Local Report

A community assessment for Brown County, Wisconsin

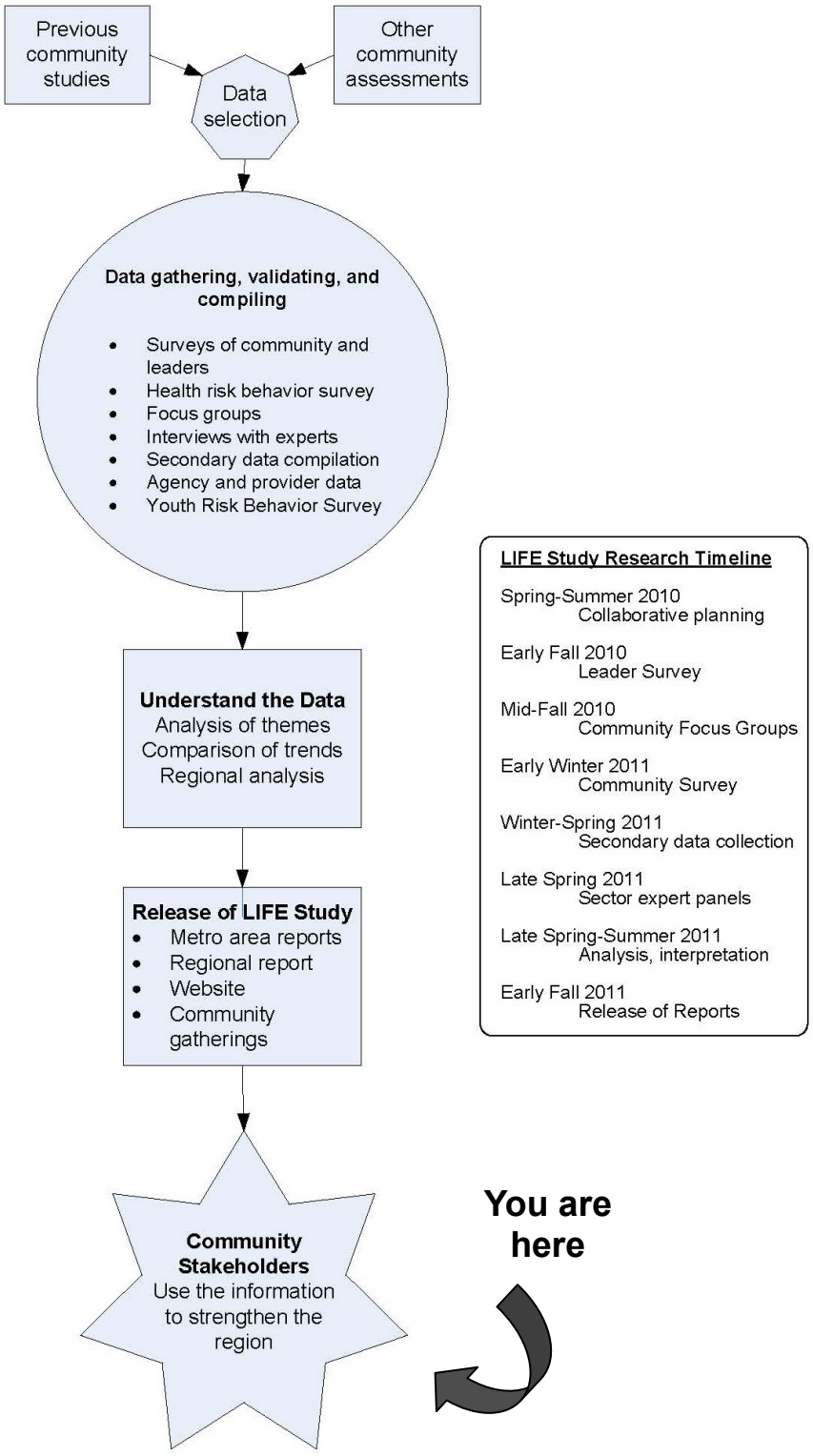
2011

LIFEstudy

Leading Indicators For Excellence | Brown County

www.lifestudy.info

2011 LIFE Study Process



LIFE Study Research Timeline

Spring-Summer 2010
Collaborative planning

Early Fall 2010
Leader Survey

Mid-Fall 2010
Community Focus Groups

Early Winter 2011
Community Survey

Winter-Spring 2011
Secondary data collection

Late Spring 2011
Sector expert panels

Late Spring-Summer 2011
Analysis, interpretation

Early Fall 2011
Release of Reports

LIFEstudy
Leading Indicators For Excellence | Brown County

Purpose and Opportunity

The purpose of the 2011 Brown County LIFE (Leading Indicators for Excellence) Study is to spark leaders and community members to take action based on an accurate understanding of the community's strengths and shortcomings across a variety of sectors.

The sponsors of the 2011 Brown County LIFE Study, the Brown County United Way, the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, and the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, want to help the community learn more about key issues it faces based on a foundation of solid research and information. The LIFE Study has identified important data reflecting ten sectors of the community and has obtained reliable numerical and perceptual data about those ten sectors.

The 2011 Brown County LIFE Study does not provide in-depth information about any one issue, rather it paints a broad picture of the community from different angles. It highlights important issues that demand further investigation in order to learn more about its cause or impact. The information provided does not inventory every organization that may impact an issue, but selects key organizations at work in the community.

This effort is in some ways unique and in other ways an 'evolution' and extension of earlier needs assessments and efforts to measure the quality of life of our community (e.g. Brown County Quality of Life Surveys 2007 and prior years; 2001 Benchmark Study). The 2011 Brown County LIFE Study includes broader economic and environmental indicators than past efforts in order to expand the usefulness of the information reflecting interwoven socio-economic sectors of life in the region.

In addition to this study about Brown County, our community has joined forces with nearby metropolitan areas to study the quality of life in Northeast Wisconsin. Through simultaneous LIFE Studies in Brown and Winnebago Counties and the Fox Cities, the process has brought together numerous stakeholders from throughout the area. The process of discussing quality of life regionally has created new relationships with the potential for future collaboration and building on new ideas.

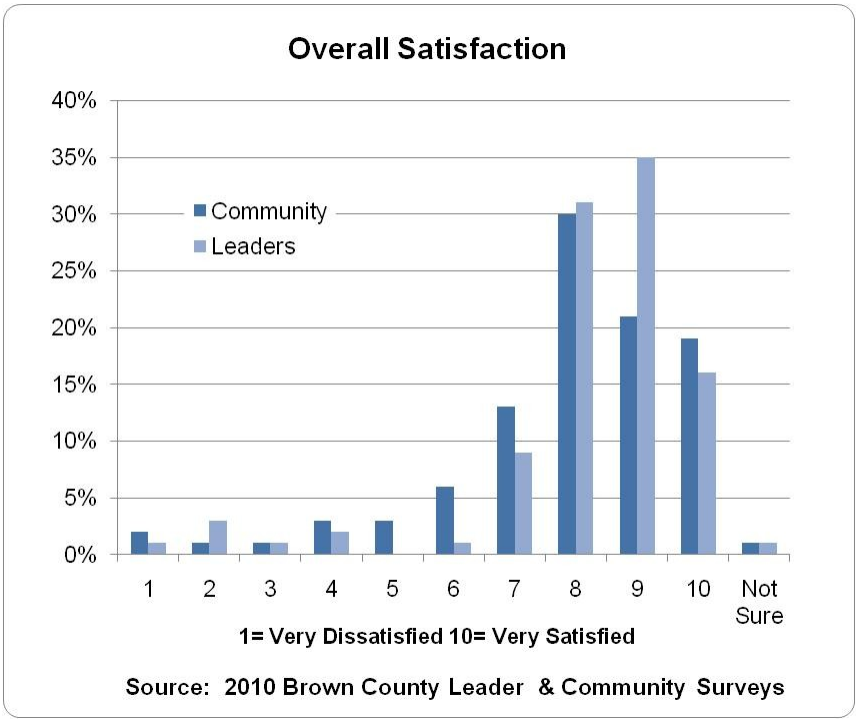
The LIFE Study provides information but not solutions: the sponsors have purposely refrained from prescribing solutions or recommendations to issues presented here. However, the research team has identified Leading Indicators to help the community measure progress. Now, it's up to the people who live in the area to use this information to impact the quality of life for all who live, work, and play here.

Further information and complete report available at www.lifestudy.info

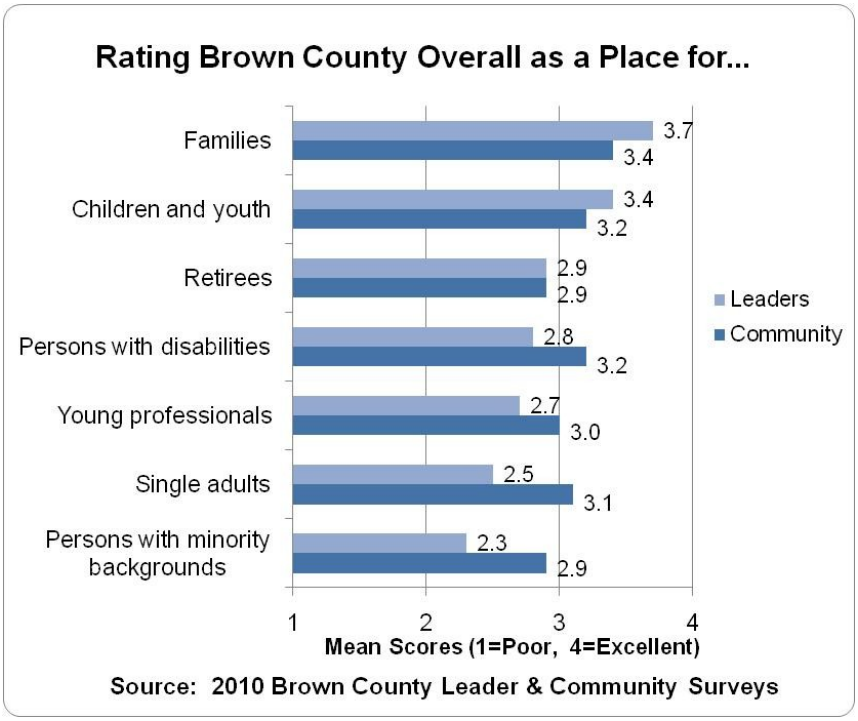
Overall Satisfaction with the Quality of Life

On separate surveys, we asked community members and leaders,

"Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of life in Brown County?"



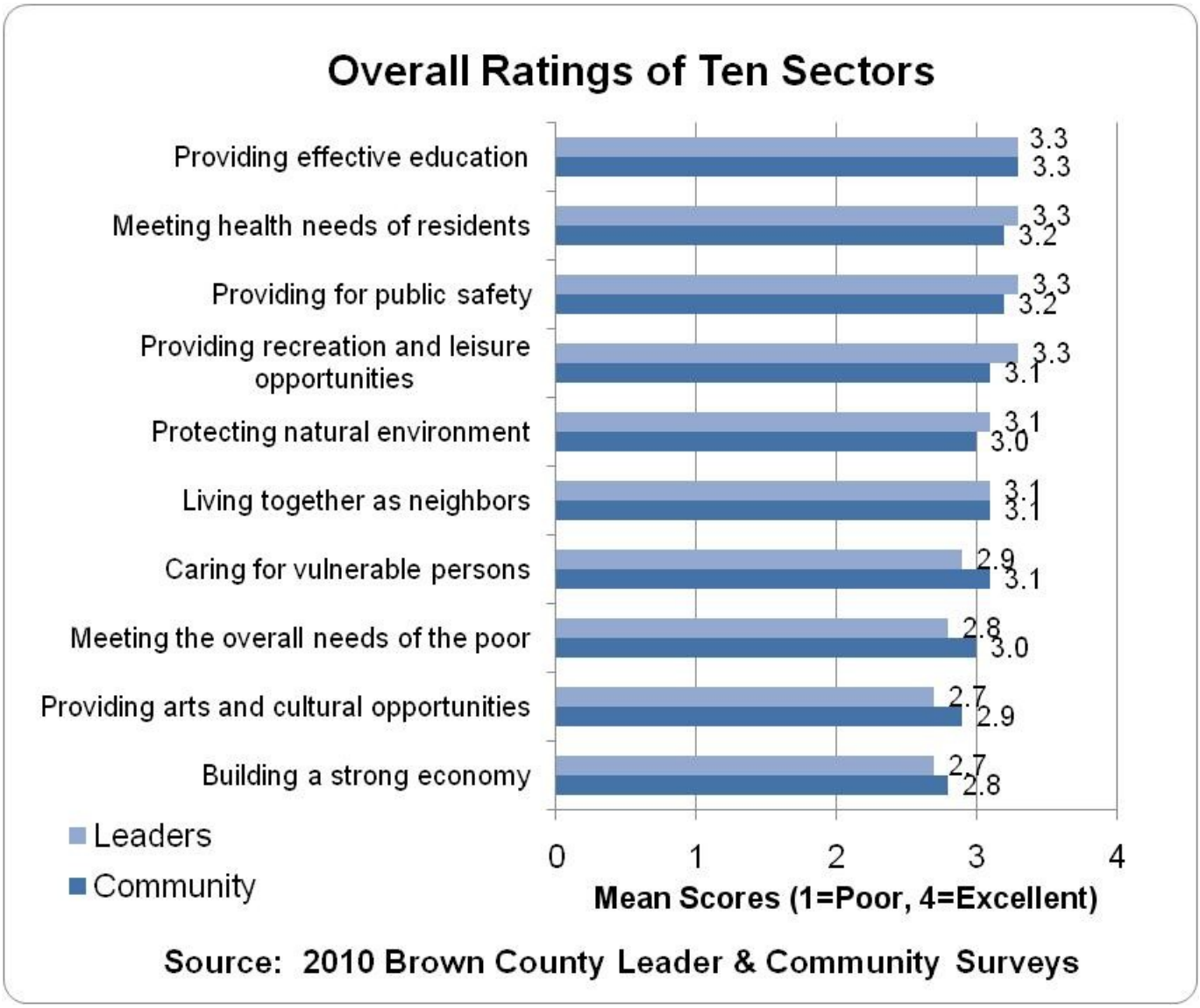
"Thinking about Brown County overall, how would you rate Brown County…"



Overall Ratings

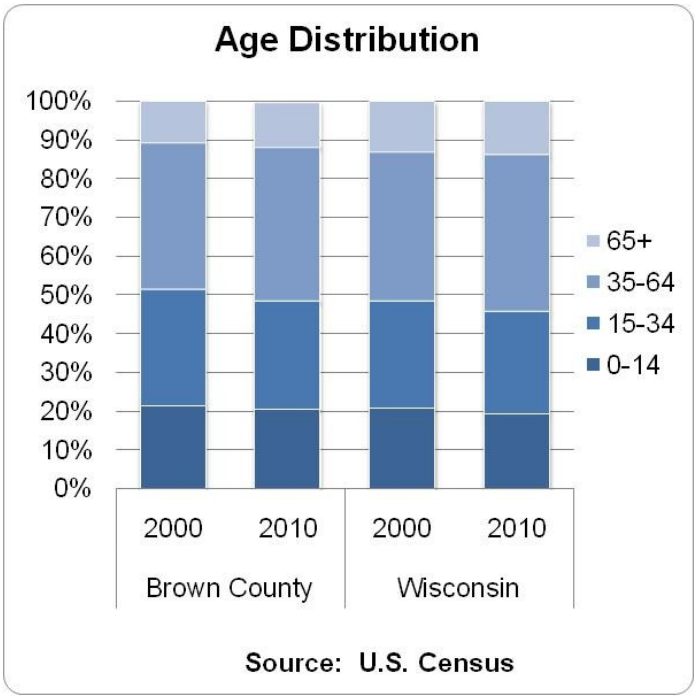
On separate surveys, we asked community members and leaders,

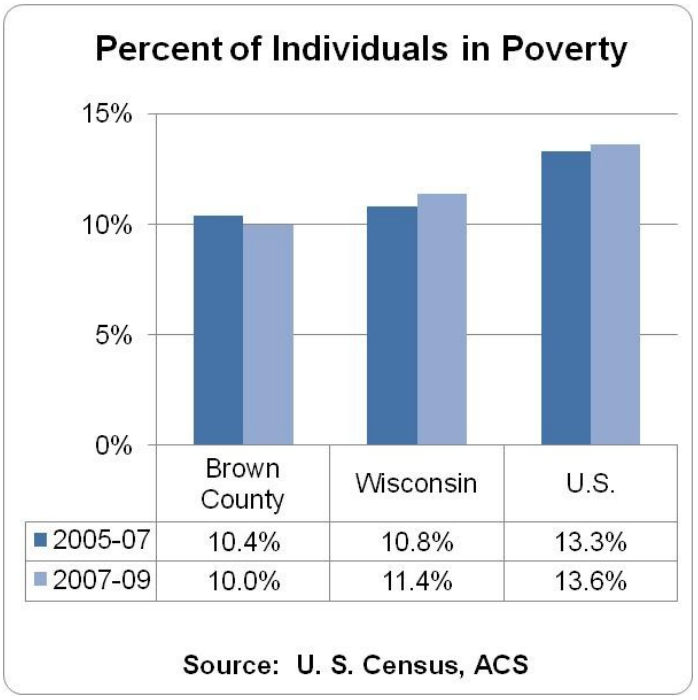
"In terms of the following aspects of life in Brown County, how would you rate the Brown County area?"



Source: 2010 Brown County Leader & Community Surveys

Selected Demographics of Brown County





Demographic Profile, 2000-2010							
	Brown County Population					United States	
	2000	% 2000	2010	% 2010	% change '00-'10	% 2000	% 2010
White	206,623	91.2%	214,415	86.5%	3.8%	75.1%	72.4%
African American	2,595	1.1%	5,491	2.2%	111.6%	12.3%	12.6%
American Indian	5,186	2.3%	6,715	2.7%	29.5%	3.6%	0.9%
Asian	4,934	2.2%	6,724	2.7%	36.3%	3.6%	4.8%
Other	4,363	1.9%	9,259	3.7%	112.2%	5.6%	6.4%
Multi-racial	2,957	1.3%	5,403	2.2%	82.7%	2.4%	2.9%
Hispanic, all races	8,694	3.8%	17,985	7.3%	106.9%	13.0%	16.3%
Total	226,658		248,007		9.4%		
Source: U.S. Census							

A Snapshot of Key Findings

	Areas of Progress	Areas of Concern
LIFE of Arts & Culture	• Many appealing nonprofit venues • Outdoor music events • Participation by high school girls	• Affordability/interest for all residents • Maintain participation by all youth
LIFE in Our Community	• Community-wide events • Highly rated quality of life • Good place to raise a family • Downtown neighborhood groups	• Ensuring positive impact of diversity • Engaging new leaders • Civic involvement
A Healthy LIFE	• Efforts to promote healthy lifestyle among children/youth • Binge drinking has declined	• Obesity and lifestyle habits • Access to care (all types) • Need for healthy start for newborns • Environmental health • Alcohol, drug and tobacco abuse
LIFE at Home	• More getting prenatal care • Community collaborations	• Growing needs of older and disabled adults • Well-being and support of youth • High cost of childcare • Increasing births that are at-risk
LIFE of Learning	• Attendance by fifth graders • Achievement in math/science • Perceived quality of education • Library system valued	• Concerns about investing in future education • Performance of economically disadvantaged students
LIFE in our Natural Environment	• Water assets well recognized • Drinking water quality • Planning for outdoor recreation by municipalities	• Air and water quality trends • Environmental health determinants • Challenge of planning with frequent policy changes • Continued clean up of Fox River
LIFE of Recreation & Leisure	• Outdoor recreation opportunities • Tourism, events • Sports opportunities for spectators and participants	• Continued downtown development desired • Upkeep and continuing investment in community infrastructure
A Safe LIFE	• Decline in juvenile arrest rate • Quality of safety services/systems • Crime rates declining	• High rate of child abuse/neglect and sexual assault reports • Drug possession arrests increasing
LIFE of Self-Sufficiency	• Strong service organizations • Improving access to fresh food downtown • Collaboration around children in some area school districts	• More people burdened with housing costs • Homelessness increasing • More people struggling financially
LIFE at Work	• Lower cost of living than in the U.S. • Tourism sector growing • Diversified economy • Economic development initiatives	• Need for jobs with higher wages • Growing income gap • Retaining young professionals • Mismatch job and workforce skills • Public transportation funding at risk

Brown County Area Strengths

The strengths listed below arose repeatedly and from multiple sources. The 2011 Brown County LIFE Study included surveys, community focus groups, interviews with experts, and statistical data published by the state and others. We considered all data sources to look for convergence on the area's strengths.

Strengths	Broadly Recognized Aspects of Brown County
Quality of Education	• Variety of quality educational opportunities at all levels • Education system rated highly by leaders and community members • Achievement of students in K-12 • Higher education and lifelong learning opportunities (including library)
Tourism	• Variety of popular amenities for tourism
Outdoor Entertainment and Community Events	• Numerous successful, affordable events for the public • County-wide gathering places and events
Safety and Safety System	• Lower crime rates than state and national rates • Safety providers coordinate responses; new state of the art emergency call center • Emergency and safety services rated highly by community and leaders
Affordability	• Cost of living is lower than the national average
Nonprofit/Volunteer Sector	• Community has numerous strong nonprofit organizations that support basic needs and people with disabilities • Collaboration among providers • Philanthropy and philanthropic community initiatives • The community actively participates in volunteerism
Outdoor Recreation Opportunities	• Opportunities available all year round • Water resources especially valued by area residents • Parks, trails and municipal planning for these amenities
Place for Children and Families	• Safety, quality of schools, family oriented opportunities • Quality of life for families rated highly by leaders and community members • Initiatives for healthy lifestyles for children and youth • Support services in schools and neighborhoods for underprivileged children
Healthcare Services	• Meeting the health needs of the public is highly by leaders and community members
Economic Development Efforts	• Progress on development of downtowns and waterfront throughout the area • Collaborative efforts to spur economic development • Efforts within business development districts

Brown County LIFE Study Opportunities for Improvement

The areas for improvement listed below arose repeatedly and from multiple sources.

Opportunity Area	Broadly Recognized Aspects of Brown County
Access to Health Care	• Poor access to medical, dental, and mental health care for some, due to job loses and too few options for publicly insured individuals • Untreated mental illness is widely implicated as a cause of numerous other challenges
Unhealthy Lifestyles	• Obesity, use of alcohol, smoking rates are high and the cause of major health issues
Healthy Development of All Youth	• Risky behaviors, including alcohol, tobacco, and drug use • For those not going to college, better work and social skills needed
Transportation Options	• For those working later shifts, public transportation is often unavailable • Better and more certain funding strategies are needed for public transit • Concerns about paratransit • More trails with connections for commuting desired
Economy	• Need for economic development, good paying jobs, diversification • Focus needed on attracting and retaining young professionals • Need for closer alignment between education and workplace skills
Self-Sufficiency	• More individuals accessing shelters, pantries, and meals programs • More individuals homeless and receiving public assistance • Insufficient access to affordable housing throughout the area
Inclusiveness of Community	• Minority and lower-income families concentrated in downtown Green Bay • Public perceptions about the value of diversity have declined
Support for Children	• Child abuse and neglect rates have grown • High costs of childcare • At-risk births increasing
Water and Air Quality	• Inadequate control of nonpoint water pollution and better protection needed for a highly valued community asset • Air quality is still good, recent years show a decline
Political Efficacy /Civic Engagement	• Drop in confidence in elected leaders; growing percent of community members feel that they do not have a voice • Supervisor elections not contested; not enough young, female, and diverse leadership • Polarization among public officials preventing finding solutions
Preserving Education Quality	• Concerns by public and leadership about education quality • Certain achievement scores declining, especially among minority and low income students • Higher educational attainment rate needed
Needs of Elderly and People with Disabilities	• Growing proportion of older adults • Growing needs relative to transportation, housing, threat of isolation • Access to long term care; uncertainty of funding for long term care
Declining Funding for Arts and Culture	• Many nonprofit arts and culture venues report reduced revenues from several sources, especially donations • Need for collaborative marketing, increased visibility to raise awareness

Brown County Leading Indicators

A leading indicator is an important data point or "marker" that can provide measurement of progress related to a community condition. The 2011 LIFE Study has identified data that reflect key conditions in the community as "Leading Indicators." In some cases, leading indicators are a data point that might be predictive, or "leading" in that sense. In other cases, leading indicators contain information that is a significant (or leading) marker of progress in a category (or lack of progress). Each leading indicator must meet high standards: quality, availability, and understandability.

Leading indicators were chosen by reviewing the best practices of others that are measuring performance indicators. As we collected data for the study, certain items began to emerge as important measures of vital aspects of the community. Experts on each sector panel were asked for input about which data might be a strong marker of conditions within that sector. Based on all of these factors, the project team chose a final set of leading indicators listed below. Based on our data analysis and interpretation, we have assigned scores along two dimensions for leading indicators:

Current Status: How well is the community doing on this indicator compared to average rates or other location?

Good  Fair  Poor 

Trend: What is the trend showing? In which direction is the community heading in recent years?

Good  Fair  Poor 

A blank square signifies that we were unable to determine status or trend. 

Cross-Cutting

- Drug and Alcohol Related Hospitalization Rate
- Higher Educational Attainment of Adult Population
- Poverty Rate
- Unemployment Rate
- Teen Birth Rate

LIFE of Arts & Culture

- Annual Tickets Sold at Non-Profit Arts Organizations
- 6th -12th Grade Participation in the Arts by Gender
- Employment in Arts-Related Field

LIFE of Natural Environment

- Environmental Health Determinant Score, County Health Rankings
- Percent of Good Air Quality Days
- Miles of Impaired Surface Waters

LIFE in Our Community

- Voter Participation Rates
- Uncontested Seats in County Supervisor Elections
- Number of Neighborhood Organizations

LIFE of Recreation & Leisure

- Miles of Bike and Hiking Trails per 1,000
- Park Acreage per 1,000
- Total Estimated Annual Expenditures Made by Visitors

A Healthy LIFE

- County Health Outcome Rankings
- Child Poverty Rate
- Births to Mothers that Obtained Prenatal Care
- Psychiatric Hospitalizations per 1,000
- Obesity Rate

A Safe LIFE

- Rate of Child Abuse or Neglect Reports
- Juvenile Arrest Rate
- Rate of Reported Domestic Violence Incidents
- Violent and Property Crime Rates
- Alcohol-related Crashes and Deaths

LIFE at Home

- Annual Childcare Costs per Median Family Income
- Older Adult Poverty Rate
- Long-Term Care Waiting List
- Poverty Rate of Female-Headed Households with Children

LIFE of Self-Sufficiency

- Percent of Households that are Cost Burdened
- Number of FoodShare Recipients
- Free and Reduced Lunch Rates of Public Schools

LIFE of Learning

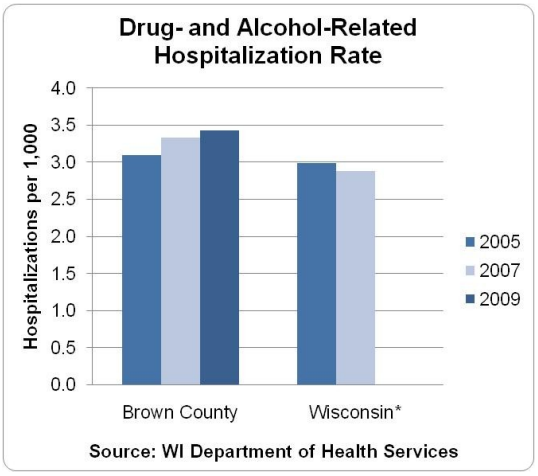
- Reading Proficiency of Third Grade Students
- Attendance Rates of Fifth Grade Students
- Math Achievement by Tenth Grade Students
- High School Graduation Rate
- Library Circulation per Capita

LIFE at Work

- Cost of Living Index
- Income Distribution
- Employment in Manufacturing Sector
- New Business Startups
- Dollar Value of Building Permits, Residential and Commercial

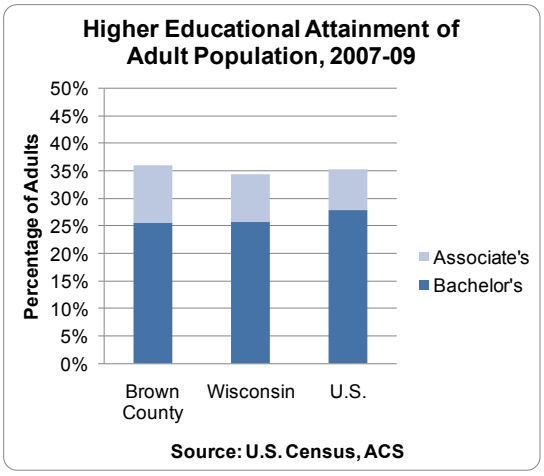
Brown County Cross-Cutting Indicators

Current Trend

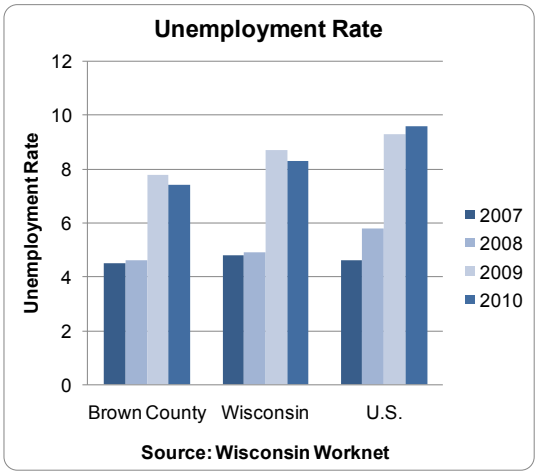


* Wisconsin 2009 rate not yet released

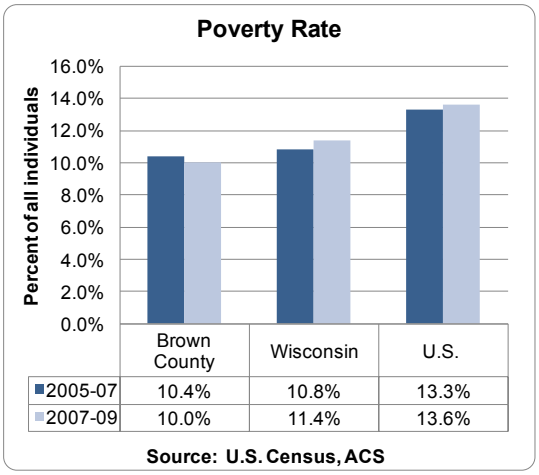
Current Trend



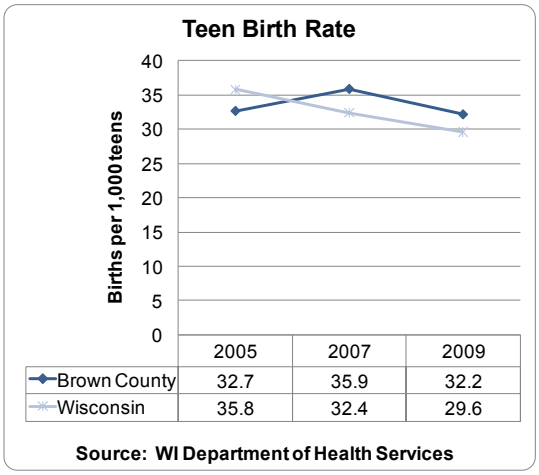
Current Trend



Current Trend



Current Trend



Key

Note: The indicators we call "cross cutting" have been chosen because they relate to numerous quality-of-life aspects of the community. The expert sector panels identified this as key data that, if the community could "bend the curve" on these items, it would drive improvements across many areas.

LIFE of Arts & Culture

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
		Annual tickets sold at select non-profit arts organizations
		6-12th grade participation in arts by gender
		Employment in art-related field

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community members of all types experience:

- Affordable opportunities to experience music, visual arts, performing arts and humanities as offered by vibrant arts organizations of all sizes and types
- Opportunities to develop their own creative and artistic skills
- Community events that bring residents together to enjoy the arts that are culturally rich and diverse
- A workforce rich with talented, creative, critically-thinking individuals
- Arts are viewed as integrated into the quality of life in the community, not as extra curricular activities

LIFE of Arts and Culture

Figure 1

Arts and Culture Organization Attendance, 2010			
	Avg. Price	Tickets Sold	Events Hosted
Green Bay Botanical Garden	$7	16,780 *	15
Green Bay Symphony	$28	7,940	4
Meyer Theater	$29	65,000	124
Neville Museum	$4	131,636	33
St. Norbert College Theater	$16	28,511	325
Weidner Center	$34	78,500	106

* general admission only - excludes special events, tours, groups, program attendees

Source: Supplied by organizations listed

Figure 2

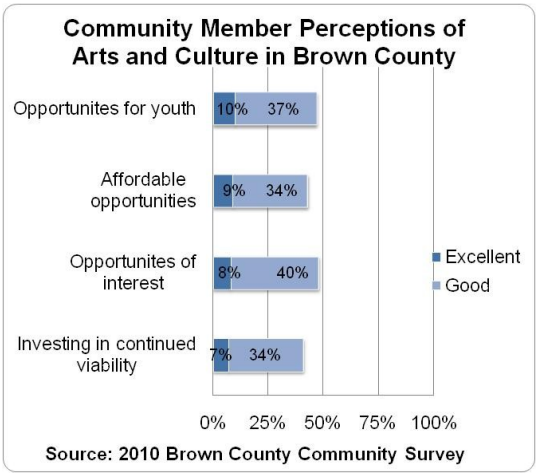


Figure 3

Percent of Youth Enrolling in Music & Art by Gender, 2009-2010 (6th-12th grades)				
	Music		Visual Art	
	F	M	F	M
Ashwaubenon	61%	52%	69%	48%
DePere	72%	42%	75%	62%
Denmark	98%	63%	61%	52%
Green Bay	41%	28%	42%	33%
Howard-Suamico	47%	40%	62%	56%
Pulaski	44%	33%	53%	39%
West DePere	61%	48%	83%	78%
Wrightstown	74%	56%	64%	55%

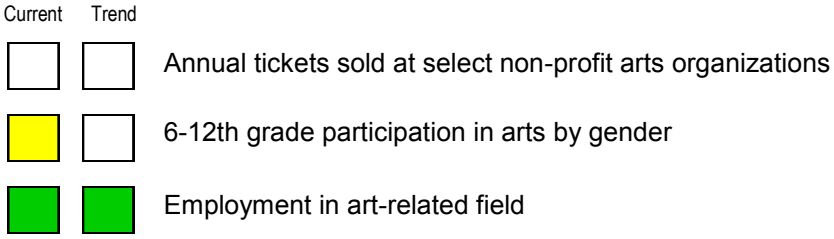
Source: WI Department of Public Instruction

The LIFE of Arts and Culture section includes non-profit providers of the performing and visual arts along with museums and cultural venues.

The Brown County area benefits from a wide variety of venues and attractions with varied pricing and strong attendance levels (Figure 1). In 2010, there were 65 registered nonprofit organizations in this sector in Brown County. The economic impact the arts have on the area can be seen through employment in the arts sector. Brown County experienced a 2% increase in persons employed in the arts sector between 2008 and 2010, while Wisconsin and U.S. experienced a 5% decrease during the same time.

Survey data and expert sector panel feedback show that there is strong community support for the arts (Figure 2). Community members gave good or excellent scores to opportunities for youth (47%); availability of affordable opportunities (43%); interesting opportunities (48%) and community investment in continued viability (41%).

Several area organizations reach many youth each year through arts and culture-related learning opportunities, including the Neville Museum and the Weidner Center. Youth enrollment in music and art classes varied across school districts in Brown County (Figure 3).



Experts in the sector panel on arts had concerns about the potential for reductions in arts opportunities for children in the future due to budget cuts. Youth participation in extracurricular music activities was less than 20% in all Brown County school districts but two. Expert sector panelists believed that while affordable options may be available for children, many families may not be aware of them.

Experts in the sector panel on arts stressed that arts organizations face the challenge of raising funds during a time when donors often choose to give to charities that provide for people's basic needs. A 2010 survey of Green Bay area nonprofits confirmed this sentiment, with no arts or culture nonprofits identifying themselves as financially healthy (Source: Greater Green Bay Community Foundation).

Seventy-six percent of community leaders ranked the arts as at least a "moderate" priority for the future of Brown County. Experts in the sector panel on arts shared that community awareness and appreciation for the value of arts seems to be growing in Brown County.

LIFE in our Community

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
		Voter participation rates in county elections
		Uncontested seats in County Supervisor elections
		Number of neighborhood organizations

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community leadership proactively makes decisions that are in the best interests of citizens in the long run. Citizens of all ages, religions, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, and income levels:

- Are valued members of the community
- Experience a sense of community and belonging
- Do not experience discrimination
- Have full access to services
- Are informed on community issues
- Have the opportunity to participate fully in community life through such opportunities as voting, volunteer work, leadership, and faith communities
- Experience a community infrastructure and amenities promoting a high quality of life

LIFE in Our Community

Brown County has high levels of volunteerism and philanthropy; leaders and the community have positive perceptions of the area's community events. The number of public charities registered in Brown County grew from 384 in 2008 to 484 in 2010, a 26% increase. At the same time, cumulative annual revenues they reported dropped by 4%. Combined estimated attendance at major community events in Green Bay was over 250,000, and there are approximately 75 free or inexpensive events held in the area each year.

By many measures, civic involvement is strong in the Brown County area. Based on voter turnout for the 2010 gubernatorial race, community members in Brown County vote at a higher rate than in Wisconsin overall (Figure 1). While the majority of leaders surveyed agreed that women take on leadership roles in the community, women were significantly underrepresented in elected positions based on the makeup of the Brown County Board of Supervisors. Additionally, elected officials often faced no opposition, with 16 of 26 of the Brown County Supervisor candidates unopposed in 2010. Among community members, only 43% believed that they had an impact on the decisions made by Brown County leaders (Figure 2).

Current	Trend	
		Voter participation rates in county elections
		Uncontested seats in County Supervisor elections
		Number of neighborhood organizations

Experts in many of the sector panels felt that the growing income gap is a concern as it relates to the self-sufficiency of residents. A related concern is the disproportionately high concentration of economically disadvantaged families within the City of Green Bay as compared to surrounding communities in Brown County.

Racial and ethnic diversity is also seen as an important issue in the Brown County area. The non-white population grew from 8% of the population in 2000 to 13.5% in 2010. Since 2002 (on past quality-of-life community surveys), perceptions of the impact of diversity in the community have become more negative (Figure 3). Members of our multicultural community focus group listed many positive quality-of-life features they experience in Brown County but felt that some area leaders expressed intolerant attitudes toward diversity and that the area could elect more diverse leadership.

A more promising indicator that may help to address these issues are the 35 active neighborhood associations in the City of Green Bay. The area must continue to address how to enhance the inclusiveness of the community.

Figure 1

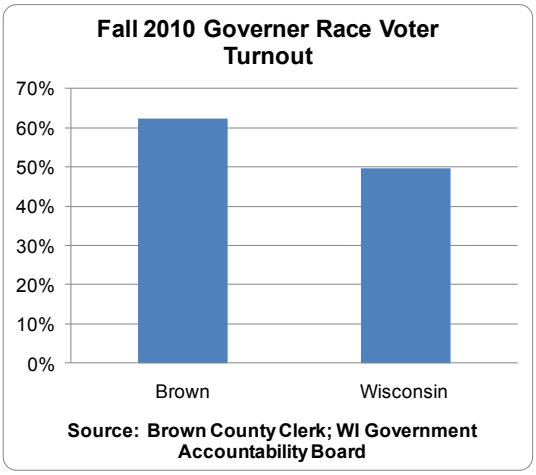


Figure 2

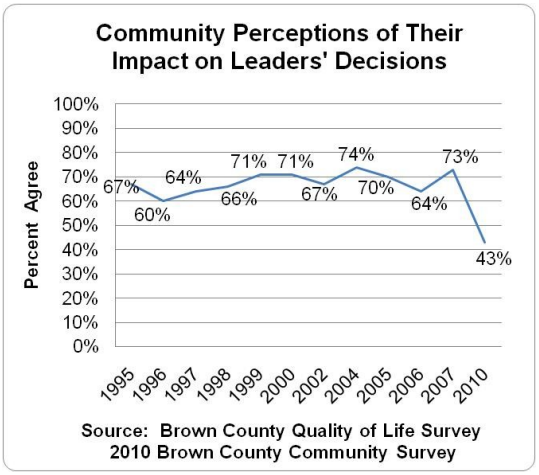
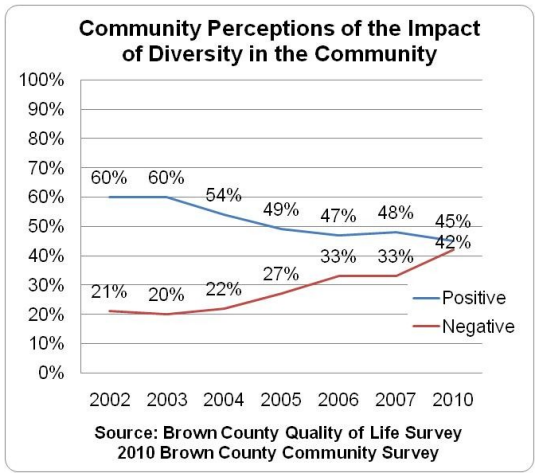


Figure 3



A Healthy LIFE

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
		County health outcome rankings
		Child poverty rate
		Births to mothers that obtained prenatal care
		Psychiatric hospitalizations per 1,000
		Obesity rate

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community members practice healthy lifestyles:

- Balanced diet
- Exercise routinely
- Engage in activities in support of good mental health
- Do not abuse tobacco, drugs & alcohol that are harmful
- Have routine health screenings such as blood pressure checks
- Have access to well prepared dental, mental, physical and medical providers

Figure 1

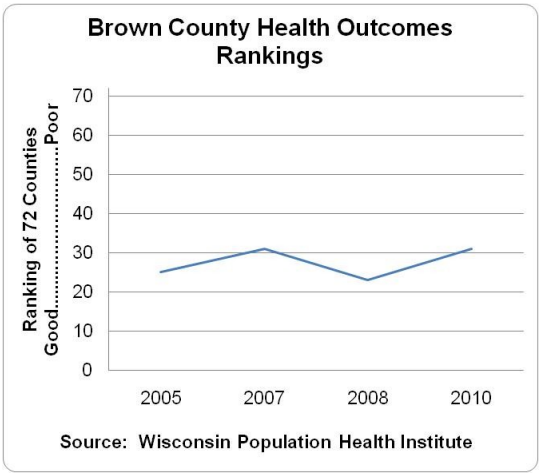
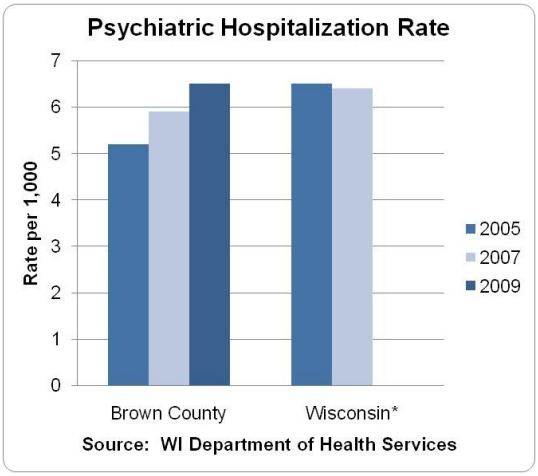
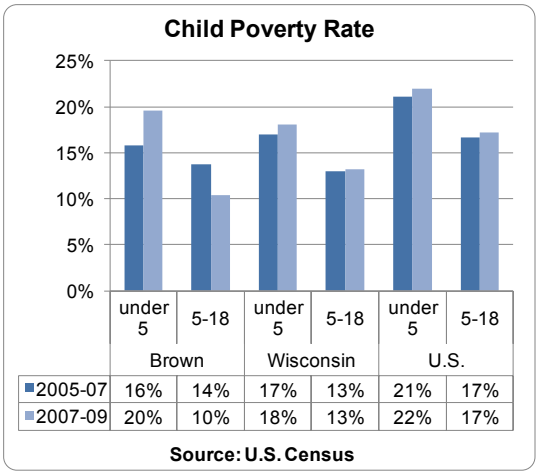


Figure 2



* Wisconsin 2009 rate not yet released

Figure 3



Brown County performs better on several key health indicators than the rest of the state and U.S. In the top half of Wisconsin's 72 counties for health outcomes (Figure 1), Brown County has lower disability rates than Wisconsin or the U.S. (U.S. Census). According to the U.S. Census, rates of insurance coverage in Brown County (91%) in 2009 surpassed the national rate of 85%. Deaths due to cancer and heart disease have declined.

There are community efforts underway to address local health problems, including 10 weekly farmer's markets and plans for an organic food co-op. More outdoor recreation opportunities and recreation trails are being planned throughout the area. A number of public/private collaborative initiatives are taking place throughout the community to improve youth physical activity and health behaviors.

Current	Trend	
		County health outcome rankings
		Child poverty rate
		Births to mothers that obtained prenatal care
		Psychiatric hospitalizations per 1,000
		Obesity rate

There are concerns, however, about certain health issues in the Brown County area. The adult psychiatric hospitalization rate (due to mental illness and related conditions) shows a concerning trend, with increases over the last few years and a rate higher than the state average (Figure 2). By 2009, the percentage of births in Brown County where mothers had obtained first trimester prenatal care matched the Wisconsin average, but was down from previous years and much lower than rates in nearby metropolitan counties. The number of fully immunized two-year-olds is down, and one in five children in Brown County under age five was in poverty, up since 2005-2007 (Figure 3). Poverty has a major influence on a child's health.

Adult rates of smoking, binge drinking, and obesity are higher than state and national averages. Limited data on youth show that one-third report drank alcohol in the past month. As in other areas of Wisconsin and U.S., adult obesity rates have increased, and Brown County now exceeds the statewide average. The community would benefit from better, more current data on adult and youth risk behaviors.

Health expert sector panelists pointed out substance abuse (including abuse of prescriptions), untreated mental illness, and obesity as particular areas of concern, with these factors greatly contributing to the health concerns locally. With these health challenges, experts in a number of panels believed that access to medical, dental, and mental health care was increasingly difficult for a growing number of persons.

LIFE at Home

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
		Annual childcare costs per median family income
		Long-term care waiting list
		Older adult poverty rate
		Poverty rate of households with children

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community leaders and residents understand and address the needs of people that are vulnerable due to their age or handicapping conditions (children, people who are older or have disabilities). All members of the community, including these different groups, have the opportunity to:

- Be safe from abuse and neglect
- Be involved in the community through leisure activities, employment, and education
- Receive needed supportive care
- Utilize affordable and quality child care

LIFE at Home

A strong majority of leaders and community members rated the area as good or excellent at caring for vulnerable persons in the community. Sixty-one percent of community members and 61% of leaders scored Brown County as good or excellent a safe and healthy environment for those with disabilities. A positive trend in our area is the decrease in the poverty rate of single-parent households, however this rate is still drastically higher than the poverty rate of two-parent households (Figure 1). Brown County also has a lower poverty rate among older adults than Wisconsin or the U.S., and the rate has decreased in recent years (Figure 2).

However there are concerns about the area's ability to meet the future needs of these groups. The percent of individuals with disabilities in Brown County increased in every age category between 2008 and 2009. Demand for long-term care services in the Brown County area has continued to be strong (Figure 3) and a long waiting list continues. Recent state policy changes impact the implementation of Wisconsin's Family Care program, a new model of care for this population that had been planned for implementation in Brown County. It will no longer be implemented, creating concerns among experts with whom we spoke that there will be a decrease in accessibility of services for persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Current	Trend	
		Poverty rate of female-headed households with children
		Long-term care waiting list
		Older adult poverty rate
		Annual childcare costs per median family income

Data and feedback from community members and leaders showed a strong concern for the self-sufficiency of families with very young children in the Brown County area. Births characterized as "at risk" (because they occur to very poor, teen-aged, unmarried, or uneducated mothers), are growing. While the area has a higher rate of licensed child care opportunities than statewide, in 2010, weekly childcare costs averaged between 9% and 11% of the median family income in Brown County. As the cost burden increases, more families are forced to choose unregulated childcare options.

Experts in the sector panel on home concurred that family-oriented services are needed to help families with parenting, budgeting, and other issues related to self-sufficiency and a healthy start for children. They also cited the critical importance of prevention-based, holistic approaches to address the root causes of poverty and family instability over the long term. The Community Partnership for Children initiative (CPC) is one such large-scale local effort to proactively assist parents and young children, starting prenatally and at birth.

Figure 1

Poverty Rate of Households with Children By Marital Status

	2005-2007		2007-2009	
	Single	Married	Single	Married
Brown County	34%	4%	30%	4%
Wisconsin	36%	4%	36%	4%
U.S.	37%	7%	37%	7%

Source: U.S. Census, ACS

Figure 1

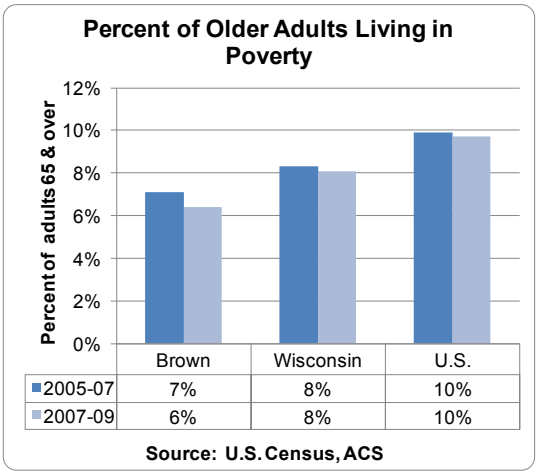


Figure 3

Long-Term Care Community Options and Medical Assistance Waiver Caseloads in Brown County

	2008	2009
Recipients	1,590	1,644
Waitlist	602	719

Source: WI Department of Health Services

LIFE of Learning

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
		Attendance rates of fifth grade students
		Reading proficiency of third grade students
		Math achievement by tenth grade students
		High school graduation rate
		Library circulation per capita

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community members of all ages continue to learn at all stages of life:

- Youth and children view school positively and develop their skills and unique talents to prepare them for viable careers and a lifetime of learning
- Adults (young and returning) seeking new skills or qualifications can obtain affordable higher education leading to improved career development
- Adults have the opportunity for enrichment programs and other lifelong learning activities that are plentiful, affordable, and satisfying
- Learning matches area employment and opportunities

Figure 1

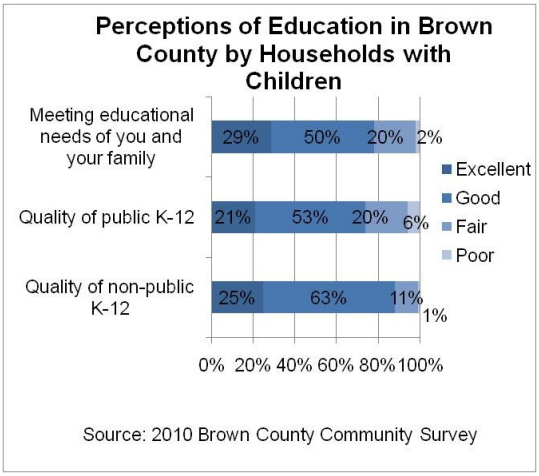


Figure 2

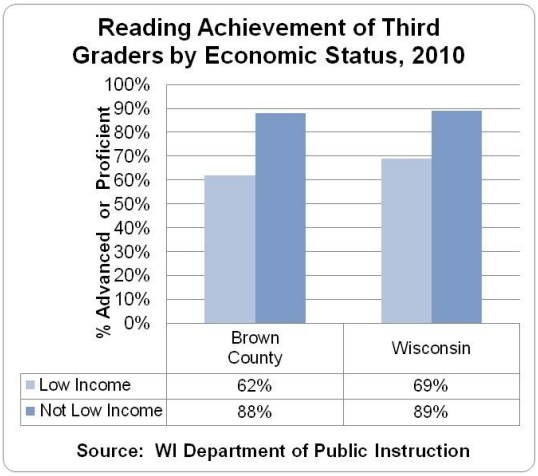
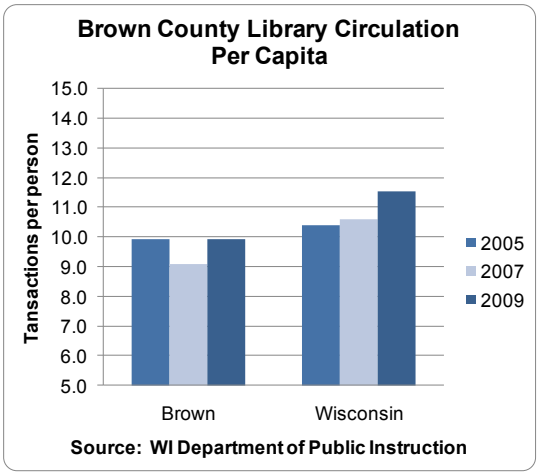


Figure 3



A common theme in focus groups, expert sector panels, and surveys was the quality of the education system in Brown County. Community members gave good ratings to public and private schools (Figure 1) while numerous focus groups and expert panels identified the strong educational system as a key asset of the area.

The Brown County area schools perform well statistically, too. Math achievement by tenth grade students in Brown County school districts in the 2009-2010 school year was better than in Wisconsin overall, and the four-year graduation rate in Brown County (89%) recently surpassed the rate for all of Wisconsin. In the 2009-2010 school year, attendance rates by fifth grade students (96%) were better than the state average in all school districts in Brown County. In Brown County, for all districts combined, 78% of third grade students read at proficient or advanced levels in 2009-2010, compared to 79% in Wisconsin. Reading proficiency has declined in five of the eight Brown County districts since 2006-2007.

Current	Trend	
		Attendance rates of fifth grade students
		Reading proficiency of third grade students
		Math achievement by tenth grade students
		High school graduation rate
		Library circulation per capita

However, disparities among different economic groups are a concern, including a significantly lower achievement test performance and graduation rate among economically disadvantaged students than students who were not disadvantaged in 2010 (Figure 2).

Community survey results show a positive attitude toward higher education and adult education opportunities in Brown County. Even with the rise in electronic media, per capita library circulation in Brown County was the same in 2009 as it was in 2005, although below Wisconsin's average (Figure 3).

There are concerns with higher education attainment in Brown County. In 2007-2009 U.S. Census estimates, 25.5% of adults had attained a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 27.8% in the U.S.

When leaders were given a list of possible priority actions for the region to take, 53% of leaders gave "strengthening the education system" very high priority, ranking it second only to "job creation." Two-thirds of leaders and only half of community members believed that the community is investing the needed resources to maintain quality education in the future.

LIFE in Our Natural Environment

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
		Environmental health determinant score, County Health Rankings
		Percent of good air quality days
		Miles of impaired surface waters

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community leaders and members:

- Value and practice conservation, stewardship, and protection of the natural environment
- Have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors
- Experience clean air and water
- Preserve green space and implement well-managed land development

LIFE in Our Natural Environment

Figure 1

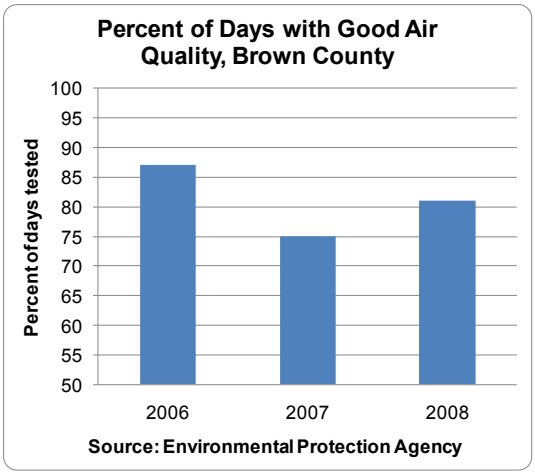


Figure 2

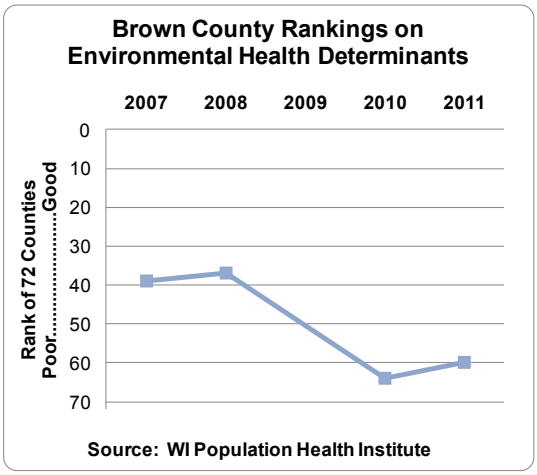
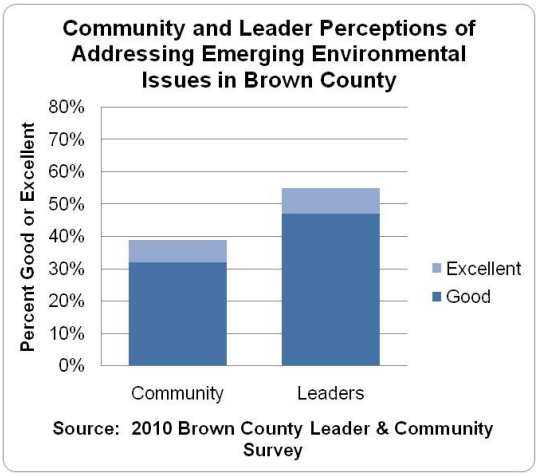
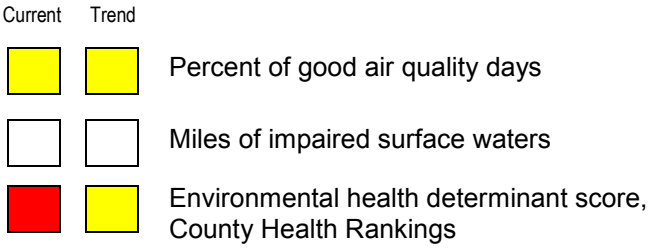


Figure 3



Water quality is an important issue for Brown County due to the use of many waterways for recreation, tourism, and business. Brown County is widely known as an area with many water-related attractions that include boating and fishing. In 2010, 37 surface waters (covering 186 linear miles) in Brown County were classified as "Impaired" by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Community members scored quality of water in lakes and rivers lower than other environmental aspects, with only 40% scoring surface water good or excellent. Of local counties, Brown County has the highest density of cows, at 1.54 acres for every cow. Local experts noted that this density has implications for the area's ability to dispose of manure and control waste run-off.

Community members' perceptions of drinking water and air quality were very high. Brown County has experienced no water quality violations and no days of unhealthy air in recent years. However, Brown County has experienced more air quality issues in recent years. Since 2006, the percent of days with good air quality in Brown County decreased to 81% in 2008 (Figure 1). Out of Wisconsin's 72 counties, Brown County dropped to 60th in 2011 on its physical environment determinants of health, compared to 39th in 2006 (Figure 2).



Feedback from experts in our environmental panel noted concerns about a decrease in the amount of time children and youth spend in nature. Several suburban communities are adopting outdoor recreation plans, which is one way to increase local opportunities for children and youth to experience the outdoors.

Another emerging initiative in our area is energy conservation, with local governments, businesses, and nonprofits making efforts to conserve energy and use alternative energy sources.

An interesting finding on our community and leader surveys is the difference in community members' and leaders' perceptions of environmental issues. Community members rated efforts in Brown County to address environmental issues significantly lower than community leaders did (Figure 3). While 55% of leaders rated efforts in Brown County to address environmental issues good or excellent, community members saw things differently, with only 39% rating this good or excellent.

LIFE of Recreation & Leisure

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
Yellow	Green	Miles of bike and hiking trails per 1,000
Green	White	Park acreage per 1,000
Green	Green	Total estimated annual expenditures made by visitors

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community members and visitors of all ages and ability levels:

- Enjoy regular, satisfying indoor and outdoor recreational activity for overall physical, mental, and social well-being
- Have access to clean, safe rivers and lakes, trails, parks, and other outdoor resources for recreation
- Enjoy appealing options for shopping, dining, and entertainment events

LIFE of Recreation and Leisure

The Brown County area has an established variety of recreation and leisure opportunities. Community members' feedback regarding recreation and leisure was overwhelmingly positive in surveys, focus groups, and expert sector panels, especially relating to outdoor opportunities. Survey data shows that the majority of community members are very satisfied with the quality and quantity of parks, trails, recreational facilities, and community events in the area (Figure 1). Additionally, 75% of community members said they used a recreational facility or program in Brown County in the past year.

In 2010, Brown County had 147 miles of biking and pedestrian trails, for a rate of .59 miles per 1,000 population, and 3,676 acres of park land, for a rate of 14.9 acres per 1,000 population. The Brown County area has two major recreational trails, the Fox River Trail (25 miles) and Mountain Bay Trail (83 miles), and in 2011, the area had 363 miles of snowmobile trails. The Fox River Heritage Parkway covers the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers corridor with biking, walking, and river trails. Still under development, the trail system will tie together the natural, recreational, and historic resources of the area.

Current	Trend	
		Miles of bike and hiking trails per 1,000
		Park acreage per 1,000
		Total estimated annual expenditures made by visitors

Despite a dip in tourism revenues in 2009, 2010 saw somewhat of a recovery with nearly $500 million in annual visitor expenditures (Figure 2). Recent initiatives have expanded tourism opportunities beyond Lambeau Field, which remains a dominant attraction in Brown County.

There have been significant increases in the number of tourism-related jobs in recent years, with 3,000 jobs added between 2008 and 2009 alone. While the area benefits by increasing the number of jobs, typically, jobs in the tourism industry are low-paying service occupations.

Protection of natural resources emerged as an important concern among experts on the sector panels and community members. Many felt that there has not been enough attention given to the care of the Fox River. Recent efforts at riverfront development are important in maximizing the area for recreation and entertainment, but the community must commit to investment in upkeep and infrastructure. Experts in the panel on recreation were concerned that, while Brown County is strong in creating opportunities for recreation and leisure, there must be a commitment and investment to maintain these venues.

Figure 1

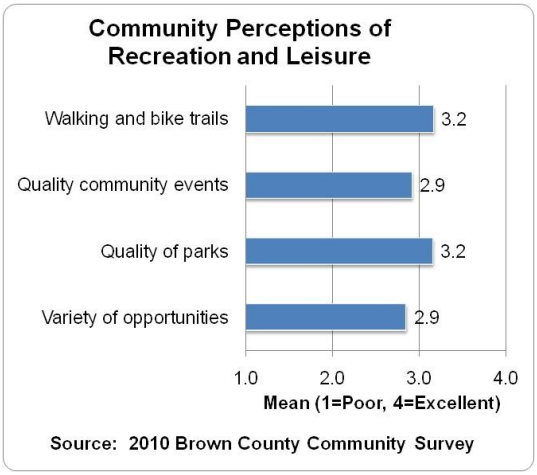
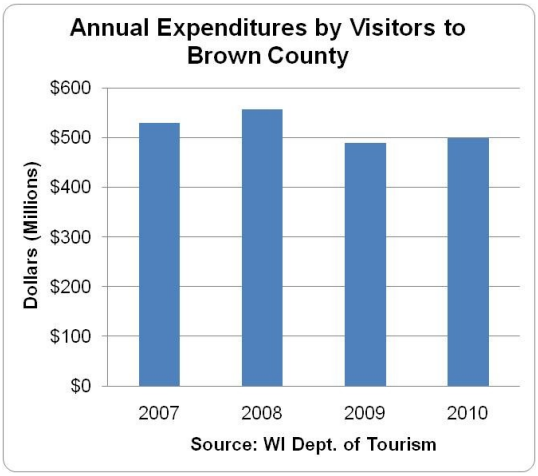


Figure 2



A Safe LIFE

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
Fair	Fair	Rate of child abuse or neglect reports
Fair	Good	Juvenile arrest rate
Fair	Fair	Rate of reported domestic violence incidents
Good	Good	Violent and property crime rates
Poor	Fair	Alcohol-related crashes and deaths

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community members and visitors of all ages, abilities, and income levels:

- Are safe from harm or neglect in their own homes and communities
- View their schools, neighborhoods, communities, and the Brown County area as safe
- Have confidence in law enforcement, emergency services, disaster response and fire protection
- Receive the support they need if they are a victim of crime
- Are aware of and engage in prevention and early intervention efforts

A Safe LIFE

Experts in the safety sector panel agreed that education outreach, partnerships, and collaborative planning are strengths of the safety system at work in Brown County. Examples of effective countywide efforts include the Child Advocacy Center, Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Taskforce and Fire Investigation Taskforce.

Alcohol-related crashes had already decreased in Brown County before the slightly more restrictive drunken-driving law that the state passed in 2010 (Figure 1). Formal efforts are underway in Brown County to better understand the use and safety of pedestrian and bicycle routes (Source: Brown County Planning & Land Services Department). Violent and property crime rates have declined over the last few years, and both remain below Wisconsin and U.S. rates (Figure 2). However, experts in the safety sector panel expressed concern over violence and neglect in the home. Experts stressed the importance of monitoring elder abuse rates, with a particular concern over financial abuse by caretakers, which is increasing.

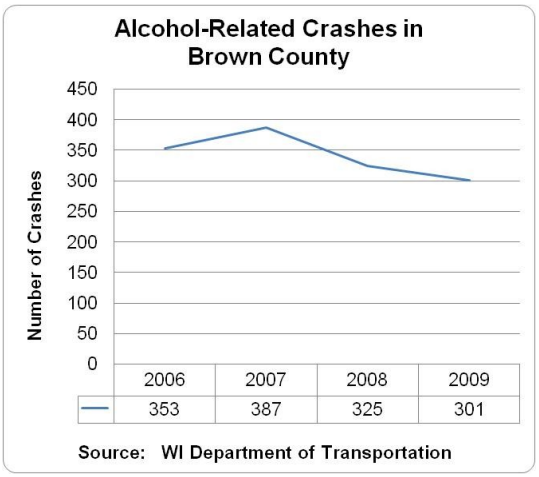
Current	Trend	
		Alcohol-related crashes and deaths
		Violent and property crime rates
		Rate of reported domestic violence incidents
		Juvenile arrest rate
		Rate of child abuse or neglect reports

Juvenile arrest rates in Brown County have recently decreased, including total arrests, status arrests, and arrests for drug possession. The total juvenile arrest rate in Brown county fell 19% between 2007 and 2009, and the arrest rate for drug possession decreased from 4.2 arrests per 1,000 youth in 2005 to 3.3 per 1,000 youth in 2009.

A concerning statistic for our area is the high rate of sexual assault reports in Brown County in 2010. There were 115 reports per 1,000 residents in Brown County, much higher than Wisconsin's rate of 86 per 1,000 residents. In 2009, the rate of reported domestic violence incidents per 1,000 people in Brown County was 4.8 compared to 5.0 in 2007.

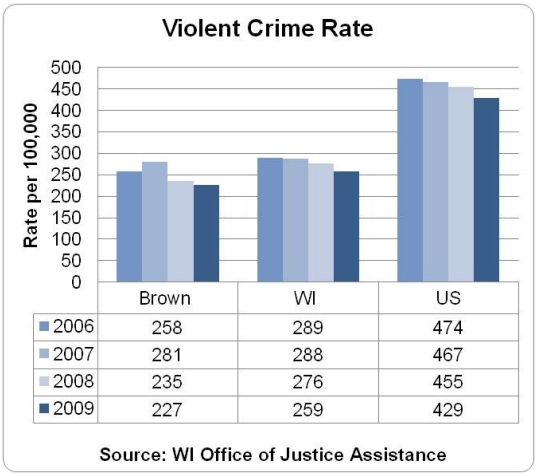
The rate of child abuse and neglect has risen since 2005, to a rate of 21.2 reports per 1,000 children in Brown County in 2009 (Figure 3). In 2010, the Center for Child Advocacy opened and was cited as a positive development in the area of child safety by the expert sector panel on safety. This is seen as important since survey data, recent statistics, and expert sector panelist feedback all pointed to concern for child and youth safety.

Figure 1



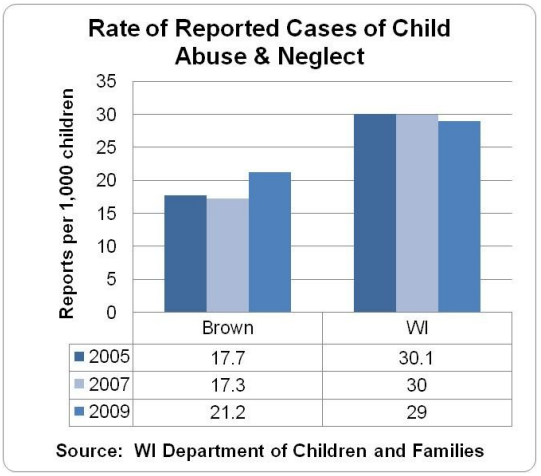
Source: WI Department of Transportation

Figure 2



Source: WI Office of Justice Assistance

Figure 3



Source: WI Department of Children and Families

LIFE of Self-Sufficiency

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
		Percent of households with housing cost burden
		Number of FoodShare recipients
		Free and reduced lunch rates of public schools

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community members of all ages, income, and ability levels have:

- Enough nutritious food daily to go without hunger
- Access to emergency services such as financial support, rental assistance, food pantries, short term shelter, and utility assistance
- Access to reliable transportation, affordable and quality housing, legal services, and accurate information and referral to needed services

LIFE of Self-Sufficiency

Figure 1

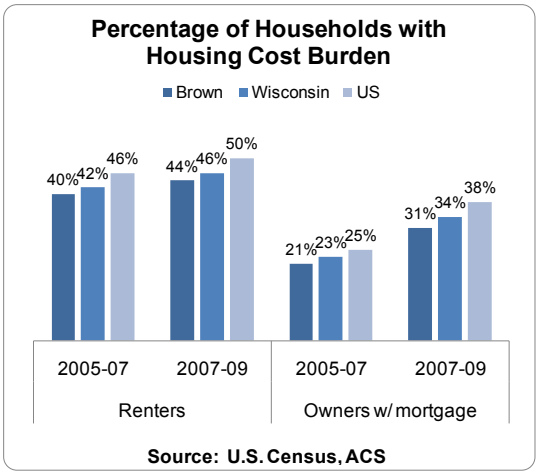


Figure 2

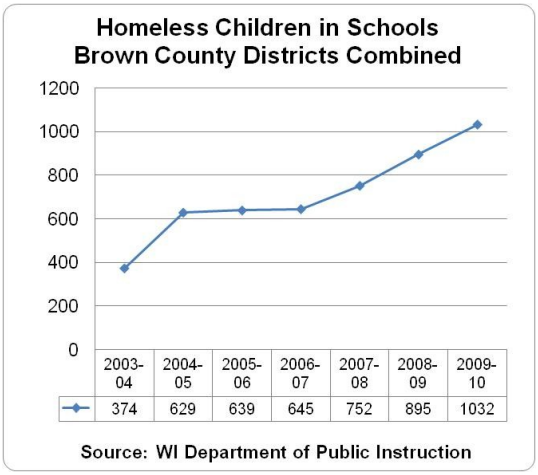
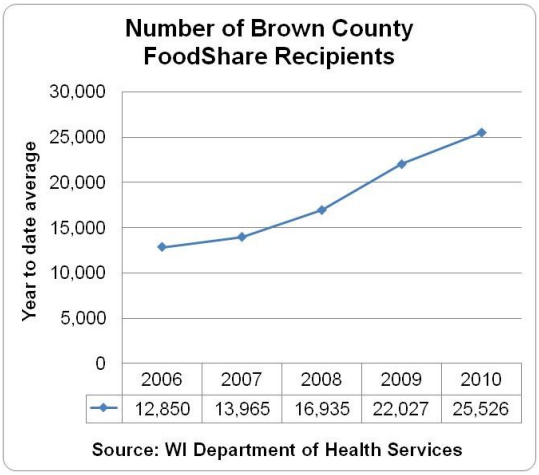


Figure 3



Brown County is widely considered an affordable place to live, with relatively low housing and food costs. Several promising trends and developments were noted by experts in the self-sufficiency sector panel. Collaboration among service providers was noted as one important strength in Brown County.

A unique example of collaboration in Brown County is the partnership between the Brown County United Way 2-1-1 Call Center, the Crisis Center, and the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). This partnership allows for closer monitoring of expressed needs of the community, as well as more accurate referrals to service providers.

Homeownership rates have increased in Brown County over the last few years while rates have decreased state and nationwide (Source: U.S. Census). Unfortunately, the number of renters and homeowners paying more than 30% of their monthly income towards housing costs (referred to as housing cost burdened), has increased in the last few years (Figure 1). Homelessness is a related concern, with record numbers of homeless persons in our communities in 2010 and a dramatic increase in the number of homeless children (Figure 2).

Current	Trend	
		Percent of households with housing cost burden
		Number of FoodShare recipients
		Free and reduced lunch rates of public schools

Experts in the self-sufficiency panel expressed concerns over increasing, multiple needs and barriers of low-income households. And there is increasing financial insecurity in our area, with only 70% of community members reporting that their families were financially secure. The high costs of childcare, homeless children and unaccompanied youth, and very limited access the mental health treatment were all issues brought up by expert sector panelists and community members as barriers to self-sufficiency that face many people in the Brown County area (and nationally).

Food security has emerged as a growing concern in the area: the number of FoodShare recipients in Brown County has doubled in the past five years to over 25,000 individuals (Figure 3), while rates of children participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program have also risen in all Brown County area school districts. In 2010, UW-Extension released a study of food security (defined as access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life) and found that in Brown County, low income and lack of access to transportation were two major barriers to food security.

LIFE at Work

Leading Indicators

Current	Trend	
		Cost of living index
		Income distribution
		New business startups
		Dollar value of building permits, residential and commercial
		Employment in manufacturing sector

Good
Fair
Poor
Not rated

"Excellence" for Brown County is defined as:

Community members of all types experience:

- An economy that offers a lifelong continuum of job and career training opportunities
- Pathways from school to work
- Employment opportunities that enable them to support an acceptable quality of life for themselves and for their families
- A growing economy that attracts and maintains an available, skilled, and motivated workforce
- A regional vision of economic growth that is explicit, widely shared, and pursued

LIFE at Work

Brown County is recognized as having some key economic strengths and as being an affordable place to raise a family. The overall cost of living in Brown County is 95% of the national average (Figure 1). Fifty three percent of community members rated the Brown County area good or excellent at meeting their family's employment needs. Progress can be seen with efforts by New North, Inc. and Better By the Bay to promote the area and increase economic development.

Other positive indicators of the area's economy are investments in building permits and new business creation. While the number of commercial permits went down between 2008 and 2010, when the amount of these permits increased to nearly $120 million. In 2010, 749 new businesses were begun. This number will be tracked in the future.

The manufacturing sector has continued to have strong employment numbers in Brown County; the local economy has remained diversified and balanced (Figure 2). Experts in our panel on work explained that the emerging higher-paying manufacturing jobs require more complex and higher order skills. There is a growing need for employees with these skills.

Current	Trend	
		Cost of living index
		New business startups
		Employment in manufacturing sector
		Dollar value of building permits, residential and commercial
		Income distribution

Experts in our panel on the economy were concerned about alignment between K-12 education and job-readiness for students, especially those who did not plan to attend college. They recommended that more paths be created for students to enter careers. When asked to rank the priority level of each of 16 possible actions (across all sectors) that the county could take, 69% of leaders ranked the top scoring item as "creation of jobs that pay higher wages" a high priority. Forty percent of leaders rated "attracting and retaining young professionals" a high priority, the third most highly rated potential action item. Experts on several sector panels (education, self-sufficiency, home, community, health) felt that the growing income gap was having an impact in Brown County, where the gap is smaller than the national average but growing faster than the rest of the country (Figure 3). Finally, experts in our panel on work expressed frustration over a lack of cooperation and cohesiveness among political leadership in the area, which they believed has contributed to slower economic development at times.

Figure 1

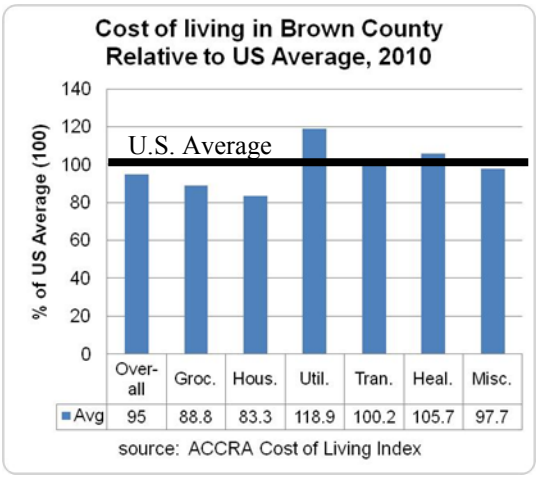
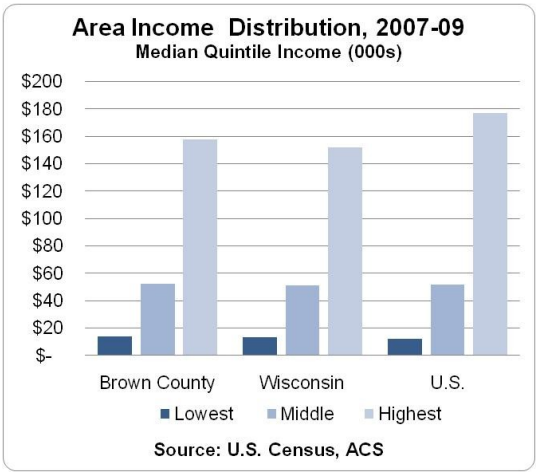


Figure 2

Changes in Employment by Industry in Brown County		
	2005-07	**2007-09**
Agriculture/Construct.	7.1%	6.7%
Manufacturing	18.0%	17.8%
Trade, Transp., Utilities	22.6%	22.5%
Info., Finance, Insurance	9.8%	9.3%
Prof., Scient., Manage.	6.6%	6.7%
Educ., Health, Social	19.0%	20.6%
Arts, Ent., Recreation	9.3%	9.1%
Other	7.6%	7.3%
Total employed (16+)	124,711	129,697
Source: U.S. Census		

Figure 3



Research Team

UW Green Bay Center for Public Affairs
Dr. Lora Warner, Director
Ashley Heath, Research Associate
Jake Lopez, Emma Reiser, Monica Moe, Student Interns

St. Norbert College Strategic Research Institute
Dr. David Wegge, Executive Director
Craig Stencel, Director of Operations
Mary Strebel, Director of Field Staff/ Research Analyst

In-Kind Contributions

Aging and Disability Resource Center
Castle-Pierce Printing Co.
Fox Valley Technical College
Harmony Café
Infinity Technology, Inc.
Prophit Marketing
Neenah Paper
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

Acknowledgements

Stephanie Foley & Sarah Inman, Brown County United Way; Rebecca Deschane, Brian Johnson, Nancy Schopf & Kristin Phillip, Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce; Sue Vincent & staff, Encompass Early Education and Care, Inc.; Snooky Zuidmulder, Aging and Disability Resource Center; Mark Franks, Megan Popkey, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; Brown County United Way 2-1-1; Chuck Lamine & staff; Brown County Planning and Land Services Department; Trish Nau, East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; Chuck Peterson & staff, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; Shana Farrell & staff, Fox Valley Technical College; Katie Stilp; Chris Terrien; David Depeau; Ben Royer; Dr. Sara Rinfret; Lidia Nonn, UW Green Bay; Chad Heath; Steve Warner.

Logo design by: Rachel Mittelstaedt, Prophit Marketing
Cover design by: Tiffany Lavender, Brown County United Way

The Sponsors of the 2011 Brown County LIFE Study would like to acknowledge Northeastern Wisconsin Technical College for their in-kind publication of this report.

Sponsored by:

Greater Green Bay Community Foundation

GREEN BAY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE