

Prosperous

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

Opportunities for Action

For Individuals

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

For Organizations

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

For the Community

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

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Successes & Progress

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

Call to Action

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

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

Why is this Important?

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

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

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

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

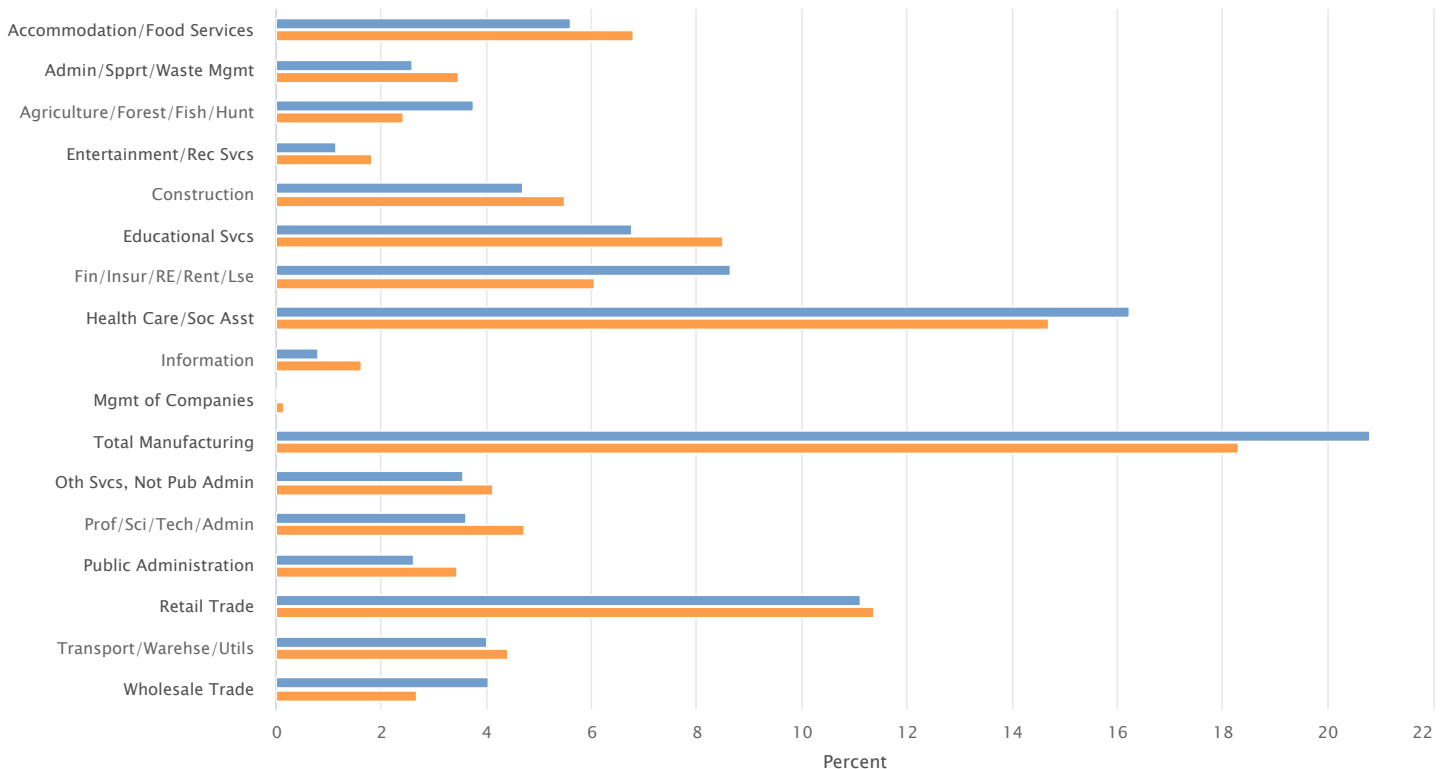
Key Takeaways

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

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

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

Employed Civilian 16+ by Industry



Why is this Important?

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

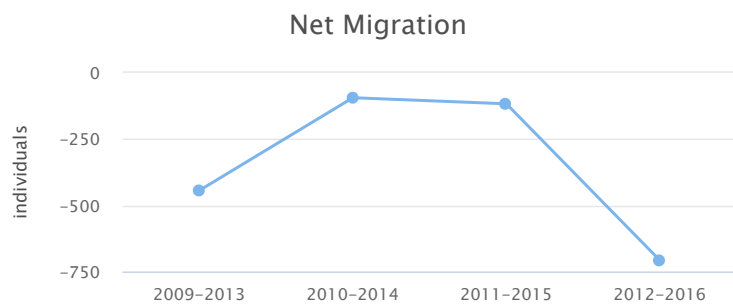
During the same period, Marathon County lost a net total of over 900 residents to Dane, Brown, and Winnebago counties in Wisconsin and to Ramsey and Hennepin counties in Minnesota. Marathon County is losing younger, higher educated professionals to larger urban areas with more employment opportunities.

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

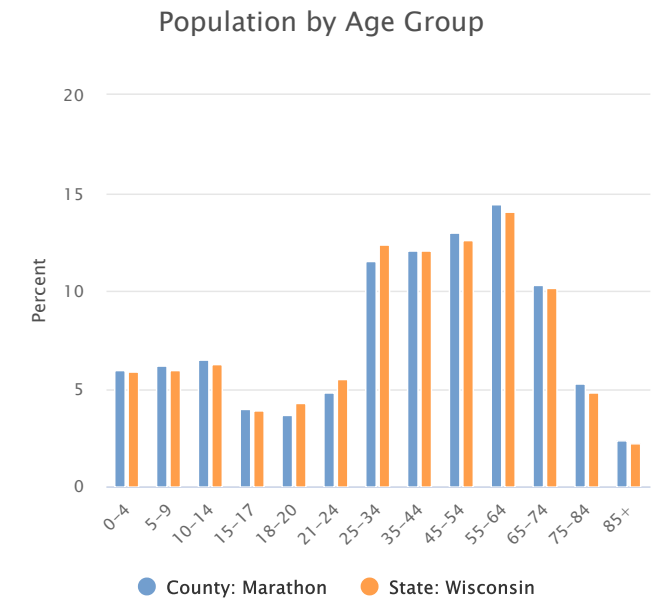
Key Takeaways

- Marathon County has gained new residents from surrounding rural counties but has **lost residents to larger urban areas** in the Midwest.
- Population growth** in Marathon County has slowed near a standstill.
- Marathon County continues to lose population, especially young adults and working age population.

More people are moving away from Marathon County.



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



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

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



Why is this Important?

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

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

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

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

Key Takeaways

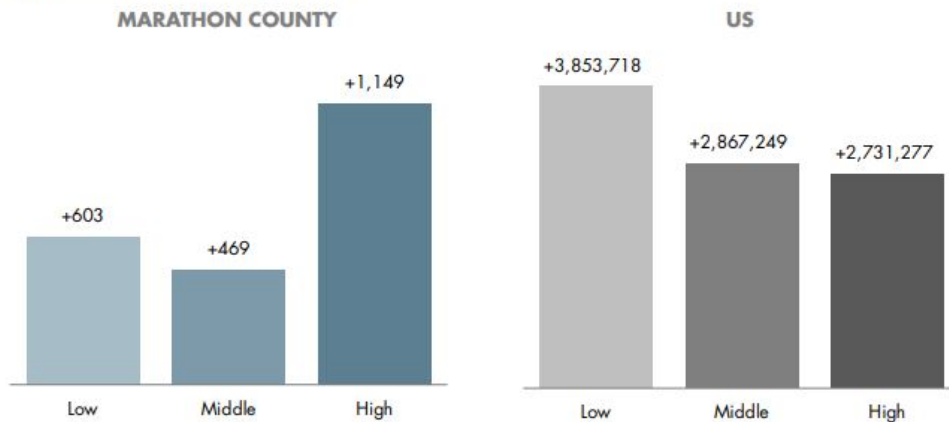
More employers are investing in on-the-job training or apprenticeships, which is beneficial to attracting and attaining a strong workforce.

Entrepreneurship, innovation, and the adoption of new technologies are all critical ingredients for the growth of local and regional economies.

Developing consistent pipelines from K-12 to higher education to employment is pivotal for future workforce development.

Marathon County needs more high skilled jobs.

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



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

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

Why is this Important?

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

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

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

Key Takeaways

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

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

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

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

Unemployed Workers in Civilian Labor Force

2.4%

(October 2019)



WI Counties



WI Value
(2.8%)



Prior Value
(2.5%)



U.S. Counties

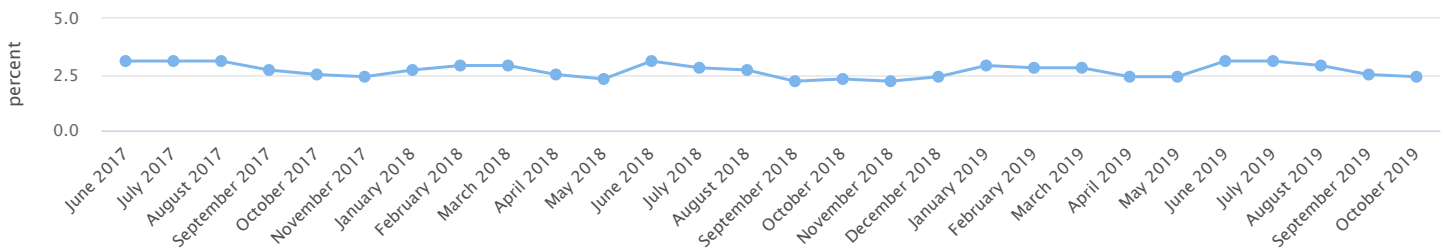


US Value
(3.3%)

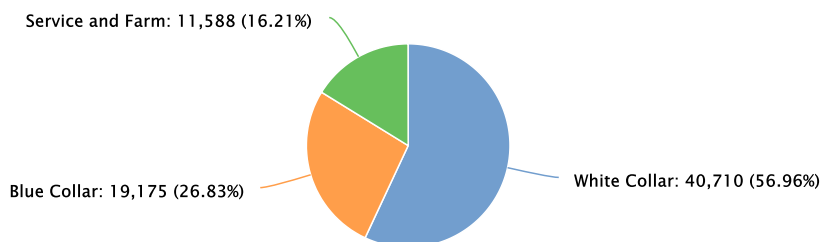


Trend

Unemployed Workers in Civilian Labor Force



Employed Civilian 16+ by Occupation Group



Why is this Important?

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

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

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

Key Takeaways

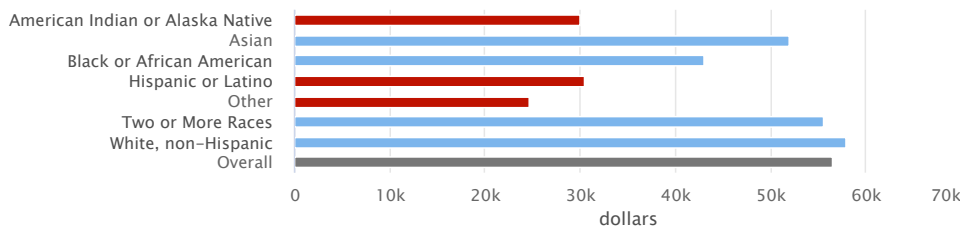
Marathon County's **median household income** continues to be lower than Wisconsin and the U.S.

Marathon County has **moderate wage levels**, often falling below national wage rates for many occupations.

Although **women's earnings in Marathon County** are higher than Wisconsin and the U.S., they are still less than 75% of men's earnings.

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

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



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

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

Per Capita Income

\$30,151
(2013-2017)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(\$30,557)



US Value
(\$31,177)



Prior Value
(\$28,773)



Trend

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

Median Household Income

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

Why is this Important?

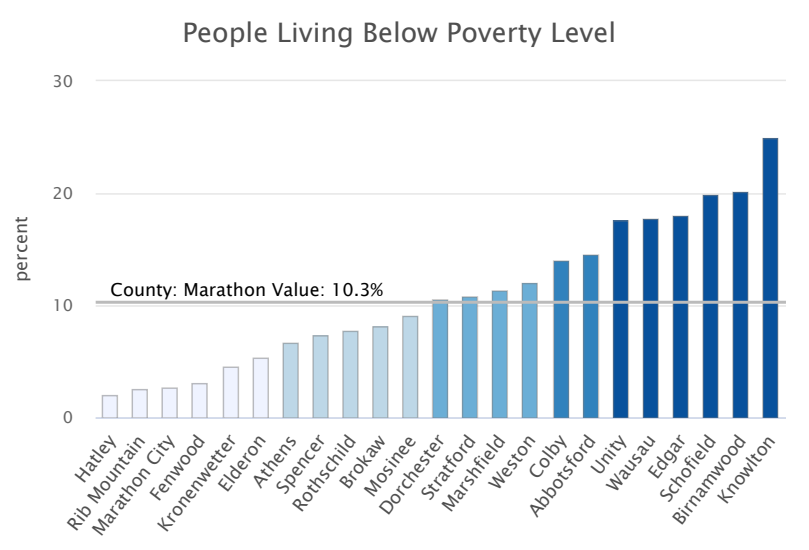
Social and economic factors are drivers of the conditions in which people live, learn, work, and play. Factors such as employment, community safety, income, housing, transportation, educational attainment, social support, and discrimination **account for roughly 40% of a person's overall health & wellbeing.**

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

Key Takeaways

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

Poverty varies greatly across Marathon County.



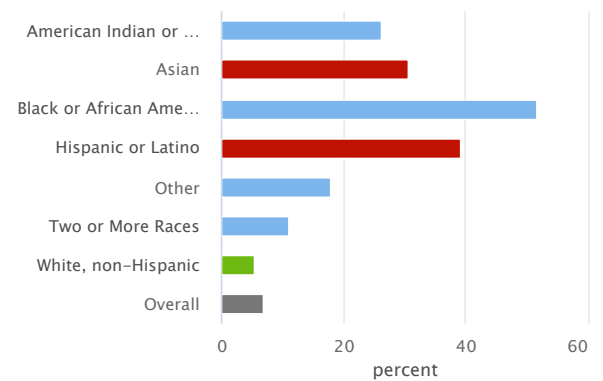
People Living Below Poverty Level

10.3%
(2013-2017)

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

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

Families Living Below Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity



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

Children Living Below Poverty Level

14.8%
(2013-2017)

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

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

Why is this Important?

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

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

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

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

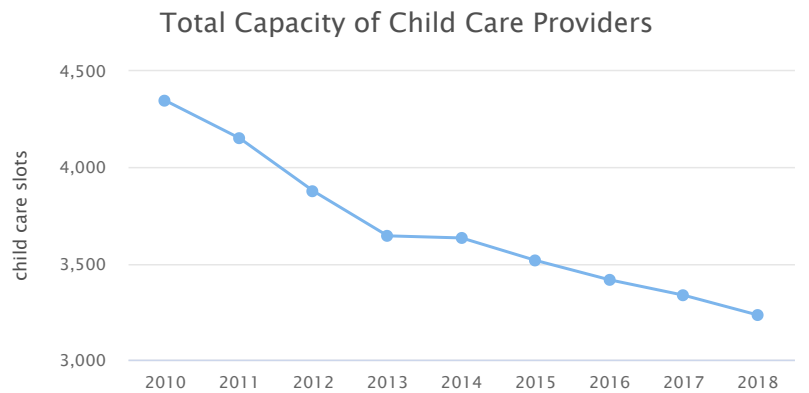
Key Takeaways

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

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

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

The number of child care openings decreasing rapidly.



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

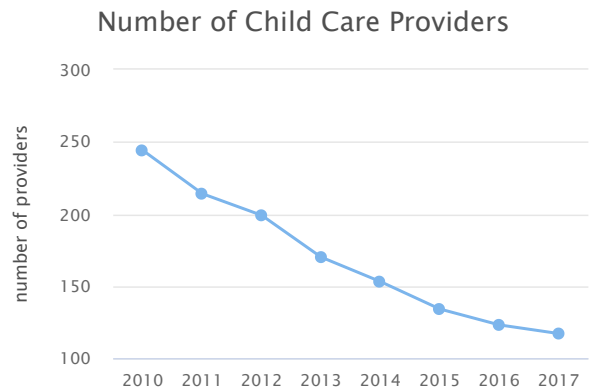
Total Capacity of Child Care Providers

3,232
Child care slots

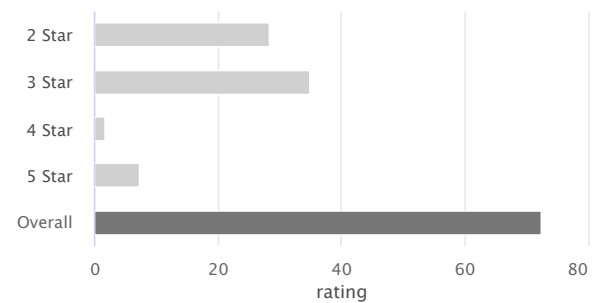
Prior Value: 4,355
Trend: Downward arrow icon

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

Regulated child care providers have decreased significantly.



YoungStar Ratings in Marathon County by YoungStar Rating



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

Why is this Important?

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

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

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

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

Key Takeaways

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

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

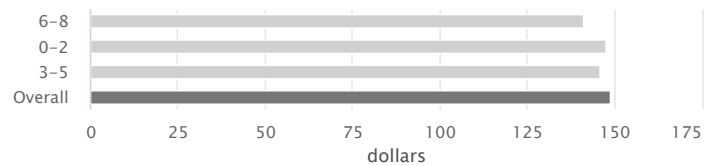
Child care professionals with an associate or bachelor degree make less than a typical factory worker whose job may not require higher education.

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

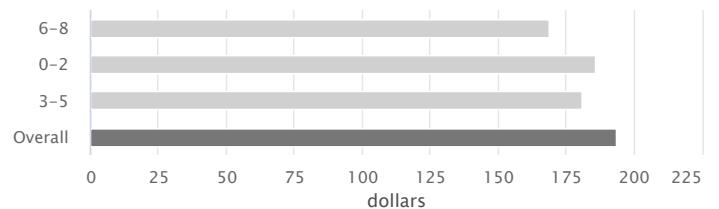
Generated by www.healthymarathoncountypulse.org/ on January 6, 2020.

Infant care continues to be the most expensive.

Average Weekly Rate for Family Child Care by Age



Average Weekly Rate for Group Child Care by Age



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

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

Why is this Important?

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

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

Key Takeaways

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

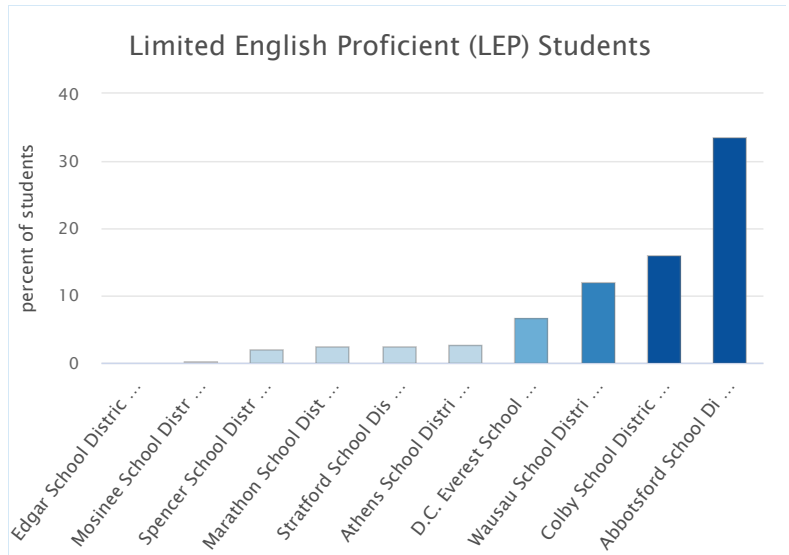
School district enrollment by Race/Ethnicity varies greatly throughout Marathon County.

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

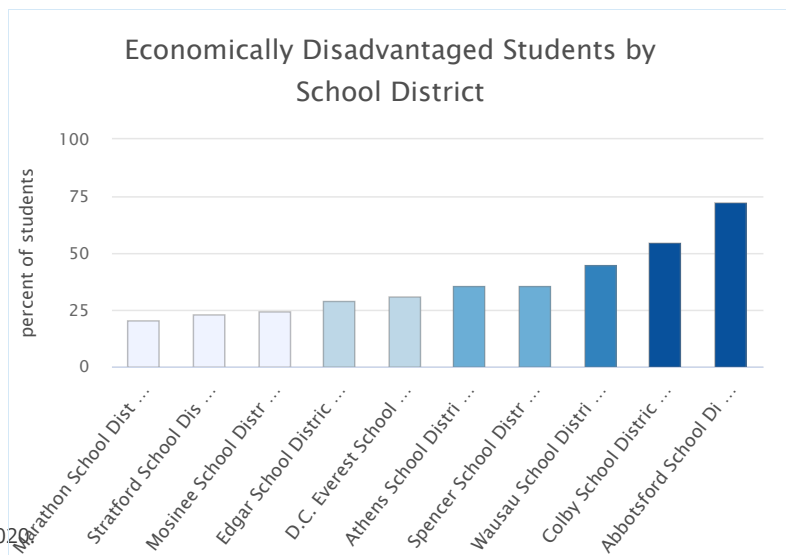
Marathon County School District Enrollment

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

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



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



Why is this Important?

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

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

Key Takeaways

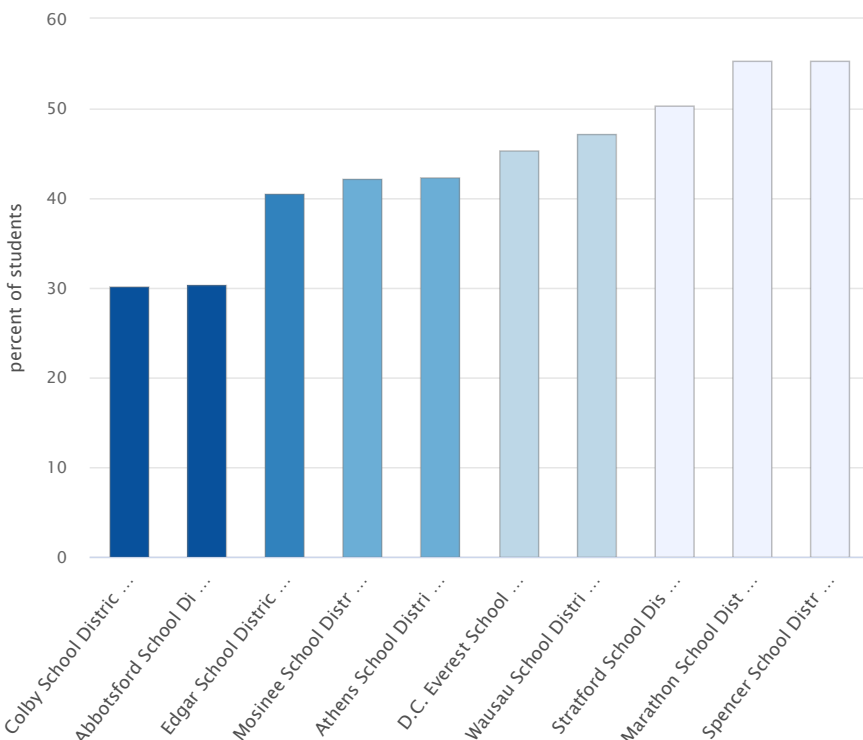
The percentage of Marathon County students scoring **Proficient and Advanced on the Forward Exams** was 43.9%.

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

Wisconsin Forward Exam State Average
42.2%

Marathon County Forward Exam Average
43.9%

Wisconsin Forward Exam Proficiency



ACT Average Score for Wisconsin
19.7

ACT Average Score for Marathon County
19.9

ACT Average Score by School District

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

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

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

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

Why is this Important?

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

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

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

Key Takeaways

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

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

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

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

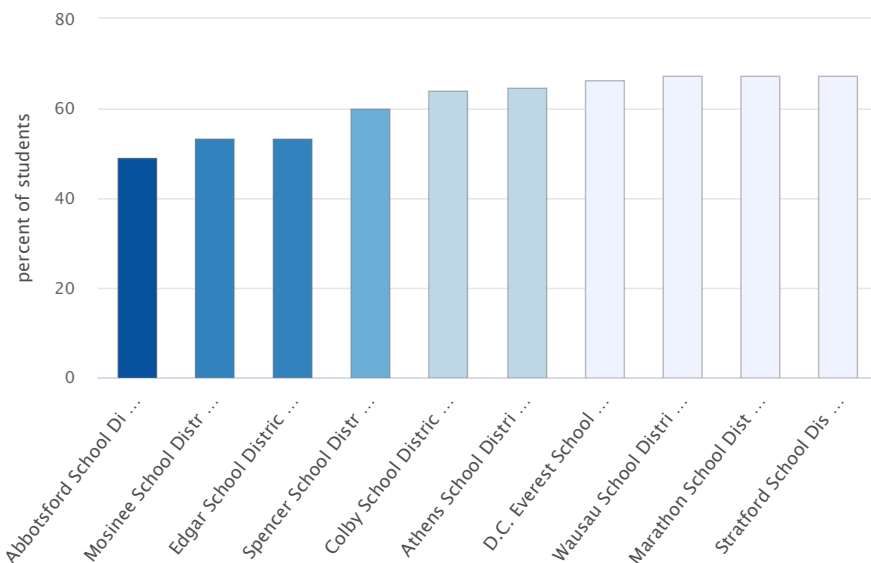
Marathon County High School Graduation Rate
92.3%

Wisconsin High School Graduation Rate
89.6%

High School Graduation Rate

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

Post-Secondary Institution Enrollment



Post-secondary institution enrollment is the percentage of high school completers (graduates) that enrolled in post-secondary institutions including public/private, two-year or four-year colleges and training programs. Data as of January 6, 2020.

Why is this Important?

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

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

Key Takeaways

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

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

People 25+ with a High School Degree or Higher

91.8%
(2013-2017)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(91.7%)



US Value
(87.3%)

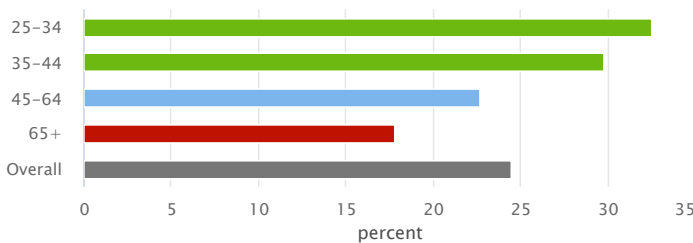


Prior Value
(91.1%)



Trend

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



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

People 25+ with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

24.5%
(2013-2017)



WI Counties



U.S. Counties



WI Value
(29.0%)



US Value
(30.9%)

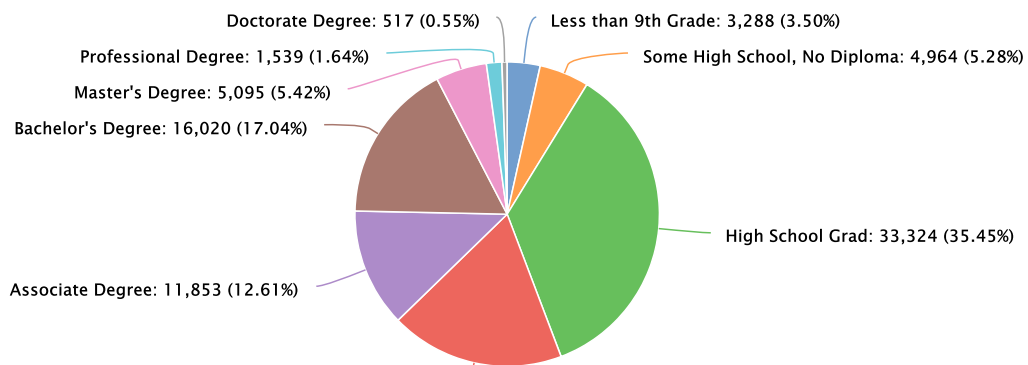


Prior Value
(23.9%)



Trend

Population 25+ by Educational Attainment



ENERGY CONSERVATION & GENERATION

Indicator 14

Why is this Important?

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

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

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

Key Takeaways

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

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

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

Number of Residents Receiving Focus on Energy Incentives

3,884

Number of Residents
(2018)



Prior Value
(4,019)



Trend

Number of Residents Receiving Focus on Energy Incentives



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

Energy Bill Savings for Focus on Energy Participants

\$55

(2018)

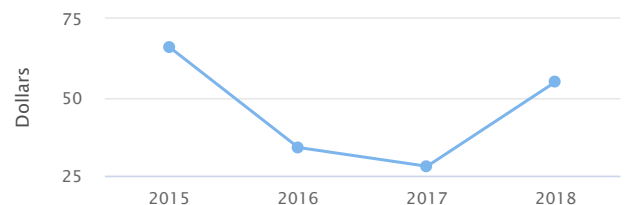


Prior Value
(\$28)



Trend

Energy Bill Savings for Focus on Energy Participants



Types of Fuel Used in Electricity Generation in Marathon County

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