

# Community Health Assessment

**Winnebago County  
Public Health**

**December 2023**



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Winnebago County, WI

We are pleased to share the 2023 Winnebago County Community Health Assessment (CHA). The CHA provides an overview of the community's health; the drivers of health, health status, and health outcomes. We invite community partners, leaders, and residents to review the summary and full report, available on the Winnebago County Public Health website at [www.winnebagopublichealth.org](http://www.winnebagopublichealth.org) or by scanning the QR code.



Our health starts where we live, learn, work, and play. In many respects, Winnebago County is a good place to be; it's a safe place to raise a family, attend college or technical school, find fulfilling employment, and pursue business opportunities. People hold similar values around the importance of family and taking care of one another. High graduation rates and low unemployment help support the economic growth of the county and the cost of living is below the US average and the state as a whole.

The focus group data gathered as part of the CHA process underscores the strengths of our community. These include excellent school systems, abundant green space for parks, playgrounds, and trails, outdoor recreation options, well-equipped libraries, essential social services, dedicated healthcare professionals, and the warm, helpful hometown atmosphere.

While overall health data suggests positive outcomes for residents of Winnebago County, a closer examination reveals an increasing number of households are struggling to meet basic needs and there remain significant disparities among various population groups. These disparities lead to a substantially lower quality of life, limited opportunity for improvement, chronic stress, low income, adverse childhood experiences, and poor health outcomes. Despite existing support systems for food, housing, and medical care, these systems are fragmented, hindering a comprehensive approach to well-being.

This assessment digs deeper into community data to reveal our blindspots. By looking at our community through the lenses of income, race, educational status, housing, and other factors that influence health, we see where our community is struggling and where we can make the most difference.

The CHA can serve as a starting point to bring residents, partners, and community leaders together to determine priorities, identify strategies, and develop plans of action. Our strength comes from our ability to bring people together from different places to forge a better future. Residents want inclusive and welcoming communities that support everyone's health and well-being. When we work together we can implement solutions that eliminate barriers and create even safer, healthier, and prosperous communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas D. Gieryn". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Doug Gieryn, Director/Health Officer  
Winnebago County Public Health

# Winnebago County: People, Land, & Water

We take this time to acknowledge that we are currently residing on the ancestral and unceded lands of Ho-Chunk and Menominee people. Winnebago County is named after the historic Winnebago Tribe, known today as the Ho-Chunk Nation.<sup>(1)</sup> We honor their enduring relationship with this land and express our gratitude for their stewardship. We also recognize the ongoing struggles that Indigenous communities face due to historical and ongoing injustices.<sup>(2)</sup>

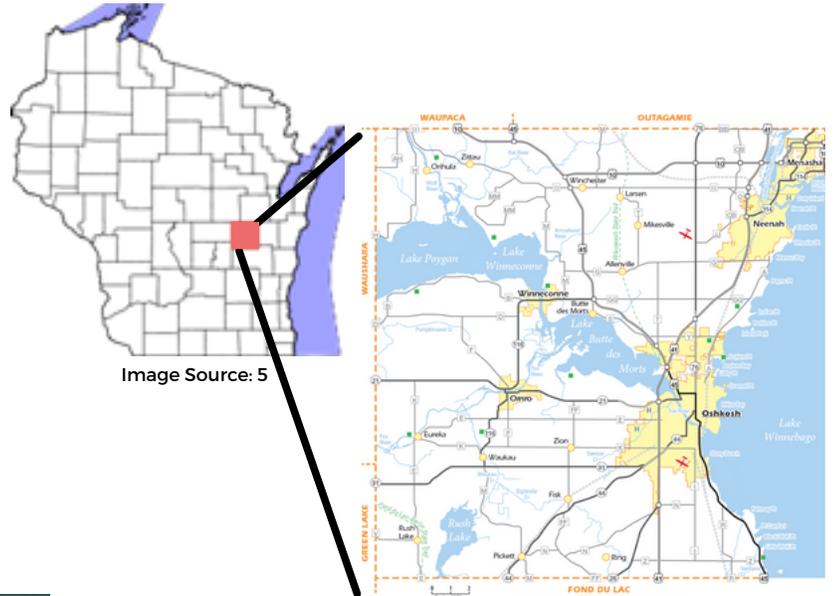


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Winnebago County has many rich natural resources identified by Native Peoples, including timber, minerals, prairie, and waterways. Oshkosh, the largest city and county seat, is named after Chief Oshkosh, a great leader of the Menominee Nation who fought back against forced relocation and shared ideas of sustainable forestry.<sup>(3)</sup>

The Menominee Nation continues to manage one of the most sustainable forests in the country, revered and studied for land management techniques that were passed down from Chief Oshkosh.<sup>(3)</sup>

## Tribal Nations<sup>(2)</sup>

The United States, as a settler colonial society, focused on the dissolution of Indigenous languages, cultures, and nations for more than 100 years until the passage of the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act.

In spite of oppression, Tribal Nations, like the Menominee and Ho-Chunk Nations, have endured, honoring their cultural and linguistic heritage.

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# Terms and Definitions

**Community conditions:** The conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

**Disproportionately impacted populations:** Populations exposed to longstanding inequities that have systematically undermined the physical, social, economic, and emotional health of the specific group. Racial and ethnic minority populations and other population groups bear a disproportionate burden of disease or condition

**Health disparity:** A particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social or economic disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater social or economic obstacles to health based on their: racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

**Health equity:** Attainment of the highest level of health for all people.

**Health inequity:** The uneven distribution of social and economic resources that impact an individual's health.

**Racial disparity:** The imbalances, that stem from historical policies and practices rooted in racism, that are evident in every domain: economic stability, housing, education, access to care, criminal justice, and health outcomes, that adversely affect groups of people based on their race or ethnic group.

**Racism:** A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call “race”), that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources.

Source: American Public Health Association <sup>(7)</sup>

# Who is This For?

Since 1993, Wisconsin statutes require local public health departments to complete a regular community health assessment (CHA) and to develop and implement a community health improvement plan (CHIP) to address the priorities of those who live there and are served by that health department. In compiling the CHA for the county, there was intentional thought about the audience and who would benefit from reading this report. This report is for all in Winnebago County. If you enjoy our parks or are proud of the community partnerships, this assessment reflects that experience. If you know the frustration of trying to find child care or have concerns about your income or expenses, others have experienced these issues too. If you are anxious about housing, health care access, or economic stability, this assessment is for you. Great care was placed on making this digestible and visually helpful as you read. You may find the information illuminating and validating to your own experience as a member of Winnebago County.

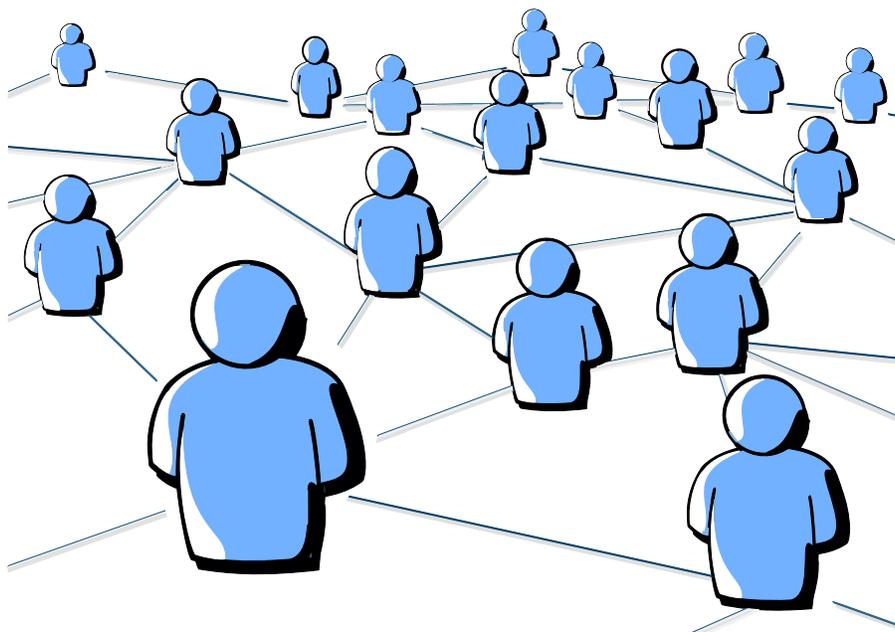
Your feedback, both on the report itself and your thoughts on our community, is important. The more people we hear from, the more we can all work together to continue to make Winnebago County a great place to live. If you would like to provide your thoughts, please scan the QR code or visit: <https://wchd.pub/chafeedback>



Scan Me



Winnebago County Public Health covers all of Winnebago County except for the portions of the City of Menasha and City of Appleton that fall within the county border. Those cities have their own health departments. The data provided in this report primarily represents the full county.

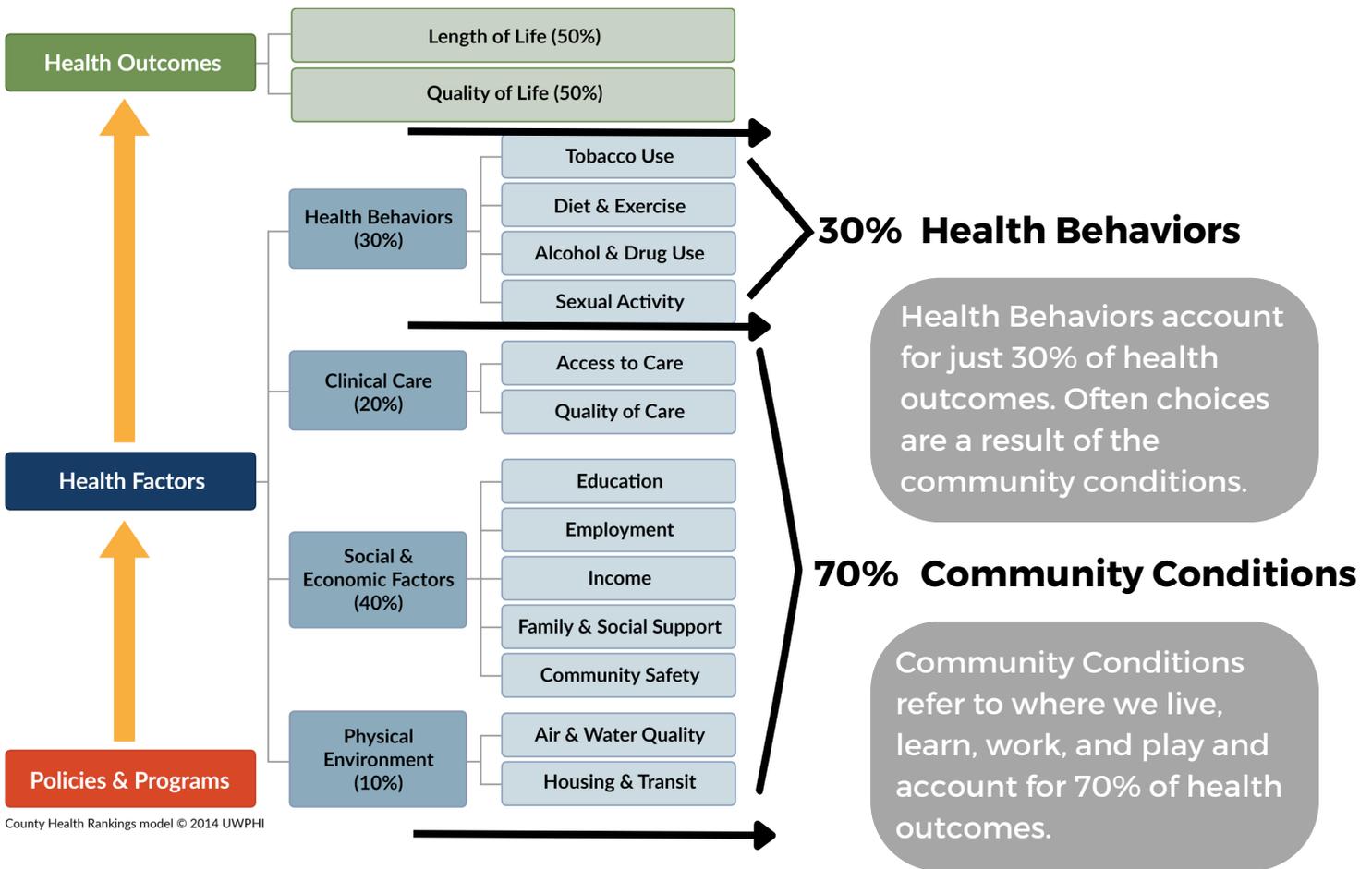


# Models for Community Health

## County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

The County Health Rankings Model illustrates that policies and programs play an important role in influencing health factors that in turn shape the community's health outcomes.

### What Influences Health?



**Health outcomes are more influenced by zip code (where we live) than genetic code.**<sup>(8)</sup>

Where we live influences our health because health disparities are founded on a complex interplay of economic, educational, social, racial, and environmental factors. To improve health outcomes, we must look beyond health care and health behaviors. We must examine the systems and community conditions that impact health. This report aims to do just that.

# Where We Live, Learn, Work, and Play



## Community Conditions <sup>(9)</sup>



Economic stability is defined as having the resources needed to live a healthy life.



Neighborhood and built environment includes housing, transportation, and broadband services, as well as the natural environment.



Education access and quality refers to improved educational opportunities and helping children and adolescents do well in school.



Social and community context refers to the relationship people have with the places they live, work, and play. Strong community connections - including civic engagement and employment - are important for well-being.



Health care access and quality means access to comprehensive, high-quality health services.

Healthy people are a result of healthy communities. Healthy communities are achieved by intentional efforts to assure the conditions and resources are available for everyone to achieve their optimal health and well-being -- regardless of their race, ethnicity, income status, gender, age, sexuality, abilities/disabilities, educational level, or experience with the criminal justice system. <sup>(10)</sup>

# Community Input



This symbol voices the experiences our community members shared.

## Focus Groups

In addition to data, this assessment includes multiple perspectives and experiences from Winnebago County residents. Focus groups were held with disproportionately impacted populations in our community who typically are not provided the opportunity to have their voices heard. With help from community partners, more than 100 community members representing a variety of experiences and backgrounds participated in focus groups.

Focus groups were held with community members connected to the following organizations:

- Day by Day Shelter
- LEAVEN/Casa Hispana
- Oshkosh Area Community Pantry
- People of Progression
- Reach Counseling
- REAL Oshkosh
- SEPO Zambia
- Solutions Recovery Inc.



We thank our community partners who organized these conversations and thank our community members for their willingness and vulnerability in sharing their stories and experiences.

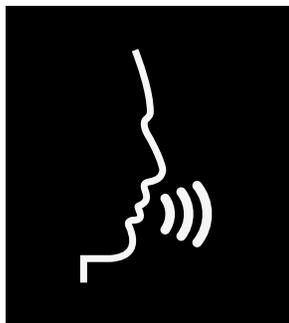
## Diverse Perspectives

Assessing health from different angles is important because society does not treat people equally and people have a variety of backgrounds, life experiences, cultures, physical abilities, and attributes. <sup>(11)</sup>



# Differences in Community Experiences

The Community Health Assessment must include an examination of disparities between subpopulations and the factors that contribute to health inequities. While overall people like living here, people also expressed the negative aspects of living here. Focus group participants who are Black/Brown/African/Immigrant/Refugee experience racist practices in places of employment, school systems, housing, policing, and healthcare.



Among all focus groups, there were positive comments about the programs and services in Winnebago County and insights about the limitation of these services not reaching all that need them. Focus group responses reflected a lack of trust towards institutions, especially government and public systems.

There was emphasis across multiple focus groups on the criminal justice system failing to support people. Formerly incarcerated individuals have greater difficulty finding housing, employment, access to medical treatment, and often experience periods of homelessness.

People of color addressed community safety. They shared their experiences of discrimination by law enforcement, fear that they are under surveillance, and fear that reporting substandard housing conditions will cause retaliation. Living with constant fear for one's safety and the safety of loved ones causes stress and anxiety.

Black/Brown/African/Immigrant/Refugee participants shared what they liked about living here: the peace and quiet, the opportunities for their children, learning English, meeting other families with diverse backgrounds, and being together with their family members.

Black/Brown/African/Immigrant/Refugee communities were specifically asked to participate in focus groups and to share their experiences about living here. Findings from the focus groups are shared throughout this document.

Not all subpopulations were represented in focus groups. We acknowledge our limitations in reaching diverse populations throughout the county.

# Ongoing Impacts of COVID-19: National

## Communities Hit Hard by the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had unprecedented, widespread impacts on households across America, raising concerns about our ability to weather long-term health and financial harms. Key findings from a nationwide poll, "The Impact of Coronavirus," identify the enormity of need across the nation.<sup>(14)</sup>

### During COVID-19



Nearly half of households (46%) report facing serious financial problems.<sup>(15)</sup>

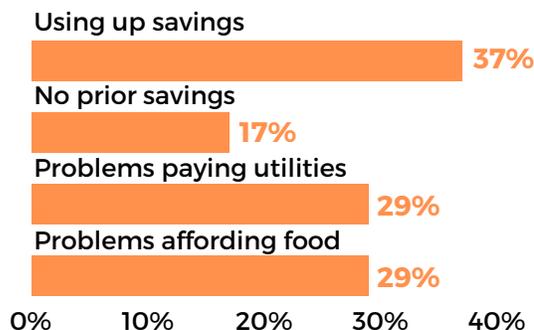


More than 4 in 10 rural households (43%) have lost jobs or businesses, or have faced wage loss or cuts in work hours.<sup>(15)</sup>



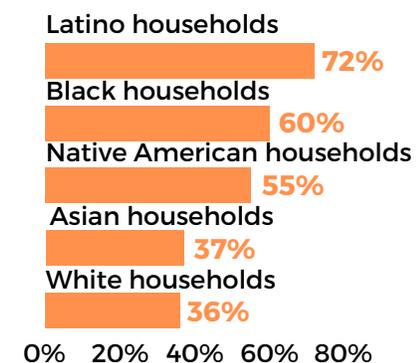
More than 6 in 10 households (63%) that include anyone with a disability report facing serious financial problems.<sup>(15)</sup>

**More than one-third of households that include anyone with a disability used up their savings during the pandemic.**



Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (15)

**More than half of Latino, Black, and Native American households report facing serious financial problems during the pandemic.**



Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (15)

Financial struggles these families experienced include paying credit card bills, loans, utilities, or rent.

# Ongoing Impacts of COVID-19: Local

## Increase in Local Needs <sup>(16)</sup>

Local support systems were stretched thin and needs/gaps widened.

In 2021, the Fox Valley Community Health Improvement Coalition, a collaboration of health care organizations and public health departments in Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago Counties, conducted 56 interviews with stakeholders representing a variety of sectors, locations, and populations.

### Economic

Service sector and other low wage workers were identified as most impacted during COVID-19.

- Loss of wages caused housing instability, food insecurity, and child care issues.
- Households with young children needed an adult at home during the day.

### Mental Health

Many people experienced isolation, loneliness, and the stress of the unknown.

- Elderly people struggled with isolation and fear.
- Parents struggled to make ends meet.
- Children lacked the connection to fellow students.

### Technological

Access to adequate technology was a challenge.

- High-speed internet became a necessity.
- Libraries were closed limiting internet access for school, work, and other needs.

Over-burdened  
Systems of Support

### Medical

Procedures, follow-up appointments, and wellness checkups were delayed.

- Delays have an impact on health conditions and diagnoses, which can cause future issues.

# Community Systems and Assets

## The Role of Systems

Systems are an interplay between policies, infrastructure, spending decisions, human actions, and intangible things like trust and goodwill. During the coronavirus pandemic, the fragility of systems was exposed. The health care system, the educational system, the employment system, etc. became overwhelmed and lacked resilience.<sup>(17)</sup>

**It is important to focus on systems when assessing community health because the role of systems plays a much bigger part in a person's health rather than individual behaviors.**<sup>(18)</sup>

A community health assessment (CHA) is a collaborative process to collect information that shows a comprehensive picture of the community's health. The CHA is used to identify gaps and opportunities to improve the health of the population and is the basis for priority setting, planning, program development, policy changes, coordination of community resources, funding applications, and new ways to collaboratively use community assets. A community asset (or community resource) is anything that can be used to improve the quality of community life.<sup>(19)</sup>



**The thumbs up symbol throughout this report highlights a community asset. Below are some of the community assets identified by focus group participants:**

- People are friendly
- Good schools
- Parks
- Close to the lake
- Community events
- Parks are handicapped accessible
- Libraries
- Services
- People are nice, helpful, welcoming
- Great doctors
- Quiet
- Low crime
- Good play areas for kids
- Free events in summer
- Hometown feel
- Farmer's Markets



# Winnebago County Demographic Snapshot

<b>Total Population</b>	171,304																								
<b>Race</b>	<p>Legend: Youth (under 18) (Grey), Adults (18 and older) (Orange)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Race</th> <th>Youth (under 18)</th> <th>Adults (18 and older)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td> <td>&lt;1%</td> <td>&lt;1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>4%</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black or African American</td> <td>4%</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</td> <td>&lt;1%</td> <td>&lt;1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Some Other Race</td> <td>1%</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Two or More Races</td> <td>6%</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>84%</td> <td>91%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Race	Youth (under 18)	Adults (18 and older)	American Indian/Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	Asian	4%	3%	Black or African American	4%	2%	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	Some Other Race	1%	1%	Two or More Races	6%	2%	White	84%	91%
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<b>Ethnicity</b>	<p>3% of the adult population identify as Hispanic or Latino              8% of the youth population identify as Hispanic or Latino</p>																								
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<b>Sex</b>	49% - Female; 51% - Male																								
<b>Urban/Rural</b>	86.6% - Urban; 13.4% - Rural																								
<b>Languages</b>	6% of the population 5 years and over speak a language other than English at home.																								

## DID YOU KNOW?

Spanish, Swahili, Dari, Karen, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Kinyarwanda, Urdu, French, Nepali, Hmong, and Arabic are some of the common languages spoken in our community.

Demographic data pulled from 2021 American Community Survey 5 year estimate (20)

# Economic Stability

## Higher Income is Associated with Better Health

Achieving economic stability for one's self and family is primarily about income and wealth. Income provides economic resources that shape options for housing, education, child care, food, and more. Wealth - the accumulation of savings and assets - helps cushion and protect in times of economic distress.<sup>(21)</sup>

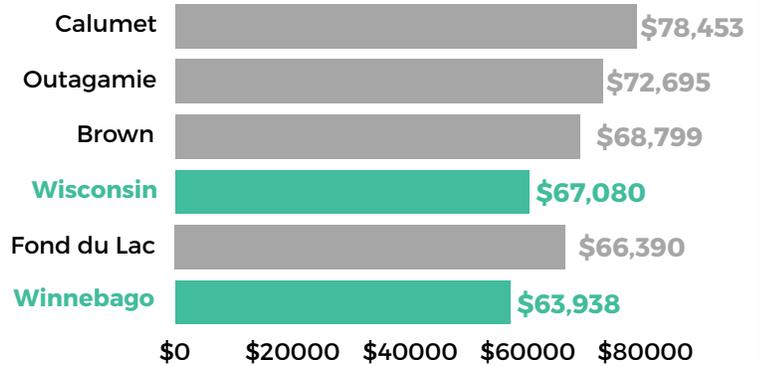
### Living Wage Calculation

The living wage is a calculation of an hourly rate that an individual must earn to support themselves and their family without community assistance. Living wage estimates include typical family expenses including food, child care, medical, housing, transportation, and other necessities.<sup>(23)</sup>

### Cost of Living

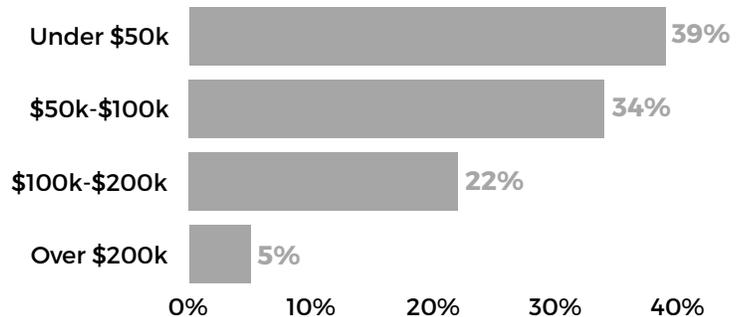
A family of four in Winnebago County would need two adults each working a full-time job earning \$24.64 per hour in order to earn a living wage.<sup>(23)</sup>

**Winnebago County has the lowest median household income compared to similar surrounding counties.**



Source: 2021 ACS 5 year estimate (22)

**Only 27% of households in Winnebago County earn more than \$100,000 annually.**



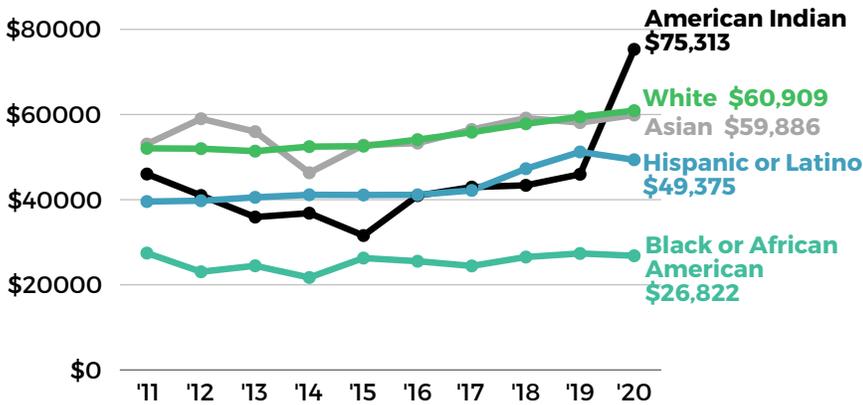
Source: 2021 ACS 5 year estimate (22)

	\$ per Hour	# of Working Adults	Total Annual Income
Living Wage	<b>\$24.64</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$102,502</b>
Minimum Wage	<b>\$7.25</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$30,160</b>

# Economic Stability

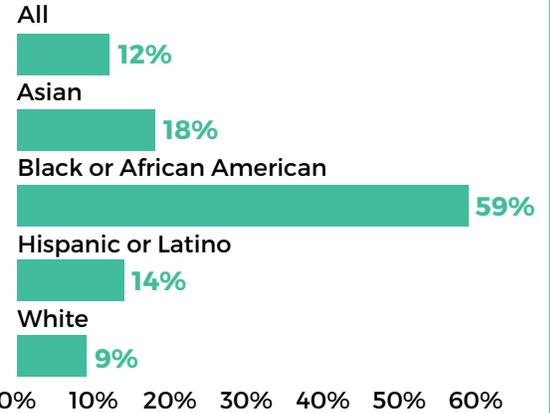
## Economic Impact of Disparities

In Winnebago County, the Black and Hispanic communities are disproportionately impacted by a much lower median income compared to other races and ethnicities.



Source: Data Commons - ACS 5 year estimates (24)

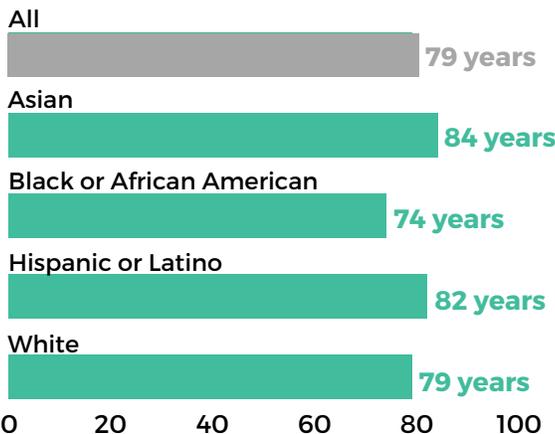
Black children are disproportionately experiencing poverty in Winnebago County.



Source: County Health Rankings (25)

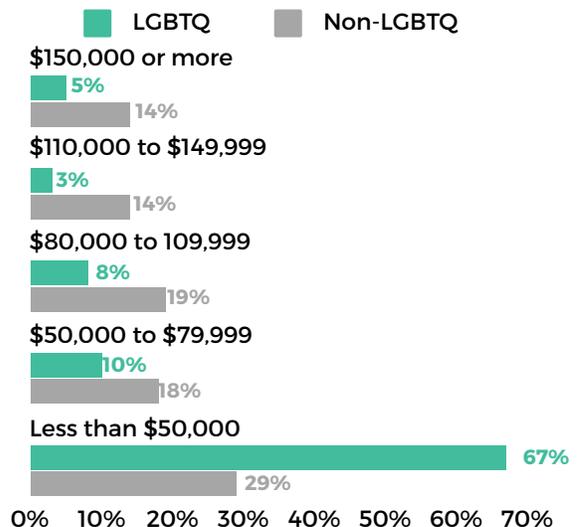
Income inequality is NOT due to a lack of work ethic or work hour differences between groups. Policies and practices, such as tax policies that favor the wealthy, are linked to the widening wealth gap. <sup>(26)</sup>

Average life expectancy at birth for the Black community in Winnebago County is the lowest compared to other races and ethnicities in the county.



Source: County Health Rankings (25)

LGBTQ+ individuals in the Fox Valley are disproportionately paid less than non-LGBTQ+ individuals.



Source: Mind Your Wellness Survey (27)

# Economic Stability

## Basic Needs



**1 in 3**

Households struggle to cover their basic needs.

11% of households live in poverty and an additional

22% are ALICE households (Asset Limited Income Constrained, Employed).

- ALICE households earn more than the federal poverty level but not enough to afford the basics. <sup>(28)</sup>

## Why Can't Families Afford Basic Needs?

The cost of household essentials increased faster than other goods and services from 2007 to 2021, which continues to impact lower-income households more harshly than middle and high-income households. <sup>(29)</sup> National data shows how much costs have increased overall during the last 14 years and each individual year. <sup>(30)</sup>

						
 COST	Housing	Child care	Food	Transportation	Health care	Technology
% Increase 2007-2021	53%	46%	23%	27%	59%	44%
Yearly % Increase	3.1%	2.8%	1.5%	1.7%	3.3%	7.6%



**Community focus group theme:** People are experiencing financial difficulties and struggle with basic needs related to food, housing, clothing, and other necessities. This is particularly felt by single mothers.

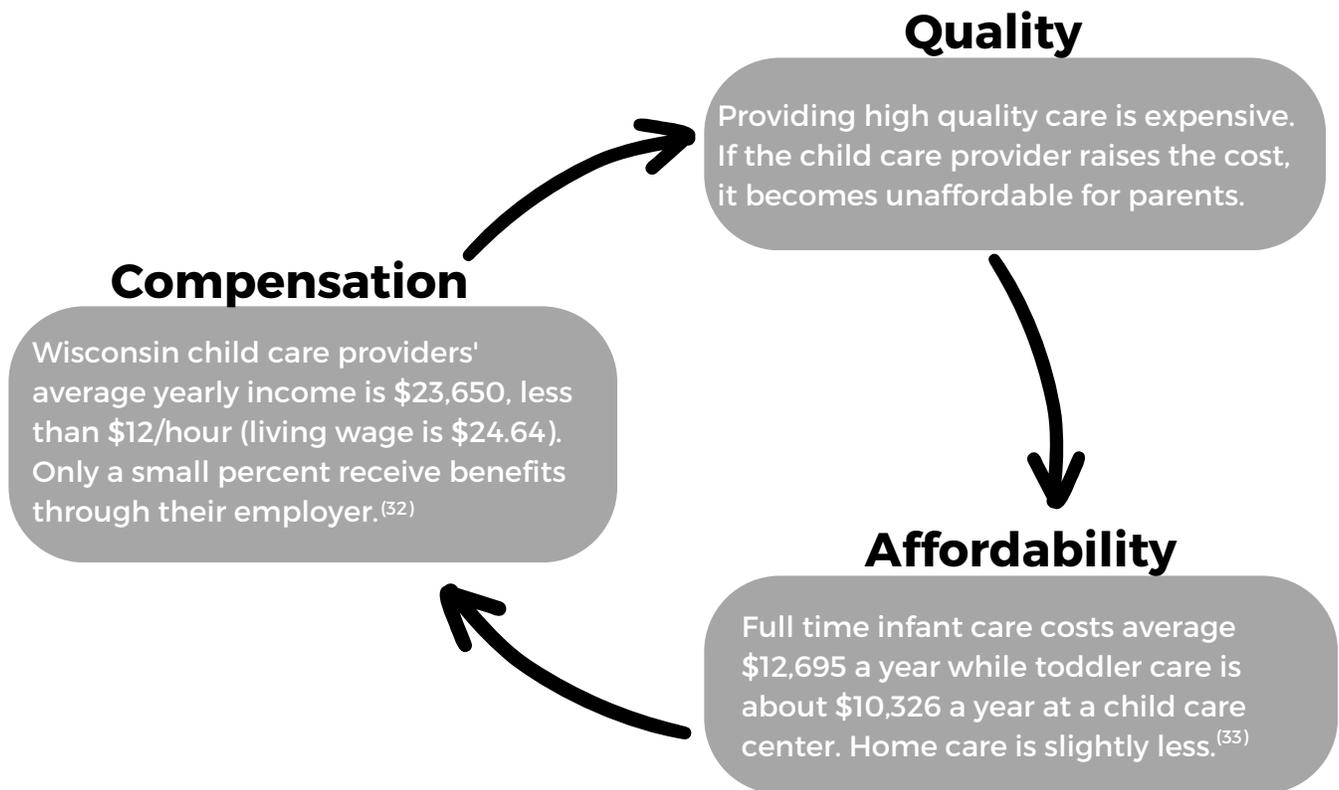
# Economic Stability

## High Cost of Raising Children

Child care is an essential industry interconnected to the health of the community. Parents need child care so that they can work, be productive, and build successful careers to support their families. For employers, insufficient child care results in lost revenue and increased hiring costs. The economic impact of child care problems on parents and employers subsequently causes lower tax revenues, increasing pressure on all taxpayers. Child care challenges have a ripple effect, costing Wisconsin's economy \$1.9 billion annually.<sup>(31)</sup>

## Foundation for a Quality Child Care System

The connections among child care quality, affordability for parents, and compensation for providers makes fixing the child care system challenging. All three areas must be strengthened for quality child care programs to survive, but improvements to these systems are complex and require funding to implement necessary changes.<sup>(32)</sup>



**Community focus group theme: Child care is expensive and difficult to find. As a result, parents' ability to work is impacted.**

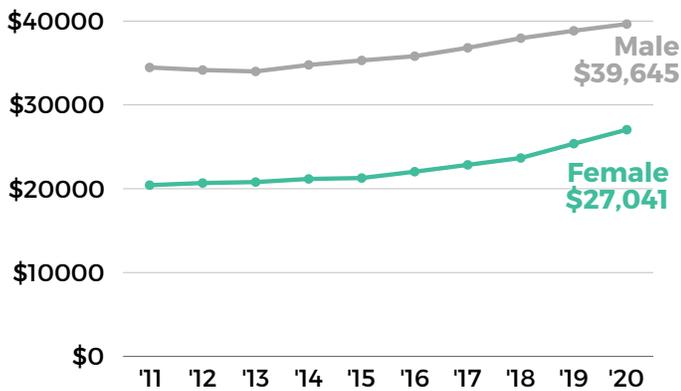
# Economic Stability

## Unequal Opportunities

Child care was a challenge for parents before the COVID-19 pandemic and has only become more difficult since.

- Lack of child care options impacts women more than men. Women are two times more likely than men to either reduce their work hours or quit a job because of child care costs or quality.<sup>(34)</sup>

**In Winnebago County, males have a much higher median income compared to females.**



Source: Data Commons - ACS 5 year estimates (24)

**Single parent households in Winnebago County face significant cost burdens.**

**31%** of children live in a household headed by a **single parent**<sup>(35)</sup>

**29%** of a single parent's income is spent on **housing**<sup>(36)</sup>

**42%** of a single parent's income is spent on **child care**<sup>(36)</sup>

## Winnebago County Business Owners (2017)

Total businesses	Men-owned businesses	Equal ownership of men & women	Women-owned businesses
<b>2,648</b>	<b>1,419 (54%)</b>	<b>830 (31%)</b>	<b>399 (15%)</b>

Business ownership is defined as: 51% or more of the stock or equity in the business. Data does not include farms.<sup>(37)</sup> Only 5% of businesses are minority owned.



**Community focus group theme: People of color said they are stuck - that they get overlooked for promotions and have limited prospects for opportunities, professional growth, and development.**

# Economic Stability

## The Complexity of Assistance

Qualifying for assistance programs is difficult and maintaining benefits is complicated, creating problems for families. An increase in wages affects all programs individually, resulting in a significant loss of benefits. Losing benefits without having enough wages to offset poses a challenge to families trying to get out of poverty.

## Benefits Cliff

Inadequate rises in wages can severely impact families benefitting from programs such as FoodShare and BadgerCare. These public assistance programs structure their support to decrease as earnings increase, resulting in even slight pay raises triggering a total loss of benefits. Termed “benefits cliff,” this income reduction frequently plunges families into greater financial hardship post-raise. According to a 2021 Point-in-Time assessment by United Way for Winnebago County, over 16,000 families were identified as ALICE households, many of whom faced challenges due to the benefits cliff.<sup>(28)</sup>

**Community focus group theme:** People are frustrated and confused with the link between the food assistance they receive and changes in their employment. When they get a small raise or pick up additional hours, they see a decline in food assistance - rendering the small increase in wages not a financial gain.

**Example of the Benefits Cliff for an Oshkosh Family with 1 Working Adult and 2 Children (July 2022)**

	Current	\$0.97/hr Raise
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
Child Support	\$187	\$187
Wages	\$2,571	\$2,729
<b>Monthly Benefits</b>		
FoodShare	\$369	\$20
Energy Assistance	\$72	\$0
Child Care	\$78	\$138
Housing	\$204	\$0
BadgerCare	Eligible	Ineligible
<b>Monthly Total</b>		
Income + Benefits	\$3,481	\$3,074

In this example, a **\$0.97/hr raise** results in a **net loss of \$407 monthly**, making the family worse off financially due to a pay raise.



# Neighborhood and Built Environment

## Impact of Housing <sup>(38)</sup>

Health is impacted by the affordability, quality, and stability of housing.

### Quality

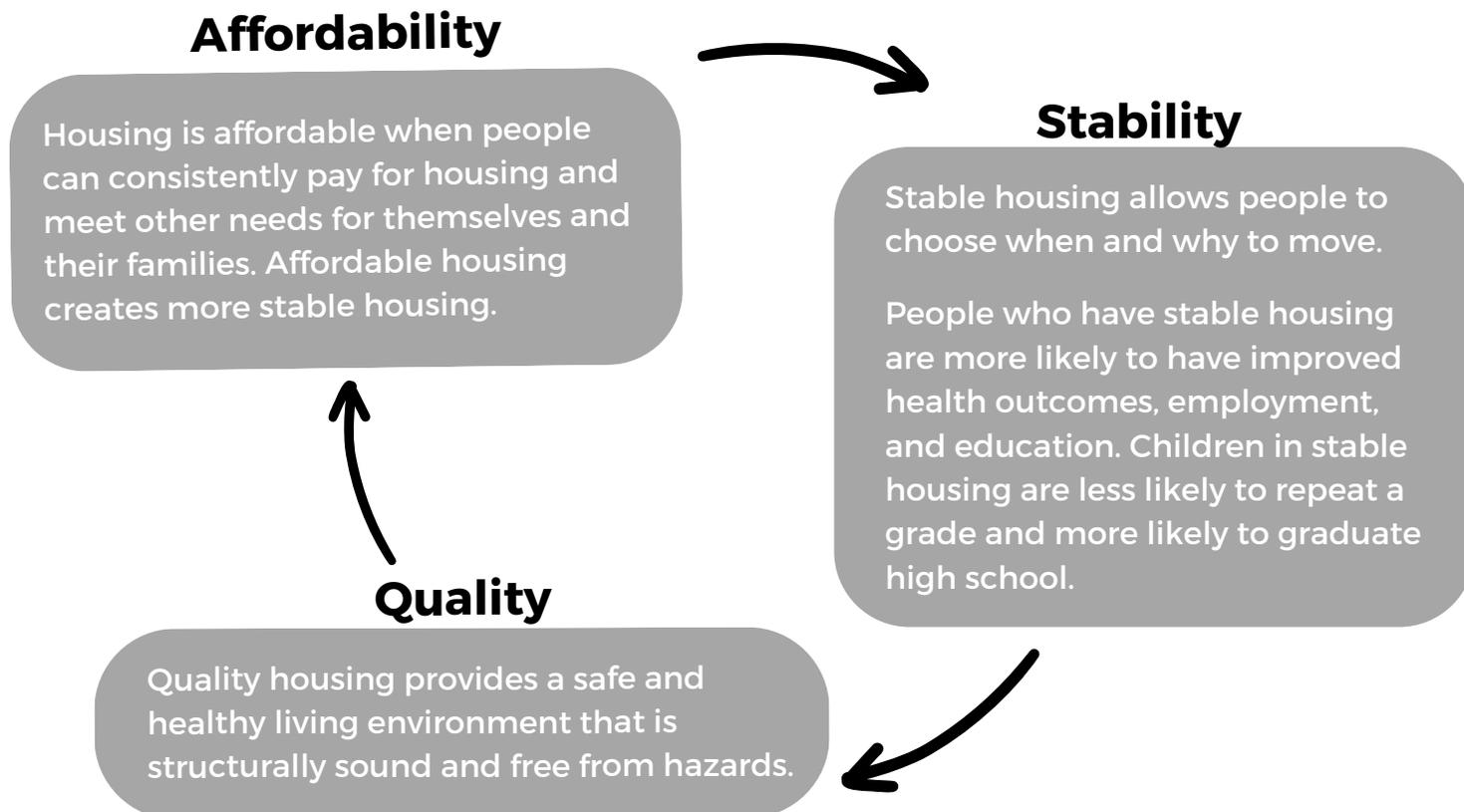
Poor quality housing includes such things as lead, mold, asbestos, poor air quality, overcrowding, inadequate building security, and the inability to lock doors and windows. These exposures contribute to chronic disease, injury, asthma, and impaired cognitive development. Low-quality housing drives people to move more frequently.

### Stability

When people are forced to move, it can lead to job loss, making it harder to afford housing and increasing the likelihood of moving into low-quality housing. People who have stable housing are more likely to have improved health outcomes, employment, and education. Children in stable housing are less likely to repeat a grade and more likely to graduate high school.

### Affordability

When rents are high compared to how much people earn it can lead to eviction, homelessness, or doubling up (when multiple families live together in a space).



# Neighborhood and Built Environment

## High Cost of Housing

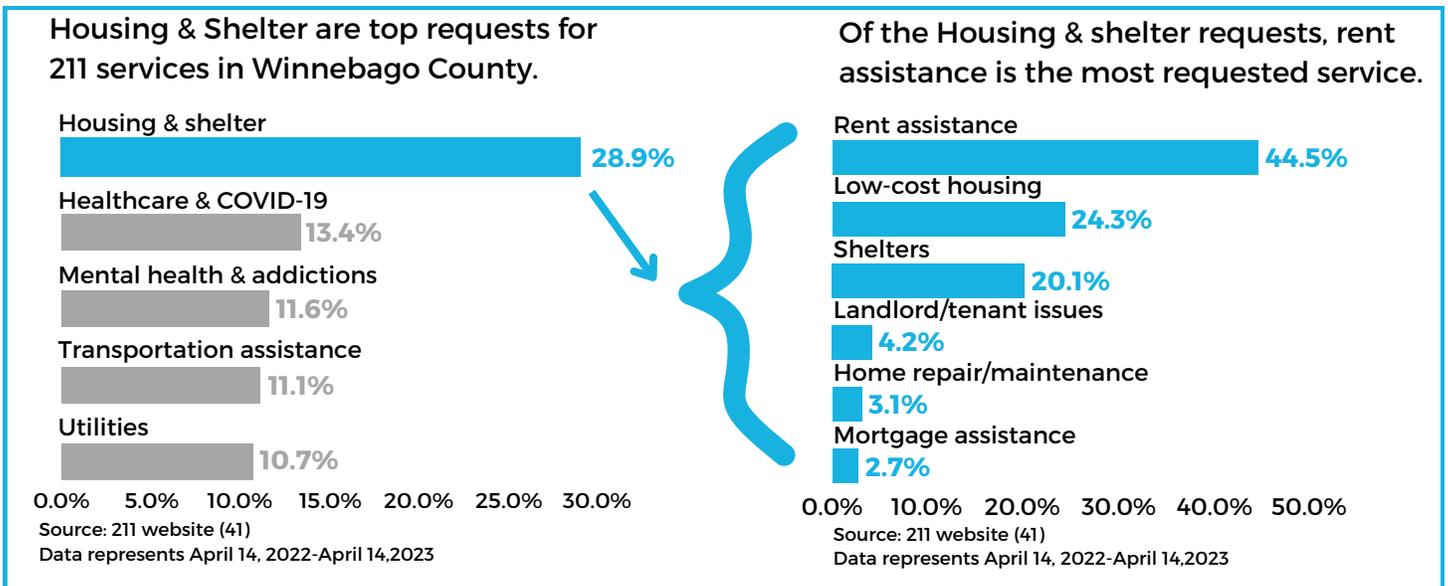
Rent has increased between 20% - 35% in the past two years according to the Winnebago County Fair Market Rent (FMR).<sup>(39)</sup> FMR is a function of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is not reflective of current rent prices.

Year	Studio/ Efficiency	One Bed	Two Bed	Three Bed	Four Bed
2023	\$712	\$739	\$954	\$1,289	\$1,502
2022	\$639	\$689	\$889	\$1,197	\$1,419
2021	\$529	\$591	\$759	\$1,025	\$1,246

### Why is Housing so Expensive?<sup>(40)</sup>

- The state of WI is experiencing a housing shortage and needs at least 140,000 more units between 2020-2030 to keep up with demand.
- High-interest rates have reduced new home construction.
- Finding affordable housing for young people is difficult as the aging population retires but remain in their homes.
- High demand and low supply influence price.

### Housing and Shelter are the Most Requested Community Needs to 211

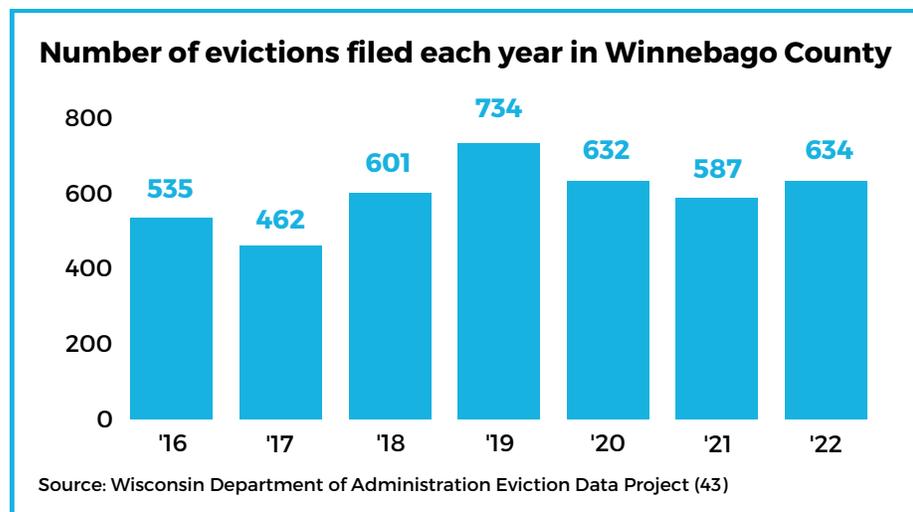


 United Way 2-1-1 is a free, confidential information and referral service for anyone to call, text, chat, or search for health and human services. Services are available 24/7.

# Neighborhood and Built Environment

## The Stress of Housing

The pandemic produced eviction moratoriums to help citizens maintain housing. The moratorium prevented landlords from removing tenants for a limited time. As these expired, there has been greater housing stress.<sup>(42)</sup>



### DID YOU KNOW?

Evictions can stay on record with the courts for 20 years, which can be used by landlords to deny rental applications.



Wisconsin landlords may evict tenants for nonpayment of rent or a violation of the lease agreement. Landlords must provide proper notice to tenants, which is typically 28 days, before the tenant has to vacate their unit.

### Community focus group themes:

- Some full-time workers are unable to find housing.
- If a renter does not have immigration documents, landlords have charged double rent.
- Eviction records are a real obstacle to acquiring housing, and renters can be unjustly evicted. Renters may not even know they have an eviction on their record.
- Any felony record makes it challenging to find a place to rent.
- There is a fear among renters that if they complain about conditions in their unit, the landlord will raise their rent or evict them.



# Neighborhood and Built Environment

## Food Environment

Food outlets are the places where people get their food. They can be food retail venues, where people buy food to cook and eat at home, or food service venues, where people eat out. Fast food and convenience stores are more common in these outlets, making it hard for low-income people to access healthy food.<sup>(44)</sup>

### Number of Food Outlets in Winnebago County

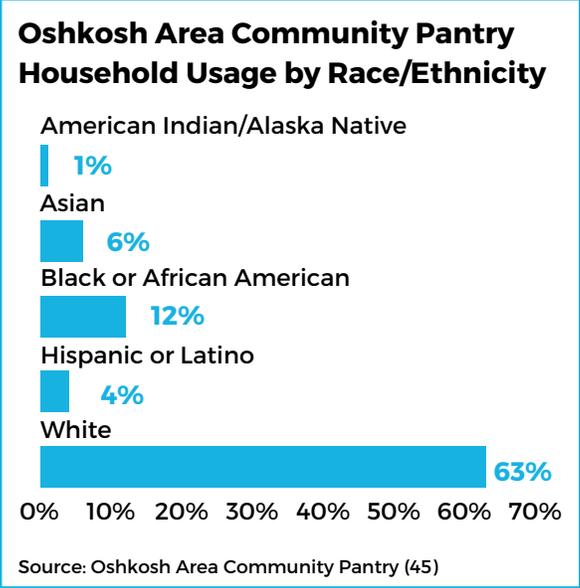


 Each summer, FoodShare and the Women, Infant, Children (WIC) programs supplement benefits with Farmer's Market vouchers.

## Food Insecurity<sup>(44)</sup>

Food insecurity is the lack of reliable access to food, whether due to financial limitations, transportation, or distance to a food outlet. Some people do not have access to full-service grocery stores and rely on convenience stores or other places.

Convenience stores may have higher food prices, lower quality foods, and less variety than grocery stores.



36% of the population is obese<sup>(46)</sup>



8% of the population is food insecure and has limited access to healthy foods<sup>(46)</sup>

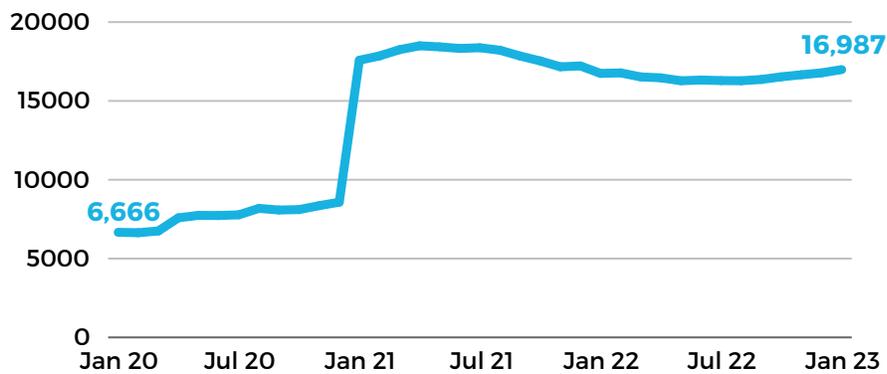
Oshkosh Area Community Pantry has seen a 112% increase in new registrants in 2022 compared to 2021.

# Neighborhood and Built Environment

## Increased Benefits During the COVID-19 Pandemic

FoodShare is an assistance program to help families afford food. To be eligible, a family's monthly income needs to be at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and takes into account household size. During the pandemic, more residents became eligible for benefits due to job loss and decreased wages. Federal changes increased the amount of benefits families received to help offset the loss of income.<sup>(47)</sup>

**FoodShare enrollment numbers in Winnebago County more than doubled from December 2020 to January 2021.**



Source: WI DHS FoodShare Program (47)

Starting March 1, 2023, FoodShare benefits returned to pre-pandemic status, lowering the dollar amount by at least \$95 even though the need has remained high.<sup>(48)</sup>



**Community focus group theme: The ending of all of the pandemic assistance is having a greater impact on community members than the pandemic did.**

### Monthly total for FoodShare benefits in Winnebago County

February 2023



March 2023



Source: WI DHS FoodShare Program (47)

**{ DID YOU KNOW? }**

The closer the family is to the income limit, the less benefit they receive (Benefits Cliff). The minimum amount of benefits for 2023 is \$23/month.

# Neighborhood and Built Environment

## Broadband and Technology Access

According to 2018 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 370,000 Wisconsinites, 6.6% of the state population, did not have an internet subscription in their homes. This included more than 82,000 Wisconsinites under the age of 18. Students without reliable internet access risk falling behind in classes, potentially widening existing socioeconomic and racial disparities. Statewide, 13.6% of black residents and 11% of Hispanic/Latinx residents lack broadband access. For white residents, the statewide average is 5.8%.<sup>(49)</sup>

7.3% of households in Winnebago County are without an internet subscription.<sup>(50)</sup>

## Importance of Transportation

Transportation decisions affect everyone by influencing where they live, how they can get to work and school, whether they can easily access health care and other essential services, how they socialize with family and friends, and, ultimately, if they can thrive in their environment.<sup>(51)</sup>

### Accessible, Affordable, and Reliable Transportation is Essential for Everyone

#### Reliable<sup>(51)</sup>

Reliable transportation means either public transit or a personal vehicle is available when needed.

#### Accessible<sup>(52)</sup>

Accessible transportation, whether by car, bus, or sidewalk, is used by everyone – with or without disabilities – and does not have barriers.

#### Affordable<sup>(51)</sup>

Affordable transportation can refer to the costs associated with owning a vehicle or paying for transit or ride services such as taxis, Uber, or Lyft.

# Neighborhood and Built Environment

## Challenges of the Transportation System

In 2006, the Wisconsin state legislature passed a law that took driver's licenses away from people without a valid Social Security number. The result of this policy puts undocumented workers in the difficult position of providing essential services, especially in the agricultural industry, and taking on great personal and family risk.<sup>(53)</sup>

### Affordability

Wisconsin's cities, villages, and towns have faced increasingly difficult fiscal decisions in recent years as their two primary revenue sources - local property taxes and state aid - have been subject to tight constraints. In recent months, rising inflation has added another major budgetary pressure. As a result, many municipalities have been forced to reduce public transit services.<sup>(54)</sup>

### Accessibility<sup>(52)</sup>

Creating accessible transportation systems can be challenging. The system needs to be accessible to all through various pathways, such as: audio announcements for people with visual disabilities; curb-cuts for sidewalks to increase accessibility for wheeled devices; and bus stops located in useable places that are designed for weather events.

### Reliability

Communities need reliable, timely transportation options. A limited public transit system places a higher burden on low-income households and on people who cannot drive. Winnebago County residents currently face reliability issues with public transit:

- Limited hours of service and routes prohibits reliance on public transportation, especially for second and third shift employees.
- Rural areas have limited options for public transportation.
- There is no public bus transit on Sundays.

#### Community focus group theme:



- There is an assumption that everyone should have a vehicle; however, some people cannot afford a vehicle or are unable to drive.
- Transportation options are limited and there is desire to see bus service go later and be available on Sundays.

# Neighborhood and Built Environment

## Gap in the Transit System in Winnebago County

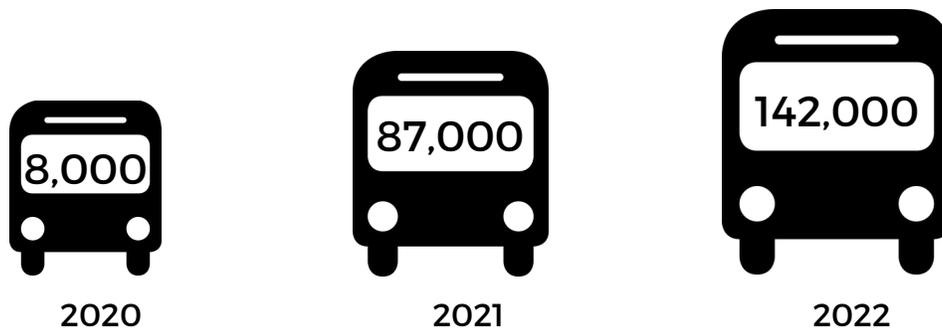
In Winnebago County, there are two independent transit systems. Valley Transit serves the Fox Valley including Appleton, Neenah, Menasha, and Fox Crossing. GO Transit serves the City of Oshkosh. The gap in transit between the two systems was covered by Route 10, an inter-city service that connected Oshkosh to Neenah and Valley Transit. In 2023, to reduce costs, the Route 10 connector was changed to an on-demand service between these systems, costing the rider \$5.00 each way.

- The on-demand service may be cost prohibitive and can be difficult to access. Riders must call to schedule a day in advance.
- The change to Route 10 eliminated public transit service that provided access to the northern part of Oshkosh, including the Winnebago County Jail. This creates a safety issue for those needing to walk to the closest bus stop because there is no sidewalk along a busy traffic corridor.

## Expanded Student Bussing

### Student Bus Ridership has Increased with Pilot Program

In February 2020, the City of Oshkosh, Oshkosh Area School District, and private funders approved a pilot program to provide free bus service to public and private K-12 students through GO Transit.



GO Transit buses have become an effective and increasingly popular means of transportation for K-12 students and their families in Oshkosh. Limited bus hours and cost were common challenges shared by students and parents/caretakers.<sup>(55)</sup>



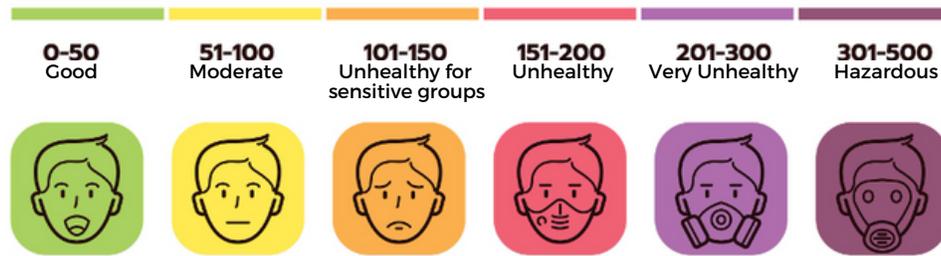
The student bussing program with Go Transit has had positive impacts on school attendance, access to school and social activities, health care, employment, and household savings.

# Natural Environment

## Air Quality

The US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Air Quality Index (AQI) provides standardized color codes for forecasting and reporting daily air quality.<sup>(56)</sup>

### Air Quality Index *US AQI*



## Air Quality Advisories

Air quality advisories are historically uncommon for Winnebago County. However, changing climate conditions has resulted in more attention to air quality. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued air quality advisories throughout the 2023 summer.

Sensitive groups, which include people with heart or lung disease, older adults, children, those who are pregnant, and those who work outdoors, are most at risk for adverse health effects.



Due to Canadian wildfires, between June 1- August 31, 2023, air quality was reported as unhealthy or unhealthy for sensitive groups for 9 days.<sup>(57)</sup>

## Emergency Preparedness

Disasters can have severe economic consequences for communities. Investing in emergency preparedness can help communities mitigate the financial impact of disasters. Preparedness measures help safeguard businesses, local industries, and employment opportunities. Moreover, communities with robust disaster preparedness are more likely to attract investments and maintain economic stability.

## Potential Hazards for Winnebago County

- Severe weather: extreme heat and cold, flooding and drought conditions, and storms causing power outages
- Cyber attacks
- Disease outbreaks

# Natural Environment

## Woodlands, Wetlands, and Waterways

Winnebago County is rich in its natural environment:<sup>(58)</sup>

- **11,600 acres** of forested land, about 4% of Winnebago County
- **53,271 acres** of wetlands, mostly in the western and northern areas, including: Lake Poygan, Rush Lake, Rush/Waukau Creek, and the Fox, Rat, and Wolf Rivers
- **91,000 acres** of surface water, which is the largest area of inland surface water of any county in Wisconsin
- The county is entirely within the Fox-Wolf River Basin and contains a network of lakes, rivers, and streams that make up the Winnebago System
- The system of lakes is known as the “Pool Lakes” and includes:
  - Lake Winnebago
  - Lake Butte des Morts
  - Lake Winneconne
  - Lake Poygan



The County’s natural environment, lakes, rivers, parks, green space, trails, and outdoor recreation provide opportunities to interact with nature.

## Water Quality

Winnebago County is one of the areas in the state that relies on a surface water system in addition to groundwater. Over 200,000 people get drinking water from Lake Winnebago.<sup>(58)</sup> Municipalities treat and monitor the water supply, following requirements that come from the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), to check for threats including:<sup>(59)</sup>

- Lead and copper due to corrosion in plumbing systems
- Viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife
- Fertilizers, pesticides, or other chemicals applied to land near water source
- Chemicals from manufacturing operations



**Community focus group theme: Community members love the parks and the lakes in our county.**

# Natural Environment

## Recreational Opportunities

The Winnebago System is known throughout the Midwest as a great fishing area for walleye, northern pike, white bass, and lake sturgeon. The county accounts for:<sup>(60)</sup>

- 513 acres of State Fishery Areas
- 58 boat launches

Amount	Activity	
770 Miles	Bike & pedestrian facilities: bike lanes, trails & sidewalks	
55 Miles	Bike lanes	
114 Miles	Trails	
200 Miles	Snowmobile trails	
124	Designated Parks	
22	Schools participating in Safe Routes to School*	

\*Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program empowers local communities and school districts with resources to increase the appeal, safety, and practicality of walking and biking to school for students.

Source: East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

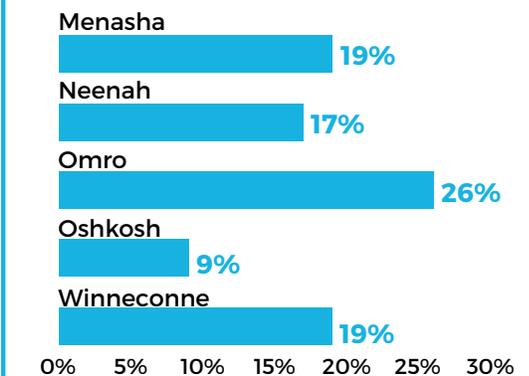
## Tree Canopy

Trees provide many benefits, which is why communities often seek to expand their tree canopy. Increasing the tree canopy can be accomplished by planting more trees and, more importantly, properly caring for current trees.<sup>(61)</sup>

### Winnebago County Urban Tree Cover: 17%<sup>(62)</sup>

Urban areas represent densely developed territory and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses. To qualify as an urban area, the territory identified must encompass at least 2,500 people.

#### Urban Tree Coverage in Winnebago County



Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources (61)

# Education Access and Quality

## Quality Education



**Education** shapes opportunities, employment, income, and is key to lifting people out of poverty. Factors that impact well-being, including access to health care, safe housing, and livable wages, all increase as a person obtains higher levels of education.<sup>(63)</sup>

## Early Literacy

### Learning to Read by Third Grade is Critical for Student Education



Until the end of third grade, most students are **'learning to read.'**

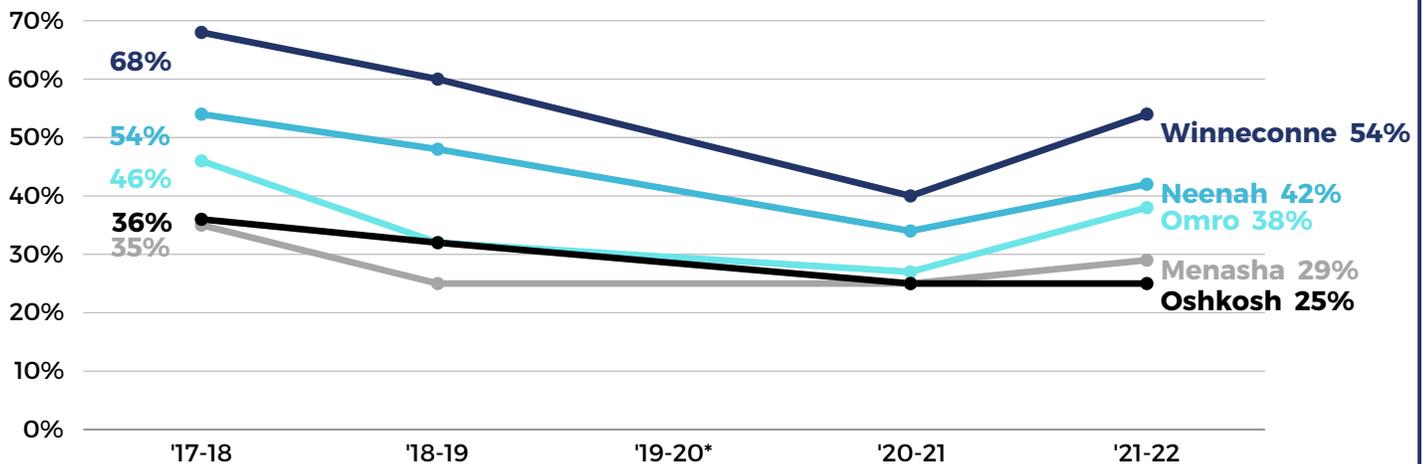
Beginning in fourth grade, students begin **'reading to learn.'**

Students who are not reading at grade level by third grade begin having difficulty comprehending the written material that is a central part of the educational process in the grades that follow. Meeting increased educational demands becomes more difficult for students who struggle to read.<sup>(64)</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

Wisconsin has the highest racial disparity in 4th grade reading compared to all other states.<sup>(65)</sup>

**The percent of third grade students who could read proficiently declined during the COVID-19 pandemic.**



Source: WI DPI WISEdash (66)

\*2019-2020 scores were not completed in the spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Education Access and Quality

## Adult Literacy

Today's jobs require literacy and numeracy skills beyond the basic levels. In Wisconsin, one in seven adults struggle with low literacy and almost one in four struggle with basic math. As the demand for technical skills continues to grow, the ability to perform math and comprehend written material will become crucial.<sup>(67)</sup> Wisconsin counties with at least 15% of the population having below basic literacy levels also tend to have poorer health, economic, and educational outcomes.<sup>(68)</sup>



**Community focus group theme: Refugee and immigrant adult community members expressed struggles with accessing local learning opportunities. People reported barriers related to traveling, attending online, or attending during traditional work hours.**

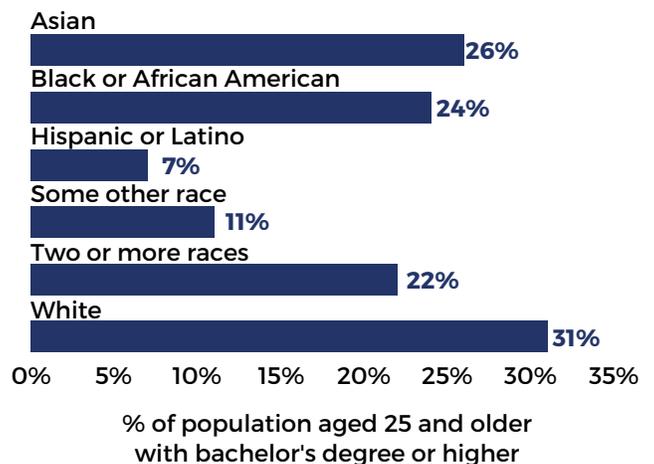
## Access to Education

Educational attainment plays an important role in health by shaping opportunities, employment, and income.<sup>(69)</sup> Cost is the most significant barrier to accessing post-high school education.



**30%** of Winnebago County residents aged 25 or older have a bachelor's degree or post-graduate degree, slightly lower than the state average (33%)<sup>(70)</sup>

**There are racial disparities in who has received a bachelor's degree or higher.**



Source: 2021 ACS 1 year estimate (70)

## Need-Based Financial Aid<sup>(71)</sup>

The Wisconsin Grant provides financial assistance to undergraduate residents enrolled at least half-time in degree or certificate programs at all Wisconsin universities, colleges, and technical schools.

- Lower-income students have lower college graduation rates than their higher-income peers.
- State funding for financial aid has not kept pace with student demand following economic recessions, which disproportionately affects older adult students.



Winnebago County has local options for higher education



# Education Access and Quality

## Educational System Disparities

“ In [educational] disparities by race, Wisconsin is the worst state in the nation...these disparities cannot be explained away by poverty; after controlling for economic disadvantage, the gap persists. In fact, on average, Black students who are not economically disadvantaged score lower than white students who are.

We are failing our students of color, and one factor in that failure is in the language we use to describe it. The word achievement places both the possibility of success and blame for failure on the child, and that is not where it belongs.

Dr. Jill Underly, State Superintendent April 19, 2022<sup>(72)</sup>

## Opportunity Gap

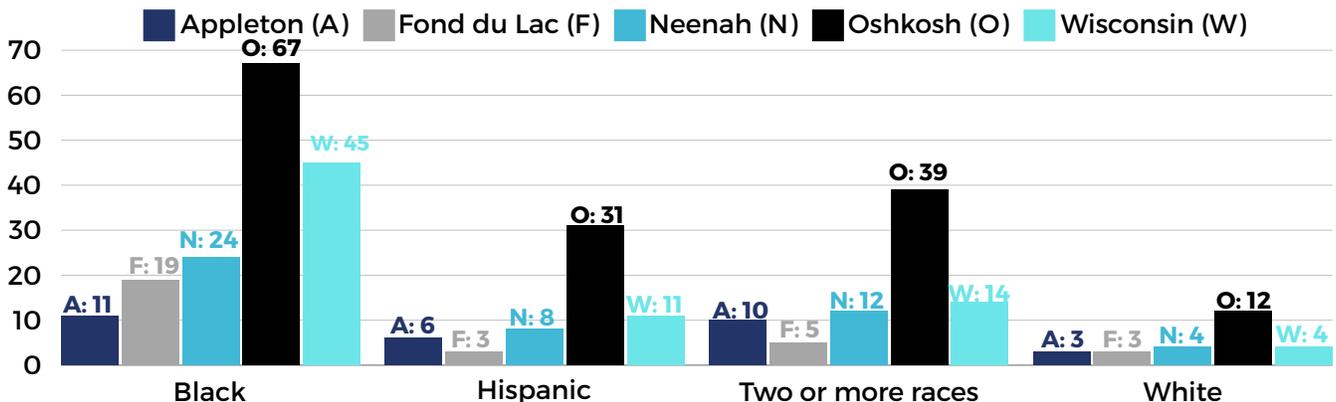
“Opportunity gap” draws attention to the conditions and obstacles that young students face throughout their educational careers. It therefore accurately places responsibility on an inequitable system that is not providing the opportunities for all kids to thrive and succeed.<sup>(73)</sup>



**Community focus group theme: Black/Brown students are being excluded from educational environments, whether through suspension, expulsion, or time spent in the principal's office, detention, or other isolated settings.**

**Rates of suspension (per 100 students) are higher among students of color compared to White students, with Black students having disproportionately higher rates of suspension.**

Rate of suspension (per 100 students)



Source: WI DPI WISEdash (66)

# Education Access and Quality

## Teaching Staff and Under-Representation

Oshkosh and other surrounding school districts in the county are seeing an increase in the diversity of their student populations. As these increases continue, there is an ask of the districts to hire more staff that represent these growing demographics within the schools. Representation by teachers that identify as a person of color is a national struggle, with only one in five teachers identifying as a person of color across the US.

Increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of educators serving students in public schools is a promising and vastly underutilized strategy. Research has shown the importance of a diverse teacher workforce. However, the pathway to increase the diversity of educators is complex and will require investments by policymakers and advocates.<sup>(74)</sup>

Students who identify as a person of color benefit from having teachers that look like them, which leads to an increased likelihood of graduating from high school or enrolling in college.<sup>(74)</sup>

Race/Ethnicity in Oshkosh Area School District	% of total students (9,202)	# of teachers of listed race	% of total staff of listed race (1,262)
Black or African American	7.1%	2	0.5%
Two or More Races	7.1%	3	0.4%
Hispanic or Latino	7.2%	1	0.5%
White	70%	753	97%

Source: WI DPI Staff Reports (75)



In 2023, the Oshkosh Area School District hired a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to oversee the District's equity efforts. In the past few years, the Neenah Joint School District also added a Diversity Coordinator in response to having a disproportionate number of students of color receiving discipline or having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

# Social and Community Context

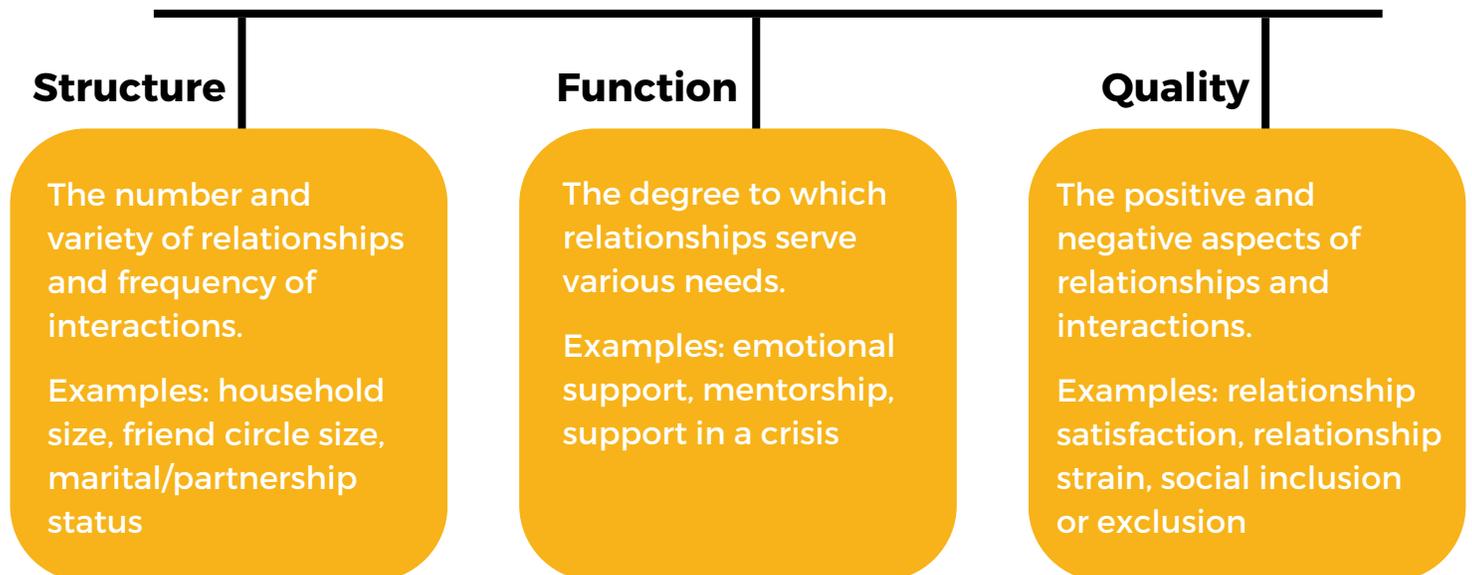
## Social Connectedness

People have profound relationships with the places they live, learn, work, and play. Community factors such as social connectedness, social support, and a sense of belonging influence these relationships.<sup>(76)</sup>

- **Social connectedness** is the meaningful relationships and bonds people have with those around them, including peers, families, and communities.
- **Social support** is the relationships that help one feel cared for, valued, and loved.
- **Belongingness** comes from being respected and valued, while having meaningful voice and opportunity to contribute and participate in community systems and structures.

Communities where residents are more connected with one another fare better on several measures of population health, community safety, community resilience when natural disasters strike, prosperity, and civic engagement.<sup>(77)</sup>

## The 3 Vital Components of Social Connection<sup>(78)</sup>



**Community focus group theme:** There are a lack of activities for some members of the community. Older community members want more evening activities and people experiencing homelessness have no where to go on Sundays.

# Social and Community Context

## Economic Cost of Social Connection<sup>(78)</sup>

The lack of social connection can have significant economic costs to individuals, communities, and society. National data shows a significant impact due to the lack of social connection.



A lack of social connection is associated with increased risk of heart disease, stroke, anxiety, depression, and dementia.

Social isolation among older adults accounts for an estimated \$6.7 billion annually in excess Medicare, largely due to increased hospital and nursing facility spending.



In the US, stress-related absenteeism attributed to loneliness costs employers an estimated \$154 billion annually.

## Current Trends Show Decline in Social Connection & Trust<sup>(78)</sup>

Changes in key indicators, such as individual social participation, demographics, community involvement, and use of technology over time, suggest both overall societal declines in social connection and that, currently, a significant portion of Americans lack adequate social connection.

Trust in each other and major institutions is at near historic lows. Polls conducted in 1972 showed that roughly 45% of Americans felt they could reliably trust other Americans; however, that proportion shrank to roughly 30% in 2016.<sup>(78)</sup>

## Groups at Highest Risk for Social Disconnection<sup>(78)</sup>

Anyone of any age or background can experience loneliness and isolation, but some groups are at higher risk than others. Not all individuals or groups experience the factors that facilitate or become barriers to social connection equally. Some people or groups are exposed to greater barriers.

Some individuals are at higher risk for loneliness and isolation, such as:

- Those with poor physical or mental health
- Those with disabilities
- Those experiencing financial insecurity
- Those who live alone
- Single parents
- Younger and older populations
- LGBTQ+ persons
- Those from ethnic and racial minority groups
- Rural residents
- Victims of domestic violence
- Those who experience discrimination or marginalization

# Social and Community Context

## Racism and Discrimination

Focus groups participants were asked if they experienced racism and discrimination. The answer was yes. They experience exclusion and a lack of belonging. They experience mistreatment by those they do not know in the community on a day-to-day basis, including interactions at work, in schools, in housing, in neighborhoods, and at stores.

## Participants Shared Their Experiences of Racial Profiling in Their Daily Interactions

“

### Work

At work when someone messes up, they always blame me because I don't have the language to defend myself. It's exhausting.

It's mentally draining to be mistreated each day at work and to know there is nothing I can do about it without risking my job.

As for promotions at work, I watch them offer promotions to my white co-workers first. And the few times they eventually gave me a shot (after exhausting everyone else), the percentage of raise was smaller than what had been offered to my co-workers.

”

“

### Neighborhood

The neighbors call the police on the kids when they are just playing with each other and being kids. It makes me uncomfortable, especially as the kids get older.

”

“

### School

The problems our black children have been having is just too much. Our kids come home with bruises, but nothing is communicated from the school. Yet when our kids misbehave, they threaten expulsion.

”

“

### Home

The landlords don't respond to our problems. We've waited weeks for leaks to be fixed, we have water coming from the ceiling, but no response from the landlord.

The landlord threatens us if we call the police.

”

# Social and Community Context

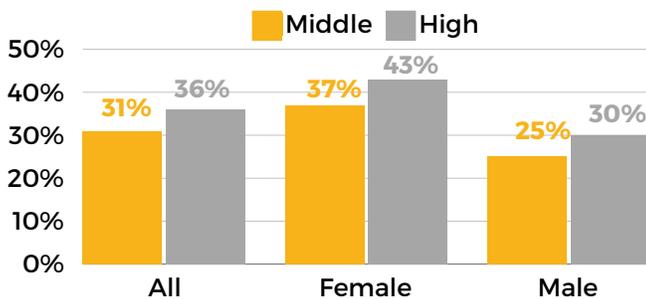
## School Belonging

The 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) displayed gaps in connection and belonging in schools. 56% of high school students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender (LGBT) do not feel like they belong at school compared to only 31% of Straight students.<sup>(79)</sup>

## Mental Well-Being

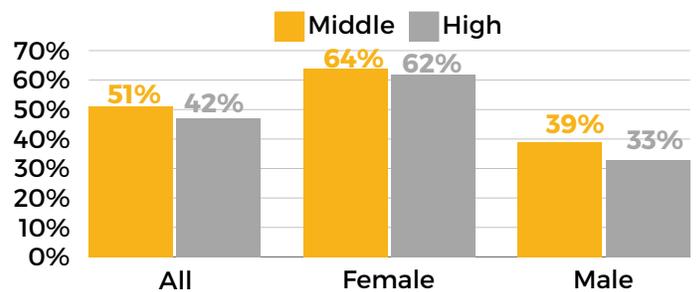
The 2021 YRBS data shows youth are struggling with their mental health. Girls have higher anxiety than boys in both middle and high schools. Rates of anxiety do not significantly differ across grades within middle school or grades within high school.<sup>(79)</sup>

In 2021, around one-third of all Middle School and High School students in Winnebago County did not feel like they belong at school.



Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey (79)

In 2021, nearly half of all Middle School and High School students in Winnebago County experienced significant problems with anxiety (past 12 months).

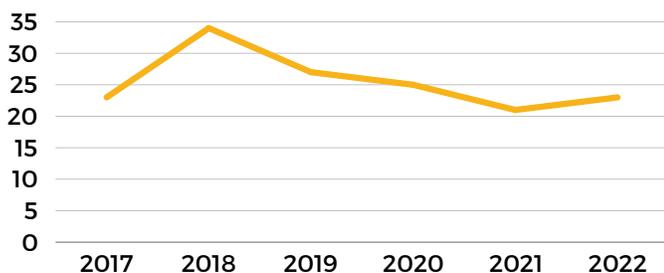


Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey (79)

## Death by Suicide

Death by suicide can serve as an important measure of the mental and economic health of a county. Some risk factors include: mental health conditions, prolonged stress, and stressful life events. Community risk factors such as discrimination and lack of access to healthcare can also increase risk. Protective factors include access to mental health care and feeling socially connected in a supportive community.<sup>(80)</sup>

### Deaths by suicide in Winnebago County



Source: Winnebago County Medical Examiner's Office (81)



# Social and Community Context

## Juvenile Arrests

Juvenile arrests add insight into policing, local laws, and community and family support. Youth who are arrested and incarcerated can face disproportionately higher rates of sickness, including infectious disease and stress-related illness.<sup>(82)</sup>

- In 2019, juvenile arrests in Winnebago County were 38 arrests per 1,000 youths, higher than the national average of 24 arrests per 1,000 youths.<sup>(82)</sup>
- In Wisconsin, Black youth are at least 10 times more likely to be held in placement as white youth.<sup>(83)</sup>
- Juveniles who are incarcerated can see an impact on factors that contribute to health such as housing, employment, wealth, and educational opportunities.

### Race Disparities for Youth Held in Placement per 100,000<sup>(83)</sup>

	Black/African American Rate	White Rate	Black/White Disparity Ratio
Wisconsin	485	43	11.3
US	315	72	4.4

## Criminal Justice System

The adult prison population is increasing. This can be attributed, in part, to Wisconsin's Truth in Sentencing statute. The statute ensures those tried as adults and convicted of a felony resulting in incarceration serve 100% of their sentence.<sup>(84)</sup> Truth in Sentencing created a new form of community corrections called extended supervision. If someone violates the terms of their supervision, they are returned to prison and must serve the entirety of the original sentence. Extended supervision rules can make integrating back into the community difficult. For example, approval is needed prior to making a work or address change.



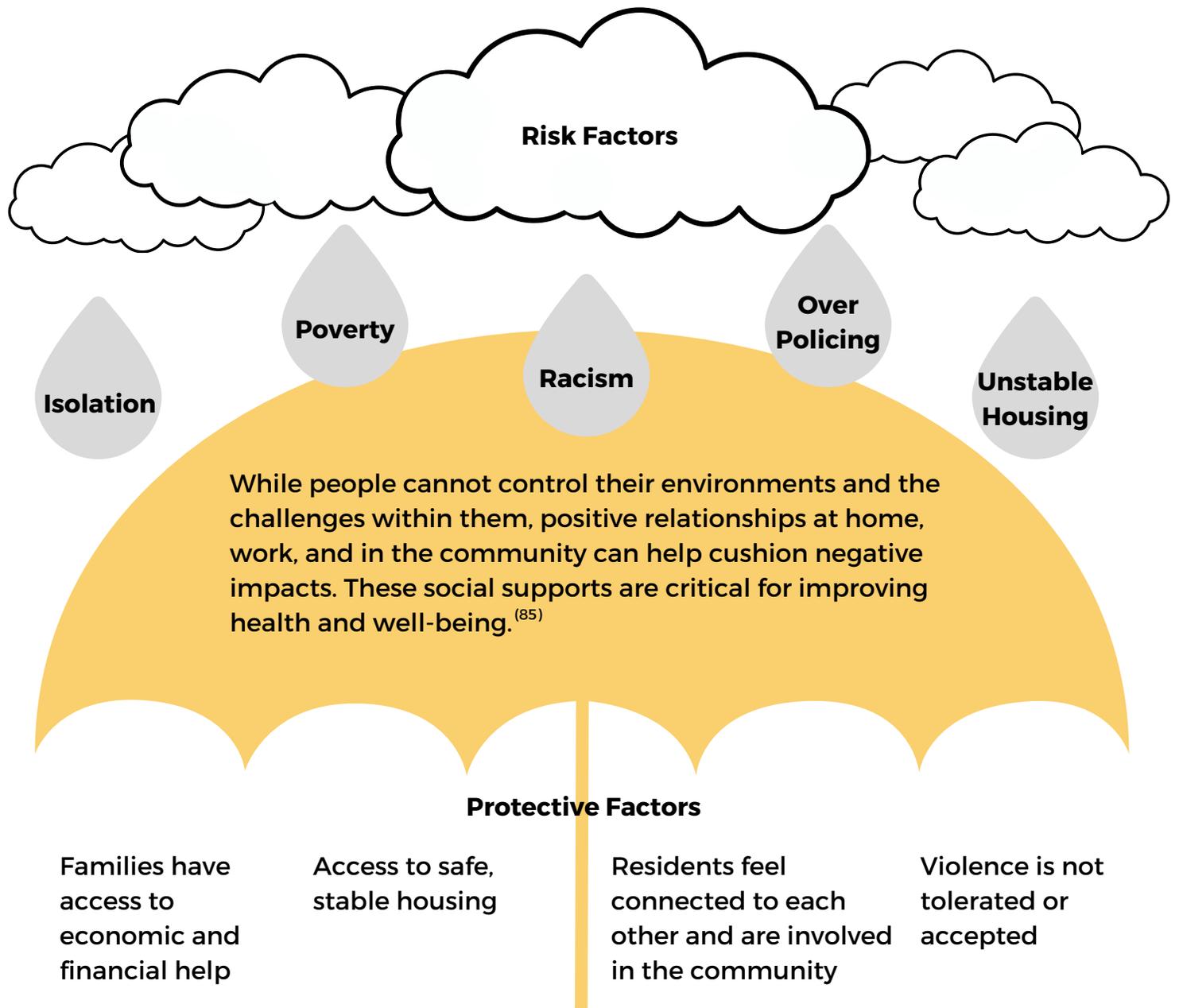
**Community focus group theme: Access to community resources and services is difficult for individuals with a criminal history.**

# Social and Community Context

## Community Safety

Community safety has a major impact on a person's health and well-being.<sup>(85)</sup> Accidents and violence affect health and quality of life in the short- and long-term for community members both directly and indirectly affected. Additionally, living in unsafe neighborhoods can cause chronic stress, accelerate aging, and harm health.<sup>(86)</sup>

Different groups experience life in their communities differently. Racism, stress, and targeting from specific systems like law enforcement, the judicial system, and child protective services make some populations feel unsafe.



# Health Care Access and Quality

## Access to Care

Access to health care means having the timely use of personal health services to achieve the best health outcomes. There are four components to this:<sup>(87)</sup>

<b>Coverage</b>	Facilitates entry into the health care system. People without health insurance are less likely to receive medical care and more likely to have poor health status.
<b>Services</b>	Having a usual source of care is associated with adults receiving recommended screening and prevention services.
<b>Timeliness</b>	Ability to provide health care when the need is recognized. Timely delivery of appropriate services can help manage chronic conditions.
<b>Workforce</b>	The health care system requires infrastructure to support a capable, qualified, and culturally competent workforce.

The U.S. has one of the most complex health insurance systems compared to other high-income countries, with coverage eligibility depending on factors such as employer, income level, age, and health care needs.<sup>(88)</sup>

## Types of Health Insurance in Wisconsin

- BadgerCare Plus (Wisconsin Medicaid): for low income adults, parents, and children
- Employer-based: employees share costs with employer
- Health Insurance Marketplace (HealthCare.gov) and the private market
- Medicaid: for people with disabilities under 65 who qualify
- Medicare: 65 or older
- Military

While the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has reduced the number of uninsured people to historically low levels and helped more people access health care services, too many people in Winnebago County remain uninsured.<sup>(89)</sup>

**7,533** or 4.5% of Winnebago County residents did not have health insurance in 2021 compared to 12,522 (or 7.7%) in 2011<sup>(90)</sup>



**Community focus group theme: There are often long waiting periods to get an appointment, especially for mental health and dental services.**

# Health Care Access and Quality

## Oral Health and Dental Coverage

Poor oral health is associated with an increased risk of chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes, increased use of medical devices, reduced quality of life, and fewer employment opportunities.<sup>(91)</sup>

Large employers are more likely than small ones to offer dental benefits. High-wage workers are also more likely to receive a dental benefit than low-wage workers. Dental benefits (not insurance) covers some procedures in full, partially, or not at all.<sup>(92)</sup> Medicare does not cover dental care except if related to a medical procedure such as surgery.<sup>(93)</sup>

## Medicaid Recipients Struggle to Access Dental Care

Lack of appointments and long wait lists prevent Medicaid recipients from accessing dental care.<sup>(94)</sup>

- Only 25% of Winnebago County Medicaid recipients utilized their dental benefit compared to 29% of recipients across Wisconsin.



- Only 17% of Winnebago County Medicaid recipients received preventive dental services.



- In 2020, Winnebago County Medicaid recipients had 652 emergency department visits for (non-traumatic) oral health, a rate higher than the state.

**With few dental providers in Winnebago County accepting Medicaid, access to dental care for those with Medicaid is limited.**

Partnership (Winnebago, Outagamie, Waupaca)



Tri-County Dental Clinic (Calumet, Outagamie, Winnebago)



Private Dentists (Located in Winnebago)



0 5 10 15 20 25

Source: Partnership Report (94)



Tri-County Dental provides oral health care to residents in Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties whose access to dental health care is limited. When school is not in session, the mobile clinic makes stops at the Boys & Girls Club, COTS, St. Joe's Food Pantry, Oshkosh Area Community Pantry, Apricity, and Harbor House.

# Health Care Access and Quality

## Behavioral Health Care<sup>(95)</sup>

Nearly half of all Americans will have a behavioral health issue in their lifetime, from a mood disorder to a substance use problem. Behavioral health care encompasses a wide variety of interventions delivered by many different types of providers. In the U.S., nearly all these providers are in short supply.

The scarcity of behavioral health professionals is affecting people's ability to get timely care. This is reinforced by historical underinvestment in behavioral health care by public insurance programs, private insurers, and employers – including lack of coverage and low reimbursement rates. In 2021, fewer than half of people with a mental illness were able to access timely care. Accessibility was even lower for those with substance use disorders.

Behavioral health workforce shortages disproportionately impact people who:

- Live in rural areas
- Are covered by Medicaid
- Are people of color, non-English speakers, and LGBTQ communities - the demographics of the behavioral health care workforce do not reflect the people they serve



**Community focus group theme: There is a lack of diverse and culturally responsive care among mental health providers.**

## Substance Use Disorder Treatment

A Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a mental disorder that affects a person's brain and behavior, leading to their inability to control their use of substances like legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, or medications.<sup>(96)</sup> Adults and youth continue to have challenges accessing timely and affordable treatment.<sup>(97)</sup>

### Barriers to Treatment<sup>(97)</sup>

- There are long wait lists for services and access to dual diagnosis (mental health and substance use) treatment.
- Due to insurance policies, people are frequently unable to access the level of treatment their assessment recommends until they fall out of lower levels of treatment.
- Insurance companies can terminate treatment authorization before completion.
- Gaps in communication across treatment, mental health, primary care, and other key agencies are apparent in many overdose deaths.



The We Heart You App helps connect people with SUD and their families to services and recovery coaches.

# Health Care Access and Quality

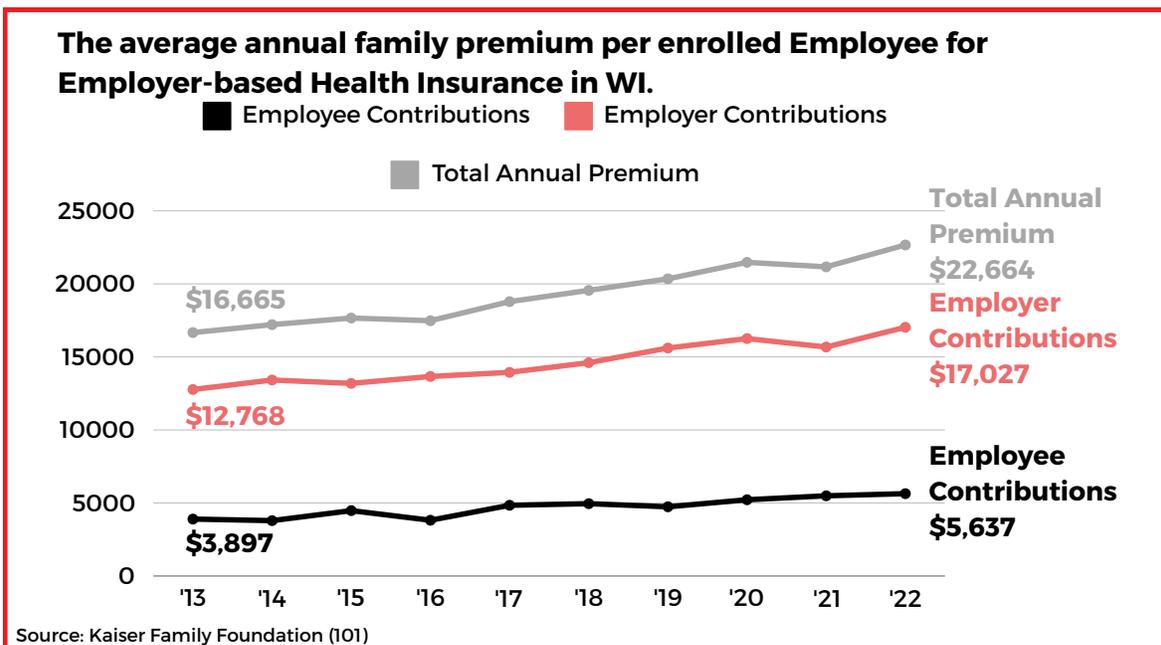
## High Cost of Health Care <sup>(98)</sup>

Most health insurances require payment of a deductible, coinsurance, and copays for medical services and prescriptions. A serious injury or illness can cost thousands of dollars out-of-pocket to meet these deductibles and other cost-sharing requirements. For people with a chronic illness, even smaller copays and other cost-sharing expenses can add up to unaffordable amounts.

### Common Health Insurance Terms and Definitions: <sup>(99)</sup>

- **Premium:** the amount an individual and/or employer pays each month in exchange for insurance coverage.
- **Deductible:** the amount an individual needs to pay each year before the insurance company will start to pay its part.
- **Co-insurance:** the amount an individual pays to share the cost of covered services after the deductible has been paid, usually a percentage. For example, the insurance company pays 80% of the claim, the individual pays 20%.
- **Co-pay:** a flat fee for certain medical expenses (e.g. \$30 for every visit to the doctor), while the insurance company pays the rest.
- **Out-of-pocket max:** the maximum amount an individual pays for medical care per year.

Nationally, the annual premium for individual coverage has risen more than \$225 per year on average, and family coverage has risen more than \$700 per year on average from 2010 to 2022. <sup>(100)</sup>



# Health Care Access and Quality

## Under-Insured and Unaffordable <sup>(104)</sup>

People who have insurance but cannot afford to seek care because of the costs are considered under-insured. They may not be able to afford the deductible for themselves or family members or other expenses such as prescription medication.

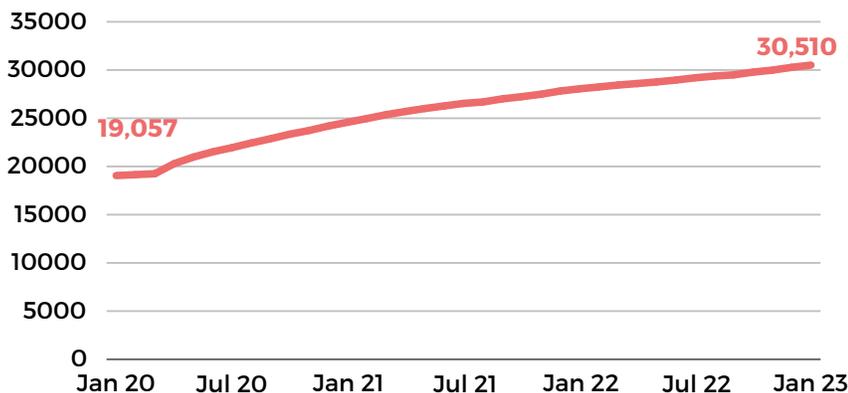
Other reasons for being under-insured may include:

- Cannot afford health insurance; considered “affordable” if the monthly amount or premium is less than 9.1% of family income
- Does not work full-time; employer plans are pro-rated for part-time employees
- Works seasonally, works in the “gig-economy,” or cash-based economy
- Does not qualify for BadgerCare Plus; generally at or below 100% FPL (Federal Poverty Level). FPL for family of 4 is \$2500/month or an hourly rate of \$14.42. <sup>(102)</sup>

## BadgerCare Enrollment

During the pandemic, the federal government allocated funding for states to expand Medicaid (including BadgerCare) in order to ensure access to health care. BadgerCare increased benefits, provided automatic re-enrollments, and had less stringent qualifications. In March 2023, federal support of the enhanced coverage expired, resulting in many no longer eligible for Badgercare.

**There was a 60% increase in Winnebago County's BadgerCare enrollment from January 2020 to January 2023.**



Source: WI DHS BadgerCare Enrollment Data (103)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Wisconsin is 1 of only 10 states that has not adopted Medicaid expansion. <sup>(104)</sup>

## Coverage Gap

The coverage gap exists in states that have not adopted the ACA Medicaid expansion for adults who are not eligible for Medicaid coverage or subsidies in the Marketplace. <sup>(104)</sup>

# Health Care Access and Quality

## Medical Debt

Despite over 90% of the United States population having some form of health insurance, medical debt is a persistent problem.<sup>(98)</sup> More than 100 million people, or 41% of American adults, struggled to pay medical bills in 2022.<sup>(105)</sup>

### Factors that Contribute to Medical Debt

<b>High health care costs including:</b> <sup>(106)</sup>	Hospital stays	Surgeries	Medications
<b>Health insurance coverage gaps including:</b> <sup>(106)</sup>	High deductibles	Coinsurance and copayments	Out-of-pocket maximums
<b>Lack of price transparency leading to:</b> <sup>(107)</sup>	Cost of medical services unknown	Complex billing process	Billing errors difficult to fix
<b>Debt collection practices resulting in:</b> <sup>(105)</sup>	Hospitals selling debt to collection agencies	Hospitals & collection agencies suing patients in court	Judgements that garnish patient wages

**{ DID YOU KNOW? }**

Coverage that is unaffordable or insufficient can harm physical, mental, and financial health.<sup>(106)</sup>

**11.5%** of Wisconsin residents have medical debt in collections <sup>(106)</sup>

**\$922** is the median amount of medical debt in Wisconsin <sup>(106)</sup>

### Impact of Medical Debt



# Health Behaviors

**Health behaviors** are health-related practices that can improve or damage individual health, such as: diet and exercise, tobacco use, alcohol and drug use, and sexual activity. Health behaviors are determined by the choices available in the places we live, learn, work, and play. <sup>(108)</sup>

## Community Conditions and Resources Influence a Person's Choices



Physical Activity



Nutrition



Tobacco/Vaping



Alcohol



Substance Use



Sexual Activity

## Physical Activity & Nutrition

Increasing opportunities for exercise and access to healthy foods in neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces can help children and adults eat healthy meals and reach recommended daily physical activity levels. <sup>(109)</sup>

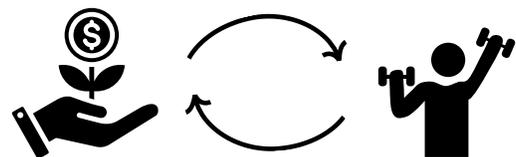
### Community Conditions that Support Physical Activity:

- Safe and accessible sidewalks and trails
- Well-maintained playgrounds and parks
- Walkable destinations-schools, grocery stores, and shopping
- Public transit
- Bike-friendly streets

### The Economic Case:

It makes good economic sense for employers to invest in employees. Employers can build a culture of health through actions such as:

- Create incentives
- Encourage walking breaks/walking meetings
- Adopt family-friendly policies, e.g., paid time off
- Provide a match for health savings accounts
- Contribute to gym memberships



8% of people do not have a reliable source of food <sup>(110)</sup>

13% of high school students reported they did not exercise in the past week <sup>(112)</sup>

19% of adults report no leisure-time physical activity <sup>(110)</sup>

# Health Behaviors

## Tobacco & Vaping Use

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the US.<sup>(111)</sup> Youth who start using substances at a younger age are more likely to suffer from a substance use disorder, mental health condition, and social isolation. The word "tobacco" on this page refers to commercial tobacco, as opposed to the traditional, Native American tobacco.

Youth	Adults
<p><b>34%</b> of Winnebago County high school students who are smokers tried cigarettes by age 13.<sup>(112)</sup></p> <p><b>26%</b> of Winnebago County high school students have tried vaping/e-cigarettes.<sup>(112)</sup></p>	<p>Nearly <b>1 in 5</b> Winnebago County adults report smoking cigarettes.<sup>(110)</sup></p>

Youth, LGBTQ+, low-income, and black communities have been aggressively targeted by the tobacco industry through tailored campaigns of their tobacco and nicotine products. In recent years, significant work has been done to reduce access to products, restricts flavors, increase the age limits, and update smoke-free laws to include e-cigarettes.<sup>(113)</sup>

## Alcohol Use

The alcohol environment is influenced by availability (locations to buy alcohol), affordability (prices are low), attractiveness (advertisements to young people), and acceptability (social norms).<sup>(114)</sup>

Municipalities control the number of liquor licenses issued. The more licenses that are issued increases availability of alcohol.<sup>(115)</sup>

**7th** Winnebago County issues the 7th most liquor licenses of any county in the state.<sup>(116)</sup>

**415** Liquor licenses were issued in Winnebago County in 2020-2021.<sup>(116)</sup>

Youth	Adults
<p><b>28%</b> of Winnebago County high school students who have drunk alcohol report trying alcohol by age 13.<sup>(112)</sup></p>	<p><b>27%</b> of Winnebago County adults report binge drinking or heavy drinking.<sup>(110)</sup></p>



**Community focus group theme:** Alcohol is everywhere. Many community events revolve around alcohol. There is a need for more family-friendly and alcohol-free events.

# Health Behaviors

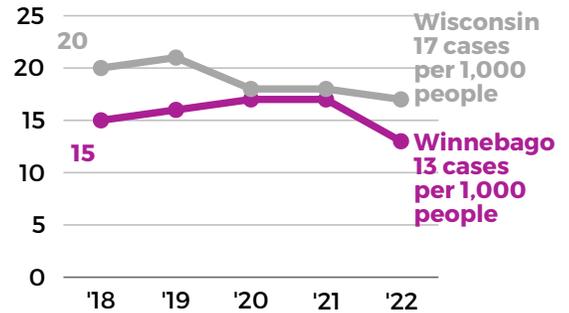
## Reproductive and Sexual Health

### Access to Sexual Health Education

Not all school districts provide students with the education needed to make fully-informed decisions about their bodies and relationships.

The absence of important topics such as consent, LGBTQ+ education, and safe practices results in misunderstanding and stigma. Accurate, inclusive, and proper guidance can help equip students for a healthy approach to their sexual well-being.

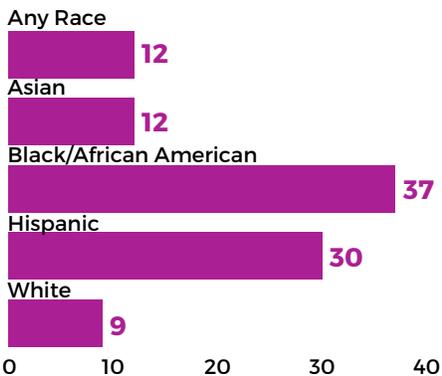
Chlamydia case rates for those aged 15-19 remain high despite recent decreases.



Source: Wisconsin PHAVR Report (117)

### Teen Pregnancy Rates by Race/Ethnicity (2014-2020)

# of births per 1,000 females aged 15 - 19



Source: County Health Rankings 2022 (110)

### Teen Births

Mothers who give birth during their teen years face more barriers that affect their health and well-being than those who give birth later in life.

These impacts include:

- Lack of community support
- Less likely to finish high school and pursue post-secondary education
- Less earning potential
- Mental and physical stress
- Struggle to find affordable, quality child care, and suitable transportation - further hampering options for education or employment

Access to culturally responsive, timely, and appropriate sexual and reproductive health information is important for everyone. Youth specifically need information from people they trust to make informed decisions.

### Birth Outcomes

Low birthweight is defined as infants weighing less than 2,500 grams, or 5.5 pounds, at birth.<sup>(118)</sup>

In 2020, low birthweight babies accounted for 6.9% of all births in Winnebago County, or 118 infants.<sup>(119)</sup>

Risk factors for low birth weight:<sup>(118)</sup>

- Infection during pregnancy
- Substance use
- African-American background
- Previous pregnancy with a low-birth-weight baby

# Health Outcomes

**Health Outcome** indicators show how well people live (quality of life) and how long people live on average within a community. Health outcomes are influenced by community conditions and health behaviors.<sup>(120)</sup>

## Quality of Life

Quality of Life represents the well-being of a community and emphasizes the importance of physical, mental, social and emotional health from birth to adulthood. Quality of life data communicates how people perceive their health, whether they feel healthy and satisfied. It is important to understand the perceived physical and mental health of a community so patterns can be identified and inequities between groups of people can be addressed. Data can also help identify risk factors and policies that address those risk factors.<sup>(119)</sup>

	Winnebago County	Wisconsin	United States
Adults that consider their own health as poor or fair	12%	12%	12%
Number of poor physical health days during previous 30 days	3.2	3.2	3.0
Number of poor mental health days during previous 30 days	4.3	4.4	4.4

Source: County Health Rankings 2023 (121)

## Community Conditions Can Cause Poor Health

Once ignored or regarded only as secondary influences on health and disease, community conditions are now accepted as a fundamental cause of illness, including both communicable and chronic diseases.<sup>(122)</sup>

Good health or poor health is the result of a complex interplay of economic, educational, social, racial, and environmental factors. To improve health outcomes, communities must look to the conditions that cause the most harm.



# Health Outcomes

## Communicable Disease

Communicable diseases are contagious and can be transmitted from one person, animal, or other source to another through various means. These diseases are caused by infectious agents such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites, or prions and can spread through direct or indirect contact, airborne particles, contaminated food or water, or vector organisms like insects.<sup>(123)</sup>

Preventing communicable disease involves a combination of personal hygiene practices, vaccination, public health measures, and community cooperation. Prevention is a shared responsibility that involves individual actions as well as collective efforts within communities and across nations that protect individuals and entire populations.

### Top reported communicable diseases in 2020-2022 <sup>(124)</sup>

#### Winnebago County

1. COVID-19
2. Chlamydia
3. Gonorrhea
4. Influenza
5. Hepatitis C

#### Wisconsin

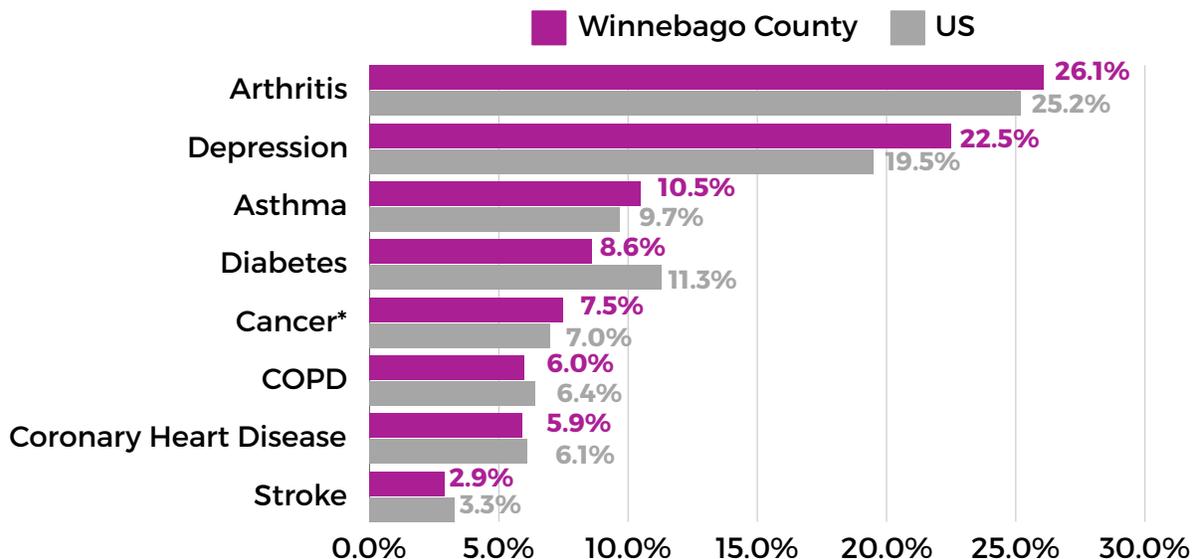
1. COVID-19
2. Chlamydia
3. Gonorrhea
4. Lyme Disease
5. Influenza



## Chronic Disease

Chronic diseases are defined broadly as conditions that last one year or more and require ongoing medical attention or limit activities of daily living or both.<sup>(125)</sup>

### The pattern of chronic disease in Winnebago County is similar to the US



Source: CDC Places (126)

\*Living with cancer, excluding skin cancer

# Health Outcomes

## Length of Life

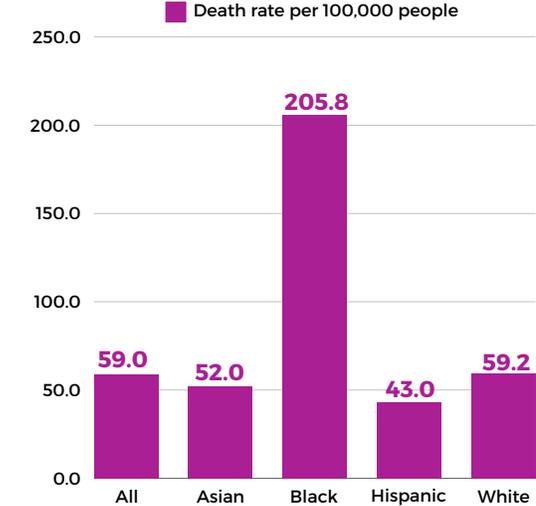
Length of life is the time between birth and death. Investigating length of life among population groups can explain differences in health outcomes and life expectancy.<sup>(110)</sup> There are stark racial disparities in premature death rates in Winnebago County, specifically among the Black population.

### Premature Death in Winnebago County

**Leading causes of death under age 75 in Winnebago County 2018-2020** <sup>(110)</sup>

	Number of Deaths
Cancer	506
Heart Disease	257
Accidents	156
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	91
Intentional self-harm	76

**Heart disease death rate by race/ethnicity for Winnebago County residents aged 35-64**



Source: CDC Heart Disease Dashboard (127)

### Impact of Community Conditions

Most chronic diseases are considered preventable by adopting a healthy lifestyle. However, research shows people with greater income, more educational attainment, and more resources have higher chances of surviving preventable causes of death, such as chronic diseases. These resources were not considered protective if the cause of death was less preventable. Resources consisting of money, knowledge, power, prestige, and social connections are vital to longevity. People without these resources have poor health outcomes and earlier death.<sup>(122)</sup>



**Community focus group theme:** People are having to choose between buying food for their family or addressing their health care needs.

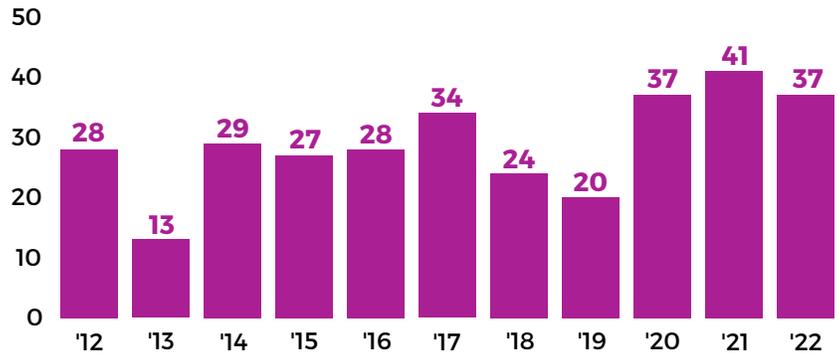
# Health Outcomes

## Causes of Death

### Drug Overdose Deaths

An increase in fatal and non-fatal overdoses has been attributed to drugs laced with fentanyl (including methamphetamine, cocaine, pressed pills, and heroin). Fentanyl was responsible for 24 of the 37 (65%) overdose deaths in 2022. With the right community support and resources, overdose deaths are preventable.<sup>(128)</sup>

**In 2022, there were 37 overdose deaths in Winnebago County.**



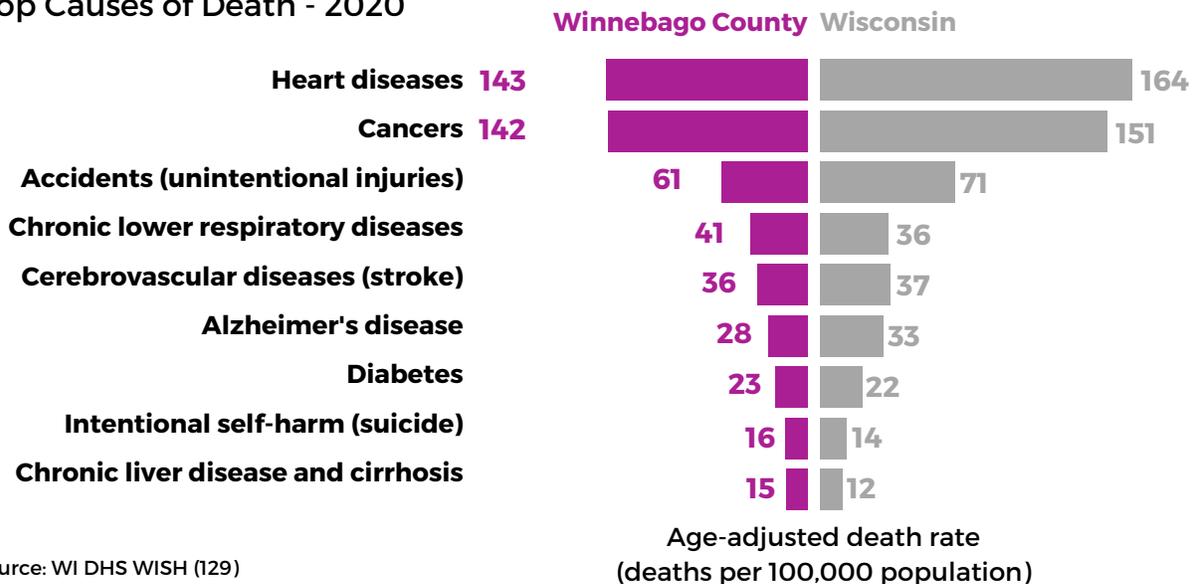
Source: Winnebago County Overdose Fatality Review Annual Report (128)

From 2018-2022, Neenah and Oshkosh had higher overdose death rates (119 deaths per 100,000 and 118 deaths per 100,000, respectively) than the county as a whole (91 deaths per 100,000).<sup>(128)</sup>

### Top Causes of Deaths

In 2020, the majority of deaths in Winnebago County were a result of heart diseases and cancers.

#### Top Causes of Death - 2020



Source: WI DHS WISH (129)

# Where Do We Go From Here?

## Invest in Our Community

### 4 Considerations to Improve Health and Well-Being for All <sup>(130)</sup>

#### What Know What Affects Health



**70%**

of health outcomes are determined by community conditions

#### Who Collaborate to Maximize Efforts



Source: CDC Community Health Improvement Navigator (130)

#### Where Focus on Areas of Greatest Need

There are widely varying experiences in the community. This report has identified profound disparities, specifically among:

- People with low income
- People of color
- People previously incarcerated
- People who identify as LGBTQ+



#### How Use Multiple Strategies that Impact Community Conditions

- Plan and implement collective action to create positive ripple effects
- Connect with public health to get involved in next steps



# Winnebago County CHA Advisory Team

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Karl Buelow	Day By Day Shelter
Kristal Coats	Ascension
Jennifer Considine	UW Oshkosh Communication Dept
Rev. Amy Engebose	St. Paul Lutheran Church, Neenah
MaryCarmen Fabian	Reach Counseling
William Green	Fox Valley Technical College
Brian Harbison	Fox Crossing Fire Department
Kevin Kropp	UW Oshkosh Intern
Angie Lee	City of Oshkosh, DEI Committee
Katie Olson	ESTHER

Ryan Rasmussen	Oshkosh Area Community Pantry
Traci Raymond	ThedaCare Rural Health Initiative
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Madeline Breager Danielle Florence Susan Garcia Franz Heidi Keating Sarahjean Schluechtermann	Winnebago County Public Health Staff
<p>Additional contributions by staff from the following organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Menasha Health Department</li> <li>• Oshkosh Area School District</li> <li>• Oshkosh United Way</li> <li>• UW-Extension Winnebago County</li> <li>• Winnebago County Supervisors</li> </ul>	

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all Winnebago County Community Health Advisory Team members.



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# Appendix - Methods

<p>June-July 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach to community partners to form the community health assessment advisory team, inclusive of populations disproportionately impacted</li> <li>• First meeting with the advisory team, level setting to understand the purpose and process of the CHA</li> <li>• Develop and review charter and agree on process for community health assessment: County Health Rankings Take Action Cycle with a focus on social determinants of health model from Healthy People 2030</li> </ul>
<p>Aug-Dec 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held monthly advisory team meetings covering the following topics and issues:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Provide guidance on County Health Rankings data</li> <li>◦ Discuss Winnebago County data that stood out, how we compared to other counties</li> <li>◦ Public health staff gathered and shared additional secondary data from various sources</li> <li>◦ Discussion around who is disproportionately impacted in our community</li> <li>◦ Discussion around most important indicators and what data is missing</li> <li>◦ Discussion and feedback around narrative and plain language for community to understand the assessment report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Jan-April 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created and shared preliminary draft on social determinants of health indicators and narrative with advisory team</li> <li>• With advisory team, planned primary data collection; focus groups, and who to prioritize hearing from</li> <li>• Develop focus group process with ESTHER and focus group questions             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Public health grant funding shared with ESTHER</li> <li>◦ Funding included incentives for focus group participants</li> <li>◦ Identified advisory team members to facilitate focus groups with specific populations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>May-June 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public health staff and advisory team members conducted focus group sessions to hear from disproportionately impacted populations in Winnebago County</li> <li>• Analyzed focus group data and determined themes</li> <li>• Incorporated focus group themes into CHA report</li> </ul>
<p>July-Sept 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met with advisory team to share results from primary data collection and feedback on narrative</li> <li>• Incorporate advisory team feedback</li> </ul>
<p>Oct 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met with advisory team to share final draft of the completed CHA</li> <li>• Discussed next steps with determining priorities and CHIP</li> </ul>
<p>Nov 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final edits to the CHA</li> <li>• Started drafting CHA summary</li> </ul>
<p>Dec 2023-Feb 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published Community Health Assessment</li> <li>• Shared Community Health Assessment with the community</li> </ul>