



# 2024 COMPASS NOW

NAVIGATING TOWARD STRONGER COMMUNITIES



## How is your community faring?

Buffalo County

Published June 13, 2024



# Acknowledgments

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Monroe County Health Department

Otto Bremer Trust

Tomah Health

Trempealeau County Health Department

Vernon County Health Department

Vernon Memorial Healthcare

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Finally, thank you to those participating in the Stakeholder meetings in each county. Your assistance in identifying and prioritizing the top needs of the region and counties involved in this process will help drive positive change. A list of organizations involved in the stakeholder meetings is on the next page.

## List of Organizations that Participated in Community Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder Meetings were held in each of the six counties covered by the Compass Now 2024 Report. 177 individuals from 84 different organizations attended. They are listed below:

ABLE, Inc.  
Allina Health  
Arcadia Public Library  
Ashley Wellness Center  
Blair-Taylor School District  
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse  
**Buffalo County**  
**Buffalo County Board**  
**Buffalo County Emergency Management**  
**Buffalo County Health Department**  
**Buffalo County Sheriff's Department**  
Caledonia School District  
Campbell Family Group Home  
CASA for Kids, Inc.  
Chileda  
City of Caledonia  
City of La Crosse – Fire Department  
**City of Mondovi**  
Coulee Recovery Center  
Couleecap, Inc.  
Family and Children's Center  
First National Bank & Trust Company  
Gale-Etrick-Trempealeau School District  
Gateway Area Council, Boy Scouts of America  
Great Rivers 211  
**Great Rivers United Way**  
Gundersen Health System  
Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital & Clinics  
Gundersen Tri-County Hospital & Clinics  
Hillsboro City Council  
Hope Floats  
**Hope4U**  
Houston County Commissioners  
Houston County Public Health  
Hunger Task Force  
Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Independence School District  
**Interpreter for Migrant Farm Workers**  
La Crosse Area Family YMCA  
La Crosse County Administration,  
Economic & Community Development  
La Crosse County Board  
La Crosse County Health Department  
La Crosse County Human Services  
La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium  
LeaderEthics  
Mayo Clinic Health System  
Minnesota Department of Health  
Monroe County Child Support  
Monroe County Health Department  
Monroe County Human Services  
Next Steps for Change  
ODCorp  
Outdoor Recreation Alliance  
Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin  
Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers  
Scenic Rivers AHEC  
School District of Hillsboro  
School District of Holmen  
School District of La Crosse  
School District of Mondovi  
School District of Onalaska  
Second Harvest Food Pantry  
SEMCAC  
St. Clare Health Mission  
**State of Wisconsin DHS**  
The Nature Place  
The Parenting Place  
The Salvation Army  
Together with Veterans  
Tomah Area School District  
Tomah Health  
Trempealeau County  
Trempealeau County Health Department  
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse  
UW-Madison Extension – Monroe County  
UW-Madison Extension – Vernon County  
**Various Local Farmers**  
Vernon County Health Department  
Vernon County Over 50  
Vernon Memorial Healthcare  
Viroqua Area Schools  
Viroqua Variety  
Viterbo University  
Western Dairyland Head Start  
Whitehall Area Chamber of Commerce  
Winona State University Department of Nursing

**Bold means there was representation at this county's stakeholder meeting.**

# Table of Contents

## 1. Introduction

Introduction and Purpose of the Study	1
Study Methods and Data Sources	2
Limitations of this Report	5
Bridging the Compass Now 2021 and 2024 Reports	6

## Study Results: How is the Great Rivers Region Faring?

### 2. The Six-County Region

Demographic Profile & Thematic Maps	8
Summary of County Health Rankings	15

### 3. Length and Quality of Life 16

Community Indicators	17
Community Insights	19

### 4. Health Behaviors and Concerns 22

Community Indicators	23
Community Insights	27

### 5. Health Care and Utilization 30

Community Indicators	31
Community Insights	32

### 6. Social and Economic Factors 36

Community Indicators	37
Community Insights	39

### 7. Physical Environment and Safety 48

Community Indicators	49
Community Insights	49

### 8. Additional Community Insights 56

Thematic Analysis	56
Themes from the Community Survey	57
Themes from Community Insight Events	58

## 9. Prioritization and Reflection 64

Top Identified Needs	66
Reflection on Top Needs	66

## Appendix

Data Sources	79
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# List of Exhibits

## Introduction

- Exhibit 1.1 - The Study Region
- Exhibit 1.2 - The County Health Rankings Model
- Exhibit 1.3 - Profile of Community Survey Respondents

## The Six-county Region

- Exhibit 2.1 - Demographic Snapshot of the Region
- Exhibit 2.2 - Population Projections
- Exhibit 2.3 - Total Population and Population Density by County
- Exhibit 2.4 - Total Population by Census Tract
- Exhibit 2.5 - Households with Income below Poverty by Census Tract
- Exhibit 2.6 - Child Population by Census Tract
- Exhibit 2.7 - Older Adult Population by Census Tract
- Exhibit 2.8 - Asian Population by Census Tract
- Exhibit 2.9 - Black/African American Population by Census Tract
- Exhibit 2.10 - Other Race Population by Census Tract
- Exhibit 2.11 - Hispanic Population by Census Tract
- Exhibit 2.12 - County Health Rankings Summary for 2023

## Length and Quality of Life

- Exhibit 3.1 - County Health Rankings for Length and Quality of Life
- Exhibit 3.2 - Leading Causes of Death
- Exhibit 3.3 - Maternal and Infant Health
- Exhibit 3.4 - Ratings of Community Life
- Exhibit 3.5 - Ratings of Educational Opportunities
- Exhibit 3.6 - Concerns about Issues Related to Community Life

## Health Behaviors and Concerns

- Exhibit 4.1 - County Health Rankings for Health Behaviors
- Exhibit 4.2a - Youth Risk Profile – Wisconsin Counties
- Exhibit 4.2b - Youth Risk Profile – Houston County
- Exhibit 4.3 - Ratings of Personal Health
- Exhibit 4.4 - Concerns about Health Issues in the Community

## Health Care Access and Utilization

- Exhibit 5.1 - County Health Rankings for Clinical Care
- Exhibit 5.2 - Cancer Screening Rates
- Exhibit 5.3 - Self-Reported Health Coverage
- Exhibit 5.4 - Ratings of Health Care Access and Affordability
- Exhibit 5.5 - Health Care Sources and Obstacles for Adults
- Exhibit 5.6 - Dental Visits and Obstacles for Adults
- Exhibit 5.7 - Health Care and Dental Visits for Children

## Social and Economic Factors

- Exhibit 6.1 - County Health Rankings for Social and Economic Factors
- Exhibit 6.2 - Low Income and ALICE Households
- Exhibit 6.3 - Reported Child Services Cases
- Exhibit 6.4 - Caring for Vulnerable Persons
- Exhibit 6.5 - Issues Affecting Vulnerable Persons
- Exhibit 6.6 - Community Supports for Vulnerable Persons

- Exhibit 6.7 - Concerns about Meeting Household Needs
- Exhibit 6.8 - Concerns about Access to Healthy Food
- Exhibit 6.9 - Concerns about Economic Issues in the Community
- Exhibit 6.10 - Community Supports for Economic Stability
- Exhibit 6.11 - 2-1-1 Assistance Profile

## Physical Environment

- Exhibit 7.1 - County Health Rankings for the Physical Environment
- Exhibit 7.2 - Rating of Overall Community Safety
- Exhibit 7.3 - Concerns about Community Safety
- Exhibit 7.4 - Responsiveness of Public Safety Agencies
- Exhibit 7.5 - Preparedness for Emergency Events
- Exhibit 7.6 - Concerns about Public Spaces

## Additional Community Insights

- Exhibit 8.1 - Thematic Analysis: Additional Comments from Survey Respondents
- Exhibit 8.2 - List of Community Insight Events
- Exhibit 8.3 - Community Insight Events: Important Health Issues
- Exhibit 8.4 - Community Insight Events: New or Emerging Health Issues
- Exhibit 8.5 - Community Insight Events: Vulnerable Populations
- Exhibit 8.6 - Community Insight Events: Important Health Resources
- Exhibit 8.7 - Community Insight Events: Ideas for Working Together

## Prioritization and Reflection

- Exhibit 9.1 - Community Stakeholder Meetings
- Exhibit 9.2 - Buffalo County Top Needs
- Exhibit 9.3 - Injury and Violence Slide
- Exhibit 9.4 - Youth Mental Health Slide
- Exhibit 9.5 - Mental Health Slide
- Exhibit 9.6 - Transportation and Childcare Slide
- Exhibit 9.7 - Quality of Environment Slide
- Exhibit 9.8 - Health Care Access: Providers Available Slide
- Exhibit 9.9 - Health Care Access Slide
- Exhibit 9.10 - Community Asset List



# Introduction

Compass Now is a joint effort of Great Rivers United Way, area healthcare organizations, and county health departments to improve the quality of life for everyone in the community. This introductory section describes the purpose and additional context for the study. Sections 2-8 present the study results.

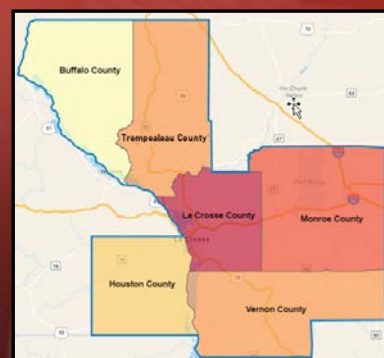
## Purpose of the Study

This report is the latest in a series of Compass Now needs assessments and reports published since 1995. In response to these reports, Great Rivers United Way has focused its funding system to more closely reflect identified community needs. In addition, a wide array of community organizations have used report findings to shape their own priorities and support grant requests.

The purpose of this Compass Now 2024 report is to provide an updated assessment of community needs that can be used to inform community action strategies by stakeholders across the region. As illustrated in **Exhibit 1.1**, the Compass Now 2024 study is focused on communities within a six-county region including Buffalo, La Crosse, Monroe, La Crosse, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties in Wisconsin, and Houston County in Minnesota. This report presents the results for the six-county region, with a focus on results for **Buffalo County** in particular.



If you find the contents of this report useful, please consider supporting our work by making a financial contribution to Great Rivers United Way at [greatriversunitedway.org](http://greatriversunitedway.org)



2023 Population Estimate	
<b>Buffalo</b>	<b>13,234</b>
Houston	18,813
La Crosse	122,678
Monroe	46,577
Trempealeau	31,170
Vernon	30,994
<b>Region</b>	<b>263,466</b>

Exhibit 1.1 - The Study Region. Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software.

## Study Methods and Data Sources

The study was conducted under the direction of Great Rivers United Way, with technical support from a contracted consultant (Community Health Solutions). The study was guided by a Compass Now Steering Committee comprised of stakeholders from public health, health care, and other community sectors. The Steering Committee members provided guidance on the study scope and methods, and also provided liaisons to engage community organizations in promoting participation in the community survey conducted for the study.

The study methods included analysis of community indicators from various sources, plus insights from community members as collected through a community survey and a series of community insight events. The study methods are summarized below, with more details provided in Appendix A.



## Community Indicators

### Community Demographics

A community demographic profile can provide insight about the size and distribution of the population in terms of health-sensitive attributes such as age, sex/gender, race, ethnicity, and income. Community demographics were analyzed and mapped using data and software from ESRI, a commercial provider of community data.

### County Health Rankings

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R) program is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The goal of CHR&R is to bring actionable data, evidence, guidance, and stories to diverse leaders and residents so people and communities can be healthier. The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute created CHR&R for communities across the nation, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

As illustrated in **Exhibit 1.2**, the County Health Rankings are based on a model of community health that emphasizes the many factors that influence how long and how well we live. The Rankings use more than 30 measures that help communities understand how healthy their residents are today (health outcomes) and what will impact their health in the future (health factors).

### Additional Community Indicators

Indicators from the County Health Rankings are supplemented with additional indicators from sources in the local region. The indicators are provided in several sections of the report, along with notes on specific data sources. These supplemental indicators include:

- Leading causes of death
- Maternal and infant health indicators
- Youth risk indicators
- Child services cases
- 211 assistance calls
- Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households





## Community Insights

### Community Survey

A community survey was conducted throughout the region from June to September of 2023. The purpose of the survey was to invite community insights about health needs in the region. The survey was conducted using mixed methods, and respondents could either complete their survey online or submit a paper copy of their survey response. Great Rivers United Way staff and volunteers entered paper survey responses into a Qualtrics survey portal provided by Community Health Solutions.

The survey was conducted in partnership with a wide range of community partners that helped raise awareness and encourage community members to complete the survey. In planning the survey, the project partners began with a common aim to conduct an inclusive survey with insights from a wide array of community members.

It should be noted that the surveys were conducted using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a practical approach for obtaining insights from as many people as possible, but without random selection. The results of a convenience sample are instructive for understanding the scope of issues and opportunities in a community; however, results might not be statistically representative of the entire population of a community.

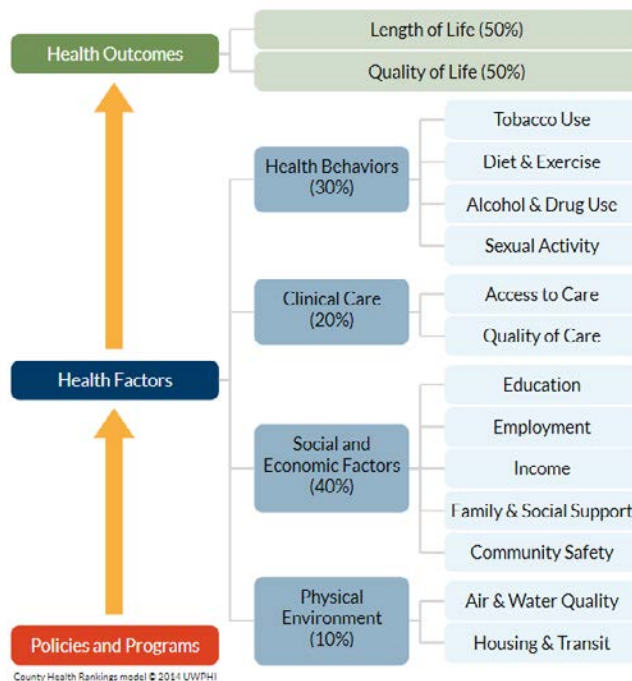
A total of 1,238 individuals submitted a response to the regional survey (although not every respondent completed every item). As shown in **Exhibit 1.3**:

The number of surveys completed by county ranged from 89 in Houston County and Trempealeau County to 536 in La Crosse County. Noting this wide range of responses, it is important to view the survey results at the county level, and recognize that the higher number of responses from La Crosse County and Monroe County have a skewing effect on the regional results.

A total of 92 responses were obtained from **Buffalo County** residents. The **Buffalo County** respondents were predominantly female (77%), as is common in community surveys of this type. Based on self-reports from survey respondents, the **Buffalo county** survey respondents included 7% other than White race alone; 2% Hispanic; and 15% with household income below \$35,000. By comparison, the rates for the overall population are 5% other than White alone; 3% Hispanic, and 24% with household income below \$35,000 (see Exhibit 2.1 for details).

### The County Health Rankings Model

Exhibit 1.2 - Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>



## Exhibit 1.3 Profile of Community Survey Respondents

Indicator	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGIONAL TOTAL
Total Survey Responses	92	89	536	226	89	206	1,238
<b>Age</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>1,219</b>
Age 18-29	20%	10%	17%	9%	8%	7%	13%
Age 30-44	34%	47%	29%	39%	30%	22%	31%
Age 45-64	34%	37%	33%	42%	47%	41%	37%
Age 65+	13%	6%	21%	10%	16%	30%	18%
<b>Gender</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>1,220</b>
Female	77%	72%	77%	77%	86%	75%	77%
Male	20%	27%	21%	19%	10%	22%	20%
Prefer not to answer	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Self-identify	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
<b>Race</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>1,211</b>
American Indian	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Asian	3%	1%	3%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Black/African American	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	93%	98%	90%	95%	92%	94%	93%
Other race	1%	0%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Two or more races	1%	0%	1%	1%	5%	2%	1%
<b>Ethnicity (Hispanic)</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>1,213</b>
Hispanic	2%	20%	3%	8%	13%	1%	6%
<b>Ethnicity (Hmong)</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>1,207</b>
Hmong	1%	2%	3%	3%	2%	0%	2%
<b>Education</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>1,216</b>
Post-graduate/professional	17%	20%	32%	21%	15%	25%	26%
College graduate	42%	53%	35%	38%	42%	37%	38%
Some college	13%	14%	20%	20%	10%	15%	17%
Vocational school	11%	7%	6%	9%	13%	13%	9%
High school diploma	14%	5%	6%	11%	17%	10%	9%
Did not graduate from high school	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	0%	1%
<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>1,215</b>
Owner-occupied	82%	78%	66%	70%	74%	86%	73%
Renter	13%	20%	30%	23%	26%	13%	24%
Other arrangement	4%	2%	5%	7%	0%	1%	4%
<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>1,186</b>
Less than \$15,000	3%	8%	9%	7%	8%	5%	8%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2%	18%	8%	3%	7%	5%	7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	10%	5%	8%	8%	4%	9%	8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	11%	8%	8%	7%	7%	12%	9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17%	16%	16%	21%	18%	17%	17%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	22%	16%	17%	21%	17%	21%	18%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	19%	19%	19%	21%	27%	15%	19%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	14%	5%	8%	10%	2%	9%	8%
\$200,000 and over	1%	5%	7%	2%	10%	8%	6%

Source: CHS analysis of community survey data.

## Community Insight Events

In addition to the community survey, the project partners conducted a series of 'community insight events' where community members were invited to share their insights about community needs in a group setting. A total of 20 community insight events were conducted in the August-October time frame (see **Exhibit 8.2** for details). Within each event the participants were invited to share their insights in response to these questions:

1. What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?
2. Are you aware of any new or emerging health issues or concerns that people should know about?
3. Are there any particular population groups who may be especially vulnerable for problems with their health or health care?
4. What do you see as the most important health resources available to support people in your community?
5. Do you have any ideas about how people or organizations could work together to promote better health or health care for the community?

## Limitations of this Report

This Compass Now 2024 report is intended to inform community action strategies by stakeholders across the region. The data presented within the report comes from multiple sources, each with its own set of limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results.

### Community Indicators

Each section of the report includes a series of exhibits showing various community indicators based on various existing data sources. This array of community indicators can be helpful for planning community improvement strategies, but it does not include every possible indicator of community health and well-being. We encourage readers to use this report as a starting point, and go beyond the report to seek additional data and information that can help you plan and implement effective strategies for community improvement.

### County Health Rankings

The County Health Rankings are developed from multiple data sources with varying levels of reliability, and some of these data sources are several years old. Consequently, the rankings and indicators do not provide precise and definitive evidence on where one county stands compared to another. However, in most cases the rankings and indicators are reliable enough to illustrate general community strengths and areas of concern, and they can be helpful for informing efforts to improve community health and well-being.

### Community Survey

As noted earlier, the community survey was conducted as an open survey with convenience sampling rather than random household sampling. The survey results do provide rich insights into community perceptions of need. However, because of the convenience sampling strategy, they are not structured to support statistical analyses that would generalize the results from the sample to the broader population.

### Respondent Perceptions.

In the community survey and the community insight events, respondents were invited to share their insights about a wide range of factors at the individual, household, and community level. Many of the survey questions rely on respondent perceptions of community concerns and community supports. Perceptions are subjective and based on the unique experience of each individual respondent. A respondent's perception of a community issue reflects their reality, but might not reflect the broader situation in the community.

## Bridging the Compass Now 2021 and 2024 Reports

The study methods used to produce this report were designed to provide continuity with the 2021 Compass Now Report where it was feasible and productive to do so. To summarize the similarities and differences:

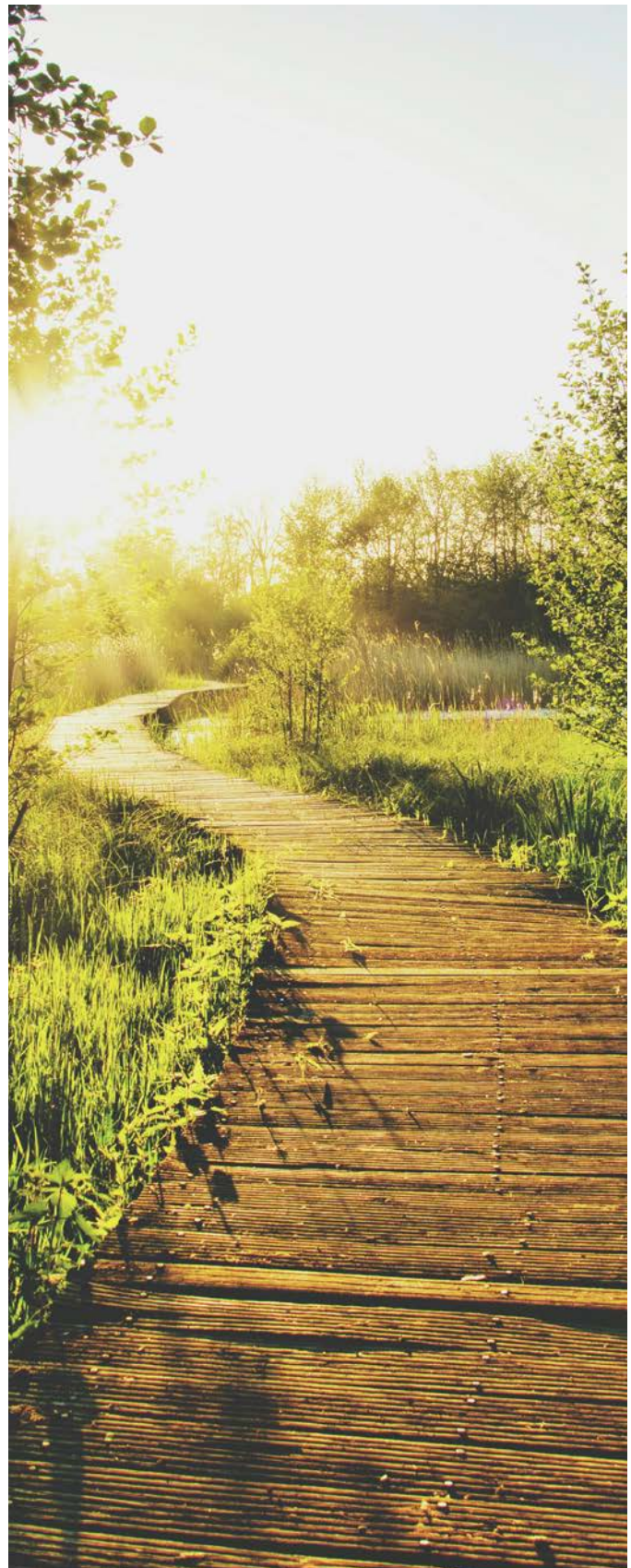
Although there is general continuity of structure between the 2021 and 2024 reports, caution should be used when comparing the results. One consideration is that many of the community indicators in the 2024 report are several years old, and the same was true for the 2021 report. This problem of 'data lag' is a challenge not only for the Compass Now study series, but also for every community study that relies on secondary sources of data. Consequently, it is not possible to measure improvement on community indicators from 2021 to 2024 in a relevant and reliable way.

Focusing on community data, this study relies heavily on County Health Rankings data, as did the Compass Now studies published in 2018 and 2021. There are some County Health Rankings data that are no longer available for this report, and these are noted in the relevant sections of the report.

This study also relies on local indicators of mortality, maternal and infant health, child health, and selected other factors. There are some differences in the availability and structure of selected indicators, and these are also noted in the relevant sections of the report.

Focusing on community surveys, the 2021 study included a highly structured, random household survey alongside a more open 'convenience sample' survey. In 2024 the study partners decided to focus on convenience sampling for the community survey, the rationale being that a convenience survey could be more flexibly focused on capturing insights from diverse populations across the study region. The study partners also conducted a series of 'community insight events' to capture additional perspectives from community members.

As a final consideration, this report is not intended as a scorecard on the health and well-being of one county compared to another. Throughout the report we provide county-level indicators on a number of community issues. However, these indicators are not structured to support reliable comparisons between counties. To illustrate this point, although the County Health Rankings do provide a relative ordering of counties on various indicators, in many cases the differences in ranking are not based on statistically significant differences in the underlying data used to generate the rankings. Beyond statistics, each county has its own unique set of factors that influence the health and well-being of the population. We recommend focusing on how to sustain strengths and address challenges within each county rather than comparing counties in scorecard fashion.







# How is the Great Rivers Region Faring?

This section presents an overview of the six-county region included in the study. The results include a demographic snapshot of the region, population projections, and a set of maps showing how selected populations are distributed throughout the region. Also shown is a summary exhibit of the County Health Rankings for the region.

## Section Outline

### **2. The Six-County Region**

Demographic Profile  
Summary of County Health Rankings

### **3. Length and Quality of Life**

Community Indicators  
Community Insights

### **4. Health Behaviors and Concerns**

Community Indicators  
Community Insights

### **5. Health Care and Utilization**

Community Indicators  
Community Insights

### **6. Social and Economic Factors**

Community Indicators  
Community Insights

### **7. Physical Environment and Safety**

Community Indicators  
Community Insights





## Demographic Profile

As shown in **Exhibit 2.1**, the six-county region is home to an estimated 263,466 residents. Within the **Buffalo County** population of an estimated 13,234 people:

- An estimated 20% are children, and an estimated 23% are adults age 65+.
- An estimated 5% of the population is classified as other than White, and about 3% are classified as multi-race.
- An estimated 10% of households have income below poverty, and an estimated 37% have household income under \$50,000 per year

### Exhibit 2.1 Demographic Snapshot of the Region

Indicator	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGIONAL TOTAL
2023 Total Population	13,234	18,813	122,678	46,577	31,170	30,994	263,466
<b>Age (2023)</b>							
Age 0-17	20%	20%	19%	24%	22%	23%	21%
Age 18-29	12%	13%	21%	13%	12%	12%	17%
Age 30-44	17%	17%	18%	18%	19%	16%	18%
Age 45-64	28%	27%	23%	26%	27%	27%	25%
Age 65+	23%	23%	18%	19%	21%	22%	20%
<b>Sex or Gender (2023)</b>							
Female Population	49%	50%	50%	49%	49%	50%	50%
Male Population	51%	50%	50%	51%	51%	50%	50%
<b>Race (2023)</b>							
American Indian/Alaska Native Population	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Asian Population	0%	1%	5%	1%	0%	0%	3%
Black/African American Population	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Other Race Population	1%	1%	1%	2%	8%	1%	2%
Pacific Islander Population	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Population of Two or More Races	3%	3%	5%	5%	5%	3%	4%
White Population	95%	95%	88%	89%	85%	95%	89%
<b>Ethnicity (2023)</b>							
Hispanic Population	3%	1%	3%	6%	14%	2%	4%
<b>Household Income</b>							
Total Households	5,668	8,050	51,322	18,380	12,453	12,261	108,134
Households Below Poverty Level (2021)	10%	8%	11%	10%	8%	14%	11%
Median Household Income	\$64,948	\$65,712	\$62,122	\$66,761	\$67,619	\$61,033	\$63,917
Household Income less than \$15,000	8%	7%	9%	7%	7%	11%	8%
Household Income \$15,000-\$24,999	8%	7%	9%	7%	6%	8%	8%
Household Income \$25,000-\$34,999	9%	7%	10%	8%	8%	8%	9%
Household Income \$35,000-\$49,999	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
Household Income \$50,000-\$74,999	20%	23%	17%	19%	20%	18%	19%
Household Income \$75,000-\$99,999	17%	13%	15%	16%	17%	14%	15%
Household Income \$100,000-\$149,999	18%	20%	15%	18%	18%	18%	17%
Household Income \$150,000-\$199,999	6%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Household Income \$200,000 or greater	3%	4%	6%	5%	5%	4%	5%
<b>Housing Type</b>							
Owner Occupied Housing Units	77%	82%	65%	72%	74%	79%	70%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	23%	18%	35%	28%	26%	21%	30%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software. [See Appendix A for details.](#)



**Exhibit 2.2** provides a closer look at the population by age within **Buffalo County**.

- Within the 2023 population there are an estimated 2,599 children age 0-17, and 3,099 adults age 65+.
- Looking ahead to 2028, overall population growth for Buffalo County is projected to be 0%.
- The adult population age 18-64 is projected to decline by 6%, and the population age 65+ is projected to grow by 12%.

## Exhibit 2.2 Population Estimates and Projections

Indicator	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGIONAL TOTAL
<b>Total Population</b>							
2023 Total Population Estimate	13,234	18,813	122,678	46,577	31,170	30,994	263,466
2028 Total Population Projection	13,138	18,766	124,103	46,625	31,416	31,060	265,108
2023-2028 % Change	-1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
<b>Children Age 0-17</b>							
2023 Child Population (Age <18)	2,599	3,813	23,871	11,109	6,840	7,245	55,477
2028 Child Population (Age <18)	2,599	3,855	24,027	11,252	6,967	7,306	56,006
2023-2028 % Change	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
<b>Adult Population Age 18-64</b>							
2023 Adult Population (Age 18-64)	7,536	10,745	76,534	26,691	17,895	17,010	156,411
2028 Adult Population (Age 18-64)	7,073	10,039	74,863	25,513	17,118	16,085	150,691
2023-2028 % Change	-6%	-7%	-2%	-4%	-4%	-5%	-4%
<b>Adults Age 65+</b>							
2023 Senior Population (Age 65+)	3,099	4,255	22,273	8,777	6,435	6,739	51,578
2028 Senior Population (Age 65+)	3,466	4,872	25,213	9,860	7,331	7,669	58,411
2023-2028 % Change	12%	15%	13%	12%	14%	14%	13%

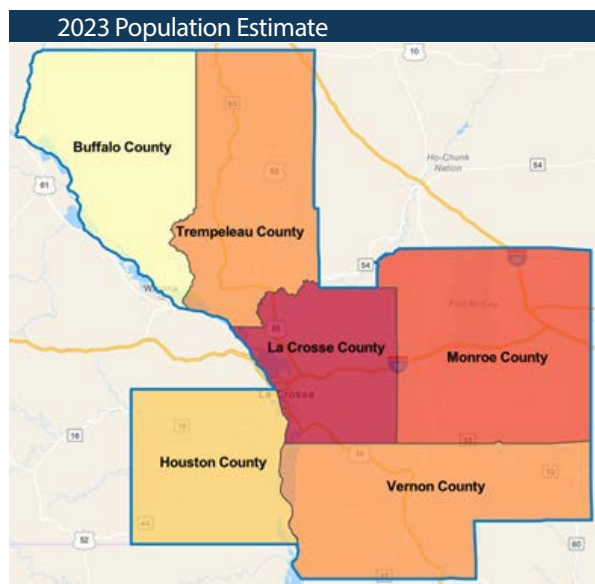
Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software. [See Appendix A for details.](#)

## Demographic Maps

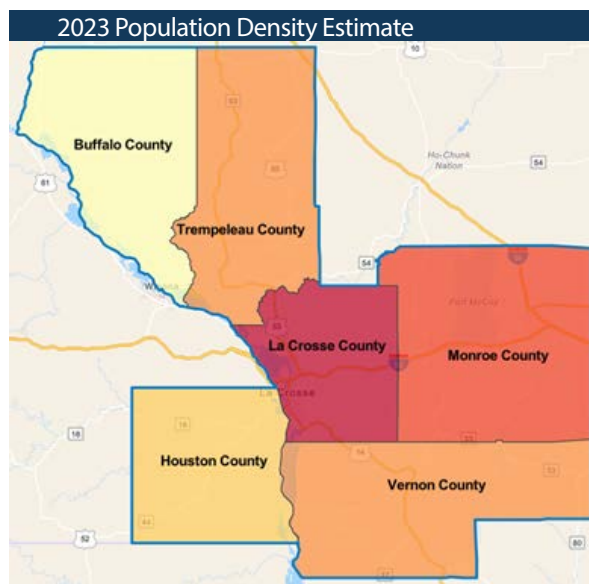
Demographic maps can be helpful for understanding the diversity and distribution of the community population. **Exhibits 2.3 through 2.11** illustrate the population distribution across the community based on demographic factors of poverty, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity.

## Exhibit 2.3 Total Population and Population Density by County

**Exhibit 2.3** shows the total population and population density by county. **Buffalo County** is home to an estimated 13,234 residents, with a relatively rural profile as indicated by the population density of people per square mile.



<b>Buffalo County</b>	<b>13,234</b>
Houston County	18,813
La Crosse County	122,678
Monroe County	46,577
Trempeleau County	31,170
Vernon County	30,994
Region	263,466

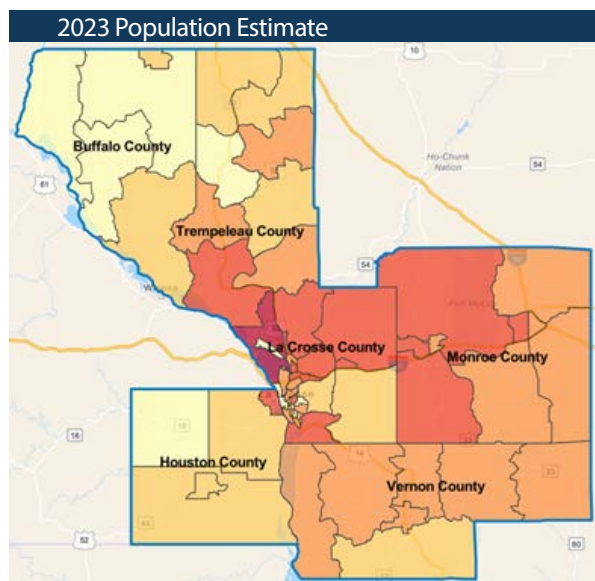


<b>Buffalo County</b>	<b>19.7</b>
Houston County	34.1
La Crosse County	271.6
Monroe County	51.7
Trempeleau County	42.5
Vernon County	39.2

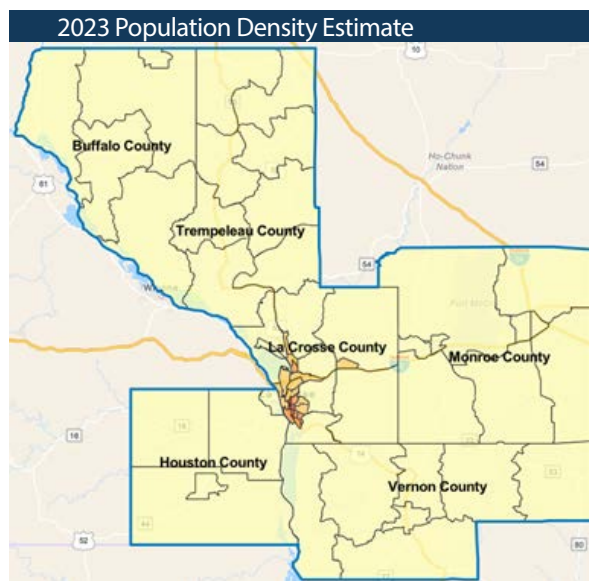
(population per square mile)

## Exhibit 2.4 Total Population by Census Tract

**Exhibit 2.4** shows a closer look at population indicators by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher populations. The right-hand map shows population density, with darker shading indicating higher density in terms of population per square mile.



1,937 - 2,815	5,156 - 7,874
2,816 - 3,834	7,875 - 8,971
3,835 - 5,155	



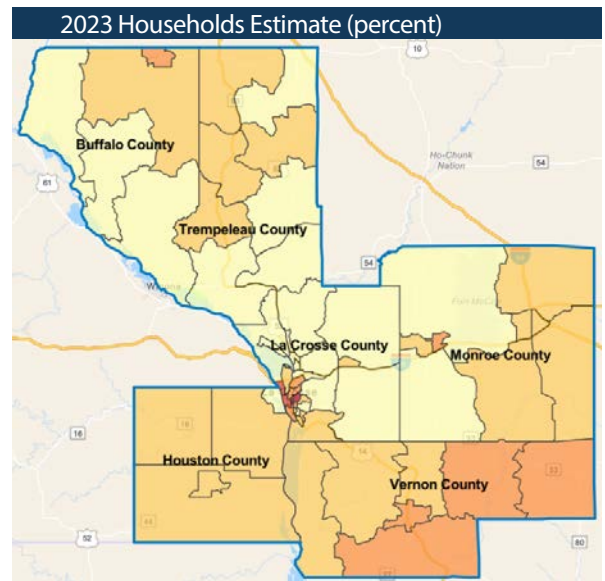
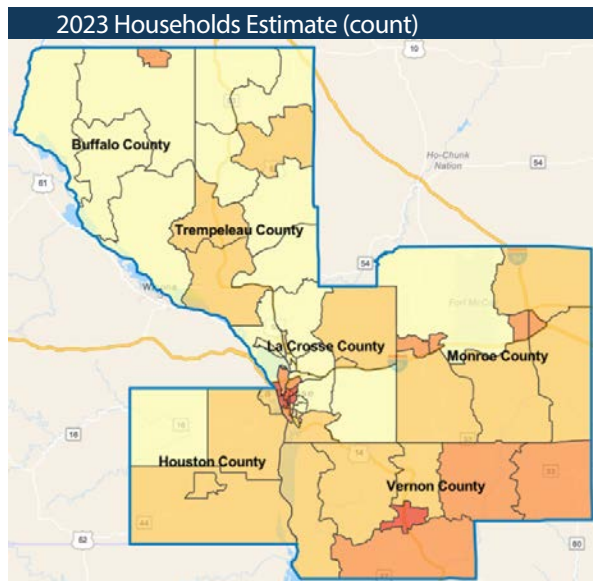
11.3 - 927.9	5,370.8 - 7,847.2
928 - 2,857.5	7,847.3 - 8,698
2,857.6 - 5,370.7	

(population per square mile)

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software. See Appendix A for details.

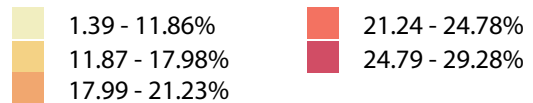
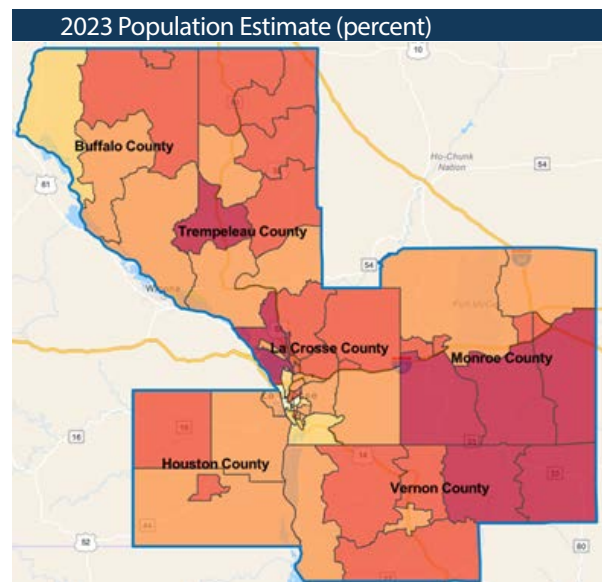
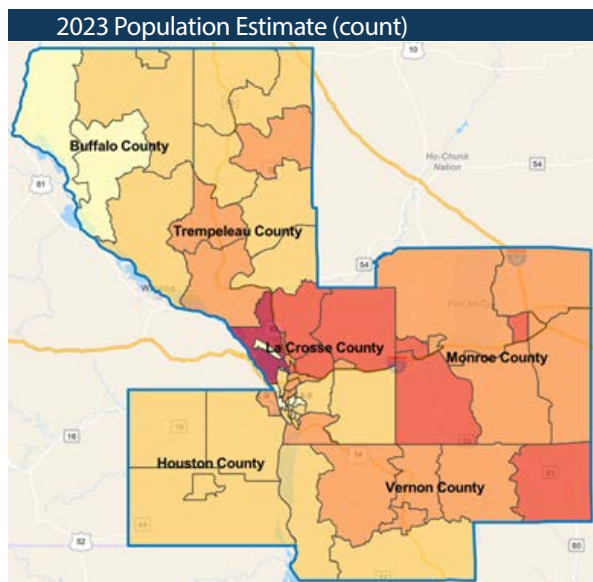
## Exhibit 2.5 Households with Income Below Poverty by Census Tract

**Exhibit 2.5** shows households with income below poverty by census tract. The left-hand map shows household counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher numbers of households in poverty. The right-hand map shows the percentage of households in poverty within each census tract.



## Exhibit 2.6 Child Population by Census Tract

**Exhibit 2.6** shows the child population (<18) by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher numbers of children. The right-hand map shows children as a percentage of the total population within each census tract.

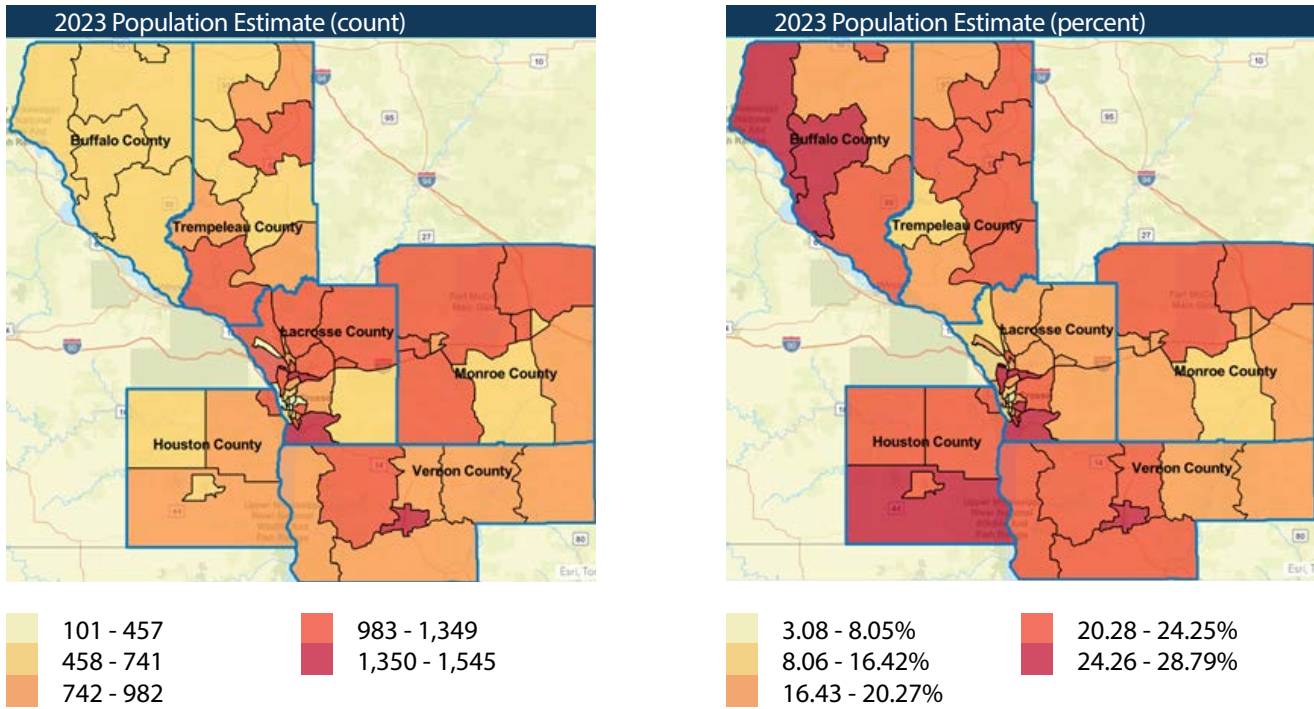


Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software. See Appendix A for details.



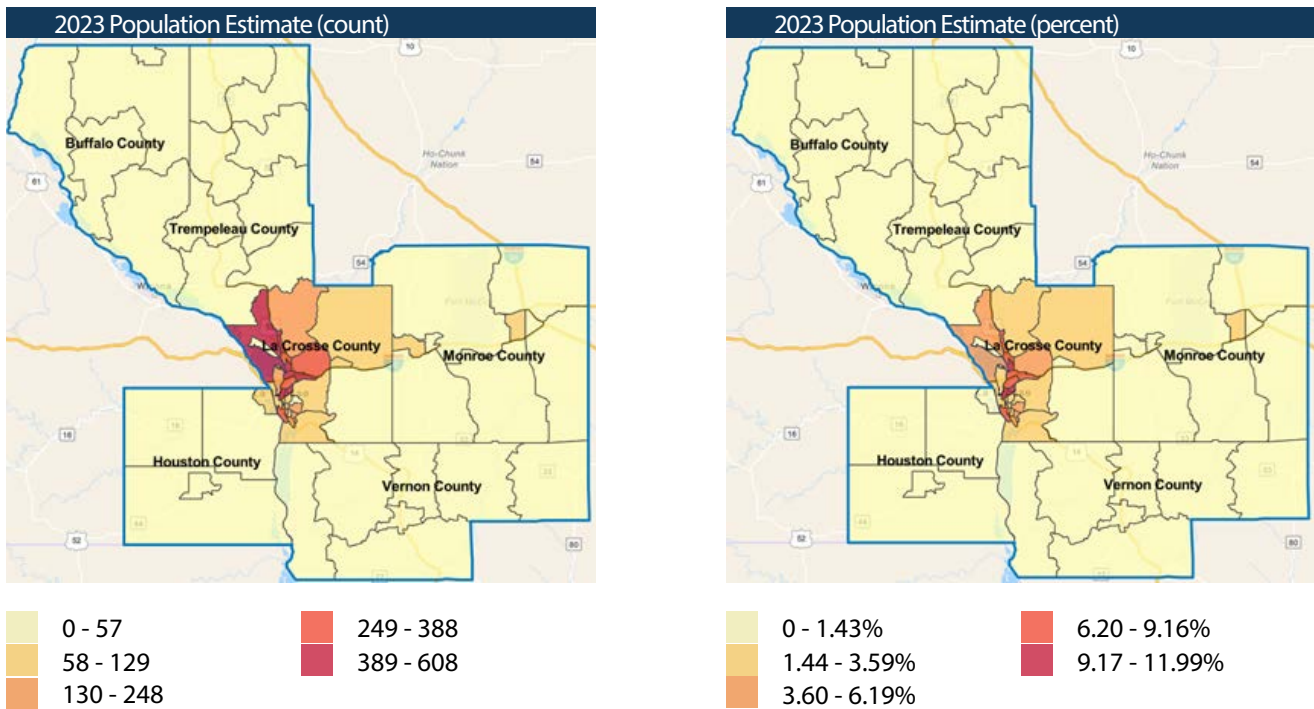
## Exhibit 2.7 Older Adult Population by Census Tract

**Exhibit 2.7** shows the older adult population (65+) by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher numbers of older adults. The right-hand map shows older adults as a percentage of the total population within each census tract.



## Exhibit 2.8 Asian Population by Census Tract

**Exhibit 2.8** shows the Asian population by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher numbers of people classified as Asian. The right-hand map shows the Asian population as a percentage of the total population within each census tract.

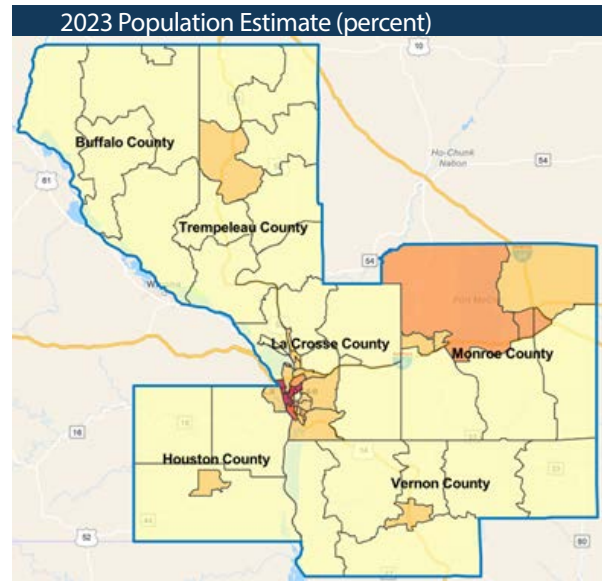
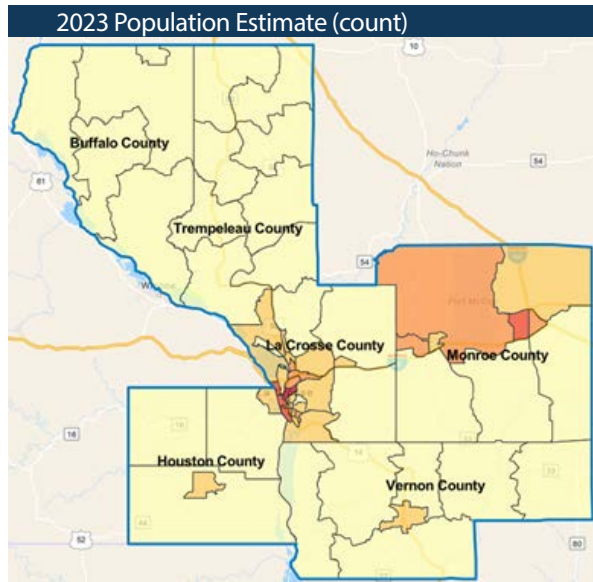


Source: CHS analysis of population estimates published by ESRI. See [Appendix A](#) for details.



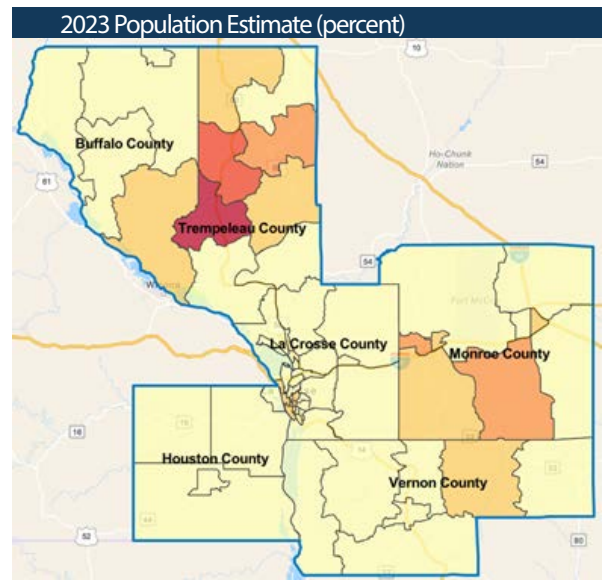
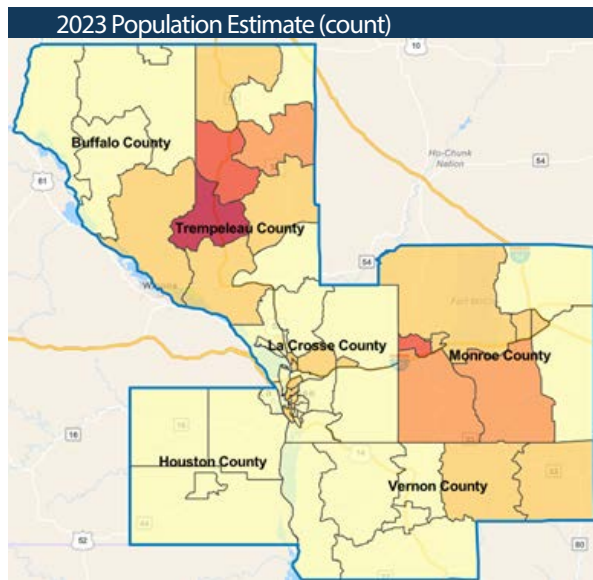
## Exhibit 2.9 Black / African American Population by Census Tract

**Exhibit 2.9** shows the Black or African American population by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating higher numbers of people classified as Black or African American. The right-hand map shows the Black or African American population as a percentage of the total population.



## Exhibit 2.10 Other Race Population by Census Tract

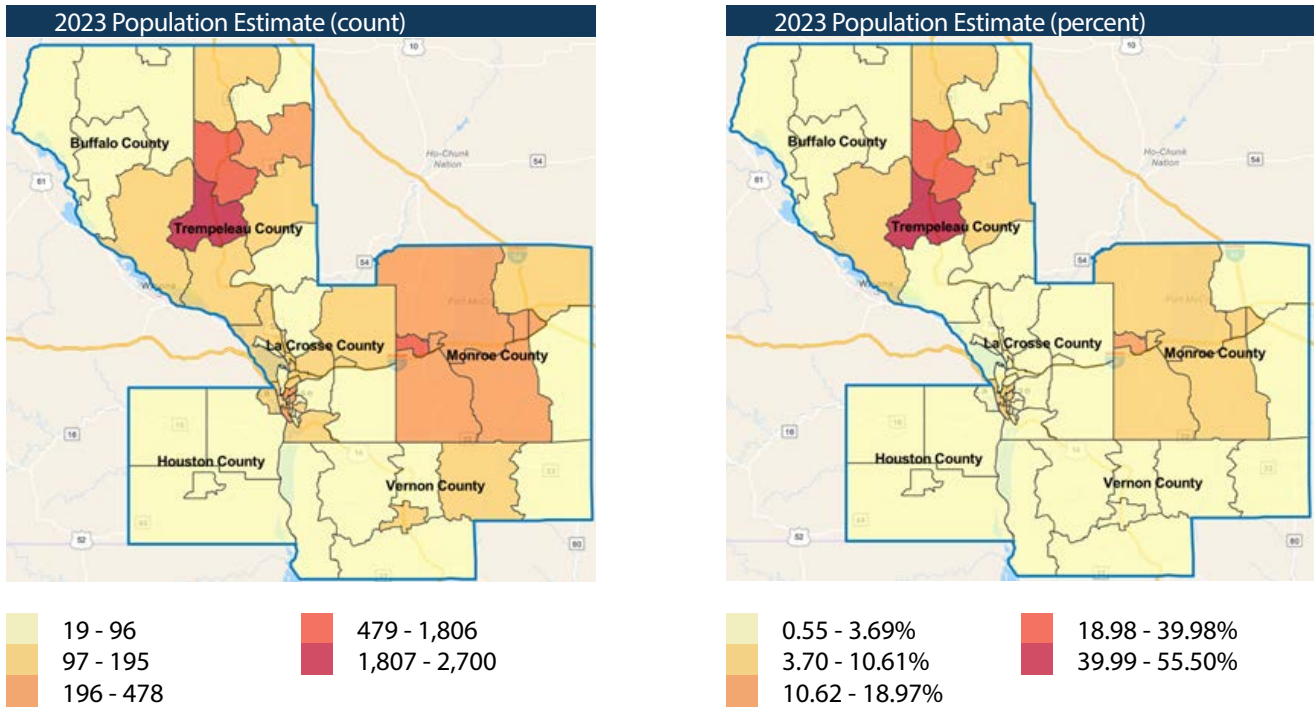
**Exhibit 2.10** shows the Other Race population by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating higher numbers of people classified as Other Race. The right-hand map shows the Other Race population as a percentage of the total population.



Source: CHS analysis of population estimates published by ESRI. See Appendix A for details.

## Exhibit 2.11 Hispanic Population by Census Tract

**Exhibit 2.11** shows the Hispanic ethnicity population by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating higher numbers of people classified as Hispanic. The right-hand map shows the Hispanic population as a percentage of the total population.



Source: CHS analysis of population estimates published by ESRI. [See Appendix A for details.](#)



## Summary of County Health Rankings

**Exhibit 2.12** provides a profile of the [County Health Rankings](#) for the six-county region. Within the exhibit, Houston County is ranked among other counties in Minnesota, and the Wisconsin counties are ranked among all counties in the state. The top part of the exhibit indicates that **Buffalo County** ranked in the 1st (best) quartile statewide on indicators of health outcomes and length of life, but has lower rankings for clinical care and physical environment. The lower part of the exhibit indicates a mix of worsening (W for Worse) and improving (B for Better) trends within the county. The County Health Rankings are explored in more depth within Sections 3-7 of the report.

### Exhibit 2.12 County Health Rankings Summary for 2023

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE
Health Outcomes	10	5	26	46	42	30
Length of Life	4	5	22	51	35	33
Quality of Life	27	9	33	46	47	31
Health Factors	39	11	7	27	31	57
Health Behaviors	31	10	14	49	43	59
Clinical Care	60	14	1	17	38	57
Social & Economic Factors	27	11	10	36	24	47
Physical Environment	61	69	22	16	55	66

Ranking Key: ■ 1st (best) quartile ■ 2nd quartile ■ 3rd quartile ■ 4th quartile

Selected Trends	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE
<b>Length of Life</b>						
Premature death	B	B	--	B	B	B
<b>Health Behaviors</b>						
Adult obesity	Trends for adult obesity and physical activity were not available for the current report.					
Physical inactivity	As of the 2021 Compass Now report, both indicators were getting worse.					
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths	--	--	W	--	--	W
Sexually transmitted infections	W	W	W	W	W	W
<b>Clinical Care</b>						
Uninsured	B	B	B	B	B	B
Primary Care Physicians	W	--	--	--	W	B
Dentists	B	B	B	B	B	B
Preventable Hospital Stays	--	--	B	B	--	B
Mammography Screening	--	--	--	--	--	B
Flu Vaccinations	--	B	B	B	B	B
<b>Social &amp; Economic Factors</b>						
Unemployment	--	B	--	--	--	B
Children in poverty	--	--	B	--	--	W
Violent crime (Not Available)						
Injury deaths (2016-2020)	55	68	83	69	74	68
<b>Physical Environment</b>						
Air pollution – particulate matter	B	B	B	B	B	B

Trend Key: ■ B Getting better ■ -- No trend ■ W Getting worse

Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

\*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.



### 3. Length and Quality of Life

Measures of length of life in a community indicate whether people are dying too early, prompting discussion of possible reasons and action strategies. Measures of quality of life indicate how people feel about their health and well-being at a given point in time. This section describes selected community indicators and community insights about length and quality of life.



Great Rivers United Way

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## Community Indicators

**Exhibit 3.1** shows the County Health Rankings for length and quality of life. The rankings are based on a set of indicators including premature death, physical and mental health status, and low weight births. The results indicate that **Buffalo County** is in the 1st (best) quartile in Wisconsin for length of life, and the 2nd quartile for quality of life. Focusing on available trend data, the premature death rate is improving in **Buffalo County**.

### Exhibit 3.1 County Health Rankings for Length and Quality of Life

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Rankings</b>								
Length of Life Rank	4	5	22	51	35	33	--	--
Quality of Life Rank	27	9	33	46	47	31	--	--
Ranking Key:	<span style="background-color: #90EE90;">■</span> 1st (best) quartile	<span style="background-color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> 2nd quartile	<span style="background-color: #FFDAB9;">■</span> 3rd quartile	<span style="background-color: #FF6347;">■</span> 4th quartile				
	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Indicators</b>								
Premature death** (2018-2020)	4,700	4,500	6,000	7,000	6,300	6,200	5,600	6,600
Poor or fair health (2020)	12%	11%	10%	12%	12%	13%	10%	12%
Poor physical health days (2020)	3.2	2.8	3.0	3.3	3.1	3.4	2.6	3.2
Poor mental health days (2020)	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.1	4.4
Low birth-weight (2014-2020)***	6%	5%	7%	7%	7%	5%	7%	8%
<b>Selected Trends</b>								
Premature death rate	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	--	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	--	--
Trend Key:	<span style="background-color: #90EE90;">■</span> <b>B</b> Getting better	-- No trend	<span style="background-color: #FF6347;">■</span> <b>W</b> Getting worse					
<p>*Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.</p> <p>** Premature death is defined as years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted).</p> <p>*** As reported in Exhibit 3.1, County Health Rankings uses a rolling, multi-year average of low birth-weight in its ranking model. Exhibit 3.3 reports a one-year rate for 2021 or 2020 as indicated. Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. <i>County Health Rankings</i>. Retrieved in July 2023 from <a href="http://www.countyhealthrankings.org">http://www.countyhealthrankings.org</a>.</p>								

“ I would like to see more continuing education opportunities for senior citizens. More opportunities for retirees to engage with the community now that they have more free time.

~ Vernon County Survey Respondent ”





**Exhibit 3.2** shows the leading causes of death in the region in 2021 for Wisconsin Counties, and 2020 for Houston County. For **Buffalo County**, the two leading causes by a substantial margin were heart disease and malignant neoplasms (cancers), which is typically the case in United States communities. Covid-19 was also among the leading causes, along with accidents, chronic lower respiratory diseases, and cerebrovascular diseases.

### Exhibit 3.2 Leading Causes of Death

	BU	LC	MO	TR	VE	WI	HO	MN
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2020	2020
<b>Counts-Total Deaths by Leading Causes</b>								
Heart Disease	35	230	106	76	65	12,782	51	8,562
Malignant Neoplasms	35	200	102	62	67	11,335	41	9,940
COVID-19	5	68	41	16	33	5,255	12	5,214
Accidents (Unintentional Injuries)	5	70	31	11	31	4,706	10	3,308
Alzheimer's Disease	x	60	27	x	18	2,371	23	2,587
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	9	61	34	14	12	2,443	10	2,211
Cerebrovascular Diseases	6	66	24	13	17	2,637	10	2,316
Diabetes Mellitus	x	39	20	12	6	1,685	6	1,492
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	x	22	9	5	6	913	1	895
Intentional Self-Harm (suicide)	x	21	7	x	5	905	x	x
<b>Rates-Age Adjusted Per 100,000 Population</b>								
Heart Disease	160.6	146.9	173.9	175.9	148.4	164.6	140.9	117.5
Malignant Neoplasms	154.3	129.2	164.1	143.5	154.5	144.1	128.4	143.7
COVID-19	26.2	45.9	70.6	42.7	78.6	69.3	x	x
Accidents (Unintentional Injuries)	25.2	55.2	67.3	32.3	86.3	72.6	38.3	45.7
Alzheimer's Disease	x	37.2	47.1	x	39.3	30.9	32.9	34.1
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	41.8	39.5	57.6	34.7	27.4	31.1	29.3	33.5
Cerebrovascular Diseases	27.2	40.6	41.6	29.7	37.3	34.2	28.6	32.4
Diabetes Mellitus	x	25.2	33.4	27.2	12.2	22.1	21.8	19.6
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	x	16.3	16.2	10.4	13.8	12.6	x	10.4
Intentional Self-Harm (suicide)	x	19.0	15.7	x	15.6	15.1	x	x

Note on Cell Suppression and Cells with Counts of Zero: An "x" indicates a value that is not reported in public sources, because of suppression due to small size, or other reasons. Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system and 2020 Minnesota Department of Health County Health Tables



**Exhibit 3.3** shows indicators of maternal and infant health for the region. Note that reporting years differ for Houston County, and also note that infant deaths are counted across a five-year period.

- The low birth weight rate for **Buffalo County** was 9%.
- The five-year infant death rate was 3.1 deaths per 1,000 live births for **Buffalo County**.

### Exhibit 3.3 Maternal and Infant Health

	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION	MN	WI
Total Births	124	203	1,150	600	399	435	2,911	63,451	61,814
Total Low Weight Births	11	8	79	39	29	17	183	3,098	4,768
As pct. of Total Births	9%	4%	7%	7%	7%	4%	6%	5%	8%
Infant Deaths	x	4	35	20	17	11	87	1,593	389
Infant Death Rate per 1,000 Live Births	3.1	-	6.0	7.0	8.1	5.3	-	-	6.1

Notes: "x" indicates a value that is less than 5 (but more than zero) and has been suppressed to protect confidentiality. "-" means not reported in public sources. Houston County low weight birth data are for 'singleton births' only. Houston County infant death data are for 2015-2019. As reported in Exhibit 3.1, County Health Rankings uses a rolling, multi-year average of low birth-weight in its ranking model. Exhibit 3.3 reports a one-year rate for 2021 (2020 for HO\*) Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system and 2020 Minnesota Department of Health County Health Tables



## Community Insights

**Exhibit 3.4** shows ratings of selected aspects of community life on a scale from poor to excellent. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Topics receiving ratings of poor or fair for **Buffalo County** included:

- 12% for the community as a place to live
- 62% for the community as a place that meets their family's recreational needs
- 61% for opportunities to explore interest and participate in positive activities
- 40% for opportunities to volunteer
- 48% for the community as a place where all people are treated respectfully
- 56% for the community as a place where people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds are included in decision making

### Exhibit 3.4 Ratings of Community Life

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	224	89	204	1,231
<b>a. Rating of your community as a place to live</b>							
Poor	1%	0%	2%	4%	4%	2%	2%
Fair	11%	14%	18%	24%	19%	10%	19%
Good	61%	54%	55%	58%	57%	59%	62%
Excellent	27%	32%	25%	14%	19%	28%	16%
<b>b. Your community as a place that meets your family's recreational needs (e.g., fine arts, outdoor activities, etc.)</b>							
Poor	22%	5%	5%	17%	23%	10%	11%
Fair	40%	30%	14%	37%	28%	31%	25%
Good	29%	40%	43%	38%	31%	39%	39%
Excellent	8%	24%	36%	8%	17%	19%	24%
No Opinion	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
<b>c. Opportunities for youth to explore interests and participate in positive activities</b>							
Poor	28%	10%	6%	18%	18%	11%	12%
Fair	33%	28%	18%	38%	30%	37%	28%
Good	33%	37%	41%	34%	33%	34%	37%
Excellent	3%	21%	26%	6%	11%	11%	17%
No Opinion	2%	5%	9%	4%	7%	7%	7%
<b>d. Opportunities to volunteer in your community</b>							
Poor	7%	1%	2%	6%	6%	6%	4%
Fair	33%	25%	11%	27%	21%	25%	19%
Good	37%	31%	39%	50%	52%	40%	41%
Excellent	18%	41%	46%	14%	20%	26%	33%
No Opinion	6%	1%	2%	4%	1%	3%	3%
<b>e. Your community as a place where all people are treated respectfully, regardless of their race, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, income level, disability or age</b>							
Poor	16%	10%	15%	24%	20%	11%	16%
Fair	32%	29%	41%	32%	36%	39%	37%
Good	41%	43%	33%	34%	34%	37%	35%
Excellent	9%	16%	9%	8%	7%	11%	10%
No Opinion	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
<b>f. Your community as a place where people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds are included in decision-making</b>							
Poor	22%	15%	23%	27%	30%	22%	23%
Fair	34%	25%	39%	34%	30%	33%	35%
Good	29%	38%	27%	26%	24%	26%	27%
Excellent	6%	20%	8%	5%	6%	8%	8%
No Opinion	9%	2%	4%	8%	11%	11%	7%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 3.5** shows ratings of selected aspects of educational opportunities on a scale from poor to excellent. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Topics receiving ratings of poor or fair for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 29% for the community as a place that meets their family's educational needs
- b. 33% for the availability of early educational opportunities
- c. 27% for the quality of education in grades K-12
- d. 54% for opportunities to gain additional knowledge or skills
- e. 80% for the availability of resources to learn new skills or hobbies

### Exhibit 3.5 Ratings of Educational Opportunities

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	532	226	88	205	1,230
<b>a. Your community as a place that meets your family's educational needs</b>							
Poor	3%	2%	4%	7%	8%	4%	5%
Fair	26%	22%	10%	32%	20%	21%	19%
Good	53%	56%	42%	43%	36%	45%	44%
Excellent	11%	14%	35%	10%	19%	24%	24%
No Opinion	7%	6%	9%	8%	16%	6%	8%
<b>b. The availability of early education opportunities in your community (e.g., play groups, Head Start, 4 year old kindergarten)</b>							
Poor	9%	8%	8%	8%	10%	8%	8%
Fair	24%	18%	12%	22%	20%	21%	18%
Good	41%	51%	37%	38%	31%	43%	39%
Excellent	12%	11%	21%	15%	23%	15%	18%
No Opinion	14%	11%	21%	17%	16%	13%	17%
<b>c. The quality of education grades K-12 in your community</b>							
Poor	3%	2%	4%	9%	5%	4%	5%
Fair	24%	18%	14%	28%	18%	18%	19%
Good	51%	56%	43%	43%	40%	46%	45%
Excellent	15%	14%	25%	10%	19%	22%	20%
No Opinion	7%	9%	14%	10%	18%	10%	12%
<b>d. Opportunities to gain additional knowledge or skills (e.g., tuition reimbursement, conferences, skills training courses, classes)</b>							
Poor	29%	17%	7%	22%	29%	22%	16%
Fair	25%	24%	24%	36%	25%	37%	29%
Good	28%	44%	40%	25%	21%	23%	32%
Excellent	7%	7%	18%	7%	11%	9%	12%
No Opinion	11%	8%	12%	10%	14%	9%	11%
<b>e. The availability of community resources to learn new skills or hobbies (e.g., woodworking, photography, computers)</b>							
Poor	42%	13%	11%	36%	39%	26%	23%
Fair	38%	23%	28%	34%	31%	39%	31%
Good	12%	40%	35%	20%	17%	19%	27%
Excellent	0%	23%	17%	4%	6%	8%	12%
No Opinion	8%	1%	8%	6%	8%	7%	7%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 3.6** shows ratings of concerns about issues related to community life. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 42% racism
- b. 74% school bullying
- c. 67% cyber-bullying
- d. 50% discrimination

### Exhibit 3.6 Concerns about Issues Related to Community Life

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	90	85	534	226	89	205	1,229
<b>a. Racism</b>							
Very Concerned	14%	25%	35%	27%	26%	16%	27%
Moderately Concerned	28%	33%	31%	24%	21%	30%	29%
A Little Concerned	31%	25%	22%	30%	27%	30%	26%
Not Concerned	26%	15%	10%	18%	24%	22%	16%
No Opinion	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
<b>b. School bullying</b>							
Very Concerned	41%	48%	44%	50%	43%	29%	43%
Moderately Concerned	33%	34%	29%	24%	26%	41%	30%
A Little Concerned	17%	14%	15%	18%	16%	20%	17%
Not Concerned	7%	4%	4%	5%	7%	3%	5%
No Opinion	2%	0%	7%	3%	8%	7%	6%
<b>c. Cyber bullying</b>							
Very Concerned	28%	45%	42%	38%	33%	31%	38%
Moderately Concerned	39%	27%	28%	37%	34%	37%	32%
A Little Concerned	21%	21%	17%	15%	18%	16%	17%
Not Concerned	9%	2%	6%	7%	8%	8%	6%
No Opinion	3%	4%	7%	4%	6%	8%	6%
<b>d. Discrimination</b>							
Very Concerned	12%	36%	36%	32%	31%	17%	30%
Moderately Concerned	38%	28%	29%	28%	29%	32%	30%
A Little Concerned	27%	21%	23%	23%	24%	32%	25%
Not Concerned	20%	12%	10%	14%	14%	14%	12%
No Opinion	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



## 4. Health Behaviors and Concerns

Health behaviors are actions individuals take that affect their health, such as eating well, being physically active, and avoiding smoking, excessive alcohol intake, and risky sexual behavior. This section describes community indicators and community insights about health behaviors and related concerns.

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## Community Indicators

**Exhibit 4.1** shows the County Health Rankings for health behaviors. The rankings are based on a set of indicators including smoking, obesity, food environment, physical activity, alcohol use, and sexual activity. The results indicate that **Buffalo** County ranked in the 2nd quartile for Wisconsin. Focusing on available trend data, the trend is getting worse for sexually transmitted infections.

### Exhibit 4.1 County Health Rankings for Health Behaviors

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Rankings</b>								
Health Behaviors Rank	31	10	14	49	43	59	--	--
Ranking Key:	<span style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 2px;">1st (best) quartile</span>	<span style="background-color: #2196F3; color: white; padding: 2px;">2nd quartile</span>	<span style="background-color: #FFC107; color: white; padding: 2px;">3rd quartile</span>	<span style="background-color: #E91E63; color: white; padding: 2px;">4th quartile</span>				
	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Indicators</b>								
Adult smoking (2020)	19%	18%	17%	20%	18%	20%	14%	16%
Adult obesity (2020)	34%	33%	32%	36%	35%	35%	31%	33%
Food environment index (2019 & 2020)	8.5	9.3	8.7	8.4	8.9	8.3	9.0	8.8
Physical inactivity (2020)	20%	19%	19%	21%	21%	22%	19%	20%
Access to exercise opportunities (2022 & 2020)	61%	87%	86%	57%	79%	47%	86%	84%
Excessive drinking (2020)	28%	22%	27%	26%	28%	26%	22%	26%
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths (2016-2020)	43%	11%	35%	32%	42%	57%	30%	36%
Sexually transmitted infections (2020)	153.5	204.3	494.8	259.4	300.2	236.8	392.1	456.2
Teen births (2014-2020)	8	8	7	18	19	7	12	14
<b>Selected Trends</b>								
Adult obesity	Trends for adult obesity and physical activity were not available for the current report.							
Physical inactivity	As of the 2021 Compass Now report, both indicators were getting worse.							
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths	--	--	<b>W</b>	--	--	<b>W</b>	--	--
Sexually transmitted infections	<b>W</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>W</b>	--	--
Trend Key:	<span style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 2px;"><b>B</b> Getting better</span>	<span>-- No trend</span>		<span style="background-color: #E91E63; color: white; padding: 2px;"><b>W</b> Getting worse</span>				
*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.								
Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings.								
Retrieved in July 2023 from <a href="http://www.countyhealthrankings.org">http://www.countyhealthrankings.org</a>								



**Exhibit 4.2** a shows a set of youth health behavior risk indicators for four of the five Wisconsin counties in the 2020-21 school year. Comparable data were not reported for Vernon County, and additional data from a separate survey effort in Houston County are summarized in Exhibit 4.2b. Focusing on available data for **Buffalo County**:

- The indicators are based on anonymous survey responses by high school students on a range of youth risk factors as of the 2020-2021 school year.
- The indicators shown include alcohol and drug use, auto safety, mental health, personal safety, sense of belonging, sexual activity, and sleep, nutrition, and exercise.
- The indicators for **Buffalo County** indicate significant numbers of youth are experiencing or engaging in health risk situations.

### Exhibit 4.2a Youth Risk Profile – Wisconsin Counties

	BU	LC	MO	TR	VE	HO
Total Survey Responses (2020-2021 School Year)	480	3,645	765	974	--	--
<b>a. Alcohol and Drugs</b>						
Were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property past 12 months.	8%	8%	7%	11%	--	--
Attended school under influence of alcohol past 12 months.	7%	6%	8%	7%	--	--
Had at least one drink of alcohol past 30 days.	33%	19%	23%	28%	--	--
Used marijuana in past 30 days.	13%	11%	12%	10%	--	--
Ever misused over-the-counter and/or prescription drugs.	4%	10%	12%	11%	--	--
<b>b. Auto Safety</b>						
Never or rarely use seatbelt.	6%	4%	6%	8%	--	--
Drove after drinking past 30 days.	3%	3%	4%	5%	--	--
Texted or emailed while driving past 30 days.	46%	40%	37%	41%	--	--
Texted and/or drank while driving past 30 days.	48%	40%	38%	41%	--	--
Rode with a driver who had been drinking.	20%	13%	16%	17%	--	--
<b>c. Mental Health</b>						
Experienced significant problems with anxiety past 12 months.	42%	49%	50%	47%	--	--
Experienced prolonged, disruptive sadness past 12 months.	28%	31%	33%	31%	--	--
Intentionally self-harmed without intending to die past 12 months.	22%	20%	23%	22%	--	--
Seriously considered suicide past 12 months.	15%	17%	17%	18%	--	--
Made a plan for suicide attempt past 12 months.	10%	13%	15%	15%	--	--
Said they rarely or never get the help they need.	58%	51%	58%	60%	--	--
Report ever having lived with someone with a mental illness.	31%	40%	41%	37%	--	--
<b>d. Personal Safety</b>						
Rarely or never feel safe at school.	10%	10%	13%	13%	--	--
Agree or strongly agree violence is a problem at their school.	8%	18%	17%	19%	--	--
In or fight and/or threatened with a weapon at school.	13%	12%	12%	14%	--	--
Experienced bullying at school past 12 months.	25%	17%	21%	25%	--	--
Bullied online past 12 months.	20%	17%	17%	17%	--	--
Agree or strongly agree bullying is a problem as school.	39%	41%	39%	37%	--	--
Experienced rape, sexual assault, or intimate partner violence.	15%	15%	17%	15%	--	--

## Exhibit 4.2a Youth Risk Profile – Wisconsin Counties (cont.)

	BU	LC	MO	TR	VE	HO
<b>e. Sense of Belonging</b>						
Said they did not feel like they belonged at their school.	17%	13%	15%	15%	--	--
Feel they do not have a teacher or other adult at school they can talk to.	15%	16%	16%	18%	--	--
Do participate in school activities, teams, or clubs.	75%	67%	58%	73%	--	--
<b>f. Sexual Activity</b>						
Sexually active past 3 months.	29%	18%	22%	21%	--	--
Sexually active past 3 months 11th grade.	36%	23%	28%	32%	--	--
Sexually active past 3 months 12th grade.	49%	33%	36%	32%	--	--
Among sexually active students, no birth control.	4%	7%	9%	9%	--	--
Engaged in sexting past 30 days.	20%	15%	20%	19%	--	--
<b>g. Sleep, Nutrition, Exercise</b>						
Sleep 8 or more hours per night.	31%	27%	28%	32%	--	--
Reported 5 or fewer hours of sleep per night.	13%	16%	19%	18%	--	--
Exercised zero days in past week.	8%	11%	13%	14%	--	--
Ate fruit every day past 7 days.	39%	50%	42%	42%	--	--
Ate vegetables every day past 7 days.	38%	47%	37%	41%	--	--
Drank plain water every day past 7 days.	79%	80%	75%	77%	--	--
Ate breakfast every day past 7 days.	33%	33%	28%	30%	--	--
Experienced hunger due to lack of food at home past 30 days.	18%	21%	21%	23%	--	--
Use technology between midnight and 5 am on school nights.	50%	50%	51%	48%	--	--
Used vaping products past 30 days.	20%	12%	16%	16%	--	--
Used tobacco products past 30 days.	8%	4%	5%	6%	--	--
Note: "--" means Comparable data not available for Vernon County and Houston County						
Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, County-Level Youth Risk Behavior Survey Reports, 2020-2021 school year.						

“ I am also concerned with the use of technology and social media, especially in regards to young people and how it is impacting their mental health.

~ Vernon County Survey Respondent ”





**Exhibit 4.2b** shows a set of youth health behavior risk indicators for Houston County in the 2021-2022 school year. These indicators were developed using a different survey instrument and sampling methodology than was used in Wisconsin.

- The indicators shown include personal safety; adverse childhood experience; food, physical activity, and sleep; mental health; and substance use.
- As in the Wisconsin counties, the Houston County results indicate significant numbers of youth are experiencing or engaging in health risk situations.

### Exhibit 4.2b Youth Risk Profile – Houston County

	9th Grade Male	9th Grade Female	11th Grade Male	11th Grade Female
Total Survey Responses (2021-22 School Year)	187 (male and female)		154 (male and female)	
<b>a. Personal Safety</b>				
Disagree with “I feel safe at school”	9%	14%	7%	7%
Been cyber-bullied at least once in the last 30 days	14%	18%	8%	10%
Been in a casual or serious relationship where your partner physically hurt you on purpose	2%	6%	7%	4%
<b>b. ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) items</b>				
Live with anyone who drinks too much alcohol	13%	15%	13%	12%
Live with anyone who uses illegal drugs or abuses prescription drugs	5%	3%	2%	8%
Live with anyone who is depressed or has other mental health issues	14%	45%	15%	43%
Had a parent or other adult in your home regularly swear at you insult you, or put you down.	6%	26%	11%	18%
Had a parent or other adult in your home ever hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way.	12%	10%	8%	9%
Had parents or other adults in your home ever slapped, hit, kicked, punched, or beat each other up?	2%	16%	5%	11%
Had anyone who was not a relative / family member ever pressured, tricked, or forced you to do something sexual or done something sexual to you against your will.	2%	4%	0%	7%
Had a relative / family member ever pressured, tricked, or forced you to do something sexual or done something sexual to you against your will.	1%	1%	0%	7%
Ever traded sex or sexual activity to receive money, food, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, or anything else?	2%	1%	0%	3%
<b>c. Food, Physical Activity, and Sleep</b>				
During past 30 days, had to skip meals because family did not have enough money to buy food.	1%	1%	0%	4%
Not physically activity for at least 60 minutes in the last 7 days.	5%	14%	0%	3%
Typically get less 6 or less hours of sleep on a school night.	19%	37%	31%	35%
<b>d. Mental Health</b>				
During past 12 months, ever do something to purposely hurt or injure yourself without wanting to die, such as cutting, burning, or bruising yourself on purpose?	16%	22%	18%	22%
Ever seriously considered attempting suicide.	14%	28%	11%	24%
Ever attempted suicide.	6%	4%	5%	7%
<b>d. Substance Use</b>				
Used conventional tobacco products, past 30 days.	4%	6%	3%	3%
Use tobacco products including e-cigarettes and hookah, past 30 days.	10%	10%	10%	16%
Use of alcohol or any drug use during the past year.	32%	24%	41%	41%

Source: Minnesota Student Survey County Tables, 2021-22 School Year, Minnesota Student Survey Interagency Team: Minnesota Department of Education Minnesota Department of Health Minnesota Department of Human Services Minnesota Department of Public Safety.



## Community Insights

**Exhibit 4.3** shows ratings of personal health by community survey respondents. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary ratings for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 26% rated their overall health as poor or fair
- b. 35% rated their overall mental health as poor or fair
- c. 28% rated their overall dental health as poor or fair

### Exhibit 4.3 Ratings of Personal Health

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	529	223	87	204	1,220
<b>a. Your overall health</b>							
Poor	5%	0%	2%	5%	9%	3%	3%
Fair	21%	28%	23%	32%	13%	19%	24%
Good	57%	59%	54%	56%	68%	58%	57%
Excellent	16%	13%	21%	7%	10%	20%	17%
<b>b. Your overall mental health</b>							
Poor	2%	7%	5%	8%	7%	3%	5%
Fair	33%	24%	26%	28%	21%	21%	26%
Good	54%	56%	49%	51%	62%	49%	51%
Excellent	11%	13%	20%	13%	10%	27%	18%
<b>c. Your overall dental health</b>							
Poor	2%	3%	10%	11%	12%	6%	8%
Fair	26%	14%	16%	23%	15%	17%	18%
Good	55%	58%	44%	50%	51%	50%	48%
Excellent	16%	24%	30%	17%	22%	27%	25%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 4.4** shows self-reported ratings of concern about health issues in the community. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were **very** or **moderately** concerned about each topic for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 71% mental health in the community
- b. 62% mental health stigma
- c. 57% suicide
- d. 66% alcohol use
- e. 55% prescription drug misuse
- f. 80% illegal drug use
- g. 69% obesity
- h. 46% tobacco use
- i. 55% e-cigarette use / vaping

### Exhibit 4.4 Concerns about Health Issues in the Community

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	87	203	1,229
<b>a. Mental health</b>							
Very Concerned	34%	46%	60%	52%	44%	43%	52%
Moderately Concerned	37%	33%	27%	28%	28%	38%	31%
A Little Concerned	18%	20%	10%	12%	22%	12%	13%
Not Concerned	11%	1%	2%	5%	6%	5%	4%
No Opinion	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%
<b>b. Mental health stigma</b>							
Very Concerned	30%	39%	36%	42%	41%	31%	36%
Moderately Concerned	32%	34%	36%	34%	26%	39%	35%
A Little Concerned	26%	20%	19%	13%	22%	21%	19%
Not Concerned	11%	5%	7%	7%	9%	7%	7%
No Opinion	1%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%
<b>c. Suicide</b>							
Very Concerned	28%	26%	41%	36%	24%	25%	34%
Moderately Concerned	29%	40%	38%	32%	43%	43%	37%
A Little Concerned	32%	28%	16%	25%	24%	18%	21%
Not Concerned	9%	5%	4%	7%	8%	10%	7%
No Opinion	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%
<b>d. Alcohol use</b>							
Very Concerned	38%	40%	53%	45%	37%	34%	45%
Moderately Concerned	28%	34%	31%	32%	32%	41%	33%
A Little Concerned	17%	15%	11%	14%	22%	16%	14%
Not Concerned	15%	10%	5%	7%	7%	7%	7%
No Opinion	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
<b>e. Prescription drug misuse</b>							
Very Concerned	21%	31%	38%	42%	23%	26%	34%
Moderately Concerned	34%	34%	37%	29%	34%	38%	35%
A Little Concerned	29%	20%	17%	19%	26%	26%	21%
Not Concerned	11%	10%	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%
No Opinion	5%	5%	2%	4%	9%	2%	3%
<b>f. Illegal drug use</b>							
Very Concerned	59%	52%	66%	61%	52%	52%	60%
Moderately Concerned	21%	26%	22%	26%	31%	29%	25%
A Little Concerned	14%	15%	7%	8%	10%	14%	10%
Not Concerned	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%
No Opinion	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%	3%	2%

## Exhibit 4.4 Concerns about Health Issues in the Community (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
<b>g. Obesity</b>							
Very Concerned	35%	33%	34%	32%	37%	45%	35%
Moderately Concerned	34%	48%	40%	38%	40%	35%	39%
A Little Concerned	25%	16%	18%	22%	10%	16%	18%
Not Concerned	7%	2%	7%	5%	10%	3%	6%
No Opinion	0%	0%	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%
<b>h. Tobacco Use</b>							
Very Concerned	14%	26%	20%	24%	19%	22%	21%
Moderately Concerned	32%	35%	31%	34%	31%	35%	32%
A Little Concerned	30%	29%	33%	23%	25%	30%	30%
Not Concerned	22%	10%	15%	14%	23%	10%	15%
No Opinion	2%	0%	1%	5%	2%	2%	2%
<b>i. e-cigarette Use / Vaping</b>							
Very Concerned	29%	37%	33%	35%	33%	32%	33%
Moderately Concerned	26%	31%	32%	34%	25%	35%	32%
A Little Concerned	29%	29%	21%	18%	17%	21%	21%
Not Concerned	12%	2%	12%	9%	21%	9%	11%
No Opinion	3%	0%	2%	4%	3%	3%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

“ We don't have enough addiction and/ or mental health treatment resources in the wider area. When people want help, it doesn't seem like they have a place to go for in-patient treatment.

~ Vernon County Survey Respondent ”



## 5. Health Care

Access to affordable, quality, and timely health care can help prevent diseases and detect issues sooner, enabling individuals to live longer, healthier lives. This section describes selected community indicators and community insights about health care access and utilization.

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## Community Indicators

**Exhibit 5.1** shows the County Health Rankings for clinical care. The rankings are based on a set of indicators including uninsured rates, health care provider supply, preventable hospital stays, mammography screening, and flu shots. **Buffalo County** ranked in the 4th quartile for clinical care. Trends indicate that **Buffalo County** is improving on indicators of uninsured and supply of dentists and worsening on primary care clinician supply.

### Exhibit 5.1 County Health Rankings for Clinical Care

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Rankings</b>								
Clinical Care Rank	60	14	1	17	38	57	--	--
Ranking Key:	<span style="color: green;">■</span> 1st (best) quartile	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> 2nd quartile	<span style="color: orange;">■</span> 3rd quartile	<span style="color: red;">■</span> 4th quartile				
	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Indicators</b>								
Uninsured (2020)	8%	5%	6%	9%	8%	12%	6%	7%
Primary care physicians (2020)	4,340:1	1,690:1	710:1	1,610:1	3,710:1	1,000:1	1,110:1	1,240:1
Dentists (2021)	780:1	1,880:1	1,020:1	1,540:1	3,410:1	3,090:1	1,310:1	1,380:1
Mental health providers (2022)	13,300:1	2,680:1	280:1	480:1	1,920:1	640:1	320:1	420:1
Preventable hospital stays (2020)	2,965	1,817	1,928	1,510	1,787	1,872	2,323	2,559
Mammography screening Medicare only (2020)	43%	53%	55%	53%	50%	42%	45%	43%
Flu vaccinations (2020)	50%	65%	64%	44%	49%	39%	57%	56%
<b>Selected Trends</b>								
Uninsured	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	--	--
Primary care physicians	<span style="color: red;">W</span>	--	--	--	<span style="color: red;">W</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	--	--
Dentists	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	--	--
Preventable hospital stays	--	--	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	--	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	--	--
Mammography screening	--	--	--	--	--	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	--	--
Flu vaccinations	--	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	<span style="color: green;">B</span>	--	--
Trend Key:	<span style="color: green;">B</span> Getting better	-- No trend	<span style="color: red;">W</span> Getting worse					
*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.								
Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from <a href="http://www.countyhealthrankings.org">http://www.countyhealthrankings.org</a>								

“ I am aging and I worry that I might need to move to assisted living or a nursing home and there is a big shortage of staff for the places in this community. I would like to see more help for those training to work in healthcare so that there are more people available to staff such facilities.

~ Vernon County Survey Respondent ”



**Exhibit 5.2** shows selected cancer screening rates for each county within the region. Note that rates shown are estimates, and apparent differences may be within the estimation margin of error. Estimated screening rates for **Buffalo County** are as follows:

- 74% for breast cancer screening (mammogram)
- 83% for cervical cancer screening
- 61% for colorectal cancer screening

### Exhibit 5.2 Cancer Screening Rates

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION	MN	WI
Year	2020	2017-19	2020	2020	2020	2020		2020	2020
Mammogram in past 2 years (50-74y/o)	74%	72%	76%	72%	74%	71%	--	79%	78%
Cervical cancer screening up-to-date (21-64y/o)	83%	73%	84%	83%	82%	82%	--	77%	78%
Colorectal cancer screening up to date (50-75y/o)	61%	--	59%	59%	60%	59%	--	--	67%

Note: Houston County data modeled from 2017-2019. "--" means not reported in public sources.

Source: Wisconsin data from Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative, Interactive County Cancer Data Dashboard. Minnesota data from National Cancer Institute State Cancer Profiles <https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/index.html>.



### Community Insights

**Exhibit 5.3** shows self-reported responses to questions about health coverage. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary results for **Buffalo County** included:

- 2% reported any household members without health coverage
- 20% reported any household members with Medicaid coverage
- 20% reported any household members with Medicare coverage
- 17% reported any household members with private insurance coverage
- 71% any household members with employer-based coverage

### Exhibit 5.3 Self-Reported Health Coverage

Topic/Survey	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
<b>a. Do all members of your household have health coverage?</b>							
Total Survey Responses	92	86	528	220	86	202	1,214
Yes, all members of my household have health coverage.	98%	88%	94%	93%	90%	96%	94%
No, one or more members of my household do not have health coverage.	2%	12%	6%	7%	10%	4%	6%
<b>b. Do any members of your household have the following types of health insurance? (Choose all that apply)</b>							
Total Survey Responses	92	83	527	222	87	200	1,211
Medicaid	20%	18%	21%	20%	32%	15%	20%
Medicare	20%	27%	29%	19%	25%	35%	27%
Private Insurance	17%	17%	20%	17%	20%	23%	19%
Employer Based Insurance	71%	52%	55%	63%	67%	58%	59%
Other	5%	1%	6%	6%	3%	6%	5%
Not Applicable-No one in my household has health insurance	2%	4%	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 5.4** shows self-reported ratings of health care access and affordability. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary results for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 24% reported poor or fair access to healthcare
- b. 41% reported poor or fair ability to pay for healthcare
- c. 43% reported poor or fair access to mental healthcare
- d. 43% reported poor or fair ability to pay for mental healthcare
- e. 23% reported poor or fair access to dental care
- f. 35% reported poor or fair ability to pay for dental care

### Exhibit 5.4 Ratings of Health Care Access and Affordability

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	529	223	87	204	1,220
<b>a. Your access to healthcare</b>							
Poor	4%	0%	2%	2%	6%	1%	2%
Fair	20%	17%	11%	20%	13%	9%	13%
Good	46%	49%	39%	48%	49%	43%	43%
Excellent	30%	35%	48%	30%	33%	47%	41%
<b>b. Your ability to pay for healthcare</b>							
Poor	11%	5%	13%	13%	13%	9%	12%
Fair	30%	33%	21%	28%	21%	22%	24%
Good	37%	44%	35%	42%	34%	37%	37%
Excellent	22%	19%	30%	16%	32%	32%	27%
<b>c. Your access to mental health care</b>							
Poor	14%	19%	14%	13%	15%	12%	14%
Fair	29%	26%	26%	34%	23%	22%	27%
Good	40%	45%	36%	41%	43%	46%	40%
Excellent	17%	10%	25%	12%	19%	21%	20%
<b>d. Your ability to pay for mental health care</b>							
Poor	19%	3%	17%	17%	15%	11%	15%
Fair	24%	37%	25%	31%	27%	22%	26%
Good	41%	43%	34%	39%	32%	43%	37%
Excellent	16%	16%	24%	12%	26%	24%	21%
<b>e. Your access to dental care</b>							
Poor	5%	6%	10%	12%	12%	7%	9%
Fair	18%	14%	13%	13%	14%	18%	14%
Good	49%	52%	36%	48%	41%	42%	42%
Excellent	27%	28%	41%	26%	34%	32%	34%
<b>f. Your ability to pay for dental care</b>							
Poor	11%	3%	15%	15%	15%	12%	13%
Fair	24%	24%	20%	28%	26%	20%	22%
Good	42%	49%	36%	40%	33%	41%	38%
Excellent	23%	23%	30%	17%	25%	28%	25%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.





**Exhibit 5.5** summarizes community survey results about health care sources and obstacles for adults. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary results for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 14% cited a hospital emergency room as a usual source of health care and 4% reported no usual source of health care
- b. 37% reported one or more obstacles to getting care, such as cost, lack of health coverage, difficulty getting appointments, transportation, problems getting child care, or language barrier

### Exhibit 5.5 Health Care Sources and Obstacles for Adults

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
<b>a. Usual Source of health care for adults</b>							
Total Survey Responses	92	85	529	222	89	202	1,219
Doctor's office	47%	52%	54%	53%	55%	54%	53%
Clinic	57%	73%	60%	58%	67%	70%	63%
Express care in a grocery or drug store	0%	9%	14%	2%	3%	3%	8%
Urgent care	47%	27%	41%	41%	36%	34%	39%
Free clinic	4%	2%	5%	12%	1%	6%	6%
Hospital emergency room	14%	9%	18%	22%	24%	25%	19%
VA Medical Center	2%	2%	1%	8%	4%	3%	3%
VA Outpatient Clinic	3%	0%	3%	5%	3%	0%	3%
Internet	9%	8%	14%	9%	12%	12%	12%
I do not have a place that I go to most often	4%	0%	5%	5%	6%	3%	4%
<b>b. Obstacles to health care for adults</b>							
Total Survey Responses	87	86	519	219	85	196	1,192
Could not afford the cost	18%	23%	15%	21%	13%	13%	16%
Did not have insurance	7%	9%	4%	7%	9%	4%	6%
Did not have transportation	3%	2%	3%	5%	4%	5%	4%
Could not schedule the appointment at a convenient time	17%	22%	26%	28%	21%	22%	24%
There was a language barrier	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
I could not get child care	3%	1%	5%	3%	4%	2%	4%
None of the above apply to me	63%	47%	64%	52%	64%	67%	61%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 5.6** summarizes community survey results about dental care visits and obstacles for adults. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary results for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 14% said they have not seen a dentist within the past 2 years
- b. 29% reported one or more obstacles to getting dental care, such as cost, lack of health coverage, difficulty getting appointments, transportation, problems getting child care, or language barrier

### Exhibit 5.6 Dental Visits and Obstacles for Adults

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
<b>a. How long has it been since you have seen a dentist for any reason?</b>							
Total Survey Responses	92	86	530	222	87	203	1,220
Within the past year	76%	85%	75%	71%	67%	74%	74%
Within the past 2 years	9%	10%	9%	11%	13%	6%	9%
Within the past 5 years	7%	1%	8%	9%	10%	9%	8%
5 or more years	7%	3%	7%	8%	9%	9%	7%
Don't know	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

## Exhibit 5.6 Dental Visits and Obstacles for Adults (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
b. In the last 12 months, was there any time when you needed to see a dentist but did not because of any of the following reasons?							
Total Survey Responses	89	84	517	219	82	198	1,189
Could not afford the cost	20%	25%	19%	19%	22%	18%	19%
Did not have insurance	10%	5%	10%	11%	11%	7%	10%
Did not have transportation	1%	4%	3%	4%	4%	2%	3%
Could not schedule the appointment at a convenient time	10%	6%	13%	12%	12%	11%	12%
There was a language barrier	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%
I could not get child care	1%	5%	2%	2%	5%	1%	2%
None of the above apply to me	71%	62%	71%	65%	65%	73%	69%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 5.7** summarizes community survey results about health care and dental visits for children. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary results for **Buffalo County** included:

- 13% cited a hospital emergency room as a usual source of care for children
- 11% reported children were without a dental visit in past two years

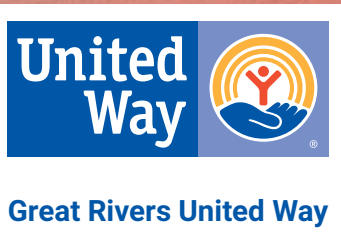
## Exhibit 5.7 Health Care and Dental Visits for Children

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
a. Usual source of health care for children							
Total Survey Responses	72	75	285	199	74	129	950
Doctor's office	58%	55%	62%	53%	59%	45%	28%
Clinic	58%	47%	50%	60%	70%	73%	29%
Express care in a grocery or drug store	3%	8%	19%	5%	3%	6%	5%
Urgent care	50%	20%	47%	39%	30%	42%	20%
Free clinic	3%	8%	9%	10%	0%	11%	4%
Hospital emergency room	13%	8%	20%	19%	32%	21%	10%
Internet	3%	6%	4%	4%	5%	8%	2%
We do not have a place that we go to most often	3%	0%	4%	2%	0%	2%	1%
b. Most recent dental visit for children							
Total Survey Responses	38	47	184	107	34	64	474
Within the past year	74%	87%	83%	70%	76%	78%	78%
Within the past 2 years	13%	11%	9%	16%	9%	9%	11%
Within the past 5 years	8%	2%	1%	7%	3%	6%	4%
5 or more years	3%	0%	3%	1%	3%	2%	2%
Don't know	3%	0%	4%	6%	9%	5%	4%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

## 6. Social and Economic Factors

Social and economic factors, such as income, education, employment, and social supports can significantly affect community health and quality of life. This section describes selected community indicators and community insights related to social and economic factors.



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## Community Indicators

**Exhibit 6.1** shows the County Health Rankings for social and economic factors. The rankings are based on a set of indicators related to education, income, family structure, social associations and injury deaths. **Buffalo County** ranked in the 2nd quartile for social & economic factors. No trend data were reported for **Buffalo County**.

### Exhibit 6.1 County Health Rankings for Social and Economic Factors

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Rankings</b>								
Social & Economic Factors Rank	27	11	10	36	24	47	--	--
Ranking Key:	<span style="color: green;">■</span> 1st (best) quartile	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> 2nd quartile	<span style="color: orange;">■</span> 3rd quartile	<span style="color: red;">■</span> 4th quartile				
	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Indicators</b>								
High school graduation (2017-2021)	92%	95%	96%	91%	92%	90%	94%	93%
Some college (2017-2021)	65%	74%	77%	60%	60%	58%	76%	70%
Unemployment (2021)	4.2%	2.9%	3.0%	3.2%	3.7%	3.2%	3.4%	3.8%
Children in poverty (2021)	11%	9%	11%	15%	12%	23%	11%	14%
Income inequality (2017-2021)	3.9	3.7	4.2	3.8	3.4	4.4	4.2	4.2
Children in single-parent households (2017-2021)	15%	16%	18%	17%	15%	14%	20%	23%
Social Associations (2020)	9.2	13.4	13.2	9.4	13.1	11.7	12.4	11.2
Injury deaths (2016-2020)	55	68	83	69	74	68	69	89
<b>Selected Trends</b>								
Unemployment	--	B	--	--	--	B	--	--
Children in poverty	--	--	B	--	--	W	--	--
Trend Key:	<span style="color: green;">■</span> <b>B</b> Getting better	<span style="color: gray;">■</span> <b>--</b> No trend	<span style="color: red;">■</span> <b>W</b> Getting worse					
Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from <a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/">https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/</a> . :*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.								

“ I work from pay check to pay check just to make a living. And then I don't have no money to myself. That's why I cant retire and enjoy life anymore!!

~ Monroe County Survey Respondent ”





**Exhibit 6.2** shows data on low-income households and ALICE households. Summary points for **Buffalo County**:

- In **Buffalo County** there were an estimated 538 households with income at or below poverty in 2021. This represents an estimated 10% of all households.
- ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and provides a way of defining and understanding the struggles of households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford basic necessities. In 2021 an estimated 1,310 households in **Buffalo County** were classified as ALICE households.

### Exhibit 6.2 Low Income and ALICE Households

	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION	MN	WI
<b>Households in Poverty (2021)</b>									
Households (count)	538	617	5,963	1,834	958	1,643	11,215	206,178	267,433
Households (%)	10%	8%	12%	10%	8%	14%	11%	9%	11%
<b>ALICE Households (2021)</b>									
ALICE Households (count)	1,310	--	13,582	4,429	2,979	3,125	24,115	--	567,854
ALICE Households (%)	24%	24%	27%	25%	24%	26%	--	26%	23%

Source: Data on households in poverty from ESRI obtained through ArcGIS Business software. Data on ALICE Households from <https://www.unitedforalice.org/county-reports/wisconsin>



**Exhibit 6.3** shows reported child services cases for 2021, including child abuse and neglect cases. In **Buffalo County** there were 190 referrals made to Child Protective Services; 22 documented child abuse victims; and 12 out-of-home placements.

### Exhibit 6.3 Reported Child Services Cases

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION	MN*	WI
<b>CPS Referrals (2021)</b>									
CPS Referrals	190	--	699	814	491	239	2,243	--	74,280
<b>Child Abuse Cases (2021)</b>									
Child Abuse Victims	22	--	38	34	26	18	116	--	4,254
Child abuse rate per 1,000 children	8.4	--	1.6	2.9	3.5	2.3	--	--	3.4
<b>Out of home Placements (2021)</b>									
Out of Home Placements	12	--	97	58	19	24	210	--	6,887

Note: CPS Referrals and Child Abuse Cases for Minnesota were not included in this report as definitions for cases and referrals in Minnesota may vary from Wisconsin definitions. For more information on Minnesota Maltreatment data, visit <https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/edocs/child-protection-foster-care-adoption/>

Source: [Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Report Annual Report for Calendar Year 2021 to the Governor and Legislature Wis. Stat. s. 48.47\(8\)](#). Also, [Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Out-of-Home Care \(Otte\) Dashboard](#).



## Community Insights

**Exhibit 6.4** summarizes community survey results about caring for individuals who are aging or have disabilities. Results are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary results for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 24% currently help care for an individual that is aging
- b. 20% currently help care for an individual that has a disability

### Exhibit 6.4 Caring for Vulnerable Persons

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
<b>a. Do you currently help care for an individual that is aging?</b>							
Total Survey Responses	92	86	525	221	86	204	1,214
Yes	24%	45%	20%	30%	26%	24%	25%
No	76%	55%	80%	70%	74%	76%	75%
<b>b. Do you currently help care for an individual that has a disability?</b>							
Total Survey Responses	92	86	528	221	85	203	1,215
Yes	20%	33%	16%	24%	21%	15%	19%
No	80%	67%	84%	76%	79%	85%	81%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 6.5** summarizes community survey results regarding concerns about vulnerable persons in the community. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic for **Buffalo County** were:

- a. 60% child abuse
- b. 62% domestic abuse
- c. 59% elder abuse
- d. 59% sexual abuse

### Exhibit 6.5 Issues Affecting Vulnerable Persons

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	87	532	225	88	204	1,227
<b>a. Child abuse</b>							
Very Concerned	24%	29%	45%	37%	25%	31%	37%
Moderately Concerned	36%	31%	30%	32%	34%	38%	33%
A Little Concerned	32%	29%	18%	23%	23%	24%	22%
Not Concerned	5%	7%	4%	6%	9%	3%	5%
No Opinion	2%	3%	3%	2%	9%	4%	3%
<b>b. Domestic abuse</b>							
Very Concerned	29%	36%	44%	35%	26%	28%	37%
Moderately Concerned	33%	28%	32%	31%	40%	43%	34%
A Little Concerned	29%	30%	16%	27%	22%	21%	21%
Not Concerned	8%	5%	5%	5%	8%	4%	5%
No Opinion	2%	2%	3%	2%	5%	4%	3%
<b>c. Elder abuse</b>							
Very Concerned	27%	28%	35%	27%	18%	24%	29%
Moderately Concerned	32%	30%	32%	30%	39%	34%	32%
A Little Concerned	27%	31%	22%	31%	26%	28%	26%
Not Concerned	10%	9%	8%	9%	9%	8%	9%
No Opinion	3%	2%	4%	4%	8%	5%	4%

## Exhibit 6.5 Issues Affecting Vulnerable Persons (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
<b>d. Sexual abuse or sexual violence</b>							
Very Concerned	26%	33%	45%	35%	25%	26%	36%
Moderately Concerned	33%	28%	33%	32%	31%	37%	33%
A Little Concerned	29%	28%	15%	25%	29%	25%	22%
Not Concerned	7%	9%	4%	6%	8%	5%	5%
No Opinion	6%	2%	2%	1%	7%	6%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 6.6** summarizes community survey results about community supports for vulnerable persons. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Topics receiving ratings of poor or fair for **Buffalo County** included:

- 48% for their community as a place that meets the overall needs of children
- 51% for efforts to prevent abuse or neglect
- 59% for their community as a place that meets the overall needs of elderly persons
- 50% for efforts to prevent neglect or abuse of seniors
- 54% for efforts to help persons age in place
- 65% for efforts to meet the overall needs of persons with disabilities
- 50% for efforts to prevent neglect or abuse of persons with disabilities
- 55% for the availability of services that meet the overall needs of community members who are victims of abuse or neglect

## Exhibit 6.6 Community Supports for Vulnerable Persons

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	85	532	226	87	205	1,226
<b>a. Your community as a place that meets the overall needs of children</b>							
Poor	12%	4%	6%	10%	1%	4%	7%
Fair	36%	31%	24%	46%	40%	32%	32%
Good	44%	48%	52%	35%	41%	50%	47%
Excellent	5%	16%	10%	5%	9%	7%	9%
No Opinion	2%	1%	7%	4%	8%	6%	6%
<b>b. Efforts to prevent abuse or neglect of children</b>							
Poor	10%	4%	10%	14%	5%	8%	10%
Fair	41%	33%	36%	44%	41%	37%	38%
Good	38%	41%	39%	31%	36%	41%	38%
Excellent	2%	13%	6%	5%	2%	3%	5%
No Opinion	9%	9%	9%	6%	16%	11%	9%
<b>c. Your community as a place that meets the overall needs of elderly persons (e.g., access to transportation, social outlets)</b>							
Poor	27%	15%	10%	15%	23%	20%	15%
Fair	32%	27%	35%	44%	31%	37%	36%
Good	31%	36%	41%	30%	34%	32%	36%
Excellent	2%	18%	8%	6%	6%	8%	8%
No Opinion	8%	4%	5%	4%	6%	3%	5%

## Exhibit 6.6 Community Supports for Vulnerable Persons (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
<b>d. Efforts to prevent abuse or neglect of seniors</b>							
Poor	18%	6%	9%	13%	7%	8%	10%
Fair	32%	32%	32%	40%	36%	44%	35%
Good	40%	39%	38%	28%	34%	31%	35%
Excellent	1%	13%	7%	5%	7%	5%	6%
No Opinion	10%	11%	15%	14%	16%	12%	13%
<b>e. The availability of resources to help persons age in place</b>							
Poor	23%	13%	13%	15%	24%	19%	16%
Fair	31%	29%	35%	43%	28%	37%	35%
Good	37%	36%	31%	27%	32%	28%	31%
Excellent	2%	12%	6%	5%	6%	8%	6%
No Opinion	7%	9%	14%	10%	10%	8%	11%
<b>f. Your community as a place that meets the overall needs of persons with disabilities</b>							
Poor	19%	6%	10%	13%	17%	15%	12%
Fair	46%	28%	37%	48%	31%	40%	39%
Good	27%	40%	37%	29%	34%	36%	34%
Excellent	4%	14%	7%	3%	5%	2%	6%
No Opinion	3%	12%	9%	8%	13%	7%	9%
<b>g. Efforts to prevent abuse or neglect of persons with disabilities</b>							
Poor	10%	4%	11%	10%	8%	11%	10%
Fair	40%	27%	32%	44%	38%	39%	36%
Good	36%	41%	36%	29%	33%	30%	33%
Excellent	2%	15%	6%	3%	3%	4%	5%
No Opinion	12%	13%	16%	13%	17%	17%	15%
<b>h. The availability of services that meet the overall needs of community members who are victims of abuse or neglect</b>							
Poor	17%	5%	13%	16%	15%	18%	14%
Fair	38%	36%	36%	42%	33%	40%	37%
Good	30%	35%	34%	25%	32%	23%	30%
Excellent	3%	14%	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%
No Opinion	12%	9%	14%	12%	16%	15%	13%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.





**Exhibit 6.7** summarizes community survey results about meeting household needs. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were **very or moderately concerned** about each topic for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 13% meeting basic needs for food, housing, and clothing
- b. 12% paying the rent or mortgage
- c. 14% paying for utility bills, property taxes, or other household expenses
- d. 14% being able to access housing
- e. 15% availability of resources to help them budget their money
- f. 32% paying for educational expenses
- g. 15% paying for vehicle expenses
- h. 26% paying for legal assistance
- i. 23% paying for child care, if needed
- j. 34% access to child care, if needed

## Exhibit 6.7 Concerns about Meeting Household Needs

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	530	223	87	205	1,222
<b>a. Your ability to meet your household's basic needs for food, housing, clothing</b>							
Very Concerned	4%	7%	10%	8%	7%	5%	8%
Moderately Concerned	9%	20%	10%	12%	10%	7%	10%
A Little Concerned	24%	22%	19%	28%	11%	17%	21%
Not Concerned	62%	51%	60%	52%	71%	69%	60%
No Opinion	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%
<b>b. Your ability to pay for rent/mortgage for your household</b>							
Very Concerned	3%	10%	11%	10%	10%	6%	9%
Moderately Concerned	9%	23%	9%	15%	10%	6%	11%
A Little Concerned	19%	16%	19%	24%	9%	19%	19%
Not Concerned	66%	50%	60%	50%	70%	65%	59%
No Opinion	3%	0%	1%	1%	0%	4%	2%
<b>c. Your ability to pay for utility bills, property tax, and other housing related expenses</b>							
Very Concerned	3%	13%	13%	12%	11%	6%	11%
Moderately Concerned	11%	22%	10%	16%	9%	6%	11%
A Little Concerned	27%	15%	21%	23%	15%	24%	21%
Not Concerned	56%	50%	55%	48%	64%	61%	55%
No Opinion	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%
<b>d. Your ability to access housing</b>							
Very Concerned	3%	16%	14%	15%	14%	13%	13%
Moderately Concerned	11%	14%	10%	15%	11%	7%	11%
A Little Concerned	15%	16%	14%	17%	12%	12%	14%
Not Concerned	63%	48%	55%	46%	59%	61%	54%
No Opinion	8%	6%	6%	6%	5%	7%	6%
<b>e. The availability of resources to help you budget your money</b>							
Very Concerned	3%	16%	6%	9%	8%	4%	7%
Moderately Concerned	12%	16%	11%	11%	9%	9%	11%
A Little Concerned	16%	18%	17%	23%	19%	21%	19%
Not Concerned	63%	48%	58%	55%	58%	59%	57%
No Opinion	5%	1%	8%	3%	6%	7%	6%
<b>f. Your ability to pay for education beyond high school for you and/or your family</b>							
Very Concerned	10%	16%	19%	23%	19%	14%	18%
Moderately Concerned	22%	24%	14%	17%	15%	14%	16%
A Little Concerned	21%	16%	19%	22%	12%	19%	19%
Not Concerned	40%	36%	37%	29%	43%	42%	37%
No Opinion	8%	7%	11%	9%	12%	11%	10%

## Exhibit 6.7 Concerns about Meeting Household Needs (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
<b>g. Your ability to pay for your own vehicle (including gas, insurance, and maintenance)</b>							
Very Concerned	5%	14%	10%	11%	13%	7%	10%
Moderately Concerned	10%	18%	15%	15%	9%	9%	13%
A Little Concerned	25%	19%	21%	25%	16%	24%	22%
Not Concerned	58%	48%	53%	48%	58%	59%	53%
No Opinion	1%	0%	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%
<b>h. Your ability to pay for legal assistance</b>							
Very Concerned	11%	19%	16%	20%	19%	12%	16%
Moderately Concerned	15%	30%	13%	17%	14%	12%	15%
A Little Concerned	19%	14%	21%	20%	16%	25%	20%
Not Concerned	47%	36%	41%	36%	44%	46%	41%
No Opinion	8%	1%	10%	8%	7%	5%	8%
<b>i. Your ability to pay for child care, if needed</b>							
Very Concerned	12%	8%	17%	20%	21%	9%	15%
Moderately Concerned	11%	23%	10%	9%	6%	6%	9%
A Little Concerned	12%	12%	7%	11%	7%	11%	9%
Not Concerned	44%	34%	37%	33%	40%	46%	38%
No Opinion	21%	23%	29%	28%	27%	28%	27%
<b>j. Your ability to access childcare, if needed</b>							
Very Concerned	18%	24%	17%	21%	27%	15%	18%
Moderately Concerned	16%	19%	10%	14%	6%	6%	11%
A Little Concerned	8%	8%	10%	8%	6%	9%	9%
Not Concerned	38%	27%	35%	30%	40%	41%	35%
No Opinion	20%	22%	29%	27%	22%	29%	27%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

“ not enough day cares to fulfill needs, which leaves working/single mothers in a very difficult situation.

~ Houston County Survey Respondent ”



**Exhibit 6.8** summarizes community survey results about access to healthy food. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary results for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 25% rated their access to healthy food as poor or fair
- b. 28% rated their ability to pay for healthy food as poor or fair
- c. 2% said in the past 12 months, it was often true that the food they bought didn't last and they didn't have money to get more

### Exhibit 6.8 Concerns about Access to Healthy Food

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	529	223	87	204	1,220
<b>a. Your access to healthy food</b>							
Poor	3%	3%	4%	4%	10%	2%	4%
Fair	22%	23%	15%	19%	10%	16%	17%
Good	45%	41%	39%	54%	48%	38%	42%
Excellent	30%	33%	42%	22%	31%	44%	36%
<b>b. Your ability to pay for healthy food</b>							
Poor	7%	3%	9%	10%	8%	4%	7%
Fair	21%	23%	19%	25%	25%	21%	21%
Good	52%	52%	37%	48%	40%	40%	41%
Excellent	21%	21%	36%	18%	27%	34%	29%
<b>c. How True is the following statement for your household? "Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more."</b>							
Often true	2%	2%	6%	7%	5%	5%	5%
Occasionally true	10%	23%	9%	10%	10%	5%	10%
Sometimes but infrequently true	12%	13%	11%	16%	2%	13%	12%
Never true	76%	62%	74%	67%	83%	77%	73%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

“ Concerned about homelessness, poverty, hunger and resources for disabled children who are not severe, but rather mild who still need adequate services for success.

~ La Crosse County Survey Respondent ”



**Exhibit 6.9** summarizes community survey results about economic issues in the community. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 48% excessive personal debt in the community
- b. 20% gambling in the community
- c. 26% foreclosure or bankruptcy in the community
- d. 31% risk of job loss in the community
- e. 49% poverty in the community
- f. 37% hunger in the community
- g. 33% homelessness in the community

## Exhibit 6.9 Concerns about Economic Issues in the Community

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	90	85	531	223	87	206	1,222
<b>a. Excessive personal debt</b>							
Very Concerned	15%	16%	24%	20%	16%	20%	20%
Moderately Concerned	33%	31%	33%	29%	28%	29%	31%
A Little Concerned	27%	24%	25%	31%	29%	29%	27%
Not Concerned	20%	18%	13%	11%	11%	14%	13%
No Opinion	6%	12%	7%	9%	16%	9%	8%
<b>b. Gambling (in-person or online)</b>							
Very Concerned	3%	11%	7%	10%	7%	7%	7%
Moderately Concerned	17%	19%	14%	15%	16%	11%	15%
A Little Concerned	29%	27%	34%	31%	23%	31%	31%
Not Concerned	38%	33%	31%	31%	36%	31%	32%
No Opinion	12%	11%	14%	13%	18%	20%	15%
<b>c. Risk of foreclosure or bankruptcy</b>							
Very Concerned	4%	15%	13%	12%	8%	10%	11%
Moderately Concerned	22%	24%	23%	25%	20%	25%	24%
A Little Concerned	36%	28%	34%	34%	29%	32%	33%
Not Concerned	27%	26%	20%	19%	26%	20%	21%
No Opinion	11%	7%	10%	10%	17%	13%	11%
<b>d. Risk of job loss</b>							
Very Concerned	7%	16%	14%	12%	16%	11%	13%
Moderately Concerned	24%	27%	30%	27%	20%	23%	27%
A Little Concerned	31%	22%	30%	36%	31%	36%	32%
Not Concerned	31%	28%	21%	17%	26%	21%	22%
No Opinion	7%	6%	5%	8%	7%	8%	6%
<b>e. Poverty</b>							
Very Concerned	19%	26%	45%	35%	23%	32%	36%
Moderately Concerned	30%	33%	32%	36%	29%	35%	33%
A Little Concerned	33%	24%	16%	20%	30%	21%	21%
Not Concerned	17%	13%	5%	5%	13%	10%	8%
No Opinion	1%	4%	1%	4%	6%	2%	2%
<b>f. Hunger</b>							
Very Concerned	17%	16%	38%	28%	19%	27%	30%
Moderately Concerned	20%	40%	35%	38%	21%	30%	33%
A Little Concerned	37%	29%	18%	22%	35%	26%	24%
Not Concerned	22%	12%	8%	9%	21%	14%	11%
No Opinion	3%	2%	1%	3%	5%	2%	2%
<b>g. Homelessness</b>							
Very Concerned	13%	26%	67%	32%	23%	23%	44%
Moderately Concerned	20%	23%	19%	31%	10%	26%	22%
A Little Concerned	34%	27%	9%	28%	36%	33%	21%
Not Concerned	31%	21%	4%	6%	26%	14%	11%
No Opinion	1%	2%	1%	3%	5%	4%	2%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.





**Exhibit 6.10** summarizes community survey results about community supports for economic stability. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Topics receiving ratings of poor or fair for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 74% availability of jobs that offer a livable wage
- b. 76% availability of safe and affordable housing
- c. 61% availability of services for people who need extra help
- d. 90% accessibility of public transportation
- e. 89% convenience of public transportation
- f. 76% efforts to reduce poverty
- g. 54% efforts to reduce hunger

### Exhibit 6.10 Community Supports for Economic Stability

Topic/Survey	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	85	530	223	87	206	1,222
<b>a. The availability of jobs that offer a livable wage</b>							
Poor	32%	24%	22%	24%	26%	30%	25%
Fair	42%	42%	38%	43%	36%	45%	40%
Good	21%	25%	33%	26%	28%	19%	27%
Excellent	4%	8%	6%	5%	7%	4%	5%
No Opinion	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%
<b>b. The availability of safe, affordable housing</b>							
Poor	32%	24%	47%	47%	29%	47%	43%
Fair	44%	36%	36%	33%	47%	34%	36%
Good	19%	27%	13%	14%	22%	16%	16%
Excellent	3%	11%	2%	4%	1%	1%	3%
No Opinion	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
<b>c. The availability of services for people who may need extra help (government, nonprofit services)</b>							
Poor	18%	8%	17%	20%	17%	18%	17%
Fair	43%	34%	40%	41%	34%	46%	41%
Good	23%	39%	31%	27%	31%	27%	30%
Excellent	8%	13%	8%	6%	7%	4%	7%
No Opinion	9%	6%	4%	5%	10%	5%	5%
<b>d. The accessibility of public transportation</b>							
Poor	72%	25%	14%	57%	66%	50%	36%
Fair	18%	25%	31%	27%	20%	29%	28%
Good	3%	29%	39%	9%	6%	16%	24%
Excellent	2%	16%	11%	3%	3%	4%	8%
No Opinion	4%	5%	4%	4%	6%	2%	4%
<b>e. The convenience of public transportation</b>							
Poor	76%	29%	20%	61%	74%	54%	42%
Fair	13%	22%	30%	25%	13%	27%	25%
Good	3%	29%	36%	9%	7%	13%	22%
Excellent	2%	14%	8%	1%	1%	2%	5%
No Opinion	6%	5%	6%	4%	6%	3%	5%
<b>f. Efforts to reduce poverty in your community</b>							
Poor	42%	20%	29%	37%	36%	30%	31%
Fair	34%	29%	39%	38%	31%	46%	38%
Good	12%	27%	23%	14%	14%	17%	19%
Excellent	1%	13%	2%	3%	1%	0%	3%
No Opinion	10%	11%	7%	8%	18%	8%	9%

## Exhibit 6.10 Community Supports for Economic Stability (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
g. Efforts to reduce hunger in your community							
Poor	8%	0%	10%	14%	15%	14%	11%
Fair	46%	29%	31%	41%	37%	38%	35%
Good	33%	49%	43%	32%	29%	37%	39%
Excellent	6%	19%	13%	9%	8%	7%	11%
No Opinion	8%	2%	3%	4%	11%	4%	4%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 6.11** provides further insight into community support needs through 2-1-1 call data. For each county and the region in calendar 2022, the exhibit shows 2-1-1 call types, the common caller problems or needs, and the common referral types. (Note that the exhibit only shows the 5 most common problems/needs and referral types for each county and region. Dozens of additional concerns were also presented by callers.)

- The most common problems or needs presented by calls were related to mental health/addictions, housing, food/meals, health care, and information services.
- The most common referral types included referrals for directory assistance, housing-related assistance, food assistance and counseling.

## Exhibit 6.11 2-1-1 Assistance Profile

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Contacts (2022)	84	990	6706	994	303	261	9,338
<b>Call Types</b>							
Information and Referral	52	912	4,756	808	210	197	6,935
Information Only	23	42	1,273	47	65	22	1,472
No Referral Given	2	9	470	47	11	15	554
Crisis	8	40	483	137	20	32	720
<b>Problems/Needs (top 5 for each)</b>							
Mental Health / Addictions	51	893	5,669	1,106	290	271	8,280
Housing	36	154	1,373	453	129	98	2,243
Information Services	14	34	746		47	30	936
Health Care	16		646	110	57	31	882
Legal, Consumer, and Public Safety Services			493	76			692
Food / Meals	17	42					
Transportation							
Utility Assistance				113	53	54	
Individual, Family, and Community Support		25				30	
<b>Referral Types (top 5 for each)</b>							
Talk lines / Warmlines		705	2,358	270	23	31	3,390
Individual Counseling	6	72	1,309	276	63	62	1,788
Rent Payment Assistance	8	62	335	116	32		570
Directory Assistance	10		483				537
Electric Service Payment Assistance			282	70	34	36	440
Food Pantries	8	25					
Low Income/Subsidized Private Rental Housing	7	31			27		
Homeless Motel Vouchers				81		27	
Community Shelters							
General Counseling Services						19	

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

## 7. Physical Environment and Safety

Physical environment and community safety affect length and quality of life. The physical environment includes the spaces where individuals live, learn, work, and play. People interact with their physical environment through the air they breathe, water they drink, houses they live in, and the transportation they access to travel to work and school. This section describes selected community indicators and community insights about the physical environment and safety in the region.



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## Community Indicators

**Exhibit 7.1** shows the County Health Rankings for the physical environment. The ranking are based on a set of indicators including air pollution, drinking water violations, housing problems, driving alone to work, and commute time.

- **Buffalo County** ranked in the 4th quartile on physical environment measures.
- Available trend data show air pollution is improving in **Buffalo County**.

### Exhibit 7.1 County Health Rankings for the Physical Environment

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Rankings</b>								
Physical Environment Rank	61	69	22	16	55	66	--	--
Ranking Key:	<span style="background-color: #4CAF50; padding: 2px;"> </span> 1st (best) quartile	<span style="background-color: #2196F3; padding: 2px;"> </span> 2nd quartile	<span style="background-color: #FFC107; padding: 2px;"> </span> 3rd quartile	<span style="background-color: #F44336; padding: 2px;"> </span> 4th quartile				
	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
<b>Indicators</b>								
Air pollution-particulate matter (2019)	7.9	8.1	7.6	8.0	8.0	8.1	6.1	7.8
Drinking water violations (2021)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A
Severe housing problems (2015-2019)	12%	9%	13%	11%	10%	15%	13%	13%
Driving alone to work (2017-2021)	78%	80%	79%	78%	79%	77%	74%	78%
Long commute- driving alone (2017-2021)	39%	31%	18%	24%	34%	40%	31%	28%
<b>Selected Trends</b>								
Air pollution – particulate matter	B	B	B	B	B	B	--	--
Trend Key:	<span style="background-color: #4CAF50; padding: 2px;"> </span> <b>B</b> Getting better	<span style="background-color: #ccc; padding: 2px;"> </span> -- No trend	<span style="background-color: #F44336; padding: 2px;"> </span> <b>W</b> Getting worse					
Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from <a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/">https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/</a> .								
:*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.								



## Community Insights

**Exhibit 7.2** summarizes community survey responses about community safety. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. For **Buffalo County**, 11% rated overall community safety as poor or fair.

### Exhibit 7.2 Rating of Overall Community Safety

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	531	225	89	203	1,227
<b>Rating of overall community safety</b>							
Poor	1%	0%	3%	1%	3%	0%	2%
Fair	10%	10%	24%	24%	19%	11%	19%
Good	75%	61%	58%	64%	69%	67%	63%
Excellent	14%	29%	15%	11%	9%	22%	16%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 7.3** summarizes community survey results regarding specific concerns about community safety. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 48% school safety
- b. 57% cyber security
- c. 60% criminal activity
- d. 16% community response to flooding
- e. 19% community response to disease outbreak
- f. 25% community response to hazardous materials incidents
- g. 12% community response to terrorist activity
- h. 29% community response to tap water safety
- i. 37% community response to well water safety

### Exhibit 7.3 Concerns about Community Safety

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	88	206	1,233
<b>a. School safety</b>							
Very Concerned	18%	31%	30%	23%	27%	27%	27%
Moderately Concerned	30%	33%	31%	38%	26%	31%	32%
A Little Concerned	32%	20%	27%	24%	32%	26%	26%
Not Concerned	18%	14%	10%	14%	14%	14%	12%
No Opinion	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
<b>b. Cyber security (e.g., identity theft)</b>							
Very Concerned	32%	32%	27%	22%	26%	31%	27%
Moderately Concerned	25%	34%	32%	35%	33%	33%	32%
A Little Concerned	26%	25%	27%	28%	33%	26%	27%
Not Concerned	16%	8%	11%	12%	5%	9%	11%
No Opinion	0%	0%	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%
<b>c. Criminal activity</b>							
Very Concerned	22%	31%	37%	27%	28%	23%	31%
Moderately Concerned	38%	19%	36%	35%	27%	32%	33%
A Little Concerned	24%	35%	20%	27%	33%	33%	26%
Not Concerned	15%	14%	5%	10%	13%	10%	9%
No Opinion	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
<b>d. Community response to flood</b>							
Very Concerned	4%	16%	8%	8%	9%	12%	9%
Moderately Concerned	12%	22%	17%	17%	25%	18%	18%
A Little Concerned	28%	16%	32%	24%	31%	29%	28%
Not Concerned	55%	45%	37%	40%	32%	38%	39%
No Opinion	0%	1%	7%	11%	2%	3%	6%
<b>e. Disease outbreak</b>							
Very Concerned	4%	20%	10%	10%	9%	13%	11%
Moderately Concerned	15%	18%	24%	21%	29%	20%	22%
A Little Concerned	37%	30%	36%	32%	24%	36%	34%
Not Concerned	43%	32%	29%	33%	37%	30%	31%
No Opinion	0%	0%	2%	4%	1%	1%	2%
<b>f. Hazardous materials incident</b>							
Very Concerned	7%	14%	9%	7%	11%	7%	9%
Moderately Concerned	18%	23%	20%	21%	21%	17%	20%
A Little Concerned	27%	24%	35%	31%	32%	41%	33%
Not Concerned	48%	36%	33%	35%	34%	33%	35%
No Opinion	0%	3%	4%	6%	1%	1%	3%



## Exhibit 7.3 Concerns about Community Safety (cont.)

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	88	206	1,233
g. Terrorist activity							
Very Concerned	4%	16%	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%
Moderately Concerned	8%	15%	11%	12%	19%	11%	11%
A Little Concerned	25%	25%	30%	26%	24%	29%	28%
Not Concerned	62%	43%	51%	52%	52%	52%	51%
No Opinion	1%	1%	3%	4%	0%	2%	3%
h. Tap water safety							
Very Concerned	11%	23%	30%	21%	15%	19%	23%
Moderately Concerned	18%	18%	21%	27%	27%	23%	22%
A Little Concerned	27%	23%	26%	25%	26%	24%	25%
Not Concerned	39%	33%	22%	25%	32%	33%	27%
No Opinion	4%	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%	2%
i. Well water safety							
Very Concerned	14%	24%	25%	18%	15%	22%	21%
Moderately Concerned	23%	20%	20%	24%	28%	21%	21%
A Little Concerned	21%	21%	21%	21%	16%	25%	21%
Not Concerned	36%	32%	24%	27%	33%	28%	27%
No Opinion	6%	3%	10%	11%	8%	3%	8%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 7.4** summarizes community survey results regarding responsiveness of public safety agencies. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 54% responsiveness of emergency medical services
- b. 34% responsiveness of law enforcement
- c. 30% responsiveness of the fire department

### Exhibit 7.4 Responsiveness of Public Safety Agencies

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	88	206	1,233
<b>a. Responsiveness of emergency medical services (EMS)</b>							
Very Concerned	22%	15%	9%	12%	19%	18%	13%
Moderately Concerned	32%	28%	13%	17%	28%	23%	19%
A Little Concerned	21%	23%	21%	22%	23%	26%	22%
Not Concerned	26%	34%	50%	44%	28%	31%	42%
No Opinion	0%	0%	7%	4%	1%	1%	4%
<b>b. Responsiveness of law enforcement</b>							
Very Concerned	13%	17%	13%	13%	16%	14%	14%
Moderately Concerned	21%	23%	21%	22%	28%	20%	22%
A Little Concerned	30%	30%	28%	27%	28%	28%	28%
Not Concerned	36%	30%	34%	34%	27%	35%	33%
No Opinion	0%	0%	5%	4%	1%	2%	3%
<b>c. Responsiveness of fire department</b>							
Very Concerned	9%	13%	7%	12%	11%	12%	10%
Moderately Concerned	21%	21%	12%	17%	25%	19%	16%
A Little Concerned	21%	25%	24%	22%	23%	26%	24%
Not Concerned	50%	41%	52%	46%	39%	41%	47%
No Opinion	0%	0%	5%	3%	2%	2%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

“ Most of our services to protect the community are ran on a voluntary basis. The lack of people wanting to work and or volunteer is a cause for concern.

~ Buffalo County Survey Respondent ”



**Exhibit 7.5** summarizes community survey results regarding preparedness for emergency events. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary results for **Buffalo County** included:

- 57% said they were not or a little prepared for household fire
- 62% said they were not or a little prepared for flood
- 45% said they were not or a little prepared for a power outage longer than 24 hours
- 46% said they were not or a little prepared for a natural disaster
- 40% said they were not or a little prepared for a pandemic
- 61% said they were not or a little prepared for loss of a job

### Exhibit 7.5 Preparedness for Emergency Events

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	531	223	86	205	1,222
<b>a. Household fire</b>							
Not prepared	13%	13%	20%	16%	15%	11%	17%
A Little Prepared	44%	37%	33%	41%	36%	35%	36%
Moderately Prepared	35%	37%	37%	31%	34%	43%	36%
Very Prepared	8%	13%	10%	12%	15%	11%	11%
<b>b. Flood</b>							
Not prepared	26%	27%	40%	39%	25%	25%	34%
A Little Prepared	36%	27%	31%	30%	39%	27%	31%
Moderately Prepared	26%	32%	20%	24%	24%	29%	24%
Very Prepared	13%	14%	9%	7%	13%	18%	11%
<b>c. Power outage longer than 24 Hours</b>							
Not prepared	11%	13%	22%	21%	17%	18%	19%
A Little Prepared	34%	35%	39%	33%	30%	29%	35%
Moderately Prepared	39%	35%	29%	32%	36%	37%	32%
Very Prepared	16%	17%	11%	14%	16%	16%	13%
<b>d. Natural disaster (such as ice storm, tornado, snowstorm)</b>							
Not prepared	9%	10%	23%	19%	16%	12%	18%
A Little Prepared	37%	36%	36%	33%	38%	35%	35%
Moderately Prepared	44%	43%	33%	38%	35%	44%	37%
Very Prepared	10%	10%	9%	10%	10%	8%	9%
<b>e. Pandemic/epidemic</b>							
Not prepared	10%	11%	16%	16%	14%	14%	14%
A Little Prepared	30%	26%	31%	37%	33%	28%	31%
Moderately Prepared	46%	48%	36%	33%	35%	42%	38%
Very Prepared	14%	15%	17%	14%	18%	16%	16%
<b>f. Loss of job</b>							
Not prepared	33%	23%	31%	35%	39%	26%	31%
A Little Prepared	28%	30%	28%	27%	26%	31%	28%
Moderately Prepared	28%	38%	22%	24%	26%	23%	24%
Very Prepared	11%	8%	18%	14%	9%	20%	16%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



**Exhibit 7.6** summarizes community survey results regarding concerns about public spaces. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic for **Buffalo County** included:

- a. 18% loose animals
- b. 36% sidewalks in poor condition
- c. 31% lack of sidewalks
- d. 21% inadequate crosswalks
- e. 15% motor vehicle traffic
- f. 10% not enough traffic lights / stop signs
- g. 20% street lighting

### Exhibit 7.6 Concerns about Public Spaces

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	88	206	1,233
<b>a. Loose animals</b>							
Very Concerned	7%	17%	8%	6%	10%	12%	9%
Moderately Concerned	11%	24%	11%	12%	13%	18%	13%
A Little Concerned	23%	16%	30%	34%	27%	33%	29%
Not Concerned	59%	42%	50%	46%	49%	36%	47%
No Opinion	1%	0%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%
<b>b. Sidewalks in poor condition</b>							
Very Concerned	9%	25%	16%	9%	10%	15%	14%
Moderately Concerned	27%	16%	22%	24%	23%	26%	23%
A Little Concerned	22%	21%	32%	29%	30%	32%	30%
Not Concerned	41%	36%	28%	33%	31%	24%	30%
No Opinion	1%	2%	1%	4%	6%	2%	2%
<b>c. Lack of sidewalks</b>							
Very Concerned	9%	24%	12%	11%	15%	15%	13%
Moderately Concerned	22%	18%	20%	19%	17%	20%	20%
A Little Concerned	19%	23%	27%	28%	30%	24%	26%
Not Concerned	46%	33%	39%	37%	36%	38%	38%
No Opinion	4%	1%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%
<b>d. Inadequate crosswalks</b>							
Very Concerned	8%	20%	15%	10%	16%	15%	14%
Moderately Concerned	13%	17%	21%	18%	23%	23%	20%
A Little Concerned	20%	29%	26%	23%	20%	28%	25%
Not Concerned	57%	33%	36%	43%	39%	32%	38%
No Opinion	2%	1%	2%	5%	2%	2%	3%
<b>e. Motor vehicle traffic</b>							
Very Concerned	3%	12%	18%	9%	10%	19%	14%
Moderately Concerned	12%	26%	24%	15%	28%	26%	22%
A Little Concerned	40%	27%	32%	39%	26%	27%	32%
Not Concerned	45%	36%	25%	35%	35%	27%	30%
No Opinion	0%	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%	1%

## Exhibit 7.6 Concerns about Public Spaces (cont.)

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
f. Not enough traffic lights/stop signs							
Very Concerned	3%	14%	9%	5%	10%	16%	9%
Moderately Concerned	7%	24%	13%	9%	10%	17%	13%
A Little Concerned	18%	10%	26%	26%	23%	28%	24%
Not Concerned	70%	50%	51%	56%	51%	37%	50%
No Opinion	2%	1%	2%	4%	6%	2%	3%
g. Street lighting							
Very Concerned	5%	14%	14%	10%	7%	13%	12%
Moderately Concerned	15%	22%	20%	12%	19%	15%	18%
A Little Concerned	21%	20%	27%	31%	22%	25%	26%
Not Concerned	57%	43%	37%	44%	45%	43%	41%
No Opinion	2%	1%	1%	3%	7%	4%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

“ I walk frequently and our community is not pedestrian friendly. You take your life into your own hands when crossing the street.

~ Vernon County Survey Respondent ”



## 8. Additional Community Insights

Beyond the results presented in Sections 1-7, the study gathered additional community insights from community members in their own words. These insights were collected through two channels, the community survey, and a series of community insight events. This section presents a summary of those results, prefaced with a brief description of thematic analysis methods used to summarize the results.

### Thematic Analysis

Through the community survey and the community insight events, respondents were invited to respond to particular questions in their own words rather than through a pre-defined checklist. To summarize the results, Community Health Solutions applied a method called 'thematic analysis' to identify common themes among the responses. Thematic analysis is a process for grouping text responses into categories based on common words and phrases. It is a commonly used method in qualitative analysis. The results of this summary analysis are presented in the exhibits that follow.

In reviewing the results of the thematic analysis, it is important to note that this approach is designed to identify broad themes as a starting point for further analysis. The detailed responses collected through the survey and the community insight events provide a much richer database for understanding community member perspectives in their own words. All of the detailed responses have been shared with the project partners.



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## Themes from the Community Survey

At the end of the community survey instrument, respondents were invited to provide any additional comments in their own words. As shown in **Exhibit 8.1**, a total of **169** comments were received from all survey respondents from all counties. A total of **18** comments were received from **Buffalo County** survey respondents. Among these:

- Themes identifying service needs included social supports, housing, health care services and coverage, employment, substance use concerns, and taxes.
- Particular populations mentioned included children and families, and older adults.

### Exhibit 8.1 Thematic Analysis: Additional Comments from Survey Respondents

Please provide any additional comments regarding this survey here:

	All counties (169 survey responses)	Buffalo County Only (18 survey responses)
<b>A. Themes Identifying Service Needs</b>		
Social Supports	51	2
Health Care Services and Coverage	44	1
Education	31	--
Housing	30	2
Health Equity	26	--
Mental Health	19	--
Employment	13	1
Transportation	13	--
Community Collaboration	12	--
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	12	--
Food Security	9	--
Community Safety	8	--
Substance Use Concerns	8	1
COVID-19	7	--
Diversity and Inclusion	7	--
Taxes	6	1
Health Behaviors	5	--
Telehealth	4	--
Faith-Based Communities	3	--
Funding-Related	3	--
Chronic Conditions	2	--
Volunteering	2	--
Health Communication	1	--
Social Isolation	1	--
Other (not-issue specified)	23	3
<b>B. Particular Populations Mentioned</b>		
Children and Families	45	4
Low Income Population	20	--
Older Adults	17	1
People with Disabilities	9	--
Minority Population / People of Color	4	--
Rural Populations	4	--
LGBTQ+	4	--
Immigrants/Undocumented	1	--

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.



## Themes from Community Insight Events

In addition to the survey of community residents, the study also included a series of community listening events facilitated by personnel from the project partner organizations. The events were held either onsite at community locations or virtually via Zoom. **Exhibit 8.2** lists the event dates and locations.

### Exhibit 8.2 List of Community Insight Events

Location	Group	Date
1. Arcadia High School, Trempealeau County	Hispanic Focus Group	9/21/2023
2. Assembly Room in Sparta	Health and Human Services Board	7/5/2023
3. Cia Siab, Inc. La Crosse County	Hmong Maternal & Child Health Group	9/13/2023
4. Cia Siab, Inc. La Crosse County	Cia Siab, Inc. Staff Members	9/11/2023
5. Hillsboro, Vernon County	St. Joseph's Community Insight Forum	9/26/2023
6. Independence Library, Trempealeau County	Hispanic Focus Group	9/28/2023
7. La Crosse, WI	La Crosse PRIDE Event Attendees	9/9/2023
8. La Crosse, WI	Gundersen Health System Employees & Volunteers	9/26/2023
9. Mayo Clinic Health System- La Crosse, La Crosse County	Social work team	9/8/2023
10. Mayo Clinic Health System-La Crosse, La Crosse County	Social work team	9/11/2023
11. Multiple Counties	Nonprofit Directors	7/25/2023
12. Multiple Counties	Community Health Workers	7/19/2023
13. Sparta, Monroe County	Monroe County Health and Human Services Board	8/2/2023
14. Sparta, WI, Monroe County	Needle Exchange staff	6/21/2023
15. Sparta, WI, Monroe County	Monroe County Health Department Maternal and Child Programming	7/10/2023
16. Virtual Attendees from La Crosse and Monroe Counties	Head Start Staff Members	9/26/2023
17. Wilton, WI, Monroe County	Together With Veterans Monthly Breakfast	9/25/2023
18. Zoom, representatives from La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties	Coulee Collaborative to End Homelessness	8/15/2023
19. Zoom-Monroe County 54660	Monroe County Nutrition Coalition	8/8/2023

Source: Great Rivers United Way

## An Important Note on Methods

**Exhibits 8.3-8.7** present the thematic analysis of insights captured at the events. During the events, participants were invited to share multiple insights in response to each question. Consequently, a participant's response to a given question might include several different insights, or 'statements.' With this dynamic in mind, the unit of analysis in the following exhibits is the number of statements classified into each theme, rather than the number of individuals.



**Important Health Issues.** Participants in community insight events were asked: What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community? **Exhibit 8.3** lists the results.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying services needs included health care services and coverage, mental health, social services/supports, substance use concerns, and health behaviors.
- As shown in Part B, particular populations mentioned included children and families, low-income population, people with chronic conditions, older adults, rural populations, LGBTQ+ populations, minority population / people of color, immigrants/undocumented, and people with disabilities.

## Exhibit 8.3 Community Insight Events: Important Health Issues

### What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?

Themes identified from 334 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
<b>A. Themes Identifying Service Needs</b>		
Health Care Services and Coverage	145	43%
Mental Health	81	24%
Social Services/Supports	62	19%
Substance Use Concerns	47	14%
Health Behaviors	43	13%
Housing	42	13%
Food Security	20	6%
Chronic Conditions	15	4%
Transportation	14	4%
Education	13	4%
Health Equity	10	3%
Social Isolation	8	2%
Communicable Disease	7	2%
Community Safety	7	2%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	7	2%
COVID-19	6	2%
Diversity and Inclusion	6	2%
Health Communication	4	1%
Community Collaboration	3	1%
Domestic Violence	3	1%
Employment	3	1%
Staffing	3	1%
Funding-Related	2	1%
Telehealth	1	0%
<b>B. Particular Populations Mentioned</b>		
Children and Families	17	5%
Low Income Population	15	4%
Older Adults	14	4%
Rural Populations	6	2%
LGBTQ+	5	1%
Minority Populations / People of Color	4	1%
Immigrants/Undocumented	2	1%
People with Disabilities	1	0%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.



**New or Emerging Health Issues.** Participants in community insight events were asked: Are you aware of any new or emerging health issues or concerns that people should know about? **Exhibit 8.4** lists the results.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying service needs included health care services and coverage, social services/supports, COVID-19, mental health, and substance use concerns.
- As shown in Part B, particular population mentioned included children and families, older adults, low-income population, immigrants/undocumented, LGBTQ+, women, minority populations / people of color, and rural populations.

## Exhibit 8.4 Community Insight Events: New or Emerging Health Issues

### Are you aware of any new or emerging health issues or concerns that people should know about?

Themes identified from 243 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
<b>A. Themes Identifying Service Needs</b>		
Health Care Services and Coverage	60	25%
Social Services/Supports	36	15%
COVID-19	34	14%
Mental Health	30	12%
Substance Use Concerns	23	9%
Housing	16	7%
Food Security	13	5%
Communicable Disease	12	5%
Education	12	5%
Chronic Conditions	11	5%
Health Behaviors	11	5%
Staffing	10	4%
Community Safety	9	4%
Health Communication	8	3%
Social Isolation	7	3%
Community Collaboration	5	2%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	5	2%
Diversity and Inclusion	4	2%
Health Equity	4	2%
Employment	3	1%
Transportation	3	1%
Volunteering	2	1%
Domestic Violence	1	0%
Telehealth	1	0%
Other (not-issue specified)	5	2%
<b>B. Particular Populations Mentioned</b>		
Children and Families	28	12%
Older Adults	16	7%
Low Income Population	9	4%
Immigrants/Undocumented	4	2%
LGBTQ+	4	2%
Women	3	1%
Minority Population/POC	1	0%
Rural Populations	1	0%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.





**Vulnerable Populations.** Participants in community insight events were asked: Are there any particular population groups who may be especially vulnerable for problems with their health or health care? **Exhibit 8.5** lists the results.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying service needs included health equity, health care services and coverage, housing, diversity, and inclusion, social services/supports, and mental health.
- As shown in Part B, particular populations mentioned included low-income population, older adults, children and families, minority population / people of color, LGBTQ+, immigrants / undocumented, women, people with disabilities, and rural populations.

## Exhibit 8.5 Community Insight Events: Vulnerable Populations

### Are there any particular population groups who may be especially vulnerable for problems with their health or health care?

Themes identified from 286 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
<b>A. Themes Identifying Service Needs</b>		
Health Equity	79	28%
Health Care Services and Coverage	40	14%
Housing	39	14%
Diversity and Inclusion	24	8%
Social Services/Supports	13	5%
Mental Health	13	5%
Substance Use Concerns	8	3%
Transportation	8	3%
Domestic Violence	6	2%
Community Safety	4	1%
Health Behaviors	4	1%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	4	1%
Social Isolation	4	1%
Chronic Conditions	3	1%
Education	3	1%
COVID-19	2	1%
Other (not-issue specified)	8	3%
<b>B. Particular Populations Mentioned</b>		
Low Income Population	67	23%
Older Adults	47	16%
Children and Families	47	16%
Minority Populations / People of Color	31	11%
LGBTQ+	23	8%
Immigrants/Undocumented	10	3%
Women	7	2%
People with Disabilities	5	2%
Rural Populations	4	1%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.



**Important Health Resources.** Participants in community insight events were asked: What do you see as the most important health resources available to support people in your community? **Exhibit 8.6** lists the results.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying community resources included health care services and coverage, social services/supports, education, food security, and mental health.
- As shown in Part B, particular populations mentioned included children and families, women, older adults, low-income population, people with disabilities, immigrants/undocumented, LGBTQ+, minority populations / people of color, and rural populations.

## Exhibit 8.6 Community Insight Events: Important Health Resources

### What do you see as the most important health resources available to support people in your community?

Themes identified from 274 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
<b>A. Themes Identifying Community Resources</b>		
Health Care Services and Coverage	135	49%
Social Services/Supports	91	33%
Education	15	5%
Food Security	14	5%
Mental Health	12	4%
Health Behaviors	10	4%
Housing	9	3%
Community Collaboration	8	3%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	8	3%
Transportation	7	3%
Employment	6	2%
Health Communication	6	2%
Communicable Disease	5	2%
Community Safety	4	1%
Diversity and Inclusion	4	1%
Substance Use Concerns	4	1%
Chronic Conditions	2	1%
Funding-Related	2	1%
Health Equity	2	1%
Volunteering	1	0%
Other (not-issue specified)	3	1%
<b>B. Particular Populations Mentioned</b>		
Children and Families	20	7%
Women	6	2%
Older Adults	5	2%
Low Income Population	4	1%
People with Disabilities	3	1%
Immigrants/Undocumented	1	0%
LGBTQ+	1	0%
Minority Populations / People of Color	1	0%
Rural Populations	1	0%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.



**Ideas for Working Together.** Participants in community insight events were asked: Do you have any ideas about how people or organizations could work together to promote better health or health care for the community? **Exhibit 8.7** lists the results.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying ideas for working together included community collaboration generally, health care services and coverage, social services/supports, health communication, and education.
- As shown in Part B, particular populations mentioned included children and families, older adults, low-income population, minority populations / people of color, rural populations, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and women.

## Exhibit 8.7 Community Insight Events: Ideas for Working Together

### Do you have any ideas about how people or organizations could work together to promote better health or health care for the community?

Themes identified from 205 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
<b>A. Themes Identifying Ideas for Working Together</b>		
Community Collaboration (generally)	61	30%
Health Care Services and Coverage	54	26%
Social Services/Supports	44	21%
Health Communication	35	17%
Education	28	14%
Mental Health	10	5%
Food Security	7	3%
Health Behaviors	6	3%
Health Equity	6	3%
Volunteering	6	3%
Funding-Related	5	2%
Housing	5	2%
Transportation	5	2%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	4	2%
Community Safety	3	1%
Social Isolation	3	1%
Telehealth	3	1%
Diversity and Inclusion	2	1%
Employment	2	1%
Staffing	2	1%
Communicable Disease	1	0%
COVID-19	1	0%
Substance Use Concerns	1	0%
Other (not-issue specified)	6	3%
<b>B. Particular Populations Mentioned</b>		
Children and Families	21	10%
Older Adults	6	3%
Low Income Population	3	1%
Minority Population/POC	2	1%
Rural Populations	2	1%
People with Disabilities	2	1%
LGBTQ+	1	0%
Women	1	0%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.

## 9. Prioritization & Reflection

### Community Insight on Priority Needs

All information presented thus far has been collected data and community input. As a culmination of the Compass process, three community stakeholder meetings were offered on March 12, 2024 at the Sparrow's Nest at the Abbey in Sparta, WI; on March 13, 2024 virtually; and on March 18, 2024 at the Sparrow's Nest at the Abbey. Two meetings were open to the public and one meeting was for people working within Monroe County coalitions. The agenda for all meetings was similar: to review the data, discuss community issues, prioritize community issues, and identify community assets.



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The stakeholder meetings were publicized through email invitations to stakeholders and a press release. Participants included representatives from local businesses, education, government, health care, and nonprofit organizations. A total of 22 individuals participated in the Monroe County meetings. The meetings were planned and facilitated by individuals from the Monroe County Health Department. Meetings that occurred in the Compass counties are listed in **Exhibit 9.1**.

### Exhibit 9.1 Community Stakeholder Meetings

County	Location	Date
<b>Buffalo</b>	<b>Roger Marten Community Center, Mondovi, WI</b>	<b>3/7/2024</b>
<b>Buffalo</b>	<b>Cochrane Fountain City School Auditorium, Fountain City, WI</b>	<b>3/19/2024</b>
<b>Buffalo</b>	<b>Virtual</b>	<b>3/22/2024</b>
Houston	ABLE, Inc, Caledonia, MN	3/26/2024
La Crosse	The Nature Place, La Crosse, WI	3/13/2024
La Crosse	Virtual	3/19/2024
La Crosse	Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library, West Salem, WI	3/21/2024
Monroe	Sparrow’s Nest at the Abbey, Sparta, WI	3/12/2024
Monroe	Virtual	3/13/2024
Monroe	Sparrow’s Nest at the Abbey, Sparta, WI	3/18/2024
Trempealeau	Gundersen Tri-County Hospital, Whitehall, WI	4/4/2024
Vernon	McIntosh Memorial Library, Viroqua, WI	4/18/2024
Vernon	Gundersen St. Joseph’s Hospital, Hillsboro, WI	4/23/2024

Source: Great Rivers United Way

Stakeholder meeting participants were presented with data from their county and given opportunities to give input on the top needs of the county. Presentations can be found online at [www.compassnow.org](http://www.compassnow.org).



Facilitators presented data through Power Point slides. Data was presented as infographics of the following topics: Maternal and Child’s Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity, Communicable Disease, Oral Health, Environment (built and quality of), Access to Care, Social and Economic Factors (includes housing, employment, education, transportation, and childcare), Injury and Violence, Substance Use, and Mental Health. The presentation can be found online at [www.compassnow.org](http://www.compassnow.org).



At three points during the presentation, participants were given opportunities to discuss the topics presented using the following prompts:

- Which health areas have the largest community impact?
- Which health areas have the most serious impact?
- Which health areas is our community ready to change?

At the end of the stakeholder meeting, participants were given the opportunity to rank community needs by the topics covered in the presentation: Access to Care, Aging and Disability, Built Environment, Dental Health, Education, Housing, Income/Employment, Infectious Disease, Injuries and Violence, Maternal and Child Health, Mental Health, Nutrition/Access to Food, Physical Activity, Quality of Environment, and Substance Use. Participants were instructed to mark the three topics they felt were the most critical needs or issues. The top five health needs/issues are shown in **Exhibit 9.2**.

## Exhibit 9.2 Buffalo County Top Needs

Topic
1. Youth Dating/Sexual Violence
2. Mental Health
3. Childcare Access
4. Lyme Disease
5. Healthcare Access

Source: Monroe County Health Department

## Reflection on Top 5 Needs

The following is a review of data relating to the top 5 issues identified as priorities for Buffalo County. As we reflect on these top needs, we also recognize that the issues identified affect some groups more than others. While this report is intended as a broad overview of the status of the health of the region, it is just a starting point in exploring how best to respond to our health needs. Using a health equity lens is important in understanding how vulnerable groups such as those who are low-income, LGBT+, have a disability, or are a racial or ethnic minority are impacted differently and the root causes of those differences.

## Youth Dating/Sexual Violence

Buffalo County stakeholders identified youth dating violence/sexual violence as a top need.

Section 4 of this report covers data on youth risk. Section 6 of this report covers data related to concerns for vulnerable people. Among Compass Survey respondents, 59% were moderately or very concerned about sexual abuse or sexual violence.

**Exhibit 9.3** shows injury, violence, and safety data shared at the stakeholder meetings. According to the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) report, 15% of all students experienced sexual or dating violence. Looking at just female students, nearly 1 in 4 (24%) reported experiencing sexual or dating violence.



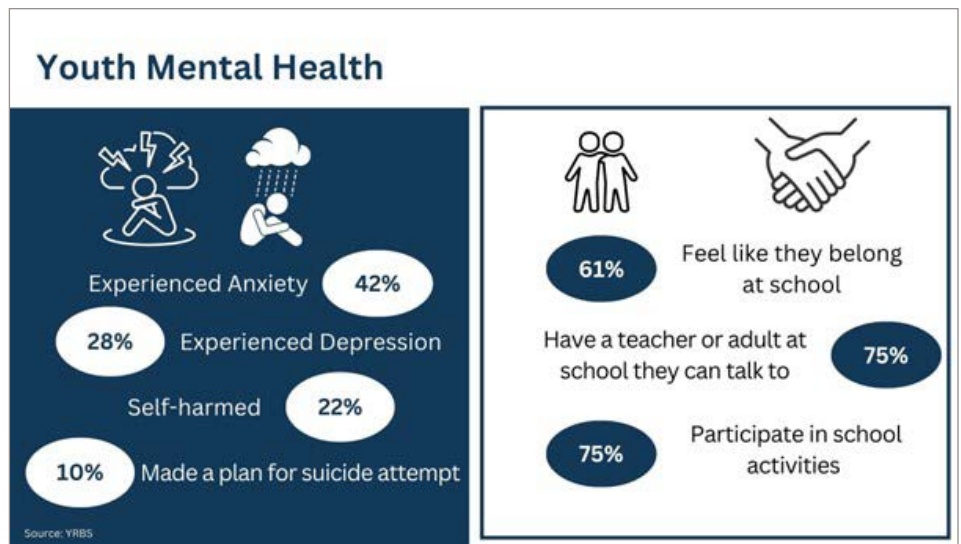
**Exhibit 9.3 Injury & Violence Slide**

## Mental Health

Buffalo County stakeholders identified mental health as a top need. Mental health in general was an overarching theme in stakeholder meetings. Specific concerns discussed were the increase of people rating their overall mental health as fair or poor, fair/poor access to mental health care, fair/poor ability to pay for mental health care, the lack of mental health providers, and youth mental health.

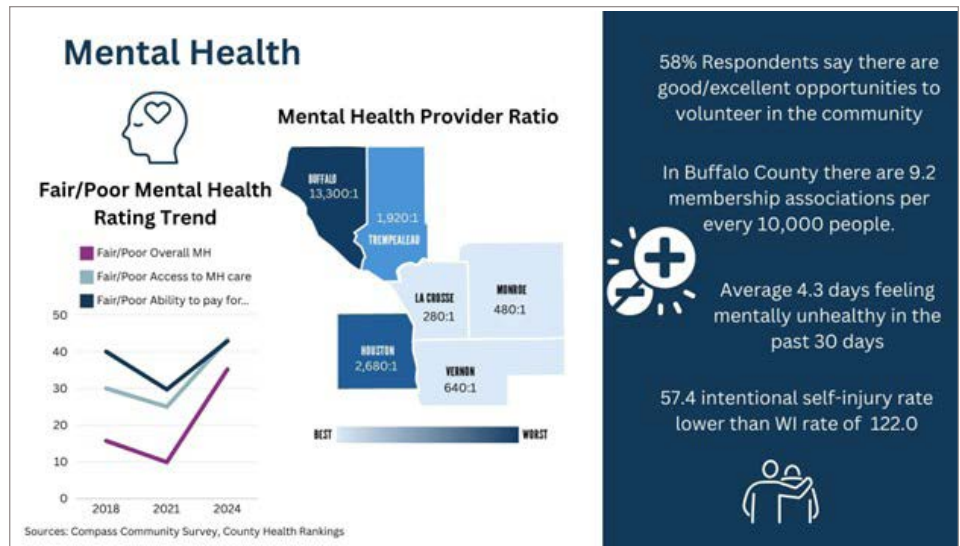
Section 4 of this report covers youth mental health data, survey respondents' rating of their mental health, and survey respondents' level of concern about mental health and mental health stigma. Section 5 of this report covers data on the availability of mental health providers and survey respondents' rating of their ability to access and pay for mental health care. Infographic data from the stakeholder meeting presentation supporting this need follow.

**Exhibit 9.4** shows youth mental health data. Youth report experiencing mental health issues. In the 2020-2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey taken in high schools in Buffalo County youth were asked a series of questions regarding mental health. Nearly half answered that they had experienced either anxiety, depression, self-harm, and/or suicidal ideation in the past year. Further analysis shows higher percentages of students who are low-income or identify as LGBT+ experiencing mental health problems. For more information on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, please visit Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction online at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/yrbs>.



**Exhibit 9.4: Youth Mental Health Slide**

Over time, survey responses rating people’s overall mental health, access to mental health care, and the ability to pay for mental health care have varied. There were improved ratings from 2018 to 2021, but worse ratings in 2024. While the Compass survey is considered a snapshot in time and can’t be used to make general conclusions about the whole population, it is a concern that an increasing proportion of respondents have rated their overall mental health as fair or poor and at the same time rated increasingly fair or poor access to care. **Exhibit 9.5** is a slide of mental health data from the Buffalo County stakeholder meeting.



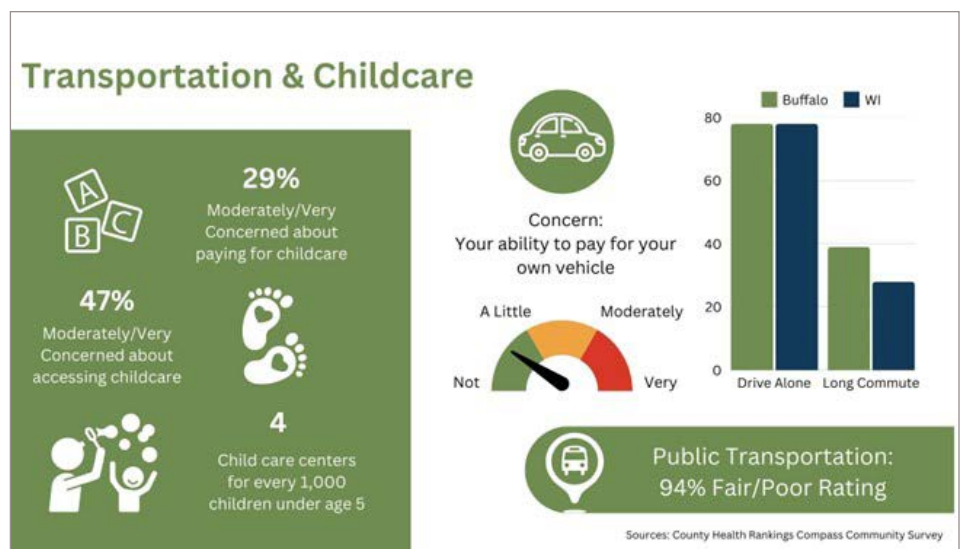
**Exhibit 9.5: Mental Health Slide**

## Childcare Access

Buffalo County stakeholders identified childcare access as a top need. Stakeholders were concerned about the accessibility and affordability of childcare in the county.

Section 6 of this report covers concerns about meeting household needs including childcare access and affordability.

**Exhibit 9.6** shows the childcare data shared at the Buffalo County stakeholder meetings.

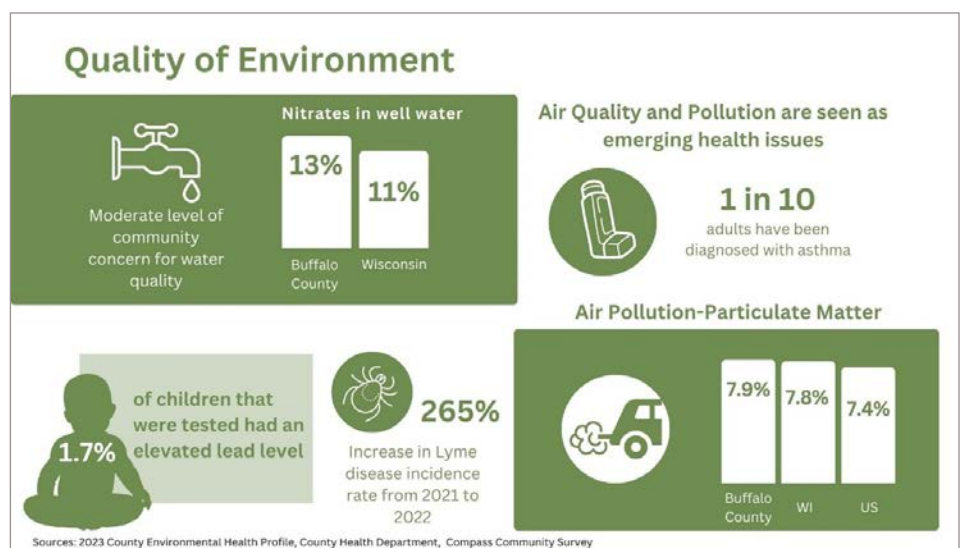


**Exhibit 9.6: Transportation & Childcare Slide**

## Lyme Disease

Buffalo County stakeholders identified Lyme Disease as a top need. The increase in Lyme Disease raised concerns for the need to increase awareness and monitoring of incidence rates.

Section 7 of this report covers Physical Environment and Safety. While only 19% of survey respondents were moderately or very concerned about disease outbreak, stakeholders reviewing data on specific environmental concerns (**Exhibit 9.7**) noted the 265% increase in Lyme disease incidence from 2021 to 2022. The latest data showed Buffalo County had a much higher Lyme Disease incidence rate per 100,000 people of 164.3 compared to the Wisconsin average rate of 90.0.



**Exhibit 9.7: Quality of Environment Slide**

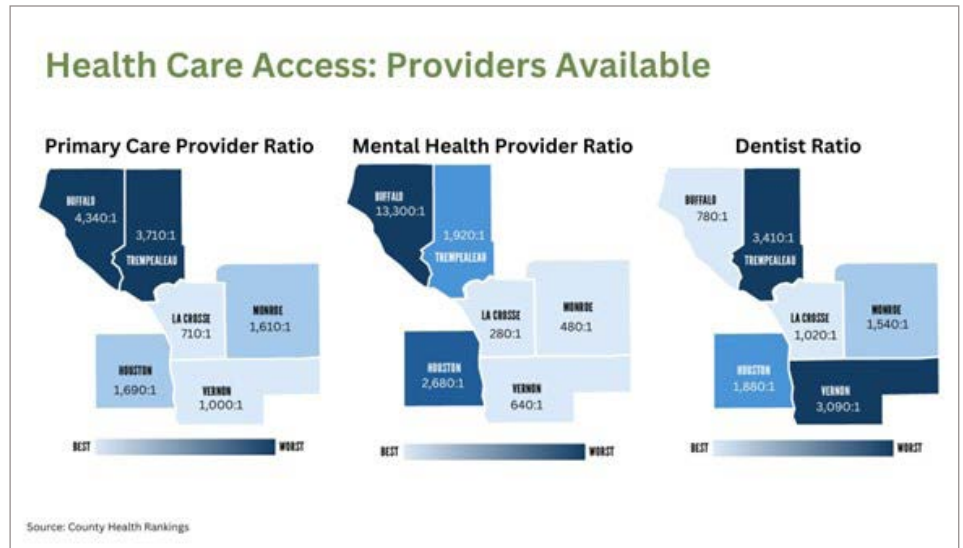
## Healthcare Access

Buffalo County stakeholders identified healthcare access as a top need. With a major healthcare provider closing its doors in 2024, stakeholders were concerned about people living in the community being able to access basic healthcare.

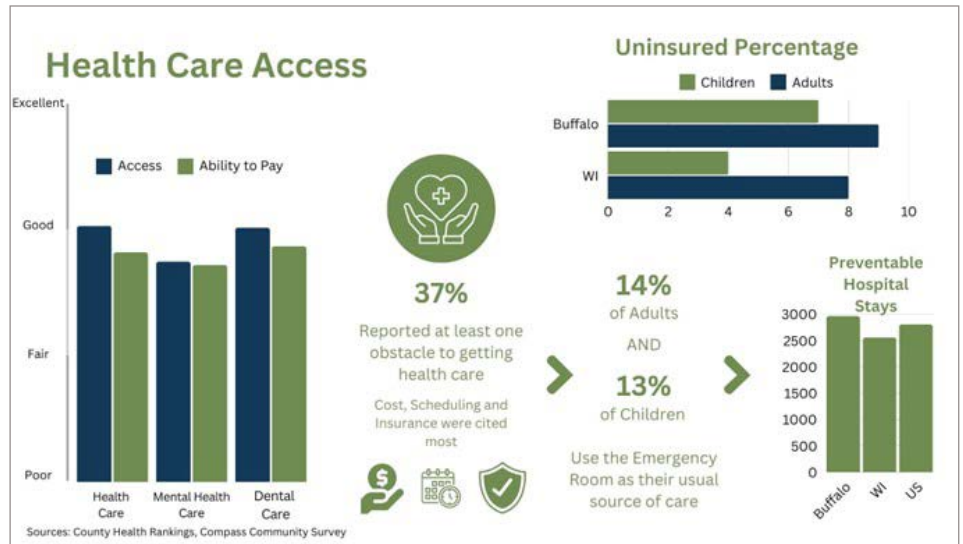
Section 5 of this report covers Health Care Access and Utilization data. Infographic data from the stakeholder meeting presentation supporting this need follow.

**Exhibit 9.8** is the Buffalo County stakeholder meeting slide showing the ratio of population for every 1 provider for primary healthcare, mental health care, and dental care. As shown by the darker shade of blue, Buffalo County has the most people per primary care provider than any other county included in this report.

**Exhibit 9.9** is the Buffalo County stakeholder meeting slide showing other data related to health care access. More than 1 in every 3 survey respondents reported at least one obstacle to getting health care when they needed and Buffalo County had a higher rate of preventable hospital stays than the state of Wisconsin and the country.



**Exhibit 9.8: Health Care Access: Providers Available Slide**



**Exhibit 9.9: Health Care Access Slide**

## Community Assets

An important step in addressing community needs is identifying community assets. Buffalo County stakeholders were asked to identify community assets that could be leveraged to help address the community's top needs. **Exhibit 9.10** are the organizations, groups, programs, and characteristics identified as community assets. The list is a starting point and not exhaustive.

### Exhibit 9.10: Community Asset List

- ADRC
- Alma Library
- Alma School District
- Buffalo County Sherrif's Department
- Buffalo County Health Department
- Buffalo County Health and Human Services
- Buffalo County Partnership Council
- CFC School District
- Churches
- Fountain City Police Department
- Gilmanton School District
- Gundersen Health System
- Hope4U Organization
- Mayo Healthcare System
- Mondovi Library
- Mondovi Police Department
- Mondovi School District
- UW-Extension
- WIC Program



## Appendix A - Data Sources

### Community Demographics (Sections 1, 2, and 6)

- Community Health Solutions analysis of demographic estimates (2023) and population projections (2028) from ESRI.

### County Health Rankings (Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

- University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>:
- [Full Rankings for Wisconsin](#)
- [Full Rankings for Minnesota](#)
- [County Health Rankings Model](#)
- [Measures and Data Sources](#)

### Leading Causes of Death (Section 3)

- [Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health \(WISH\) data query system \(2021 data\)](#)
- [2020 Minnesota Department of Health County Health Tables](#)

### Maternal and Infant Health (Section 3)

- [Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health \(WISH\) data query system](#)
- [2020 Minnesota Department of Health County Health Tables](#)

### Cancer Screening Rates (Section 5)

- [Wisconsin data from Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative, Interactive County Cancer Data Dashboard.](#)
- [Minnesota data from National Cancer Institute State Cancer Profiles](#)

### Youth Risk Profile (Section 4)

- [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, County-Level Youth Risk Behavior Survey Reports, 2020-2021 School Year](#)
- [Minnesota Student Survey County Tables, 2021-22 School Year, Minnesota Student Survey Interagency Team: Minnesota Department of Education Minnesota Department of Health Minnesota Department of Human Services Minnesota Department of Public Safety](#)

### ALICE Households (Section 6)

- [United for ALICE National Research Center, Accessed September 2023.](#)

### Child Services Cases (Section 6)

- [Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Report Annual Report for Calendar Year 2021 to the Governor and Legislature Wis. Stat. s. 48.47\(8\). Also, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Out-of-Home Care \(Otte\) Dashboard.](#)
- CPS Referrals and Child Abuse Cases for Minnesota were not included in this report as definitions for cases and referrals in Minnesota may vary from Wisconsin definitions.
- For more information on Minnesota Maltreatment data, visit <https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/edocs/child-protection-foster-care-adoption/>

### Community Survey (Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)



- Community Health Solutions analysis of survey responses submitted by community residents in June – September, 2023. Raw survey data provided to Great Rivers United Way under separate cover.

### Community Insight Events (Section 8)

- Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events. Original statements provided to Great Rivers United Way under separate cover.



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