new bicycle trail system near Ringle and continued commitment to an extensive parks and recreation system.

In Marathon County, more than three-quarters of the 2019 LIFE survey respondents identified that friends and family help them feel connected to the community. Each time the survey has been completed since 2013, the majority of respondents have also indicated that they serve as volunteers.

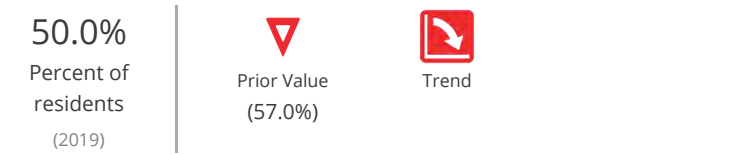
But recent LIFE Survey responses indicate a trend that Marathon County is perceived as a less welcoming, less connected and less tolerant community. Seventy percent of 2019 LIFE Survey respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that Marathon County is a good place to live, a slight drop from 2017; furthermore, LIFE Survey respondents perceived Marathon County as less of a good place to live for some groups including people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, younger people and people with different abilities.

Key Takeaways

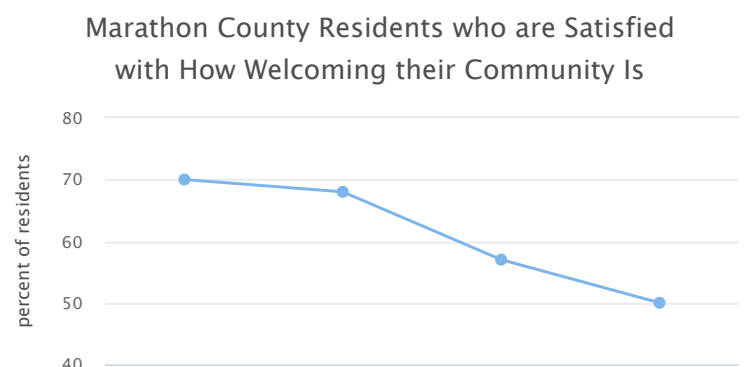
There is a trend in respondents' perception that we are a less welcoming, connected, and tolerant community.

The top three reasons LIFE Survey respondents indicated they chose to live in Marathon County are: Near family/friends (66%), size of the community (29%), and job opportunities (26%).

Marathon County Residents who are Satisfied with How Welcoming their Community Is

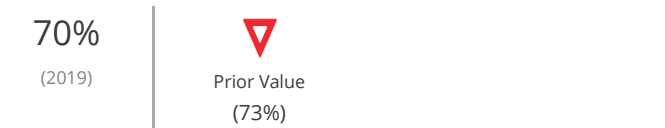


Fewer residents are Satisfied with How Welcoming their Community is.

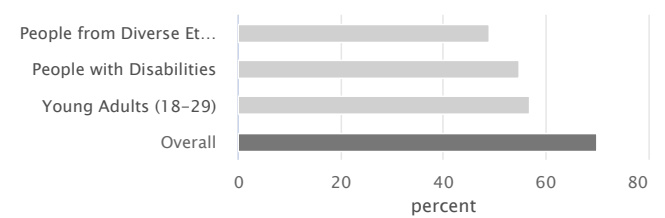


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Marathon County is a Good Place to Live



Marathon County is a Good Place to Live by Population



Number of Years Residing	Percent of 2019 LIFE Survey Respondents
20 or more	72.1%
11-20	14.2%
5-10	6.1%
Less than 5	7.5%

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

74% of LIFE Survey respondents indicated they volunteered or helped others outside their household.

59.3% of LIFE Survey respondents indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of information about community services.

Why is this Important?

Discrimination is defined as prejudicial treatment of a person or a group of people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, religion or other characteristics. In Marathon County, a higher number of LIFE Survey respondents reported experiencing discriminatory acts in 2019 than in 2017. In addition, 2019 respondents indicated a decreased satisfaction in how tolerant the community is.

Members of minority groups may experience a unique stress related to the experience of discrimination or hate crimes. Hate crimes are “criminal acts motivated by bias or prejudice towards particular groups of people. According to the 2017 FBI Hate Crimes Statistics report there was a 17% increase in the number of reported hate crimes (totaling 7,175 incidents that impacted 8,828 victims) since the 2015 report. It is thought that the number of hate crimes committed is actually higher since these types of crimes are underreported. The stress of discrimination and hate crimes negatively impacts a person’s physical and mental health; it also has detrimental effects on families and communities.

*It is important to note that respondents to the 2019 LIFE Survey do not fully reflect the demographics of Marathon County.

Key Takeaways

A higher percentage of 2019 LIFE Survey respondents reported experiences of discrimination.

Less than half of 2019 LIFE Survey respondents indicated they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied that we are a tolerant community.

In the 2017 FBI Hate Crimes report 46 hate crimes occurred in Wisconsin. In the 2015 report, the number of hate crimes reported in Wisconsin was 43.

Marathon County Residents who are Satisfied with How Tolerant their Community Is

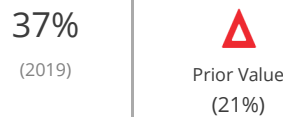


LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

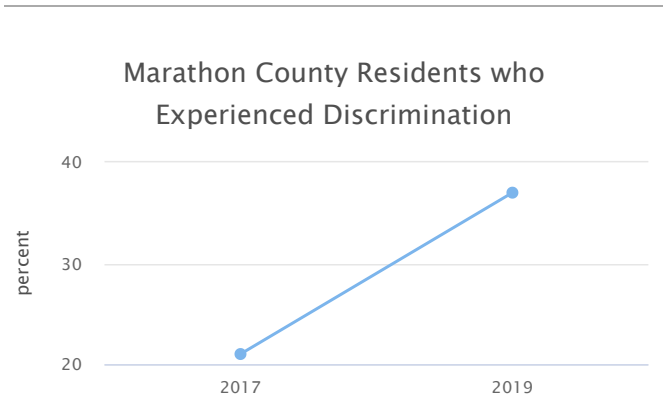
In 2019, 37% of LIFE Survey respondents indicated they have experienced discrimination on one or more occasions.

In 2019, 15% of LIFE Survey respondents indicated that what makes them feel connected to the community is respectful treatment, compared to 21% of respondents in 2017.

Marathon County Residents who Experienced Discrimination



Number of Times Experiencing Discrimination in Past Year	2017	2019
None	70%	63%
1 Time	5%	5%
2-5 Times	10%	15%
6-10 Times	4%	4%
11-20 Times	1%	1%
21+ Times	1%	3%
Don't Know	8%	9%



RACIAL DISPARITIES WITHIN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Indicator 55

Why is this Important?

Racial disparities within the justice system negatively impact individuals and the community. According to the [Academy of Pediatrics](#), students who have been suspended are as much as 10 times more likely to drop out of high school. Individuals who do not complete high school can expect to earn considerably less over a working career and have fewer educational and employment opportunities. Adults who have served time in jail or prison also experience employment barriers upon re-entry to the community.

Marathon County is currently experiencing worker shortages due to changes in age demographics. To help address workforce shortages in our state, the [Future Wisconsin Project's Wisconsin Workforce Competitive Evaluation](#) includes recommendations to improve the career pathway and reach disconnected groups, such as ex-offenders and students in the juvenile justice system.

In addition to employment and income-related impacts on a family, having a parent(s) in jail or prison is considered an [Adverse Childhood Experience \(ACE\)](#). Individuals with four or more ACE's are more likely to deal with a variety of physical and mental health issues throughout their lives.

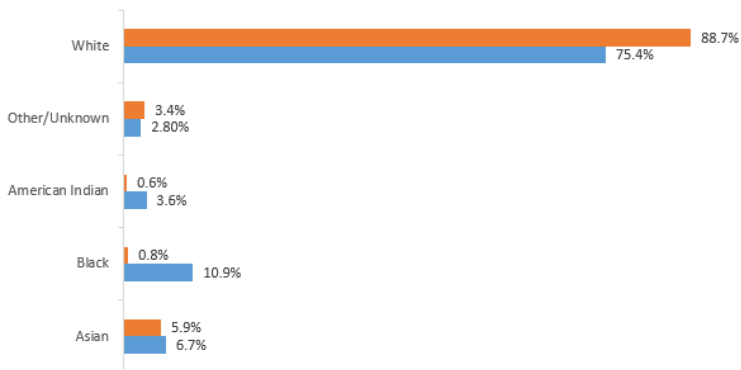
Key Takeaways

Students of color in Marathon County receive **out-of-school suspensions** at a disproportionate rate.

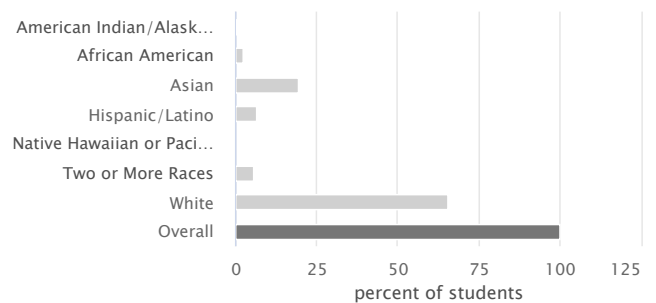
There is a disproportionate percentage of American Indian and Black individuals in Marathon County Jail compared to those demographic groups' percentage of the general population.

The State of Wisconsin has larger racial disparities in the prison population than Marathon County.

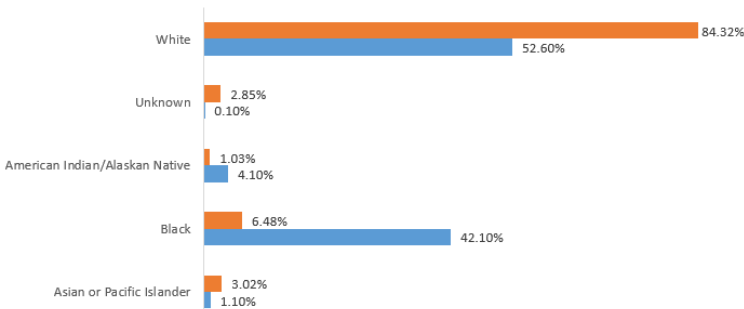
2018 Marathon County General Population Compared to Jail Population by Race



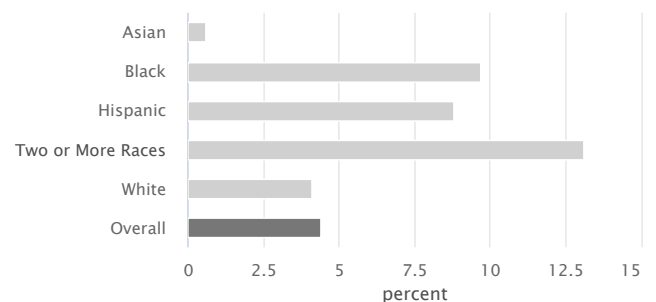
School District Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity by Race/Ethnicity



2018 Wisconsin General Population Compared to Prison Population by Race



Out-of-School Suspensions by Race/Ethnicity



INCOME/WAGE DISPARITIES BY RACE AND GENDER

Indicator 56

Why is this Important?

An individual or family's **income** impacts their quality of life and their ability to ensure their **basic needs** are met. Pay inequality due to race and gender can make some groups more vulnerable to financial hardship than others. The costs of basic needs (e.g. **food, housing, transportation, health care, and child care**) may be higher than is affordable based on their **income**. When people are unable to afford their basic needs, they may be forced to make difficult decisions choosing between food and paying utilities, **skipping needed health care** or medications, or living in unsafe or substandard housing. This can create a strain on community resources and government programs, as well.

Attracting and maintaining a skilled workforce is essential to the health of an economy. Wage disparities may make it more challenging to attract new workers to the area and lower the amount of money that goes back into the economy. This issue is not unique to Marathon County, though, as shown in the Economic Policy Institute's "**State of Working America: Wages 2018**" report, which may indicate policy action is needed at the state and/or national level to address wage disparities.

Key Takeaways

There are racial disparities in wages in Marathon County. A disproportionate percentage of those in poverty are people of color.

Women's earnings as a percentage of men's earnings are slightly higher in Marathon County (74.5%) compared to the State of Wisconsin (70.3%) and U.S. (72.8%).

Women earn less than men with the same educational attainment.

Women's Earnings as a Percentage of Men's Earnings

74.5%
(2013-2017)

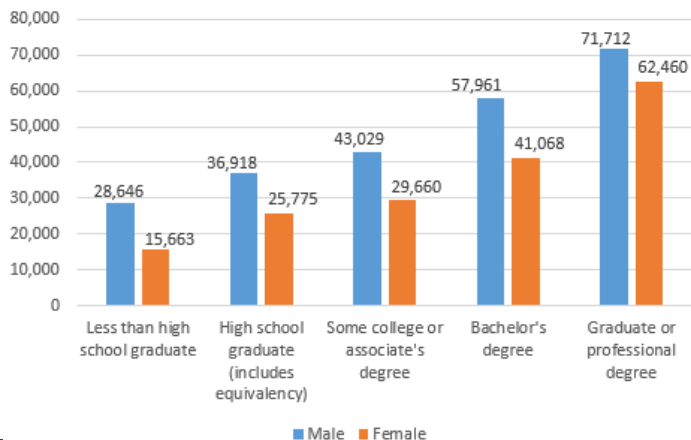


WI Value
(70.3%)

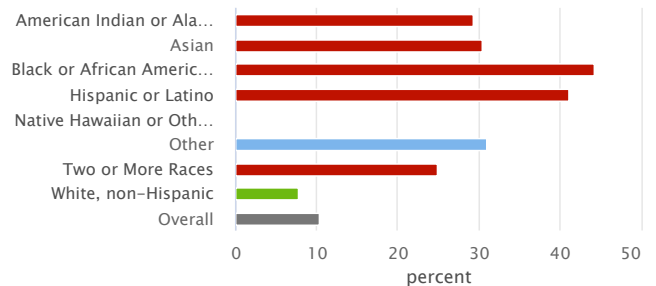


US Value
(72.8%)

Median Earnings in Marathon County by Sex and Educational Attainment

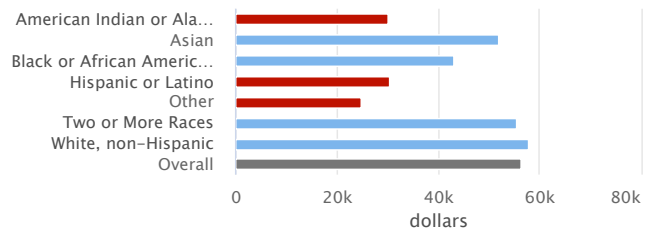


People Living Below Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity



- Significantly **better** than the overall value
- Significantly **worse** than the overall value
- No significant difference with the overall value

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



- Significantly **worse** than the overall value
- No significant difference with the overall value

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

33% of 2019 LIFE Survey respondents are concerned or very concerned about the availability of jobs that pay enough to meet basic household expenses.

Why is this Important?

Transportation is an essential resource for conducting daily life and staying connected to the community. Affordable, reliable, transportation helps families sustain household income; it connects workers with jobs and employers with workers; and it enables seniors to be active and independent and remain in their homes.

The cost of owning, maintaining and insuring a vehicle can burden low-income residents in Marathon County. Guidelines from American Consumer Credit Council estimate transportation costs at 20 percent of household budgets. In areas where taxi services are available, cost and lack of ADA accessibility are significant barriers for low-income populations and people with disabilities.

In Marathon County, public transportation services have diminished since 2011, due to municipal levy limits and reduced transit investment. City bus service and ADA paratransit for persons with disabilities are now available only in the City of Wausau. Public transportation is not provided in the evenings, on weekends or on holidays and key destinations for employment, medical care and retail activity in the Wausau region are no longer served.

Attracting young people to live and work in Marathon County is crucial for local business success and a vibrant economy. The availability of transportation alternatives may be an important factor in that effort. According to a Global Strategy Group survey conducted in 2014, more than half of millennials said they would consider moving to another community if better transportation options were offered.

Key Takeaways

According to a 2019 [WISPIRG survey](#), 75% of surveyed college students in Wisconsin prioritized modes of transportation that did not involve driving.

In 2018, there were 321 calls to 2-1-1 regarding transportation. Of those calls, 136 resulted in unmet needs.

The strongest factor in attracting or maintaining transit ridership is transit service availability.

More than 500,000 rides were provided in 2018

Metro Ride Operating Statistics 2018			
Bus Miles:	401,607	Paratransit Riders:	3,841
Bus Passengers:	503,359	Paratransit Expense:	\$166,190
Bus Expense:	\$2,970,590	Paratransit Exp./Rider	\$43.27
Bus Exp./Passenger:	\$5.90	Paratransit Revenue:	\$7,714
Bus Revenue:	\$388,037	Paratransit Rev/Expense:	4.64%
Revenue/Expense	13.06%	Paratransit Riders:	3,841

Number of Riders on Fixed-Route Bus

503,297

Number of Riders

(2018)



Prior Value
(498,902)

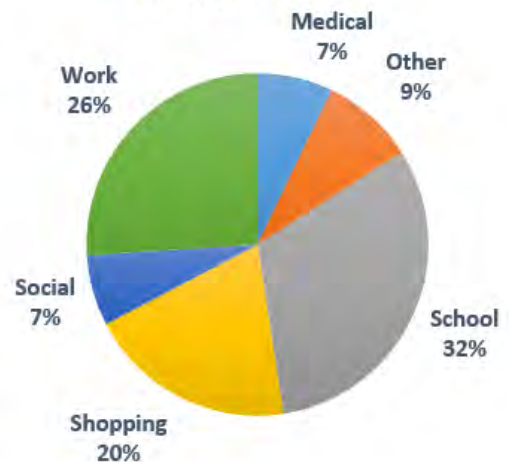


Trend

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 8, 2020.

Passengers Ride for a Variety of Purposes

Metro Ride Passengers By Trip Purpose



Transit Service Levels Impact Ridership



Why is this Important?

Human connections are essential to our mental and physical well-being.

Research also shows that adolescents who spend more time on electronic devices are less happy than those who spend time on most other activities. Other studies link increased social media use among young adults with loneliness.

While these concerns apply to Marathon County residents, LIFE survey and other indicators show that respondents continue to maintain important social connections. Nearly all survey respondents have someone they can talk to. Most (66%) say they choose to live here to be near family and friends. Eighty-six percent agree or somewhat agree that Marathon County is a good place for adults and families.

Community leaders have recognized the need to help seniors stay connected. The Woodson YMCA in Wausau is developing The Landing, a senior activity center. North Central Health Care plans extensive renovations to better serve seniors.

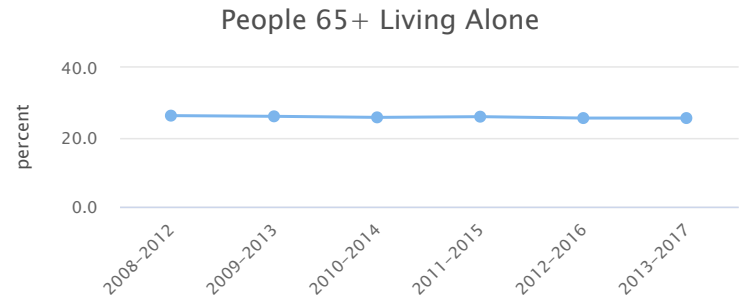
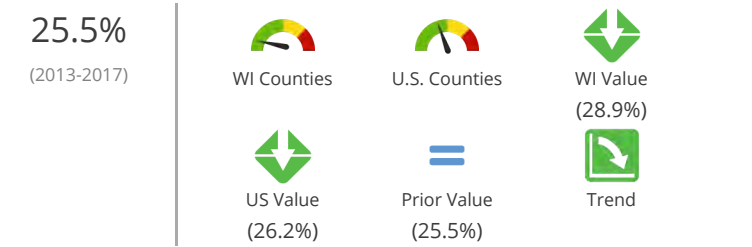
Key Takeaways

While connections to community organizations has dropped based on LIFE survey results, county health data indicates that Marathon County maintains **social associations** at a higher rate than the state or U.S. residents overall.

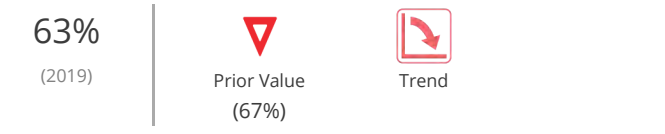
Marathon County residents have a higher rate of **social associations** (13.9 per 100,000) than others in Wisconsin (11.6 per 100,000) or the U.S. (9.3 per 100,000) Social associations include business, labor, religious, civic and other organizations. Individuals with strong social networks are more likely to perform healthy behaviors

73% of Marathon County teens reported having at least one teacher or other adult in their school who they can talk to if they had a problem.

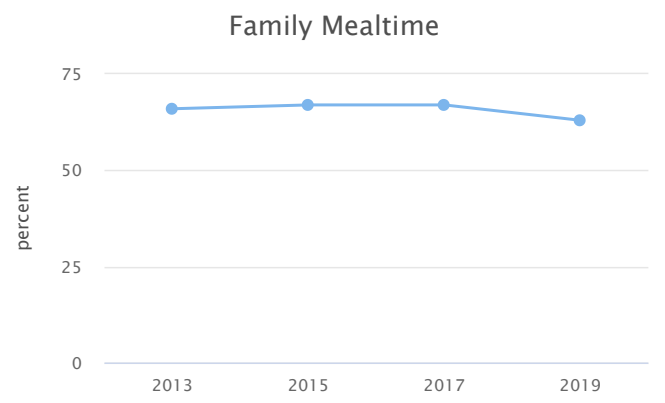
People 65+ Living Alone



Family Mealtime



The percentage of LIFE Survey respondents that ate a meal at a table with family and/or friends at least 3 days per week.



LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

79% of 2019 LIFE Survey Respondents feel connected to the community because of their family/friends.

Fewer LIFE Survey Respondents said they feel connected to the community because of organizations like clubs and churches | 2017 - 47% | 2019 - 29%

Twenty percent of LIFE Survey Respondents said they feel connected to the community because of access to needed service, an 18 percentage point drop from the previous survey | 2017 - 38% | 2019 - 20%