



Life in MARATHON COUNTY

12th Edition | 2019-2021

2019-2021 Marathon County LIFE Report

The 2019-2021 Marathon County LIFE Report is now powered by Marathon County Pulse, a public online data platform that provides access to a variety of Marathon County population data.

The 2019-2021 LIFE Report powered by Pulse is a critical tool to ensure that we use data-driven approaches for community health improvement in Marathon County.

Access to population-level data is crucial to empower local leaders and community organizations to create results-based strategies that are data-driven.

This is the 12th edition of the LIFE Report, which has been published every two years since 1997. The LIFE Report is guided by the LIFE Steering Committee and made possible through the support of organizations listed below.

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2019-2021 LIFE REPORT SUCCESSES & PROGRESS

- The Marathon County School-Based Counseling Consortium offers onsite mental health counseling in every Marathon County public school district.
- To serve the growing population of seniors and increase social and community connections, a multimillion-dollar initiative to develop new facilities and programming has been put into place. Those efforts include development of the YMCA's The Landing and extensive renovations at North Central Health Care.
- A Crisis Assessment Response Teams (CART) was implemented with the goals to reduce the numbers of involuntary detentions, provide better access, divert persons to mental health services, and provide immediate crisis response to alleviate demand on the crisis services. Marathon County has experienced significant reduction in emergency detentions for individuals with a mental health crisis with the formation of two CARTs, which pair a law enforcement officer with a crisis professional.
- The Marathon County Board has made it a priority to identify the gaps in high speed Internet access and help residents connect to affordable high speed Internet services.
- As a community, Marathon County has responded to raise awareness and address the opioid (and other drugs) epidemic with prevention, treatment, and enforcement efforts through changes in organizational policies and practices. Grant funding from the Wisconsin Division of Health Services was secured to create a Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) program in the county jail. This program will be the first in the State to offer Suboxone or Vivitrol to our inmate population to assist with opioid addiction issues.
- Access to higher education in Central WI is better than it's ever been. Barriers to higher education have been greatly reduced and is evident with more young people getting degrees than previous generations, leading to Marathon County residents age 25-44 received Bachelor's degrees at a higher rate than previous generations.
- The Marathon County Hunger Coalition member pantries collaborated to ensure individuals/families receive the needed food to keep them healthy and fed. More requests for food assistance were met by pantries throughout Marathon County. School districts, as well as post-secondary institutions, worked to solve hunger for students within their schools by opening food pantries within the schools.
- The Marathon County Board passed a resolution in 2019 to recognize June as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) PRIDE month.
- Overall, Marathon County school districts meet or exceed WI state educational standards (Forward Exam, ACT), leading to all school districts in Marathon County exceeding the state average for high school graduation rate.
- The Marathon County Board of Supervisors has identified the protection and enhancement of surface water and groundwater quality and quantity as a priority objective in their 2018-2022 Strategic Plan.

2019-2021 LIFE REPORT CALLS TO ACTION

Alcohol

Alcohol continues to be the most frequently consumed substance of use and misuse in Marathon County, among both teens and adults. Increase awareness of continual impact of alcohol misuse and abuse on children, families, and individuals.

Diversity, Inclusion, & Belonging

Create a community that is diverse, inclusive and everyone has a sense of belonging.

- Combat discrimination (In 2019, more than one-third of LIFE Survey respondents reported one or more experiences of discrimination; this is a 7% increase since 2017)
- Ensure a welcoming and inclusive community (LIFE Survey respondents reported a continued decline in satisfaction with how welcoming their community is in 2019. Satisfaction with how welcoming the community is has fallen more than 20 percentage points since 2013);
- Fewer than half of 2019 LIFE Survey respondents said they were satisfied with the level of tolerance in the community.

Housing

Provide quality, affordable, diverse housing. This includes access to rental housing for all incomes, condos, and housing for mid-life professionals.

Workforce Development

Continue to develop and promote quality, engaging, entertaining places and amenities that attract people and are accessible to all. Marathon County has gained new residents from surrounding rural counties but has lost residents to larger urban areas in the Midwest.

- Promote opportunities for local employers to enhance their recruiting and retention strategies.
- Develop, attract, and retain a younger, well-educated workforce, which is critical to keep Marathon County's workforce strong.
- Our region's economic success requires action to enhance and promote efforts to support diversity and inclusion where culturally diverse communities feel welcome and are provided access to high growth-high wage jobs through development of relevant skills, knowledge, and abilities.

Child Care

Marathon County has experienced a significant decrease in child care programs and their capacity. Our community needs to have accessible, affordable, quality child care programs for families to live in Marathon County. We need to explore how our community can support quality child care.

- Outside investment is needed to support our early childhood teachers and our children.
- Exploring how businesses and school districts can support quality child care for their employees is important.
- Address the cliff of eligibility requirements in public benefits in regards to childcare (and MA, FoodShare, etc.). A benefits cliff is what happens when public benefit programs taper off or phase out quickly when household earnings increase. The abrupt reduction or loss of benefits can be very disruptive for families because even though household earnings increased, they usually have not increased enough for self-sufficiency.

Drug Treatment & Recovery

There is a lack of a community-wide plan to address the treatment and recovery of substance abuse to ensure continuum of care in recovery.

- Create more options in Transitional Housing units for individuals coming out of substance abuse treatment program.
- Expand Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) outside of the correctional settings. The majority of the persons impacted by opioid addictions are not in our jail but are being treated at local medical facilities.
- Expand addiction treatment services wherever possible. A 2018 Wisconsin Professional Police Association survey identified 77% of respondents feel law enforcement should treat people addicted to opioids as persons in need of care and treatment rather than only as criminal offenders.

Water Quality

The community should engage key stakeholders and decision makers to address the options, costs, and opportunities to reduce phosphorous from agricultural runoff to surface waters to acceptable levels.

Prosperous

The Prosperous section contains indicators from Economic Environment, Education, and Environment & Energy.

Opportunities for Action

For Individuals

- Seek education and training to 'Own and Hone' workforce skills to remain competitive in the labor market and to increase pay levels associated with skill and knowledge enhancement.
- Promote and support childhood literacy in our community.
- Contact your legislator and advocate for growth, support, increased pay and benefits for professional childcare services in greater Marathon County.
- Encourage employers to adopt family-friendly practices.

For Organizations

- Organizations should strive to pay a living wage that allows employee to participate more fully in the local economy.
- Business and Industry should continue to partner with K-16 institutions to enhance career pathway pipelines focused on innovation and technology to support the economic growth of our driving industry sectors.
- Continue to build organizational capacity and connectedness to support strategic workforce development throughout the central Wisconsin region.
- Consider providing onsite child-care.

For the Community

- Be a collective force to shape change to realize enhanced child-care services and expand affordable child-care facilities. See childcare providers as critical professionals, not babysitters.
- Continue funding for programs providing professional agency training for childhood trauma, mental health treatment and building family resiliency to reduce adverse impact of early year's experiences like abuse, neglect, family violence, serious accidents, illness, and medical procedures.
- Develop and support a community strategy that will bring together diverse stakeholders to address the obstacles to workforce participation.
- Establish funding resources that align to strategic priorities to uplift at-risk youth and underserved populations.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Successes & Progress

- Unemployment in Marathon County is at historic lows, and remains better than Wisconsin and the U.S.
- Marathon County's labor force participation rate of 69% is higher than Wisconsin and the U.S.
- Access to higher education in Central Wisconsin is better than it's ever been. Barriers to higher education have been greatly reduced and is evident with more young people getting degrees than previous generations.
- Marathon County's local economy is diverse, driven by the key industries of manufacturing, health care, finance & insurance, agriculture, and tourism.
- Marathon County has lower poverty rates than Wisconsin and the U.S.

Call to Action

- Marathon County has gained new residents from surrounding rural counties but has **lost residents to larger urban areas** in the Midwest. Explore opportunities for local employers to enhance their recruiting and retention strategies must be explored.
- Develop quality places and amenities to attract the best and brightest.
- Attract and retain a younger, well-educated workforce to keep Marathon County's workforce strong.
- Develop consistent pipelines from K-12 to higher education to employment.
- Encourage supply chain innovation, upstream technology development, and the formation of new businesses driven by the region's existing industries.
- Increase affordable multi-unit family housing.

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

Why is this Important?

The region's major industries—**manufacturing, healthcare, finance & insurance, and agriculture**—depend on a steady influx of workers across the skill spectrum that, for the foreseeable future, cannot be supplied by remote talent. This includes everything from the entry-level labor required by many small to mid-size manufacturers to the highly skilled engineers and specialty physicians needed to support the region's advanced manufacturers and healthcare organizations.

Manufacturing continues to draw the most new workers to the area with a net inflow of 2,577 people. Retail trade is second with 662 people.

Healthcare, our second largest industry sector, is **losing more workers** than we are gaining with a net loss of 58 workers.

Marathon County needs to become a desirable destination not only for traditional manufacturing employment, but also for creative workers, entrepreneurs, and professionals. The disruption of traditional industries and employers (such as manufacturing and agriculture) could lead to fewer local jobs.

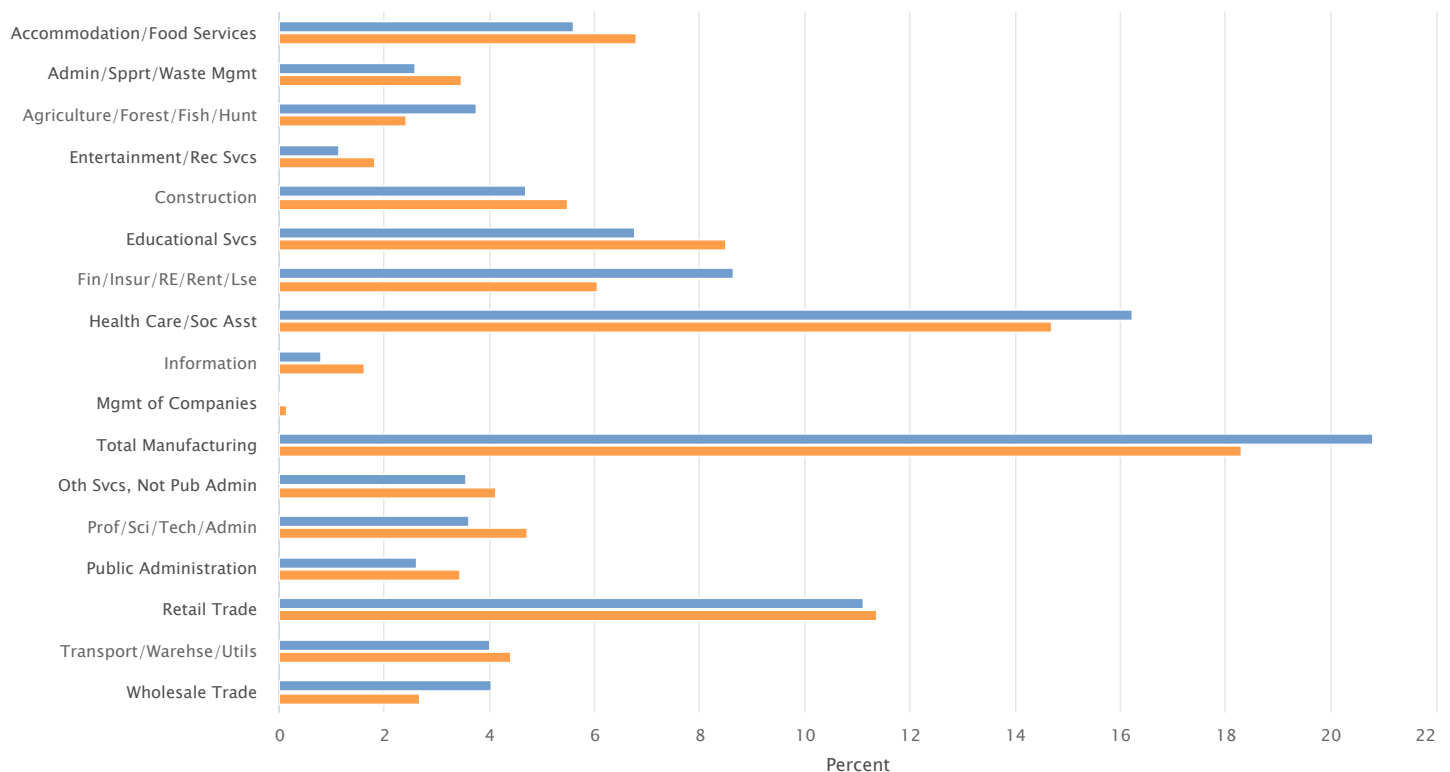
Key Takeaways

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

Marathon County and the surrounding four-county region have a **high concentration of production and agricultural talent**.

Marathon County, compared to the state of Wisconsin, has lower employment in Information Technology and Educational Services.

Employed Civilian 16+ by Industry



Why is this Important?

Marathon County has gained new residents from surrounding rural counties but has **lost residents to larger urban areas** in the Midwest. Since 2010, Marathon County gained more than 1,300 net new residents from Clark, Langlade, Lincoln, Shawano, and Wood counties.

During the same period, Marathon County lost a net total of over 900 residents to Dane, Brown, and Winnebago counties in Wisconsin and to Ramsey and Hennepin counties in Minnesota. Marathon County is losing younger, higher educated professionals to larger urban areas with more employment opportunities.

Community culture and social environment are becoming just as important factors for young professionals as wage and benefits.

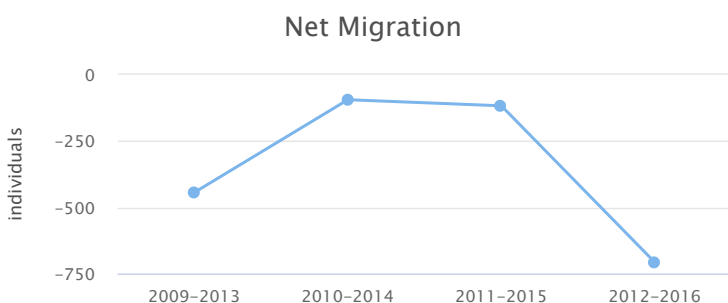
Key Takeaways

Marathon County has gained new residents from surrounding rural counties but has **lost residents to larger urban areas** in the Midwest.

Population growth in Marathon County has slowed near a standstill.

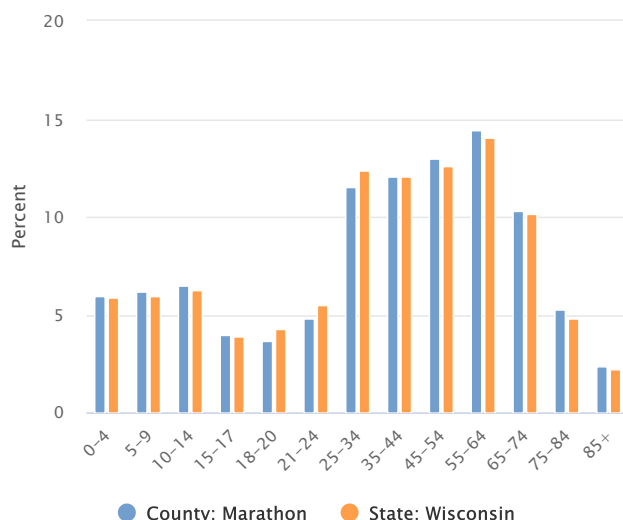
Marathon County continues to lose population, especially young adults and working age population.

More people are moving away from Marathon County.



Marathon County's aging population will have significant impacts on the future workforce.

Population by Age Group



Net migration looks at the difference between the number of people, age one and older, moving to Marathon County from another Wisconsin county or another state and the number of people moving away from a county.

FIGURE 21. INFLOW/OUTFLOW FOR MARATHON COUNTY, 2015
FLOW OF WORKERS TO/FROM THE COUNTY



Why is this Important?

Developing the region’s existing workers and continually attracting talented individuals from outside the region are both important. But the orientation of all talent initiatives must start with the recognition that skilled workers have a choice of where to live and work. The Wausau region will prosper only if it can compete successfully for top-tier talent, including locally developed talent and skilled workers from outside the region.

The region’s major industries—**manufacturing, healthcare, finance & insurance, and agriculture**—depend on a steady influx of workers across the skill spectrum that, for the foreseeable future, cannot be supplied by remote talent. This includes everything from the entry-level labor required by many small to mid-size manufacturers to the highly skilled engineers and specialty physicians needed to support the region’s advanced manufacturers and healthcare organizations.

There is industry demand for jobs requiring higher education degrees, but in Marathon County there is shortage of qualified higher education professionals.

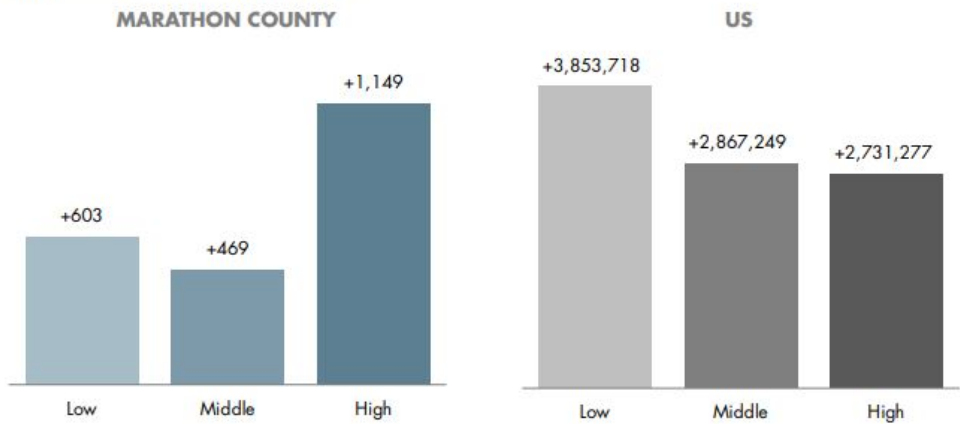
There is also a growing trend to hire entry-level workers and train them to develop skills that will make them successful on the job. Getting the education and skill building you need to do the job is just as important and is a viable alternative to attaining a higher education degree.

Key Takeaways

- More employers are investing in on-the-job training or apprenticeships, which is beneficial to attracting and attaining a strong workforce.
- Entrepreneurship, innovation, and the adoption of new technologies are all critical ingredients for the growth of local and regional economies.
- Developing consistent pipelines from K-12 to higher education to employment is pivotal for future workforce development.

Marathon County needs more high skilled jobs.

FIGURE 41. OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES BY SKILL LEVEL, 2017–2022
INCLUDES NEW AND REPLACEMENT JOBS



Low Skill	High school or less
Middle Skill	More than high school, less than four years of college
High Skill	Four-year degree or above

Source: (all figures) EMSI 2018.2 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed.
Generated by www.marathoncountypulse.org on January 8, 2020.

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

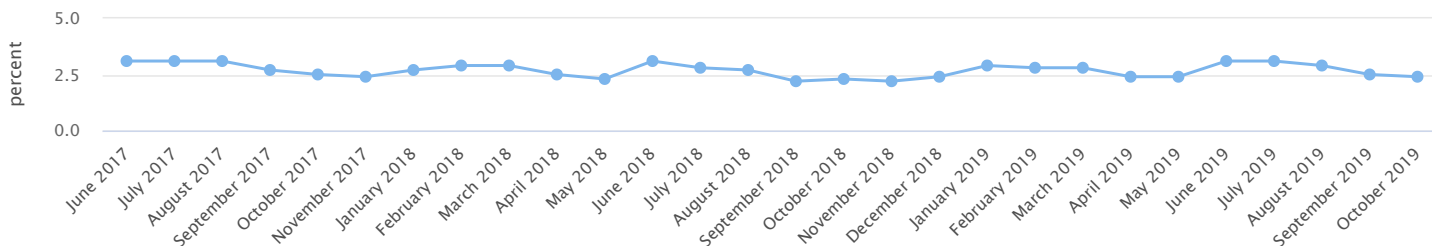


US Value
(3.3%)

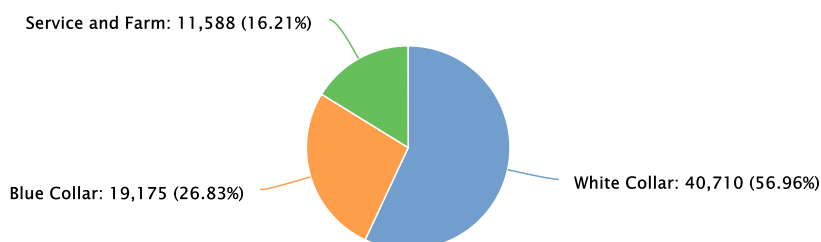


Trend

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.

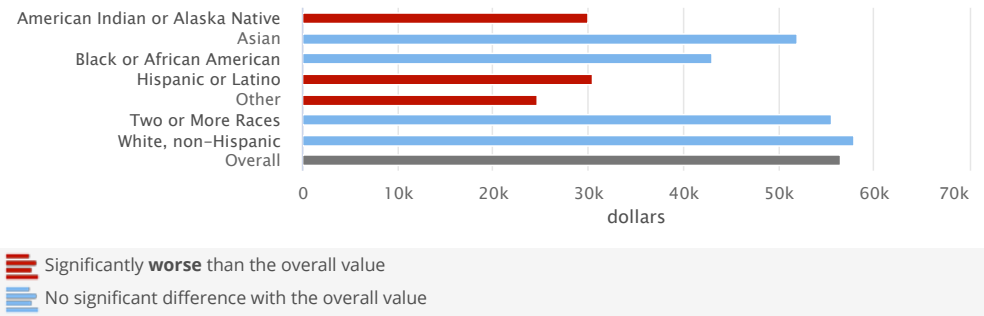
Wages and benefits are important, but encouraging local employers to provide non-traditional benefits (child care, healthcare, and retirement packages) for talent retention is also vital. Wage is one piece of the puzzle when it comes to job satisfaction, a healthy lifestyle, and work/life balance.

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.

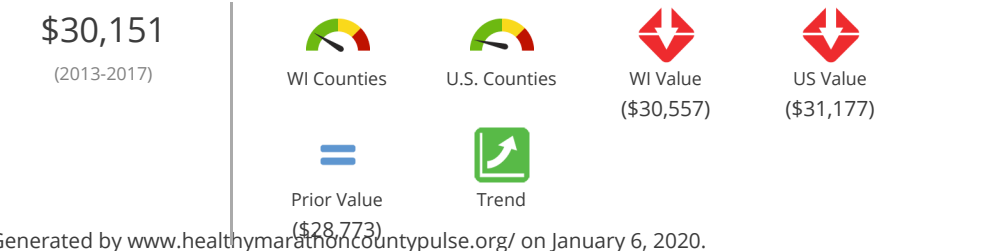
Significant household income disparities exist among racial/ethnic groups in Marathon County.

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



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

Per Capita Income



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

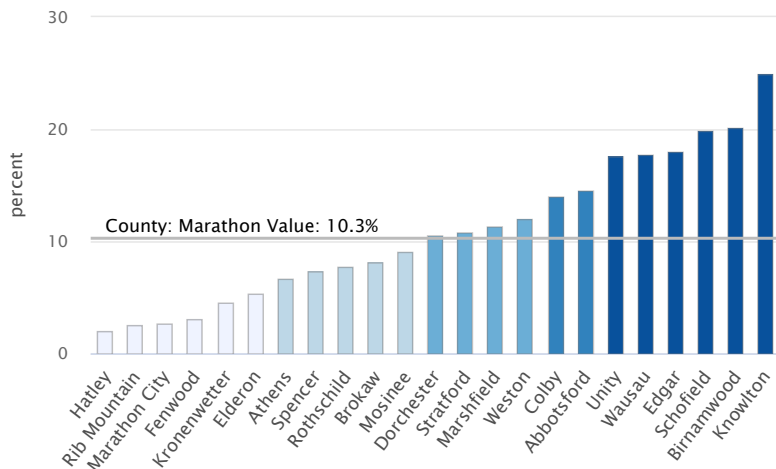
Poverty impacts **children, families, people age 65+, veterans, and persons with disabilities.**

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



People Living Below Poverty Level

10.3%

(2013-2017)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(12.3%)



US Value
(14.6%)



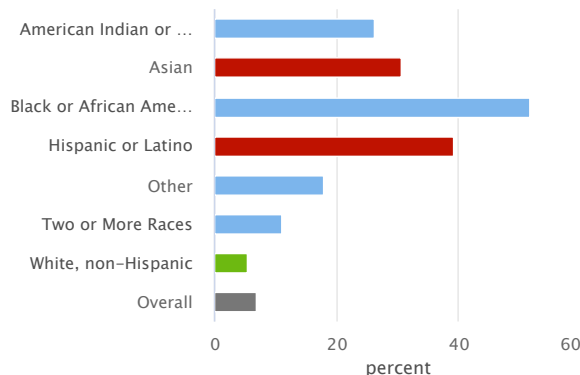
Prior Value
(11.1%)



Trend

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

Families 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

Children Living Below Poverty Level

14.8%

(2013-2017)



WI Counties



WI Value
(16.7%)



U.S. Counties



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.

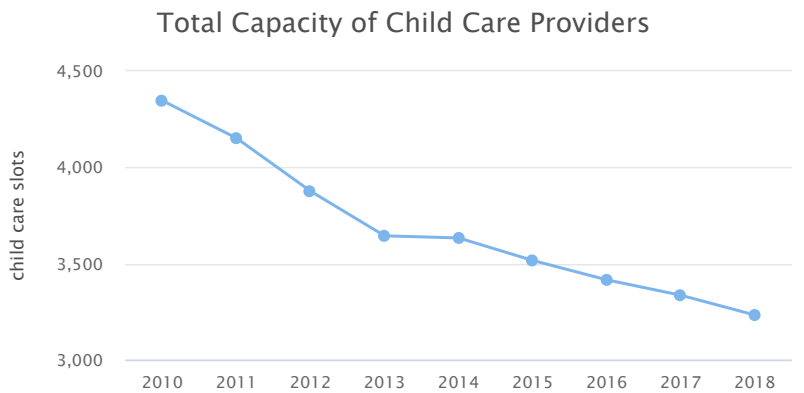
The quality of care provided makes a big difference in the lives of children and families. Maintaining a safe, healthy place for children to learn and grow isn't easy. It takes hard work and dedication. **YoungStar** is designed to help child care providers succeed. The 5 Star rating system gives providers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

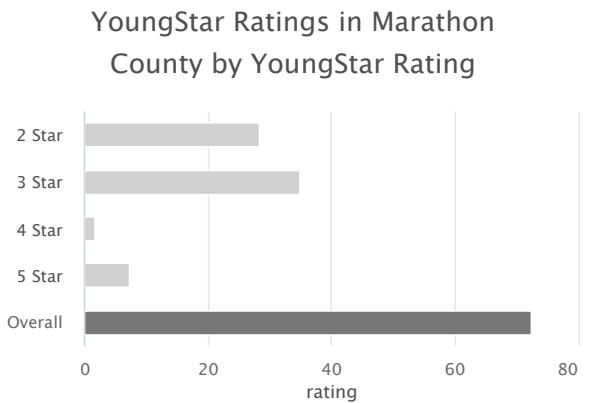
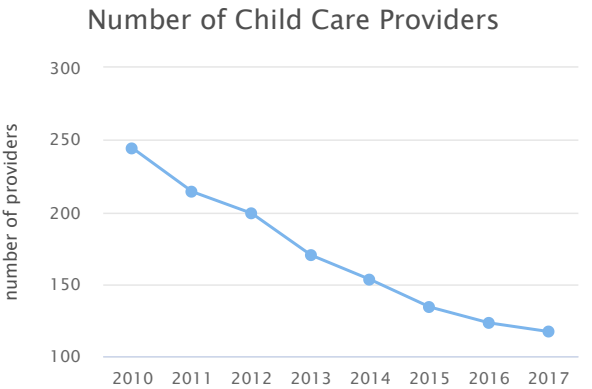
Child care slots

Prior Value

Trend

Generated by www.healthymarathoncounty.org/pulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

Regulated child care providers have decreased significantly.



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

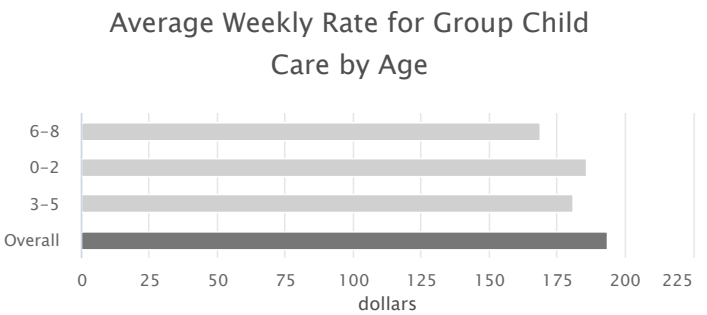
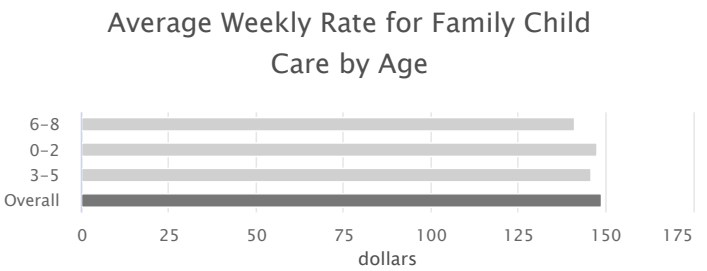
The average annual cost for full-time child care for one child is between \$7,400 - \$9,500 in Marathon County.

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
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?

Diversity of student populations vary greatly in school districts that serve Marathon County. This diversity poses unique opportunities and challenges for schools. As diversity increases, school districts need to respond with support services and culturally responsive practices. Historically, Marathon County school districts are below the state average for students with limited English proficiency and below the state average for economic disadvantage.

Twenty-three percent of Marathon County students are enrolled in the rural school districts (Abbotsford, Athens, Colby, Edgar, Marathon, Spencer, Stratford). The majority (77%) of Marathon County students are enrolled within the D.C. Everest, Mosinee, and Wausau School districts.

Key Takeaways

The percentage of economically disadvantaged and **Limited English Proficient (LEP) students** vary greatly in Marathon County public school districts.

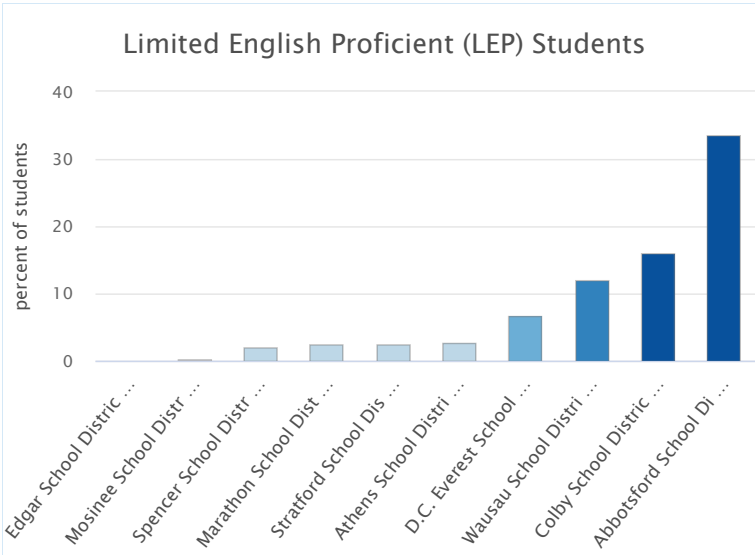
School district enrollment by Race/Ethnicity varies greatly throughout Marathon County.

Public school district enrollment for 2017-2018 was 21,457 total students.

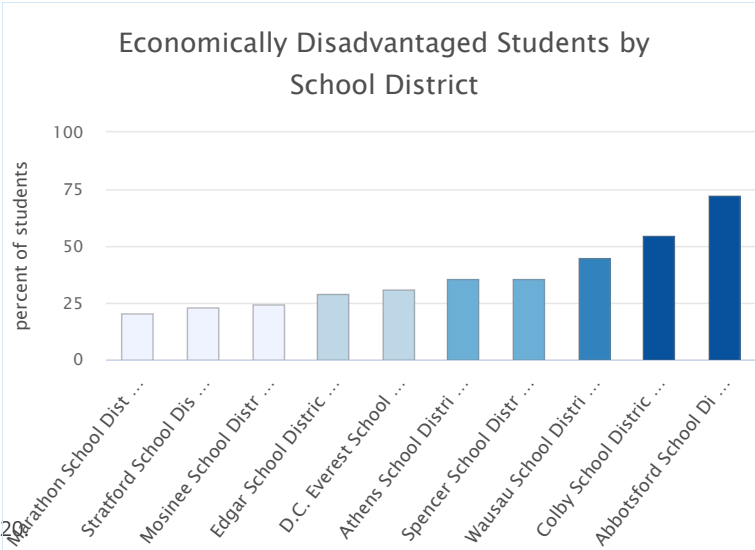
Marathon County School District Enrollment

School District	Number of students
Athens School District	415
Edgar School District	597
Spencer School District	686
Marathon School District	731
Abbotsford School District	764
Stratford School District	884
Colby School District	912
Mosinee School District	2,016
D.C. Everest School District	6,004
Wausau School District	8,311

An "economically disadvantaged" student is a student who is a member of a household that meets the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price meals (less than or equal to 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines) under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). School districts are permitted to use their best local source of information about the economic status of individual students consistent with the DPI definition.



An Limited English Proficient (LEP) status students is any student whose first language, or whose parents' or guardians' first language, is not English and whose level of English proficiency requires specially designed instruction, either in English or in the first language or both, in order for the student to fully benefit from classroom instruction and to be successful in attaining the state's high academic standards expected of all students at their grade level.



Why is this Important?

Successful academic experiences lead to greater post-secondary opportunities for students. Results on statewide assessments indicate that a majority of Marathon County students meet or exceed the state English Language Assessment (ELA) average. ACT scores are one indicator that students are prepared to successfully pursue post-secondary education routes. The average ACT score in Marathon County mirrors the Wisconsin state average.

The school district data is based on the 10 public school districts (Abbotsford, Athens, Colby, D.C. Everest, Edgar, Marathon, Mosinee, Spencer, Stratford, Wausau) that serve the majority of Marathon County students.

Key Takeaways

The percentage of Marathon County students scoring **Proficient and Advanced on the Forward Exams** was 43.9%.

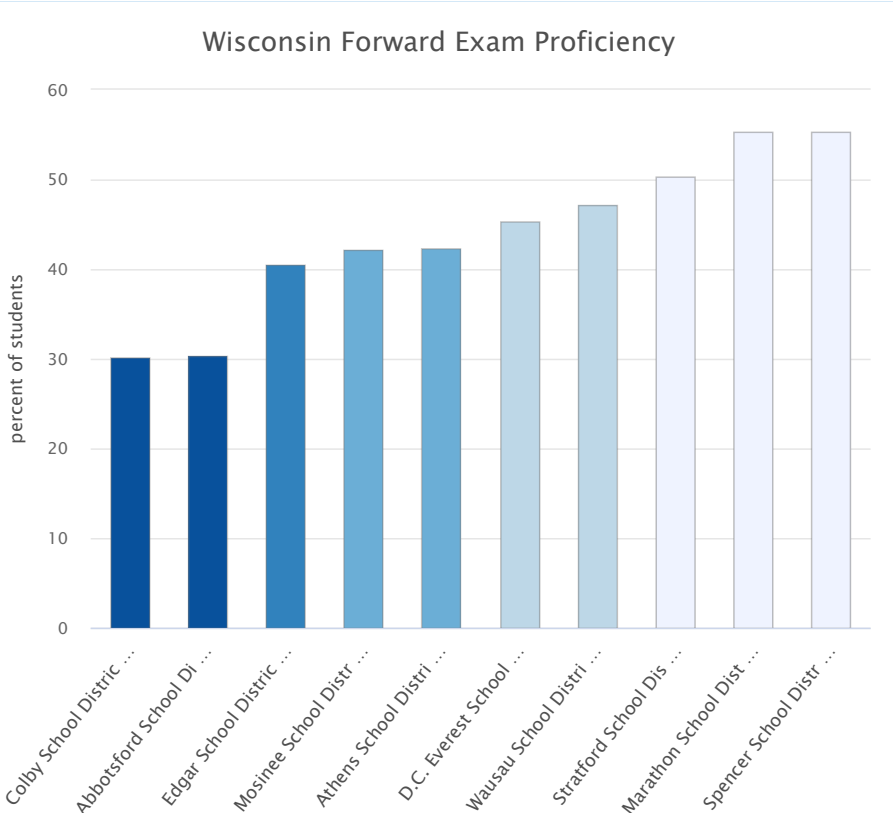
All Marathon County public school districts meet or exceed expectations for the **School District Accountability Report Cards**.

Wisconsin Forward Exam State Average

42.2%

Marathon County Forward Exam Average

43.9%



ACT Average Score for Wisconsin

19.7

ACT Average Score for Marathon County

19.9

ACT Average Score by School District

School District	Average score
Athens School District	18.6
Abbotsford School District	18.7
Colby School District	18.9
Mosinee School District	19.2
Edgar School District	19.8
Wausau School District	20.3
Stratford School District	20.7
Marathon School District	20.9
D.C. Everest School District	21.1
Spencer School District	21.5

During the 2015-16 school year, Wisconsin rolled out a new assessment called the Wisconsin Forward Exam. The Exam is designed to gauge how well students are doing in relation to the Wisconsin Academic Standards. These standards outline what students should know and be able to do in order to be college and career ready.

The Forward Exam is administered online in the spring of each school year at:

- grades 3-8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics,
- grades 4 and 8 in Science and,
- grades 4, 8, and 10 in Social Studies.

Why is this Important?

High school diplomas provide access to the world of work and a path to higher education. All school districts in Marathon County exceed the state average for high school graduation rate.

Less Marathon County high school graduates are choosing to continue their education. 61.3% of 2017 Marathon County high school graduates enrolled in a post-secondary institutions such as two-year or four-year college, technical colleges or training program. This is a significant decrease from 71.7% of graduates continuing their education in 2013.

More high school graduates are directly entering the workforce than five years ago. The demand for entry level workers in the area is greater than that requiring post secondary education.

Key Takeaways

Marathon County's overall **high school graduation rate** is 92.3%, higher than the state of Wisconsin and U.S.

Post-secondary institution enrollment is changing in Marathon County, meaning less high school graduates are continuing post-secondary education at any level for many reasons.

61.3% of Marathon County high school graduates enroll in post-secondary education, compared to 66.4% for the rest of Wisconsin.

All Marathon County high school graduation rates are higher than the state average.

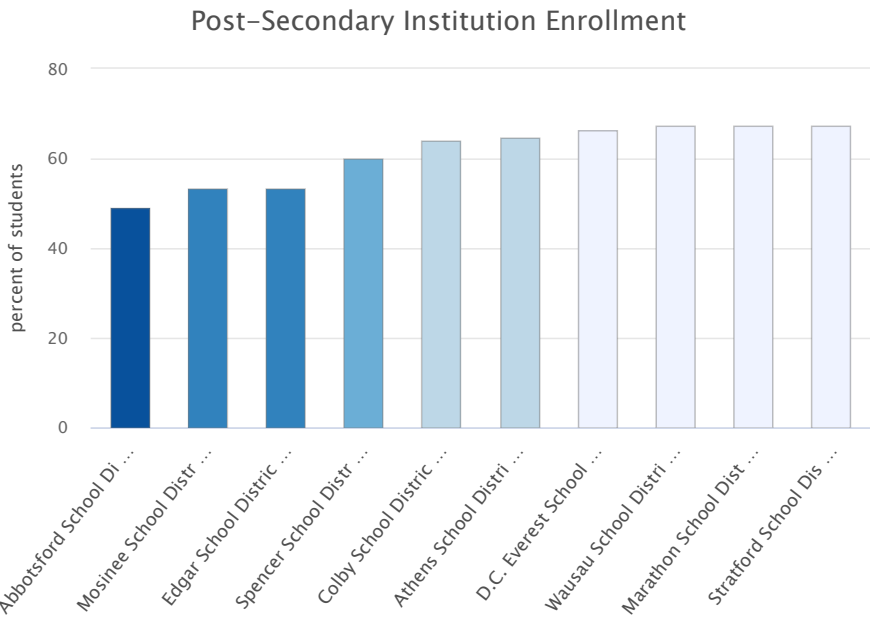
Marathon County High School Graduation Rate

92.3%

Wisconsin High School Graduation Rate

89.6%

High School Graduation Rate



Post-secondary institution enrollment is the percentage of high school completers (graduates) that enrolled in post-secondary institutions including public/private, two-year or four-year college, technical colleges and training programs.

School District	Percent of students
Wausau School District	90.7%
Spencer School District	93.5%
D.C. Everest School District	94.1%
Colby School District	94.9%
Athens School District	95.7%
Stratford School District	96.2%
Mosinee School District	96.5%
Marathon School District	98.7%
Abbotsford School District	100.0%
Edgar School District	100.0%

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%)

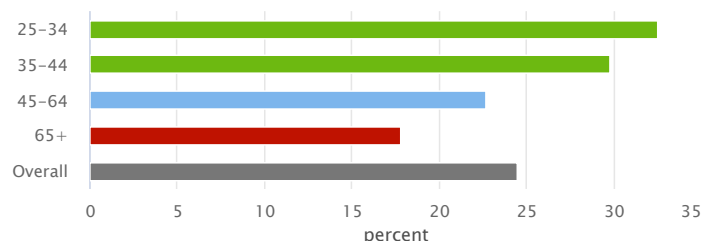


Prior Value
(91.1%)



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%)

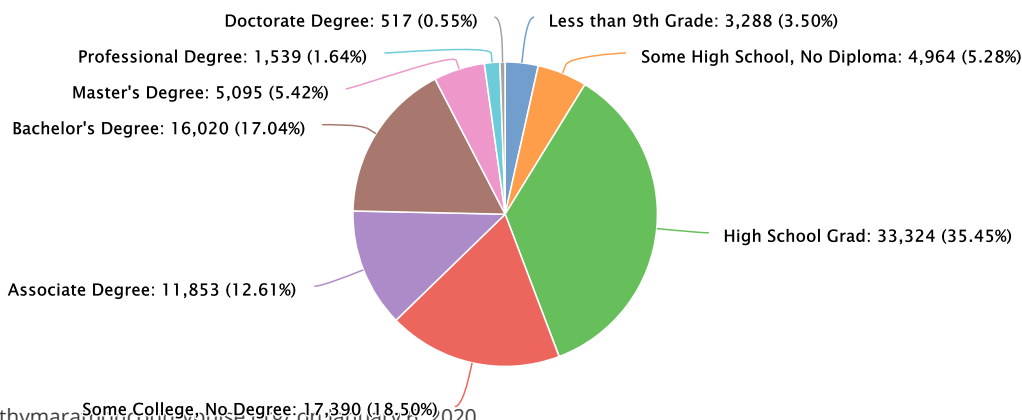


Prior Value
(23.9%)



Trend

Population 25+ by Educational Attainment



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.

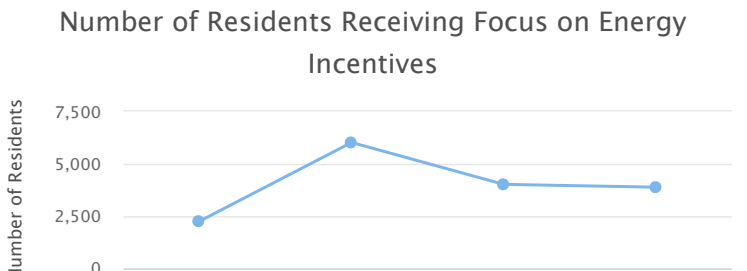
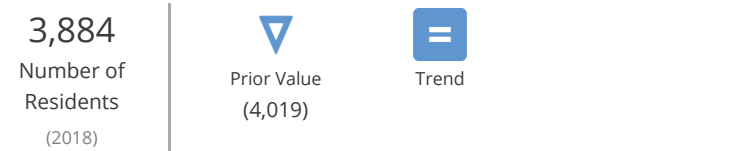
Focus on Energy, a program coordinated by the State of Wisconsin with utility providers, offers statewide energy conservation and renewable energy programs for residents and businesses. These programs provide financial incentives, education and consultative services to encourage and implement projects 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.

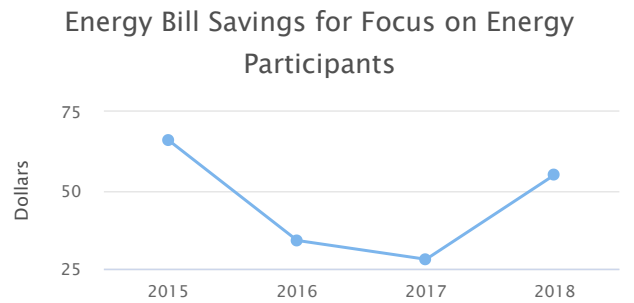
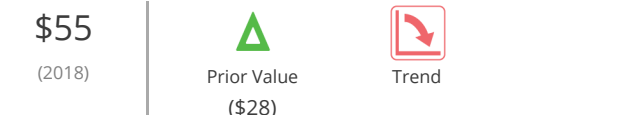
Key Takeaways

- 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



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

Healthy

The Prosperous section contains indicators Basic Needs, Health & Wellness, and Environment & Energy.

Opportunities for Action

For Individuals

- Keep alcohol out of the hands of youth. Model safe and responsible alcohol use.
- Educate yourselves on addiction as a chronic disease. Support local recovery efforts.
- Learn how phosphorus impacts the environment and water quality. Support efforts and practices that help minimize phosphorus and other pollutants from entering our lakes and streams.
- Advocate to State and Federal Government Officials the need to take action on the cliff of eligibility requirements in public benefits, providing protection to the most vulnerable portions of our community.

For Organizations

- Support community initiatives addressing evidence based approaches for solving the issues of substance abuse, affordable housing and basic needs for all members of the community.
- Review policies to ensure your company is a recovery-oriented organization.
- Collaborate and partner to work together to collectively reduce phosphorus impacts on surface water quality.
- Maintain and grow collaboration and partnership in working together to address the needs of all community members.

For the Community

- Come together as individuals, businesses and organizations to plan and assist in implementing strategic actions for solving the community's issues of affordable housing, substance abuse and basic needs.
- Define a community-wide plan that addresses the root causes of substance abuse both in teens and adults. Invest in evidence based solutions, intervention and policy strategies to reduce/eliminate substance abuse.
- Engage stakeholders and decision makers to address the options, costs and opportunities to reduce phosphorus from agriculture runoff to surface waters to acceptable levels.
- Promote community awareness and discussions regarding solutions for the following issues within the community: affordable housing, emergency family housing, supported housing, transitional housing, day care and women's shelters.

BASIC NEEDS

Successes & Progress

- The Marathon County Hunger Coalition member pantries collaborated to ensure individuals/families receive the needed food to keep them healthy and fed.
- The Marathon County Housing and Homelessness Coalition brought the non-profit housing organizations together to work collaboratively in their effort to assure people are housed.
- School districts worked to solve hunger for their students by opening food pantries within the schools.
- More requests for food assistance were met by pantries throughout Marathon County.

Calls to Action

- Provide quality affordable housing that is accessible to public transportation.
- Address the cliff of eligibility requirements in public benefits.
- Provide caregivers for elderly individuals wanting to continue to live within their own home.
- Provide emergency housing units for homeless families. Only one family unit is available in all of Marathon County.
- Create more options in Transitional Housing units for individuals coming out of treatment programs.

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

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.

Hunger Coalition Partner Pantry Requests for Food Assistance



Requests for Food Assistance Met

151,875
(2017)

▲
Prior Value
(146,647)

↗
Trend

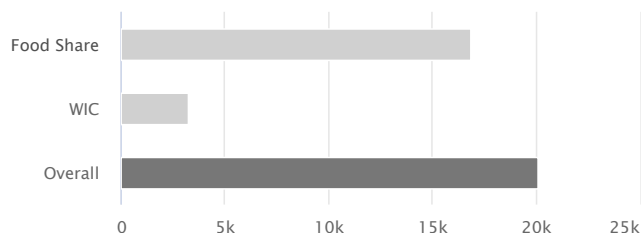
Number of Individuals Served Through Food Assistance

20,116
(2018)

▼
Prior Value
(20,756)

↺
Trend

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 requests 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)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(45.7%)



US Value
(50.6%)

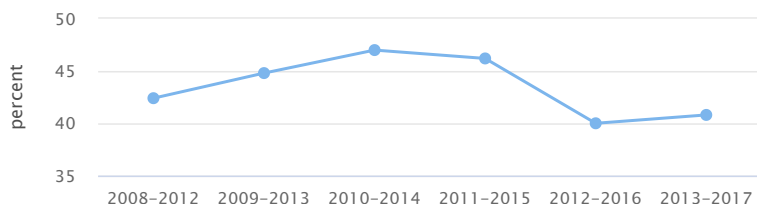


Prior Value
(40.0%)



Trend

Renters Spending 30% or More of Household Income on Rent



Number of Households Receiving Emergency Housing Assistance Funds (EHAF)

249

(2018)



Prior Value
(246)



Trend

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?

The cost of owning or renting a home are numerous and include water and sewer, electricity, natural gas, LP or propane gas as well as non-essential services such as phone, cable television and internet services. Added together, the total costs of these services can exceed family budgets. If this happens and the bills go unpaid, the utilities can and do shut off the services. Utilities are a life necessity.

In the event of a service shut off, safety and health issues can arise. Lack of proper water and sewer can result in unsanitary conditions. Without proper heating individuals may turn to unsafe alternatives for keeping their home warm. In today's world, the lack of electricity can have an effect on children's ability to complete homework, adult's ability to apply for employment and many other activities that have become necessary to handle via the internet.

There are energy programs available to assist with heating and electrical needs. Two of the major energy assistance programs available to residents with limited income are the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program administered by Energy Services, Inc. and Public Benefits Energy Assistance Program. While available resources in the community provide much needed assistance, there are still needs not being met in Marathon County.

Key Takeaways

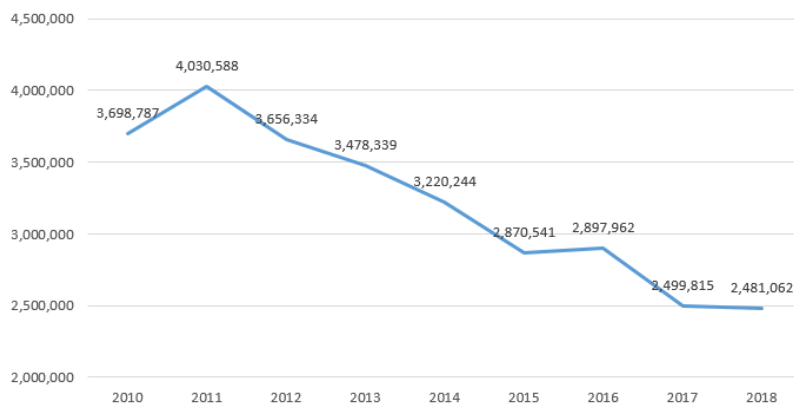
The average water bill for a Marathon County residential customer using 18,750 gallons in a quarter was \$195.19, with an additional charge for sewer cost.

If a utility service provided the primary heat source to a home or impacts the primary heat source to a home (for example, water or steam radiators), the utility cannot disconnect that service from November 1 through April 15 each year.

70% of Wisconsin residents use natural gas for heating while only 12% use electricity for heating. More than 20% of Wisconsin households do not use air conditioning during the summer.

In 2019 the average cost per kwh of electricity in Wisconsin was \$0.148; Wisconsin Public Service cost per kwh was \$0.098.

Total Amount Paid by the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program for Heating Assistance



Number of Households with Utility Assistance

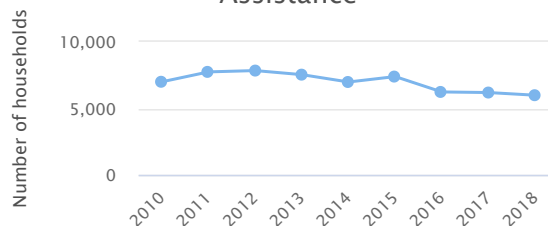
5,985
Number of
households
(2018)

Prior Value
(6,185)

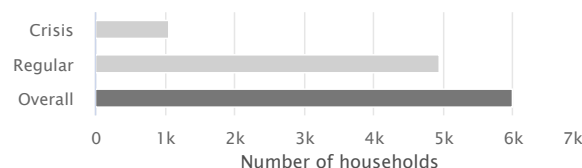


Trend

Number of Households with Utility Assistance



Number of Households with Utility Assistance by Type of Payment



LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

19% of individuals responding on the LIFE Survey missed or were late with monthly bills (utilities, phone, etc.) 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.

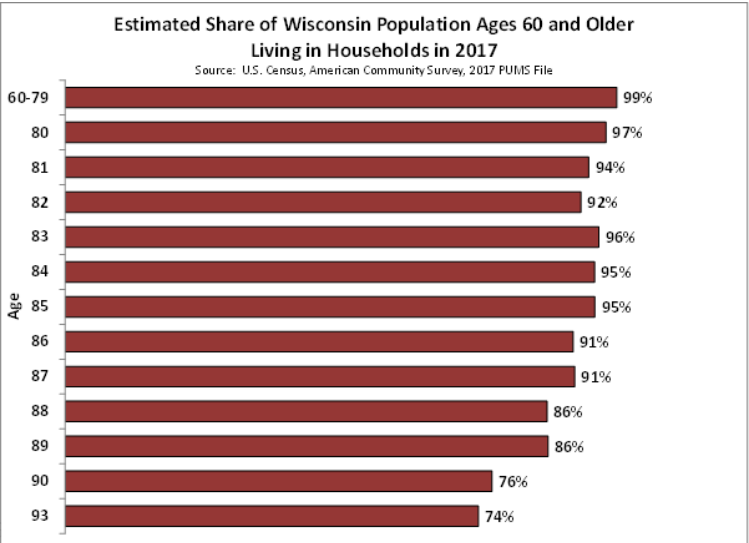
Key Takeaways

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

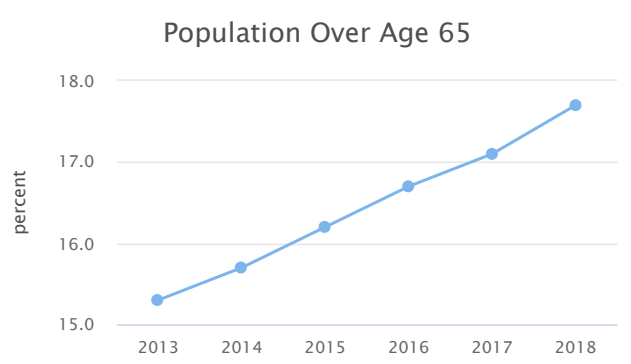
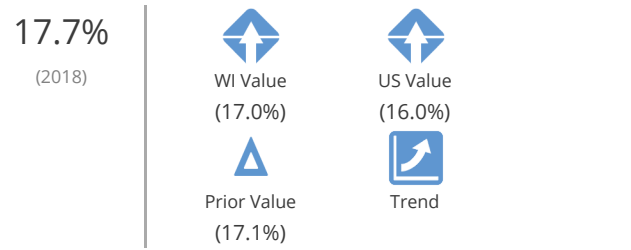
In Wisconsin if all current caregiver positions are fully staffed, it's projected that there will be a 30% increase in the number of caregivers needed by 2026.

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



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?

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)

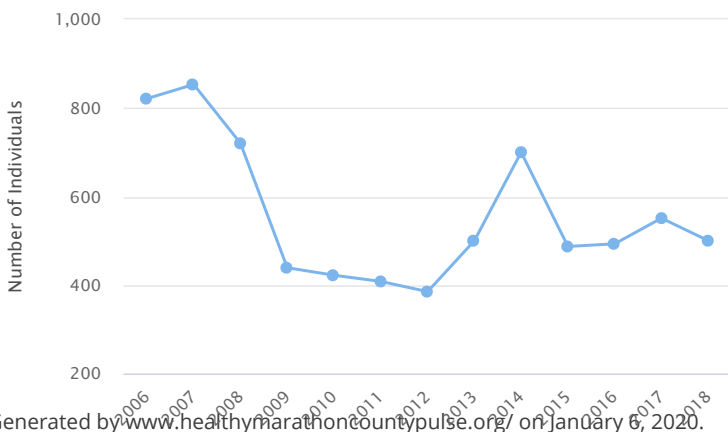


Prior Value
(551.0)



Trend

Number of Individuals Sheltered



Average Number of Nights Sheltered

41.7

Average
Number of
Nights
(2018)

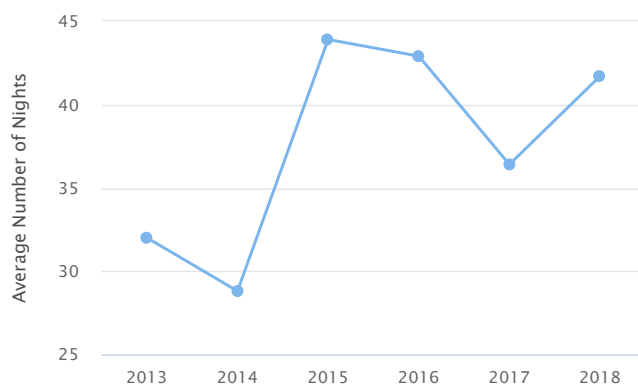


Prior Value
(36.4)



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.

UNMET BASIC NEEDS

Indicator 20

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

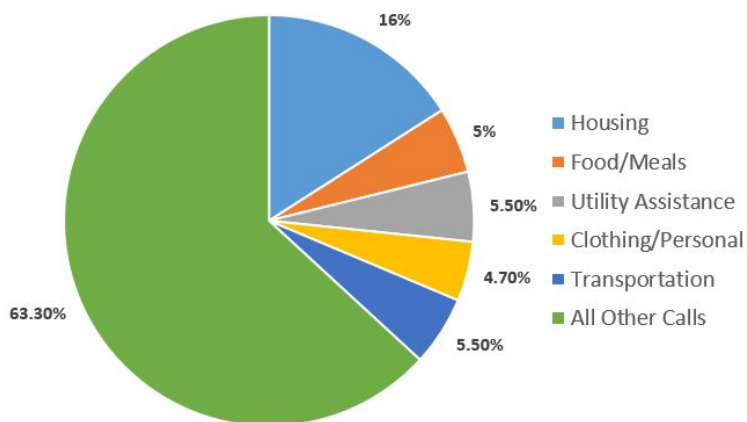
Number of
Requests
(2018)



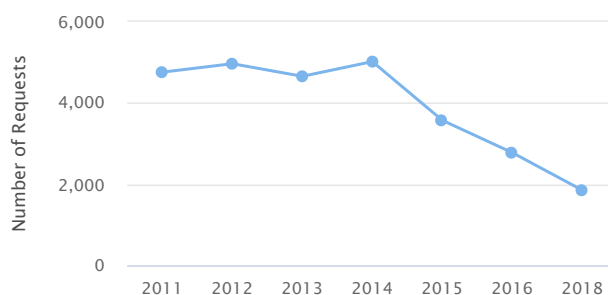
Prior Value
(2,774)



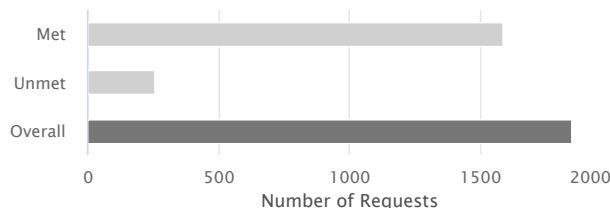
Trend



Number of 211 Basic Needs Requests



Number of 211 Basic Needs Requests by Type of Request



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.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Successes & Progress

- Marathon County has more children with up-to-date vaccinations at age two than most surrounding counties.
- Overall, Marathon County has better birth outcomes than state and national comparisons, with decreases in teen pregnancy, low birth weight babies, and infant mortality.
- The Marathon County School-Based Counseling Consortium offers on-site mental health counseling in every Marathon County public school district.
- All Marathon County public middle and high schools participated in the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), marking the third time our community has had local data about the issues that impact youth.
- Marathon County continues to serve as a health care hub with four major health care systems in the community. Access to health care remains high in Marathon County with a higher density of primary care providers than the state of Wisconsin.
- Marathon County has experienced significant reduction in emergency detentions for individuals with a mental health crisis with the formation of two Crisis Assessment Response Teams (CART) that pair a law enforcement officer with a crisis professional.
- As a community, Marathon County has responded to raise awareness and address the opioid epidemic with prevention, treatment, and enforcement efforts.
- The number of mental health care providers has increased significantly in Marathon County.

Call to Action

- The impact of prescription and illegal drug use is continuing in Marathon County with an increase in overdose deaths, drug arrest rates, and felony and misdemeanor drug charges.
- Alcohol continues to be the most frequently consumed substance of use and misuse in Marathon County, among both teens and adults.
- Marathon County has experienced a significant Increase in child abuse & neglect and out-of-home placements, impacting hundreds of children and families and resulting in an increase of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and childhood trauma.
- E-cigarettes are a growing concern with more Marathon County teens reporting that they had tried vaping e-cigarettes (38%) than smoking cigarettes (20%).
- Falls continue to be the leading cause of unintentional injury death in Marathon County.
- Marathon County is working on a community-wide plan to address the treatment and recovery of substance abuse.

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

PREMATURE DEATH

Indicator 21

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.

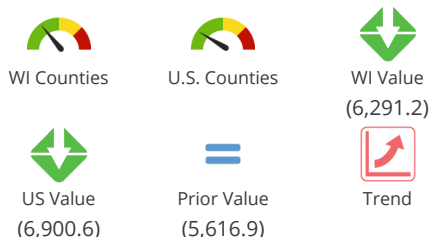
Marathon County's life expectancy is greater than that of Wisconsin and the U.S.

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.

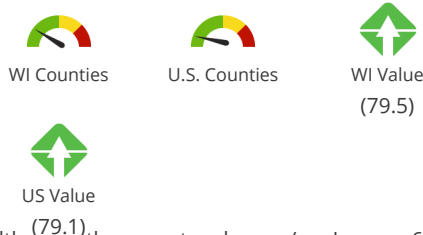
Premature Death

5,562.0
Years per
100,000
population
(2015-2017)



Life Expectancy

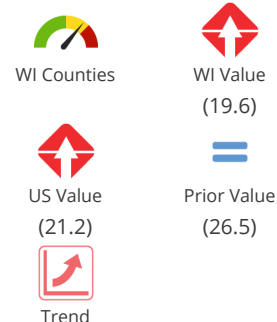
80.5
Years
(2015-2017)



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

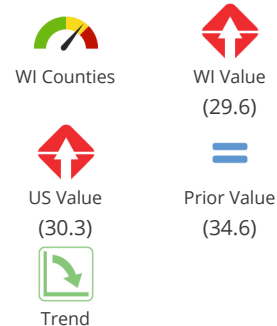
Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Diabetes

23.8
Deaths per
100,000
population
(2015-2017)



Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Alzheimer's Disease

31.6
Deaths per
100,000
population
(2015-2017)



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

UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

Indicator 22

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

15.5
Deaths per
100,000
population
(2015-2017)



WI Counties



Prior Value
(14.5)



WI Value
(19.4)



Trend



US Value
(9.2)



HP 2020 Target
(7.2)

Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Unintentional Poisonings

11.3
Deaths per
100,000
population
(2015-2017)



WI Counties



Prior Value
(8.4)



WI Value
(17.0)



Trend



US Value
(19.3)

Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Unintentional Injuries

42.2
Deaths per
100,000
population
(2015-2017)



WI Counties



US Value
(46.7)



Trend



WI Value
(53.7)



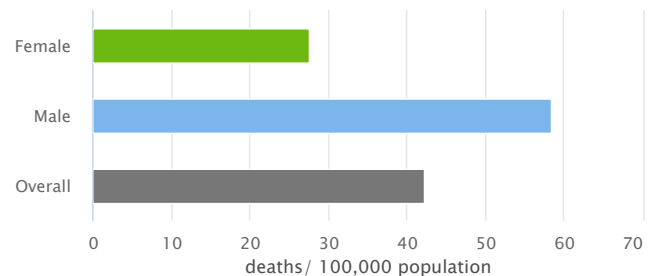
Prior Value
(37.7)



HP 2020 Target
(36.4)

Men are more likely to die from unintentional injuries.

Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Unintentional Injuries by Gender



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

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.

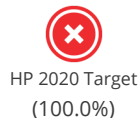
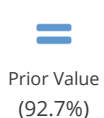
Marathon County's life expectancy is greater than that of Wisconsin and the U.S.

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

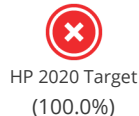
92.8%
(2017)



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

Children with Health Insurance

93.2%
(2017)

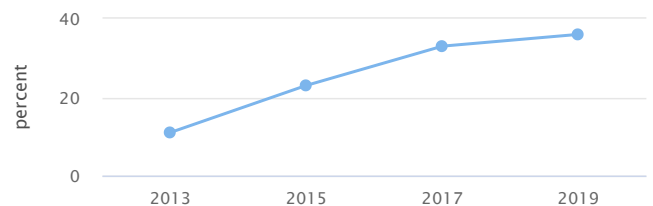


Marathon County Residents That Didn't Go to the Doctor

36%
(2019)



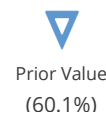
Marathon County Residents That Didn't Go to the Doctor



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.

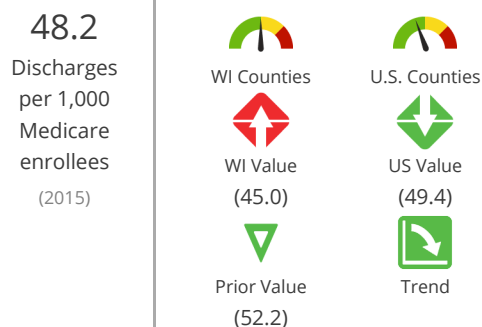
Key Takeaways

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.

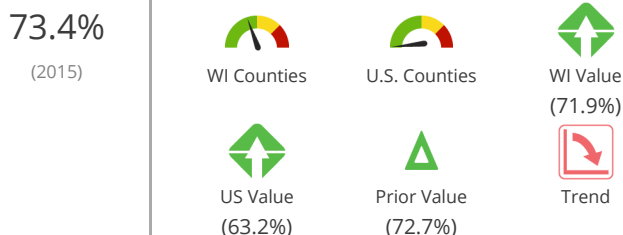
Preventable hospital stays are higher in Marathon County than the rest of Wisconsin.

Preventable Hospital Stays: Medicare Population

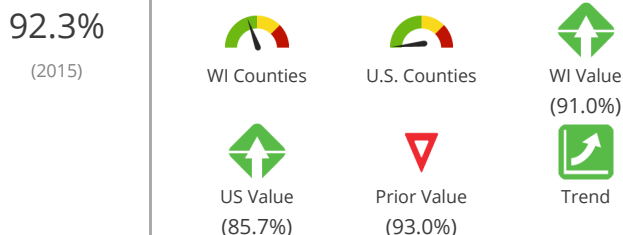


Preventive screening rates are higher in Marathon County than Wisconsin and the U.S.

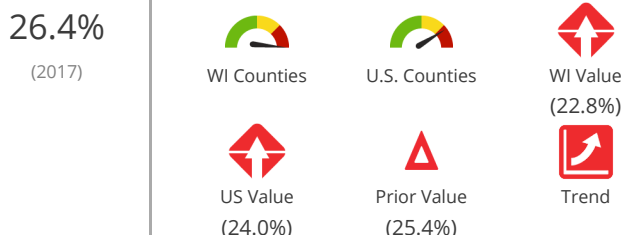
Mammography Screening: Medicare Population



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)

81.0%
Percent of high school students
(2019)


US Value
(74.4% in 2015)


Prior Value
(79.6%)


Non-Traumatic Oral Health Emergency Department Visit Rate

28.1
ED visits per 10,000 population
(2018)


WI Counties

Trend


WI Value
(38.1)


Prior Value
(38.3)

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

Students Referred to a Dentist for Treatment

49.5%
Percent of students
(2018-2019)


Prior Value
(40.7%)

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.




Dentist Rate

77
Dentists per 100,000 population
(2017)


WI Counties

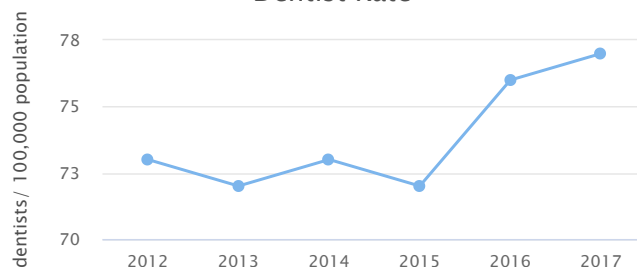
WI Value
(68)

Prior Value
(76)


U.S. Counties

US Value
(68)

Trend

Access to dental care is adequate in Marathon County.

Dentist Rate



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

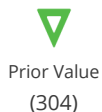
The number of Gonorrhea cases are increasing significantly in Marathon County.

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)



WI Value
(470)



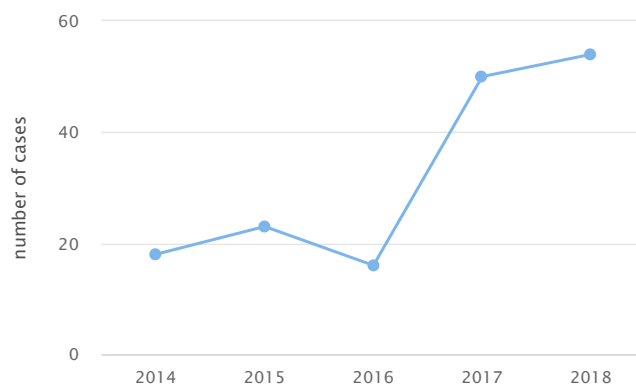
Trend



US Value
(497.3)

Gonorrhea has increased significantly.

Number of Gonorrhea Cases



Hepatitis B & C cases have remained steady.

Number of Hepatitis C Cases

25
Number of
cases
(2018)



Prior Value
(64)



Trend

Number of Hepatitis B Cases

10
Number of
cases
(2018)



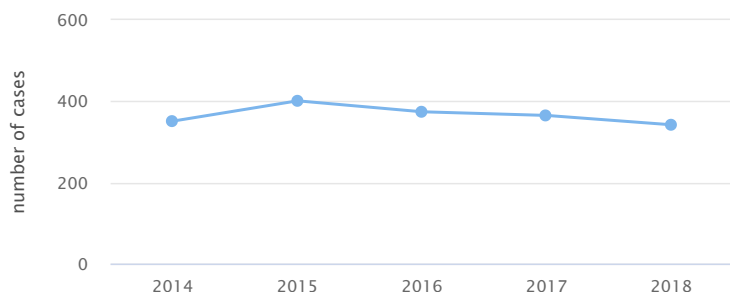
Prior Value
(8)



Trend

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

Number of Chlamydia 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.

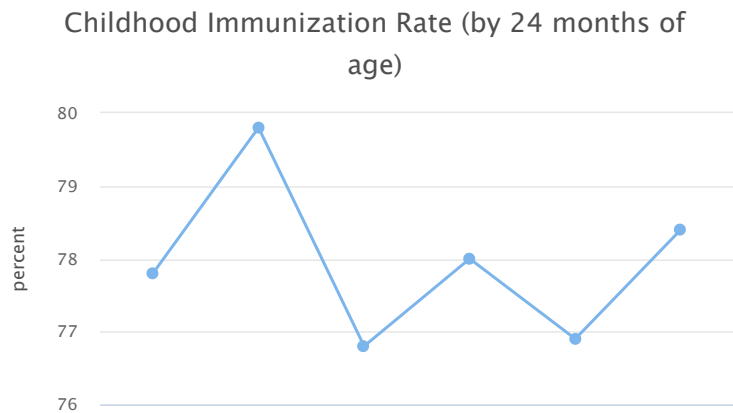
Key Takeaways

- 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.

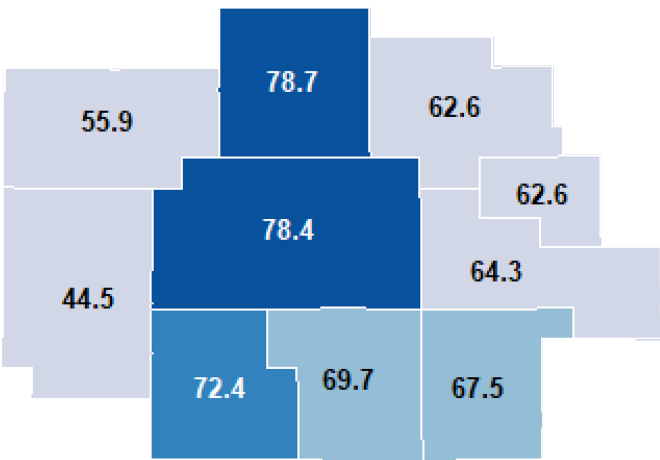
Childhood Immunization Rate (by 24 months of age)



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

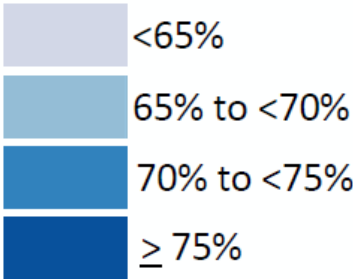


Marathon County has more children with up-to-date vaccines at age two than most surrounding counties.



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.

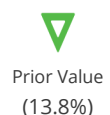
Tobacco use during pregnancy is more common in mothers under age 25.

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

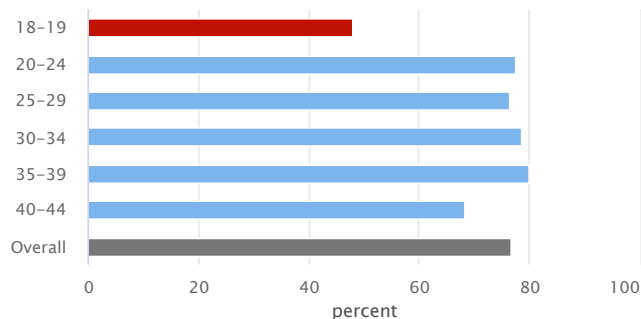
13.1%

(2017)



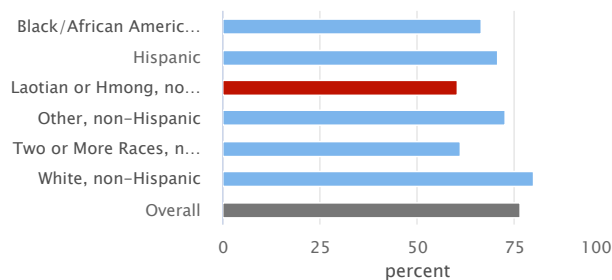
Young mothers and those who are Laotian/Hmong are less likely to start early prenatal care.

Mothers who Received Early Prenatal Care by Maternal Age



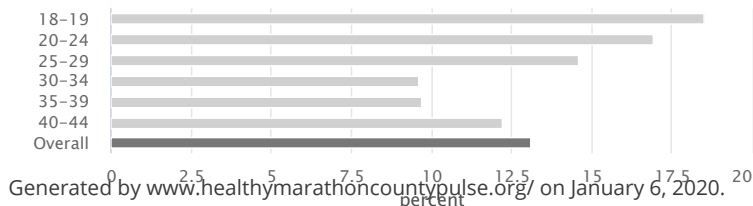
Significantly worse than the overall value
No significant difference with the overall value

Mothers who Received Early Prenatal Care by Maternal Race/Ethnicity



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

Mothers who Smoked During Pregnancy by Maternal Age



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

41.9

Deaths per
100,000
population
under 18
(2015-2017)



WI Counties



WI Value
(49.9)

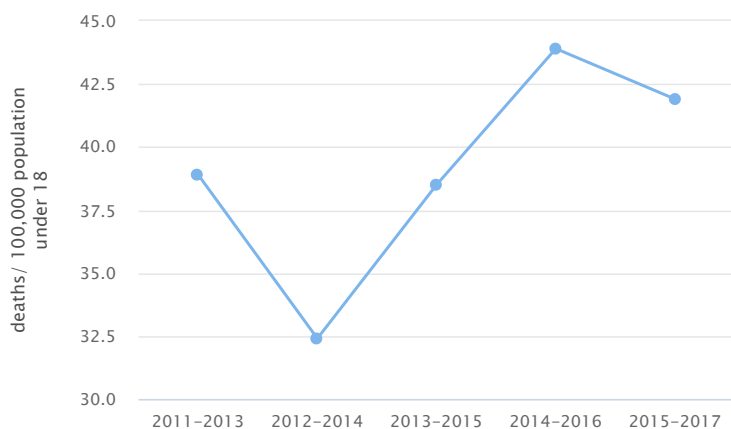


Prior Value
(43.9)



Trend

Child Mortality Rate



Child deaths in ages 1-17 are increasing.

Infant Mortality Rate

4.3

Deaths per
1,000 live
births
(2014-2016)



WI Counties



WI Value
(5.9)



US Value
(5.9)



Prior Value
(4.6)



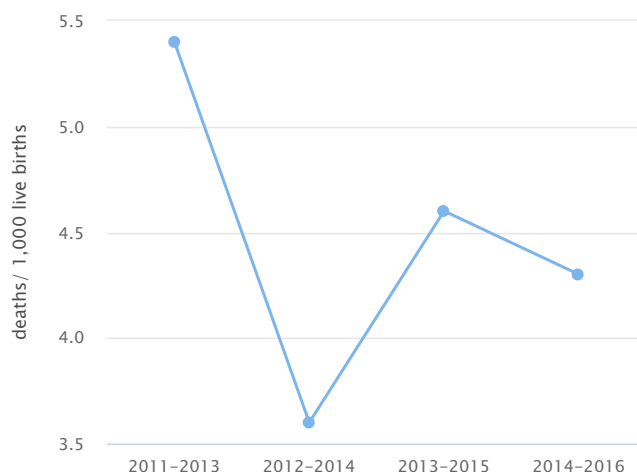
Trend



HP 2020 Target
(6.0)

Infant deaths before age 1 are decreasing.

Infant Mortality Rate



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)

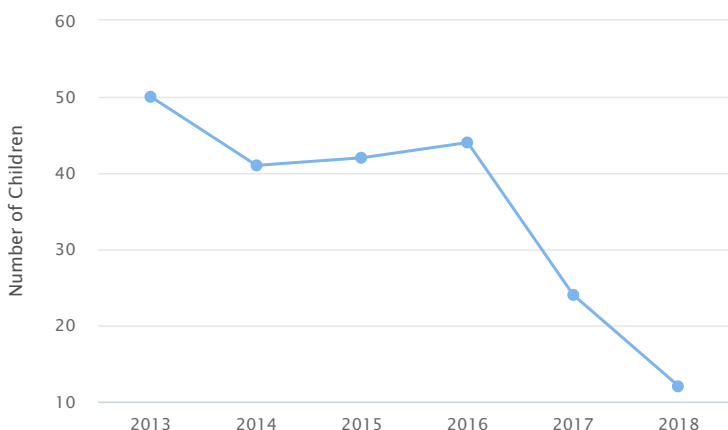


Prior Value
(24)



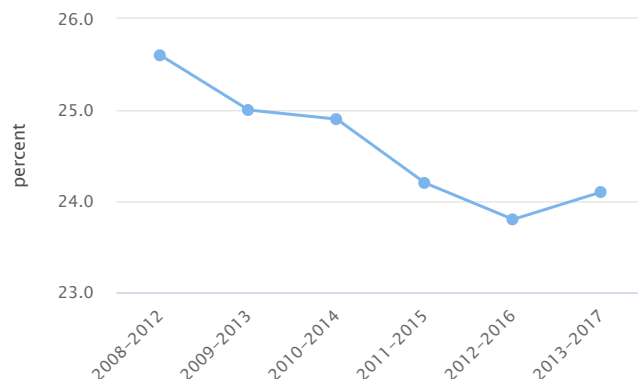
Trend

Number of Children with Positive Blood Lead Test(s)

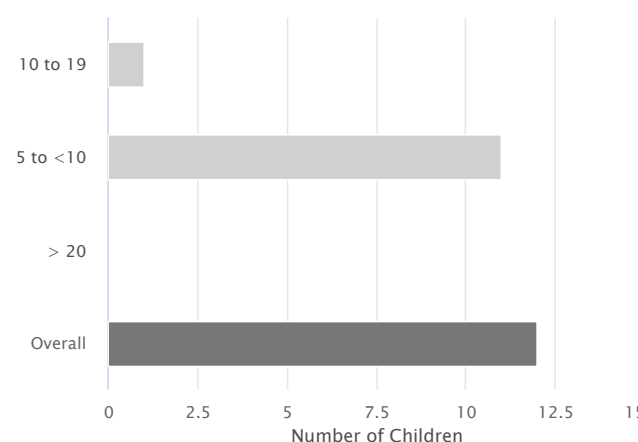


Older housing stock in the area is decreasing.

Houses Built Prior to 1950



Number of Children with Positive Blood Lead Test(s) by Test Levels in Micrograms/Deciliter



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)

26.0%

(2019)



WI Value

(27.0% in 2017)



US Value

(31.5% in 2017)



Prior Value

(25.2%)

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)

15.0%

Percent of high school students

(2019)



WI Value

(16.4% in 2017)



US Value

(17.2% in 2017)



Prior Value

(14.4%)

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

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

Poor Mental Health: Average Number of Days

3.3 Days



WI Value
(3.8)

Mental Health Provider Rate

175

Providers per 100,000 population
(2018)



WI Counties



WI Value

(189)



Prior Value
(154)



U.S. Counties



US Value

(229)



Trend

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



Prior Value (7.8)



WI Value (3.9)



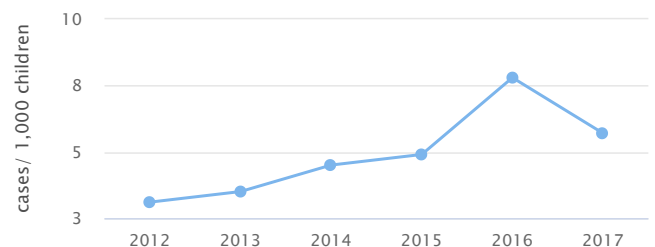
Trend



US Value (9.1 in 2016)

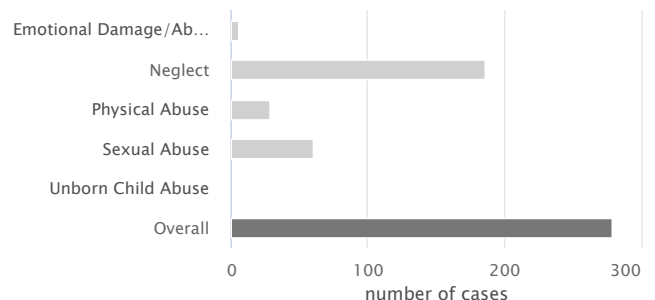
Child abuse has had a significantly increasing trend the past five years.

Substantiated Child Abuse Rate



Neglect is the number one type of child maltreatment.

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



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.

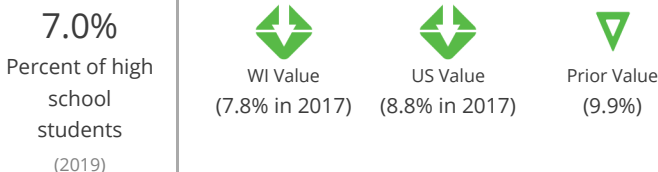
Key Takeaways

The use of e-cigarettes is unsafe for kids, teens, and young adults.

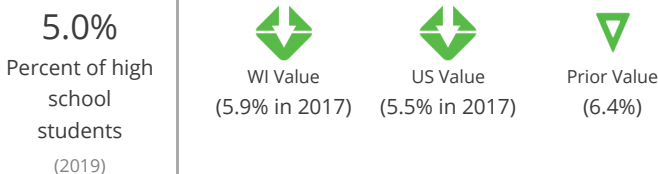
Overall teens are smoking less, but the use of e-cigarettes is steadily rising.

Adult smoking in Marathon County is significantly higher than Wisconsin or national values.

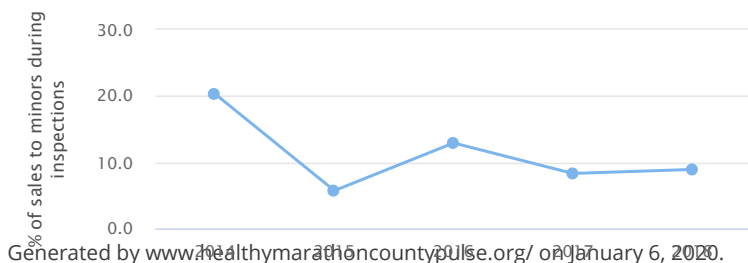
Teens Who Smoked Cigarettes In the Past 30-days (High School)



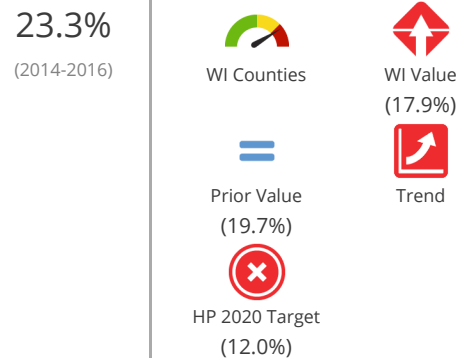
Teens Who Chewed Tobacco in the Past 30-days (High School)



Tobacco Checks

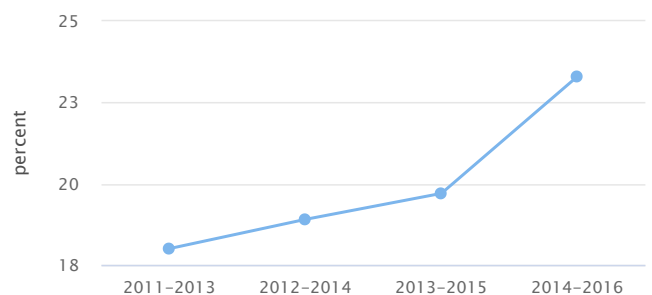


Adults who Smoke

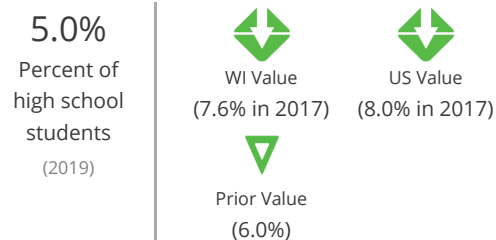


Adult smoking is increasing.

Adults who Smoke



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.

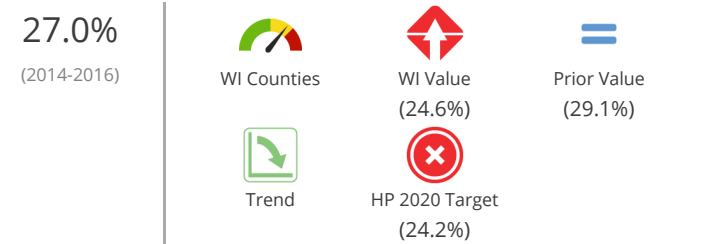
Marathon County adults binge drink more than the rest of Wisconsin and set an example for our youth. More youth in Marathon County begin drinking before the age of 13 compared to Wisconsin. 1 out of 3 Marathon County high school students said their parents didn't think it was wrong for them to drink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



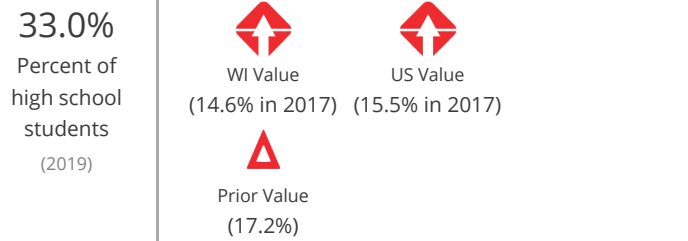
Adult binge drinking is above the state average.

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

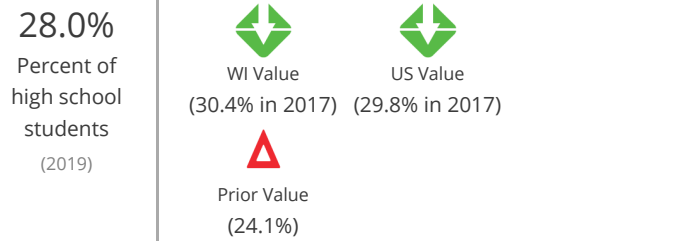
- 30% of LIFE Survey respondents** binge drank (consumed 5 or more drinks on one occasion) in the past 30 days.
 - Rates of **reported drinking and driving** is not getting worse.
- Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

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

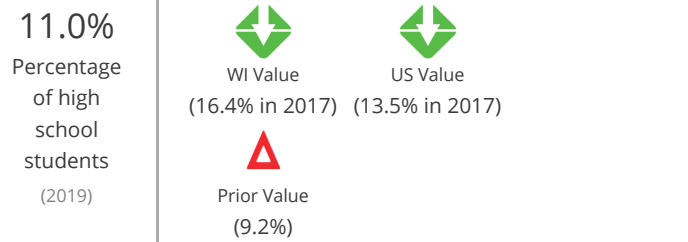
Teens Who Drank Alcohol Before Age 13 (High School)



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



Teen Binge Drinking (High School)



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%)

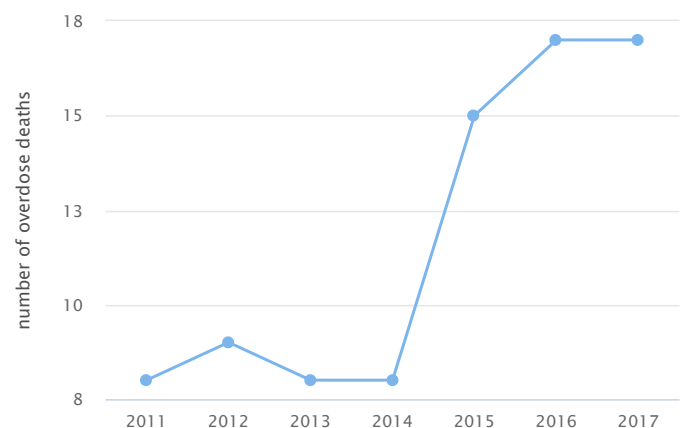
LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

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

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

Drug overdose deaths are increasing significantly.

Drug Overdose Deaths



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.

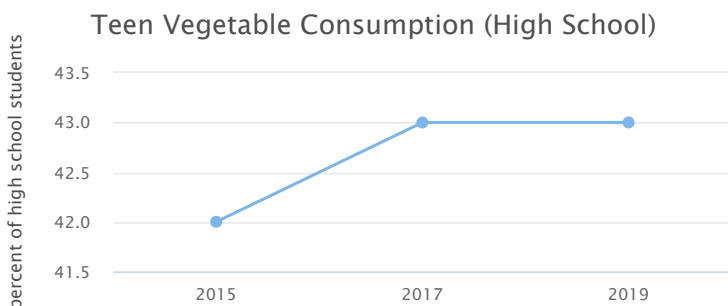
Key Takeaways

Fruit and vegetable consumption is increasing among youth.

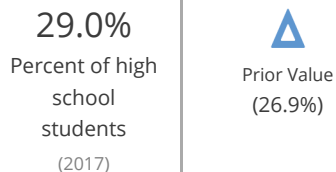
Marathon County has an abundant amount of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Several complex factors contribute to the obesity problem.

Teen fruit and vegetable consumption is increasing.



Teen Fruit Consumption (High School)

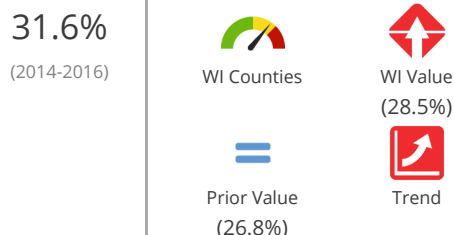


LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

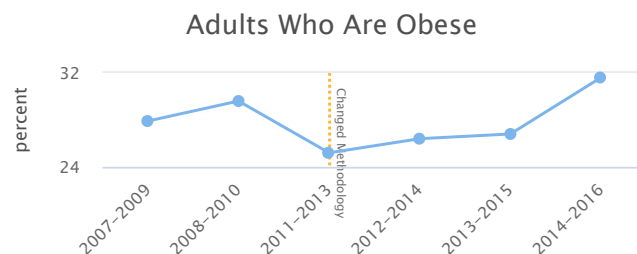
63% of residents ate a meal at a table with family and/or friends at least 3 days per week.

71% of residents reported being overweight or obese.

Adults Who Are Obese



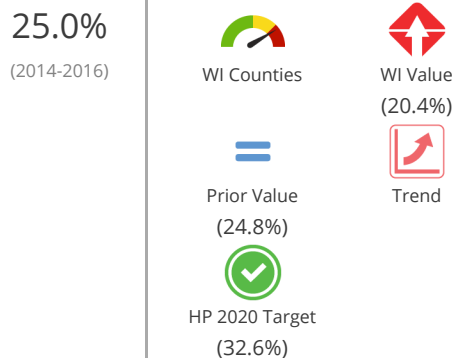
Adult obesity continues to increase.



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

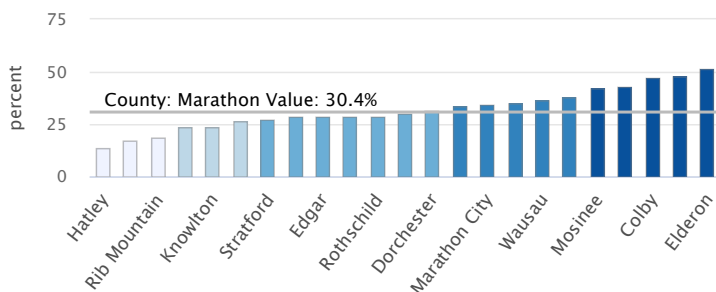
Marathon County's 65+ population continues to increase.

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.

Adults 65+ with a Disability



Hearing Difficulty

15.7%

Vision Difficulty

5.8%

Self-Care Difficulty

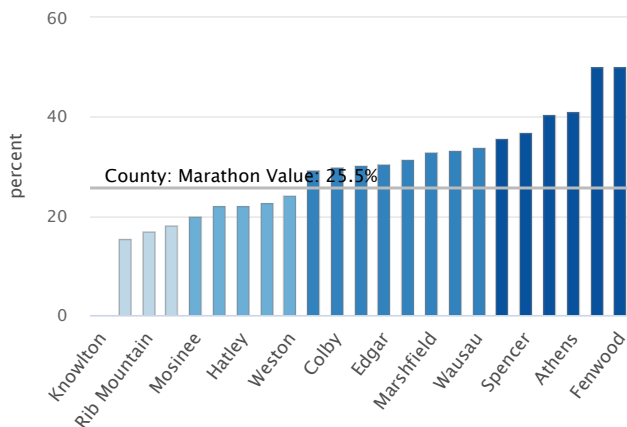
5.8%

Independent Living Difficulty

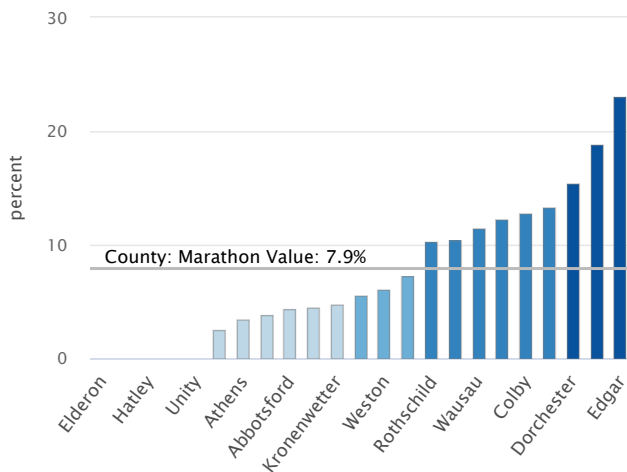
5.8%

Aging differs greatly throughout Marathon County.

People 65+ Living Alone



People 65+ Living Below Poverty Level



ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Successes & Progresses

Prosperous: (Energy)

- Since 2017, Marathon County residents have increased their energy bill savings through the Focus on Energy program.
- The entire north central Wisconsin region's economy and environment has benefited from the generation of electricity from diverse energy sources located in Marathon County.
- Since 2008, Marathon County Government has completed 48 energy conservation projects in collaboration with Focus on Energy and Wisconsin Public Service. Marathon County Government is committed to being an environmentally responsible county government which includes policies and programs that conserve energy, and reduce fuel, utility, and resource consumption to save tax dollars that can be redirected to support services to the public.

Healthy: (Environment)

- The Marathon County Board of Supervisors has identified the protection and enhancement of surface water and groundwater quality and quantity as a priority objective in their 2018-2022 Strategic Plan.
- Marathon County residents have recognized the benefits to our ample and clean water resources. The 2019 LIFE Survey indicates 78.17% of the respondents are either very concerned or concerned about the cleanliness of local lakes and rivers. The survey also revealed a high public awareness of the importance of protecting open and natural areas.
- Marathon County residents have remained committed to reducing their waste and improving the health of our local environment. According to the LIFE Survey, 77.23% of Marathon County residents recycle, donate, re-use or compost waste.
- Marathon County is home to a number of parks, recreation, and open natural areas that provided an abundance of opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors and be physically active. The majority, 86.65% of LIFE Survey respondents were satisfied with the availability of these outdoor spaces.

Calls to Action

- Residents, businesses, industries, and communities should take more smart energy efficiency measures by using less and conserving more along with securing energy from diverse sources.
 - Private well owners should have their water tested annually or whenever a change in taste or appearance occurs.
 - Residents should have their homes tested for radon.
 - The community should engage key stakeholders and decision makers to address the options, costs, and opportunities to reduce phosphorous from agricultural runoff to surface waters to acceptable levels.
- Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

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

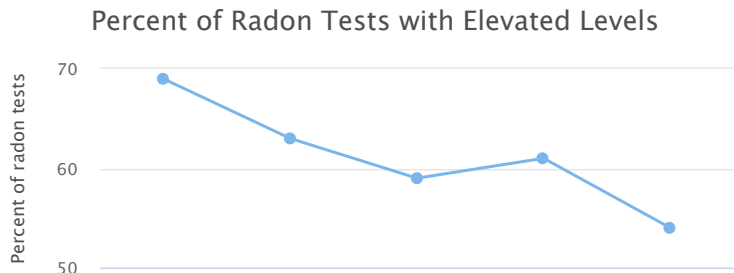
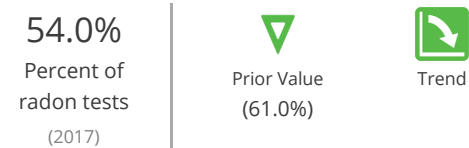
Key Takeaways

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.

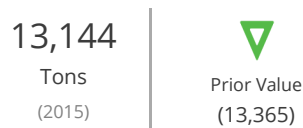
Test your home for radon—it's easy and inexpensive.

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

Percent of Radon Tests with Elevated Levels



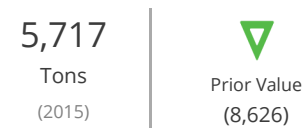
Air Pollutant Emissions- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)



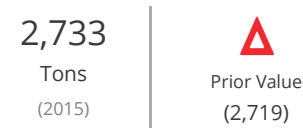
Air Pollutant Emissions- Nitrogen Oxide (NOx)



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.

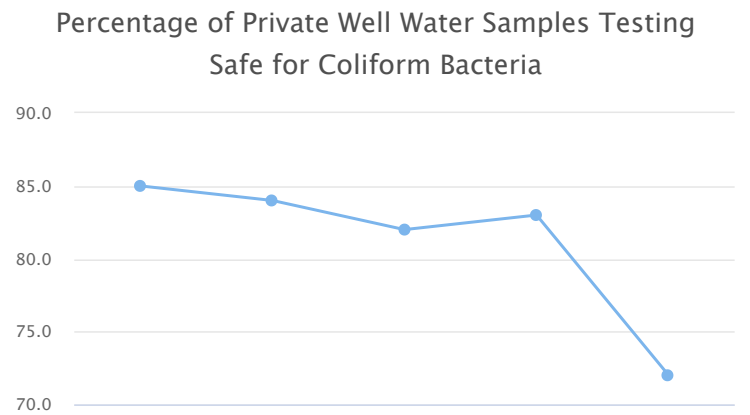
Key Takeaways

Fewer coliform samples tested safe than in prior years.

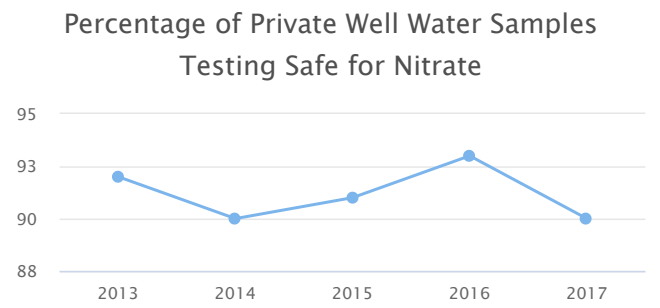
Nitrate levels were safe for 90 % of the water samples in 2017.

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



Percentage of Private Well Water Samples Testing Safe for Nitrate



Percentage of Private Well Water Samples Testing Safe for Fluoride



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?

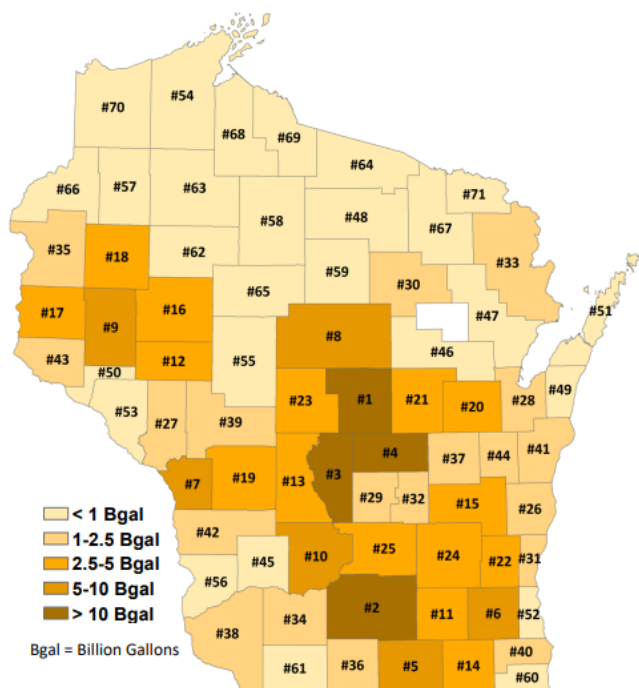
Ground water quantity and quality is vital for the sustainability, growth, and health of local communities. The need for clean ground water is not only a health issue, but it is also an economic issue. Where ground water becomes polluted, property values drop and land development may become adversely 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

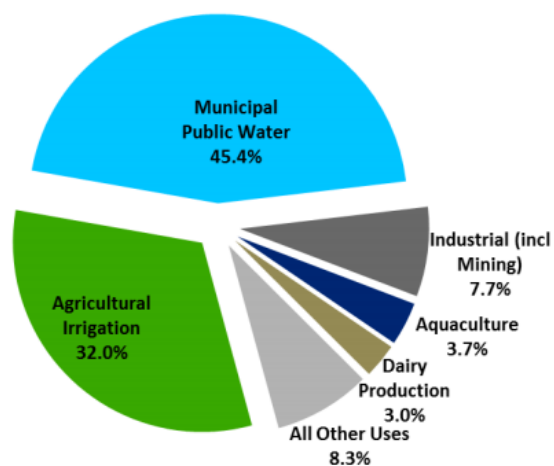
According to the [2017 DNR Wisconsin Water Use Summary](#) – Marathon County ranked 8th out of 72 counties in terms of Total Groundwater Withdrawals by County.

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.

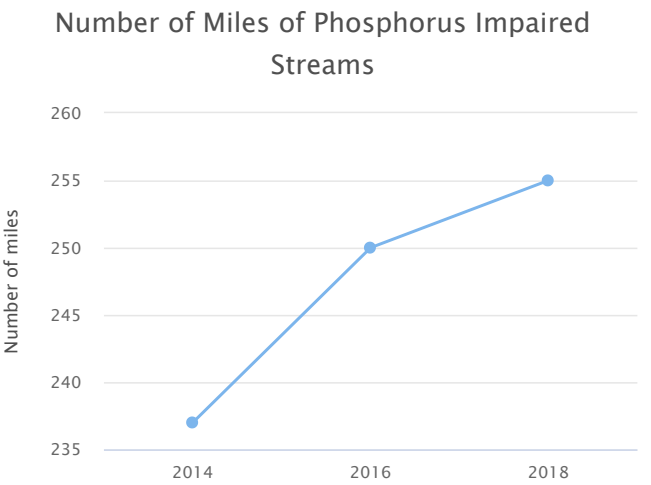
The Big Eau Pleine River and Little Eau Pleine River significantly exceeded the phosphorus criteria.

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



Why is this Important?

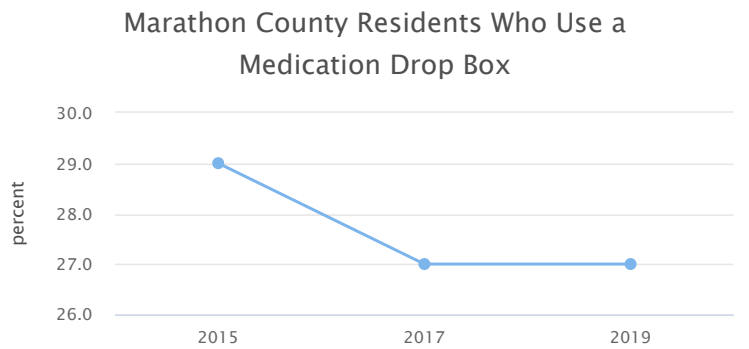
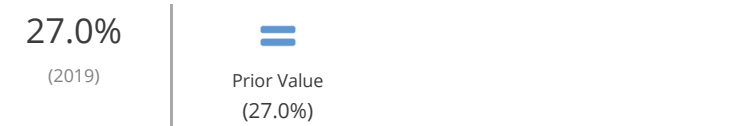
Waste management services are essential to a community's health, safety, and prosperity. The collection of garbage and recycling from local businesses, industries and households occurs almost unnoticed every day, yet it is essential to protecting human health and the environment. It is also essential 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.

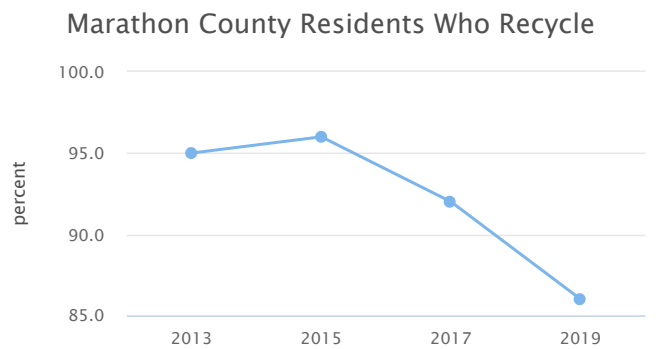
Marathon County Residents Who Use a Medication Drop Box



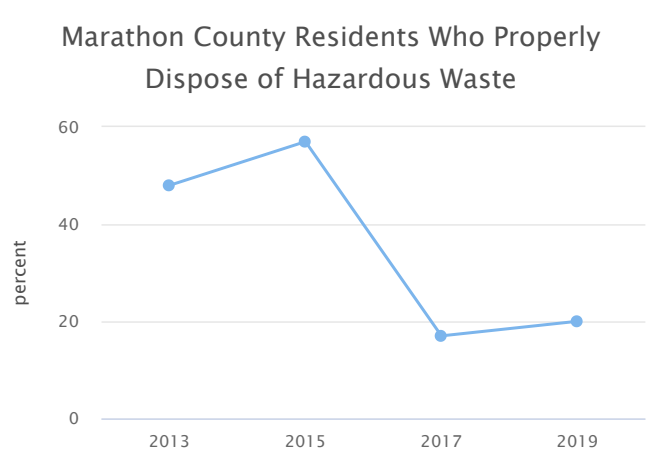
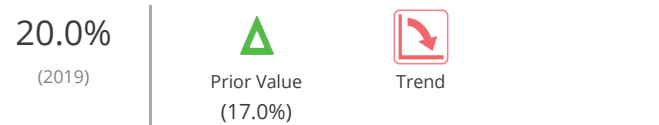
Marathon County Residents Who Compost



Marathon County Residents Who Recycle



Marathon County Residents Who Properly Dispose of Hazardous Waste



Safe

Opportunities for Action

For Individuals

- Advocate for your emergency services as National polls depict 86% of law enforcement professionals do not feel the public fully understands the risks they face.
- Use available technology to remain current and receive local emergency alerts and warnings through personal devices.
- Suspected opioid overdose is a medical emergency. Individuals have received or acquired naloxone products which are administered to persons in an opioid overdose. These individuals receive little to no training in the administration of these products. If the product is administered too fast or inappropriately there is a potential the recovering person can become aggressive or violent.
- Stop participating in distracted driving, such as texting while operating a motor vehicle. Stay focused and cognizant.

For Organizations

- Support and promote outreach groups to build networks, provide education and share accurate information on issues or threats.
- Develop response and security protocols to accommodate your staff and the persons your organization serves.
- Assist individuals leaving incarceration by providing stable housing and employment opportunities causing lifestyle change while being cognizant this is a group that will occasionally fail.
- Focus on solutions and funding to better serve individuals with mental health needs.

For the Community

- Be committed to being a community where all people can maximize their full potential feeling valued regardless of their diverse background, experiences and perspectives.
- Public safety is a two way street. Public safety messages can be shared daily, but unless heard and acted on, they are ineffective.
- Be aware that international issues may affect religious communities and area businesses within this community.
- Emergency services cannot function when fear over misperceptions or even deliberate mischaracterizations inhibit required role of maintaining the community.

Successes & Progress

- Marathon County established and is implementing a uniform address system in all townships and the two villages that agreed to participate. This will provide a sequential address numbering system in those areas with no confusion pertaining to similar or same road names being used. This process should be completed in 2019.
- Marathon County District Attorney and area law enforcement implemented a "Proxy" system to assess whether or not an offender is best suited for initial incarceration or if a summons/referral is more appropriate for future court appearances. The Proxy has resulted in a reduction of jail bed days required to house offenders in Marathon County. Out of County jail housing needs have decreased and \$50,000.00 in budget dollars were saved.
- The Sheriff's Office, Wausau Police Department and North Central Health Care Center implemented a Crisis Assessment Response Team (CART) with the goals to reduce the numbers of involuntary detentions, provide better access and divert persons to mental health services and provide immediate crisis response to alleviate demand on the Crisis Center. In 2018, CART responded to 41% of all mental health calls for service resulting in a 36% decrease in emergency detentions.
- Technology paves new avenues for criminals to engage in fraudulent schemes and avoid detection. The Sheriff's Office forensic technology lab works directly with Marathon County law enforcement and is building partnerships with other central Wisconsin law enforcement agencies to impact crime committed through technology.
- The Sheriff's Office and North Central Health Care Center received an \$80,000.00 grant from the Wisconsin Division of Health Services to create a Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) program in the county jail. This program will be the first in the State to offer Suboxone or Vivitrol to our inmate population to assist with opioid addiction issues. Aspirus Wausau Hospital has offered additional financial assistance and the services of two doctors.
- More area citizens are learning about and receiving local emergency alerts and warnings through their personal devices.
- More individuals and businesses are aware of cyber threats such as data loss risks, viruses, and ransomware which may create problems for their organization or themselves personally.
- Educational opportunities and law enforcement reviews have caused more area businesses to prepare emergency response plans and practice them, ensuring employees have the necessary equipment, know where to go and know how to keep themselves safe when an emergency occurs.

Calls to Action

- Effective radio communications for all emergency services is essential. It provides responders with valuable safety and response information helping all gain a better understanding of the situation. The needs of the community have been assessed and evaluated through various studies which indicate the vital need to open another radio channel for law enforcement services. The Sheriff's Office is working with the community to accomplish this while remaining fiscally responsible.
- The uniform addressing system was implemented in all of Marathon County's townships and in two villages. This helped eliminate various grids that were being used. Other municipalities should follow the direction initiated, eliminating inconsistent directional data, road names and numbering systems. This would assist toward Marathon County's goal of being the safest county.
- Shortages continue in addiction treatment professionals being available. A 2018 Wisconsin Professional Police Association survey identified 77% of respondents feel law enforcement should treat people addicted to opioids as persons in need of care and treatment rather than only as criminal offenders.
- The Medical Assisted Treatment (MAT) program is offered in the county jail, but this needs to be expanded outside of the correctional setting as a majority of the persons impacted by opioid addictions are not in our jail but being treated at local medical facilities.
- Initiate local discussions that could drive national decisions focusing on solutions and funding to better serve individuals with mental health needs moving away from incarceration to better suited means and methods to serve this vulnerable population.
- Impaired driving is a significant and growing problem as communities elect to decriminalize or legalize other controlled substances. Communities need to be cognizant of how these changes will impact law enforcement, human services and the health care system.

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

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)

20.0%

Percent of high school students
(2019)



Prior Value
(22.0%)

Teen - Physical Harm at School (High School)

81.0%

Percent of high school students
(2019)



Prior Value
(84.0%)

Marathon County Residents who Experienced Discrimination

37%

(2019)



Prior Value
(21%)

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)

5.0%

Percent of high school students
(2019)



WI Value
(6.9% in 2017)



US Value
(6.0% in 2017)



Prior Value
(5.8%)

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

1.0%

Percent of high school students
(2019)



WI Value
(5.2% in 2017)



US Value
(3.8% in 2017)



Prior Value
(2.5%)

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

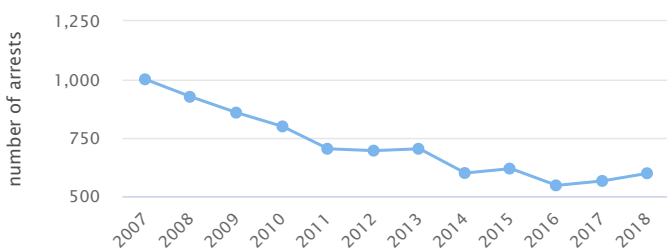
Methamphetamine, opioids, cocaine and marijuana are the controlled substances impacting Marathon County the most.

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)

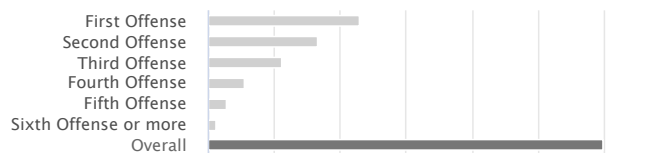
Drunk driving arrests continue to decrease significantly in Marathon County.

OWI Arrests



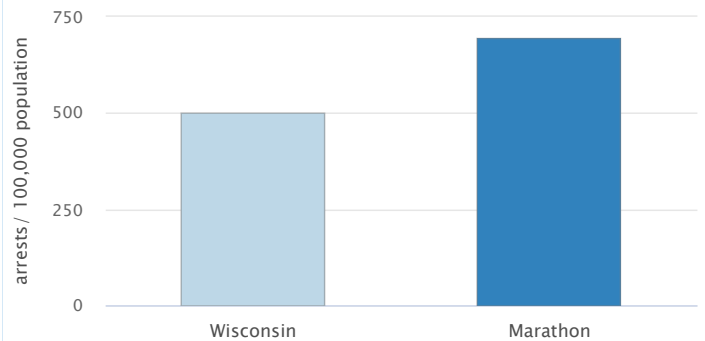
Most drunk driving arrests are first time offenses.

OWI Arrests by Operating While Intoxicated

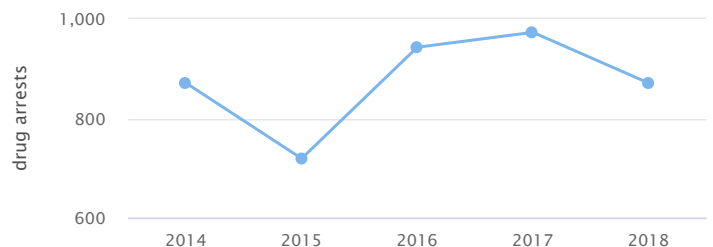


Marathon County has a significantly higher drug arrest rate than Wisconsin.

Drug Arrest Rate



Drug Arrests in Marathon County



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?

Highway safety requires every driver and passenger to act in a safe and responsible manner. This includes operating at posted speed limits, wearing safety belts, avoiding being distracted while driving and not operating under the influence of any legal or illegal substances. Nationally, over 90% of traffic crashes involved driver error. Fatalities and injuries from these crashes impact the victims, families and employers. Prevention is key to drivers not making dangerous and irresponsible decisions.

Speed and alcohol continue to be the two main contributing factors to motor vehicle crashes.

Wisconsin has seen an 89% seat belt use rate, which still is behind the U.S. average of 90%. In 2016, 41% of drivers/passengers killed in Wisconsin traffic crashes were not wearing seatbelts. Crashes are the leading cause of death for children between the ages of 4 and 8. Age appropriate booster seats protect children from injury better than seatbelts do. Statistics show parents who use child restraint systems are more apt to use seatbelts.

Key Takeaways

On average, Marathon County law enforcement agencies respond to 18 motor vehicle crashes every day.

In 2017 in Wisconsin, 81% of drivers that were killed in a motor vehicle accident had a blood alcohol content (BAC) great than the legal limit of .08.

Motor Vehicle Crashes Law Enforcement Responded To

6,813

Number of
crashes
(2018)



Prior Value
(6,915)



Trend

Motor Vehicle Crash
Injuries

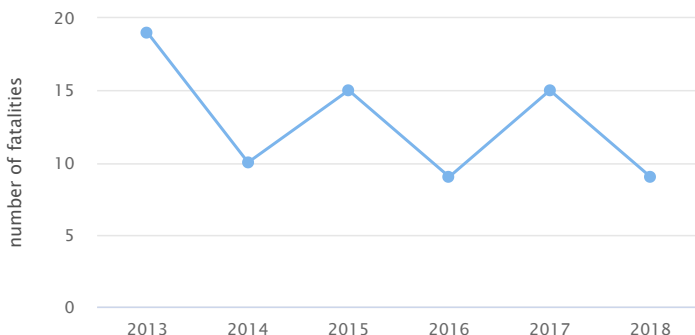
811 Number of injuries

Motor Vehicle Crash
Fatalities

9 Number of fatalities

Traffic fatalities have decreased, but not significantly.

Motor Vehicle Crash Fatalities



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Alcohol-Related Motor Vehicle Crash Fatalities

2

Fatalities
(2018)

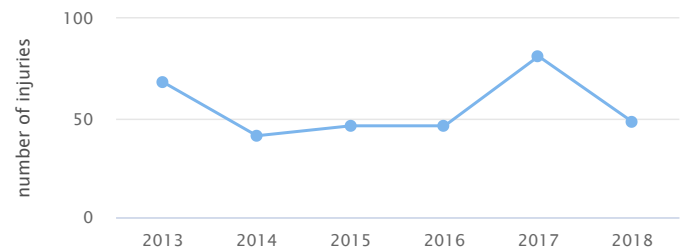


Prior Value
(2)



Trend

Alcohol-Related Motor Vehicle Crash Injuries



Motor Vehicle
Crashes with
Bicyclists

20

Number of crashes

Motor Vehicle
Crashes with
Deer

421

Number of crashes

Motor Vehicle
Crashes with
Pedestrians

25

Number of crashes

Period of Measurement: 2017

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

8% of 2019 LIFE Survey respondents admitted to driving under the influence of alcohol in the past month.

60% of LIFE Survey respondents are very concerned about persons texting while driving

45% of LIFE Survey respondents are very concerned about persons operating a vehicle while intoxicated.

Why is this Important?

During the 2016 Presidential campaign, addressing and fighting crime was a focus. In 2017, Federal prosecutors were instructed to pursue the strongest possible charges against subjects committing crimes. There are two commonly cited sources of crime statistics in the U.S. Both are Federal agencies with one being the FBI and the other the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). The FBI collects data from the approximately 18,000 law enforcement jurisdictions around the U.S. The BJS surveys more than 90,000 households inquiring of persons ranging 12 years or older whether they have been victims of crime regardless if it was reported to law enforcement.

Between 1993 and 2017, the FBI reported the violent crime rate fell 49% and according to the BJS it fell 74%. This has not been a steady decline as there have been noticeable increases in violent crime in 2004, 2006, 2014 and 2016. During the same time period, the FBI reported property crime rates fell 50% and BJS reported it was 69%. Interestingly, the figures presented do not coincide with public perception. In the same time span, 6 of 10 Americans felt there was more crime in the U.S. While this perception is at the national level, when discussed locally slightly over 50% feel crime is up in their areas.

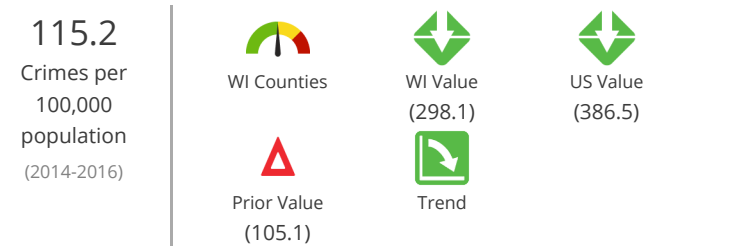
Key Takeaways

Marathon County violent crime rates have remained consistent with a slight increase recently, which is similar across Wisconsin.

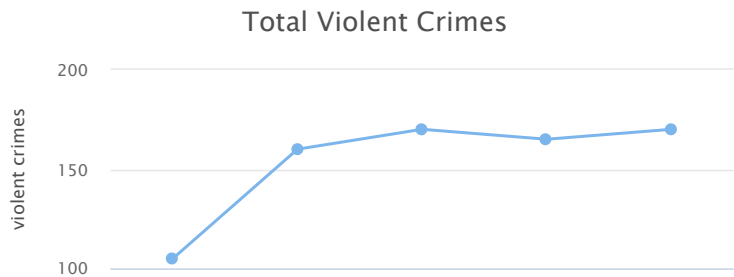
Marathon County property crime rates have decreased, which is consistent with the experience across Wisconsin.

Various factors influence an area's crime rate, such as population density, economic conditions and geographic location.

Violent Crime Rate

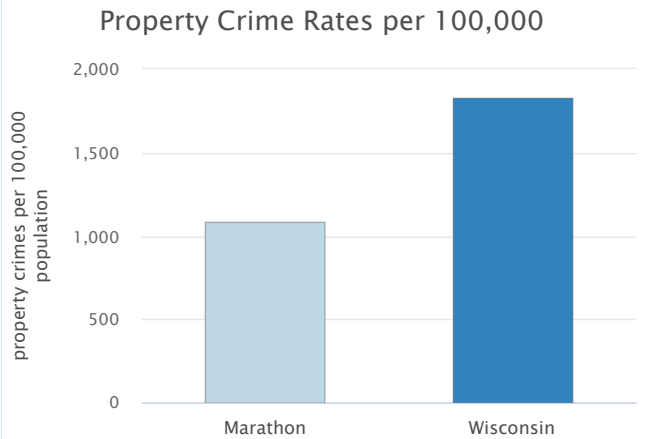
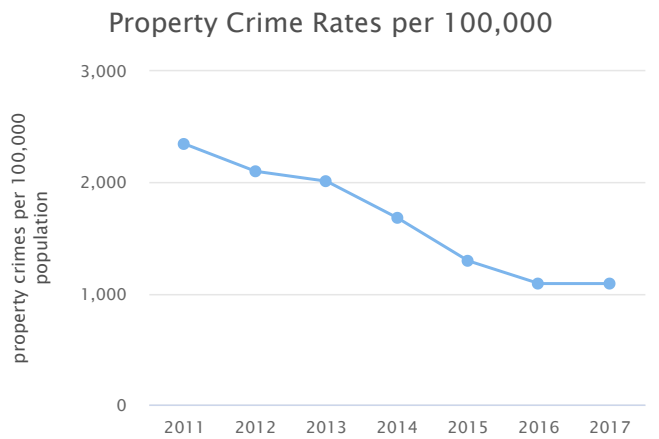


Violent crime in Marathon County is significantly lower than Wisconsin, but has been increasing.



Property crime rates have decreased significantly.

Property crimes include burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Property crimes are committed to obtain property or money and can involve force or threat of force.



Why is this Important?

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) conducts annual surveys collected from 90,000 households which asks respondents whether they were victims of crime and if that crime was reported to law enforcement. In 2017, only 45% of violent crimes and 36% of property crimes tracked by BJS were reported to law enforcement. There are many reasons why victims elect to not report crimes. Some may feel that the incident may be too personal or trivial or have the perception law enforcement would not or could not do anything to help. Perception can be reality as in 2017, the FBI using a crime clearance rate measure reported the national clearance rate as 46% for violent crimes and 18% for property crimes.

The use of technology could assist law enforcement with becoming less reactionary to crime already committed and more proactive in predicting where criminal activity is most likely to occur. Software could be utilized to identify trends and develop patterns of activity. Crime prevention methods would be initiated, because the easiest means to solve crime is to prevent it in the first place. The efforts of law enforcement are limited to the factors within its control. As famed risk manager Gordon Graham said, "Predictable is preventable."

Key Takeaways

- Crime is a social problem and a community concern.
- In 2017, for all offenses reported in the United States, there were 10.5 million arrests.
- Problem oriented policing is an analytic method used by law enforcement to develop strategies to prevent or reduce crime.

In the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, a law enforcement agency reports that an offense is cleared by arrest, or solved for crime reporting purposes, when three specific conditions have been met. The three conditions are that at least one person has been:

- Arrested.
- Charged with the commission of the offense.
- Turned over to the court for prosecution (whether following arrest, court summons, or police notice).

In certain situations, elements beyond law enforcement's control prevent the agency from arresting and formally charging the offender. When this occurs, the agency can clear the offense *exceptionally*. Law enforcement agencies must meet the following four conditions in order to clear an offense by exceptional means. The agency must have:

- Identified the offender.
- Gathered enough evidence to support an arrest, make a charge, and turn over the offender to the court for prosecution.
- Identified the offender's exact location so that the suspect could be taken into custody immediately.
- Encountered a circumstance outside the control of law enforcement that prohibits the agency from arresting, charging, and prosecuting the offender.

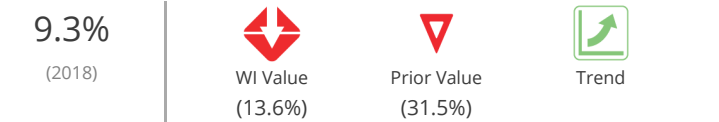
Get the full story at www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

Clearance rates in Marathon County tend to be higher than the state of Wisconsin.

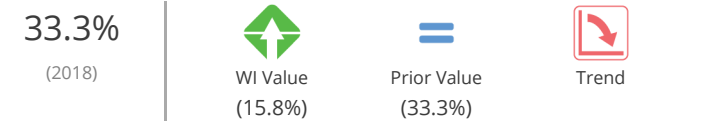
Clearance Rates for Rape Charges



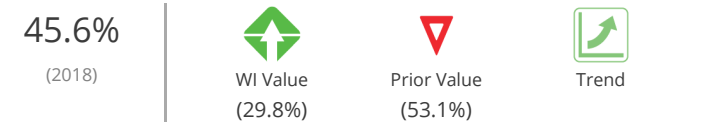
Clearance Rates for Burglary



Clearance Rates for Motor Vehicle Theft



Clearance Rates for Larceny Theft



Why is this Important?

Youth Justice focuses on community safety, accountability, and youth rehabilitation. Brain development continues to occur for most until the age of 25. During the adolescent years we can expect many youth not to fully comprehend the outcomes of their actions. It is for this reason that youth need intervention when poor decision making occurs. Sometimes parental consequence is enough to remedy the situation, while at other times, restitution may be involved or the action is more serious and requires court intervention along with supervision of the youth.

Current research reflects that youth who are at low risk and have high protective behaviors such as involved parents, a teacher that they are connected to, and activities that they are involved in will often correct themselves and don't need system involvement. However, low risk youth who do not have these protective elements are more likely to reoffend and continue to engage in risky behavior putting themselves and our community at greater risk.

Key Takeaways

Marathon County Social Services continues to carefully evaluate youth that can be deferred from the Youth Justice System.

Youth who have been involved in the Child Protective Services system or have identified mental health issues are more likely to continue to receive referrals based on their behaviors.

As truancy numbers in Marathon County remain higher than desired, Social Services continues to collaborate with United Way and pilot schools in the Wausau/DC Everest School Districts.

Youth Justice Referrals to Truancy Citation Court

159
Referrals
(2018)



Prior Value
(107)


Trend

The number of youth referrals (youth ages 8-16 years old) directly to Truancy Citation Court from their school.

Youth Justice Referrals Sent to Court

202
Referrals to
court
(2018)


Prior Value
(219)


Trend

The number of youth justice referrals (youth ages 8-16 years old) to the Marathon County Department of Social Services for delinquent behavior that are sent to court.

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Youth Referrals to Social Services for Delinquent Behavior

561
Number of
referrals
(2018)


Prior Value
(528)

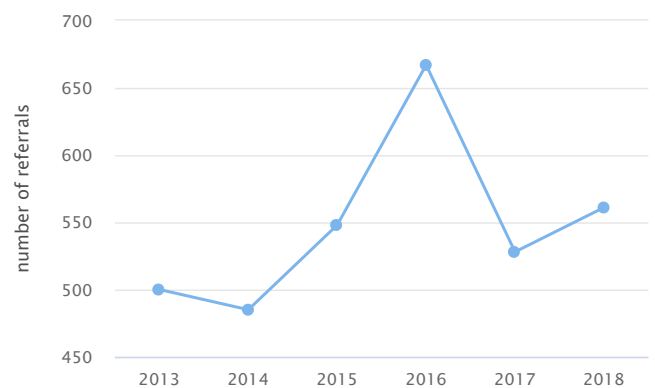

Trend

Juvenile Justice Intake receives and processes referrals from law enforcement agencies and schools. Referrals are reports of delinquent behavior that would be considered a crime or status offense if the juvenile were an adult.

The largest number of youth referrals were for disorderly conduct, theft, battery, criminal damage to property, and drug charges.

Overall, youth referrals to Social Services is increasing.

Youth Referrals to Social Services for Delinquent Behavior



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.

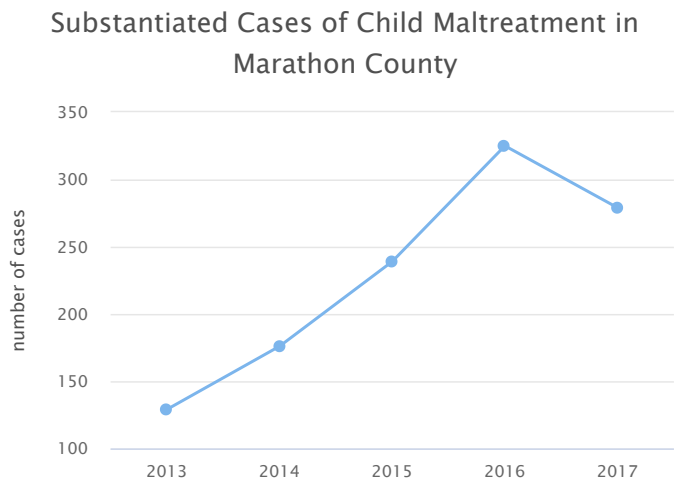
Key Takeaways

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.

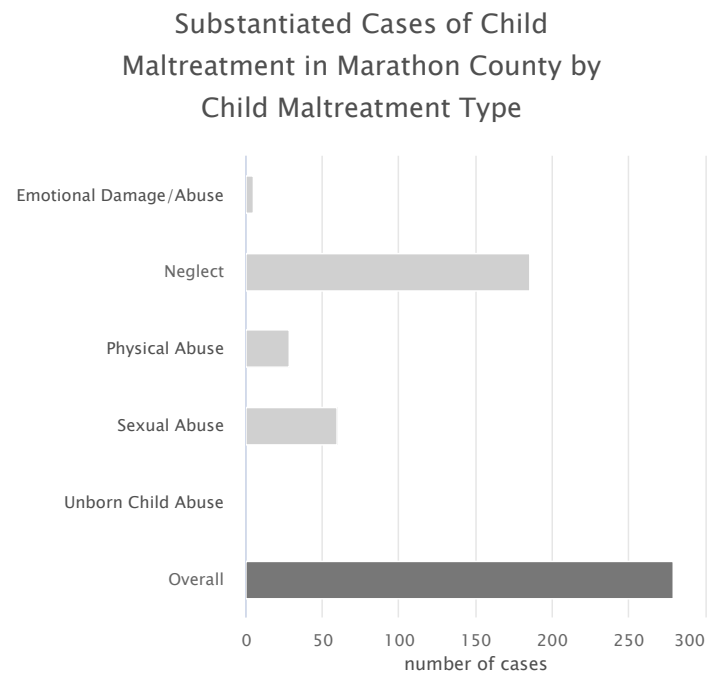
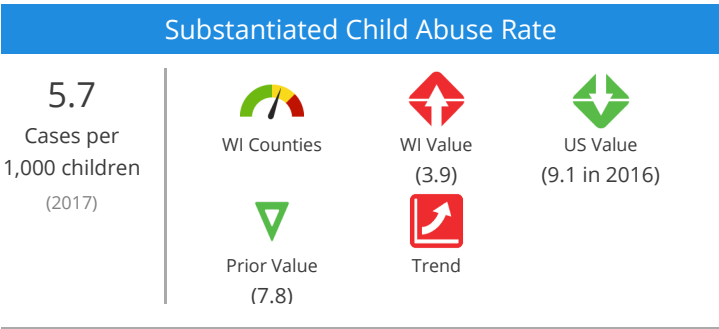
From January 2016 through the end of 2017, Marathon County Department of Social Services completed 1,327 CPS Initial Assessments (this is 44% of the reports that were called in). Of those assessments, 45% of the children that were involved in the assessments were found to have a preponderance of evidence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



Why is this Important?

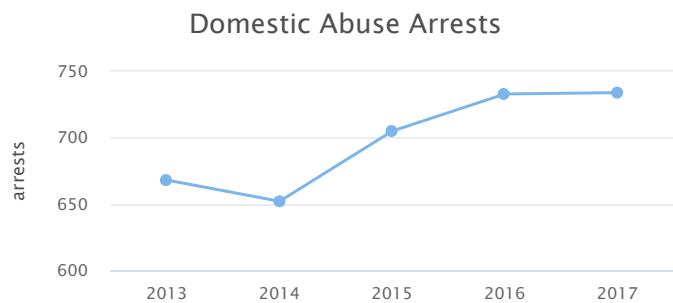
Domestic violence does not discriminate. It occurs in every economic environment, ethnic or religious background, age and community status. Alcoholism or other substance addictions, threats and physical abuse are common factors. Domestic violence devastates lives, families and communities. Yet, many 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.

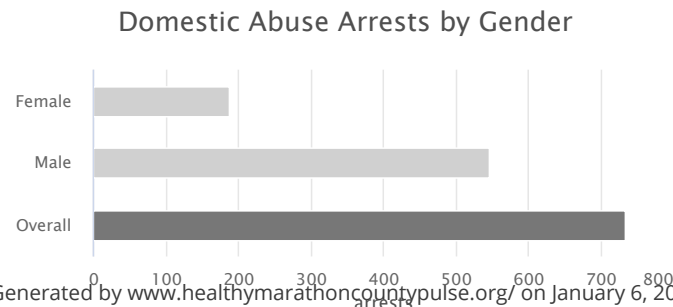
Key Takeaways

- 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.



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.

Number of Individuals Sheltered at The Women's Community	Number of Individuals Served by The Women's Community
170 Individuals	1,925 Individuals

Teen Partner Violence (High School)	Percentage of high school students who were physically injured one or more times in the 12 months before the survey by their partner.
7.0%	
Percent of high school students	

Teen Sexual Abuse (High School)	Percentage of high school students who were forced to take part in a sexual activity.
12.0%	
Percent of high school students	

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)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(28.9%)



US Value
(26.2%)



Prior Value
(25.5%)



Trend

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

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?

Emergency response is a team effort involving all the emergency service fields. It is the organization and management of resources and responsibilities, such as preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery. The goal is to reduce the harmful effects of all hazards including natural disaster events. Critical events occur daily such as severe weather, violent acts, cyber issues, critical infrastructure and equipment failures, environmental damage, etc. Emergency services drafts plans and policies, followed by training to counteract any possible emergencies, seeking to limit the impact on people and the environment.

Citizens need to consider their own emergency response plan for their homes and businesses. Local law enforcement does provide staff to assist businesses with reviews of their facilities and actions to be considered in reducing risks while making the workplace safer for customers and workers. Marathon County utilizes Everbridge as a direct community outreach alerting all who use the service to receive information by text message, social media, on a smartphone or using a landline phone. This service keeps persons informed in the right language and time during critical events. Persons can opt in to information they wish to receive using their zip code or other data.

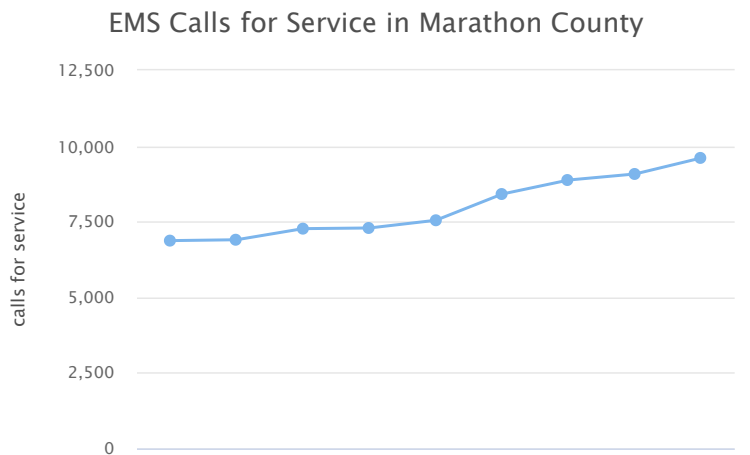
Key Takeaways

- 54% of U.S. households rely solely on cellphones and do not have landline phones.
- Communities are building closer to flood and wildfire prone areas. The frequency of severe weather events is increasing across the U.S.
- During the period 2009-2019, Marathon County experienced 108 storm events with 25 events causing reportable damage.

EMS Calls for Service in Marathon County



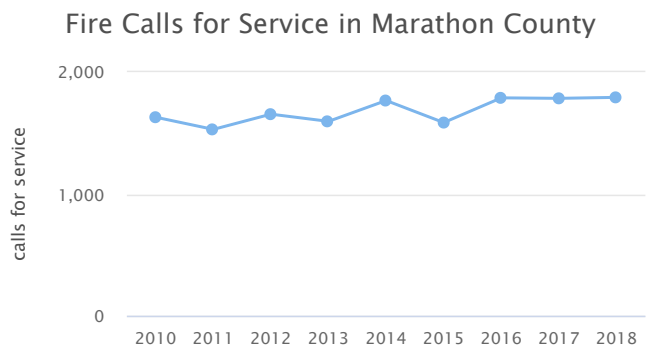
Medical emergency calls have increased significantly.



Fire Calls for Service in Marathon County



Fire calls for service have increased significantly.



Marathon County Hazards Ranked by Greatest Threat
1. Winter Storm/Extreme Cold
2. Tornado
3. Thunderstorm/High Wind/Hail/Lightning
4. Hazardous Materials Incidents / Groundwater Contamination
5. Flooding / Dam Failure
6. Drought / Extreme Heat
7. Forest Fire / Wildfire

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

70% of LIFE Survey respondents agreed that Marathon County is a good place to live.

Connected

Opportunities for Action

For Individuals

- Improving our connections and understanding of others will require ongoing and intentional effort to visit other communities, reach out to those with backgrounds different from our own, and attend local cultural events.
- Regularly talking to elderly neighbors, friends, and family will serve an important role in helping them connect and engage. In addition, look for opportunities to serve the elderly through volunteer programs.
- Understand and experience the difficulty experienced by those without access to their own vehicle by relying on alternative transportation for a week.
- Reach out to your neighbors. Consider planning a neighborhood block party or cookout.

For Organizations

- In their effort to meet labor force needs, businesses have become more innovative and intentional about connecting with diverse populations. Continued work with schools, trade organizations and social service providers will help with that effort. Advancing the understanding of ethnic, cultural and generational differences will help employees connect and succeed.
- The racial makeup of jail inmates to the population and the disproportionate number of minority school suspensions raise a host of questions that require answers. Law enforcement, public schools, and social service providers must research and work together to understand and address ongoing institutional disparities in punishment.
- Employers should work closely with the Society for Human Resources Management and wage equity organizations to evaluate, confront, and address wage and earnings disparities. As the labor pool shrinks, addressing those disparities will become more important.
- Local institutions will need to continue to adopt and expand the use of trauma-informed care principles in order to develop more empathetic and understanding approaches to connect with people at a personal and community level.

For the Community

- Marathon County will need to ensure a diverse and culturally inclusive culture to secure its long-term future. Whether it is attracting millennials, including LGBTQ perspectives or tapping the contributions of minority populations, regional viability requires that everyone is welcomed, engaged, and connected in the community.
- Community and business leaders have a responsibility to explore additional diversity and inclusion strategies to supplement those in process. Exciting opportunities exist to share ideas with other communities. Establishing additional benchmarks will help track progress and create parity for populations that have historically experienced disadvantages and discrimination.
- Our region needs to develop an aggressive and collaborative approach to ensuring high-speed broadband. Marathon County has stepped up to evaluate needs and opportunities to improve

Internet service. Municipalities must see past their borders and work together in support of efforts to attract vendors and establish competitive broadband services for the region.

- Easily accessible public transportation is a critical way to connect our community to services, job opportunities and shopping centers. Each of our municipalities must adopt a broader perspective on the impact of public transportation — how it helps address regional labor shortages and keeps seniors in the community by ensuring accessibility.

CONNECTED

Successes & Progress

- The Marathon County Board has made it a priority to identify the gaps in high speed Internet access and help residents connect to affordable high speed Internet services.
- To serve the growing population of seniors and increase social and community connections, a multimillion-dollar initiative to develop new facilities and programming has been put into place. Those efforts include development of the YMCA's The Landing and extensive renovations at North Central Health Care.
- The Marathon County Board passed a resolution in 2019 to recognize June as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) PRIDE month.
- Investments in parks and outdoor recreation spaces have provided additional ways for people to connect. Those improvements include the new River Life Park, a playground by WOW and additional bicycle trails.
- Marathon County has continued to be a Midwest regional destination for visual and performing arts. Local festivals provided a wide assortment of opportunities to connect with the community and its culture.
- Marathon County residents engaged with social associations at a higher rate than average in Wisconsin and the United States.

Calls to Action

- In 2019, more than one-third of LIFE Survey respondents reported one or more experiences of discrimination; this is a 7% increase since 2017.
- LIFE Survey respondents reported a continued decline in satisfaction with how welcoming their community is in 2019. Satisfaction with how welcoming the community is has fallen more than 20 percentage points since 2013.
- Several disparities continue to exist in our county:
 - Women's earnings as a percentage of men's are lower
 - Women's earnings by race vary despite equal education levels
 - Jail population by race does not reflect the population-at-large
 - In-school suspensions by race do not reflect the population-at-large
- In 2019, LIFE Survey respondents reported a decrease in perception that Marathon County is a good place to live for young adults, people of color, and people with disabilities. Less than half of survey respondents are satisfied with the level of tolerance in the community.
- It is estimated that nearly half of rural Marathon County residents do not have access to high speed Internet.
- Since 2013, satisfaction with public transit has decreased from 46% to 25%.

Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

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.

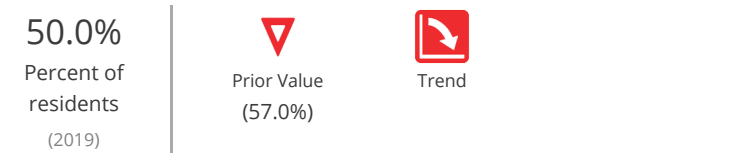
In Marathon County, more than three-quarters of the 2019 LIFE survey respondents identified that friends and family help them feel connected to the community. Each time the survey has been completed since 2013, the majority of respondents have also indicated that they serve as volunteers.

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.

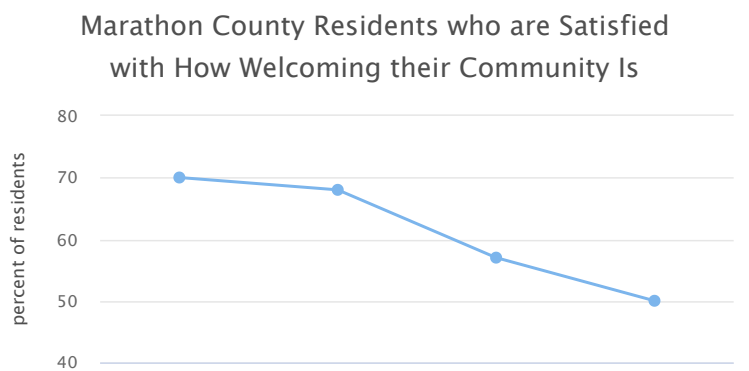
Key Takeaways

- 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%).

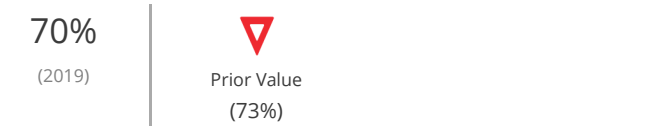
Marathon County Residents who are Satisfied with How Welcoming their Community Is



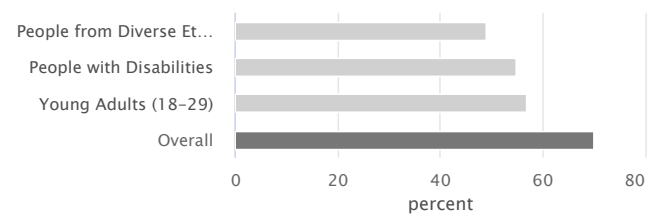
Fewer residents are Satisfied with How Welcoming their Community is.



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

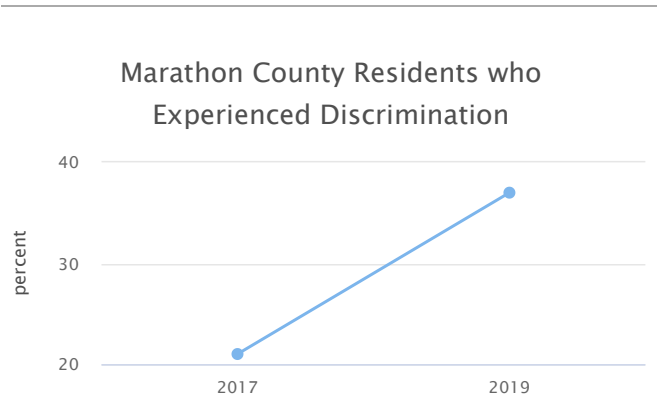
In 2019, 37% of LIFE Survey respondents indicated they have experienced discrimination on one or more occasions.

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.

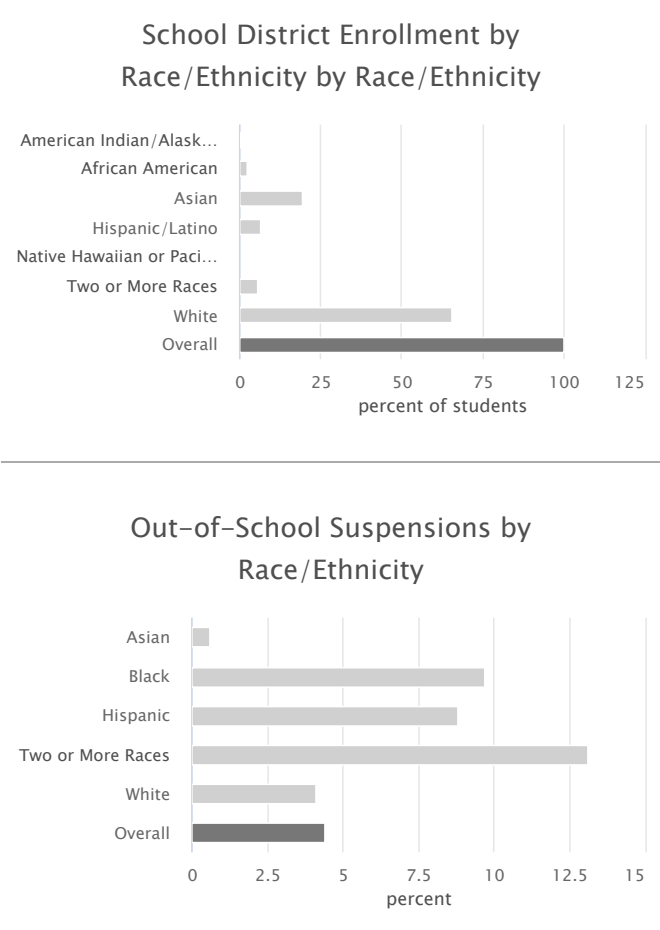
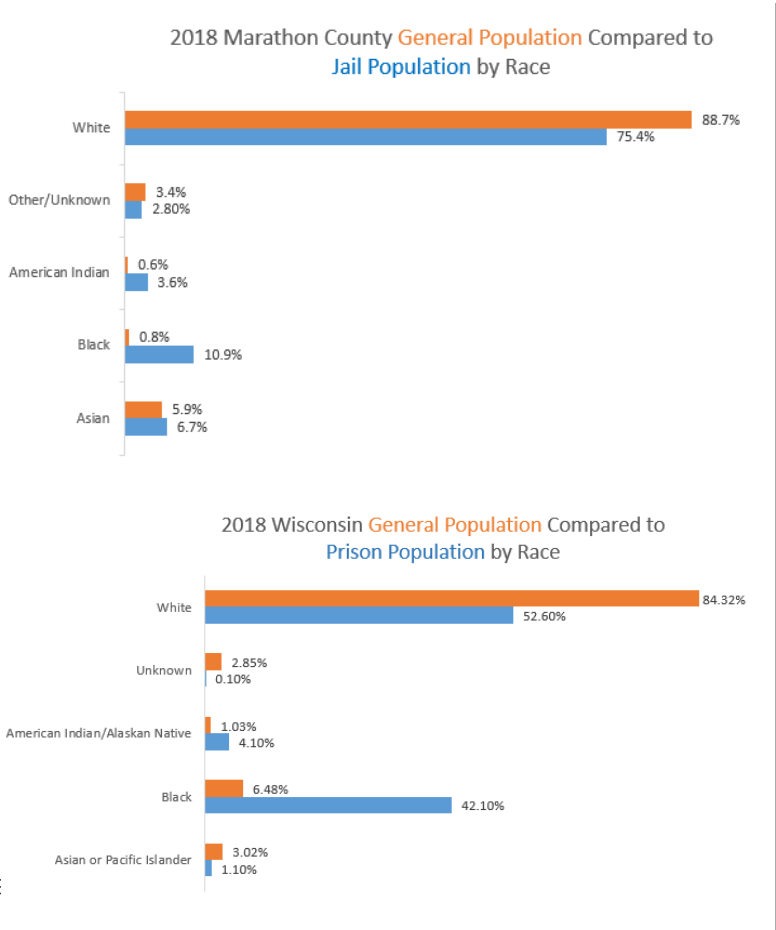
In addition to employment and income-related impacts on a family, having a parent(s) in jail or prison is considered an [Adverse Childhood Experience \(ACE\)](#). Individuals with four or more ACE's are more likely to deal with a variety of physical and mental health issues throughout their lives.

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.



INCOME/WAGE DISPARITIES BY RACE AND GENDER

Indicator 6

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)

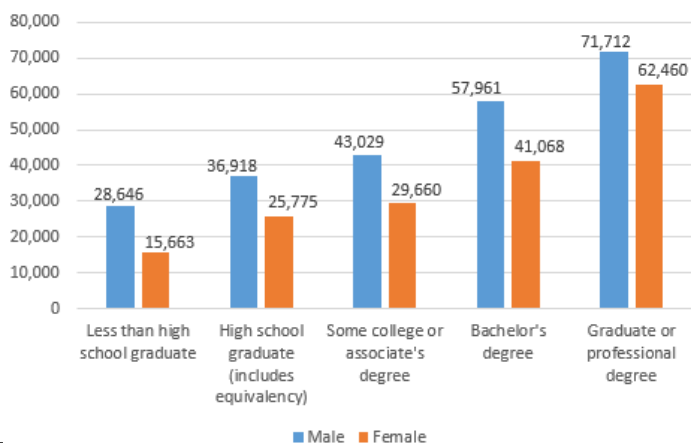


WI Value
(70.3%)

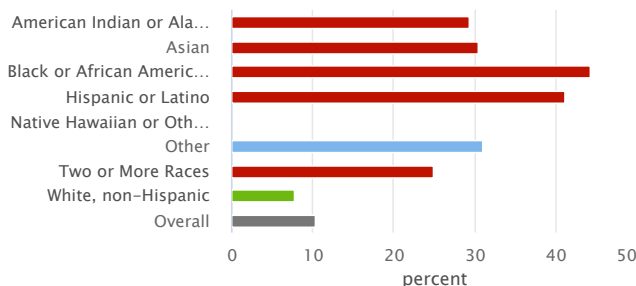


US Value
(72.8%)

Median Earnings in Marathon County by Sex and Educational Attainment

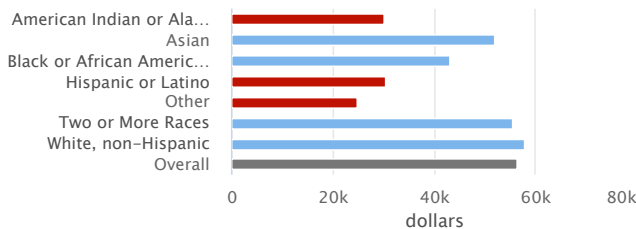


People Living Below Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity



- 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)

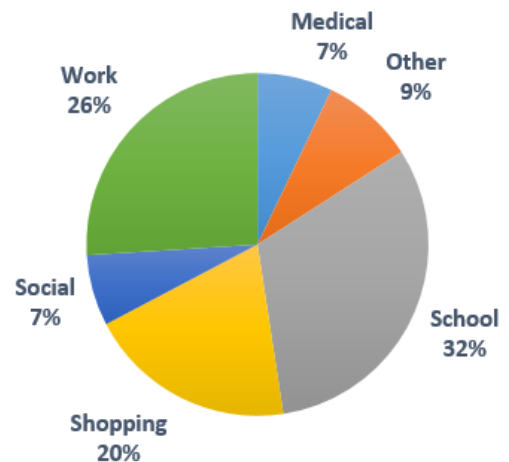


Trend

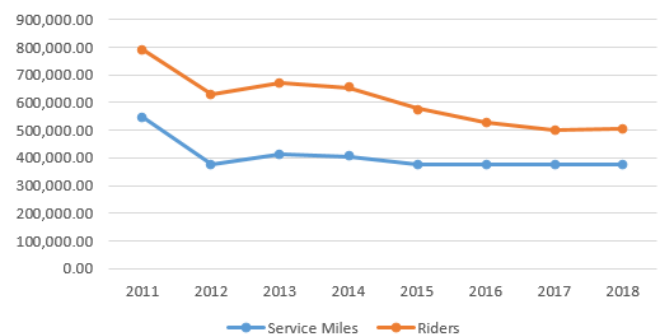
Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

Passengers Ride for a Variety of Purposes

Metro Ride Passengers By Trip Purpose



Transit Service Levels Impact Ridership



Why is this Important?

Voting is a central part of democracy. It is one way that citizens can exercise their voice about how their government operates. In Marathon County and across the state of Wisconsin, the number of registered voters tends to increase around months in which elections are held.

Voter turnout can vary based on a number of factors including the type of election and level of competition in each race, voting laws that impact how easy or difficult it is to cast a ballot and demographics such as age, race or ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status.

While recent elections have seen increased voter turnout, compared to many developed nations, the United States has relatively low voter turnout. Low voter turnout can also be a symptom of “voter apathy” or a lack of interest in elections. Voter apathy can occur when eligible voters feel like their vote will not make a difference or that candidates do not represent them or their interests.

In Wisconsin, voter turnout for the 2018 midterm election increased by about 5 percentage points since the last midterm election. Nationwide, midterm voter turnout was the highest it has been since 1914. While the majority of voters still visit their polling place, the number of absentee ballots cast is on the rise.

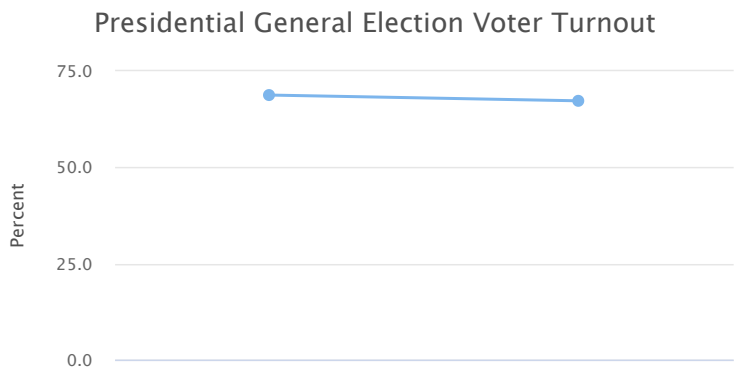
Key Takeaways

- Surrounding the 2018 midterm election, the number of registered voters in Marathon County increased by 4,746 (from 73,429 to 78,175).
- Approximately 3,250 absentee ballots were mailed to voters ahead of the 2018 midterm election. Of the ballots mailed, 2,598 were returned.
- In Marathon County, a total of 62,144, or roughly 80%, of registered voters cast a ballot in the 2018 midterm election.

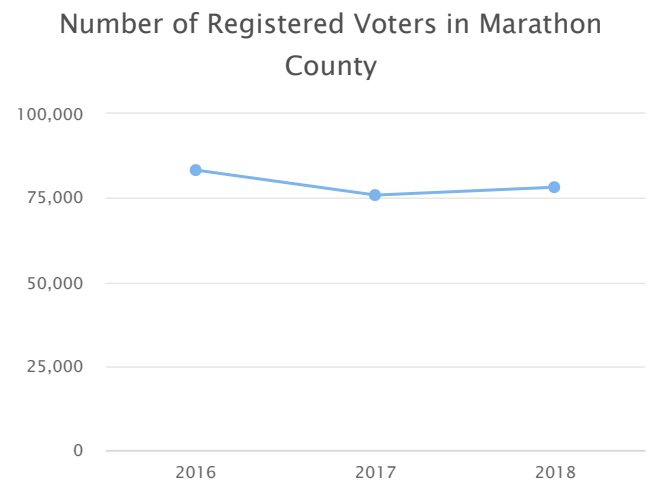
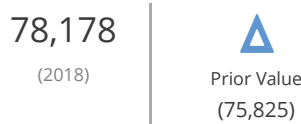
Presidential General Election Voter Turnout



The percent of eligible voters that turned out for the presidential general elections.



Number of Registered Voters in Marathon County



LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

When asked what most connects residents to their community, 8% of 2019 LIFE Survey respondents indicated civic engagement is part of what helps them feel connected.

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

25.5%
(2013-2017)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(28.9%)



US Value
(26.2%)

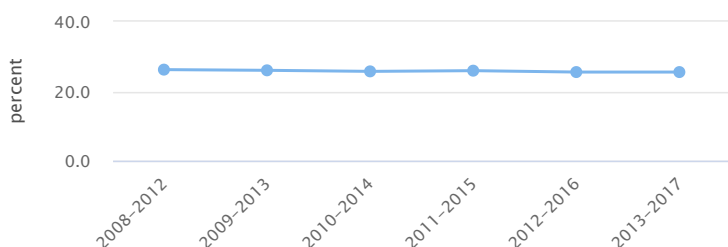


Prior Value
(25.5%)



Trend

People 65+ Living Alone



Family Mealtime

63%
(2019)



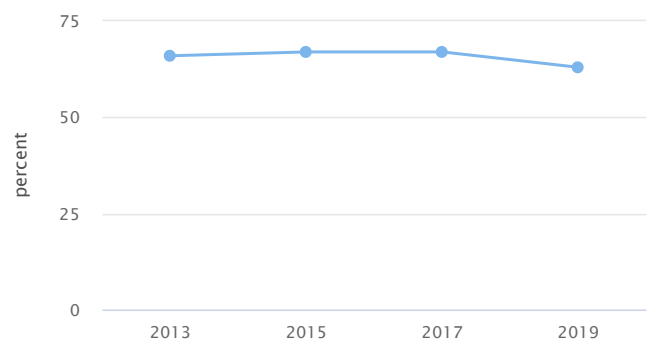
Prior Value
(67%)



Trend

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

Family Mealtime



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%

Why is this Important?

High speed Internet access and usage play an important role in helping people connect to goods, services and information as well as to family, friends and entertainment sources. Broadband is high-speed Internet that comes in four different forms: cable, DSL (or Digital Subscriber Line), fiber-optic and satellite.

As Internet usage increases so does its variety of uses including those by businesses trying to connect with customers, health care providers sharing information with patients and job seekers looking for employment. Many schools have also begun utilizing iPads, Chromebooks or other tablets, which depend on high speed Internet to be effective, for students in and out of the classroom. Due to the limited data available regarding broadband Internet access, it is uncertain how many students in Marathon County are able to utilize these tools at home.

In Marathon County, it is estimated that less than half the population in rural parts of the county has access to broadband Internet. In urban areas, nearly all of the population has access to broadband Internet, though affordability may factor into a family's ability to purchase it. Those who live or work in geographic regions without access to affordable Internet may experience distinct disadvantages.

Key Takeaways

Because of concerns about access to affordable high-speed internet, Marathon County has launched an extensive [study of broadband access](#) and its development.

In urban areas, 99% of the population in Marathon County as well as across Wisconsin have access to 25 Mbps/3Mbps. In rural areas, we begin to see a gap: only 41.5% of the rural population have the same access in Marathon County in contrast with 56.9% across rural Wisconsin.

Households with an Internet Subscription

79.7%

(2013-2017)



WI Counties

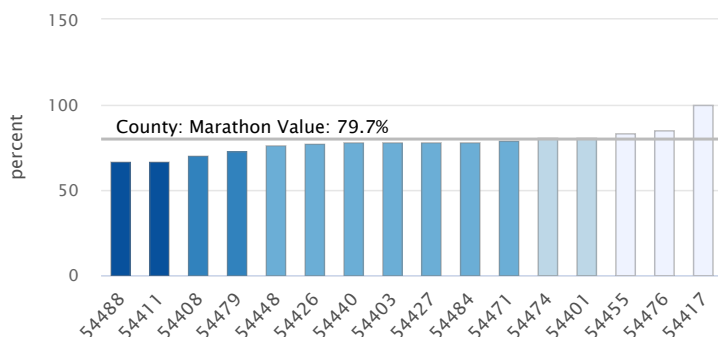


WI Value
(79.1%)



US Value
(78.7%)

Households with an Internet Subscription



Households with One or More Types of Computing Devices

85.8%

(2013-2017)



WI Counties

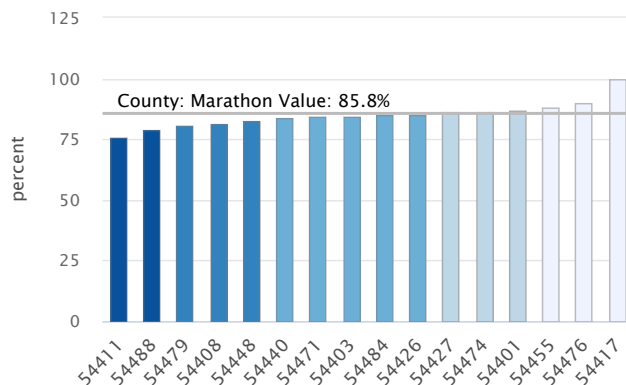


WI Value
(86.6%)



US Value
(87.2%)

Households with One or More Types of Computing Devices



Teen Computer/Video Game Usage (High School)

40.0%

Percent of high school students
(2019)



US Value
(41.7% in 2015)



Prior Value
(39.4%)

Why is this Important?

Marathon County has a vibrant arts and culture scene with opportunities for individuals of all ages. Research has long shown that a thriving arts and culture sector in a community not only fuels economic development, but also enhances the connectedness of the community as a whole.

Marathon County has two internationally-acclaimed venues in Wausau, with the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum and The Grand Theater combining to bring over 200,000 guests through their doors each year. There are opportunities beyond Wausau, with over 30 arts organizations throughout the county, which not only provide opportunities for residents but also drive tourism and attract new residents to the region.

From diverse cultural activities such as Hmong New Year and Polish Fest to opportunities to participate in public art projects, individuals can take part in the arts in many ways. Residents can enjoy the Center for Visual Arts, Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art, community theater groups, and a variety of music venues, including the popular summer concert series on the 400 block. This is of great importance as strong arts and culture in a community is tied to broader civic engagement. People involved in the arts in any capacity demonstrate increased voter participation, volunteerism and charitable giving compared to those who are not. Abundant and accessible arts and culture opportunities for youth also help to build skills for the next generation of Marathon County residents.

Key Takeaways

Over two-thirds of LIFE Survey respondents continue to be satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of arts and entertainment opportunities in Marathon County.

More than half respondents of LIFE Survey respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the availability of family-friendly activities.

Culture and Arts Bring Revenue into Communities.

Total Impact of the Non-Profit Arts and Culture Industry in Marathon County

Expenditures by both organizations and audiences

Total Direct Expenditures	\$9,174,439
Full-Time Equivalent Jobs	340
Resident Household Income	\$6,074,000
Local Government Revenue	\$309,000
State Government Revenue	\$464,000
Source: 2012 Total Impact of the Arts- Economic Prosperity Study IV	

LIFE Survey: Resident Perspectives

Only 4% of LIFE Survey respondents indicated they chose to live in Marathon County for the arts and entertainment opportunities.

Marathon County Residents Satisfied with Arts/Entertainment

67.0%

(2019)

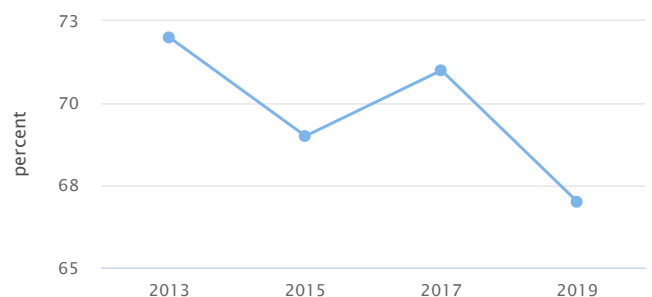


Prior Value
(71.0%)



Trend

Marathon County Residents Satisfied with Arts/Entertainment



Marathon County Residents who are Satisfied with Family Activities

59.0%

(2019)



Prior Value
(61.0%)

Marathon County LIFE Survey 2019

In order to assess important issues regarding the quality of life in Marathon County, the LIFE Steering Committee issued a survey to Marathon County residents in February of 2019. During March and early April 2019, the Survey Research Center (SRC) from University of Wisconsin-River Falls collected data on behalf of the 2019 LIFE Report Survey. The 2019 survey mirrored similar surveys done in previous years.

Data were gathered in three ways:

- A six-page survey was sent to 1,434 households in Marathon County. 75% of the surveys were mailed to a random sample of County residents and 25% to the populations under age 35, households with incomes under \$25,000, and people of color, because we wanted to ensure representation in the sample from three populations that are sometimes challenging to reach with surveys.
- 100 surveys were distributed to selected Marathon County non-profit partners by United Way of Marathon County.
- Emailed an invitation to a panel of approximately 2,000 Marathon County residents.

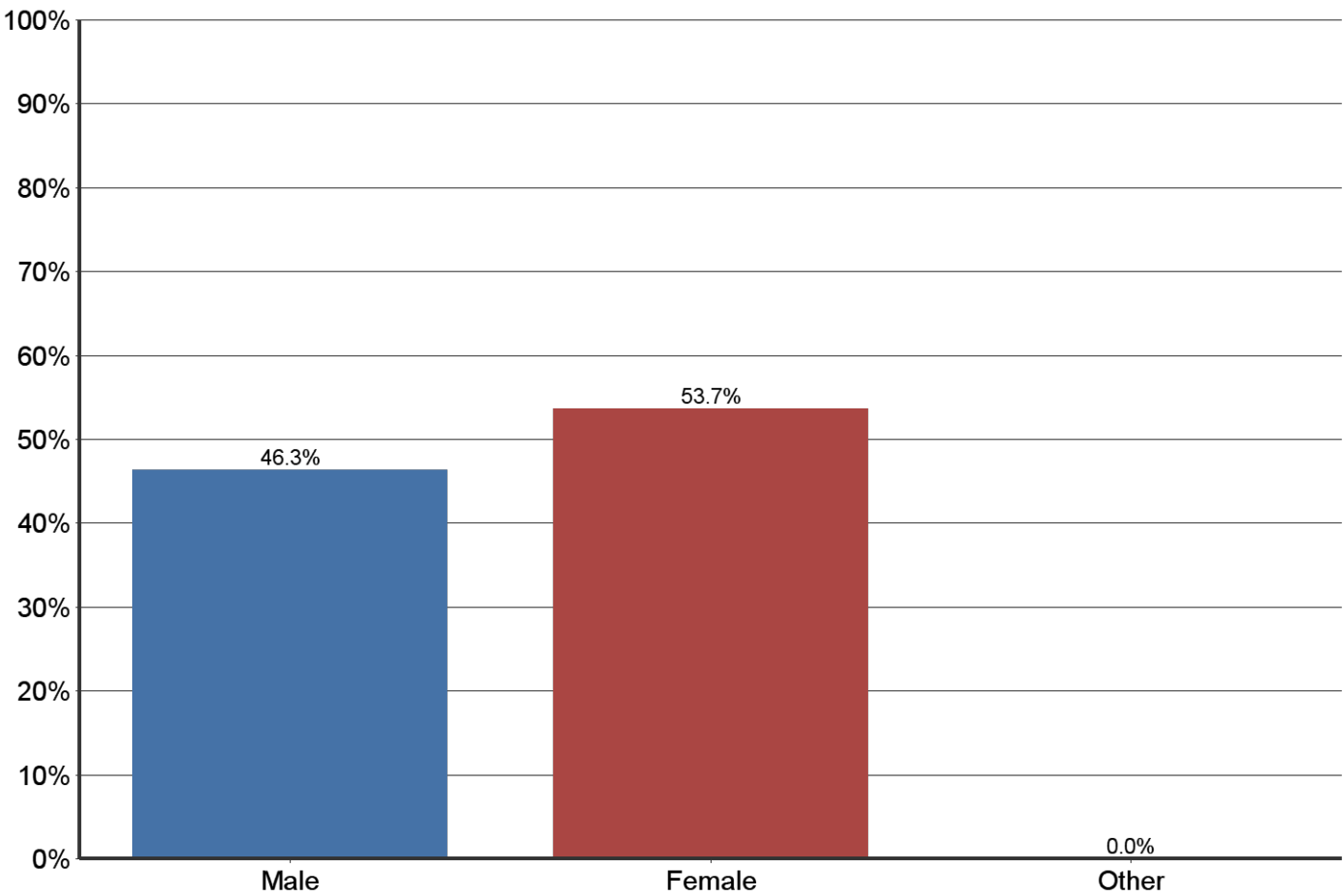
The SRC used the Dillman Method for the 1,434 households in the mail survey. Each person in the sample was sent a survey initially. Those who had not returned their survey within two weeks were sent a postcard reminding them to complete the survey. Two weeks after the postcard, those who had still not responded received a second postcard.

The SRC received the following number of responses from these three sources:

- 388 paper surveys from the mail out
- 37 paper surveys from non-profit partners
- 107 on-line surveys

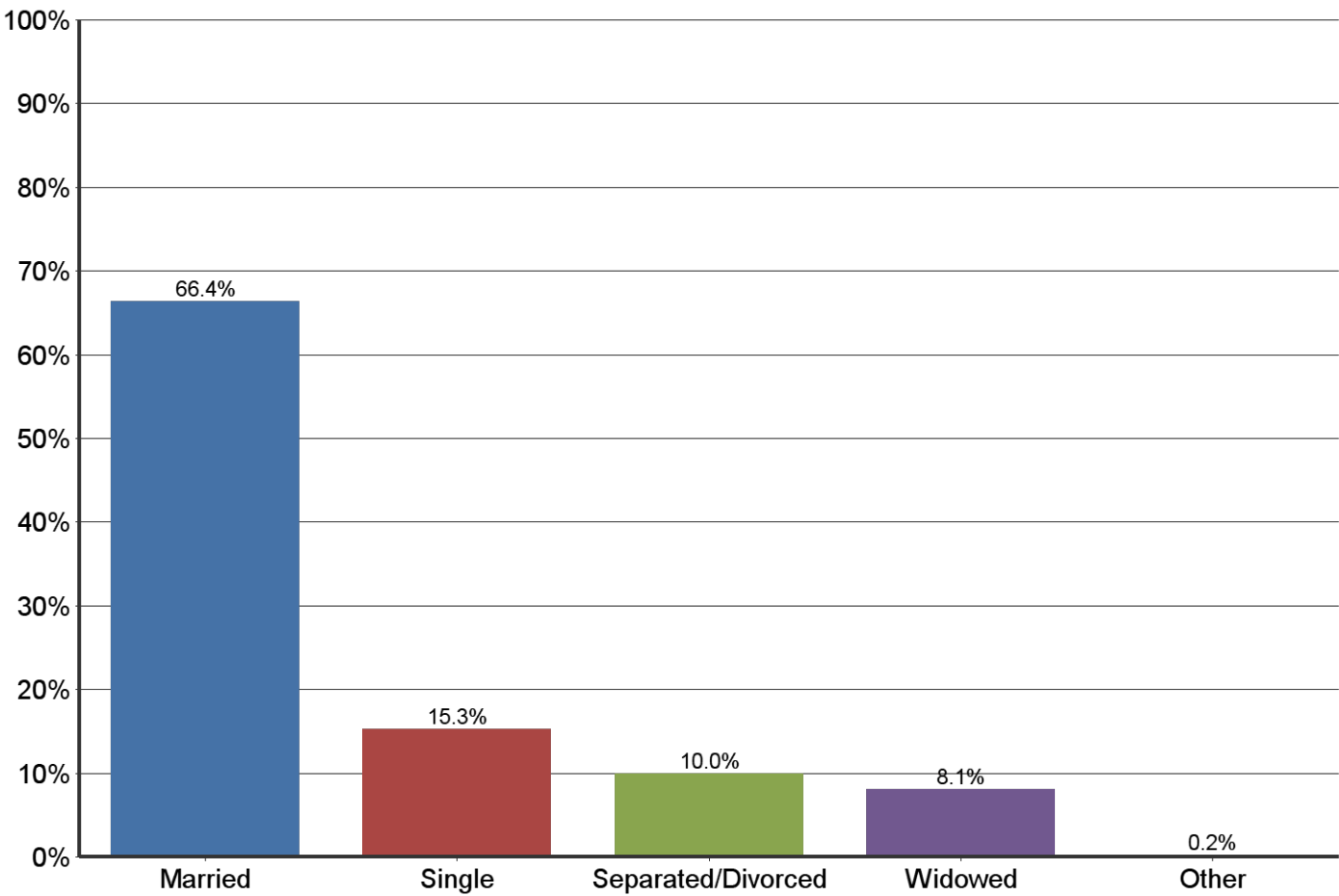
According to the US Census (2011-2015, 5-Year Estimates) there are approximately 53,848 households in Marathon County. Based on that number, SRC did receive an adequate number of completed questionnaires to produce estimates that are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 5% with 95% confidence.

What is your gender?



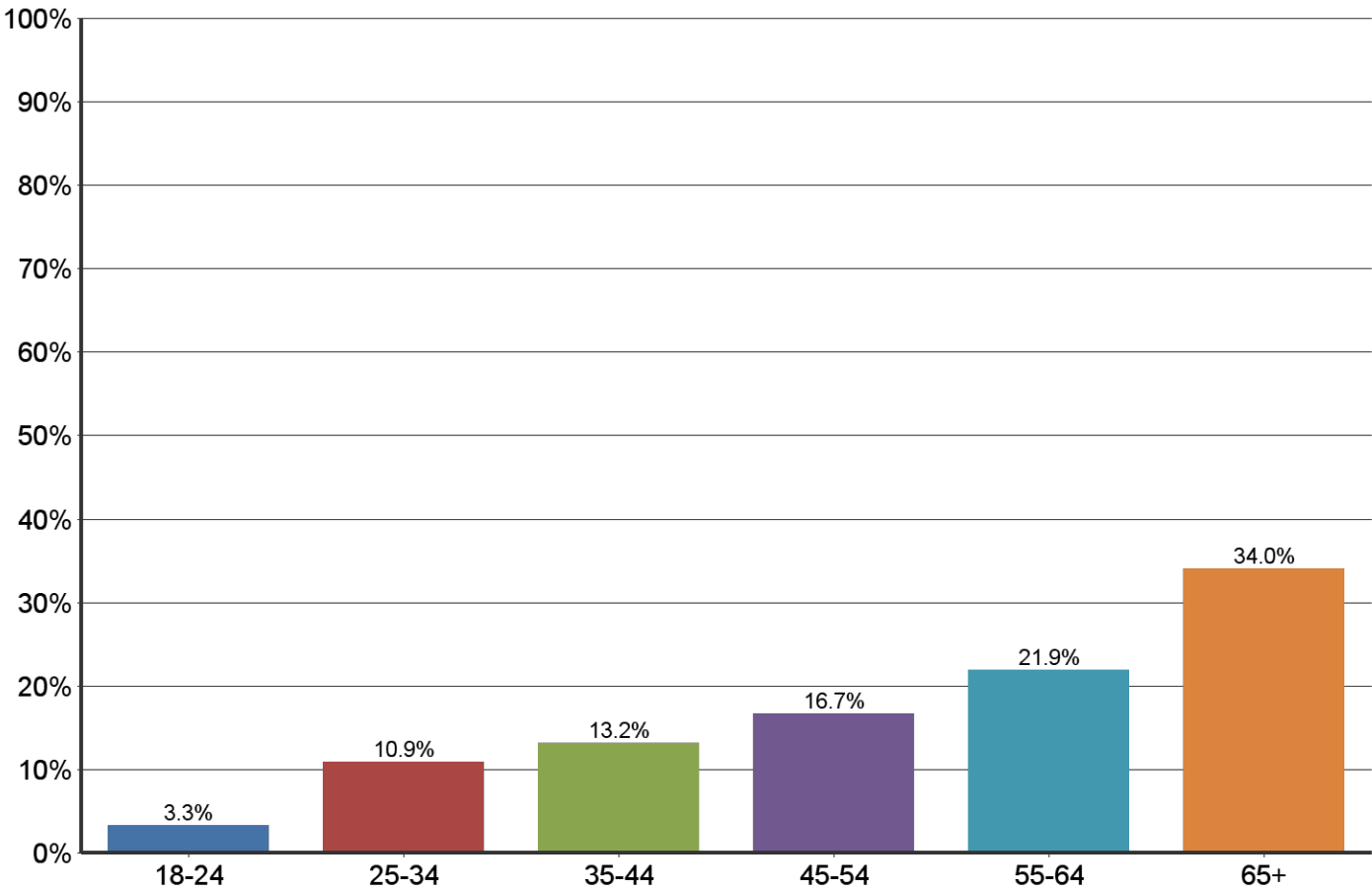
	Percent	Count	Percent
Male	<div></div>	239	46.3%
Female	<div></div>	277	53.7%
Other		0	0.0%
Total	<div></div>	516	100.0%

What is your marital status?



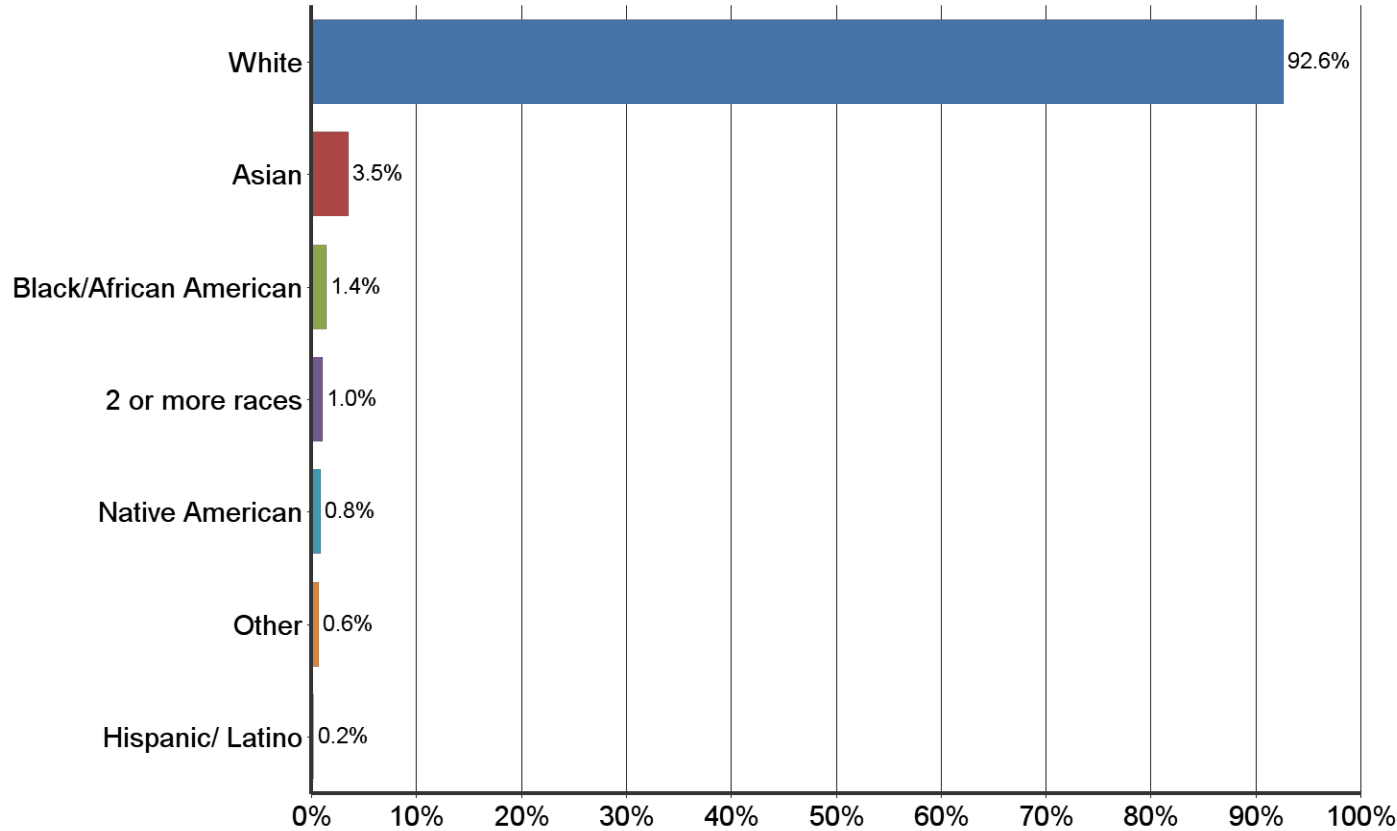
	Percent	Count	Percent
Married	<div></div>	344	66.4%
Single	<div></div>	79	15.3%
Separated/Divorced	<div></div>	52	10.0%
Widowed	<div></div>	42	8.1%
Other		1	0.2%
Total	<div></div>	518	100.0%

What is your age?



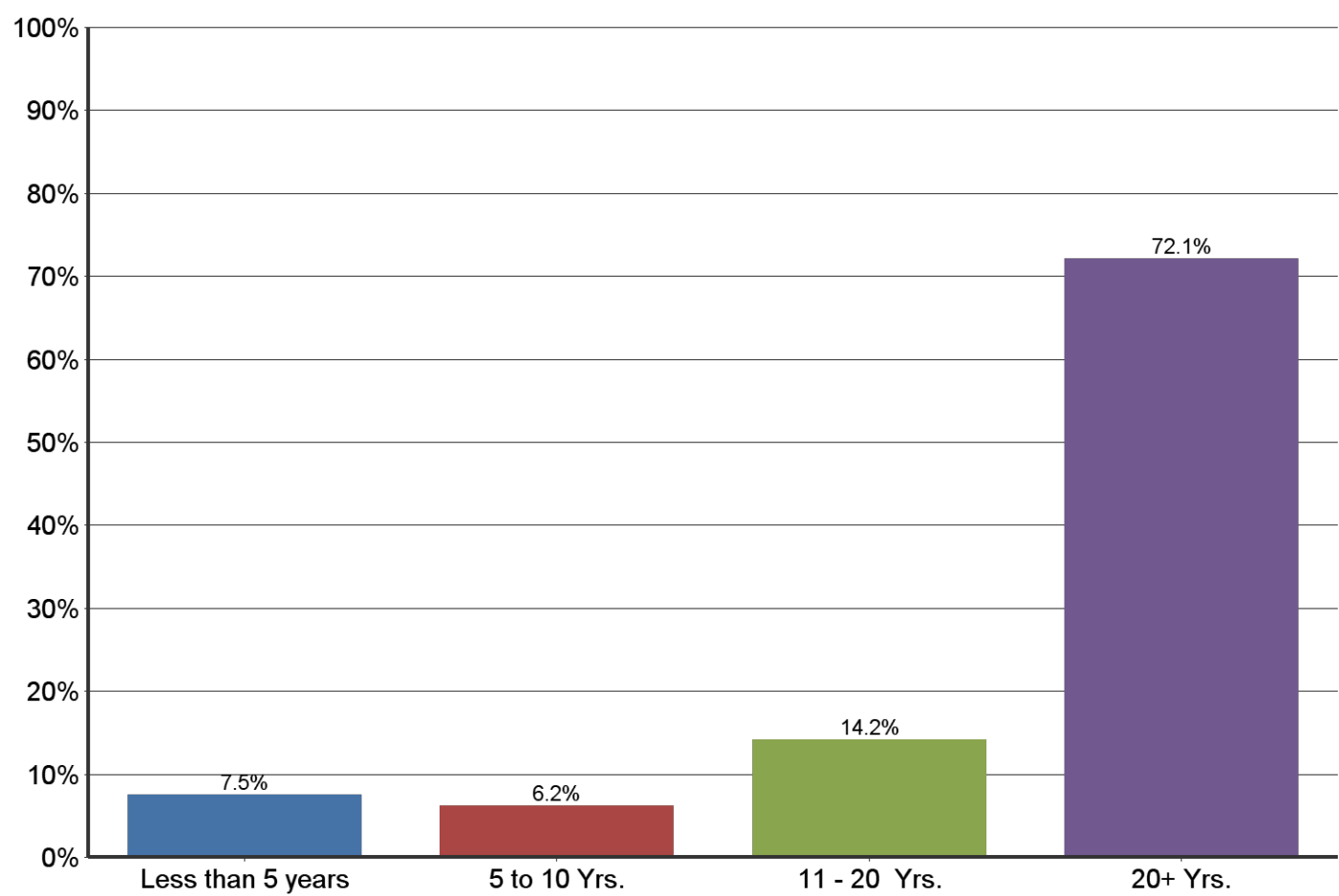
	Percent	Count	Percent
18-24	<div></div>	17	3.3%
25-34	<div></div>	57	10.9%
35-44	<div></div>	69	13.2%
45-54	<div></div>	87	16.7%
55-64	<div></div>	114	21.9%
65+	<div></div>	177	34.0%
Total	<div></div>	521	100.0%

What racial or ethnic category best describes you?



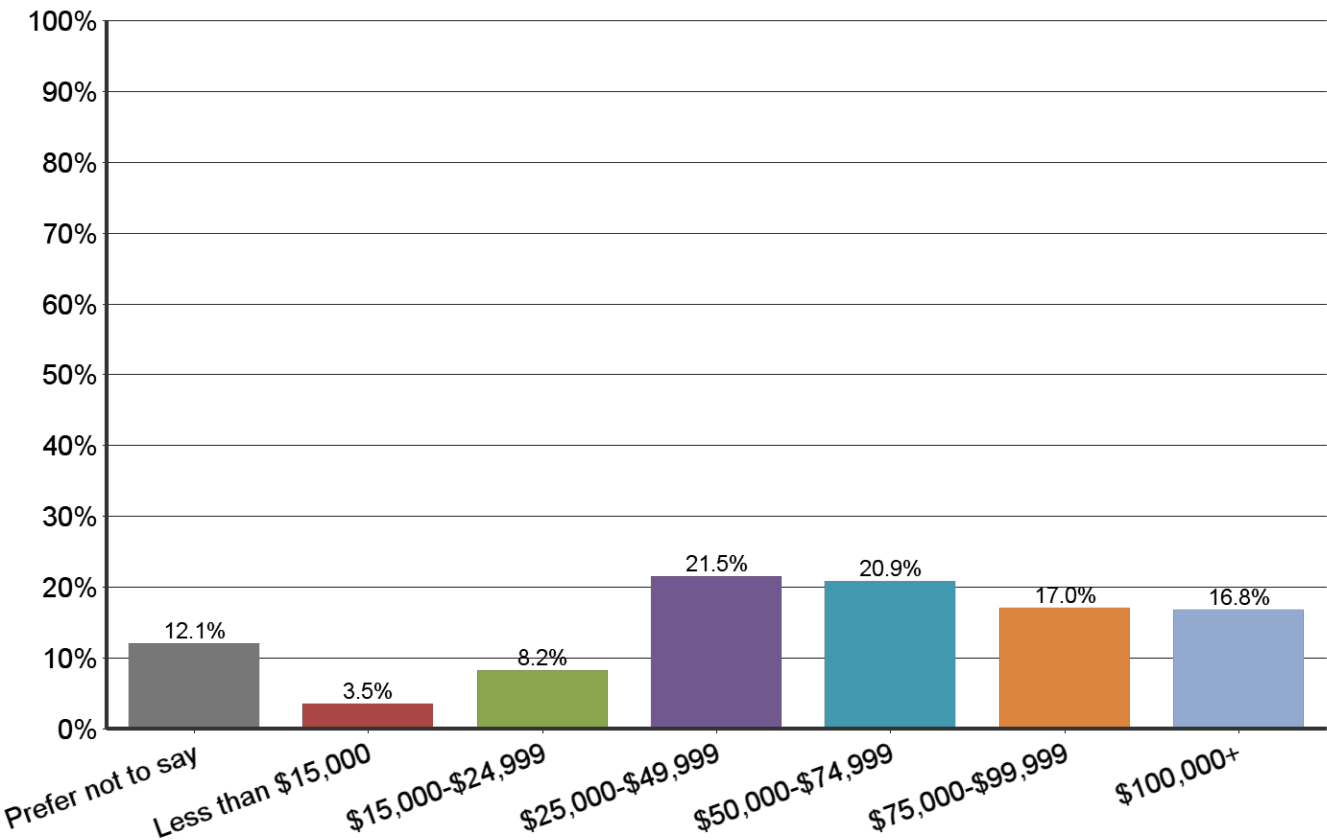
	Percent	Count	Percent
White	<div></div>	478	92.6%
Asian	<div></div>	18	3.5%
Black/African American	<div></div>	7	1.4%
2 or more races	<div></div>	5	1.0%
Native American	<div></div>	4	0.8%
Other	<div></div>	3	0.6%
Hispanic/ Latino		1	0.2%
Total	<div></div>	516	100.0%

How many years have you lived in Marathon County?



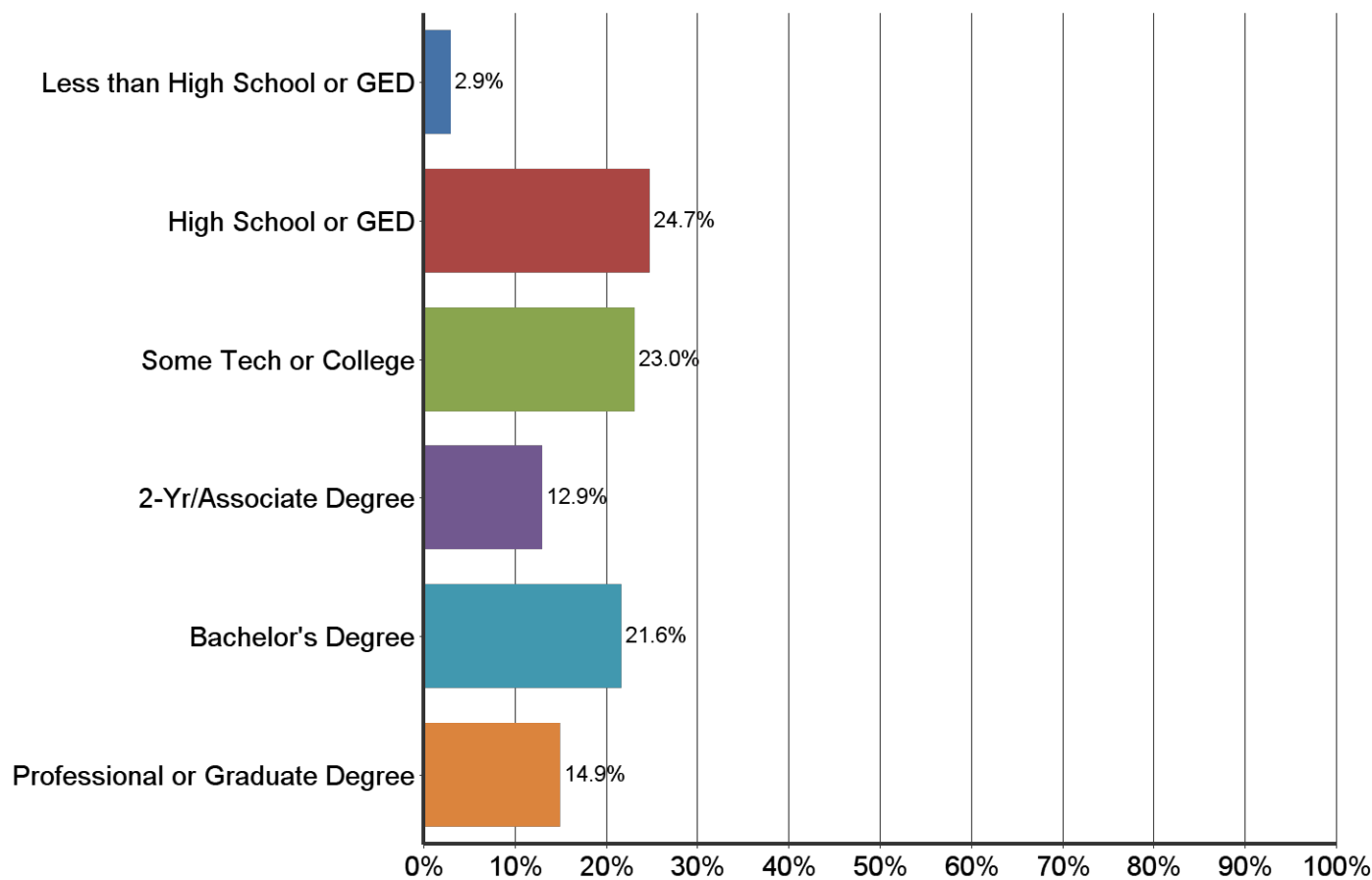
	Percent	Count	Percent
Less than 5 years	<div></div>	39	7.5%
5 to 10 Yrs.	<div></div>	32	6.2%
11 - 20 Yrs.	<div></div>	74	14.2%
20+ Yrs.	<div></div>	375	72.1%
Total	<div></div>	520	100.0%

What is your household's annual income range?



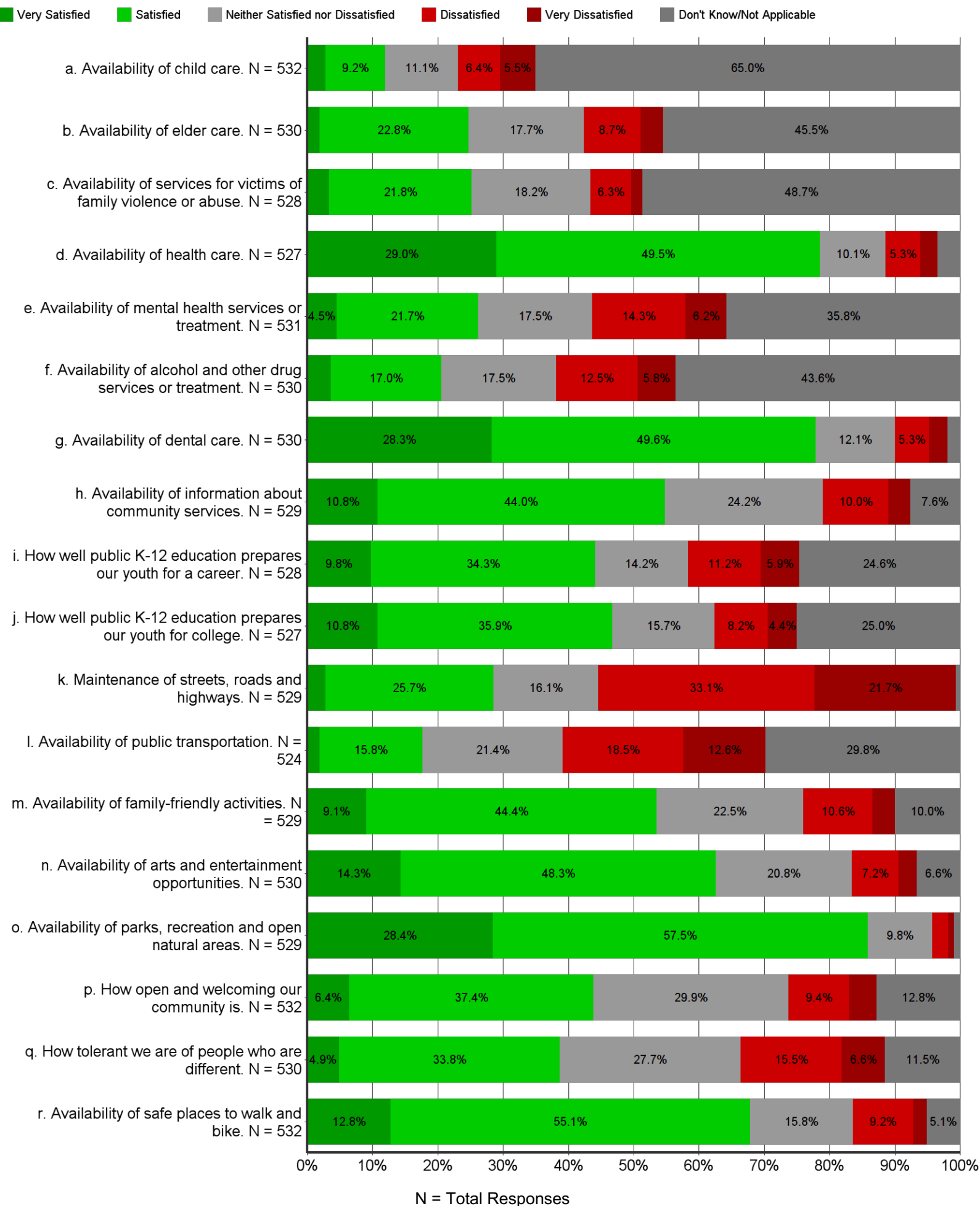
	Percent	Count	Percent
Prefer not to say	<div></div>	62	12.1%
Less than \$15,000	<div></div>	18	3.5%
\$15,000-\$24,999	<div></div>	42	8.2%
\$25,000-\$49,999	<div></div>	110	21.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	<div></div>	107	20.9%
\$75,000-\$99,999	<div></div>	87	17.0%
\$100,000+	<div></div>	86	16.8%
Total	<div></div>	512	100.0%

What is the highest level of education that you've completed?

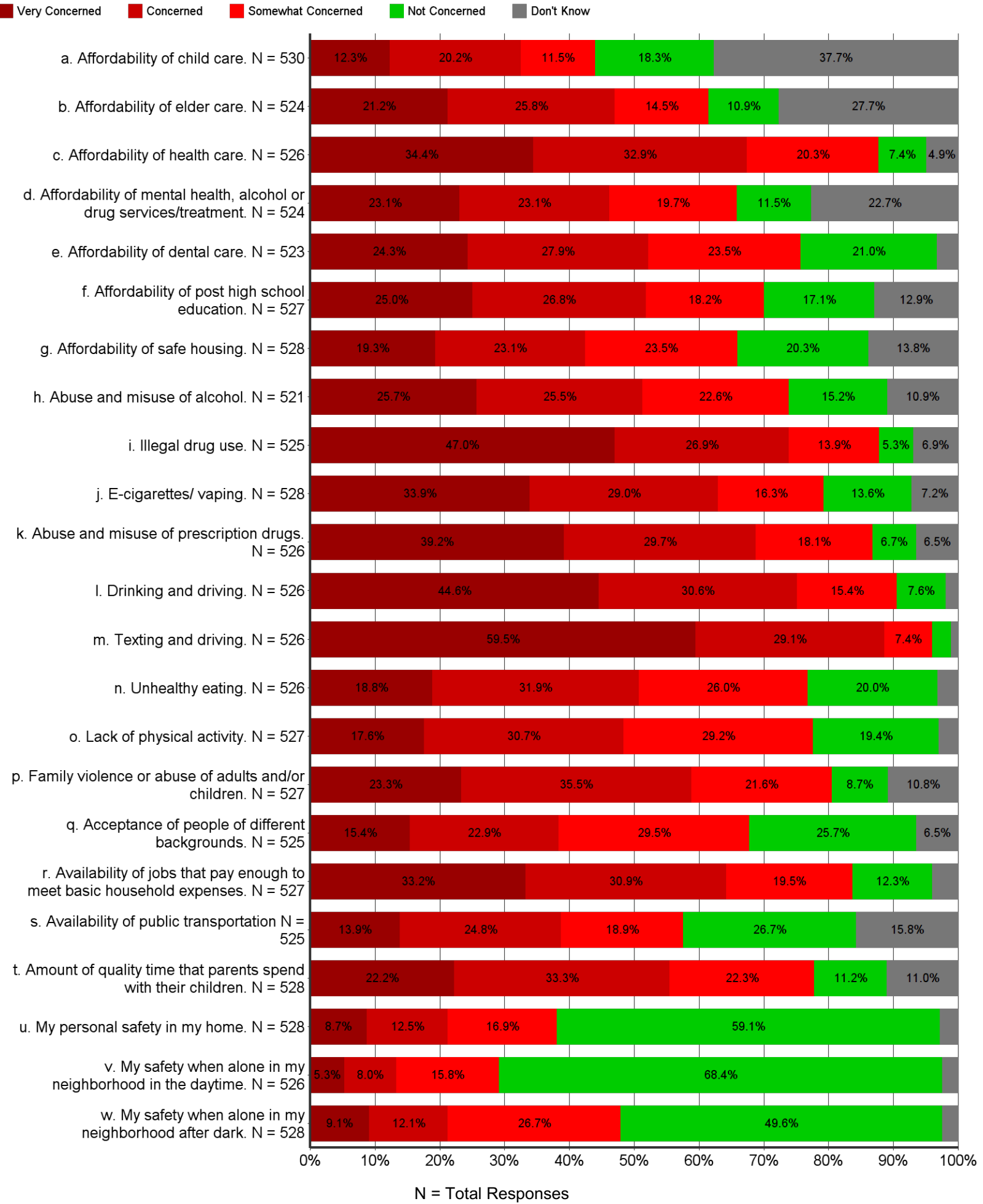


	Percent	Count	Percent
Less than High School or GED	<div></div>	15	2.9%
High School or GED	<div></div>	128	24.7%
Some Tech or College	<div></div>	119	23.0%
2-Yr/Associate Degree	<div></div>	67	12.9%
Bachelor's Degree	<div></div>	112	21.6%
Professional or Graduate Degree	<div></div>	77	14.9%
Total	<div></div>	518	100.0%

1. How **SATISFIED** are you with the following in your community?



2. How **CONCERNED** are you about the following in your community?



3. From the list in Question 2 above, please type the letter (a-w) of the THREE issues that most concern you.

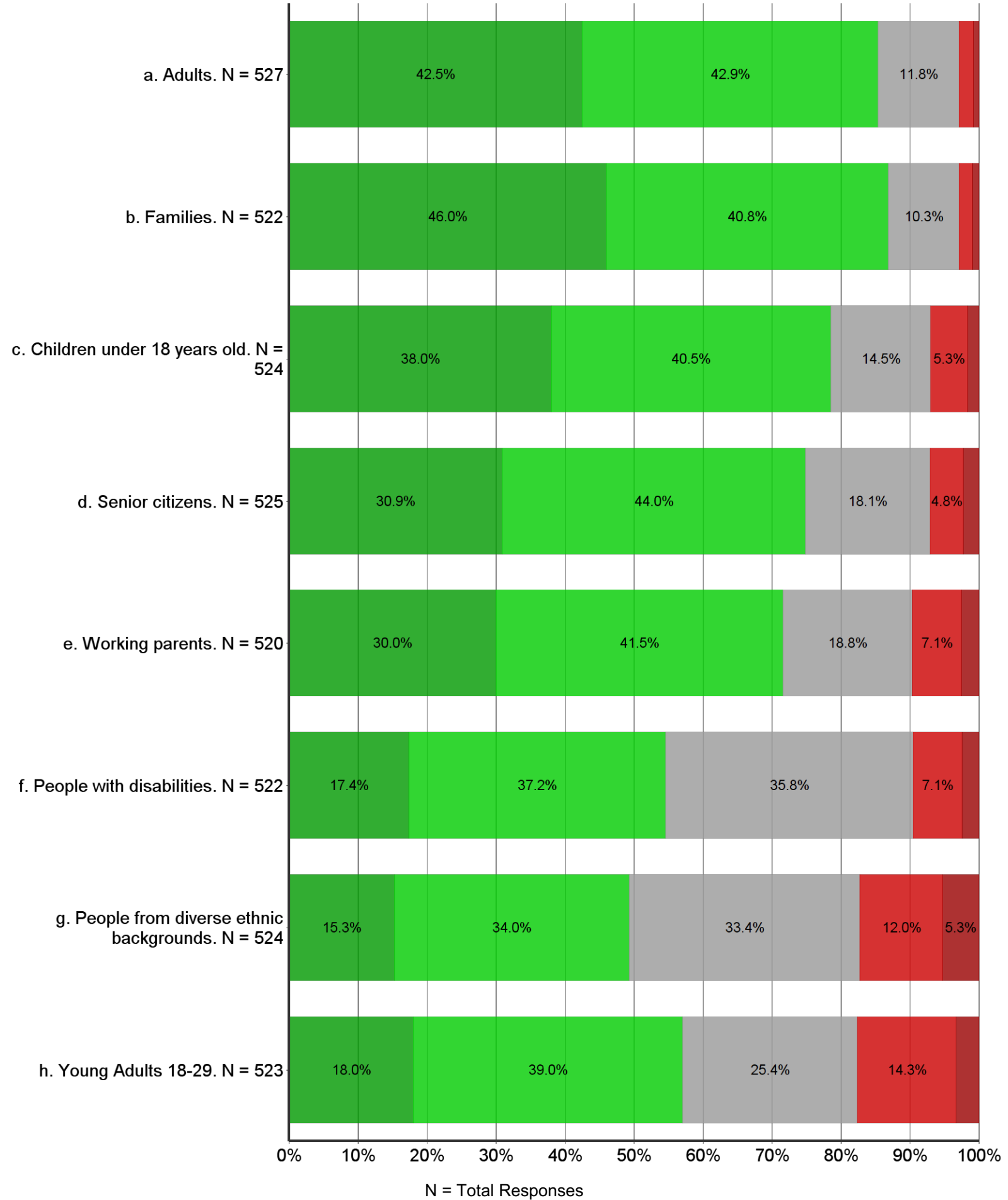
Total Responses: 1456

Total Respondents: 483

Percent	Concern
13.3%	Illegal drug use
13.0%	Texting and driving
10.9%	Affordability of health care
8.3%	Drinking and driving
7.0%	Availability of jobs that pay enough to meet basic household expenses
4.9%	Abuse and misuse of prescription drugs
4.5%	Affordability of elder care
3.7%	Affordability of post high school education
3.4%	Abuse and misuse of alcohol
3.4%	Family violence or abuse of adults and/or children
3.0%	E-cigarettes/ vaping
2.9%	Affordability of dental care
2.8%	Affordability of mental health, alcohol or drug services/treatment
2.4%	Affordability of child care
2.4%	Amount of quality time that parents spend with their children
2.2%	My safety when alone in my neighborhood after dark
2.0%	Affordability of safe housing
2.0%	Lack of physical activity
2.0%	Availability of public transportation
1.9%	Acceptance of people of different backgrounds
1.6%	Unhealthy eating
1.0%	My personal safety in my home
1.0%	My safety when alone in my neighborhood in the daytime
0.7%	Other

4. Do you agree or disagree that Marathon County is a good place to live for:

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree



5. Of the following, which are the THREE most important reasons you've chosen to live in Marathon County? (Mark up to three reasons only)

	Percent	Count	Percent
Near family/friends	<div></div>	349	66.3%
Rural life style	<div></div>	172	32.7%
Size of community	<div></div>	153	29.1%
Job opportunities	<div></div>	143	27.2%
Safe community	<div></div>	134	25.5%
Good place to raise kids	<div></div>	127	24.1%
Affordable cost of living	<div></div>	124	23.6%
Good schools	<div></div>	108	20.5%
Recreation opportunities in parks/natural areas	<div></div>	82	15.6%
Other	<div></div>	42	8.0%
Welcoming community	<div></div>	30	5.7%
Entertainment opportunities	<div></div>	23	4.4%
Total	<div></div>	1487	282.7%

6. Which three of the following most connects you to your community in Marathon County? (Mark up to three reasons only)

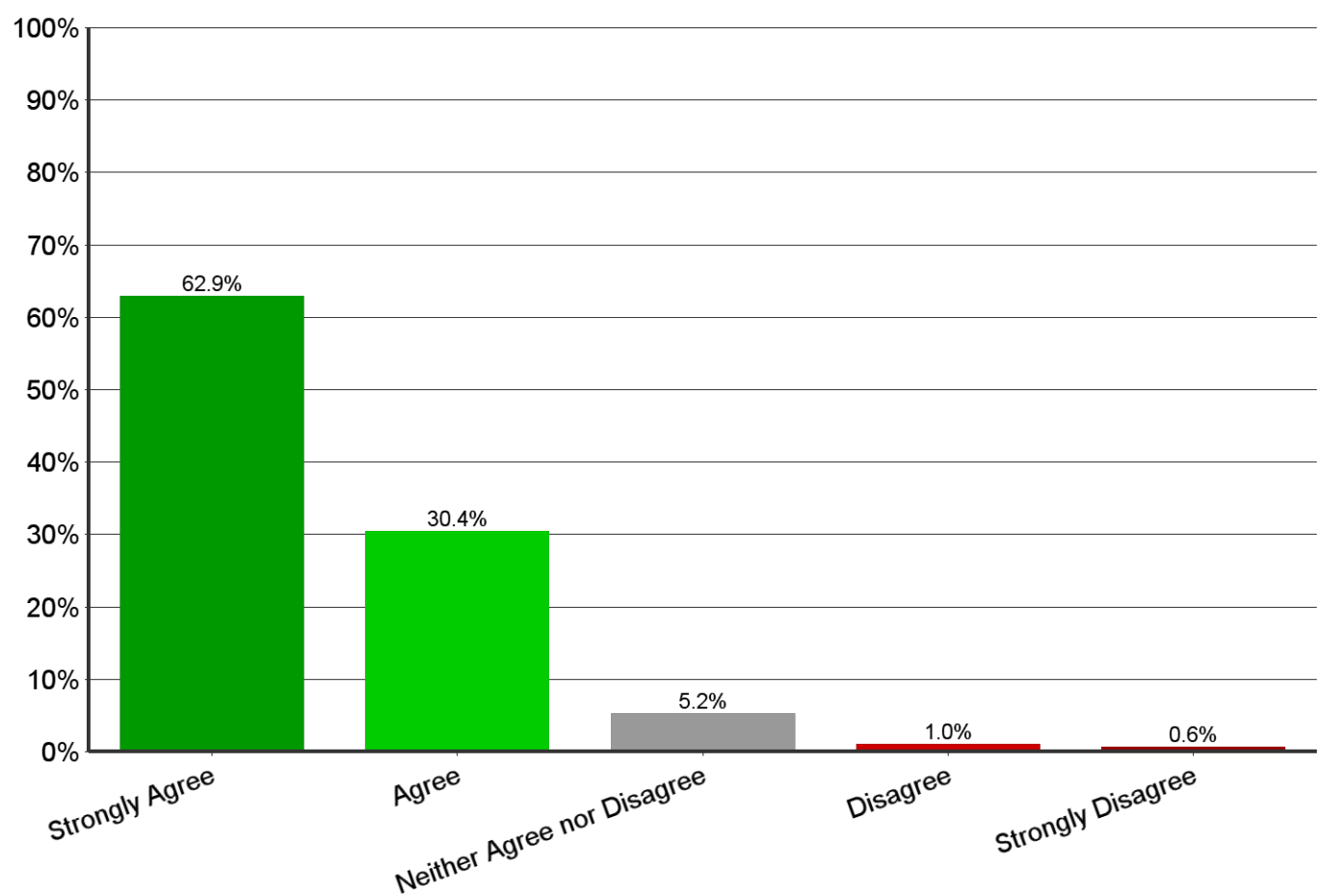
	Percent	Count	Percent
My family/friends	<div></div>	402	78.8%
Organizations (clubs, churches, etc.)	<div></div>	147	28.8%
Access to needed services	<div></div>	103	20.2%
Respectful treatment by my community	<div></div>	79	15.5%
Volunteering	<div></div>	57	11.2%
Involvement with schools	<div></div>	55	10.8%
Social media/Internet	<div></div>	47	9.2%
Civic engagement (voting, public forums, etc.)	<div></div>	40	7.8%
Other	<div></div>	38	7.5%
Total	<div></div>	968	189.8%

7. Discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly based upon personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, income, religion, disability or handicap, etc.

During the past year, how many times have you/members of your household experienced discrimination in Marathon County?

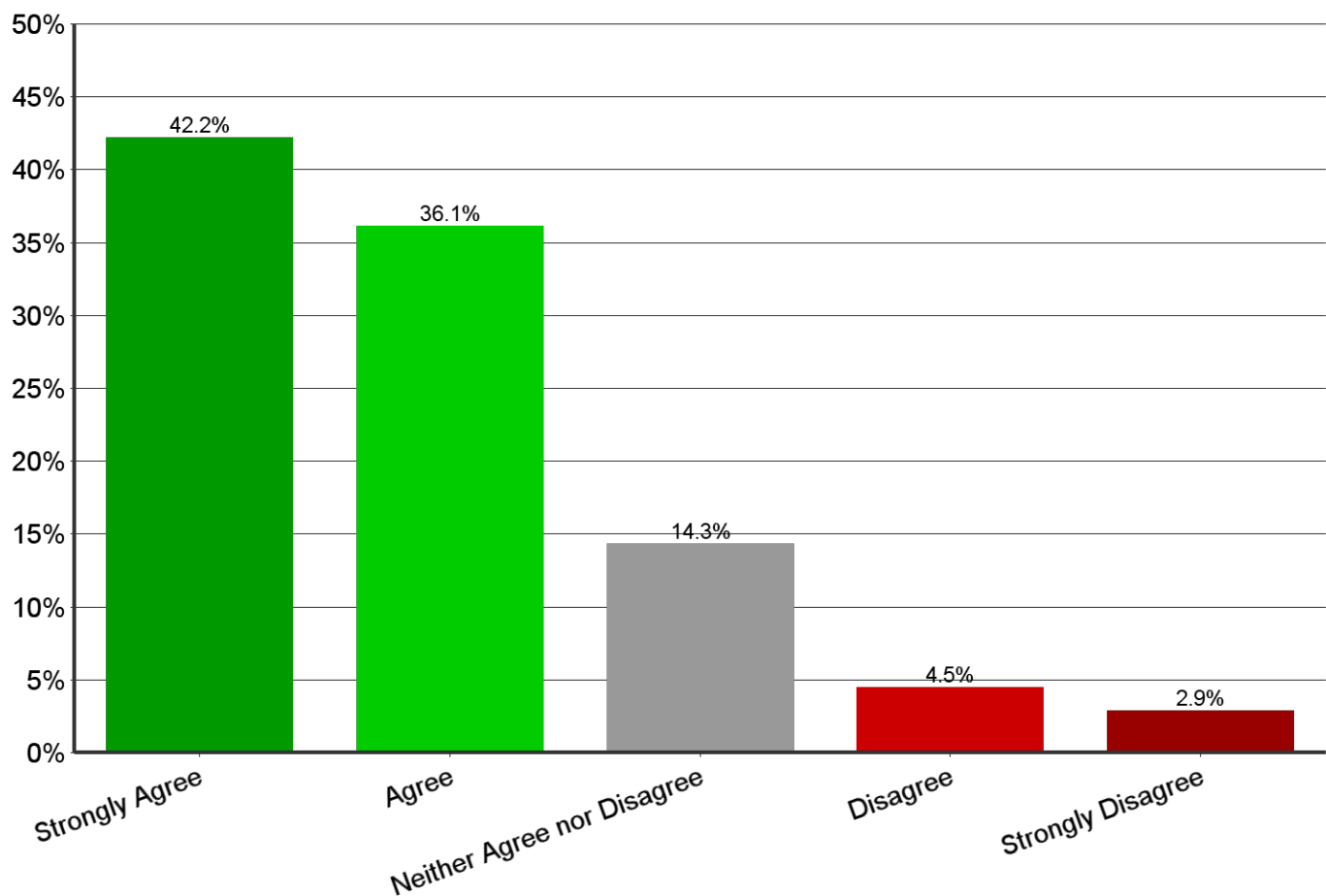
	Percent	Count	Percent
None	<div><div></div></div>	324	63.3%
1 Time	<div><div></div></div>	27	5.3%
2-5 Times	<div><div></div></div>	77	15.0%
6-10 Times	<div><div></div></div>	18	3.5%
11-20 Times	<div><div></div></div>	6	1.2%
21+ Times	<div><div></div></div>	15	2.9%
Don't Know	<div><div></div></div>	45	8.8%
Total	<div><div></div></div>	512	100.0%

8. The people with whom I currently work, or with whom I used to work, would say I have a strong work ethic?



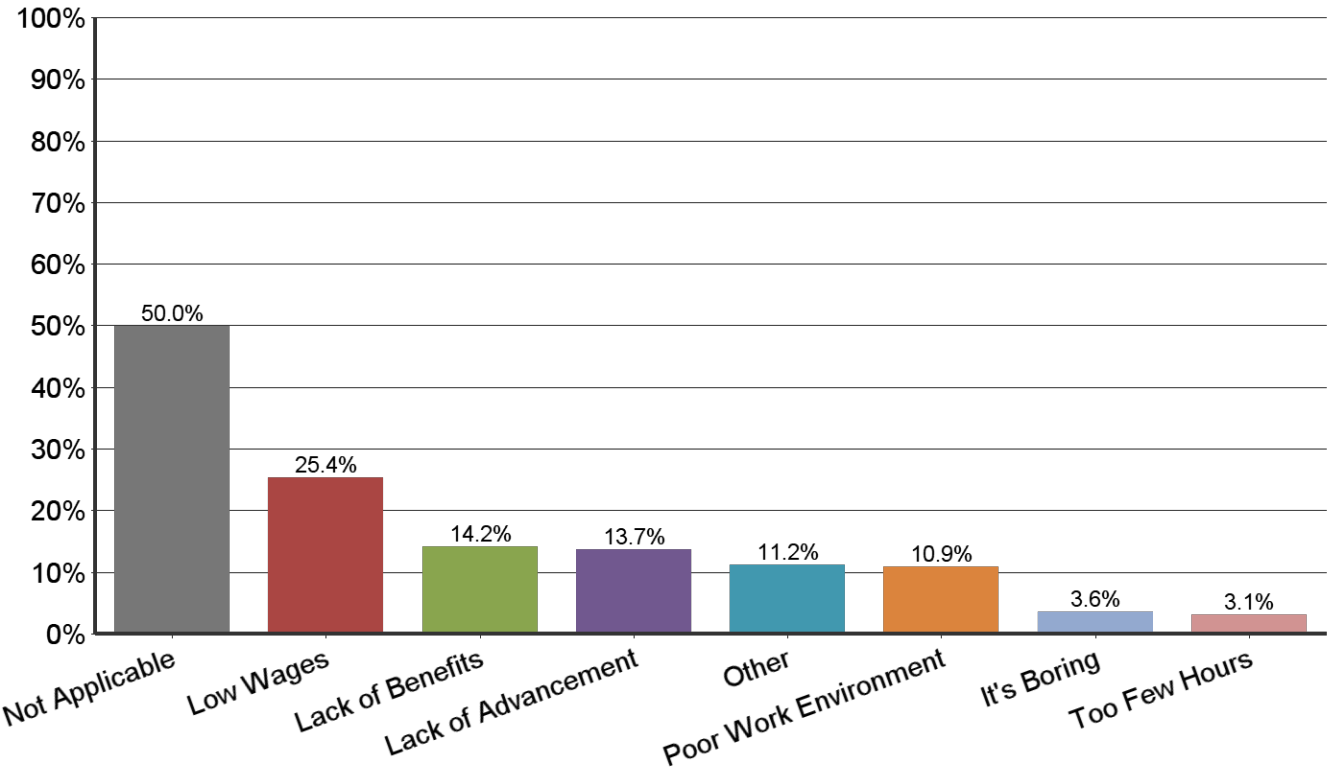
	Percent	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	<div></div>	325	62.9%
Agree	<div></div>	157	30.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	<div></div>	27	5.2%
Disagree	<div></div>	5	1.0%
Strongly Disagree	<div></div>	3	0.6%
Total	<div></div>	517	100.0%

9. Do you get satisfaction from your current job, or the one you most recently had?



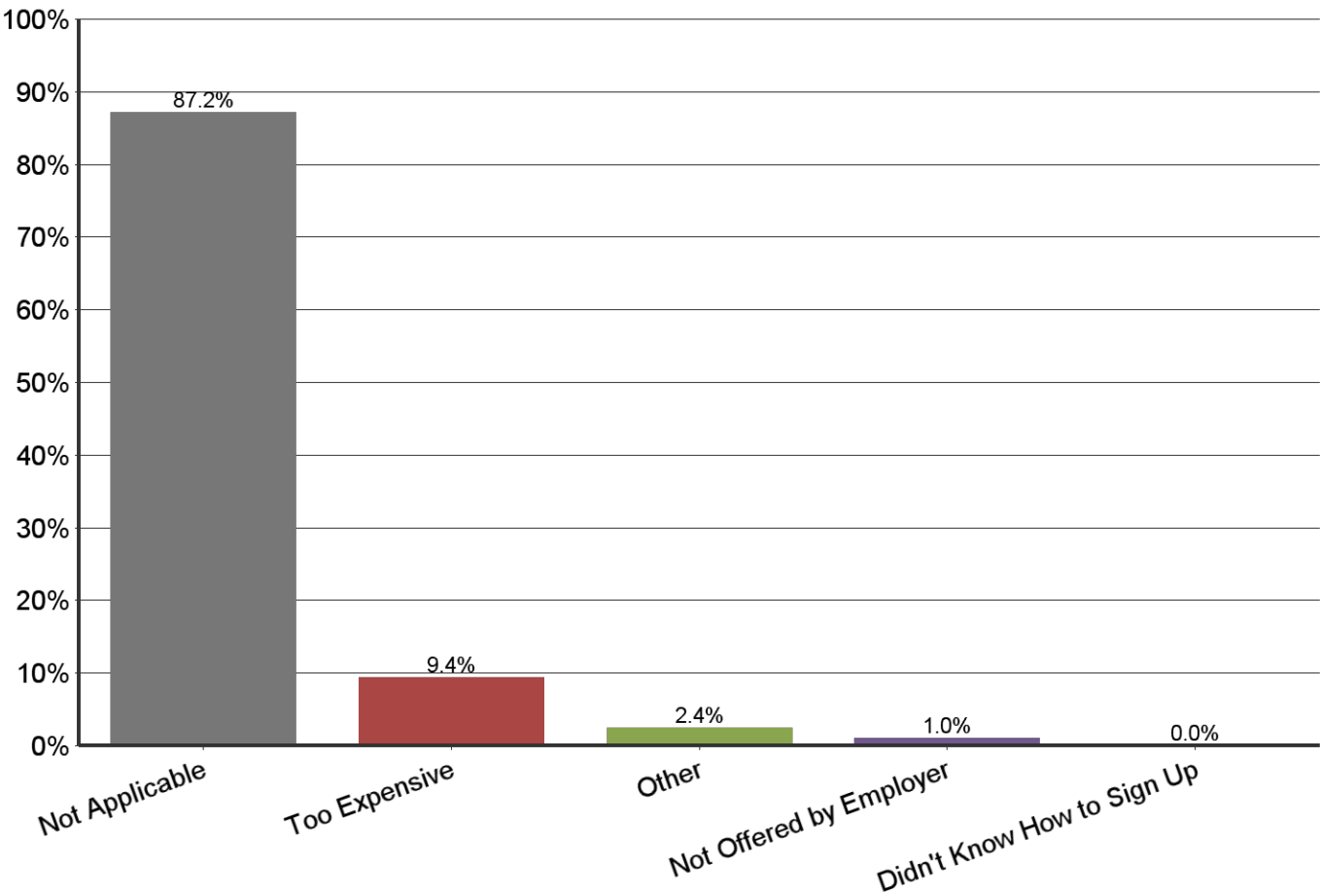
	Percent	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	<div></div>	215	42.2%
Agree	<div></div>	184	36.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	<div></div>	73	14.3%
Disagree	<div></div>	23	4.5%
Strongly Disagree	<div></div>	15	2.9%
Total	<div></div>	510	100.0%

10. If you don't get satisfaction from your current job, or the one you had most recently, which of the following are reasons for your dissatisfaction? (Mark all that apply)



	Percent	Count	Percent
Not Applicable	<div></div>	179	50.0%
Low Wages	<div></div>	91	25.4%
Lack of Benefits	<div></div>	51	14.2%
Lack of Advancement	<div></div>	49	13.7%
Other	<div></div>	40	11.2%
Poor Work Environment	<div></div>	39	10.9%
It's Boring	<div></div>	13	3.6%
Too Few Hours	<div></div>	11	3.1%
Total	<div></div>	473	132.1%

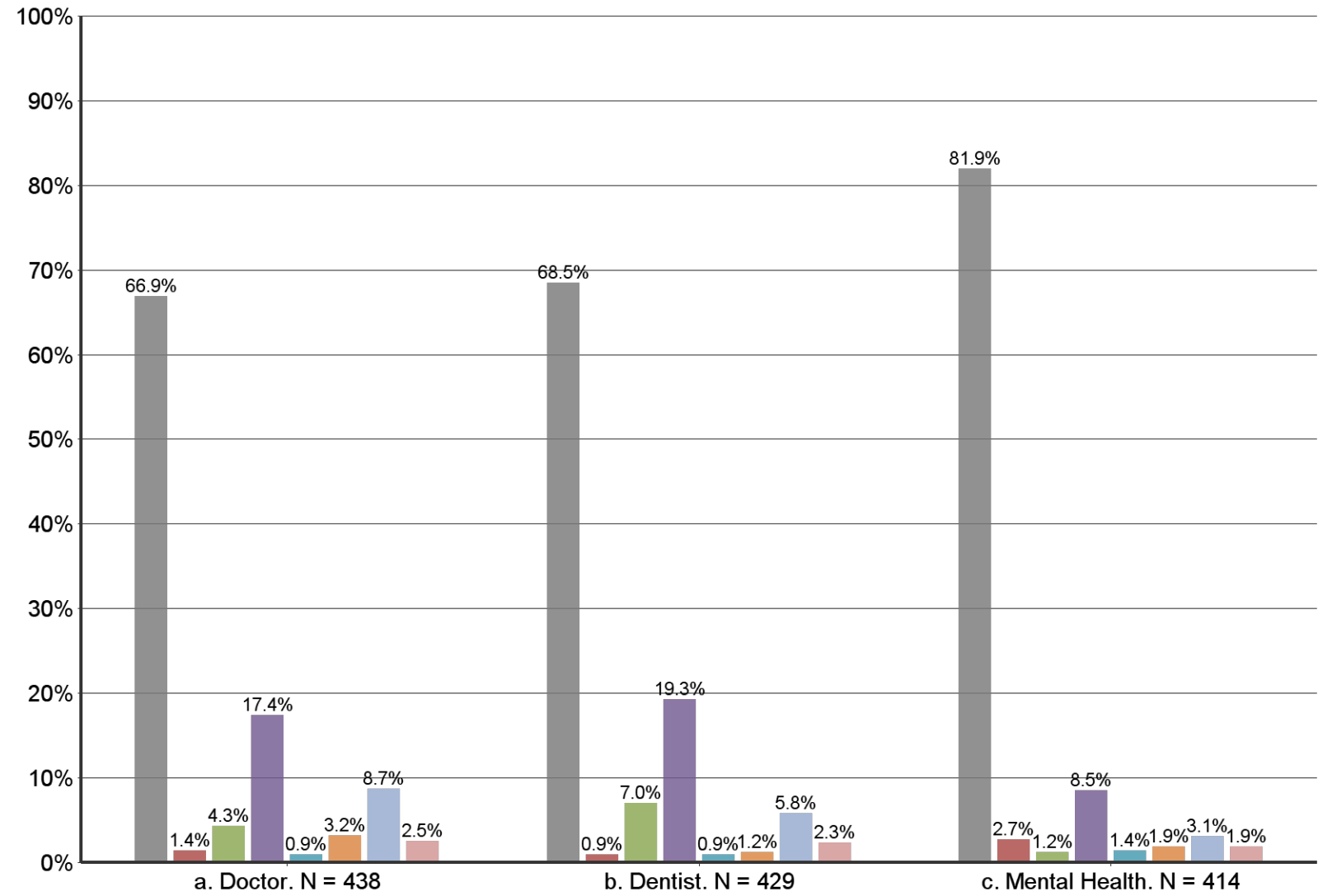
11. If you've not had health insurance (Medicare, Medicaid, Badgercare, Private Insurance) at any time during the past 12 months, which of the following is the most important reason? (Mark one only)



	Percent	Count	Percent
Not Applicable	<div></div>	360	87.2%
Too Expensive	<div></div>	39	9.4%
Other	<div></div>	10	2.4%
Not Offered by Employer	<div></div>	4	1.0%
Didn't Know How to Sign Up		0	0.0%
Total	<div></div>	413	100.0%

12. In the last 12 months, has there been a time when you or someone in your family should have seen a doctor, dentist, or mental health provider but didn't? If so, please indicate why. (Mark all that apply)

Not Applicable Didn't Know How to Find a Provider No Insurance Couldn't Afford Distance/No Transportation
No Appointments Available Choose Not To Other



What is the "other" reason you were unable to see a doctor?

What is the "other" reason you were unable to see a doctor?

Not many to choose from when you're on Medicare.

Stigma around selling counseling time

I choose preventative health care. Chiropractic care massage yoga being in nature eating healthy exercising meditation

I went online to set up an appointment and never heard back from the dental office. I was sent a generic email to call and schedule. What's the point of having online scheduling if you have to call? I'm a busy single mother and have no time to call during my work hours. I need flexibility from dental offices.

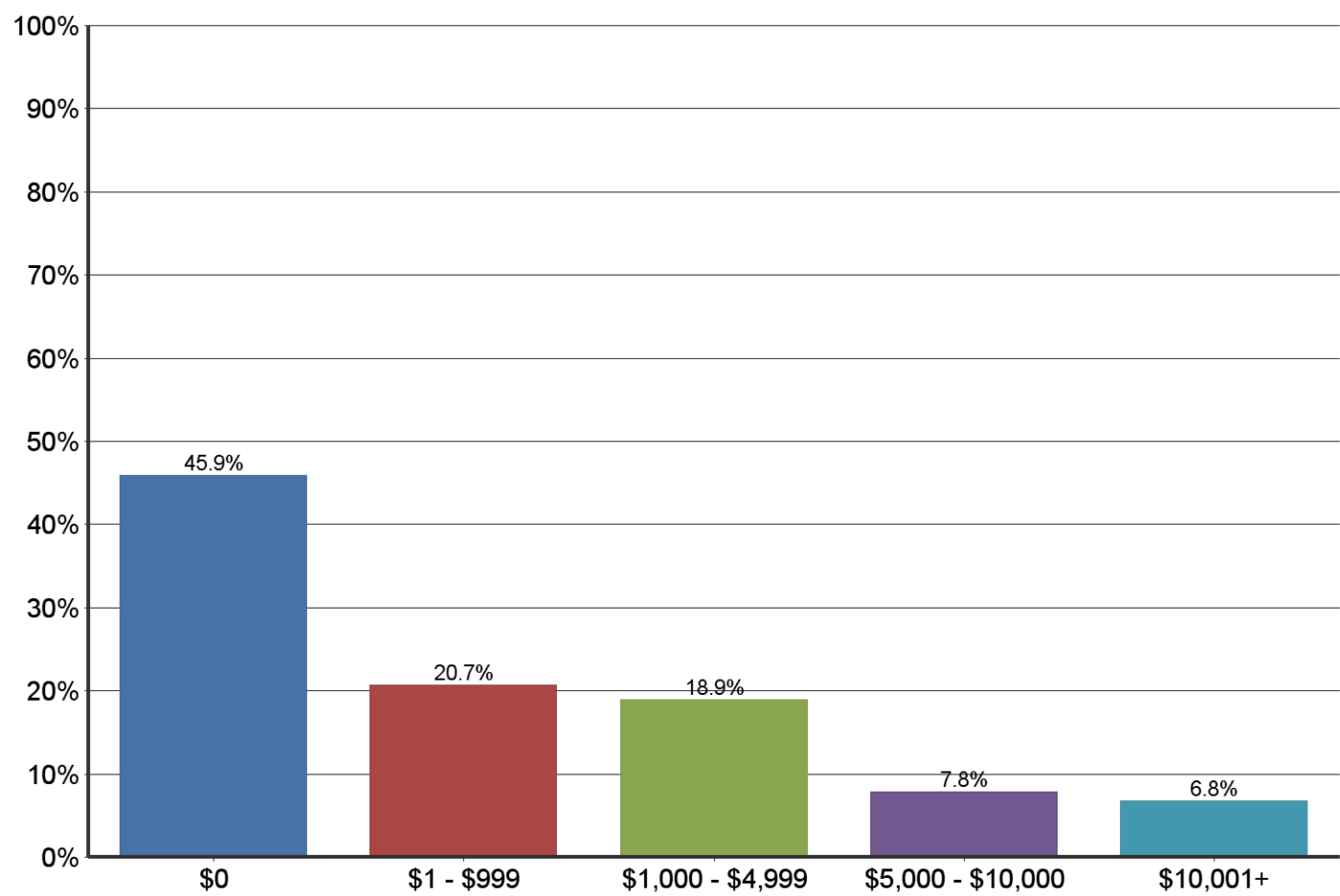
What is the "other" reason you were unable to see a dentist?

No answers.

What is the "other" reason you were unable to see a mental health care provider?

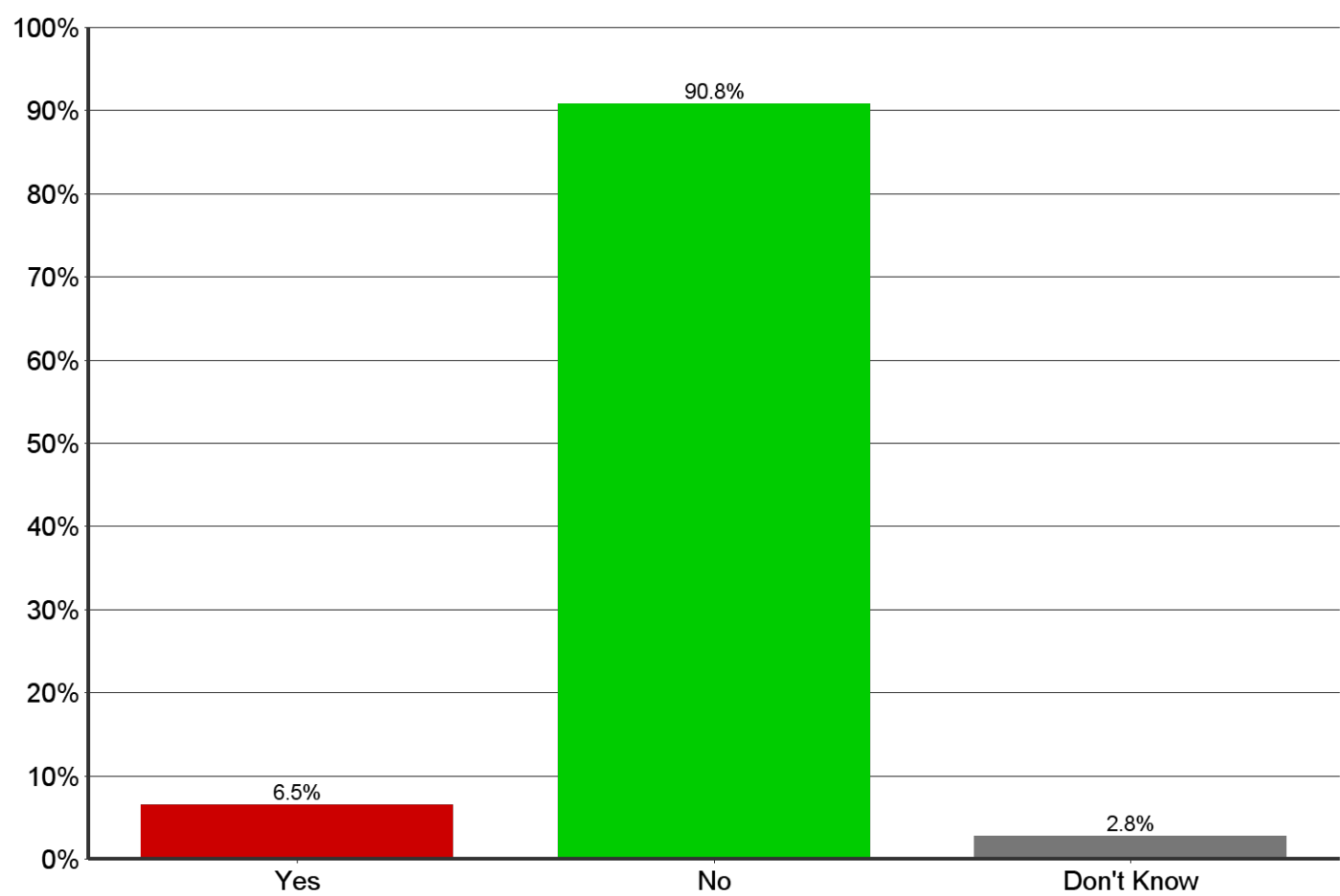
No answers.

13. Which of the following best describes your current family/household medical debt?



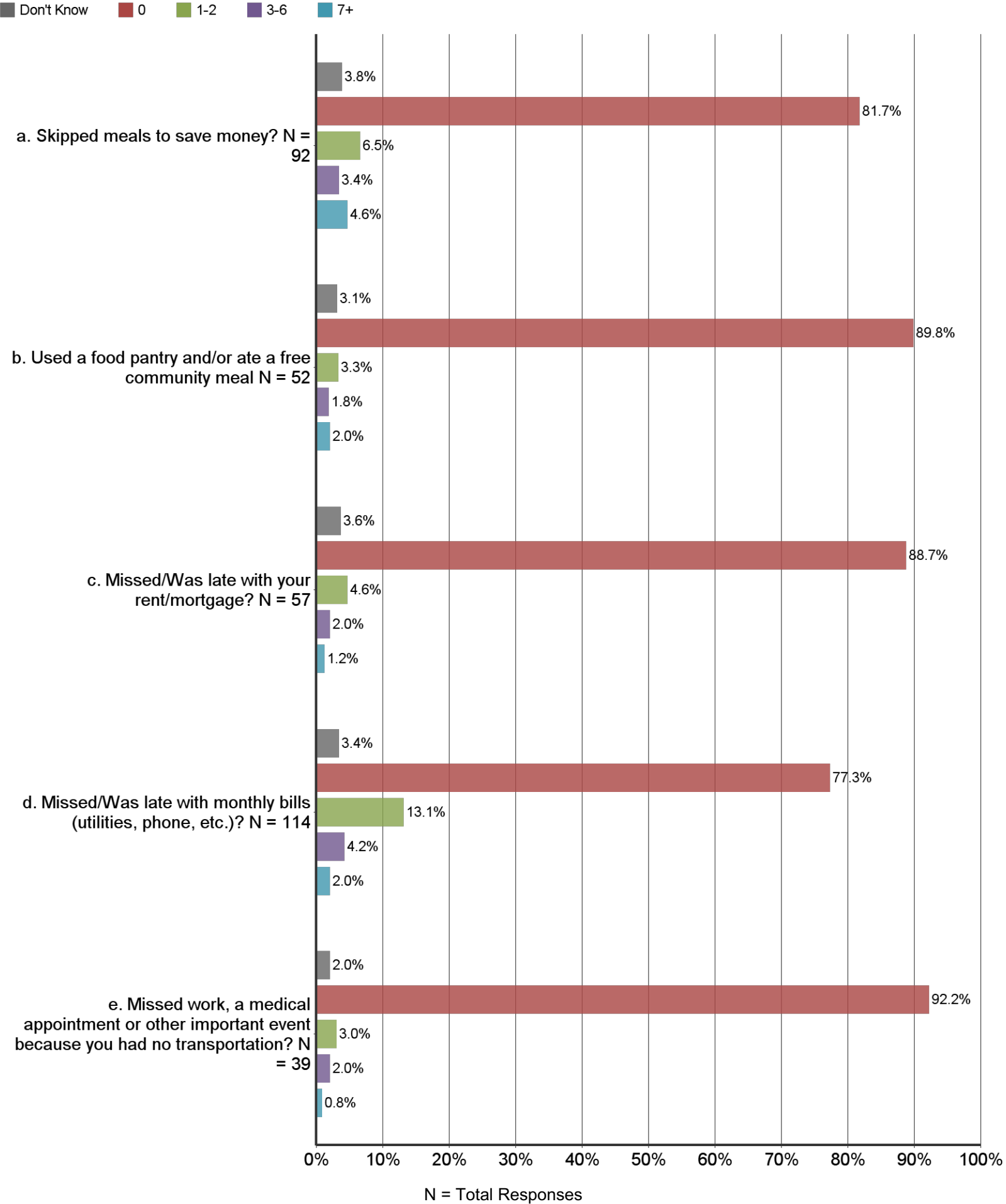
	Percent	Count	Percent
\$0	<div></div>	231	45.9%
\$1 - \$999	<div></div>	104	20.7%
\$1,000 - \$4,999	<div></div>	95	18.9%
\$5,000 - \$10,000	<div></div>	39	7.8%
\$10,001+	<div></div>	34	6.8%
Total	<div></div>	503	100.0%

14. In the past year, have you been concerned about someone in your family misusing drugs (prescription or illegal)?

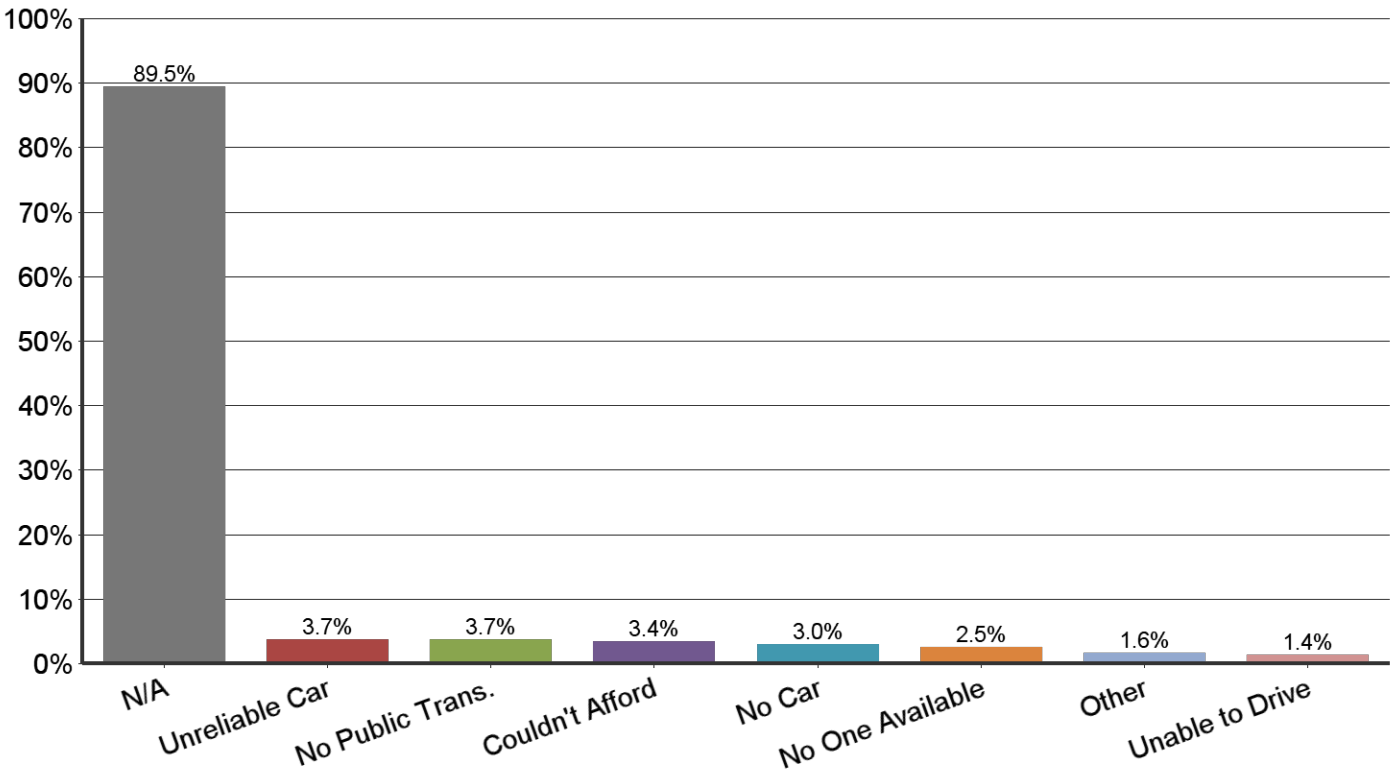


	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	<div></div>	33	6.5%
No	<div></div>	462	90.8%
Don't Know	<div></div>	14	2.8%
Total	<div></div>	509	100.0%

15. During the past year, in how many months have you/someone in your household:



16. If, during the past year, you or someone in your household missed work, a medical appointment or other important event because you had no transportation, which of the following caused this problem? (Mark all that apply)

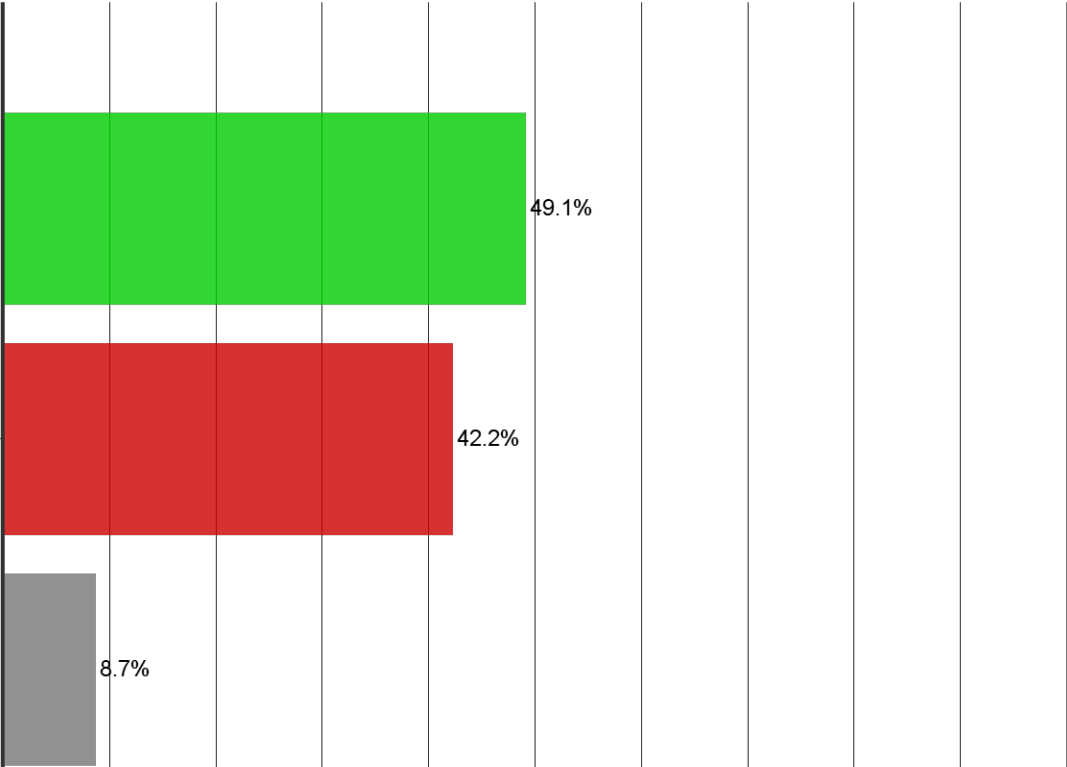


	Percent	Count	Percent
Not Applicable		392	89.5%
Unreliable Car		16	3.7%
No Public Transport (bus)		16	3.7%
Couldn't Afford Gas/Cab Fare		15	3.4%
No Car		13	3.0%
No One Available to Drive Me		11	2.5%
Other		7	1.6%
Unable to Drive		6	1.4%
Total		476	108.7%

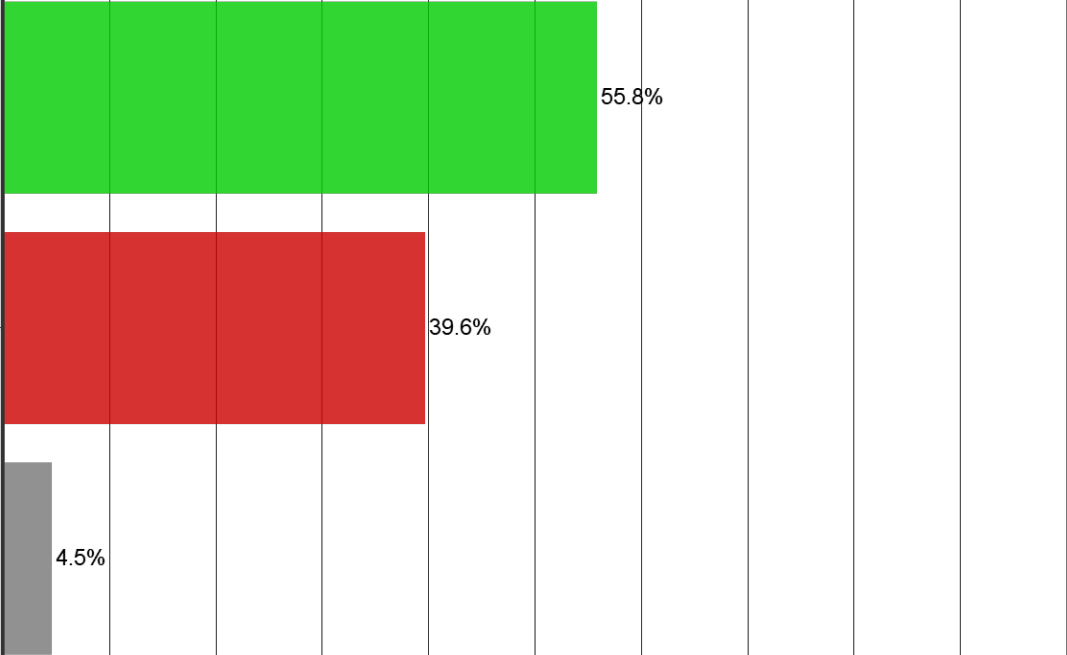
17. Do you/your household:

Yes No Don't Know

a. Spend 30% or more of your total household income on housing (including rent/mortgage, utilities, home/rental insurance, and property taxes)? N = 507

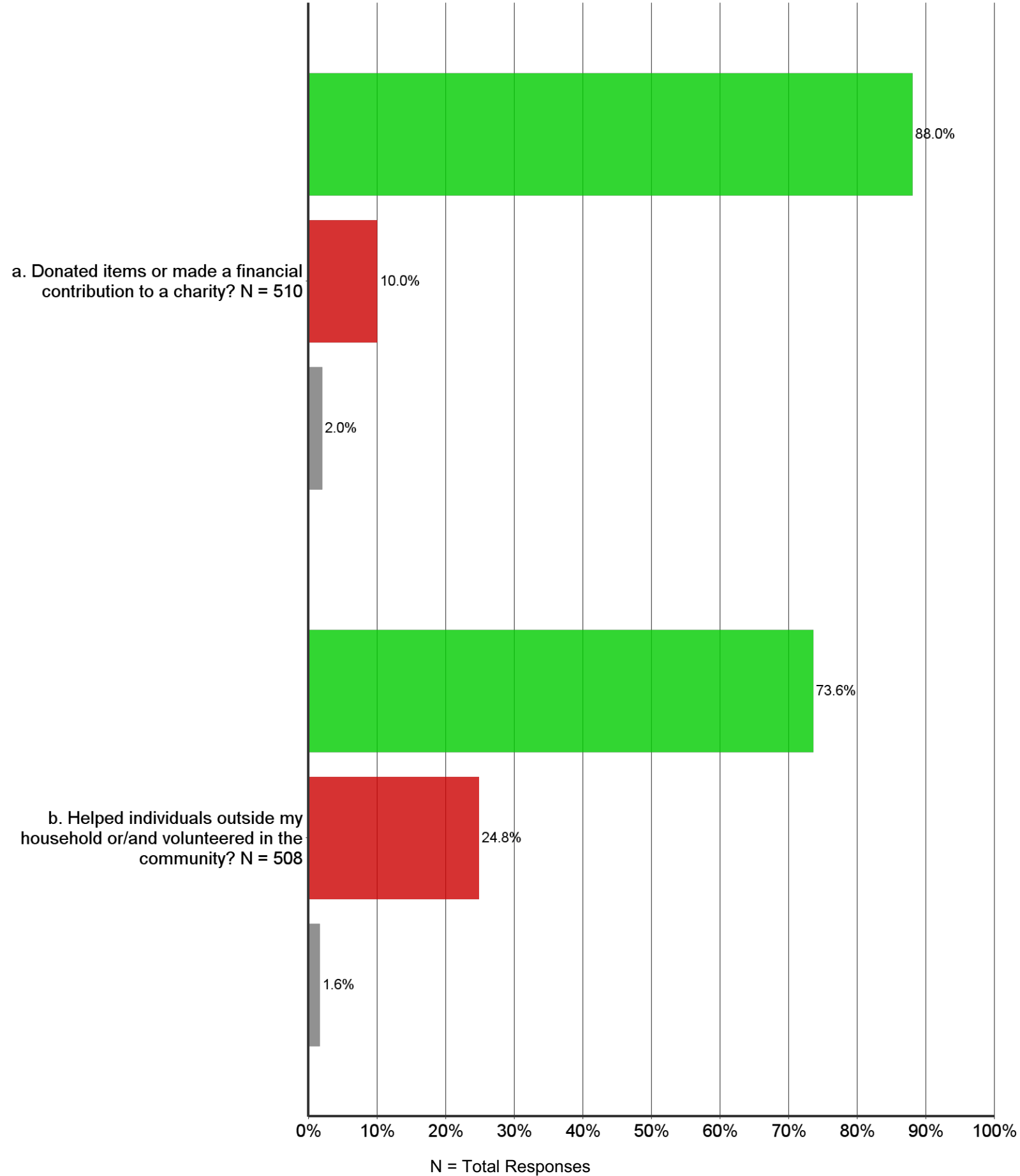


b. Have enough of a savings/rainy day fund to cover your expenses for 3-months in case of sickness, job loss, or other emergency? N = 507



18. In the past year, have you:

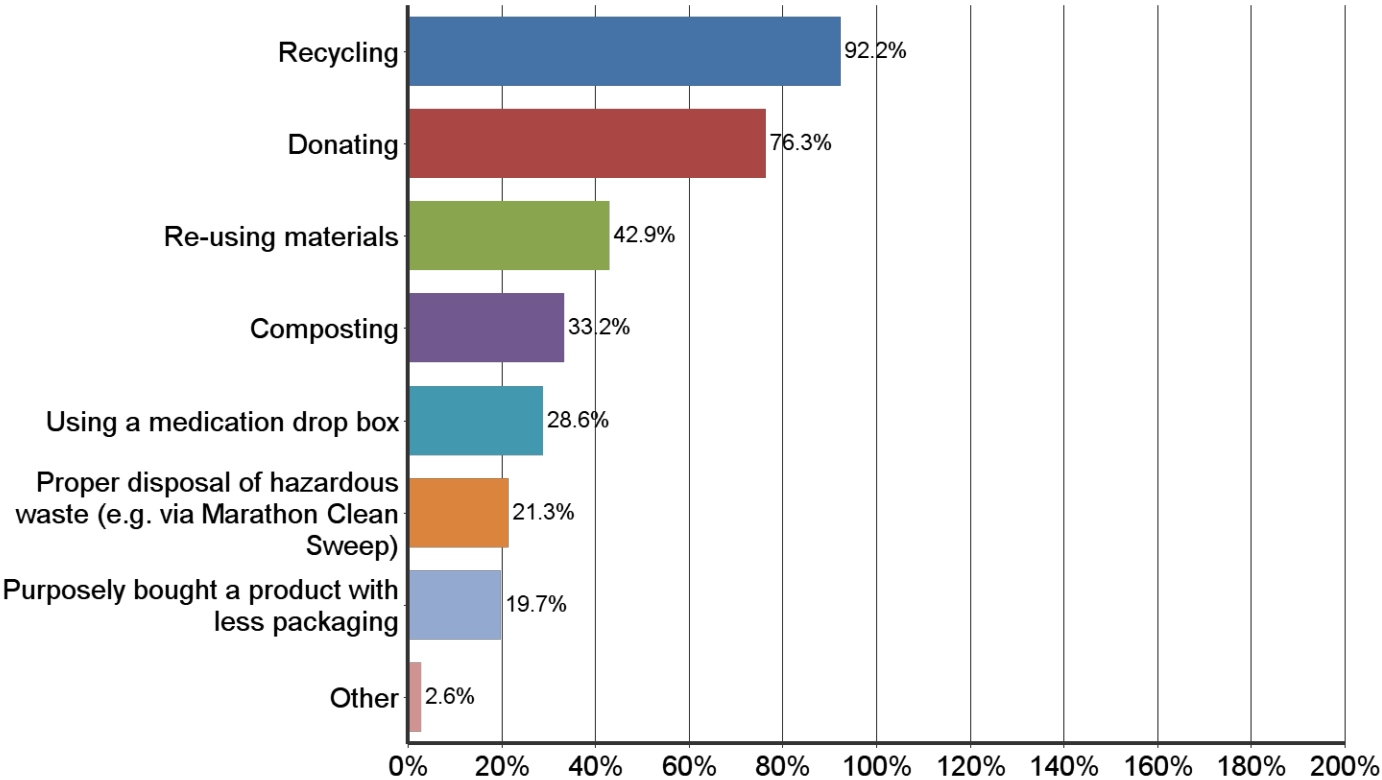
Yes No Don't Know



19. If you have NOT tested your well water in the last year, what are your main reasons? (Mark up to 3 reasons)

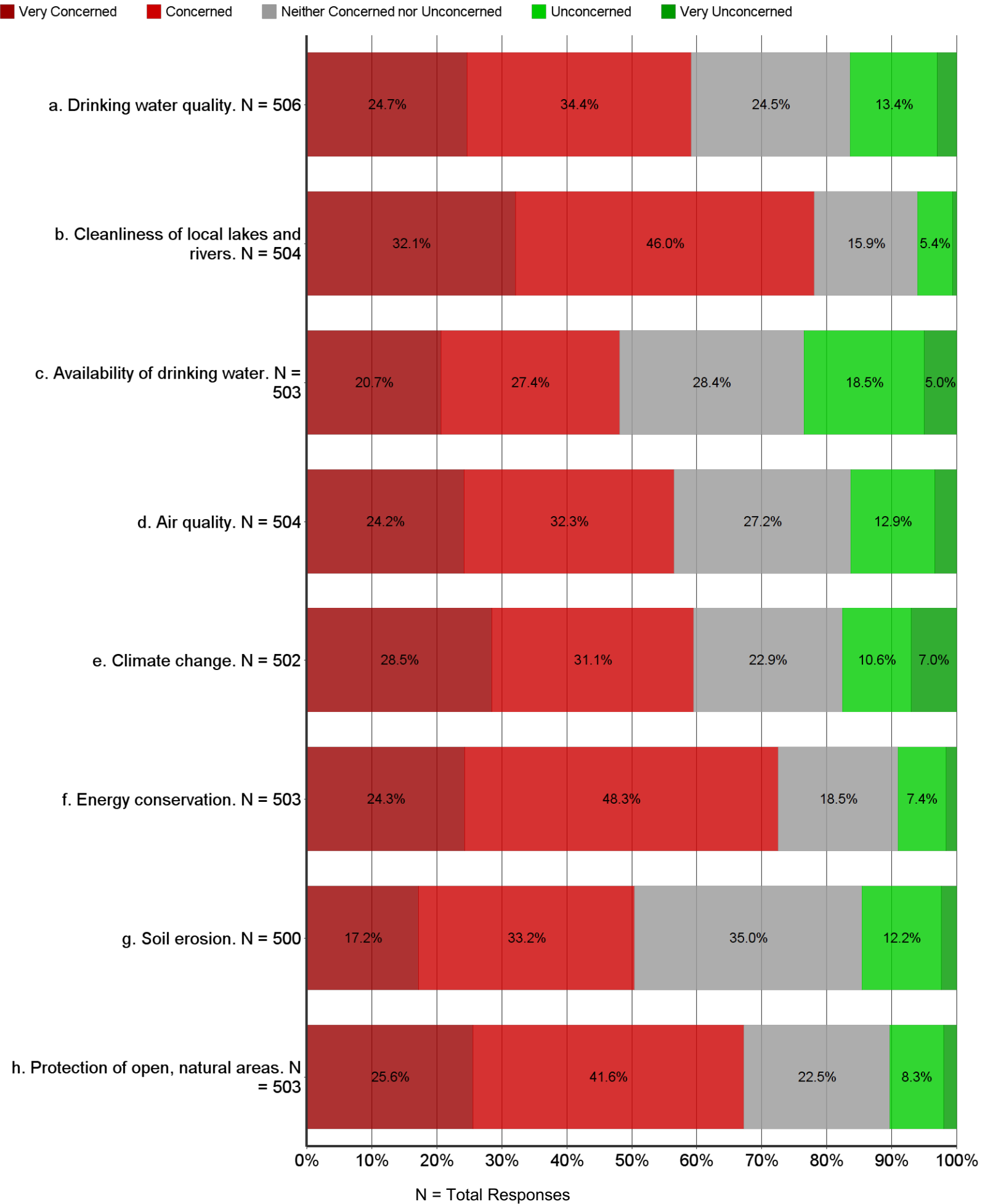
	Percent	Count	Percent
a. Not applicable, my water comes from a municipal water system.	<div></div>	299	65.0%
g. I have been drinking this water for years without any problems.	<div></div>	83	18.0%
l. Other	<div></div>	36	7.8%
j. I didn't know that we should test the water.	<div></div>	35	7.6%
k. I do not own the property where I live.	<div></div>	28	6.1%
c. I don't know how to have my well water tested.	<div></div>	23	5.0%
b. I don't know what to test for.	<div></div>	22	4.8%
d. It costs too much to have my well water tested.	<div></div>	20	4.3%
i. I didn't know well water testing was available.	<div></div>	17	3.7%
h. I will wait to see if others in our area have problems with well water.	<div></div>	16	3.5%
f. Dealing with a problem in well water quality would be too expensive.	<div></div>	15	3.3%
e. I don't want to know if there is a problem with my well water.	<div></div>	6	1.3%
Total	<div></div>	600	130.4%

20. In addition to trash hauling, over the last year have you disposed of things by any of the following? (Mark all that apply)



	Percent	Count	Percent
Recycling	<div></div>	464	92.2%
Donating	<div></div>	384	76.3%
Re-using materials	<div></div>	216	42.9%
Composting	<div></div>	167	33.2%
Using a medication drop box	<div></div>	144	28.6%
Proper disposal of hazardous waste (e.g. via Marathon Clean Sweep)	<div></div>	107	21.3%
Purposely bought a product with less packaging	<div></div>	99	19.7%
Other	<div></div>	13	2.6%
Total	<div></div>	1594	316.9%

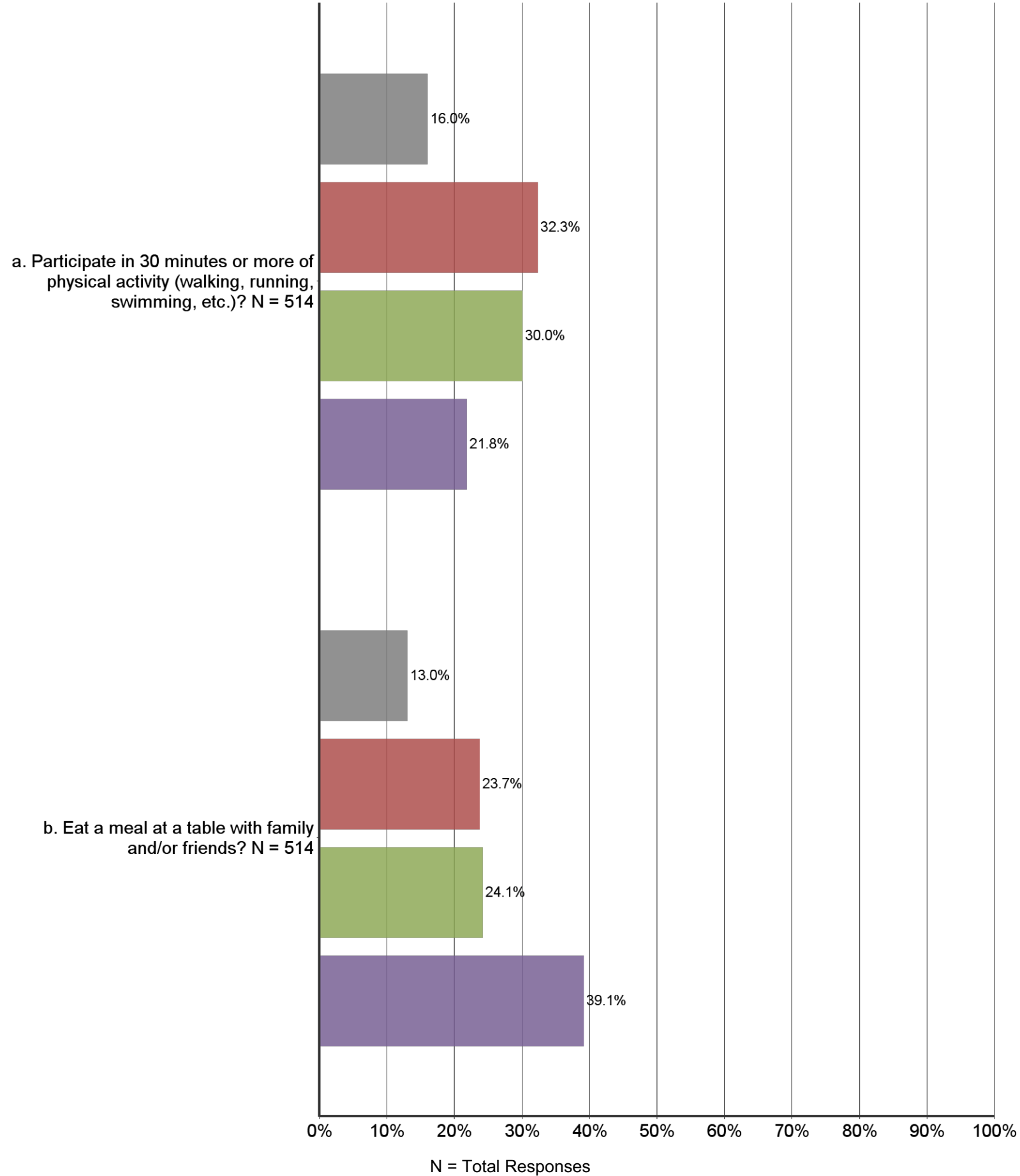
21. Please indicate how concerned you are about the following in Marathon County.



Choice	Count	Percent
Underweight (<18.5)	4	0.8%
Normal (18.5-24.9)	136	27.6%
Overweight (25.0-29.9)	179	36.4%
Obese (30+)	173	35.2%

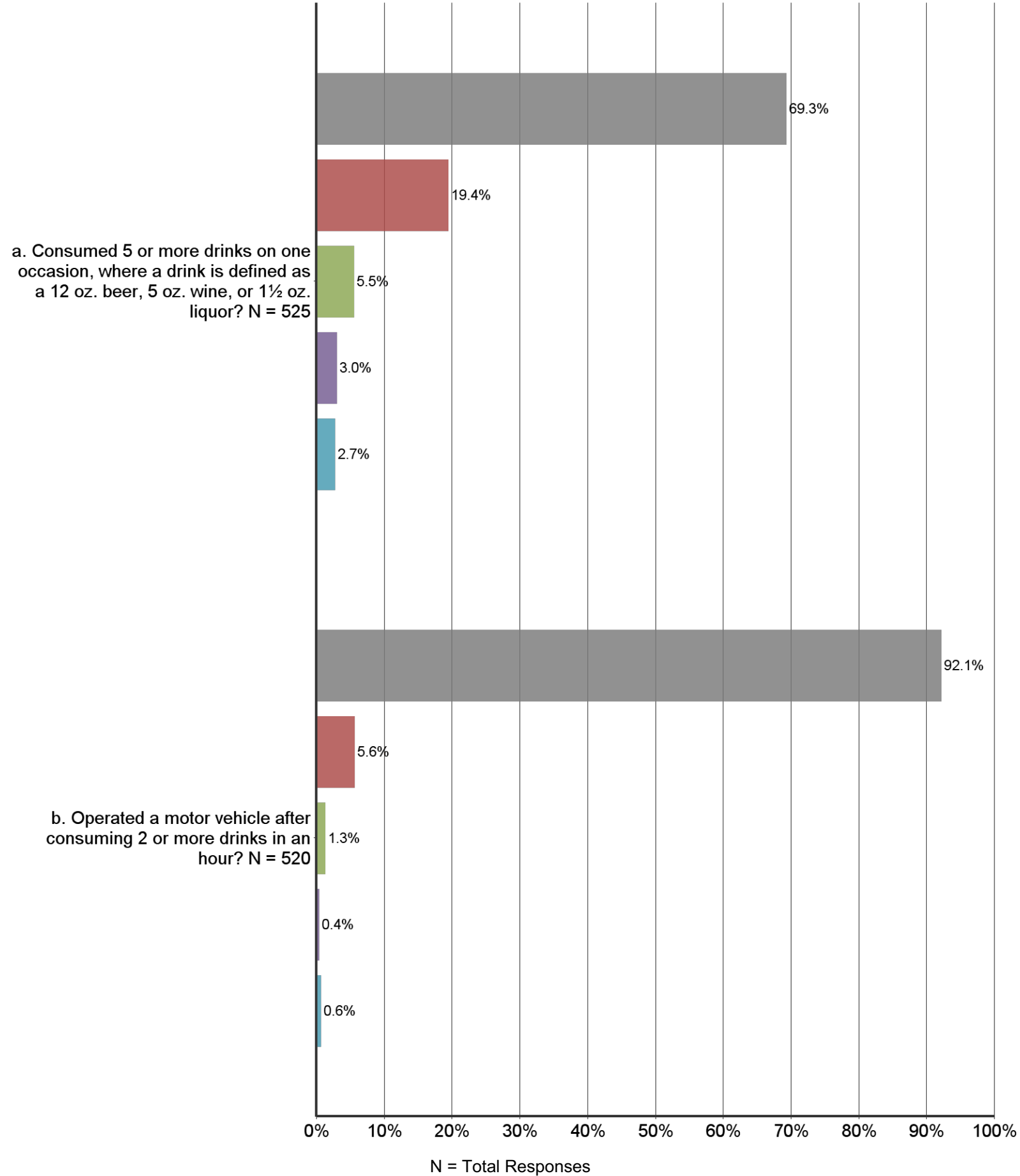
24. In a typical week, how many times do you:

None 1-2 days 3-4 days 5-7 days

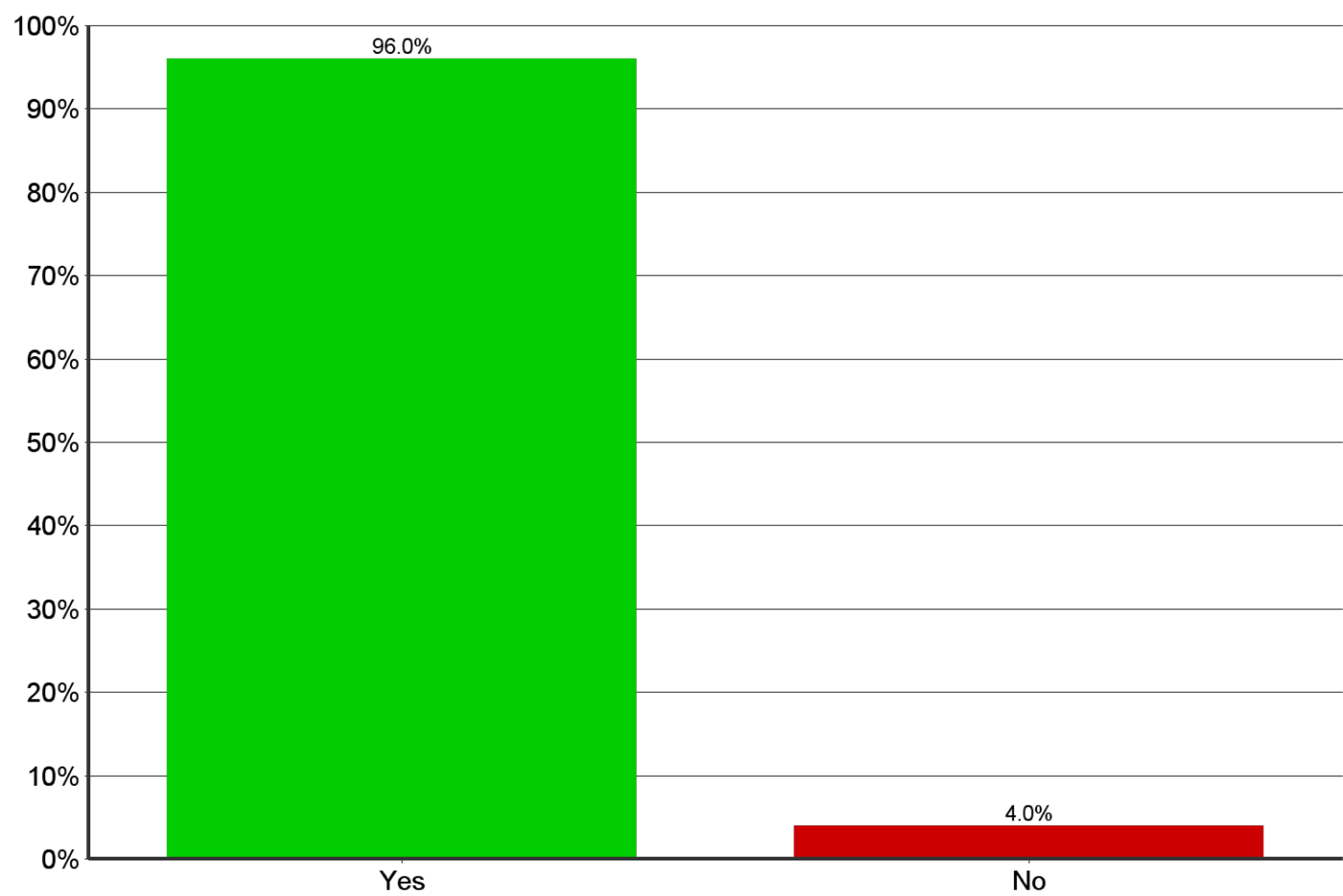


25. In the past 30 days, how many times have you:

None 1-2 times 3-5 times 6-9 times 10+ times



26. Do you have at least one person you can talk to if you have a personal problem?



	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	<div></div>	478	96.0%
No	<div></div>	20	4.0%
Total	<div></div>	498	100.0%