

October 2013

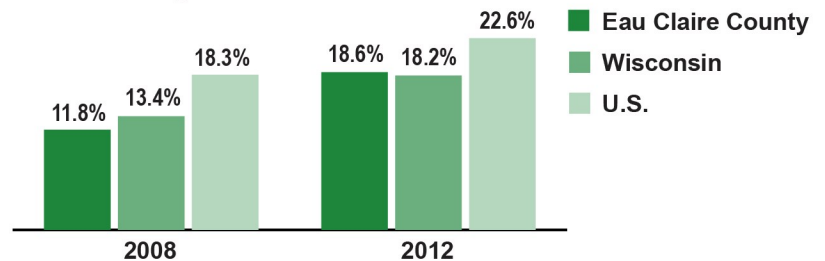
## Economic Recovery Slow for Eau Claire County Families

### More People in Poverty, Median Income Declines

#### One out of Six Children in Eau Claire County Now Lives in Poverty

The child poverty rate in Eau Claire County rose to 18.6% in 2012 from 11.8% in 2008. Eau Claire County's child poverty rate is slightly higher than the statewide average, which rose to 18.2% in 2012 from 13.4% in 2008. More than 1,700 additional children slipped into poverty in Eau Claire County between 2008 and 2012, which represents a population greater than the village of Fall Creek.

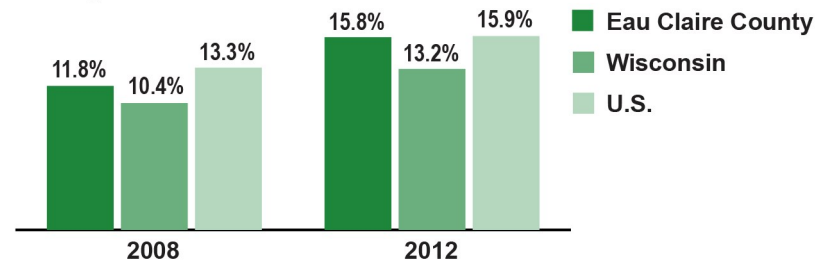
#### Child Poverty



#### Poverty in Eau Claire County Has Increased

As a result of the recession, the total poverty rate in Eau Claire County increased to 15.8% in 2012 from 11.8% in 2008. In 2012, Eau Claire County's poverty rate was higher than the Wisconsin average, which rose from 10.4% in 2008 to 13.2% in 2012. The statewide poverty level was lower than the national average.

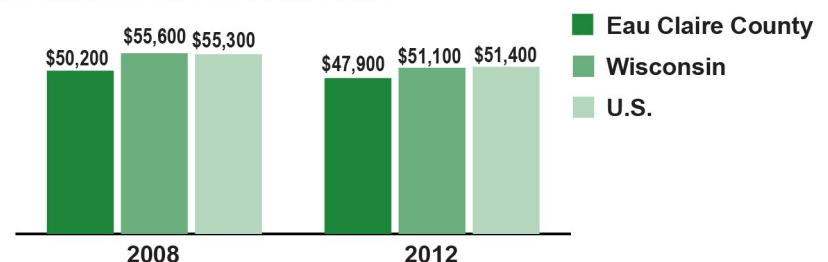
#### Poverty



#### Households in Eau Claire County are Making Do with Less

The typical household in Eau Claire County earned \$2,300 less in 2012 than in 2008. Median household income dropped to \$47,900 in 2012 from \$50,200 in 2008. A typical household in Eau Claire County earns roughly 6% less than the state and national average.

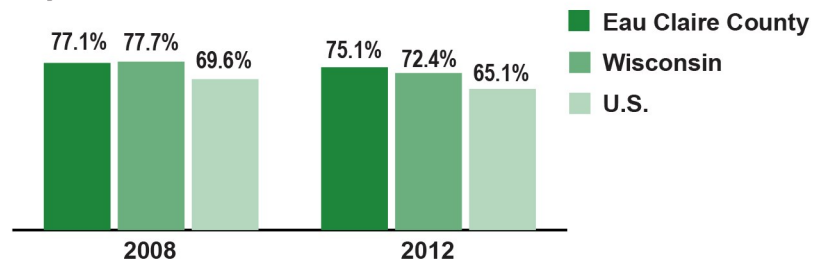
#### Median Household Income



## Fewer People in Eau Claire County Have Private Health Insurance

The percent of people in Eau Claire County with private health insurance decreased to 75.1% in 2012 from 77.1% in 2008. The increase in the unemployment rate impacted health insurance coverage, since most families obtain insurance through their employers. Eau Claire County and Wisconsin in general still had significantly higher rates of private health insurance coverage than the nation as a whole.

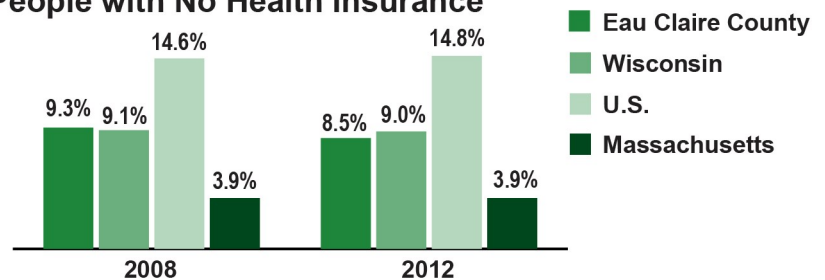
**People with Private Health Insurance**



## Implementing Health Care Reform Could Significantly Improve Access to Insurance

The percent of Eau Claire County residents lacking health insurance decreased slightly to 8.5% in 2012 from 9.3% in 2008. Both Eau Claire County and Wisconsin had a much smaller share of their population without health insurance than the national average, but far above the 3.9% rate in Massachusetts. That state implemented health care reforms in 2007 that served as the model for the Affordable Care Act.

**People with No Health Insurance**



## How to Help Eau Claire County Families Affected by the Recession

Families in Eau Claire County are still feeling the effects of the recession, when steep job loss pushed many residents into poverty and resulted in the loss of health care coverage. Eau Claire County's median household income is below the national average, and far too many families are struggling to make ends meet or going without health insurance.

It is discouraging that three years into the recovery, poverty rates and income remain stubbornly low, and the uninsured rate remains high. But there are some basic steps we can take to help boost the local economy and help Eau Claire County families pull themselves out of poverty, including:

- Increase the minimum wage and then adjust it each year for inflation.
- Give businesses access to a well-trained workforce by providing schools and colleges the resources they need to prepare students for employment. And provide students with the financial aid they need to succeed in their educational efforts.
- Adjust the Homestead tax credit for inflation each year, like the rest of the tax code.
- Create a strong public/private partnership to help Wisconsinites get insurance through the Affordable Care Act and to help reach the Governor's target of cutting the uninsured rate in half.
- Maintain funding for safety net programs such as food stamps and federal unemployment benefits that help lift families out of poverty and pump money into the still sluggish economy.
- Increase school readiness by improving children's early learning and development opportunities through high-quality child care, early education, home visiting, and parent engagement.