

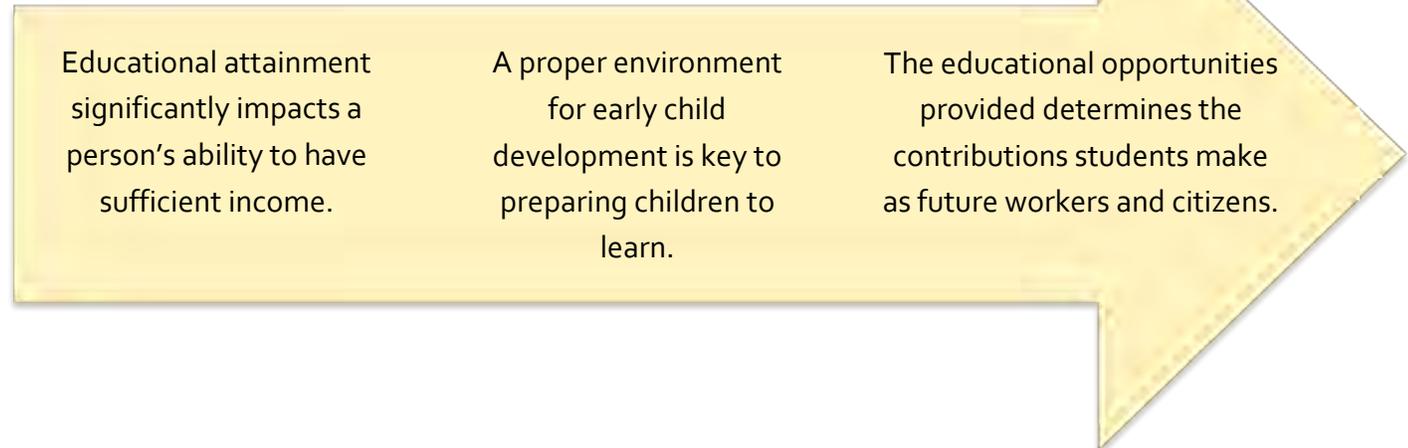
# EDUCATION



Educational attainment significantly impacts a person's ability to have sufficient income.

A proper environment for early child development is key to preparing children to learn.

The educational opportunities provided determines the contributions students make as future workers and citizens.



## Keep in mind....

Students' exposure to trauma, abuse, and neglect outside of school will have significant impact on their ability to learn within it. Early trauma exposure has lasting impacts on long-term physical and mental health.

### Education Subcommittee

Julie Burmesch, Chair  
Jeff Lindell, Chair  
Laurie Borowicz  
Rachele Cherek

Retired Educator  
Wausau School District  
Northcentral Technical College  
Childcarng, Inc.

# Section Summary

## Success and Progress

- Since the adoption of new statewide assessments to measure reading proficiency, Marathon County schools have collectively demonstrated a rate of improvement almost twice that of the state average.
- Local efforts have increased YoungStar ratings of local child care programs through increased education and training.
- Marathon County continues to have graduation rates higher than the state average in all of its districts, which is especially impressive as Wisconsin has the highest graduation rates in the country.

## Calls to Action

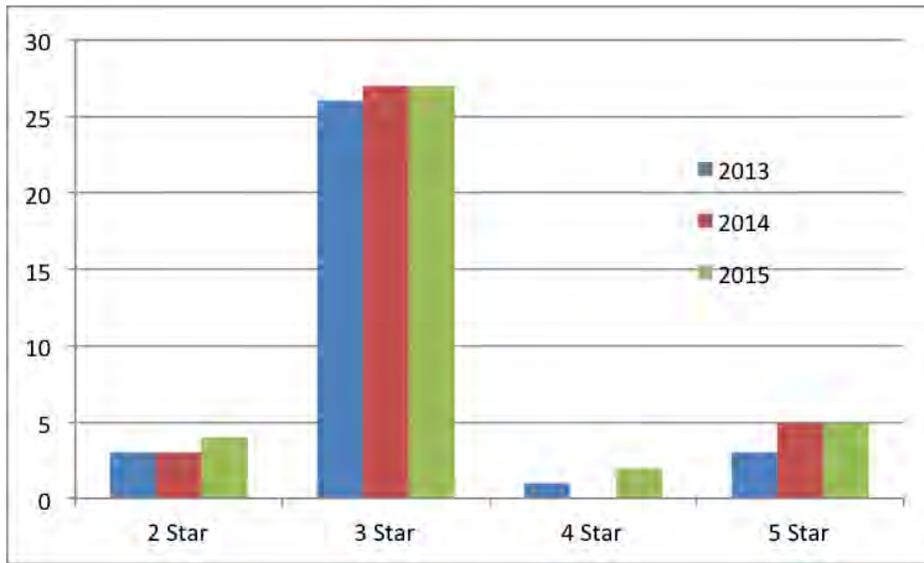
- Marathon County schools are observing higher levels of childhood exposure to poverty, emotional trauma, and abuse & neglect, all of which significantly interfere with educational performance and long-term educational outcomes.
- To support both our workforce and childhood development, Marathon County must reverse the decline in licensed and certified childcare providers, especially in certain under-served areas.
- Marathon County still lags behind state averages for educational attainment. While 57.7% of Marathon County high school graduates intend to attain a bachelor's degree or higher, only 22.2% of the population holds these degrees.

## Opportunities for Action

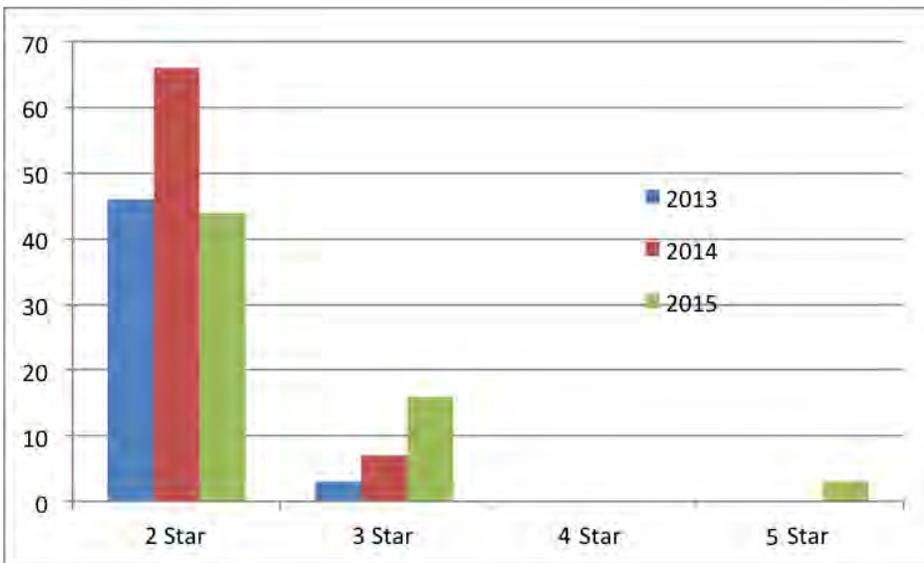
For Individuals	Recognize the impact of early childhood experiences, advocate for young children, and support parents. Encourage young adults to stay in or return to Marathon County to become long-standing members of the community.
For Organizations	Implement Trauma Informed Care training throughout the county to reduce the impact of challenging past experiences. Implement family-friendly practices in work environments. Increase opportunities for internships within local businesses and maintain ties to young adults.
For the Community	Support and expand birth-to-three interventions for high-risk populations and expand mental health services. Increase awareness of local jobs and education/training opportunities throughout the county.



**Key Measure:** YoungStar Child Care Ratings for Licensed Group Care in Marathon County, 2013—2015



**Key Measure:** YoungStar Child Care Ratings for Licensed/Certified Family Care in Marathon County, 2013—2015



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

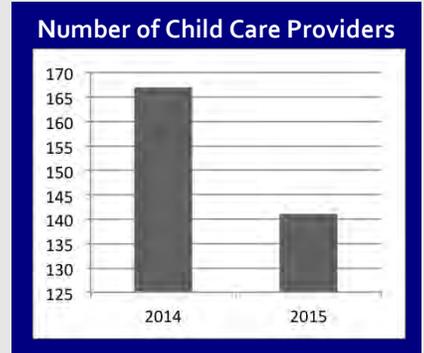
Marathon County offers the following options for regulated child care: group centers, family child care, preschool, Head Start, school age, and day camps.

YoungStar continues to make a difference in Marathon County. Child care providers are receiving onsite technical assistance to improve the quality of their programs. Providers are taking advantage of credit-based education through opportunities offered both at the county and state levels. They are learning record keeping skills and

how to set and maintain budgets and policies for their programs. Providers are creating curricula that is developmentally appropriate for each child, so that children are progressing at their own rates.

Waitlists exist in Marathon County for full-time infant care. Other areas of need include part-time care for infants and second- and third-shift care. Only a few child care providers countywide offer third-shift care.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS



- There are 3,633 child care slots available in Marathon County.
- 13 child care providers completed the Infant & Toddler Credential fulfilling the educational requirements for a 3-star rating.
- Childcaring, Inc., a local resource & referral agency, provided 86 training opportunities in 2014 and 66 as of October 2015.
- Providers are eligible for a micro grant, determined by regulation, through YoungStar to increase the quality of their child care program.
  - \* Group Child Care - \$1,000
  - \* Licensed Family - \$500
  - \* Certified Family - \$250

### SOURCES

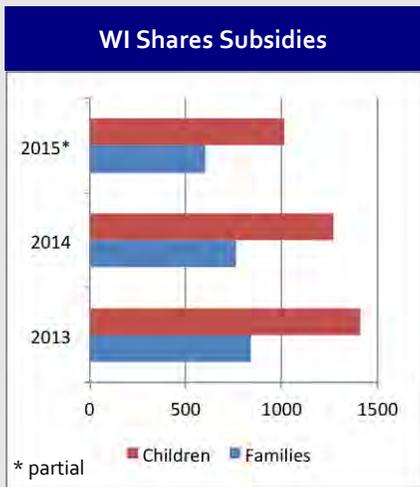
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families YoungStar [dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/)
- Childcaring, Inc. [www.childcaring.org](http://www.childcaring.org)
- Wisconsin Early Childhood Association [www.wisconsinearlychildhood.org](http://www.wisconsinearlychildhood.org)



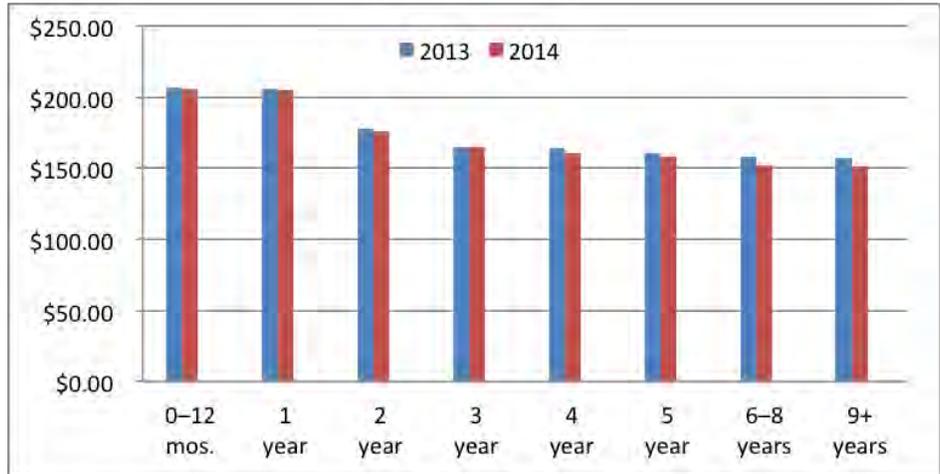
DATA HIGHLIGHTS



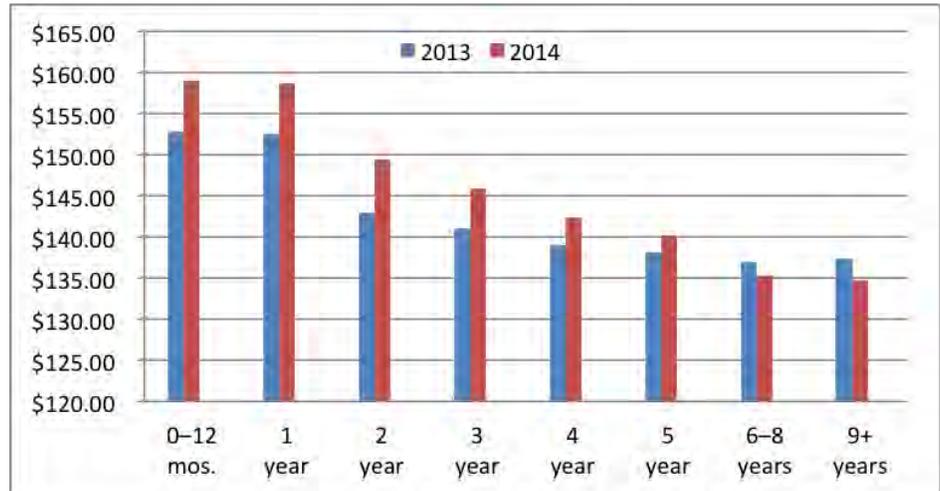
- In 2014, 15 child care programs received Good Start Grants supporting 98 children.
- As of October 2015, 95 children are using the Good Start Grants program.
- 21 child care programs are currently participating in Good Start Grants.



**Key Measure:** Average Full-Time Weekly Cost of Child Care Centers in Marathon County, 2013 & 2014



**Key Measure:** Average Full-Time Weekly Cost of Family Child Care in Marathon County, 2013 & 2014



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

For more than 15 years, United Way of Marathon County has helped families pay for quality child care. In 2010 a collaboration of early childhood partners explored sliding fee assistance for all Marathon County families. This sliding fee program, now named Good Start Grants, were dispersed countywide beginning January 2014.

Federal Poverty Level, not qualify for or receive WI Shares subsidies, participate in an approved activity such as work or school, and select a childcare program that is rated 3 stars or higher by the YoungStar program.

Good Start Grants help to meet the funding gap between what providers need to charge to offer a quality program and what families can afford to pay, helping families to avoid choosing between affordable care and quality care. To qualify for Good Start Grants, families must reside in Marathon County, have a household income below 300% of

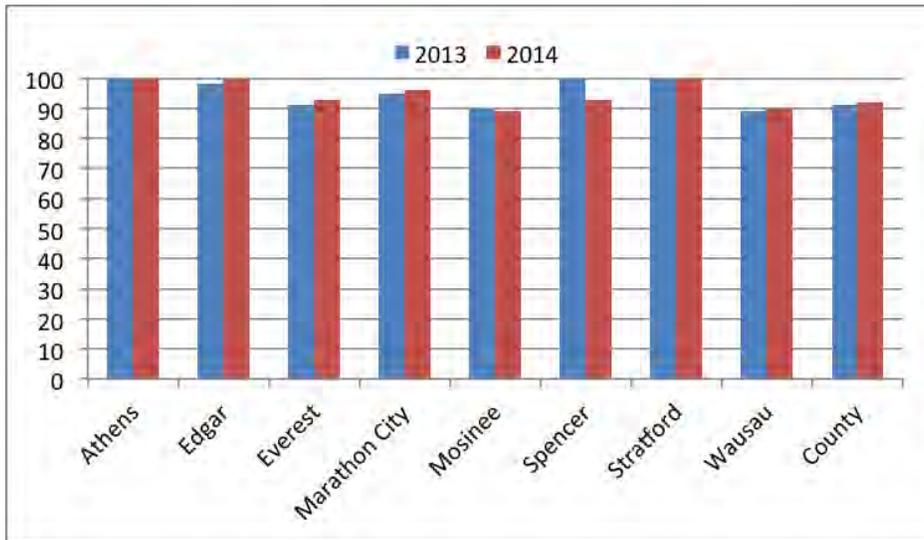
In 2014, Good Start Grants received \$300,000 from United Way of Marathon County to help families pay for quality child care. The B. A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation contributed an additional \$50,000.

SOURCES

- **Wisconsin Department of Children and Families**  
Wisconsin Shares  
[dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/wishares/)
- **Childcaring, Inc.**  
[www.childcaring.org](http://www.childcaring.org)



**Key Measure:** Percent of Students Meeting the PALS-K Benchmark,  
Fall 2013 & 2014



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening-Kindergarten (PALS-K) is given to students statewide to help school districts identify children needing academic interventions at the start of their Kindergarten year. The assessment is designed to measure skills predictive of future reading success such as alphabet identification, letter sound recognition, and beginning sound recognition in words. Students falling below benchmark on this assessment are at-risk for future academic difficulties without intervention.

The PALS assessment is not comprehensive and does not evaluate other necessary reading skills such as vocabulary comprehension and rhyming. However, it does begin the identification process so that schools can immediately put in place interventions to assist at-risk students.

Reading readiness is only one part of school readiness. In fact, other skills such as the ability to maintain attention, follow directions, follow social rules, and regulate behavior can significantly affect a student's performance. The ACES Study data (Indicator 40: Social & Emotional Development) highlights the need to reduce the impact of adverse childhood experiences. School districts throughout the county are noting the educational impact of these experiences and have initiated training to help teachers understand and reduce the effects of childhood trauma.

A recent report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation—"The First Eight Years: Giving Kids a Foundation for Lifetime Success"—shows how, for many low-income children, the gap starts early because of health problems at birth that slow cognitive, social, and emotional development. The gap can widen when kids don't have access to book- or language-rich homes or high-quality learning experiences, and it can widen even more for kids growing up poor.

Communities and families can improve readiness by mitigating the impact of poverty through parent education, early intervention programs such as Early Head Start, and family visiting programs.



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

PALS-K # of Students Screened, 2013 & 2014		
Athens	18	19
Edgar	43	46
Everest	422	396
Marathon City	43	51
Mosinee	125	124
Spencer	46	45
Stratford	54	64
Wausau	641	614

- According to the PALS-K Kindergarten readiness assessment, 91% of students in Marathon County were prepared for Kindergarten in 2013 and 92% were prepared in 2014.
- Athens, Spencer, and Stratford had 100% readiness rates in 2013, and Athens, Edgar, and Stratford had 100% readiness in 2014.
- Wausau and Mosinee see the highest rate of enrolling Kindergarteners that do not meet readiness benchmarks.

### SOURCES

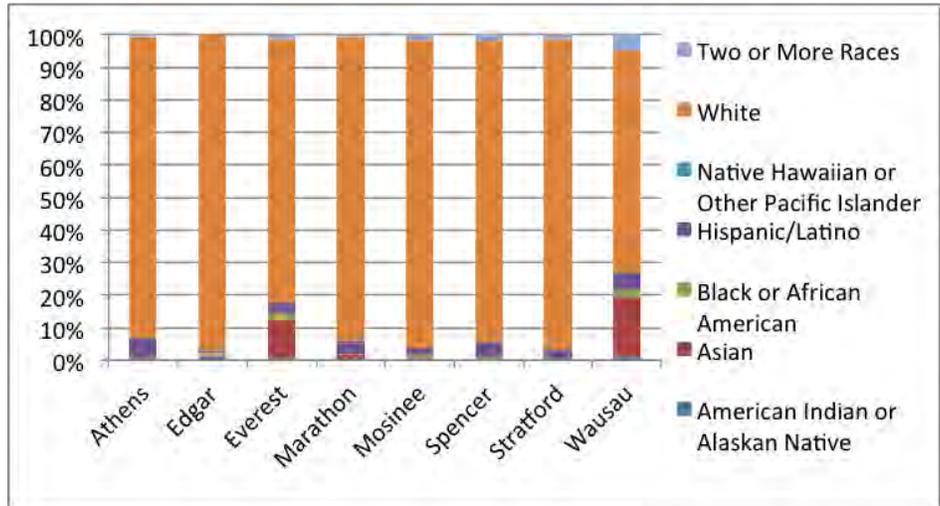
- Annie E. Casey Foundation  
[www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)
- PALS Wisconsin  
[www.palswisconsin.info](http://www.palswisconsin.info)
- Marathon County Early Years Coalition  
[www.raisegreatkids.org](http://www.raisegreatkids.org)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

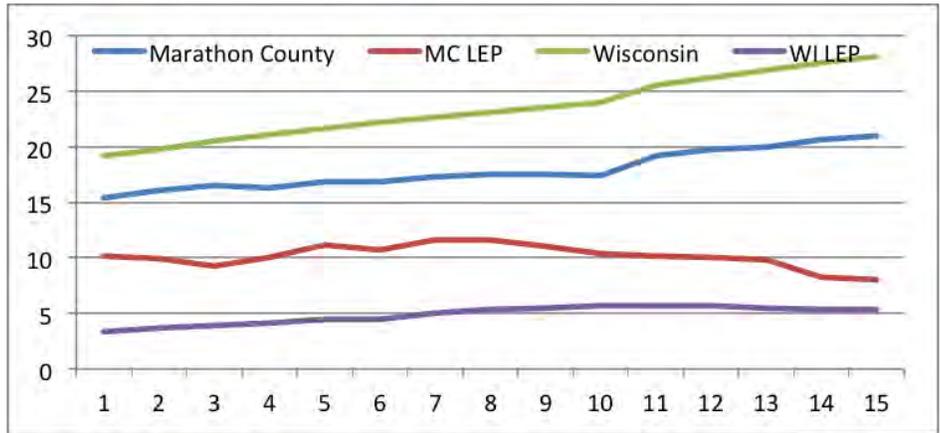
District Enrollments	
Athens	407
Edgar	654
Everest	5,857
Marathon City	676
Mosinee	2,011
Spencer	771
Stratford	938
Wausau	8,628

- 72.6% of Marathon County students attended the urban districts of Wausau or D. C. Everest in 2014-15.
- 32% of Wausau students and 21% of Marathon County students identified as a race or ethnicity other than white in 2014-15.
- While Asians remain the second largest ethnicity in county schools, Hispanics are the fastest growing, followed by students of two or more races.
- While Marathon County continues to have lower minority populations than state averages, it continues to serve almost twice the number of LEP students.

Key Measure: District Enrollment by Race or Ethnicity, 2014—2015



Key Measure: Percent of Students Identifying as a Race or Ethnicity Other than White and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students, 2000—2015



SOURCES

- WI Department of Public Instruction**  
WISEdash Public Portal  
[wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash](http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash)
- U.S. Census Bureau**  
[www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

While only about 9% of the entire Marathon County population identified as non-white in the last census, 21% of county students do, 32% in Wausau. Schools are indicators of impending community change, and, while a mostly white older generation still skews demographics, it is clear from school-age data that the ethnic make up of Marathon County is becoming more diverse.



Also notable, while Marathon County remains below statewide percentages for non-white students, it continues to

serve a higher percentage of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, although that percentage is trending slightly down, continuing to drop further below 10%.

Marathon County serves students in eight different school districts. Two—Wausau and D. C. Everest—are considered urban districts, while the other six are considered rural. Populations within

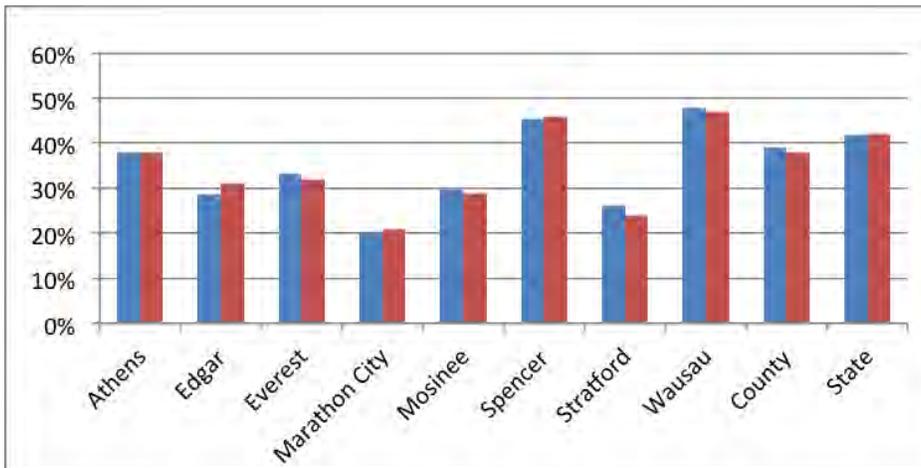
those districts range from under 500 to more than 8,500 and serve a wide range of students from a variety of circumstances.



**Key Measure:** Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students, 2000—2015



**Key Measure:** Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students by District, 2013-14 & 2014-15



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The economic downturn saw a significant increase in the number of economically disadvantaged students in Marathon County schools, jumping from 23% in 2001-02 to 39% in 2012-13. While the last two years have seen slight decreases from this peak, the percent of economically disadvantaged students still remains well above pre-recession levels.

There are also disparities between the districts in Marathon County—with Wausau and Spencer having the highest percentages at 47% and 46% respectively and Marathon City having the lowest at 21%. There are similar disparities within the larger urban districts, especially at the elementary

school level. For instance, of Wausau’s 13 elementary schools, five fall below 30% while five exceed 65%. Only one—Riverview Elementary—falls within 5 percentage points of Wausau’s district average.

Education research has demonstrated strong correlations between poverty and learning challenges. To maximize learning outcomes, communities must work not only to reduce the number of individual students living in poverty but also to lessen the impact of poverty on the schools within the district.

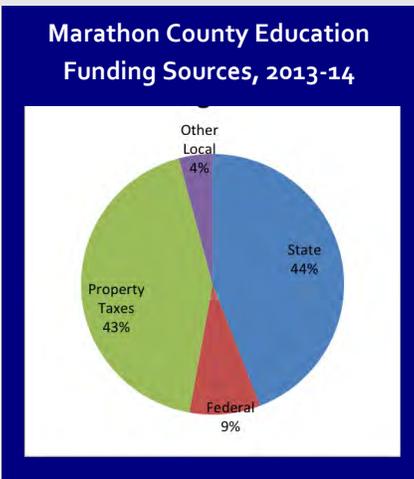
### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Marathon County has seen slight decreases in the percent of economically disadvantaged students over the past two years from its peak at 39% in 2012-13. However, some rural districts—Edgar, Marathon City, and Spencer—are still seeing increases.
- Urban districts with multiple elementary schools (Wausau and Everest) see disparities among those schools largely because of wealthy and impoverished neighborhoods that fall within those school boundaries.
- While Wausau schools have an average economic disadvantage of 47.0%, its elementary schools range from South Mountain at 19.1% (the county’s lowest) to Thomas Jefferson at 78.9% (the county’s highest).
- Wausau has five elementary schools with economic disadvantage percentages above 65%.
- While Everest schools have an average economic disadvantage of 32%, its elementary schools range from Hatley at 19.3% to Weston at 57.1%.

### SOURCES

- **WI Department of Public Instruction**  
WISEdash Public Portal  
[wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash](http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash)
- **USDA**  
Food and Nutritional Service  
National School Lunch Program  
[www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/)
- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates  
[www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/statecounty/index.html](http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/statecounty/index.html)

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

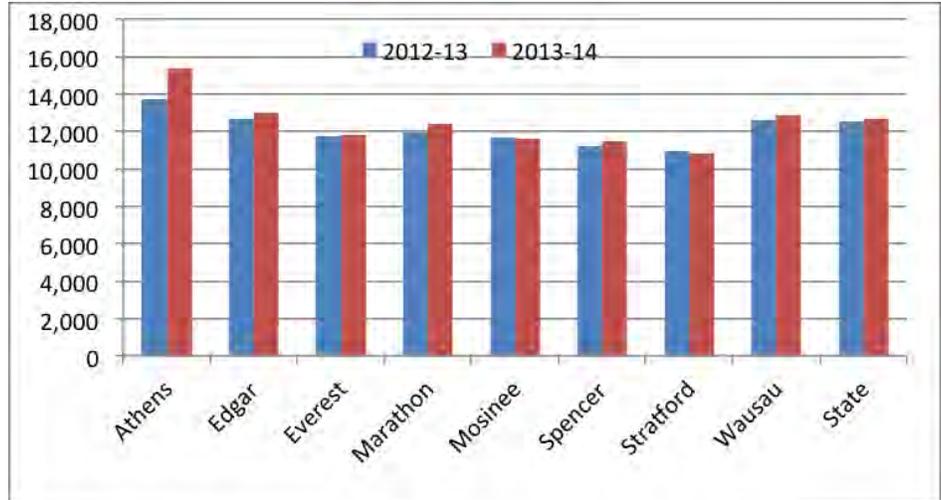


- TEC per pupil do not include the cost of food service, fee-funded community service activities, or capital projects funded through long-term debt.
- At \$15,369, Athens continues to have the highest per pupil TEC in the county. Stratford continues to have the lowest at \$10,854.
- Legislation to support rural schools in Wisconsin lead to a spike in funding for rural districts in Marathon County.
- The statewide expansion of the School Voucher program has had an impact on the per pupil dollars that a district is able to keep within its schools.

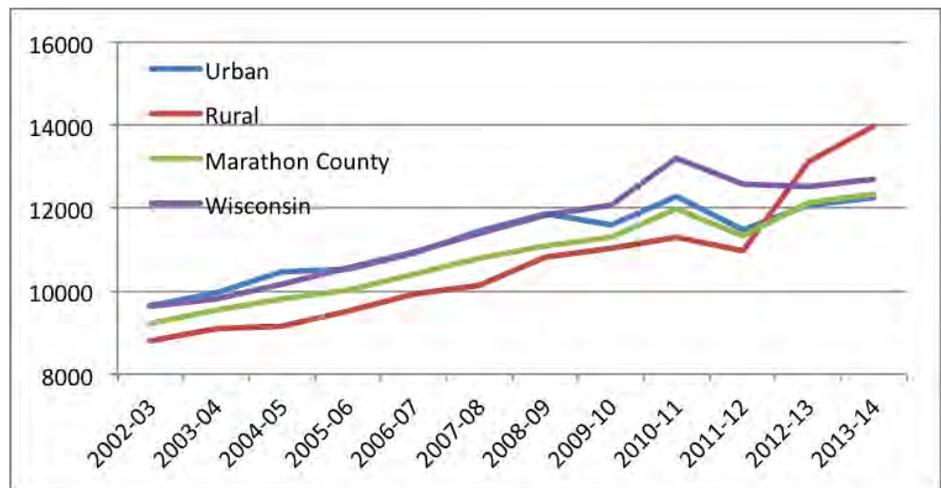
SOURCES

- WI Department of Public Instruction  
WISEdash Public Portal  
[wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash](http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash)

Key Measure: Total Education Costs (TEC) Per Pupil by District, 2012—2014



Key Measure: Total Education Costs Per Pupil, 2002—2014



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

With the exception of a recent investment in rural schools statewide, funding for education in Marathon County has stayed relatively flat since the 2008-09 school year—hovering just

did little to move the overall education investment in the county.

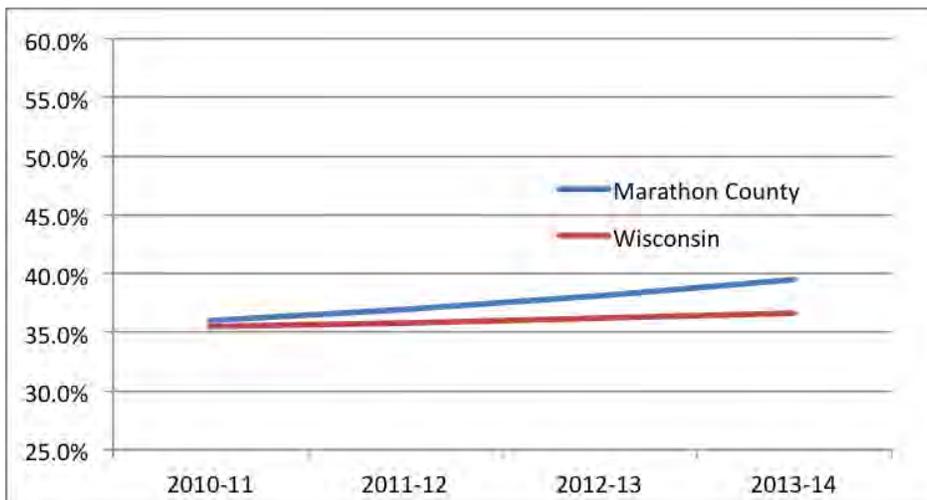
With the cost of operations continuing to rise and the statewide expansion of the school voucher program, districts have had to work with fewer real dollars even as total dollar amounts have seen a slight increase.

In 2012, Wisconsin had the fourth largest reduction in pre-recession per-pupil spending at \$776 per pupil.



above or below \$12,000 per pupil. As about 75% of students attend urban schools, even this increased investment

**Key Measure:** Percent Achieving Reading Proficiency, 2010—2014



**Key Measure:** Percent of Students Achieving Proficient or Advanced in Reading on the Wisconsin Student Assessment System by District, 2013-14



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- Since the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) was adopted, Marathon County has seen stronger gains in reading proficiency than the state as a whole.
- 39.5% of Marathon County students score Proficient or Advanced on the WSAS reading assessments, surpassing the state average of 36.6%.
- In 2013-14, Marathon City had the highest reading proficiency scores at 43.6%. Edgar had the lowest scores at 32.3%.
- Seven of the eight school districts in Marathon County exceeded the state average for reading proficiency in 2013-14.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

In 2012, the state of Wisconsin adopted a new assessment system—the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS)—that created new standards for student achievement. This more rigorous assessment set a higher bar for advanced and proficient skills in hopes of generating instructional changes that would prepare more students for college and careers after high school.

Marathon County continues to exceed state averages in these measures, and our growth rate is also out-pacing the state average. Still, there is room for growth to ensure that all Marathon County students receive an adequate education that prepares them for life after high school.



### SOURCES

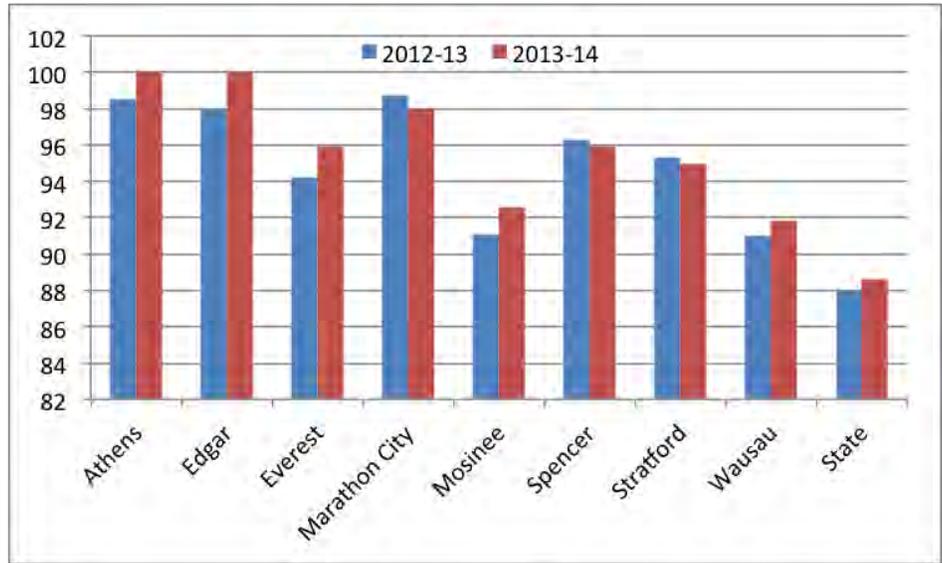
- WI Department of Public Instruction  
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[wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash](http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash)

## DATA HIGHLIGHTS

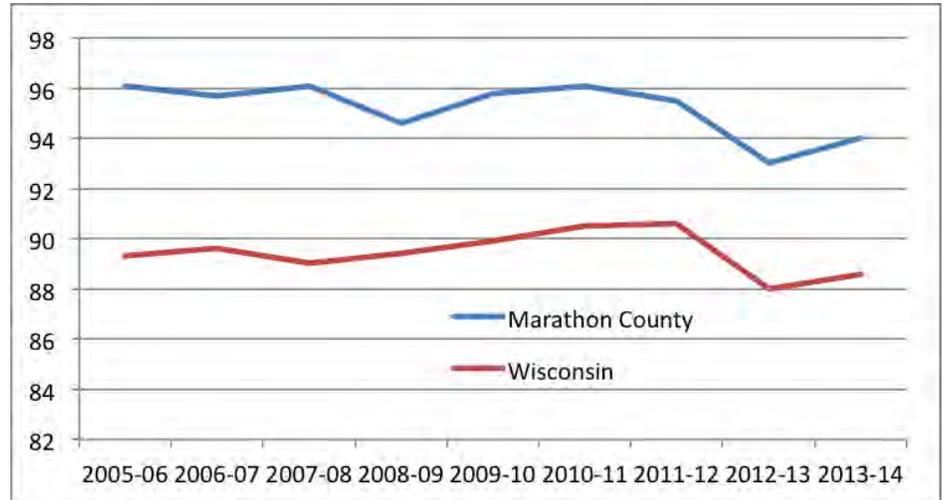
- With 88.6% of high school freshmen graduating within four years, Wisconsin continues to be ranked first in the country for high school graduation rates.
- Athens and Edgar both had 100% graduation rates for 2013 – 2014.
- Marathon County had a 94.0% four-year cohort graduation rate in 2013 – 2014.
- At 91.8%, Wausau had the lowest graduation rate in Marathon County in 2013 – 2014; however, all districts had a higher rate of graduation than the state average.



**Key Measure:** Percent of Seniors Graduating (Four-year Cohort) with a Regular Diploma, 2012–2014



**Key Measure:** Percent of Students Graduating (Four-year Cohort) with a Regular Diploma, 2005–2014



## SOURCES

- **WI Department of Public Instruction**  
WISEdash Public Portal  
[wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash](http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash)

## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

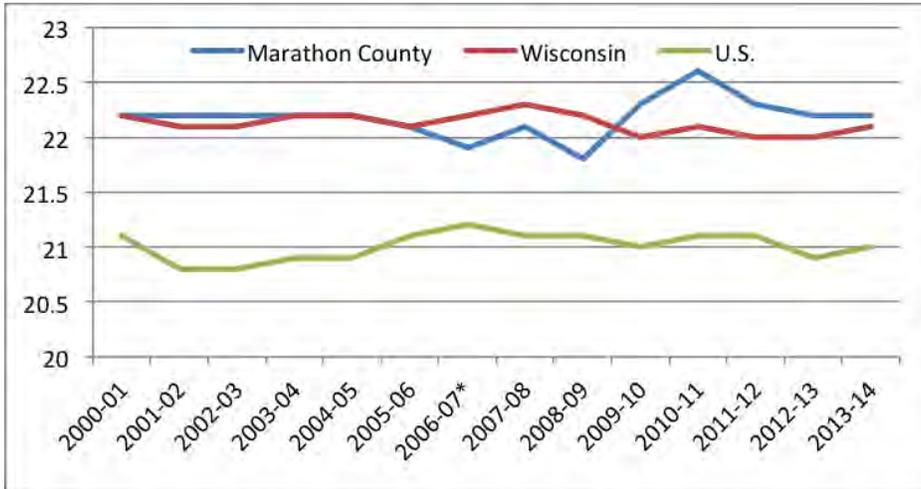
Wisconsin has led the nation for years with its ability to graduate seniors on time from high school. This same tradition is alive and well in Marathon County, with 94% of its students graduating with their four-year cohort, well above the state average. However, recent data has shown a slight decrease in the number of students graduating within four years.

A timely graduation sets county residents up for a successful future, increasing the likelihood of attending college or finding a stable job after graduation. An increasing number of jobs require at least a high school

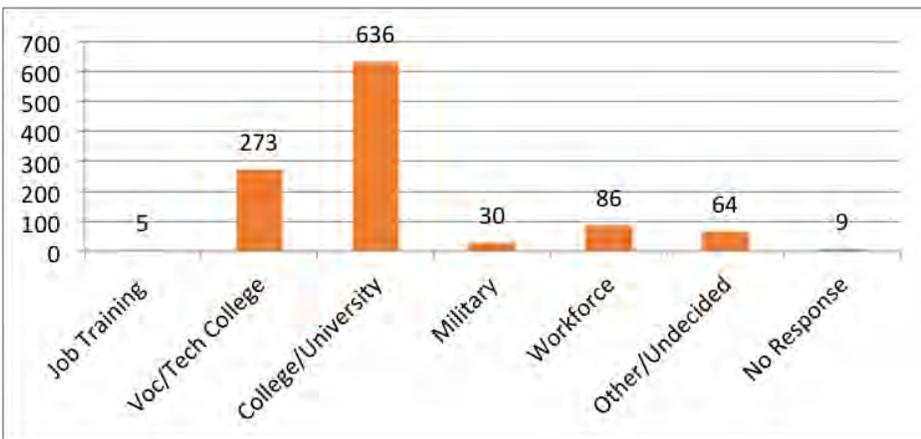
diploma, and graduating on time signals to employers a work ethic and reliability they look for in employees.

Investing in efforts to maintain or improve the graduation rate in Marathon County will continue to have positive benefits for the county.

**Key Measure:** Average ACT Composite Score, 2000—2014



**Key Measure:** Post-Secondary Intentions for Marathon County Graduates, 2014-15



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Secondary instruction focuses much of its efforts on preparing students for their lives after high school in hopes that graduates are well prepared to participate in society either as students or workers. While students have a variety of post-secondary options, a strong majority of high school graduates in Marathon County plan to continue their education either at a vocational or technical college or at a college or university.

For four-year college students, the ACT is a strong measure of their preparedness. Typically taken by college-bound students in their junior or senior year, it assesses their educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. These averages accordingly serve as a measure for educational effectiveness at national,

state, and local levels.

At 22.2, Marathon County has maintained an average ACT composite score above the state average for five testing cycles, although the gap is narrowing.

The state of Wisconsin has recently adopted the ACT as part of its state-wide testing program in hopes of measuring the preparedness of all students, rather than those that select to take the test because of their future college plans. This shift may impact future averages.

### DATA HIGHLIGHTS

2013-14 ACT Results		
District	Score	% Tested
Athens	22.6	49
Edgar	21.5	50
Everest	22.8	68
Marathon City	23.3	62.1
Mosinee	21.9	52.0
Spencer	22.2	53.2
Stratford	21.1	76.5
Wausau	21.8	62.7

- Marathon County had an average ACT Score of 22.2, above the state (22.1) and national (21.0) averages.
- At 62.4%, Marathon County had a ACT participation rate slightly below the state average of 66% but higher than the national average of 57%. All Wisconsin students will be required to take the ACT in future testing years.
- At 82.4% a vast majority of Marathon County graduates plan to continue their schooling after high school with 57.7% indicating plans to attend a college or university and 24.8% indicating plans to attend a vocational or technical college.

### SOURCES

- **WI Department of Public Instruction**  
WISEdash Public Portal  
[wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash](http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash)
- **The American College Test (ACT)**  
[www.act.org/](http://www.act.org/)

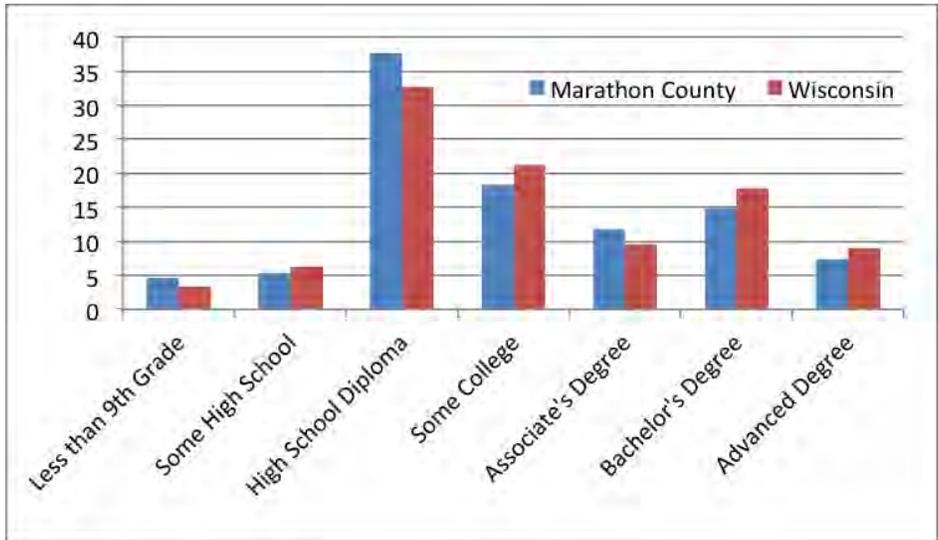


DATA HIGHLIGHTS

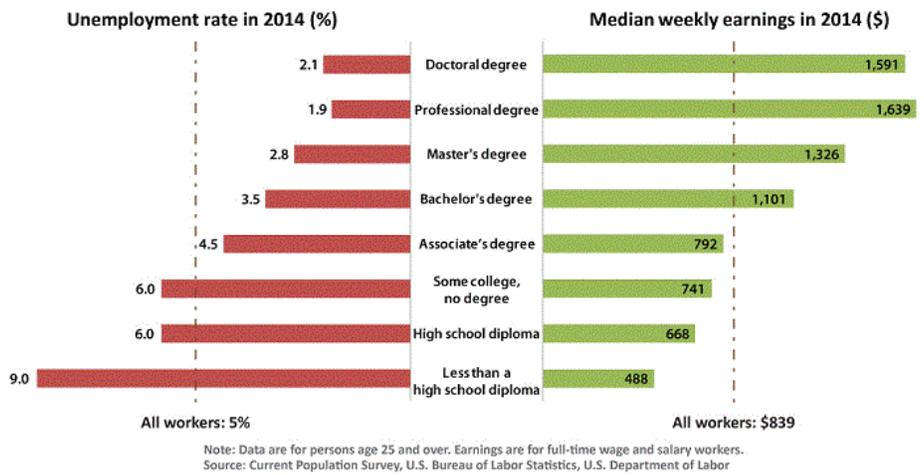
2014 Median Income by Educational Attainment for Marathon County	
Education	Income
< High School	\$20,285
HS Diploma	32,289
Some College/ Associate's	\$34,663
Bachelor's	\$42,051
Advanced	\$63,944

- The percent of residents in Marathon County with a bachelor's degree decreased slightly from 22.5 % in 2011 to 22.2% in 2013, falling further below the state average which grew from 26.5% to 26.8% over the same period. In the U.S. 29% of adults hold bachelor's degrees.
- 21.6% of Marathon County residents born out of state have a bachelor's degree and 10.9% have an advanced degree compared with 18.1 % and 5.9% for residents born in state.
- At 11.7%, Marathon County has a higher percent of residents with an associate's degree than the state average of 9.6%.
- At 35.1%, women in Marathon County are more likely to attain a post-secondary degree than men at 32.7%

**Key Measure:** Educational Attainment Percentages for People 25 and Older, 2013



**Key Measure:** National Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment, 2014



SOURCES

- WI Department of Public Instruction**  
WISEdash Public Portal  
[wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash](http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wisedash)
- U.S. Census Bureau**  
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics**  
[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)
- U.S. Department of Labor**  
[www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

An individual's educational attainment level is often a predictor of his or her ability to access certain benefits of the economy. People with higher levels of education tend to have easier access to steady employment at a higher level of compensation.

Marathon County holds true to this narrative, with median income levels rising with educational attainment. However, Marathon County does have lower percentages of residents with bachelor's and advanced degrees than state averages. With Marathon County's strong manufacturing sector, the county does see an increase in the percent of residents with associates degrees.

Marathon County offers its residents many programs to continue their education, including UW-Marathon County, Northcentral Technical College, Globe University, and Rasmussen College with partnership programs with Concordia University, Edgewood College, Lakeland College, Marian University, Silver Lake College, Upper Iowa University, UW-Green Bay, UW-Stevens Point, UW-Stout, and Viterbo University.