

This tenth edition of the LIFE Report celebrates twenty years of community coming together for the purpose of community improvement. 1996, community leaders representing Marathon County met to discuss ways to identify a common agenda to create and improve community efficiencies. The first edition of the LIFE Report was published in 1997 and every two years since.

The United Way of Marathon County continues to serve as the lead agency for the project—coordinating the work, providing staff, acting as fiscal agent, and overseeing project activities. The LIFE Steering Committee guides all aspects of the report development. The continued commitment of our sponsors and committee members are essential to the report's success.

## **Purpose of the LIFE Report:**

- Acknowledge community strengths.
- Identify community challenges.
- Serve as a catalyst for change by advancing community conversations and partnerships around the Calls to Action.

## **Overview and Highlights of the Tenth Edition LIFE Report :**

- For the first time, this edition includes icons on select indicator pages that show five issues that are represented across several sections of the report. These icons are to help the reader understand the scope of the topic and how sections of the report are intertwined.
- New with this report are short videos produced to highlight the issues and sections. The videos will be available at [www.unitedwaymc.org/lifereport.htm](http://www.unitedwaymc.org/lifereport.htm). A color version of the report will also be available via this link.
- The LIFE Steering Committee is dedicated to continually improving the report. Modifications include:
  - \* Improved indicators—some were eliminated and other more relevant indicators were added.
  - \* Survey questions were changed to address gaps in data and subcommittee priorities.
  - \* Opportunities for action were added on the second page of each section. These statements are viewed as a step toward setting a broad community agenda to make improvements across all issues, not just the top calls to action.
- The report continues to involve subcommittee experts to write indicator pages and to clarify the implications for our community.
- Online links to information sources are provided to enable readers to do additional research.
- Over the history of the report, the process that determines priorities or Calls to Action has evolved. The LIFE Steering Committee selected these Calls to Action by doing the following:
  - \* Becoming familiar with the data, survey results, and section summaries.
  - \* Using agreed upon criteria to select top issues of concern.
  - \* Then together, reviewing and discussing the data and rationale for top issues and coming to a consensus about the top Calls to Action.
- The report relies on a staff manager to coordinate the work of the volunteer subcommittees, to update data, to pull together the demographics, and to analyze data results.

# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2015-2017

## Executive Summary: Twenty Years of LIFE

This tenth edition of the Marathon County LIFE Report celebrates twenty years of the community coming together to establish priorities. A look back through the previous nine reports identified trends, shifts, and successes captured through this process and an ongoing evolution and improvement in the report over time.



### The Evolution of the Report

- 1997 - The first report presented data and identified top challenges.
- The second report recognized the role of the report is also to stimulate a community commitment to take action.
- While some progress was noted, the third report stated about the previous priorities: "These are difficult issues and will likely take years to see real progress."
- The fourth report added a snapshot report to summarize the highlights of the full report. The snapshot has been continued in all subsequent years. The report acknowledged that it is difficult to always see the connection between a specific program or activity and a change in community status.
- The fifth report was the tenth year and included consistent indicators so that a 10-year trend analysis could be completed. At that time, the group evaluated whether the report should be less frequent. There was an overwhelming response that publishing every two years was necessary. This continuity allowed for ongoing involvement, discussion and focus for the community. The fifth report began the tradition of distributing the report at a community forum.
- More improvements were made to the indicators in the sixth report and in each report thereafter. In this report the top three issues identified by the survey perception question were noted, which continued in following reports, used for priority setting. This report also included a summary of the county's 2006 health assessment.
- The seventh report more prominently focused on the Calls to Action. Each section's summary page brought attention to the Calls to Action noting progress made and community strengths. The expanded issue description occurred with sub-committees of community experts who assisted in writing the report. Their involvement also allowed more community engagement to "own" the data and see it as a tool to help inform the community of the issues and track data over time.
- The eighth and ninth reports continued the community expert involvement and the continued the refinement of more meaningful measures and survey questions to fill in gaps where data did not exist. These reports added more details, objectives and photos.
- The eighth report emphasized the need for collaborative partnerships and groups to work together on priorities. This report also noted that "many of the community challenges represent large scale national issues not likely to change or improve short term."
- The ninth report continued to bring attention to community successes, challenges and opportunities.
- This tenth edition continued past practices and added several new elements: videos will be produced and icons for major issues that cross sections were added.

These report advancements were supported by technology. Twenty years ago the internet was not widely available and data was more difficult to find. Today active hyperlinks are now available to allow readers to connect and learn more about the issue. More people can access the report by viewing the report on the website.

People have come to rely on the report for information. Over the years, the report has gained traction with community organizations, foundations and government seeing it as an essential tool for setting their agendas and distributing resources. The LIFE Report is now aligned with the required County Health Assessment and it is being used this year to guide the Marathon County 10-Year Plan.

# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2015-2017

## Executive Summary: Twenty Years of LIFE

In addition to content changes, our look back over the priorities and calls for action set in each report revealed changes to the number of priorities selected and the scope and specificity of those topics.

*"The Life Report moved from being a more static review of the community's strengths and challenges, to a more visionary and proactive approach for moving the community towards action."*

*-Barbara Jakobi*

### The Most Common Priorities

- Income was reported in all ten reports. Sometimes the topic was referred to as lack of affordable housing, good paying jobs, or basic needs (e.g. food/housing/jobs).
- Eight of the reports mentioned alcohol and drug abuse as a priority.
- Most reports mentioned a concern for improved health. This was described as a need for healthy behaviors, reducing obesity or increasing preventative health and healthy lifestyles.
- Most reports also focused on a concern for developing strong families to support children and reducing domestic abuse and child abuse.
- The most recent five reports have mentioned the need to have supports and services to support the growing demographic of the elderly population.

## The Changing Faces of Marathon County

A twenty-year view of our county's changing demographics provided a unique picture of our community.

Twenty years of reports have seen the percent of people of color living in the county more than double from 4.5% in 1996 to 10.4% in 2013. This shift is even more striking when viewed through school enrollments, where cultural diversity significantly outpaces county percentages. Marathon County still has a largely white adult population, but its school-age population is much more diverse.

The past twenty years also depict an aging county. In 1996, the median age for Marathon County was 32.7. By 2013, it had increased to 39.8. In 1996 only 12.7% of the county's residents were 65+. People 65+ now make up 14.6% and, with aging Baby Boomers, is projected to reach a quarter of the population by 2035 if we maintain current demographic patterns.

To fully understand the LIFE Report, a reader must also understand these demographic shifts and the impacts they are having and will continue to have on the indicator pages within this report.

### DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

#### Ethnic/Racial Diversity

**4.5**  
% in 1996

**10.4**  
% in 2013

**10.4**  
% in County

**21.0**  
% in Schools

#### Asian Kindergarteners in Wausau Schools

**33.7**  
% in 1996

**22.3**  
% in 2013

#### Median Age

**32.7**  
Years in 1996

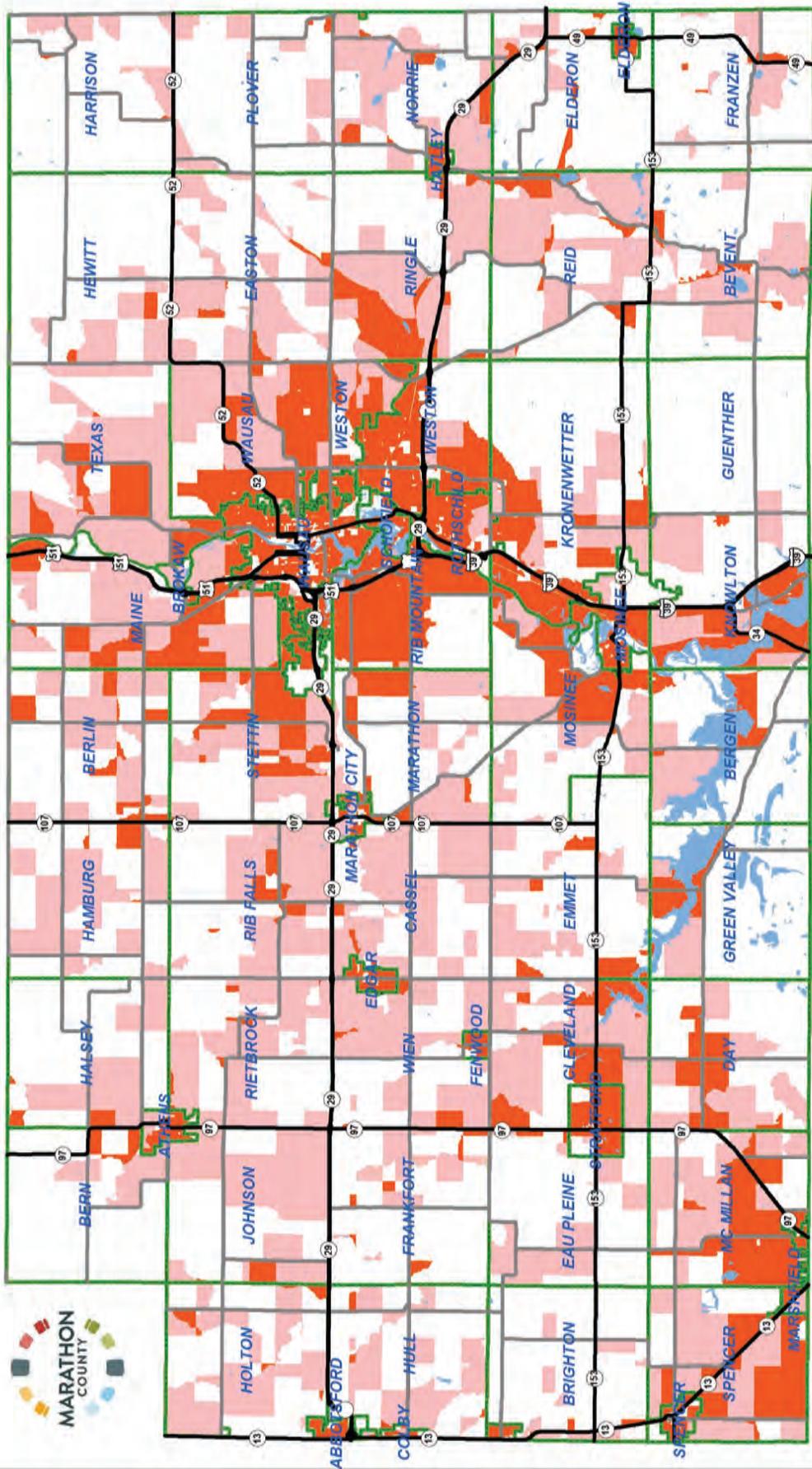
**39.8**  
Years in 2013

#### Population 65+

**12.7**  
% in 1996

**14.6**  
% in 2013

# MARATHON COUNTY, WI POPULATION DENSITY



**2010 Census**

- 0 - 25.0 Persons/SqMile
- 25.1 - 50.0 Persons/SqMile
- > 50.0 Persons/SqMile

— State & US Highways  
 — County Roads  
 □ Municipal Boundary  
 ■ Hydro Features



Map Date: November 3, 2011

# Community Demographics

| Description                                | Marathon County                            |          |          | Wisconsin |           |           | United States |             |             |
|--|--|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
|  | 2000                                       | 2010     | 2013     | 2000      | 2010      | 2013      | 2000          | 2010        | 2013        |
| Population                                 | 125,836                                    | 134,063  | 135,365  | 5,363,675 | 5,686,986 | 5,742,953 | 284,421,906   | 308,745,538 | 316,497,531 |
| Median Age (Years)                         | 36.3                                       | 37.9     | 39.8     | 36.0      | 38.5      | 38.7      | 35.3          | 36.5        | 37.3        |
| Minority Population                        | 6.6%                                       | 9.7%     | 10.4%    | 13.1%     | 16.7%     | 17.5%     | 31.8%         | 36.3%       | 37.4%       |
| Families in poverty                        | 4.3%                                       | 5.0%     | 6.9%     | 5.6%      | 7.2%      | 11.3%     | 9.2%          | 9.9%        | 11.3%       |
| Median Household Income                    | \$45,165                                   | \$53,150 | \$53,363 | \$43,791  | \$51,569  | \$52,413  | \$41,994      | \$51,425    | \$53,046    |
| Average Household Size                     | 2.6  | 2.5      | 2.6      | 2.5       | 2.4       | 2.4       | 2.6           | 2.6         | 2.6         |
| Language Other Than English Spoken in Home | 7.4%                                       | 7.8%     | 8.1%     | 7.3%      | 8.2%      | 8.6%      | 17.9%         | 19.6%       | 20.7%       |
| In Labor Force (16+)                       | 71.7%                                      | 72.1%    | 70.5%    | 69.1%     | 69.0%     | 67.9%     | 63.9%         | 65.0%       | 64.3%       |
| AGE  | Under 5                                    | 6.4%     | 6.4%     | 6.4%      | 6.3%      | 6.2%      | 6.8%          | 6.9%        | 6.4%        |
|  | 5 to 14                                    | 15.5%    | 13.5%    | 13.4%     | 14.6%     | 13.1%     | 14.6%         | 13.4%       | 13.2%       |
|  | 15 to 24                                   | 13.1%    | 13.3%    | 12.4%     | 14.3%     | 13.8%     | 13.7%         | 13.9%       | 14.1%       |
|  | 25 to 44                                   | 29.5%    | 25.9%    | 25.0%     | 29.4%     | 25.4%     | 25.2%         | 30.3%       | 27.6%       |
|  | 45 to 64                                   | 22.5%    | 27.2%    | 28.4%     | 22.1%     | 27.7%     | 27.9%         | 21.9%       | 25.2%       |
|  | 65+  | 13.0%    | 13.7%    | 14.6%     | 13.1%     | 13.7%     | 14.1%         | 12.4%       | 12.6%       |
|  | 64.3%                                      | 64.3%    | 64.3%    | 64.3%     | 64.3%     | 64.3%     | 64.3%         | 64.3%       | 64.3%       |
| RACE                                       | White (Not Hispanic or Latino)             | 93.8%    | 91.3%    | 89.6%     | 88.9%     | 86.2%     | 82.5%         | 72.4%       | 62.6%       |
|  | Black or African-American                  | 0.3%     | 0.6%     | 0.8%      | 5.7%      | 6.3%      | 6.5%          | 12.6%       | 13.2%       |
|  | American Indian and Alaska Native          | 0.3%     | 0.5%     | 0.6%      | 0.9%      | 1.0%      | 1.1%          | 0.9%        | 1.2%        |
|  | Asian                                      | 4.5%     | 5.3%     | 5.6%      | 1.7%      | 2.3%      | 2.5%          | 3.6%        | 5.3%        |
|  | Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 0.0%     | 0.0%     | 0.0%      | 0.0%      | 0.0%      | 0.0%          | 0.1%        | 0.2%        |
|  | Hispanic or Latino                         | 0.8%     | 2.2%     | 2.5%      | 3.6%      | 5.9%      | 6.3%          | 12.5%       | 16.3%       |
|  | Two or More Races                          | 0.7%     | 1.3%     | 1.3%      | 1.2%      | 1.8%      | 1.7%          | 2.4%        | 2.4%        |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder  
[factfinder2.census.gov/](http://factfinder2.census.gov/)

# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2015-2017

## 2015 LIFE in Marathon County Community Survey

In order to assess some important issues regarding the quality of life in Marathon County that are not currently being measured, the LIFE Steering Committee issued a survey to Marathon County residents in February of 2015.

- 4,000 surveys were mailed to randomly selected Marathon County residents using U.S. mail zip codes.
- Over 100 surveys were issued to non profits including, The Neighbors' Place, The Women's Community, Bridge Community Clinic and Community Center of Hope. This distribution was intended to increase representation of minority populations of Marathon County.
- Again to get increased segments of our population to complete the survey targeted groups were provided an opportunity to fill out an online survey.
- 825 mailed responses were returned
- 167 online responses were completed
- 95 agency surveys were returned.
- In total this yielded an outstanding 25.3% survey return rate (1087 survey responses/4,300 surveys issued).
- This response rate results in a low 2% to 3% margin of error allowing the LIFE Steering Committee to tailor the LIFE Report to our community's concerns and priorities.

### WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?

The LIFE Report follows proper protocols to capture a representative sample of Marathon County's population with its survey. However, any survey is influenced by the people who choose to participate. Interpreting any survey requires an understanding of who took it. To help readers, we have included the following comparison of 2015 LIFE Community Survey participants to actual Marathon County demographics:

| Survey %                | Category               | County %                |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 65% Female              | GENDER                 | 49.8% Female            |
| 64% Married             | RELATIONSHIP STATUS    | 57.2% Married           |
| 36.0% Bachelor's Degree | EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT | 22.2% Bachelor's Degree |
| 43.1% 55—74             | AGE                    | 20.5% 55—74             |
| 94.2% White             | RACE                   | 89.6% White             |
| 30% \$75,000+           | INCOME                 | 32.8% \$75,000+         |

The data obtained from the community survey represent the viewpoints of those who responded. The survey is not representative of Marathon County's population.

# 2015 LIFE Community Survey Results

| 1. In thinking about the quality of life in Marathon County, how SATISFIED are you with the following in your community? | Strongly Satisfied | Satisfied | Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Strongly Dissatisfied | Don't Know/Not Applicable |
|--|--------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Accessibility of childcare.  | 5.5                | 19.3      | 11.9                               | 47.1         | 0.4                   | 58.8                      |
| Accessibility of elder care.   | 5.4                | 30.8      | 14.8                               | 7.3          | 1.7                   | 39.9                      |
| Accessibility of services for adults and/or children who are victims of family violence or abuse.                        | 4.7                | 28.6      | 13.5                               | 4.9          | 0.8                   | 48.3                      |
| Accessibility of healthcare.   | 28.2               | 53.9      | 8.2                                | 5.2          | 1.9                   | 2.6                       |
| Accessibility of mental health services.   | 7.5                | 28.1      | 14.8                               | 10.7         | 7.1                   | 31.8                      |
| Accessibility of dental care.  | 25.2               | 51.8      | 9.6                                | 6.2          | 4.2                   | 3.0                       |
| Availability of information about community services.  | 13.0               | 47.8      | 22.4                               | 8.9          | 1.7                   | 6.2                       |
| Public K-12 education in terms of career/college readiness.  | 14.1               | 39.4      | 12.6                               | 10.7         | 2.8                   | 20.5                      |
| Availability of post-high school education.  | 17.0               | 50.0      | 12.7                               | 6.2          | 0.9                   | 13.2                      |
| Maintenance of streets, roads and highways.  | 5.2                | 35.3      | 20.6                               | 28.1         | 9.6                   | 1.1                       |
| Availability of public transportation.   | 4.8                | 22.3      | 21.3                               | 18.2         | 9.9                   | 23.5                      |
| Availability of arts and entertainment opportunities.  | 15.3               | 50.8      | 20.5                               | 7.0          | 1.8                   | 4.6                       |
| Availability of area parks and recreation.   | 27.6               | 57.3      | 10.4                               | 2.4          | 0.6                   | 1.7                       |
| Availability of safe places to walk and bike.  | 17.9               | 52.8      | 14.5                               | 9.2          | 2.8                   | 2.9                       |
| Cleanliness of our lakes and rivers.   | 8.6                | 48.2      | 22.8                               | 12.1         | 3.4                   | 4.9                       |
| My community is open and welcoming.  | 15.6               | 50.9      | 21.1                               | 8.3          | 2.1                   | 2.1                       |

| 2. In thinking about the quality of life in Marathon County, how CONCERNED are you about the following in your community? | Very Concerned | Somewhat Concerned | Neither Concerned or not concerned | Not concerned | Don't Know/Not Applicable | Top-Three Concern |
|---|----------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Affordability of childcare.   | 12.9           | 20.1               | 11.1                               | 6.8           | 49.0                      | 16: 6.6           |
| Affordability of elder care.  | 26.4           | 30.6               | 9.7                                | 4.3           | 29.0                      | 6: 16.6           |
| Affordability of healthcare.  | 42.3           | 35.4               | 10.9                               | 7.7           | 3.7                       | 2: 33.6           |
| Affordability of mental health care services.   | 27.7           | 26.0               | 17.3                               | 6.3           | 22.7                      | 13: 9.0           |
| Affordability of dental care.   | 32.6           | 35.6               | 16.4                               | 12.3          | 3.1                       | 10: 10.8          |
| Availability of assistance programs for those in need.  | 23.4           | 34.4               | 17.0                               | 11.5          | 13.6                      | 12: 9.1           |
| Affordability of post high school education.  | 25.4           | 32.0               | 17.6                               | 12.9          | 12.2                      | 9: 11.2           |
| Abuse and misuse of alcohol.  | 34.8           | 33.6               | 17.7                               | 6.6           | 7.2                       | 5: 18.4           |
| Illegal drug use.   | 58.8           | 26.0               | 6.8                                | 3.2           | 5.1                       | 1: 46.7           |
| E-cigarettes/vaping   | 31.8           | 30.2               | 17.7                               | 11.4          | 8.9                       | 18: 5.5           |
| Abuse and misuse of prescription drugs.   | 43.5           | 32.7               | 12.7                               | 4.8           | 6.3                       | 7: 14.0           |
| Drinking and driving.   | 51.9           | 31.3               | 11.0                               | 3.4           | 2.9                       | 3: 31.0           |
| Unhealthy eating and/or the lack of physical activity.  | 24.2           | 42.8               | 21.8                               | 8.4           | 2.9                       | 11: 10.3          |

|  |      |      |      |      |     |          |
|--|------|------|------|------|-----|----------|
| Family violence or abuse of adults and children.                       | 32.5 | 40.7 | 15.2 | 4.4  | 7.3 | 8 (12.2) |
| Acceptance of people of different backgrounds, races and life-styles   | 18.2 | 33.8 | 30.4 | 15.0 | 2.6 | 15: 7.6  |
| Availability of jobs that pay enough to meet basic household expenses. | 42.8 | 35.5 | 11.0 | 6.2  | 4.5 | 3 (31.0) |
| Amount of quality time that parents spend with their children.         | 31.9 | 37.8 | 15.5 | 6.4  | 8.4 | 14: 8.3  |
| My personal safety in my home.   | 13.9 | 20.2 | 23.8 | 39.6 | 2.5 | 17: 5.8  |
| My safety when alone in my neighborhood in the daytime.                | 9.9  | 17.7 | 21.6 | 49.3 | 1.5 | 19: 4.8  |
| My safety when alone in my neighborhood after dark.                    | 14.4 | 25.9 | 21.8 | 35.8 | 2.0 | 20: 4.2  |

|                          |                 |                    |                          |                   |               |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>3. I am employed:</b> | Full Time: 46.0 | One Part Time: 8.7 | 2 or More Part Time: 2.4 | Not Employed: 6.8 | Retired: 36.0 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|

**a. If employed – I am satisfied with my full time or part time job.**

|                      |             |                |                        |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Strongly Agree: 43.5 | Agree: 41.8 | Disagree: 12.4 | Strongly Disagree: 2.3 |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------|

**b. If you are not satisfied with your job, what best describes why? (check all that apply)**

|  |                 |                        |                            |                                   |                              |             |
|--|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Job Does Not Use Educational Back-ground: 28.1 | Low Wages: 51.7 | Lack of Benefits: 33.7 | Lack of Advance-ment: 30.3 | Not Enough Hours/ Part Time: 18.0 | Poor Work Environ-ment: 27.0 | Other: 11.2 |
|--|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|

**4. Was there a time in the past 12 months you had no healthcare coverage or insurance (private, Medicare, Medicaid, or BadgerCare)?**

|          |          |                          |
|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| Yes: 7.6 | No: 91.0 | Don't Know/Not Sure: 1.4 |
|----------|----------|--------------------------|

**a. If yes, what was the most important reason?**

|                               |                                       |                   |                    |             |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Not Offered by Employer: 18.4 | Chose Not to Have it Do to Cost: 28.9 | Not Working: 14.5 | Not Eligible: 21.1 | Other: 17.1 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|

**5. Was there a time in the past 12 months when you or someone in your household should have seen a doctor/ medical provider but did not?**

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| Yes: 21.0 | No: 79.0 |
|-----------|----------|

**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

|  |                               |                              |                                |                                       |                    |             |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Did Not Know How/Where to Find a Provider: 4.1 | Transportation/ Distance: 6.8 | Did Not Have Insurance: 32.1 | No Available Ap-ointments: 4.1 | Had No Means to Pay for Service: 42.1 | Chose Not To: 24.0 | Other: 22.6 |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|

**6. Was there a time in the past 12 months when you or someone in your household should have seen a dentist but did not?**

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| Yes: 24.2 | No: 75.8 |
|-----------|----------|

**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

|  |                               |                              |                                |                                       |                    |             |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Did Not Know How/Where to Find a Provider: 5.5 | Transportation/ Distance: 3.9 | Did Not Have Insurance: 54.3 | No Available Ap-ointments: 3.1 | Had No Means to Pay for Service: 44.9 | Chose Not To: 17.7 | Other: 11.4 |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|

**7. Was there a time in the past 12 months when you or someone in your household should have taken their medication as prescribed but did not?**

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| Yes: 11.1 | No: 88.9 |
|-----------|----------|

**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

|                               |                                |   |                                     |  |                         |  |             |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|-------------|
| Did Not Have Insur-ance: 15.5 | Distance/ Transporta-tion: 0.9 | Had No Means to Pay for Medi-cation: 42.2 | Chose Not to Take Medica-tion: 21.6 | Did Not Under-stand Prescription Directions: 1.7 | Did Not Remem-ber: 19.8 | Did Not Know How/ Where to Get Pre-scription Filled: 4.3 | Other: 17.2 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|-------------|

**8. Was there a time in the past 12 months when you or someone in your household should have seen a mental health provider but could not?**

|          |          |
|----------|----------|
| Yes: 8.0 | No: 92.0 |
|----------|----------|

**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

|   |                              |                              |                                 |                                       |                    |             |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Did Not Know How/Where to Find a Provider: 11.9 | Transportation/Distance: 3.6 | Did Not Have Insurance: 25.0 | No Available Ap-ointments: 15.5 | Had No Means to Pay for Service: 44.0 | Chose Not To: 27.4 | Other: 17.9 |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|

**9. Does your family/household have medical debt?** Yes: 28.7 No: 71.3

**a. If yes, check the amount:**

|                     |                         |                          |                |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| \$999 or Less: 36.5 | \$1,000 - \$4,999: 45.2 | \$5,000 - \$10,000: 12.0 | \$10,000+: 6.4 |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|

**10. In a typical month, how difficult is it for you to cover your food expenses?**

|                     |                          |                            |                 |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Very Difficult: 4.1 | Somewhat Difficult: 23.0 | Not at all Difficult: 71.1 | Don't Know: 1.8 |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|

**11. Do you spend 30% or more of your total household income on housing? (Housing includes rent or mortgage plus utilities, insurance, and property taxes.)**

|           |          |                 |
|-----------|----------|-----------------|
| Yes: 44.7 | No: 47.8 | Don't Know: 7.5 |
|-----------|----------|-----------------|

**12. In a typical month, how difficult is it to cover your household expenses and bills?**

|                     |                          |                            |                 |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Very Difficult: 8.4 | Somewhat Difficult: 36.3 | Not at all Difficult: 53.1 | Don't Know: 2.3 |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|

**13. Have you set aside emergency or rainy day funds that would cover your expenses for 3 months, in case of sickness, job loss, economic downturn, or other emergencies?**

|           |          |                 |
|-----------|----------|-----------------|
| Yes: 58.3 | No: 39.1 | Don't Know: 2.6 |
|-----------|----------|-----------------|

**14. In the last 12 months have you: (check all that apply)**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Donated Items or Made a Financial Contribution to Charity: 93.0 | Helped Individuals Outside My Household and/or Volunteered in the Community: 68.3 |
|---|---|

**a. If you volunteered, approximately how many total hours in the past 12 months did you volunteer or help individuals outside your household?**

|                         |                          |                           |                       |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - 10 Hours/Year: 24.9 | 11 - 50 Hours/Year: 38.9 | 51 - 100 Hours/Year: 20.6 | >100 Hours/Year: 15.5 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|

**15. Do you have a private well?** Yes: 33.6 No: 66.4

**a. Do you have your water tested annually?** Yes: 18.2 No: 81.8

**b. If no, why not?**

|  |            |  |                             |             |
|--|------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Not Concerned about Taste, Odor, or Look: 48.2 | Cost: 11.9 | Do Not Know Where to Get it Tested: 10.8 | Did Not Know I Should: 25.5 | Other: 19.1 |
|--|------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------|

**16. Which of the following actions have you taken to reduce your amount of trash?**

|                  |                         |  |  |                      |                           |                 |           |
|------------------|-------------------------|--|--|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Composting: 30.4 | Reusing Materials: 50.0 | Proper Disposal of Hazardous Materials: 55.9 | Pay Attention to Packaging When Shopping: 19.4 | Donating Items: 57.0 | Medication Drop Box: 28.6 | Recycling: 94.3 | None: 2.6 |
|------------------|-------------------------|--|--|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|

**17. What are you most concerned about in terms of our natural environment?**

|                              |                                       |                           |  |                   |                                |                   |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Drinking Water Quality: 62.9 | Cleanliness of Lakes and Rivers: 54.9 | Energy Conservation: 38.5 | Protection of Open Natural Areas: 33.4 | Air Quality: 47.7 | Available Drinking Water: 17.7 | Soil Erosion: 6.6 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|

**18. Was there a time in the last 12 months when you or someone in your household had no transportation to get to critical activities such as work, medical appointments, shopping, etc.?**

|          |          |               |
|----------|----------|---------------|
| Yes: 9.5 | No: 89.2 | Not Sure: 1.3 |
|----------|----------|---------------|

**a. If yes, why? (check all that apply)**

|                             |                          |                           |  |  |   |            |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|---|------------|
| No Car/Unreliable Car: 70.3 | No Access to a Bus: 36.6 | Couldn't Afford Gas: 35.6 | Couldn't Afford Taxi or Special Transportation: 30.7 | Unable to Drive Due to My Health: 14.9 | No Family, Friends, or Volunteers were Available to Take Me: 41.6 | Other: 5.0 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|---|------------|

**19. How attractive is Marathon County as a place in which to live and work for you?**

|                       |                           |                            |                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Very Attractive: 39.6 | Somewhat Attractive: 54.3 | Not at all Attractive: 4.6 | Don't Know: 1.6 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|

**19a. How attractive is Marathon County as a place in which to live and work for your children?**

|                       |                           |                             |                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Very Attractive: 23.5 | Somewhat Attractive: 50.0 | Not at all Attractive: 11.5 | Don't Know: 15.0 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|

**19b. What do you like best about living in Marathon County?**

|                                |                           |                    |                               |                             |                    |                               |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Affordable Place to Live: 40.3 | Good Place for Kids: 33.4 | Rural Living: 31.9 | Size of the Community: 42.7   | After-hours Activities: 6.7 | Good Schools: 41.7 | Parks and Natural Areas: 52.7 |
| Open and Welcoming: 9.7        | Job Opportunities: 11.5   | Location: 20.2     | Near Friends and Family: 62.1 | Sense of Community: 17.2    | Other: 3.7         |                               |

**20. Considering all types of alcoholic beverages, how many times have 5 or more drinks been consumed on one occasion during the past 30 days? (A standard drink is defined as a 12 oz beer, 4 oz wine, 1½ oz liquor)**

|                       |      |      |         |             |             |            |
|-----------------------|------|------|---------|-------------|-------------|------------|
|                       | None | Once | 2 Times | 3 - 5 Times | 6 - 9 Times | 10 or More |
| By you?               | 74.7 | 9.8  | 5.7     | 6.3         | 1.8         | 1.8        |
| By most other adults? | 16.2 | 12.4 | 19.1    | 32.6        | 10.1        | 9.6        |

**21. In the past 30 days, how many times has a motorized vehicle been operated after consuming 2 or more drinks of alcohol in an hour?**

|                       |      |      |         |             |             |            |
|-----------------------|------|------|---------|-------------|-------------|------------|
|                       | None | Once | 2 Times | 3 - 5 Times | 6 - 9 Times | 10 or More |
| By you?               | 92.7 | 3.4  | 1.7     | 1.5         | 0.4         | 0.3        |
| By most other adults? | 24.5 | 16.1 | 19.6    | 25.3        | 6.8         | 7.7        |

**22. Was there a time in the past 12 months when you've been concerned about someone in your family misusing prescription drugs or using illegal drugs?**

|          |          |                 |
|----------|----------|-----------------|
| Yes: 7.4 | No: 90.8 | Don't Know: 1.8 |
|----------|----------|-----------------|

**23. In a typical week, how many days per week do you participate in physical activity for at least 30 minutes?**

|            |             |             |             |                 |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| None: 15.8 | 1 - 2: 30.2 | 3 - 4: 30.1 | 5 - 7: 21.8 | Don't Know: 2.1 |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|

**24. In a typical week, how many times do you eat an evening meal at a table with family and/or friends?**

|            |             |             |             |                 |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| None: 11.9 | 1 - 2: 21.2 | 3 - 4: 18.6 | 5 - 7: 47.0 | Don't Know: 1.2 |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|

**25. What is your BMI category?**

|                  |              |                  |             |
|------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| Underweight: 1.1 | Normal: 33.0 | Overweight: 38.3 | Obese: 27.6 |
|------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|

**26. Do you live in an urban or rural location (urban: Wausau, Weston, Rothschild, Schofield, Rib Mountain)?**

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| Urban: 60.1 | Rural: 39.9 |
|-------------|-------------|

**27. My gender is:**

|            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| Male: 35.0 | Female: 65.0 |
|------------|--------------|

**28. What is your current marital status?**

|              |               |                |              |               |            |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Single: 14.7 | Married: 64.4 | Separated: 0.8 | Widowed: 9.9 | Divorced: 9.6 | Other: 0.8 |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|

**29. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

|                            |                           |                         |                    |                               |                         |                       |                |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| No High School Degree: 4.3 | High School Diploma: 25.0 | GED or Alternative: 0.9 | Some College: 14.1 | Tech/Associate's Degree: 19.8 | Bachelor's Degree: 22.9 | Master's Degree: 11.3 | Doctorate: 1.8 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|

**30. What is your age group?**

|              |              |               |               |               |               |              |          |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------|
| 18 - 24: 4.6 | 25 - 34: 7.9 | 35 - 44: 12.7 | 45 - 54: 19.1 | 55 - 64: 21.9 | 65 - 74: 21.2 | 75 - 84: 9.2 | 85+: 3.4 |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------|

**31. How long have you lived here?**

|                       |                  |                    |                          |                          |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Less than 1 Year: 1.9 | 1 - 5 Years: 7.5 | 6 - 15 Years: 17.4 | More than 15 Years: 40.9 | Life-long Resident: 32.3 |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

**32. What is your race of ethnic background?**

|             |                         |            |                      |                      |                      |            |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| White: 94.2 | Black/Afr-American: 0.6 | Asian: 2.6 | Hispanic/Latino: 0.8 | American Indian: 0.1 | 2 or More Races: 0.9 | Other: 1.0 |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|

**33. What was your gross annual income before taxes last year?**

|                   |                              |                              |                              |                              |                 |                            |
|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| <\$14,999:<br>8.7 | \$15,000 -<br>\$24,999: 10.6 | \$25,000 -<br>\$34,999: 11.1 | \$35,000 - \$49,999:<br>11.9 | \$50,000 -<br>\$74,999: 17.1 | \$75,000+: 25.5 | Prefer Not to Say:<br>15.1 |
|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|



# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2015-2017

## Executive Summary: Calls to Action

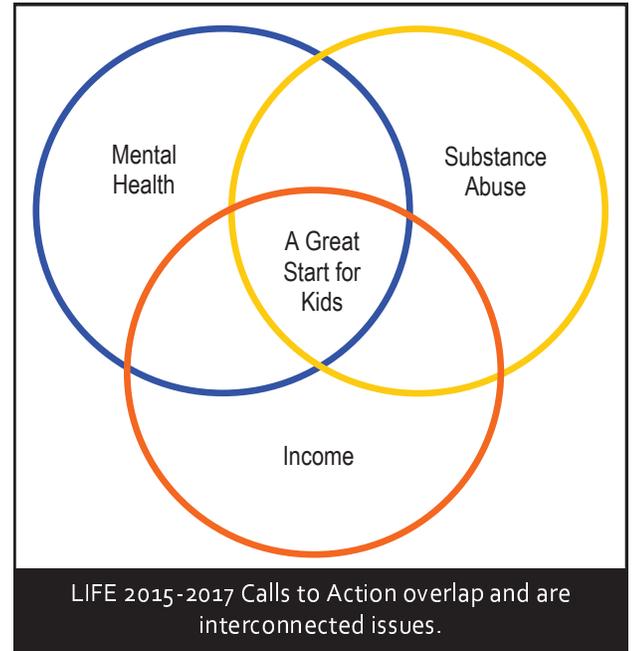
### Calls to Action

The LIFE Report sets community level Calls to Action based on the report data. The purpose of setting these Calls to Action is to advance community dialogue, especially about issues that have been historically under-discussed, and to stimulate action to improve our community's well-being.

In this tenth report, four issues were established as priorities:

- Mental Health
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Income
- A Great Start for Kids

These issues are viewed as root causes for many of the community's challenges captured in this year's data. The overlap and relationships of these complex problems are outlined in this summary section for continuing community conversation.



### MENTAL HEALTH

Everybody has mental health, and mental health affects everybody's day-to-day functioning. As a community we must be willing to acknowledge that poor mental health contributes to social isolation, substance abuse, injuries, death, family violence, job loss, crimes, and binge behavior. We will only address those issues effectively when we understand the connections, overcome the stigma, openly talk about the issues, and provide people access to services they need.

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Understanding and openly discussing substance abuse—both drugs and the more accepted use of alcohol—would put our county on the path to changing the culture and use. Abuse of alcohol and drugs affects an individual's ability to hold a job, contributes to multiple health concerns and results in increased crimes and incarcerations.

### INCOME

Income plays a significant contributing factor to a number of the challenges outlined by the data in this report. Access to adequate wages is often the most reliable predictor of success, including health outcomes, educational attainment, and the capacity to meet basic needs such as food and housing.

### A GREAT START FOR KIDS

The last LIFE Report introduced a long-term Call to Action: to ensure that every child in Marathon County gets off to a great start. In order to provide our kids with a great start, we must first understand what obstacles are likely to prevent that achievement. Research indicates that parents face greater challenges to providing their kids with great starts when they struggle with untreated mental health or substance abuse issues or they fail to access living wages. To improve the success of kids in Marathon County, we must also ensure that the adults in their lives have the means and supports to provide a suitable environment for development.

# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2015-2017

## Executive Summary: Calls to Action

| ISSUE  | GENERAL COMMENT   | PROBLEM   | ADDRESSING ISSUE   |
|--|---|---|--|
| Improve Mental Health and Health Access and Availability | Often misunderstood, good mental health is emotional wellbeing. How to access and pay for services can be unfamiliar, and often there is a stigma associated with accessing services. | The absence of good mental health is a contributing factor to many other individual, family, and community challenges (i.e. social isolation, poor performance at school and work, alcohol/drug abuse, criminal behavior).  | Community conversations should be held on the benefit of having good mental health across the lifespan, what impacts an individual's emotional wellbeing, and the services available to address mental health issues.  |
| Reducing Alcohol Use and Drug Abuse                      | Our communities would benefit from furthering conversations on what the safe use of alcohol and drugs looks like for individuals, families and communities.                           | The consequences of alcohol and drug abuse are significant (i.e. negative impact on children, ruined lives, jobs lost, and death). For many individuals, alcohol is woven into pastimes, celebrations, and coping with life events.   | Communities need to rethink current practices to change culture and attitudes.   |
| Adequate Income  | Income plays a significant role in contributing to health and well-being and obtaining education.   | Those without a high school or advanced degree have difficulty obtaining living wage jobs. Children growing up in economically disadvantaged situations are more likely to drop out of school or be unable to attend higher education.  | Community leaders and employers should look at what can be done to increase education levels, to attract higher income jobs, and to increase wages for current jobs that don't provide a living wage.  |
| A Great Start for Kids                                   | Children will thrive when they are provided a stable, supportive, and nurturing environment.  | Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) result in toxic stress that can harm a child's brain by negatively impacting their brain development and physical, mental, and social behaviors.   | The community should focus on helping families overcome challenges and building resilience in children to lessen the lasting negative consequences of adverse experiences.   |
| Healthy Aging Supported by an Aging Friendly Community   | The topic of aging has been an issue to watch for the last four LIFE reports. We hear reference to a "silver tsunami" coming as the aging of the baby boomers continues.              | The past LIFE report has struggled to present meaningful indicators that show the health of the aging population. To help frame the issue, focus groups were held in early 2015. The greatest concerns identified included social isolation, depression and mental health; affordable and available housing and the right time to transition and the type of home care needed; and a community awareness about the need for conversations and decisions about treatment at end of life. | The community should strive to be an aging friendly community. A first step will be generating a greater understanding of what that means and ensuring our community meets the basic food and housing, health care, transportation, and safety needs of the elderly. |

# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2015-2017

## Executive Summary: Interrelated Issues

### Issues that Cross Sections

To better capture the complexity of our community challenges, this edition of the LIFE Report has added the five icons described below, which you will see on the top of these related indicator pages. These icons draw attention to many of the subtopics that impact larger issues. Indicator numbers and titles are listed below.



#### A GREAT START

- 9. Regulated Child Care & Quality
- 10. Child Care Costs & Subsidies
- 11. Kindergarten Readiness
- 29. Early Prenatal Care
- 30. Teenage Pregnancy and Childbirth
- 31. Low Birth Weight Babies
- 33. Childhood Lead Poisoning
- 34. Childhood Immunizations
- 51. Juvenile Justice
- 52. Child Abuse and Neglect



#### INCOME

- 5. Unemployment
- 6. Wages & Income
- 10. Child Care Costs & Subsidies
- 13. Economic Disadvantage
- 18. Educational Attainment
- 19. Hunger
- 20. Housing Assistance
- 21. Household Utilities
- 22. Shelter for the Homeless
- 23. Housing Options for the Aging
- 24. Access to Transportation
- 25. Unmet Basic Needs
- 27. Access to Health Care
- 33. Childhood Lead Poisoning
- 48. Property Crimes



#### SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- 43. Alcohol & Other Drug Misuse & Abuse
- 44. Tobacco Use
- 45. Concerns of Personal Safety
- 46. Alcohol & Drug Arrests
- 47. Traffic Crashes
- 48. Property Crime



#### THE AGING

- 23. Housing Options for the Aging
- 35. Unintentional Injuries
- 36. Chronic Conditions & End of Life Care
- 41. Social Isolation
- 54. Elder Abuse & Vulnerable Adults



#### MENTAL HEALTH

- 32. Infant & Child Mortality
- 39. Access to Mental Health
- 40. Social & Emotional Development
- 41. Social Isolation

# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2015-2017

## Executive Summary: Interrelated Issues



Those who work most closely with these issues understand how complex and difficult they are to solve. No simple single solution exists. These issues present themselves over a continuum of life, and addressing them is difficult because they are so closely intertwined.

### INTERCONNECTED & INDETERMINATE CAUSE & EFFECTS

Mental Illness  
Alcohol or Drug Abuse  
Criminal Behavior  
Failure in School  
Inability to Obtain /Maintain Employment  
Intimate Partner Violence



Financial Insecurity  
Lack of Housing  
Social Isolation  
Unhealthy Lifestyle Choices  
Chronic Disease  
Unmet Basic Needs

### THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

#### CHALLENGE

- Not enough mental health care providers
- Cost of mental health services
- Counselors not available in schools
- Limited access to services for the incarcerated or recently released
- Limited ability to reach at-risk children under five to prevent future occurrences
- Community acceptance of alcohol abuse
- Potential employees fail drug tests
- Prevalence of intimate partner violence
- Community needs to be willing to tackle difficult and sensitive issues.

#### OPPORTUNITY

- Recruit more mental health care professionals
- Increase dual-certified counselors for drug & alcohol and mental health
- Create new partnerships between mental health providers and schools
- Increase access to training and jobs
- Change culture of acceptance of alcohol
- Intervene with families to overcome obstacles
- Increase birth-to-five programming
- Grow community collaborations to address issues
- Provide trauma informed care

# LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2015-2017

## Executive Summary: Community Strengths

Marathon County is a resource rich community. The quality of life we are afforded here is enhanced by the amenities, services, and supports we have at our disposal.

### RESOURCE RICHNESS

- Economic Diversity
- K-12 Schools
- Higher Education
- Protected Natural Environment
- Recreation & Wellness
- Healthcare Services
- Arts & Culture
- Emergency Services
- Population Diversity
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Marathon County's reach extends well beyond its borders. It is a regional center that draws people in for a wide variety of reasons.

### REGIONAL CENTER

- Shopping & Commerce
- Employment Opportunities
- Tourism & Recreation
- Essential Services

A great strength of Marathon County is that community leaders understand the value of community partnerships. As a result, a number of community collaborations have formed to implement a collective-impact approach to address complex social issues. The following is a list of community coalitions that are actively working on one or more of the issues identified in this report.

### COALITION BUILDING

- AOD Partnership
- Coalition of Higher Education
- Domestic Abuse Intervention Team
- Get Smart Wausau
- Healthy Marathon County
- Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL)
- Housing and Homelessness Coalition
- Marathon County Early Year's Coalition
- Marathon County Hunger Coalition
- Partnership for Healthy Aging
- Partnership for Youth
- Prevent Suicide Marathon County

