

October 2013

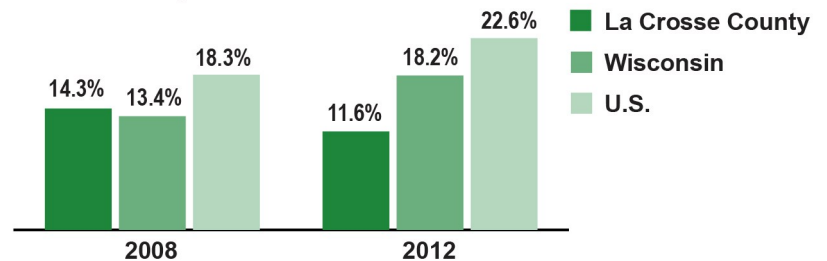
## Economic Recovery Slow for La Crosse County Families

### More People in Poverty, Fewer with Private Health Insurance

#### One out of Nine Children in La Crosse County Lives in Poverty

The child poverty rate in La Crosse County dropped to 11.6% in 2012 from 14.3% in 2008. La Crosse County's child poverty rate is lower than the statewide average, which rose to 18.2% in 2012 from 13.4% in 2008. Both La Crosse and the state have child poverty rates lower than the national average.

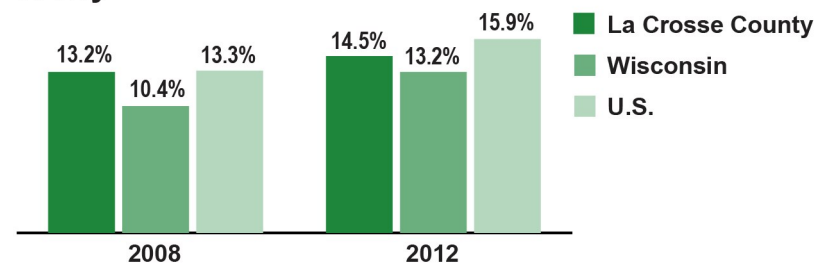
#### Child Poverty



#### Poverty in La Crosse County Has Increased

As a result of the recession, the total poverty rate in La Crosse County increased to 14.5% in 2012 from 13.2% in 2008. In 2012, La Crosse County's poverty rate was above the Wisconsin average, which rose to 13.2% in 2012 from 10.4% in 2008. The statewide poverty level was lower than the national average.

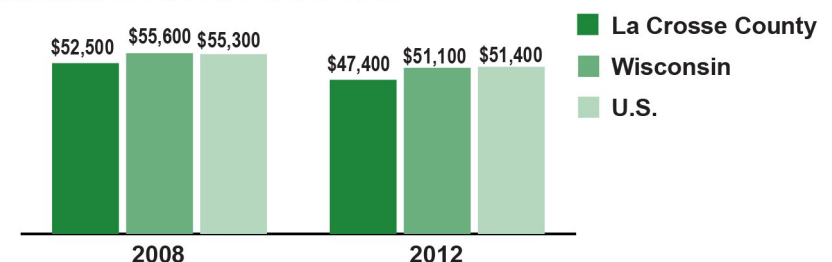
#### Poverty



#### Households in La Crosse County are Making Do with Less

The typical household in La Crosse County earned \$5,100 less in 2012 than in 2008. Median household income dropped to \$47,400 in 2012 from \$52,500 in 2008. A typical household in La Crosse County earns roughly 7% less than the state and national average.

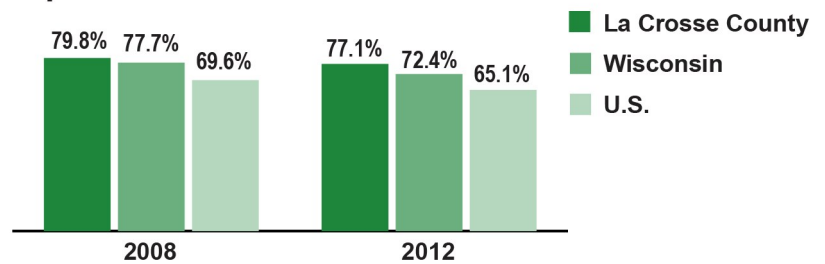
#### Median Household Income



## Fewer People in La Crosse County Have Private Health Insurance

The percent of people in La Crosse County with private health insurance decreased to 77.1% in 2012 from 79.8% in 2008. The increase in the unemployment rate impacted health insurance coverage, since most families obtain insurance through their employers. La Crosse County had higher rates of private health insurance coverage than the state and national averages.

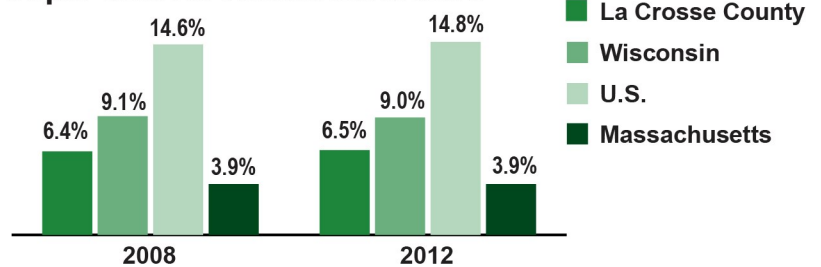
People with Private Health Insurance



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

The percent of La Crosse County residents lacking health insurance essentially stayed the same between 2008 and 2012. Both La Crosse 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 La Crosse County Families Affected by the Recession

Families in La Crosse 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. Median household income in La Crosse County has dropped 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 La Crosse 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.