

October 2013

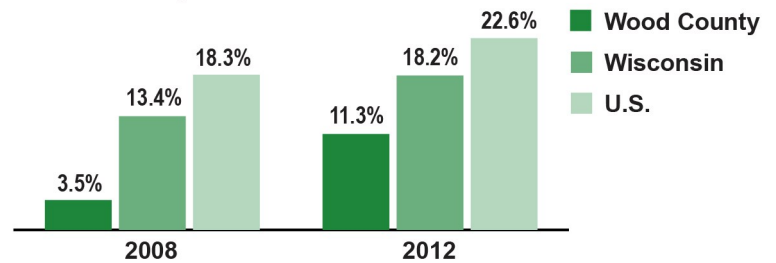
Economic Recovery Slow for Wood County Families

More People in Poverty, Fewer with Private Health Insurance

One out of Nine Children in Wood County Now Lives in Poverty

The child poverty rate in Wood County increased to 11.3% in 2012 from 3.5% in 2008. Wood County's child poverty rate is lower than the statewide average, which rose to 18.2% in 2012 from 13.4% in 2008. Nearly 1,200 additional children slipped into poverty in Wood County between 2008 and 2012, which represents a population nearly the same size as the city of Nekoosa.

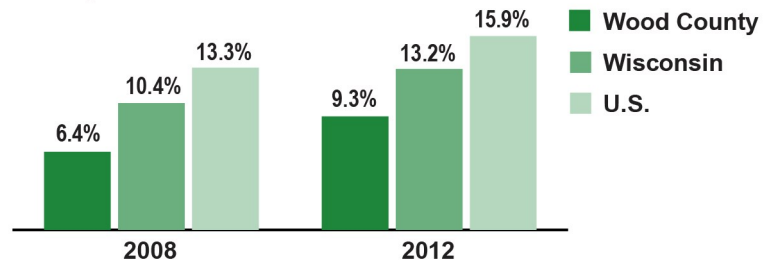
Child Poverty



Poverty in Wood County Has Increased

As a result of the recession, the total poverty rate in Wood County increased to 9.3% in 2012 from 6.4% in 2008. In 2012, Wood County's poverty rate was below 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.

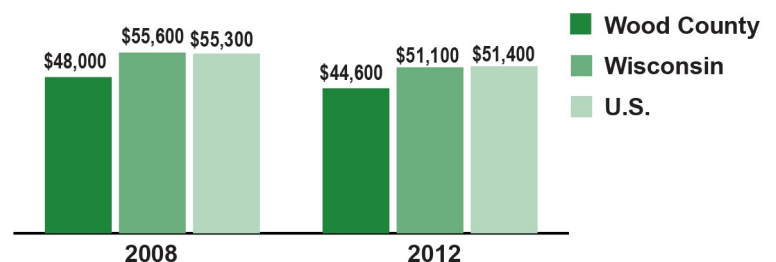
Poverty



Households in Wood County are Making Do with Less

The typical household in Wood County earned \$3,400 less in 2012 than in 2008. Median household income dropped to \$44,600 in 2012 from \$48,000 in 2008. A typical household in Wood County earns roughly 13% less than the state and national average.

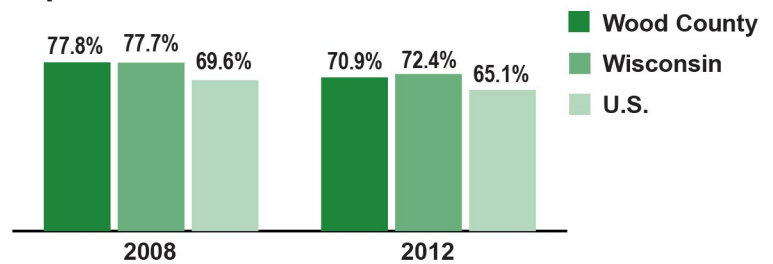
Median Household Income



Fewer People in Wood County Have Private Health Insurance

The percent of people in Wood County with private health insurance decreased to 70.9% in 2012 from 77.8% in 2008. The increase in the unemployment rate impacted health insurance coverage, since most families obtain insurance through their employers.

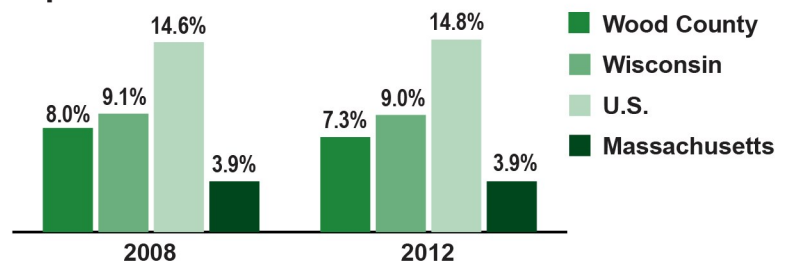
People with Private Health Insurance



Implementing Health Care Reform Could Significantly Improve Access to Insurance

The percent of Wood County residents lacking health insurance dropped to 7.3% in 2012, from 8.0% in 2008. Both Wood 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 Wood County Families Affected by the Recession

Families in Wood 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. Wood County's economic situation is better in some respects than the national average, but 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 Wood 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.

