



# community needs assessment report



**communityactioncoalition**  
FOR SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN

# About Us

We've been serving Dane, Jefferson and Waukesha County for more than 50 years and are working toward a just and equitable community for every person. Thanks to a network of strong partnerships, we can identify and act in the areas of greatest need.

## **Focused on the Bigger Picture**

We work to transform systems so that all people can achieve social and economic security.

## **Broad Goals, Specific Strategies**

We are collaborators who apply innovative, targeted strategies to identify and serve the areas of greatest need.

## **Helping People Live with Dignity**

We believe that food and housing insecurity are public health crises. Everyone deserves a place to call home and food on the table.

**Authors:** Sydney Esse, Ashley Pandow, Jay Nielsen, & Amber Duddy



# About This Report

Every three years we work with community partners, clients and stakeholders to conduct a community needs assessment. This report is a summary of the barriers and conditions preventing people in our community from obtaining social and economic security.

## Background

Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin (CAC) conducts a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) within three counties- Dane, Jefferson, and Waukesha that comprise the organizations geographic jurisdiction. Prior needs assessments focused on documenting the urgent human needs arising from poverty which CAC continues to address with dedication and care. The 2022 Community Needs Assessment aims to advance the understanding of the wicked social problem contributing to systemic poverty in our community.

The goals of the Community Action Coalition Needs assessment are as follows:

- Understand the scope of wicked social problems affecting residents experiencing significant challenges to achieving social and economic security.
- Engage residents, community partners, and other community agencies to find, prioritize, and communicate local gaps to assure limited CAC resources are responsive to the real needs of the community.
- Use the Community Needs Assessment to collaboratively cultivate policies, system and environmental strategies via a strategic planning process to drive local community transformation.



# Executive Summary: Talking Poverty

For years the broad discussion on poverty has focused on what individual people can achieve. Helping a family obtain a living wage job or find an affordable place to rent have been the ultimate goal. After fifty years of poverty alleviation work, we have unfortunately seen the cycle of poverty trap generations of incredible, hardworking people who despite their best efforts could not make ends meet. The experience of poverty fosters despair and creates nearly unsurmountable barriers for almost one third of Wisconsinites.

The lesson we learned is the system is designed to work against low-income families. Our policies and environments create intentional traps that lock people in unsafe, unaffordable housing; create food deserts; limit quality education opportunities, and exploit groups of people in low-wage jobs. CAC's commitment to helping people live better lives involves more than programs and services. CAC focuses on improving environments, advocating for cost-effective programs, and advancing policy solutions to improve the quality of life for everyone.

While reviewing this report, we want to recognize the system's role in trapping our low-income families in a cycle of poverty. This report is the story of how the system disproportionately limits opportunities for populations who have experienced discrimination, oppression, and historic marginalization.

## Key Findings

This report uses a mix of traditional databases, client and stakeholder surveys, and interviews to identify the top 5 needs in our community:

- #1: Accessing Affordable Housing
- #2: Obtaining Healthy, Affordable Nutrition
- #3: Improving Mental Health Services
- #4: Access to Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use Treatment
- #5: Identifying Living Wage Career Opportunities

Reccomendations:

- #1: Focus on the root causes of poverty
- #2: Address Housing Security
- #3: Address Food Security
- #4: Improve the social-emotional wellbeing of community members

# Shifting the focus from programs to systems

CAC works to transform systems so that all people can achieve social and economic security. Systems work recognizes the intersection of social issues which impact community level outcomes and indicators. While many of our programs (program-level) aim to address a single social issue or outcomes, our systems approach (system-level) seeks to impact multiple social issues and outcomes.

At times systems-level work can feel like new lingo, however both our clients and community partners offered some great explanations of how our community system can trap entire populations in a cycle of poverty. Here are some of the best examples of the need for system-level work:

## Quote on the intersection of food and transportation

“The winter months everything gets compact so my family can’t get to the store as easily. When it comes to getting food, on a fixed income and/or disability and everything going up it’s hard to get food that’s affordable. We have to budget and go to Woodman’s or Aldi’s. You have to make decisions to get gas or food just to make ends meet. Light bill, gas bill, food – on a fixed income.”

- CAC Client, Community Needs Assessment Interview

## Quote on the intersection of food and housing

“Not enough money for rent, or all their money goes to rent, and they have nothing left to live on for that month. There is not nearly enough affordable housing. I managed apartments for 13 years. Wages didn't cover both food and housing.”

- CAC Client, Community Needs Assessment Survey

## Quotes on general challenges associated with being low-income

“Taking care of the people struggling because this pandemic is still hitting us hard with all the price changes and everything, I personally have a 20 dollar an hour job and a single parent, and I am still struggling and that shouldn’t be.”

- CAC Client, Community Needs Assessment Survey

“Rental assistance for people who are not yet homeless but in danger of losing their housing due to their inability to pay for all monthly bills, including rent, utilities, food, internet, cell phone service, car/renters insurance, credit card/collections payments/student loan payments/etc., as needed/scheduled throughout the month.”

- CAC Client, Community Needs Assessment Interview

“If you don’t have a credit score over 700 or cosigner that is making 6,000 a week, or a criminal history no matter how back it goes, an eviction, it will affect the housing you have applied to. I have been turned down for things that shouldn’t even matter.”

- CAC Client, Community Needs Assessment Survey

Top 5 Needs	Example Program-Level Approach	Example System-Level Approach
<b>#1: Accessing Affordable Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rental and Mortgage Assistance Programs</li> <li>Housing First Case Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support of Rent Control policies</li> <li>Development of affordable housing units</li> <li>Leveraging public-private partnerships to support Housing First policy</li> </ul>
<b>#2: Obtaining Healthy, Affordable Nutrition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Pantry</li> <li>Stock-box program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support of policies to reduce the prevalence of Food Desserts</li> </ul>
<b>#3: Improving Mental Health Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Health First Aid Training</li> <li>Support Groups and Counseling Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leveraging public-private partnerships to improve trauma sensitive workplace policies</li> </ul>
<b>#4: Access to Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use treatment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substance Use Treatment Programs</li> <li>Developing and Managing Supportive Housing Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support policies to decriminalize substance use.</li> <li>Support for policies to advance problem-solving courts (Drug Courts, Mental Health Courts, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>#5: Identifying Living Wage Career Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job Skills Training</li> <li>Resource and Referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support of Living Wage policy</li> </ul>

# Demographics

We focus our programs and services to address the needs of low-income community members in an effort to help our clients navigate a complicated social service system. In 2021, CAC reached 35,406 unduplicated people.

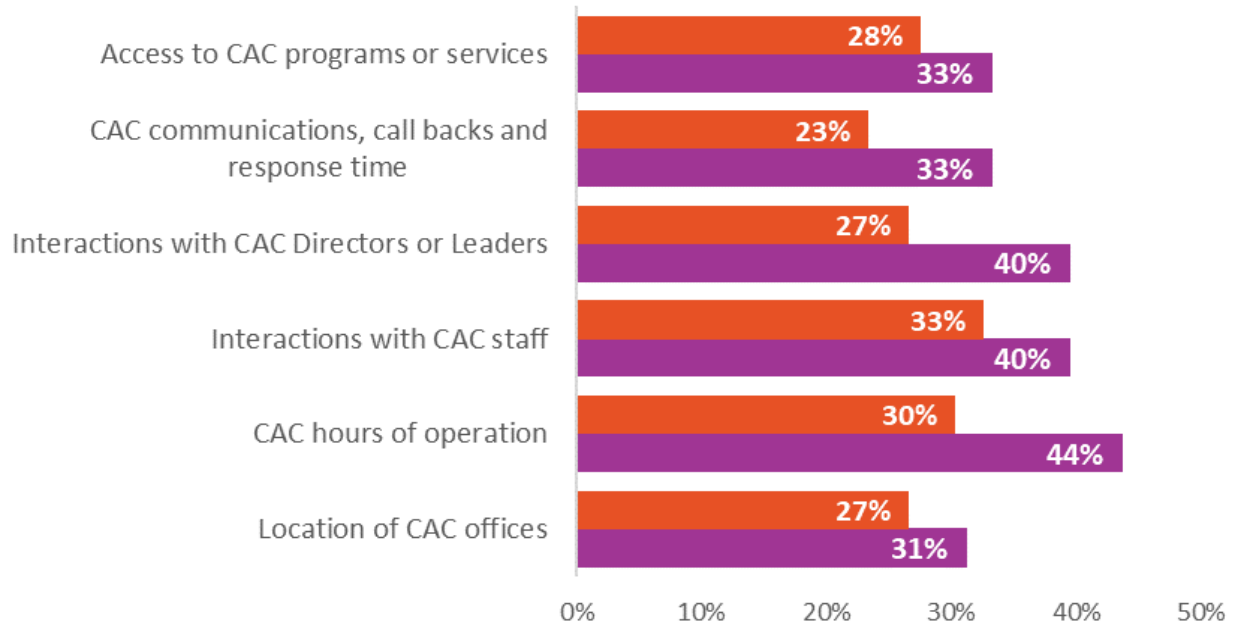
## 2021 Client Demographics

- 87% of clients had incomes at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level
- 55% of clients are single, one person households
- 62% of clients are unemployed
- 48% of clients are White
- 31% of clients are Black
- 25% of client are Hispanic
- 29% of our clients are under 18 years of age

## Satisfaction with CAC

We asked CNA respondents about their satisfaction with different CAC offerings. Below are the percent of respondents who are satisfied or very satisfied with CAC services

### Client and Community Partner self-report of being satisfied or very satisfied with CAC



# Our Population & Poverty

## Total Population

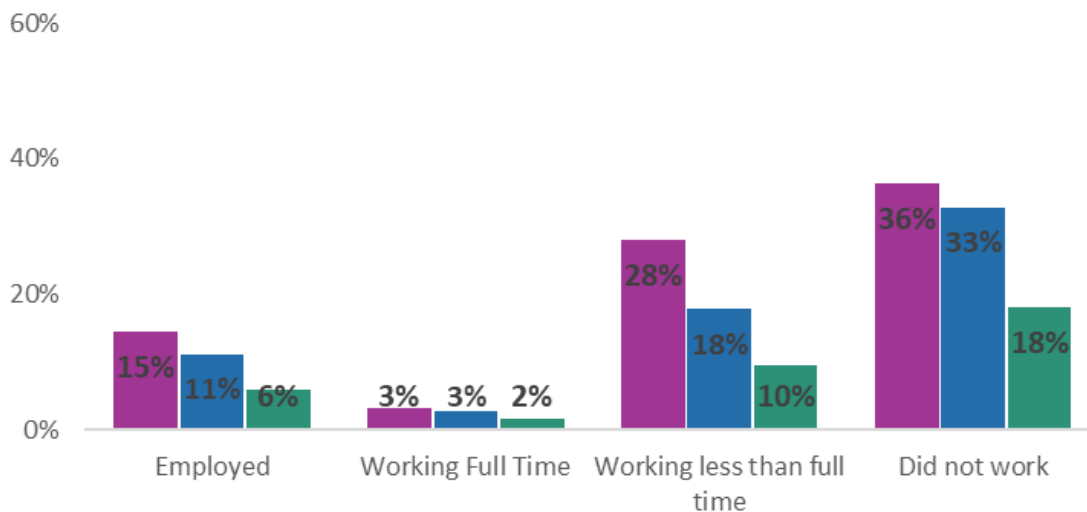
A total of 1,029,933 people live in the 2,302.70 square mile report area defined for this assessment according to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2016-2020 year estimates. The population density for this area, estimated at 447 persons per square mile, is greater than the national average population density of 92 persons per square mile.

Report Area	Total Population	Total Land Area (Square Miles)	Population Density (Per Square Mile)
Report Location	1,029,933	2,302.70	447
Dane County, WI	542,459	1,196.49	453
Jefferson County, WI	84,837	556.49	152
Waukesha County, WI	402,637	549.72	732
Wisconsin	5,806,975	54,167.14	107
United States	326,569,308	3,533,038.14	92

*Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016-20. Source geography: Tract*

As a Community Action Agency, we receive federal funding known as the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), which supports programs and services for low-income families making at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Below are the percent of people at or below 125% FPL by county and work status.

Percent of people living in Poverty by work status in **Dane**, **Jefferson** and **Waukesha** County





## Total Population by Age Groups, Total

This indicator reports the total population of the report area by age groups.

Report Area	Age 0-4	Age 5-17	Age 18-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-44	Age 45-54	Age 55-64	Age 65+
Report Location	55,308	159,589	112,723	137,133	132,693	130,525	138,097	163,865
Dane County, WI	30,340	80,137	73,503	85,229	72,194	63,404	63,213	74,439
Jefferson County, WI	4,298	13,588	7,866	9,698	10,727	11,766	12,397	14,497
Waukesha County, WI	20,670	65,864	31,354	42,206	49,772	55,355	62,487	74,929
Wisconsin	331,066	943,255	550,536	735,559	706,143	738,449	819,168	982,799
United States	19,650,192	53,646,546	30,435,736	45,485,165	41,346,677	41,540,736	42,101,439	52,362,817

## Median Age

This indicator reports population median age based on the most recent 5-year American Community Survey estimate.

*Note: Median age is not recalculated for report areas consisting of more than one census-designated geography.*

Report Area	Total Population	Median Age
Report Location	1,029,933	No data
Dane County, WI	542,459	35.2
Jefferson County, WI	84,837	41.3
Waukesha County, WI	402,637	43.1
Wisconsin	5,806,975	39.6
United States	326,569,308	38.2

*Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016-20. Source geography: Tract*

## Total Population by Ethnicity Alone

This indicator reports the total population of the report area by ethnicity alone.

Report Area	Total Population	Hispanic or Latino Population	Hispanic or Latino Population, Percent	Non-Hispanic Population	Non-Hispanic Population, Percent
Report Location	1,029,933	61,022	5.92%	968,911	94.08%
Dane County, WI	542,459	35,232	6.49%	507,227	93.51%
Jefferson County, WI	84,837	6,148	7.25%	78,689	92.75%
Waukesha County, WI	402,637	19,642	4.88%	382,995	95.12%
Wisconsin	5,806,975	408,267	7.03%	5,398,708	92.97%
United States	326,569,308	59,361,020	18.18%	267,208,288	81.82%

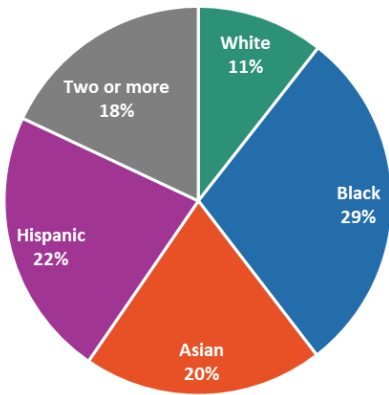
## Total Population by Race Alone, as Percent

This indicator reports the percentage of population by race alone in the report area.

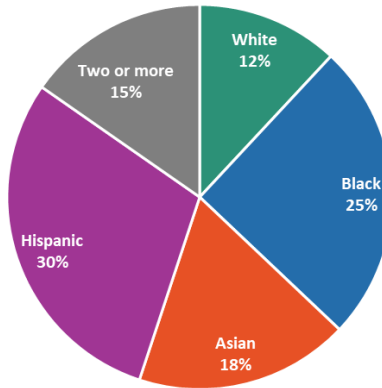
Report Area	White	Black	Asian	Native American	Native Hawaiian	Some Other Race	Multiple Race
Report Location	86.66%	3.24%	4.65%	0.25%	0.05%	1.60%	3.55%
Dane County, WI	82.63%	4.85%	5.95%	0.30%	0.06%	1.70%	4.52%
Jefferson County, WI	93.23%	0.84%	0.53%	0.19%	0.05%	2.26%	2.90%
Waukesha County, WI	90.72%	1.57%	3.76%	0.21%	0.03%	1.33%	2.38%
Wisconsin	84.30%	6.34%	2.81%	0.84%	0.05%	2.32%	3.35%
United States	70.42%	12.62%	5.64%	0.82%	0.19%	5.14%	5.17%

People in our community are greatly impacted by systemic racism. When we look at race/ethnicity for low-income families at or below 125% FPL, significant opportunity gaps are obvious. The data show that Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) are significantly more likely to be very low income. For instance, the Black population in Waukesha County represents only 1.57% of the population, but it represents 41% of households making 125% FPL or less. This statistic is true for all three counties, and across all BIPOC populations. Addressing the barriers BIPOC community members face to access living wage job opportunities is a major need identified in our community needs assessment.

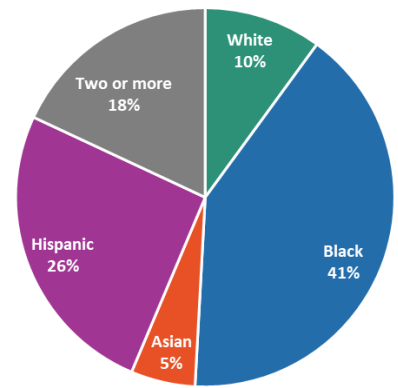
Poverty by Race in **Dane County**



Poverty by Race in **Jefferson County**

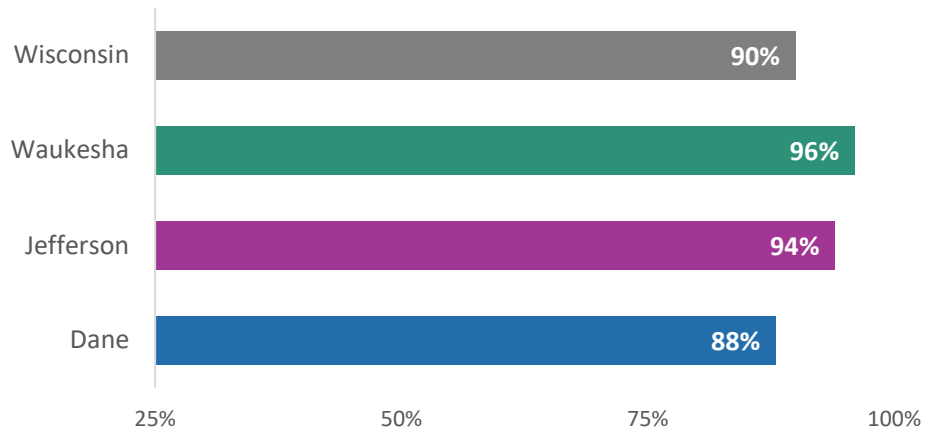


Poverty by Race in **Waukesha County**



Differences in opportunity start early in life. Having access to a high-quality education improves the odds a person is able to obtain a living wage job in the future. The indicator here shows the High School Graduation rate for each county, compared to the state of Wisconsin.

High School Graduation rate by County



Source: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/wisconsin/2022/rankings/waukesha/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot> \*

## Total Population Change, 2010-2020

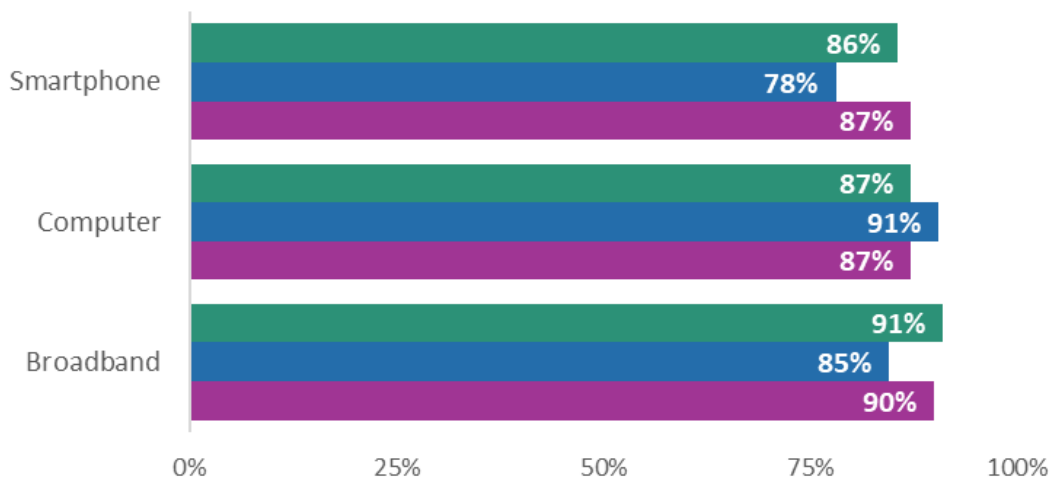
According to the United States Census Bureau Decennial Census, between 2010 and 2020 the population in the report area grew by 91,737 persons, a change of 9.54%. A significant positive or negative shift in total population over time impacts healthcare providers and the utilization of community resources.

Report Area	Total Population, 2010 Census	Total Population, 2020 Census	Population Change, 2010- 2020	Population Change, 2010-2020, Percent
Report Location	961,645	1,053,382	91,737	<b>9.54%</b>
Dane County	488,069	561,504	73,435	<b>15.05%</b>
Jefferson County	83,686	84,900	1,214	<b>1.45%</b>
Waukesha County	389,890	406,978	17,088	<b>4.38%</b>
Wisconsin	5,687,000	5,893,718	206,718	<b>3.63%</b>
United States	312,471,161	334,735,155	22,263,994	<b>7.13%</b>

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.  
Data Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census. 2020. Source geography: Tract*

During the pandemic, many of our programs and services followed a national shift from paper to electronic applications. This shift mean populations who lack access to technology face significant barriers to their social and economic security. Additionally, the population growth in our community places demands on our existing broadband infrastructure. The indicator below shows the percent of people in each county who have access to a computer, smart phone and broadband internet services.

### Access to technology in Dane, Jefferson, and Waukesha County



## Living Wage

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology calculates the living wage for people across the United States. The table below shows what a living wage is for each county.

### Jefferson County

	1 Adult				2 Adults (1 working)				2 Adults (both working)			
	Children				Children				Children			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Living Wage	\$16.10	\$32.79	\$41.91	\$56.14	\$25.02	\$30.50	\$36.22	\$39.65	\$12.51	\$18.14	\$23.88	\$28.48
Poverty Wage	\$6.19	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$14.92	\$4.19	\$5.28	\$6.37	\$7.46
Minimum Wage	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25

### Dane County

	1 Adult				2 Adults (1 working)				2 Adults (both working)			
	Children				Children				Children			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Living Wage	\$18.10	\$37.52	\$48.94	\$66.19	\$27.75	\$32.93	\$38.65	\$42.78	\$13.87	\$20.50	\$27.40	\$33.50
Poverty Wage	\$6.19	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$14.92	\$4.19	\$5.28	\$6.37	\$7.46
Minimum Wage	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25

### Waukesha County

	1 Adult				2 Adults (1 working)				2 Adults (both working)			
	Children				Children				Children			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Living Wage	\$16.63	\$34.83	\$45.39	\$60.53	\$25.93	\$31.09	\$36.81	\$39.70	\$18.10	\$37.52	\$48.94	\$66.19
Poverty Wage	\$6.19	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$8.38	\$10.56	\$12.74	\$14.92	\$4.19	\$5.38	\$6.37	\$7.46
Minimum Wage	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$7.25

## Child Poverty Rate

Population and poverty estimates for children age 0-17 are shown for the report area. According to the American Community Survey 5-year data, an average of 8.0% percent of children lived in a state of poverty during the survey calendar year. The poverty rate for children living in the report area is less than the national average of 17.5%.

Report Area	Ages 0-17 Total Population	Ages 0-17 In Poverty	Ages 0-17 Poverty Rate
Report Location	212,158	17,077	<b>8.0%</b>
Dane County, WI	109,274	10,017	<b>9.2%</b>
Jefferson County, WI	17,647	1,736	<b>9.8%</b>
Waukesha County, WI	85,237	5,324	<b>6.2%</b>
Wisconsin	1,250,830	177,140	<b>14.2%</b>
United States	72,065,774	12,598,699	<b>17.5%</b>

## Children in Poverty by Race, Percent: Age 0 - 17

Report Area	Non-Hispanic White	Black or African American	Native American / Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Multiple Race
Report Location	4.57%	25.77%	37.45%	7.38%	70.27%	18.14%	16.98%
Dane County, WI	3.87%	27.55%	37.94%	11.51%	86.67%	22.72%	19.77%
Jefferson County, WI	7.96%	5.44%	100.00%	0.00%	No data	4.84%	13.50%
Waukesha County, WI	4.60%	20.49%	35.75%	1.24%	0.00%	11.96%	10.55%
Wisconsin	8.40%	39.36%	34.69%	16.49%	33.59%	27.85%	21.39%
United States	10.58%	31.80%	31.16%	10.58%	23.24%	27.24%	17.63%

## Seniors in Poverty

Population and poverty estimates for persons aged 65 and up are shown for the report area. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data, an average of 6.1% of people lived in a state of poverty during the survey calendar year. The poverty rate for people living in the report area is less than the national average of 9.3%

Report Area	Ages 65 and Up Total Population	Ages 65 and Up In Poverty	Ages 65 and Up Poverty Rate
Report Location	161,042	9,878	<b>6.1%</b>
Dane County, WI	73,108	4,914	<b>6.7%</b>
Jefferson County, WI	14,260	1,299	<b>9.1%</b>
Waukesha County, WI	73,674	3,665	<b>5.0%</b>
Wisconsin	956,642	74,180	<b>7.8%</b>
United States	51,072,143	4,756,707	<b>9.3%</b>

## Poverty by Race, Percent: Age 65 and Up

This indicator reports the percentage of population in poverty in the report area by race alone.

Report Area	Non-Hispanic White	Black or African American	Native American	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Some Other Race	Multiple Race
Report Location	5.29%	16.08%	12.77%	4.85%	56.67%	33.82%	3.17%
Dane County, WI	4.75%	16.29%	2.78%	3.93%	0.00%	93.64%	0.51%
Jefferson County, WI	8.92%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	20.00%
Waukesha County, WI	5.08%	16.62%	51.72%	6.07%	No data	0.26%	3.03%
Wisconsin	7.01%	18.96%	12.82%	8.90%	62.62%	22.72%	13.21%
United States	7.22%	16.93%	17.68%	12.65%	12.28%	18.60%	14.29%

## Unemployment Change

Unemployment change within the report area from July 2021 to July 2022 is shown in the chart below. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, unemployment for this one-year period fell from 3.1% to 2.7%.

Report Area	Unemployment July 2021	Unemployment July 2022	Unemployment Rate July 2021	Unemployment Rate July 2022	Rate Change
Report Location	18,924	16,347	3.1%	2.7%	<b>-0.4%</b>
Dane County, WI	9,822	8,274	2.9%	2.5%	<b>-0.4%</b>
Jefferson County, WI	1,536	1,362	3.3%	2.9%	<b>-0.3%</b>
Waukesha County, WI	7,566	6,711	3.3%	2.9%	<b>-0.4%</b>
Wisconsin	123,757	105,072	3.9%	3.3%	<b>-0.5%</b>
United States	9,367,597	6,320,721	5.7%	3.8%	<b>-1.9%</b>

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.  
Data Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2022 - July. Source geography: County*



# Housing Security



*Because all people deserve a place to call home.*

We work as case managers to find stable and reliable shelter for people without homes and those facing threats to their housing. Across three different counties, we focus on developing custom solutions that not only help individuals and families get back on their feet but allow them to access a higher quality of life.

When asked about accessibility to access safe, affordable housing, respondents to our Community Needs Assessment Survey shared the following information:

- [Our community needs] “Ways to provide more services to help find and maintain housing.”
- [Our community needs] “More shelters, or hotel vouchers for more than a night or two because that does nothing to help families in the long term.”
- [Our community needs] Rent control, and stricter requirements for landlords and paths to home purchasing for economically disadvantaged families.

## Housing Cost - Cost Burden (30%)

This indicator reports the percentage of the households where housing costs are 30% or more than the total household income. This indicator provides information on the cost of monthly housing expenses for owners and renters. The information offers a measure of housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. The data also serve to aid in the development of housing programs to meet the needs of people at different economic levels. Of the 419,729 total households in the report area, 113,433 or 27.03% of the population live in cost burdened households.

Report Area	Total Households	Cost Burdened Households (Housing Costs Exceed 30% of Income)	Cost Burdened Households, Percent
Report Location	419,729	113,433	27.03%
Dane County, WI	226,600	65,764	29.02%
Jefferson County, WI	33,349	8,543	25.62%
Waukesha County, WI	159,780	39,126	24.49%
Wisconsin	2,377,935	617,624	25.97%
United States	122,354,219	37,128,748	30.35%

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.*

*Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016-20. Source geography: Tract*

## Housing Costs - Cost Burden, Severe (50%)

This indicator reports the percentage of the households where housing costs are 50% or more total household income. This indicator provides information on the cost of monthly housing expenses for owners and renters. The information offers a measure of housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. The data also serve to aid in the development of housing programs to meet the needs of people at different economic levels.

Report Area	Total Households	Cost Burdened Households (Housing Costs Exceed 50% of Income)	Percentage of Cost Burdened Households (Over 50% of Income)
Report Location	419,729	48,188	<b>11.48%</b>
Dane County, WI	226,600	28,529	<b>12.59%</b>
Jefferson County, WI	33,349	3,247	<b>9.74%</b>
Waukesha County, WI	159,780	16,412	<b>10.27%</b>
Wisconsin	2,377,935	265,953	<b>11.18%</b>
United States	122,354,219	16,837,694	<b>13.76%</b>

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.*

*Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016-20. Source geography: Tract*

## Eviction

This indicator reports information about formal evictions based on court records from 48 states and the District of Columbia, compiled by the Eviction Lab. The number of evictions and eviction filings within the report area is shown below. The “filing rate” is the ratio of the number of evictions filed in an area over the number of renter-occupied homes in that area. An “eviction rate” is the subset of those homes that received an eviction judgment in which renters were ordered to leave. For the year 2016, the Eviction Lab reports that, of 141,352 homes in the report area, there were 2,465 eviction filings, for an eviction filing rate of 1.74%. 839 of the eviction filings ended in an eviction, for an eviction rate of 0.59%.

Report Area	Renter Occupied Households	Eviction Filings	Evictions	Eviction Filing Rate	Eviction Rate
Report Location	141,352	2,465	839	1.74%	<b>0.59%</b>
Dane County, WI	92,427	1,815	545	1.96%	<b>0.59%</b>
Jefferson County, WI	10,090	253	112	2.51%	<b>1.11%</b>
Waukesha County, WI	38,835	397	182	1.02%	<b>0.47%</b>
Wisconsin	787,739	26,508	14,871	3.37%	<b>1.89%</b>
United States	38,372,860	2,350,042	898,479	6.12%	<b>2.34%</b>

*Note: Not all counties have data that has been provided. Indicator data do not include information about "informal evictions", or those that happen outside of the courtroom.*

## Median Rent by County

**Dane**  
**\$1,118**

**Jefferson**  
**\$869**

**Waukesha**  
**\$1,078**

## Homeless Children & Youth

This indicator reports the number of homeless children and youth enrolled in the public school system during the school year 2019-2020. According to the data source definitions, homelessness is defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Those who are homeless may be sharing the housing of other persons, living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds, in emergency transitional shelters, or be unsheltered. Data are aggregated to the report-area level based on school-district summaries where three or more homeless children are counted.

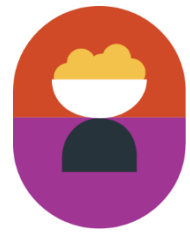
In the report area, of all the 145,905 students enrolled in reported districts during the school year 2019-2020, there were 2,383 or 1.63% homeless students, which is lower than the statewide rate of 2.32%.

*Note: Data are available for 100.00% school districts in the report area, representing 100.00% of the public school student population.*

Report Area	Students in Reported Districts	Homeless Students	Homeless Students, Percent	Districts Reporting	Students in Reported Districts
Report Location	145,905	2,383	<b>1.63%</b>	100.00%	100.00%
Dane County, WI	79,506	1,838	2.30%	96.00%	99.60%
Jefferson County, WI	11,512	197	1.70%	100.00%	100.00%
Waukesha County, WI	54,887	348	0.60%	85.70%	91.90%
Wisconsin	765,180	17,756	2.32%	88.51%	95.82%
United States	47,386,316	1,311,089	2.77%	86.95%	97.47%

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.  
Data Source: US Department of Education, ED Facts. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2019-2020. Source geography: School District

# Food Security



**We won't rest until there's food on every table.**

Our food assistance programs create access to nutrition for people in the greatest need. We provide food to food pantries at zero cost, while our Gleaners program helps restaurants and grocers redirect their unused food to hungry community members. Through Double Dollars, people with low income can access fresh, locally grown food at farmers markets. Our holistic approach helps us do the most good.

Federal feeding programs help us provide food assistance to communities; however, these programs do not address systemic causes of food insecurity. Additionally, federal commodities are often not culturally appropriate for all community members and are dispersed based on stringent pantry schedules that may not be convenient for customers. Instead of continuing to provide food on an “emergency” basis, more needs to be done to empower low-income individuals to have a say in their food choices and support their ability to build financial stability.

Federal pandemic feeding programs highlighted how public assistance cannot only empower individuals in their choices, but also offset financial hardship caused by sudden life events (e.g., death of breadwinner, employment loss). In the wealthiest country in the world the conversation on food security over emergency feeding is long overdue.

When asked about accessibility to obtain healthy, affordable nutrition, respondents to our Community Needs Assessment Survey shared the following information:

- [Our community needs] “greater variety of food offered to the food pantries. “
- [Our community needs] “An easier way to get food to the pantries more than once a month.”
- [Our community needs] “Drive through mobile food pantries and senior box delivery sites in Jefferson County.”

## Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch

Free or reduced-price lunches are served to qualifying students in families with income between under 185 percent (reduced price) or under 130% (free lunch) of the US federal poverty threshold as part of the federal National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Out of 148,938 total public-school students in the report area, 41,215 were eligible for the free or reduced price lunch program in the latest report year. This represents 27.68% of public school students, which is lower than the state average of 42.78%.

*Note: States with more than 80% records "not reported" are suppressed for all geographic areas, including hospital service area, census tract, zip code, school district, county, state, etc.*

Report Area	Total Students	Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, Percent
Report Location	148,938	41,215	27.68%
Dane County, WI	78,541	26,005	33.12%
Jefferson County, WI	9,883	3,631	36.74%
Waukesha County, WI	60,514	11,579	19.14%
Wisconsin	830,875	355,362	42.78%
United States	53,244,287	22,445,622	42.16%

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.*

*Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NCES - Common Core of Data, 2020-2021. Source geography: Address*

## Children Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch by Eligibility

The table below displays the number and percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch by income eligibility category. Percentages in the table below are out of the total student population.

*Note: States with more than 80% records labeled as "not reported" are suppressed for all geographic areas.*

Report Area	Free Lunch, Total	Free Lunch, Percent	Reduced Lunch, Total	Reduced Lunch, Percent
Report Location	36,072	24.2%	5,131	3.4%
Dane County, WI	23,242	29.6%	2,757	3.5%
Jefferson County, WI	3,054	30.9%	574	5.8%
Waukesha County, WI	9,776	16.2%	1,800	3.0%
Wisconsin	314,063	37.8%	41,254	5.0%
United States	19,950,407	37.5%	1,952,641	3.7%

## Food Environment - Grocery Stores

Healthy dietary behaviors are supported by access to healthy foods, and grocery stores are a major provider of these foods. There are 146 grocery establishments in the report area, a rate of 13.86 per 100,000 population. Grocery stores are defined as supermarkets and smaller grocery stores primarily engaged in retailing a general line of food, such as canned and frozen foods; fresh fruits and vegetables; and fresh and prepared meats, fish, and poultry. Delicatessen-type establishments are also included. Convenience stores and large general merchandise stores that also retail food, such as supercenters and warehouse club stores, are excluded.

In the Report area there are fewer establishments per 100,000 people in Dane (14.43). Jefferson (15.31) and Waukesha Counties (12.78) than the state of Wisconsin (16.27). This data tells us our community experiences greater challenges to access healthy foods than the state of Wisconsin and United States.

Report Area	Total Population (2020)	Number of Establishments	Establishments, Rate per 100,000 Population
Report Location	1,053,382	146	<b>13.86</b>
Dane County, WI	561,504	81	<b>14.43</b>
Jefferson County, WI	84,900	13	<b>15.31</b>
Waukesha County, WI	406,978	52	<b>12.78</b>
Wisconsin	5,893,718	959	<b>16.27</b>
United States	331,449,275	62,268	<b>18.79</b>

# Essential Resources



When others step out, we step in to help people thrive.

We offer resources and referrals, support to connect to living-wage careers, and our long-standing winter clothing drive program. By helping people become their best selves, we’re building a stronger community.

When asked about accessibility to Mental Health Services and Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug programs on our Community Needs Assessment Survey shared the following information”

- “There is a huge lack of substance abuse programs or even getting into them.”
- “I have not been homeless but other members of my family have been due to mental illness and/or substance addictions.”
- [Our community needs] “Access to mental health”
- [Our community needs] “bilingual mental health services (family, teens, parents, etc.)”
- [Our community needs] “more mental health services available.”

Note: *Age-adjusting the rates* ensures that differences in incidence or deaths from one year to another, or between one geographic area and another, are not due to differences in the age distribution of the populations being compared.

## Poor Mental Health - Mental Health and Substance Use Conditions

This indicator reports the rate of diagnoses for mental health and substance use conditions among the Medicare population. Figures are reported as age-adjusted to year 2000 standard. Rates are summarized for report areas from county level data, only where data is available. This indicator is relevant because mental health and substance use is an indicator of poor health.

Report Area	Medicare Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries with Mental Health and Substance Use Conditions, Percent
Report Location	16,199	<b>32%</b>
Jefferson County, WI	16,199	<b>32%</b>
Wisconsin	1,130,066	<b>31%</b>
United States	57,235,207	<b>33%</b>

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.*

*Data Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Mapping Medicare Disparities Tool. 2019. Source geography: County*

## Poor Mental Health

This indicator reports the percentage of adults age 18 and older who report 14 or more days during the past 30 days during which their mental health was not good. Data were from the 2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) annual survey. Within the report area, there were 11.5% of adults 18 and older who reported poor mental health in the past month of the total population.

Report Area	Total Population (2019)	Adults with Poor Mental Health (Crude)	Adults with Poor Mental Health (Age- Adjusted)
Report Location	1,035,662	11.5%	11.8%
Dane County, WI	546,695	11.90%	11.70%
Jefferson County, WI	84,769	12.80%	13.40%
Waukesha County, WI	404,198	10.80%	11.60%
Wisconsin	5,822,434	13.01%	13.49%
United States	328,239,523	13.60%	13.90%

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.  
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Accessed via the PLACES Data Portal. 2019. Source geography: Tract*

## Poor Physical Health

This indicator reports the percentage of adults age 18 and older who report 14 or more days during the past 30 days during which their physical health was not good. Data were from the 2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) annual survey. Within the report area, there were 9.3% of adults 18 and older who reported poor physical health in the past month of the total population.

Report Area	Total Population (2019)	Adults with Poor Physical Health (Crude)	Adults with Poor Physical Health (Age- Adjusted)
Report Location	1,035,662	9.3%	9.0%
Dane County, WI	546,695	8.90%	9.10%
Jefferson County, WI	84,769	11.40%	10.60%
Waukesha County, WI	404,198	9.50%	8.60%
Wisconsin	5,822,434	11.6%	10.9%
United States	328,239,523	12.5%	11.8%

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.  
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Accessed via the PLACES Data Portal. 2019.*



## Deaths of Despair (Suicide + Drug/Alcohol Poisoning)

This indicator reports average rate of death due to intentional self-harm (suicide), alcohol-related disease, and drug overdose, also known as "deaths of despair", per 100,000 population. Figures are reported as crude rates, and as rates age-adjusted to year 2000 standard. Rates are summarized for report areas from county level data, only where data is available. This indicator is relevant because death of despair is an indicator of poor mental health.

Within the report area, there were 2,122 deaths of despair. This represents an age-adjusted death rate of 39.8 per every 100,000 total population.

Report Area	Total Population, 2016-2020 Average	Five Year Total Deaths, 2016-2020 Total	Crude Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)	Age-Adjusted Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Report Location	1,029,233	2,122	41.2	<b>39.8</b>
Dane County, WI	541,857	1,089	40.2	38.8
Jefferson County, WI	84,879	185	43.6	43.1
Waukesha County, WI	402,497	848	42.1	40.5
Wisconsin	5,808,570	13,868	47.8	45.7
United States	326,747,554	806,246	49.4	47.0

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.*

*Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC - National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2016-2020. Source geography: County*

## Deaths of Despair, Age-Adjusted Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.) by Gender

This table reports the age-adjusted rate of death due to intentional self-harm (suicide), alcohol-related disease, and drug overdoses, also known as "deaths of despair," per 100,000 people for the 5-year period 2016-2020 by gender.

Report Area	Male	Female
Report Location	55.9	24.0
Dane County, WI	53.1	24.7
Jefferson County, WI	63.0	23.1
Waukesha County, WI	58.3	23.1
Wisconsin	64.4	27.3
United States	67.7	27.3

## Deaths of Despair, Age-Adjusted Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.) by Race / Ethnicity

This table reports the age-adjusted rate of death due to intentional self-harm (suicide), alcohol-related disease, and drug overdoses, also known as "deaths of despair," per 100,000 people for the 5-year period 2016-2020 by race and by Hispanic origin.

Report Area	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Asian or Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Hispanic or Latino
Report Location	41.5	81.3	No data	No data	25.3
Dane County, WI	39.7	81.3	No data	No data	22.1
Jefferson County, WI	46.7	No data	No data	No data	No data
Waukesha County, WI	42.7	No data	No data	No data	31.2
Wisconsin	45.8	64.1	14.8	101.8	39.5
United States	55.6	38.6	14.3	64.3	34.6

## Violent Crime - Total

Violent crime includes homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Within the report area, the 2015-2017 three-year total of reported violent crimes was 5,141, which equates to an annual rate of 165.20 crimes per 100,000 people, lower than the statewide rate of 304.60.

Report Area	Total Population	Violent Crimes, 3-year Total	Violent Crimes, Annual Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.)
Report Location	1,037,239	5,141	<b>165.20</b>
Dane County, WI	535,733	3,774	234.80
Jefferson County, WI	89,929	423	156.70
Waukesha County, WI	411,577	944	76.40
Wisconsin	5,882,800	53,764	304.60
United States	366,886,849	4,579,031	416.00

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.*

*Data Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI Uniform Crime Reports. Additional analysis by the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data. Accessed via the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. 2015-2017. Source geography: County*

## Mortality - Firearm

This indicator reports the 2016-2020 five-year average rate of death due to firearm wounds per 100,000 population, which includes gunshot wounds from powder-charged handguns, shotguns, and rifles. Figures are reported as crude rates, and as rates age-adjusted to year 2000 standard. This indicator is relevant because firearm deaths are preventable, and they are a cause of premature death.

Within the report area, there are a total of 395 deaths due to firearm wounds. This represents an age-adjusted death rate of 7.2 per every 100,000 total population.

*Note: Data are suppressed for counties with fewer than 20 deaths in the three-year time frame*

Report Area	Total Population, 2016-2020 Average	Five Year Total Deaths, 2016-2020 Total	Crude Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)	Age-Adjusted Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Report Location	1,029,233	395	7.7	7.2
Dane County, WI	541,857	196	7.2	6.7
Jefferson County, WI	84,879	37	8.7	8.5
Waukesha County, WI	402,497	162	8.1	7.5
Wisconsin	5,808,570	3,207	11.0	10.9
United States	326,747,554	203,100	12.4	12.2

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.  
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC - National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2016-2020. Source geography: County

## Mortality - Opioid Overdose

This indicator reports the 2016-2020 five-year average rate of death due to opioid drug overdose per 100,000 population. Figures are reported as crude rates, and as rates age-adjusted to year 2000 standard. Rates are summarized for report areas from county level data, only where data is available. This indicator is relevant because opioid drug overdose is the leading cause of injury deaths in the United States, and they have increased dramatically in recent years.

Within the report area, there are a total of 871 deaths due to opioid overdose. This represents an age-adjusted death rate of 17.8 per every 100,000 total population.

*Note: Data are suppressed for counties with fewer than 20 deaths in the time frame.*

Report Area	Total Population, 2016-2020 Average	Five Year Total Deaths, 2016-2020 Total	Crude Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)	Age-Adjusted Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Report Location	1,029,233	871	16.9	<b>17.8</b>
Dane County, WI	541,857	496	18.3	18.0
Jefferson County, WI	84,879	71	16.7	18.4
Waukesha County, WI	402,497	304	15.1	17.3
Wisconsin	5,808,570	4,834	16.6	17.6
United States	326,747,554	256,428	15.7	16.0

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC - National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2016-2020. Source geography: County

## Mortality - Infant Mortality (CDC)

This indicator reports information about infant mortality, which is defined as the number of all infant deaths (within 1 year) per 1,000 live births. Data were from the National Center for Health Statistics - Mortality Files (2014-2020) and are used for the 2022 County Health Rankings.

Within the report area, 351 infant deaths occurred during the 2014-20 seven year period. This represents 4.7 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Note: Data are suppressed for counties with fewer than 20 infant deaths in the time frame.

Report Area	Number of Infant Deaths	Deaths per 1,000 Live Births
Report Location	351	<b>4.7</b>
Dane County, WI	210	5.0
Jefferson County, WI	25	4.3
Waukesha County, WI	116	4.3
Wisconsin	2,728	6.0
United States	154,136	5.7

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, County Health Rankings. 2014-2020. Source geography: County

# COVID-19 - Mortality

In the report area, there have been 1,955 total deaths among patients with confirmed cases of the coronavirus disease COVID-19. The mortality rate in the report area is 189.70 per 100,000 population, which is less than the state average of 260.08. Data are current as of 09/11/2022.

Report Area	Total Population	Total Deaths	Deaths, Rate per 100,000 Population	Last Update
Report Location	1,030,565	1,955	189.70	09/11/2022
Dane County, WI	542,364	564	103.99	09/11/2022
Jefferson County, WI	85,129	249	292.50	09/11/2022
Waukesha County, WI	403,072	1,142	283.32	09/11/2022
Wisconsin	5,813,568	15,120	260.08	09/11/2022
United States	326,262,499	1,029,486	315.54	09/11/2022

*Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.  
Data Source: Johns Hopkins University. Accessed via ESRI. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2022. Source geography: County*

## About our Methodology

CAC used five sources of data to inform our needs assessment report. The table below describes each source of data. To request any of the surveys or tools we used please email [cac@cacscw.org](mailto:cac@cacscw.org).

<b>Resident Survey</b>	<b>318 people responded</b> to our client needs assessment. The assessment asked respondents to rate needs, report on satisfaction with CAC programs and services, and barriers/challenges they face.
<b>Community Partner Survey</b>	<b>113 people responded</b> to our community partner needs assessment. The assessment asked respondents to rate needs they see in the community, report on satisfaction with CAC programs and services, and share barriers/challenges their clients/constituents.
<b>Interviews with Clients</b>	<b>CAC interviewed 8 clients</b> representing in August 2022. Clients represented areas CAC offers support for community members. These areas include clients receiving rental assistance, resource and referral, double dollars, mortgage assistance and case management.
<b>Agency Data-Intake Records</b>	<b>CAC received over 12,000 emails, intake forms, and calls</b> to via our intake process from August 1, 2021-July 31, 2022. CAC tracks the requests made via the intake, referrals provided, and unmet needs.
<b>National, State, and Local Databases</b>	CAC uses secondary data to support the key findings/recommendations uncovered in our needs assessment surveys.

### Primary Analysis: Ranking Priorities

To identify the top 5 key findings, clients and community partners used a 5-point Likert scale to rank the accessibility (easily accessible to not accessible) and need (no need to high need) for 38 areas. Needs assessment areas included items such as food pantries, housing vouchers, community referrals, mental health services, affordable housing, childcare, transportation, etc. CAC sent a survey to more than 8,000 clients, stakeholders and community partners between May and August 2022. We received 431 responses, 318 from clients and 113 from community partners.

The items with the highest scores for both accessibility and need were ranked. The rankings were as follows:

1. Paying for affordable housing (20% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)
2. Finding Safe, affordable housing (17% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)
3. Purchasing healthy foods (16% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)
4. Purchasing or refinancing a home (15% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)
5. Finding a living wage job (15% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)
6. Mental Health Supports or Groups (15% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)
7. Accessing Mental health care (15% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)
8. Accessing affordable transportation (13% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)
9. Accessing affordable childcare (13% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)
10. Accessing Affordable substance use or AODA services (12% of respondents ranked as High Need/Not Accessible)

## **Secondary Analysis: Key Findings and Poverty Trends**

To better understand the personal impact of our key findings, CAC team members conducted 8 client interviews, met with other partners conducting similar assessments (health departments, hospitals, county governments), and reviewed our internal client intake data. Using 14 national, state, and local databases, we further verified our findings. The rankings were thematically organized as possible. For instance, we placed items from the top 10 rankings (numbers 1,2, and 4) and under the umbrella term “Accessing Affordable Housing.” Additionally, CAC used quotes from both the needs assessment surveys and interviews to inform the the key finding. A total of 5 key findings were identified as items of greatest need in our community. Our key findings were:

- #1: Accessing Affordable Housing
- #2: Obtaining Healthy, Affordable Nutrition
- #3: Improving Mental Health Services
- #4: Access to Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use Treatment
- #5: Identifying Living Wage Career Opportunities

## **Recommendations: Taking Action**

CAC is driven by our strategic plan, community action plan, funding sources and mission. To determine our recommendations, we organized our top 5 key findings under CAC’s existing focus areas. The primary and secondary data are presented in this report according to the three CAC focus areas (Housing Security, Food Security, and Essential Resources). An overarching section on poverty was included to help compare how our community compared to other Wisconsin communities and the country as a whole. The recommendations for how CAC should address our top 5 key findings include:

- #1: Focus on the root causes of poverty
- #2: Address Housing Security
- #3: Address Food Security
- #4: Improve the social-emotional wellbeing of community members

## **Why we conduct a Community Needs Assessment?**

As a community action agency, CAC receives a federal block grant called the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). As a CSBG recipient we are required to conduct a community needs assessment and summarize our findings in a report. The findings of the report then inform the CSBG-funded programs and services offered by CAC. This unique and innovative approach allows us to move the needle on poverty, by addressing local gaps thus helping meet the needs of low-income families across our communities.

## **Acknowledgement**

The Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin Community Needs Assessment is a report which aims to better understand the gaps and assets of our communities. Many people assisted with the collection and compilation of data within this report. We are thankful for the CAC Board of Directors; Plans, Program and Development Committee; and local community partner agencies for their active involvement and continued support and guidance. Above all we are deeply grateful to the people who participated in our community need’s assessment process and Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Community Services Block Grant for financial support. We especially want to thank the individuals who took time to complete the 2022 Community Needs Assessment household survey, as well as the individuals who completed the community partners/key sectors survey.

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