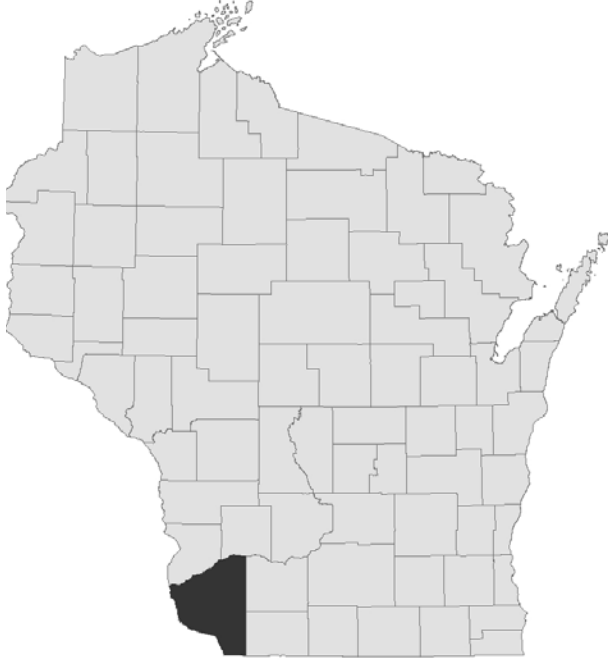
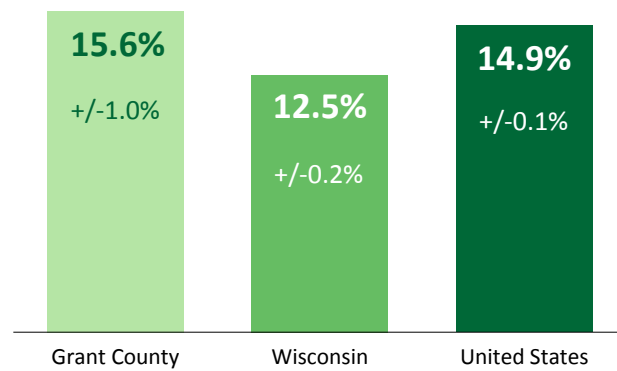


Poverty and Food Security in Grant County, Wisconsin



Poverty rates vary greatly across Wisconsin. In Grant County, the estimated poverty rate during the 5-year span of 2008-2012 was 15.6%, an increase from 2000 when the county poverty rate was 11.2%. The 2008-2012 estimated poverty rate in Grant County was significantly higher than the statewide rate of 12.5% and was not significantly different from the national average of 14.9%.⁵

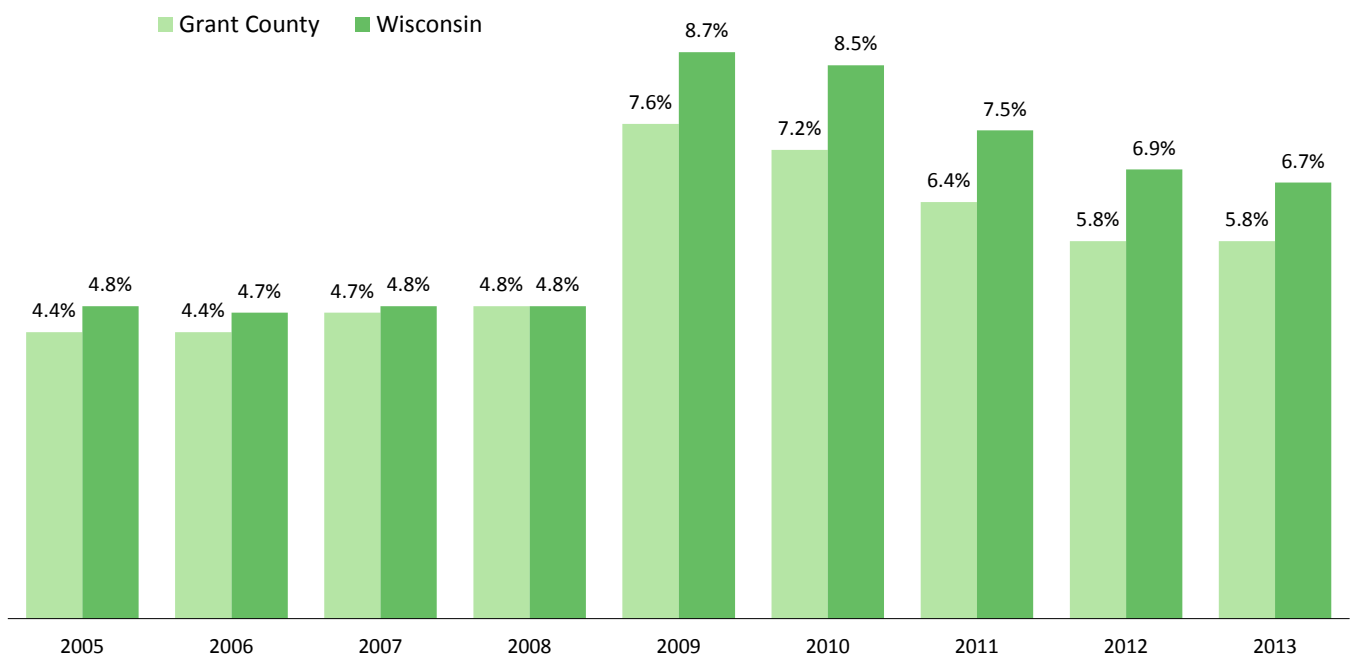
Figure 1. **Poverty Rates in Grant County, Wisconsin and the United States: 2008-2012**



Although Wisconsin's unemployment rate has decreased in recent years, it remains high at 6.7%

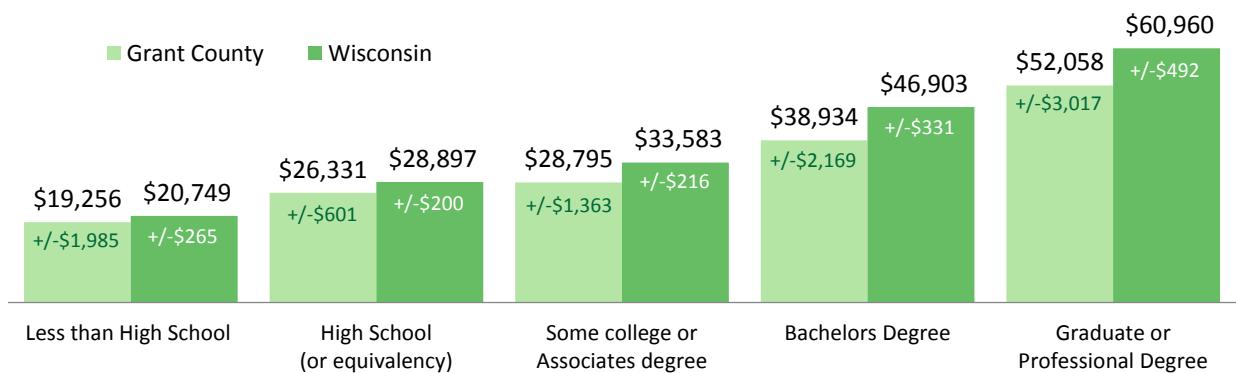
statewide. Unemployment rose significantly between 2008 and 2009, and is still substantially above pre-recession rates. In Grant County, the 2013 unemployment rate was 5.8%, lower than the state's average.

Figure 5. *Unemployment Rate in Grant County and Wisconsin: 2005-2013*



In 2012, 70.6% of adults over 25 in Grant County did not have an associates or bachelors degree, putting them at high risk for poverty-wage jobs.

Figure 7. **Individual Median Earnings by Educational Attainment in Grant County: 2008-2012**



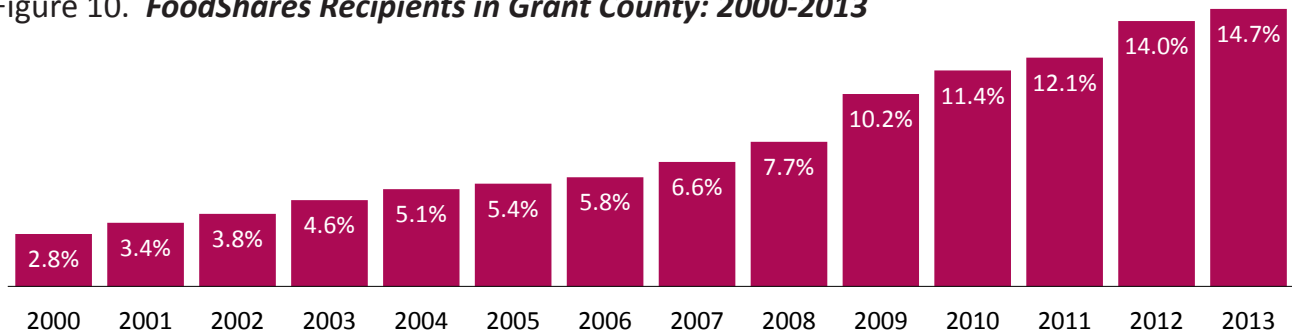
During the period of 2008-2012, the median income for residents of Grant County was \$29,806 – significantly lower than the state median income of \$35,085. However, individual income differs by education. In Grant County, employed adults over

25 with only a high school degree or GED earned a median income of \$26,331 which is significantly lower than the \$38,934 median income earned by individuals with a bachelors degree.

The highest food hardship rate in the 2011-2012 period—21.8%—was reported by residents of District 4, located in part of Milwaukee County. The lowest rate—7.7%—was reported for District 5 to the north and west of the city of Milwaukee. Grant County was in District 3, where 10.5% of the population reported food hardship.

In Grant County, the proportion of the population receiving FoodShare increased from 2.8% in 2000 to 14.7% in 2013. The county rate of FoodShare participation in 2013 was lower than the statewide rate of 19.1%.

Figure 10. *FoodShares Recipients in Grant County: 2000-2013*



Likewise, there has been substantial growth in the share of children who are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals at school. Statewide, the rate increased from 30.8% to 40.0% between 2000 and 2012.

In Grant County during the same period, the share of school-age children certified for free or reduced-price meals grew from 27% to 43%. Children are eligible for free meals if their household income is below 130% of the federal poverty line, and children are eligible for reduced-price meals if their household income is below 185% of the federal poverty line.

1. The number reported by the 2012 ACS 1-Year estimates has a 90% margin of error of +/-16,981 or +/-0.3%. This means one can be 90% certain that the actual number of people in Wisconsin living below the poverty line falls between 720,375 and 754,337.
2. Poverty estimates are from the 2012 American Community Survey, 1-year Estimates, and Census 2000 SF3. These and other estimates are available through the US Census Bureau on-line through the American FactFinder (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>).
3. The lower 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia, Alaska, and Hawaii all have slightly different poverty thresholds. The 2012 guidelines can be found on-line through the US Department of Health and Human Services <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/12poverty.shtml#thresholds>). Poverty thresholds used here and reported by the US Census Bureau can be accessed on-line (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html>).
4. Smeeding, T.M., Isaacs, J.B. & Thornton. J.B. Wisconsin Poverty Report: Jobs Recover to Help Reduce Poverty in 2012. The Sixth Annual Report of the Wisconsin Poverty Project. May 2014. (<http://www.irp.wisc.edu/research/WisconsinPoverty/pdfs/WI-PovertyReport2014.pdf>)
5. The Grant County poverty rate reported by the 2008-2012 ACS 5-year estimates has a margin of error of +/-1.0%. Therefore, we can be 90% certain that the actual percentage of people in Grant County living below the poverty line is between 14.6% and 16.6%. This estimate is above the range for the state poverty rate (12.5% +/-0.2). At 15.6%, the Grant County's estimated poverty rate is significantly higher the state rate. A complete table of poverty rates for all Wisconsin counties is available through the Applied Population Laboratory. (http://www.apl.wisc.edu/publications/poverty_rates_WI_portrait.pdf)
6. Despite lower poverty rates among the older population, research suggests that the official poverty measure may underestimate poverty among seniors by not accounting for high medical costs, while it may overestimate poverty among parents and children by not accounting for key forms of economic assistance. See Smeeding, T.M., Isaacs, J.B. & Thornton. J.B. Wisconsin Poverty Report: Jobs Recover to Help Reduce Poverty in 2012. The Sixth Annual Report of the Wisconsin Poverty Project. May 2014. (<http://www.irp.wisc.edu/research/WisconsinPoverty/pdfs/WI-PovertyReport2014.pdf>)
7. Van de Water, P., Sherman, A., & Ruffing, K.A. Social Security Keeps 22 Million Americans Out Of Poverty: A State-By-State Analysis. Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. October 25, 2013. (<http://www.cbpp.org/files/10-25-13ss.pdf>)
8. Curtis, K.J. & O'Connell, H. County Factors Related to Wisconsin Poverty, 2000. Wisconsin Poverty Series, Briefing #3. August 2010. (<http://www.apl.wisc.edu/publications/WisPovertyBriefing-3.pdf>)
9. US Bureau of Labor Statistics. How the Government Measures Unemployment. February 2009. (http://www.bls.gov/cps/cps_htgm.htm#unemployed)
10. Center for Wisconsin Strategies (COWS). 2012. The State of Working Wisconsin, 2012. (<http://www.cows.org/the-state-of-working-wisconsin-2012>)
11. Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) analysis of Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2012 1-year estimates.
12. Center on Hunger and Poverty, Brandeis University. 2002. The Consequences of Hunger and Food Insecurity for Children: Evidence from Recent Scientific Studies. (www.centeronhunger.org/pdf/ConsequencesofHunger.pdf)
13. Cohen, R., J. Mabli, F. Potter & Z. Zhao. (2010). Hunger in America 2010. Mathematica Policy Research, Feeding America. (http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/PDFs/Nutrition/Hunger_in_America_2010.pdf)
14. Lee, J.S., & E.A. Frongillo Jr. (2001). Nutritional and Health Consequences are Associated with Food Insecurity among U.S. Elderly Persons. *Journal of Nutrition*. 131: 1503-1509. (<http://jn.nutrition.org/content/131/5/1503.full.pdf>)
15. "Food hardship" is based on the question "Have there been times in the past twelve months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?" asked by the Gallup Poll and cited by the Food Research Action Center. "Food insecurity" is based on a series of questions asked by the US Census and the USDA about households' ability to meet their food needs. The two measures are similar but not identical. See: Food Research and Action Center. Food Hardship in America, 2012. February 2013. (http://frac.org/pdf/food_hardship_2012.pdf)