



BROWN COUNTY

LIFE STUDY

LEADING INDICATORS FOR EXCELLENCE

A COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT FOR BROWN COUNTY, WISCONSIN

2021

ABOUT THE LIFE STUDY

The 2021 Brown County LIFE (Leading Indicators for Excellence) Study builds on periodic assessments of the quality of life in our community and measures progress over time so we as a community can fill gaps, find solutions, and further successes.

The **LIFE** Study identifies trends and determines where there are opportunities to improve our quality of life, and it serves as a tool to guide the allocation of resources for the initiatives addressing these community needs.

As a successor to the 2011 and 2016 studies, the purpose of the 2021 LIFE Study is to build on an evaluation of the community from a variety of angles through both public perception and evidence-based research, then to help align and allocate resources to better the community and achieve greater impact.

“

I worry that as the economic impacts of COVID hit local government and organizations, there will be a rush to cover funding gaps by pulling money away from less ‘essential’ services like the arts, community education, and recreation. I hope the community comes together to protect the arts and recreation services that have so improved the quality of life in Brown County.

”



The **LIFE** Study
assesses Brown County's
quality of life based on
10 SECTORS

LIFE of Arts & Culture

A Healthy LIFE

LIFE of Learning

LIFE of Recreation & Leisure

LIFE of Self-sufficiency

LIFE in Our Community

LIFE at Home

LIFE in Our Natural Environment

A Safe LIFE

LIFE at Work

ABOUT THE LIFE STUDY

THE VOICE OF OUR COMMUNITY

Founding sponsors and lead advocates of the study, the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation and Brown County United Way, are firmly committed to engaging an inclusive and diverse range of viewpoints and demographics representing our community. Research partner St. Norbert College Strategic Research Institute and community engagement teams, comprised of individuals from all sectors, are critical to its success.

In 2021, more than 1,500 surveys were completed by members of the community and community leaders. A series of community conversations were held with stakeholders for a deeper dive into the early findings. Intensive efforts went into broadening the input to achieve a more diverse perspective that better represents our evolving community.

As a result, the 2021 survey responses exceed those of both 2011 and 2016 combined, including more than double the number of non-white respondents over previous survey years.

An analysis of survey responses and community conversation input was contextualized with data surrounding 10 aspects of the quality of life in Brown County to provide the 2021 LIFE Study.

“
Overall,
I feel this
is a very safe
and welcoming
community and
is an excellent
place to raise
a family.
”

ENGAGING ALL VOICES

The community survey was provided online for the first time, with postcards mailed to the 2,000 typically most underrepresented households.

- The survey was translated into both Hmong and Spanish.
- Translation services were provided for the Somali community.
- One-on-one outreach was made to members of the Hispanic, Somali, Hmong, Black and Oneida communities for broader dissemination of the survey.
- New community engagement sessions brought groups of community representatives together to further discuss survey findings. These sessions dove deeper into the data and provided more opportunity for community members to begin to interpret the findings and provide greater context to the issues.



ABOUT THE LIFE STUDY

FROM STUDY TO ACTION

The LIFE Study has informed the work of community leaders across sectors and been a catalyst for community initiatives to move the needle on systemic issues. Direct outcomes of previous studies have included regional efforts to address root causes of poverty through quality improvement science; the development of a cradle-to-career initiative; collaborative efforts to support arts and culture and girls ages 9-15; and collective impact work around mental health and housing insecurity.

The **LIFE Study** assesses the community from different angles to provide insight into the community's greatest assets and most pressing challenges. It is the community's tool, intended to inform the work of everyone invested in improving the quality of life here.



WHAT'S NEW

To provide the most dynamic, up-to-date resource, we have invested in creating the **Greater Green Bay Community Hub**.

The Community Hub will help Brown County residents, community leaders, local nonprofits and policymakers learn about the overall health and trends of our community to help prioritize collaborative solutions. Focusing on measuring what matters in our community, the Hub offers free, easy-to-use access to up-to-date data that highlights trends, challenges, and opportunities in Brown County. The Hub, powered by Conduent Healthy Communities Institute, will include maps, tables, and figures, promising practices and a wealth of local, regional, and national data.



The Greater Green Bay Community Hub greatergreenbaycommunityhub.org provides a free digital resource for easy-to-use access to community data.

DEMOGRAPHICS

BROWN COUNTY 2020 CENSUS

POPULATION

BROWN COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Population, Census, April 1, 2020	268,740
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	248,007

AGE AND SEX

Persons under 5 years	6.20%
Persons under 18 years	23.50%
Persons 65 years and over	15.40%
Female persons	50.40%

RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN

White alone	87.80%
Black or African American alone	3.00%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	3.40%
Asian alone	3.40%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.10%
Two or More Races	2.40%
Hispanic or Latino	9.00%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	80.30%

EDUCATION

High school graduate or higher, persons age 25 years+, 2016-2020	92.50%
Bachelor's degree or higher, persons age 25 years+, 2016-2020	30.30%



“Brown County has great potential to attract and retain professionals, families, and attract new business. We need to be broadening our views and look for ways to develop comprehensive opportunities for work and leisure for young professionals.”

DEMOGRAPHICS

2021 SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Community survey data is weighted by age, race, ethnicity, gender, and education.

	Leaders	Community
Total Responses	343	1,187

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING AGE GROUPS DO YOU FALL INTO?

18-24 years old	0%	14%
25-34 years old	6%	16%
35-44 years old	19%	12%
45-54 years old	27%	15%
55-64 years old	29%	19%
65-74 years old	14%	15%
75 years old or older	5%	10%

WHAT IS YOUR RACE?

White	93%	86%
Non-White	7%	14%

ARE YOU OF HISPANIC, LATINO, OR SPANISH ORIGIN?

Yes	2%	9%
No	99%	91%

ARE YOU...

Female	53%	49%
Male	47%	51%

WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION YOU HAVE COMPLETED?

Less than high school diploma	<1%	9%
Graduated from high school or GED	1%	28%
Some college or tech school	9%	33%
Graduated from college	34%	21%
Graduate or professional degree	56%	9%

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE BROWN COUNTY AREA?

Less than 1 year	1%	2%
1-5 years	6%	8%
6-10 years	7%	11%
11-20 years	16%	15%
Over 20 years	49%	31%
All my life	22%	33%

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

THE BIG PICTURE

On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied is the community with the overall quality of life in the Brown County area?

In 2021, the average level of satisfaction was 7.85 among community members who responded to the survey. It's a decline from previous studies: In 2011, the average was 7.88, and in 2016 that number climbed to 8.24. However, for a question answered during a worldwide pandemic, it's notable that 83 percent of community members rate their satisfaction as slightly to very satisfied.

More than half of respondents somewhat or strongly agree they can have an impact on the decisions made by community leaders here – though that is lower than the 80 percent of community leaders who believe that to be the case. Most surveyed feel that Brown County is moving in the right direction and overwhelmingly feel it is an excellent or good place to raise a family.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE BROWN COUNTY

- Community conversation participants helped us better understand disability as an area of the LIFE Study that needs deeper investigation as a nuanced and growing concern.
- Most everyone thinks there is room for improvement when it comes to support for LGBTQ+ individuals in the area.
- Pressing concerns include providing cultural spaces for everyone, addressing housing insecurity and finding solutions to transportation limitations.

NEW IN 2021

The 2021 survey mirrors previous studies to benchmark progress, while introducing new survey questions around:

- **The impact of coronavirus on the community:** Eighty-one percent of leaders surveyed are very or somewhat concerned coronavirus will have a negative impact on the long-term health of Brown County residents, compared with 69 percent of community respondents.
- **The social acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals:** While 83 percent of leaders surveyed believe there is some or a lot of acceptance in the nation, 59 percent say that holds true for Brown County. Among community members, 71 percent believe there is acceptance in the nation compared with 62 percent in Brown County.

Further highlights follow, and an in-depth look can be found at greatergreenbaycommunityhub.org.



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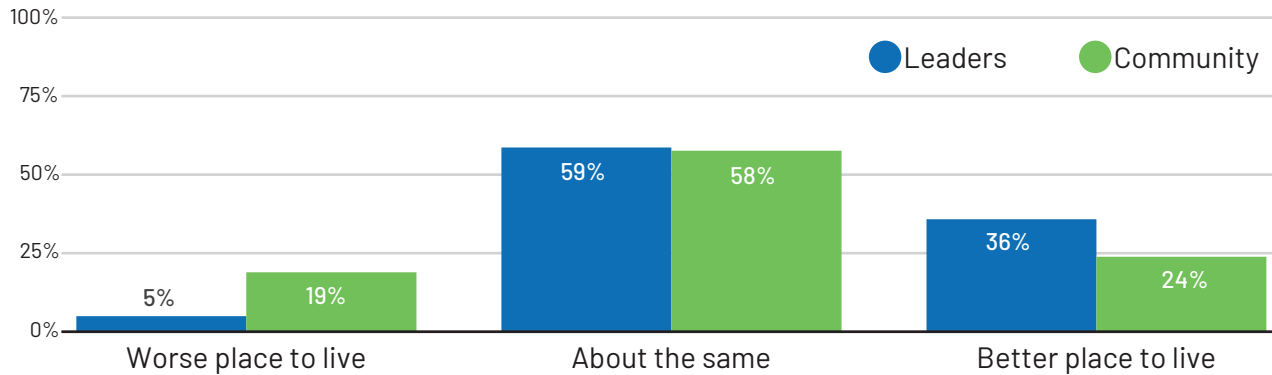
It is very lonely living here if you don't fit nicely into the established norms. ... Diversity and inclusion feels like a checkbox, 'nice to have' instead of an 'I see you as part of my social network and community.'

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SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

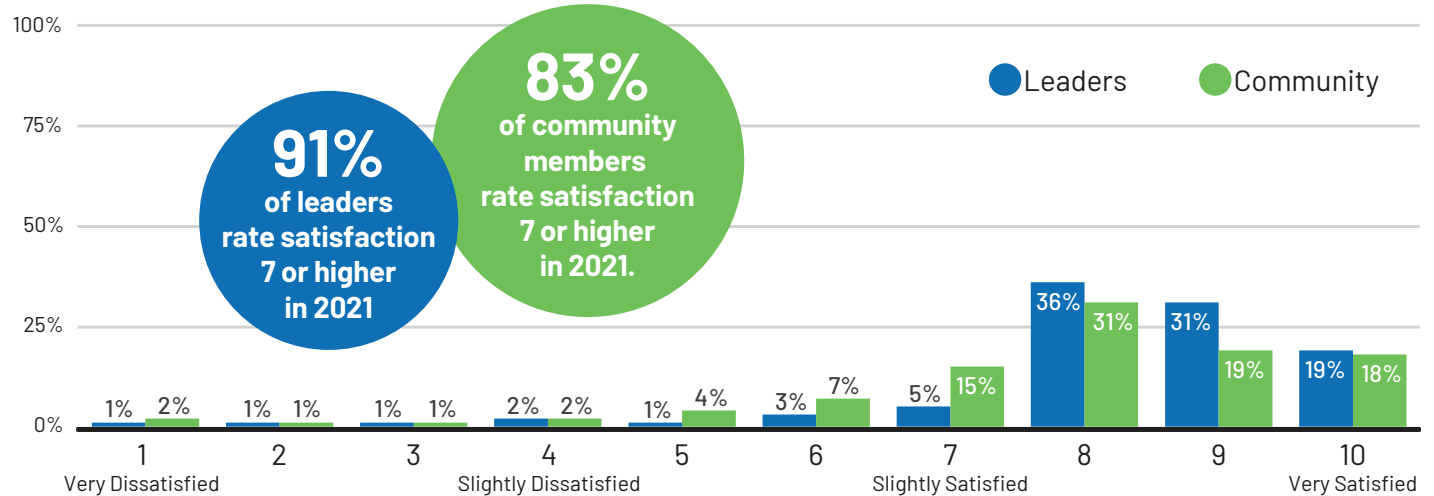
BETTER OR WORSE PLACE TO LIVE

Most community leaders think Brown County has improved or stayed the same in the past two years, while the community is split on whether it has become a better or worse place to live.



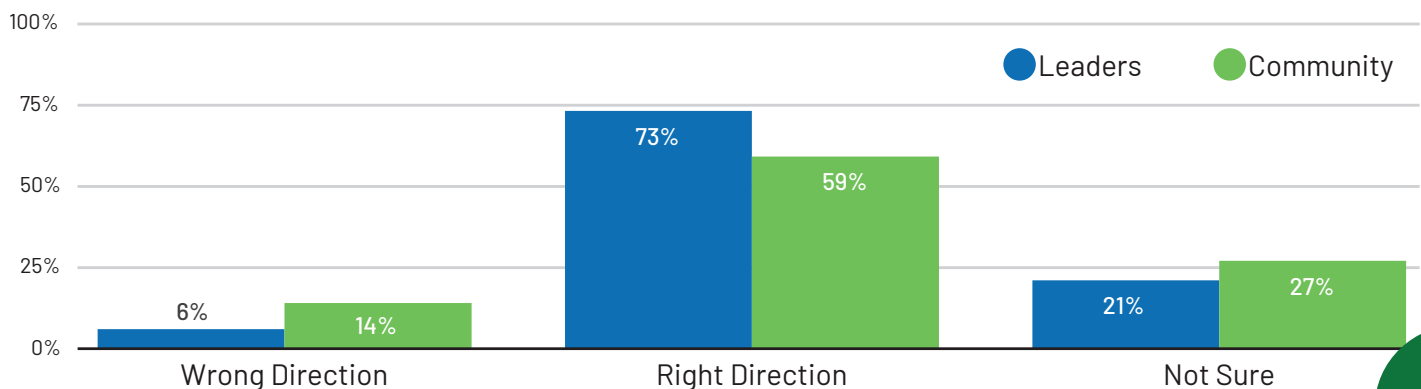
QUALITY OF LIFE SATISFACTION

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



RIGHT OR WRONG DIRECTION

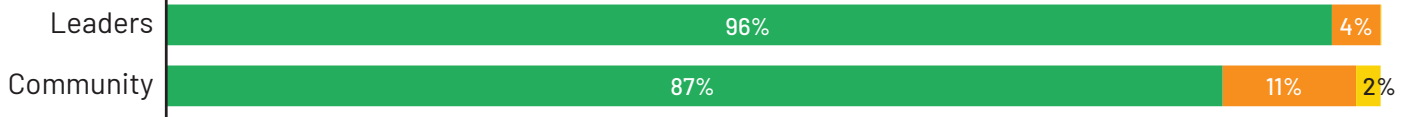
Generally speaking, considering where you would like to see the Brown County area in FIVE years, do you feel the Brown County area is currently headed in the WRONG DIRECTION or the RIGHT DIRECTION?



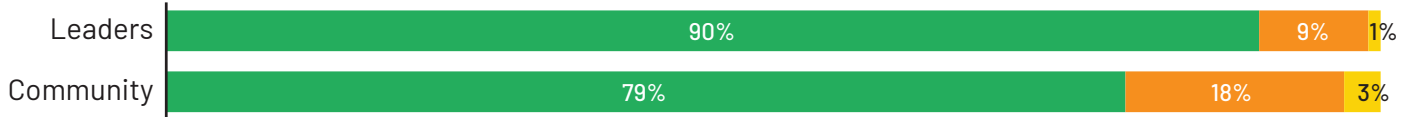
SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE BROWN COUNTY AREA

AS A PLACE TO RAISE A FAMILY



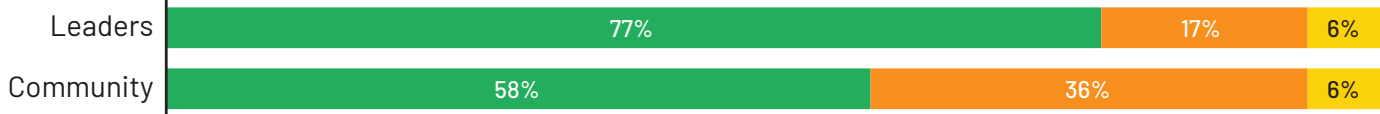
AS A PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH



AS A PLACE FOR SINGLE ADULTS



AS A PLACE TO RETIRE



AS A PLACE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



AS A PLACE FOR PEOPLE OF MINORITY RACIAL, ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, OR OTHER CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS



AS A PLACE FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

● Excellent/Good ● Fair/Poor ● Not Sure

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

“

We live in a safe community and our school system is great. I would love to see our community become more open minded and inclusive to all levels of diversity.

”

LIFE of Arts & Culture

Areas of STRENGTH:

- There are many affordable arts and entertainment options.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- Many see Brown County as an area in need of improved arts and culture.
- There is room for greater support for artists, creative professionals, and art performances.
- More than any other leading indicator, there is a clear opportunity and desire to improve cultural offerings.

A Healthy LIFE

Areas of STRENGTH:

- Perception of quality health care in Brown County remains positive.
- Community collaboration to combat health problems is an emerging area of strength in Brown County.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- Alcohol use remains an area of great concern.
- Few see Brown County as a place encouraging healthy habits, and many see significant room for improvement for elder health and health of disadvantaged populations.
- Obesity and overweight health issues remain a general community challenge.

LIFE of Learning

Areas of STRENGTH:

- We have high-quality higher education but will need to continue to promote improvements across the public and private sector to keep up with changing demographics and evolving demand.
- Ninety percent of community leaders and nearly 80 percent of community members believe Brown County is an excellent or good place to raise a family.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- Quality, center-based childcare remains an area for significant improvement. Forty-six percent of leaders believe there are fair- or poor-quality affordable childcare options in Brown County.
- There is continued concern about the costs of higher education.



SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

LIFE of Recreation & Leisure

Areas of STRENGTH:

- Brown County scores high for recreation and leisure.
- There are quality parks and playgrounds and a perception of quality festivals and events. Titledown District is positively rated.
- There is an increase in local sports teams and venues.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- There is concern with the availability of year-round opportunities for recreation.
- There is room for growth in recreational opportunities for people with a disability.
- There is concern regarding recreation post-pandemic.

Life of Self-sufficiency

Areas of STRENGTH:

- The limited housing stock is of high quality.
- There is low unemployment.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- Transportation and access is limited, as is support for the elderly to age at home and maintain independence.
- There are significant barriers to escaping poverty, including wages, transportation, and quality childcare.
- We are lacking adequate and affordable housing for families with low income.

Life in Our Community

Areas of STRENGTH:

- We are seeing diversity at an increasing rate along with overall population growth.
- Community leaders are optimistic that Brown County is improving over time.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- Community members are less optimistic about Brown County improvement over the next five years.

Life at Home

Areas of STRENGTH:

- Most consider Brown County an excellent or good place to raise a family.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- There are concerns about safety in the lives of those with disability.
- Affordable childcare remains a deficiency.



“

(There is) room for growth when it comes to transportation, disability support, and increased residential diversity.

”

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

LIFE in Our Natural Environment

Areas of STRENGTH:

- We have strong support for the natural environment in Brown County, and by many measures we are doing well.
- Most leaders perceive air quality to be high and are satisfied with progress made on the Fox River cleanup efforts.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- Encouraging conservation is an area in need of additional support.
- Greater implementation of green practices at the city and corporate levels is needed.



A Safe LIFE

Areas of STRENGTH:

- Brown County is perceived as safe. There are excellent emergency services and policies that prevent crime, but some remain concerned that the county has not adequately prepared for natural disasters.
- Local law enforcement is rated positively.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- There are concerns with violence in the home.

LIFE at Work

Areas of STRENGTH:

- Most community leaders believe the revitalization progress in downtown Green Bay is going well and encourage continued efforts.
- There is strong support for entrepreneurship.

Areas of OPPORTUNITY:

- Few community leaders think Brown County does an excellent job of retaining young professionals, while 43 percent think it does a fair or poor job.
- Flexible work continues to be an increasing need.
- Wages are not competitive and remain below state averages.

“

There are too many folks having to work two or more jobs to make ends meet. There should be a minimum wage and community resources that allow for a good quality of life for everyone.

”

LIFE IN BROWN COUNTY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FOUNDING SPONSORS AND LEAD ADVOCATES OF THE STUDY

The Greater Green Bay Community Foundation and Brown County United Way

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“

You'll like it once you've experienced it. You'll appreciate it once you've left it.

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*Quotes are from 2021 survey



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LIFE STUDY
LEADING INDICATORS FOR EXCELLENCE



Special thanks to our creative partner for their design and production of this report:

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