

LIFE STUDY

LEADING INDICATORS FOR EXCELLENCE **BROWN COUNTY**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 2016
A COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT FOR BROWN COUNTY, WISCONSIN

LIFE Study

Purpose and Opportunity

Vibrant communities thrive when people from all sectors are knowledgeable and informed about the community as a whole and are willing to contribute to its progress. The Leading Indicators for Excellence (LIFE) Study, sponsored by the Brown County United Way, the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, and the Greater Green Bay Chamber, is a tool for this work. By providing an assessment of the quality of life in Brown County, leaders and residents can find common ground and align resources to advance community goals.

The purpose of the LIFE Study is to measure progress using leading indicators of measurement for 10 sectors of life in the community; identify areas of concern and issues the community can address; and provide secondary data and community member perceptions for analysis purposes. The study becomes even more meaningful if it fosters community conversations that help align and allocate resources to better the community and achieve greater impact. The study offers a comprehensive, timely synopsis of data, surveys, and expert analysis on key areas of community health from a wide variety of objective, reputable, original and published sources.

The 2016 Study, a successor to the 2011 LIFE Study, is a continuation of a concerted effort to build a base of knowledge about our community and measure its progress over time. The 2016 Brown County LIFE Study includes many indicators explored in the 2011 LIFE Study, allowing the community to benchmark itself on progress. It also incorporates new indicators that provide additional insight into the quality of life in Brown County.

The 2011 LIFE Study has remained a dynamic and powerful resource over the past five years, serving as a catalyst for community initiatives across sectors and informing the work of nonprofits and their approach to serving the community. The leading indicators report on progress achieved in all 10 sectors of the Brown County community. A number of significant larger-scale initiatives followed the release of the 2011 LIFE Study, including the following:

- A Brown County Vision 2020 conference hosted by the Bay Area Community Council that subsequently convened discussion groups around the major topic areas.
- Achieve Brown County, a cradle-to-career initiative that rallies its efforts around critical indicators of success.
- The Brown County Child Abuse and Neglect Task Force, which developed a community plan to reduce and ultimately prevent child maltreatment.
- An 18-month regional initiative to use quality improvement science to address root causes of poverty in Northeastern Wisconsin called the Poverty Outcomes and Improvement Network Team (POINT).
- A new Field of Interest fund at the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation to support Arts and Culture.
- An impact strategy developed by The Women's Fund, a fund of the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, to support girls ages 9-15.
- Connections for Mental Wellness, a collaboration to create better access and an improved system; decrease stigma of mental illness; create a healthier community; and increase funding for community mental health services.

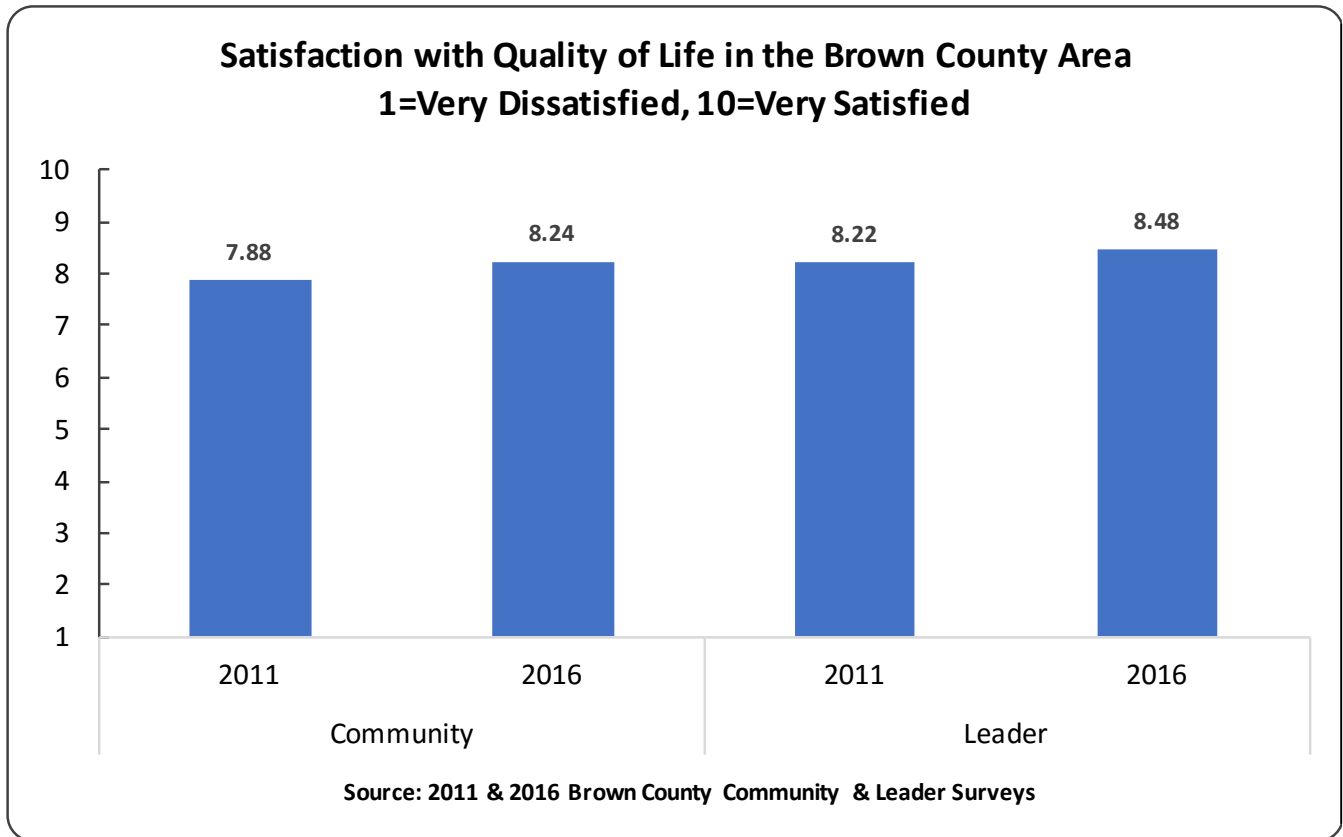
The LIFE Study paints a broad picture of the community from different angles and presents selected key data. This research provides insight into the assets and challenges of the community but not solutions to its needs: The sponsors have not offered recommendations to addressing issues presented in the study but have identified leading indicators to help the community measure progress. Now, it's up to the community to use this information to continue to impact the quality of life here.

Additional information available at

www.lifestudy.info

Overall Satisfaction with Quality of Life

LIFE Study Survey Data



Overview: Members of the community and community leaders were asked to rate the quality of life in Brown County on a 1-10 scale, where 10 corresponds to the highest level of satisfaction. This question was asked in both 2011 and 2016.

Among community members and leaders, perceptions of the quality of life improved from 2011 to 2016.

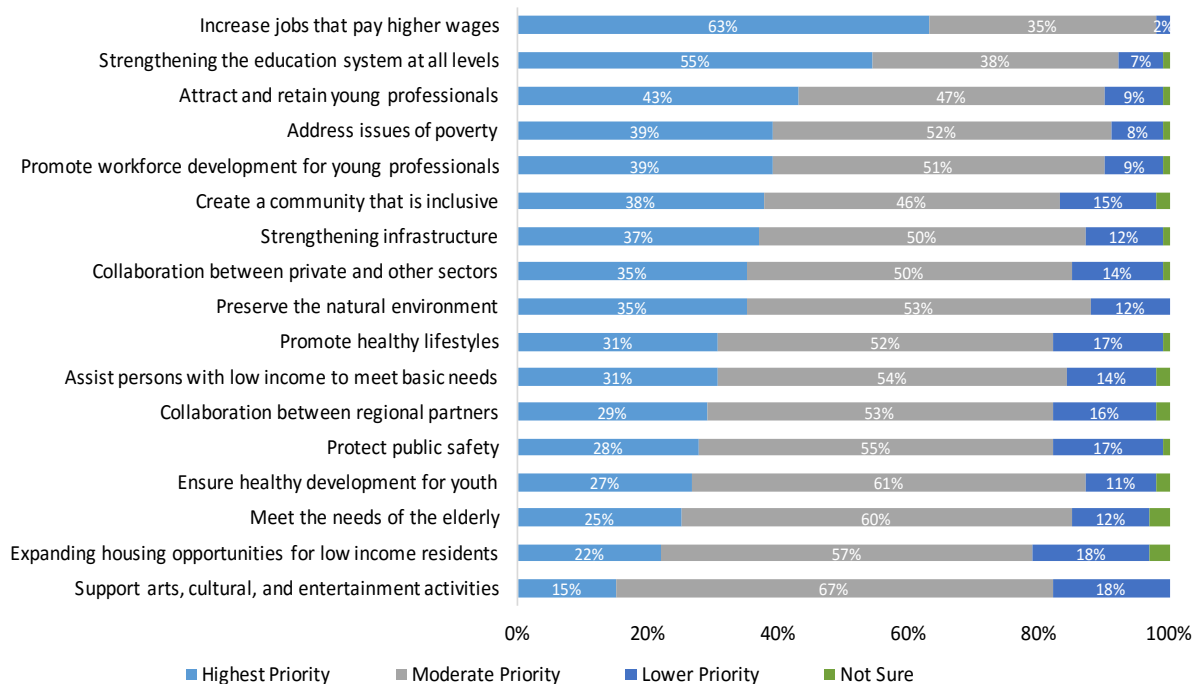
In 2011, the average level of satisfaction with the quality of life was 7.88 among community members. In 2016, that number increased to 8.24. It is worth noting that an increase of 0.36 from 2011 to 2016 is quite large given that the scale runs from 1 to 10.

Among community leaders, perceptions about the quality of life improved as well. In 2011, the average rating among community leaders was 8.22, and in 2016 that number increased to 8.48. Again, an increase of 0.26 from 2011 to 2016 is fairly large given the scale.

Priorities of Leaders

LIFE Study Survey Data

Please Indicate Whether Leaders Should Place a Low or High Priority on Each of the Following Issues.



Source: 2016 Brown County Leader Survey

Overview: A number of issues were seen as very high priorities among community leaders in the 2016 LIFE Study survey.

Sixty-three percent of community leaders said increasing jobs that pay higher wages should be a high priority; 35% of leaders said this should be a moderate priority.

Fifty-five percent of community leaders said strengthening the education system at all levels should be a high priority; an additional 38% of leaders considered it a moderate priority.

Attracting and retaining young professionals also garnered attention: 43% of leaders said this should be a high priority, and 47% said it should be a moderate priority.

Addressing issues of poverty was also seen as important by many community leaders, with 39% of leaders saying this should be a high priority, and 52% saying it should be a moderate priority.

Brown County Demographics

Census Estimates

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Value</i>
Race/Ethnicity	
Hispanic	8.3%
White (not Hispanic)	81.8%
Black/African American	2.4%
American Indian	2.5%
Asian	3.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.04%
More than 2 races	1.9%
Unemployment Rate	4.1%
Poverty Rate	12.4%
Median Household Income	\$53,392
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	28.3%
Has Health Insurance	92.6%
Has a Disability	11.6%
Median Rent	\$696
Median Home Sale Price	\$151,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015

Snapshot of Key Findings

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Concerns</i>
LIFE of Arts and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positive ratings for arts and cultural opportunities ○ Increased revenue in local arts and cultural organizations in recent years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concern about arts and cultural opportunities for youth ○ Constant pressure on arts and cultural organizations to fundraise
LIFE in Our Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Population growth ○ High levels of civic involvement ○ Strong financial health reported among local nonprofits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perceptions about being able to impact decisions of community leaders ○ Perceptions about the impact of growing diversity ○ Representation of women in local government
A Healthy LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decline in teen birth rate since 2010 ○ Decrease in the hospitalization rate due to alcohol or drugs ○ Health care quality rated very positively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child poverty rate has remained high in Brown County ○ Large portions of the population are overweight or obese ○ Concern about promoting responsible alcohol use by residents
LIFE at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positive rating for Brown County as a place for people with disabilities ○ Positive rating for Brown County as a place that cares for vulnerable populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sizeable number of people reported being unable to obtain affordable child care ○ Death rate due to Alzheimer's disease exceeded the state average
LIFE of Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved ACT scores and high school graduation ○ More adults in the community with experience with higher education ○ Positive view of quality of educational opportunities in Brown County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More pronounced achievement gap in Brown County compared to the state ○ Concern about the disproportionate suspensions of minority students ○ Rising costs of higher education
LIFE in our Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positive rating for the quality of the natural environment ○ Positive rating for the quality of drinking water ○ Number of days with good quality air increased from 2014 to 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concern about the extent to which the area addresses emerging environmental issues ○ Concern about the quality of rivers and lakes ○ Number of people commuting to work alone remains high and has increased slightly
LIFE of Recreation and Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overwhelmingly positive assessments of recreation and leisure opportunities ○ Increase in direct visitor spending over time ○ Variety of sporting events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concern the local workforce can't keep pace with growth in tourism in the coming years
A Safe LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decline in crime rates through 2014 ○ Positive rating for local law enforcement ○ Local schools seen as safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concern among community leaders about domestic abuse and violence at home ○ Juvenile arrest rate higher than state average
LIFE of Self-Sufficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase in median home prices ○ Decline in the number of home foreclosures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Housing cost burden ○ Increase in the number of children identified as homeless in local public schools ○ Disparities in hunger by income level ○ Little improvement to poverty rate over time
LIFE at Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decline in unemployment rate ○ Cost of living remains low ○ Diverse local economy ○ Public support for revitalization efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wages lower than the state average within some sectors of the economy ○ Need to continue to innovate to ensure economic growth and development

Brown County Strengths

Strengths	<i>Broadly Recognized Assets of Brown County</i>
Quality of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education system viewed very positively by surveyed community members and leaders
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Growth in direct visitor spending ○ Variety of amenities for tourists
Entertainment Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Variety of new and affordable events for the public
Safety in the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brown County widely viewed as a safe community by community members and leaders ○ Decline in crime rates
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cost of living has remained low relative to the U.S. average
Civic Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High levels of civic participation by community members
Outdoor Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diversity of amenities and activities for residents to enjoy ○ Positive assessments of recreation and leisure activities by community members
Place for Children and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brown County widely viewed as an excellent place for children and families by surveyed community members and leaders
Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quality of local health care is rated very positively by community members
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community and leader support for economic development and revitalization ○ Variety of new projects underway that will attract tourists and spur economic growth

Brown County Opportunities for Improvement

Opportunity Area	<i>Issues to Consider</i>
Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disparities in health insurance coverage by race/ethnicity ○ Disparities in low birthweight births and late prenatal care by race/ethnicity ○ High rates of obesity and overweight status
Unhealthy Lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The promotion of responsible alcohol use ○ Rates of binge drinking much higher than the national average
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to attract and maintain high-paying jobs ○ Retention of young professionals in the area ○ Ensuring a match between area jobs and education/training opportunities
Self-Sufficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Differences in homeownership rates by race/ethnicity ○ Increased number of homeless students identified in public schools ○ Disparities in concerns about hunger by income level ○ Concerns among surveyed community members and leaders about meeting the overall needs of the poor ○ Large differences in poverty rates by race/ethnicity ○ Differences in the sense of financial stability by race/ethnicity
Inclusiveness of the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Belief by about one-third of surveyed community members that the growing diversity was having a negative impact ○ Divergence in the views of surveyed community members and leaders about the impact of diversity and the extent to which Brown County was a good place for people of diverse cultural backgrounds
Water and Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Surveyed community members are concerned about the extent to which the area has been addressing emerging environmental issues ○ Mixed views by surveyed community members about the quality of rivers and lakes in Brown County
Political Efficacy and Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Majority of surveyed community members did not believe they could impact the decisions of community leaders ○ Gap in political representation of women on the County Board ○ Lack of electoral competition in county supervisor elections
Support for Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Burdensome costs of child care for many families ○ More arts and cultural opportunities for children
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disparities in achievement when comparing race, income, and disability status ○ Procedures for the suspension of students, as minority groups were much more likely to be suspended

Leading Indicators

Leading Indicator Description: A leading indicator is an important data point or “marker” that can provide measurement of progress related to a community condition. The 2016 LIFE Study has identified data that reflect key conditions in the community, which are called “Leading Indicators.” In some cases, leading indicators represent data that might be predictive or “leading” in that sense. In other cases, leading indicators contain information that is a significant (or leading) marker of progress (or lack of progress). Each leading indicator must meet a number of standards: quality, availability, and understandability.

LIFE of Arts and Culture

- Annual Tickets Sold at Nonprofit Arts Organizations
- Revenues of Arts-Related Charities
- Employment in Arts-Related Field

LIFE in Our Community

- Voter Participation Rates
- Uncontested Seats in County Supervisor Elections
- Number of Neighborhood Organizations

A Healthy LIFE

- County Health Rankings
- Child Poverty Rate
- Births to Mothers who Obtained Prenatal Care
- Percent of Adults Binge Drinking in the Past Month
- Percent of Adults who are Obese or Overweight

LIFE at Home

- Annual Childcare Costs per Median Family Income
- Older Adult Poverty Rate
- Percent of Births to Mothers with less than High School Education

LIFE of Learning

- Attendance Rates of Fifth-grade Students
- Reading Proficiency of Third-grade Students
- Math Achievement by Eighth-grade Students
- High School Graduation Rate
- Library Circulation per Capita

LIFE in Our Natural Environment

- Percent of Good Air Quality Days
- Miles of Impaired Surface Waters

LIFE of Recreation and Leisure

- Miles of Bike and Hiking Trails
- Park Acreage
- Total Estimated Annual Expenditures Made by Visitors

A Safe LIFE

- Rate of Child Abuse or Neglect Reports
- Juvenile Arrest Rate
- Rate of Reported Domestic Violence Incidents
- Violent and Property Crime Rates
- Alcohol-related Crashes and Deaths

LIFE of Self-Sufficiency

- Percent of Households that are Cost Burdened
- Number of FoodShare Recipients
- Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Rates of Public Schools

LIFE at Work

- Cost of Living Index
- Income Distribution
- Employment in Manufacturing Sector
- Unemployment Rate
- Dollar Value of Building Permits

LIFE of Arts and Culture

Overview

The availability of arts and cultural opportunities is an important component of community life. According to data from the 2016 community survey (shown in Figure 1), 67% of community members said that arts and cultural opportunities were good or excellent in Brown County.

Community leaders held similar views on this issue. In the 2016 leader survey, 63% of leaders rated the availability of arts and cultural opportunities as good or excellent.

Many of the arts and cultural opportunities in the Brown County area are provided by local organizations. According to Figure 2, the financial performance of large public charity arts organizations improved significantly between 2011 and 2015. Of the 63 registered arts-related public charities reported by the National Center for Charitable Statistics in Brown County in 2015, the average revenue was \$394,653 annually compared to an average of \$183,451 reported in 2011.

It is worth noting that while the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the number of persons employed in arts-related careers has remained level between 2011 and 2015, local experts advise that typical industry reports of employment within a sector may not apply well to the arts sector. Many artists hold different full-time jobs while pursuing creative activities on a part-time basis.

Ratings for the leading indicators in this section are shown in Figure 3. There has been improvement in the number of tickets sold at arts and cultural organizations. In addition, the revenues of arts-related public charities in the area have improved over the past several years. Finally, the number of people employed in arts-related fields in the Brown County area has remained fairly stable since 2011.

Figure 1

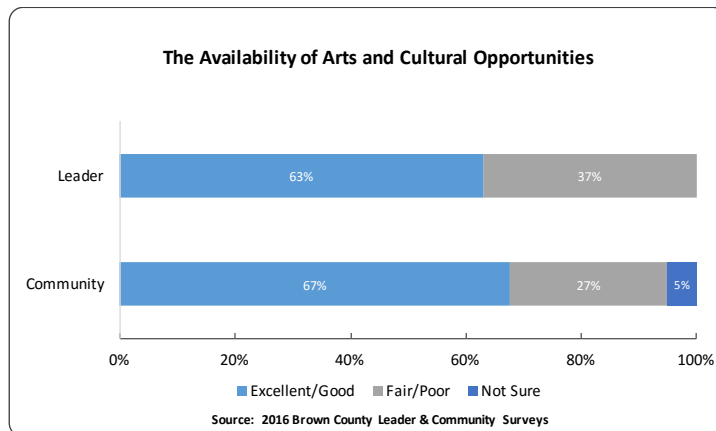


Figure 2

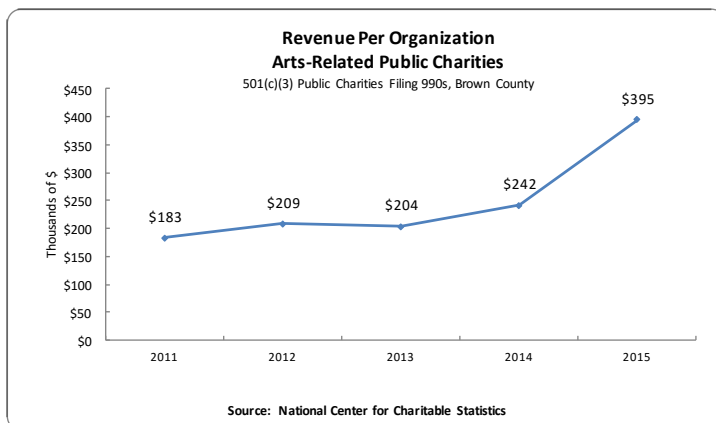


Figure 3

Current	Trend	Indicator
▷	△	Tickets sold at arts and cultural organizations
▷	△	Revenues of arts-related public charities
▷	▷	Employment in arts-related field

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

LIFE in Our Community

Overview

In the 2011 LIFE Study, Brown County was characterized by a high level of civic engagement and a strong sense of community. Those trends have continued in 2016. Rates of participation in a variety of civic and community activities have remained quite high since the 2011 study, as Figure 1 illustrates. According to data from the 2016 community survey, 82% of people in Brown County reported donating money to a charitable service or volunteer organization other than a church and 71% of people helped at church, a school, or a charitable organization. It is also worth noting that the number of neighborhood associations has increased in the area. As of 2015, there were 42 active neighborhood associations in the City of Green Bay, which is an increase from 35 associations in 2011.

A number of important changes have occurred since the publication of the 2011 LIFE Study. One noteworthy change has been the overall population growth in Brown County and the growing racial and ethnic diversity of the population. A summary of demographic changes in Brown County since 2000 is shown in Figure 3 (data from U.S. Census Bureau). The size of the Hispanic population, for example, has grown considerably in Brown County over the past 15 years. Between 2000 and 2015, the size of the Hispanic population increased by about 146%. A number of other groups have seen large increases in their population size. Since 2000, for example, the size of the Asian population has increased by about 63%.

The 2016 community survey indicated that views about the impact of the area's growing diversity are mixed, as shown in Figure 2. In 2016, 33% of community members said that the growing cultural diversity was having a positive impact, while 30% of people said that it was having a negative impact. Among leaders, about 60% said that the growing diversity in Brown County was having a positive impact. Thirteen percent of leaders in 2016 said that growing diversity was having a negative impact. Thus, there is a divergence between community members and leaders on the impact of growing cultural diversity in Brown County.

Ratings for the leading indicators in this section are shown in Figure 4. Overall, voter participation rates and the number of neighborhood associations have seen improvements. Local electoral competition, as measured by the number of uncontested County Supervisor seats, has been declining in recent years.

Figure 1

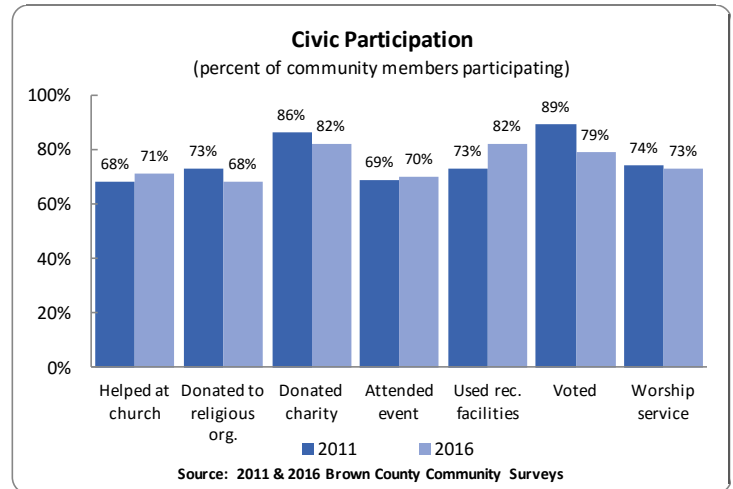


Figure 2

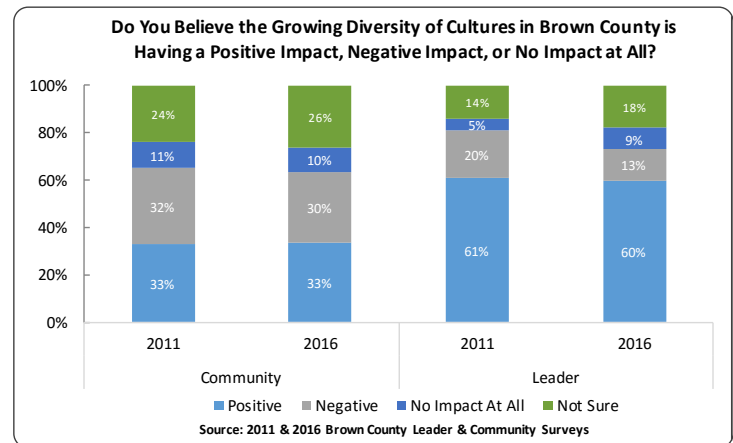


Figure 3

Category	2000		2010		2015		% Change '00-'15
	Pop.	Percent	Pop.	Percent	Pop.	Percent	
Hispanic	8,694	3.82%	17,985	7.25%	21,383	8.26%	145.95%
White (not Hispanic)	203,180	89.39%	207,874	83.82%	211,604	81.79%	4.15%
Black/African American	2,688	1.18%	5,311	2.14%	6,173	2.39%	129.65%
American Indian	5,278	2.32%	5,971	2.41%	6,416	2.48%	21.56%
Asian	5,049	2.22%	6,700	2.70%	8,221	3.18%	62.82%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	80	0.04%	88	0.04%	101	0.04%	26.25%
More than 2 races	2,329	1.02%	4,077	1.64%	4,820	1.86%	106.96%
Total	227,298	100%	248,006	100%	258,718	100%	13.82%

Figure 4

Current	Trend	Indicator
△	△	Voter participation rates
▽	▽	Uncontested seats in County Supervisor elections
△	△	Number of neighborhood organizations

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

LIFE in Our Community

A Healthy LIFE

Overview

Since the 2011 LIFE Study, community members and leaders have maintained very positive views about the overall quality of health care in the area, which is shown in Figure 1.

In 2011, 86% of leaders rated Brown County's health care quality as excellent or good. In 2016, that number increased slightly to 89%. Among community members, there were also exceptionally positive assessments about health care quality in the area. In 2011, 86% of community members rated the quality of health care as excellent or good. That number was very similar in 2016 (82%).

A number of challenges still exist. In 2014, Brown County's rate of binge drinking among adults (26%) was higher than the national average (16%). Brown County's rate of binge drinking increased from 23% of adults in 2011 to 26% of adults in 2014.

When asked to rate Brown County as a place that promotes the responsible use of alcohol by residents, community members had mixed views. In 2011, 42% of people rated Brown County as excellent or good on this issue.

At the same time, 52% of people rated Brown County as fair or poor on promoting responsible alcohol use. Those numbers remained nearly identical in the 2016 survey, as Figure 2 illustrates.

Figure 3 provides an overview of the leading indicators for the health sector. There has been improvement in the county's overall health ranking. A number of indicators remained at a fair or poor rating. There has been little change in the number of births to mothers who obtained prenatal care.

In addition, three indicators, the child poverty rate, binge drinking rate among adults, and the percent of adults who are obese or overweight, have either remained at the same level or have worsened over the past several years.

Figure 1

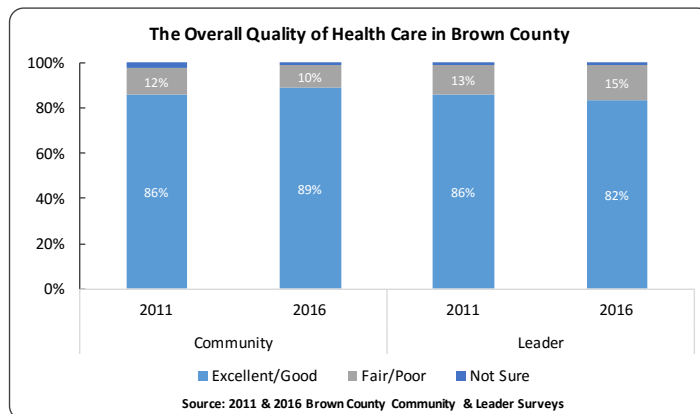


Figure 2

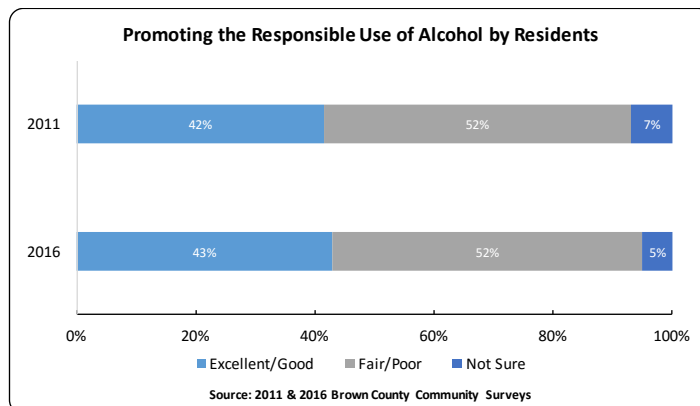


Figure 3

Current	Trend	Indicator
▽	△	County health rankings
▷	▷	Births to mothers who obtained prenatal care
▽	▽	Child poverty rate
▽	▽	Percent of adults binge drinking in the past month
▽	▽	Percent of adults who are obese or overweight

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

LIFE at Home

Overview

There were 60,907 children under the age of 18 in Brown County in 2014, according to the U.S. Census. In 2014, the most recent year shown in Figure 1, the percentage of children living in poverty was 18% in Brown County. That is the same as the percentage of children in poverty in Wisconsin as a whole, but slightly less than the U.S. average of 22%. There has been a slight increase in the child poverty rate in Brown County over the past several years, from 15% in 2011 to 18% in 2014.

Poverty rates vary by marital and household status. For example, the poverty rate for single parent households was higher than the rate for two-parent households in both 2011 and 2014.

Both leaders and community members have fairly positive views about care for vulnerable people in the area (e.g., elderly, individuals with disabilities, children). In 2016, 64% of community members and 62% of leaders said that Brown County did an excellent or good job of caring for vulnerable people. About 30% of community members and leaders rated Brown County as fair or poor on this issue. The trends were very similar when comparing community members' views in 2011 and 2016. Among leaders, the most notable change was that fewer leaders rated the area as good or excellent in 2016 (62%) compared to 2011 (73%).

Figure 3 provides an overview of the leading indicators for the home sector. Overall, data on the leading indicators reveal a high level of stability over time. For example, 13% of all births in Brown County were to women who did not have a high school degree in 2014. In 2010, that number was 15%.

Another leading indicator is the cost of childcare as a percent of median family income. In 2015, the approximate cost of caring for an infant was \$9,025 annually (13.2% of median income for families with children, which was \$68,629 according to the U.S. Census). A child age 3-5 averaged \$7,875 (11.5% of median income). In 2010, infant care cost 13.2% of median income while care for children aged 3-5 was proportionately lower, at 11.0% of median income. The number of older (65+) adults living in poverty has also remained fairly stable (approximately 7% over the past several years).

Figure 1

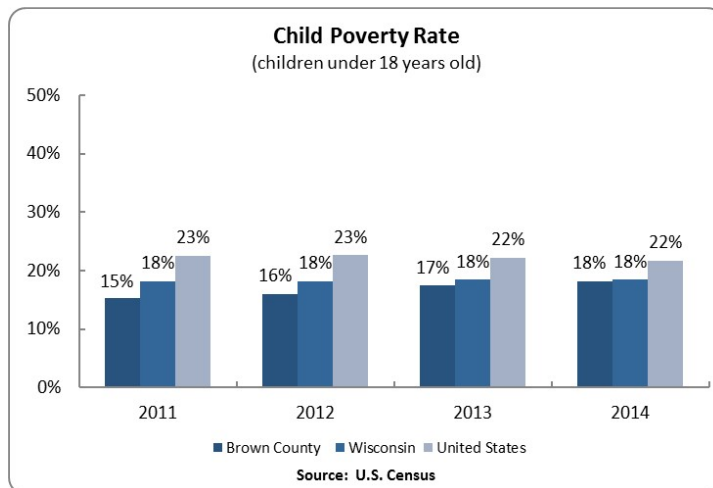


Figure 2

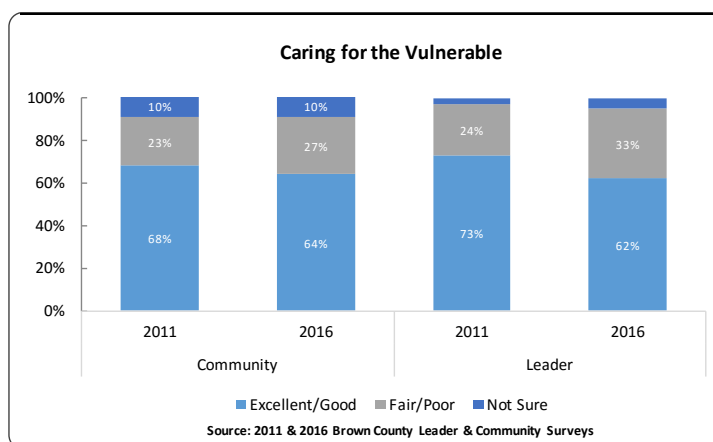


Figure 3

Current	Trend	Indicator
▷	▷	Percent of births to mothers with less than a high school education
▽	▷	Annual childcare costs as a percent of median family income
▽	▷	Older adult poverty rate

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

LIFE of Learning

Overview

There are a number of positive features of Brown County's education system and a number of potential concerns.

According to data from the community and leader surveys, 73% of community members reported that the overall quality of public K-12 education was excellent/good in 2016 (Figure 1). This is nearly identical to the data collected in 2011.

The percentage of leaders in Brown County who rated the quality of public K-12 education as excellent/good (in both 2011 and 2016) was greater than that of community members at 87%.

There are some important gaps in achievement in Brown County when students are broken down by their economic status. According to data from 2015-2016 (shown in Figure 2), only 27.95% of economically disadvantaged 3rd grade students were proficient on the English/Language Arts portion of the Wisconsin Forward Exam. Among those students who were not economically disadvantaged, the percentage who were proficient was significantly higher at 49.92%. The achievement gap in Brown County is greater than that of Wisconsin.

Figure 3 provides a look at the five leading indicators for the LIFE of Learning section. Three of the indicators (attendance rates of 5th grade students, reading proficiency of 3rd grade students, and math achievement of 8th grade students) are characterized by stability over time.

The high school graduation rate has improved in Brown County in recent years, the number of library transactions per person decreased in Brown County (and the state of Wisconsin). In 2010 there were 9.7 library transactions per person in Brown County as compared to 7.6 transactions per person in 2014.

Figure 1

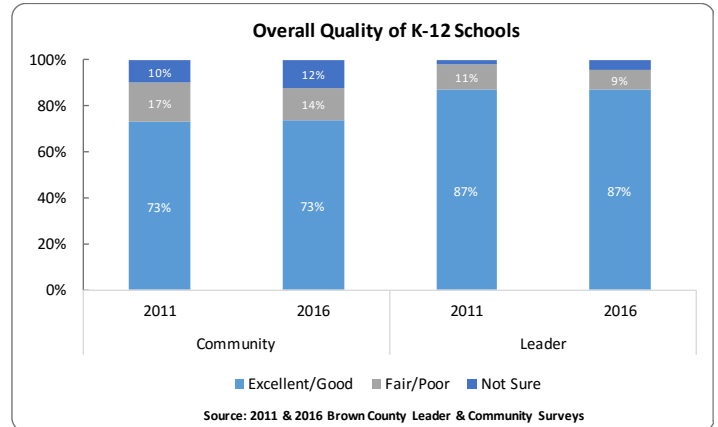


Figure 2

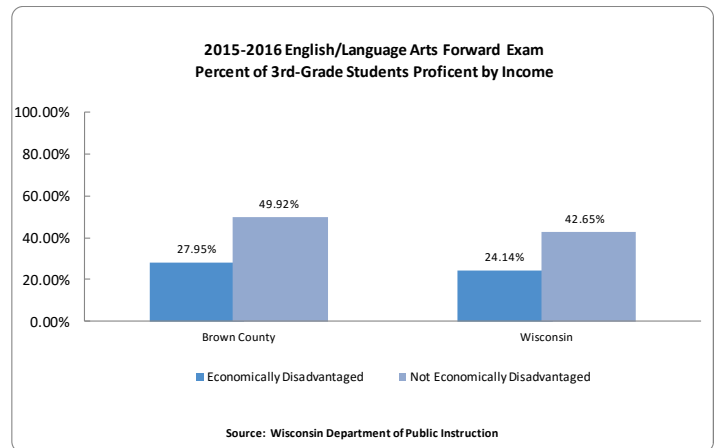


Figure 3

Current	Trend	Indicator
△	▷	Attendance rates of 5 th -grade students
▽	▷	Reading proficiency of 3 rd -grade students
▽	▷	Math achievement of 8 th -grade students
△	△	High school graduation rate
▽	▽	Library circulation per capita

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

LIFE in Our Natural Environment

Overview

In general, both community leaders and community members have positive views about the quality of the natural environment in Brown County. In 2011, 76% of community members rated the quality of the natural environment as excellent or good. That number increased to 79% in 2016. In 2011, 82% of leaders rated the natural environment as excellent or good. That number was nearly identical in 2016 (81%).

Figure 1 indicates that community members have divided views about the quality of water in lakes and rivers in the area. In 2011, 45% of community members said that the quality of water in rivers and lakes was excellent or good. That year, 54% rated area rivers and lakes as fair or poor. In 2016, 50% of people rated the quality of rivers and lakes as excellent or good and 48% rated the quality as fair or poor.

Community members have split views about the extent to which Brown County addresses emerging environmental issues before they become significant problems. In 2016, 45% of community members rated Brown County as excellent or good on this issue. That same year, 35% of community members rated Brown County as being good or fair on this issue. Perceptions about addressing emerging environmental issues were nearly identical in 2011 compared to 2016.

Figure 2 illustrates that the number of residents who commute alone (by car) to work has remained fairly stable over time in Brown County. In 2014, data from the U.S. Census reveals that 85% of people commuted to work alone. That number is higher than the state rate of 81% and the U.S. rate of 77%.

Figure 3 provides a look at the leading indicators for this section. The number of days with good quality air has been improving in recent years, which is a positive trend. When it comes to impaired surface water, conditions have been worsening in the past several years.

Figure 1

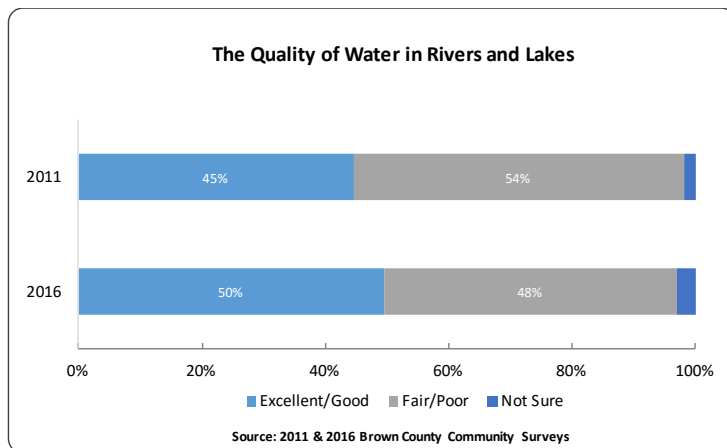


Figure 2

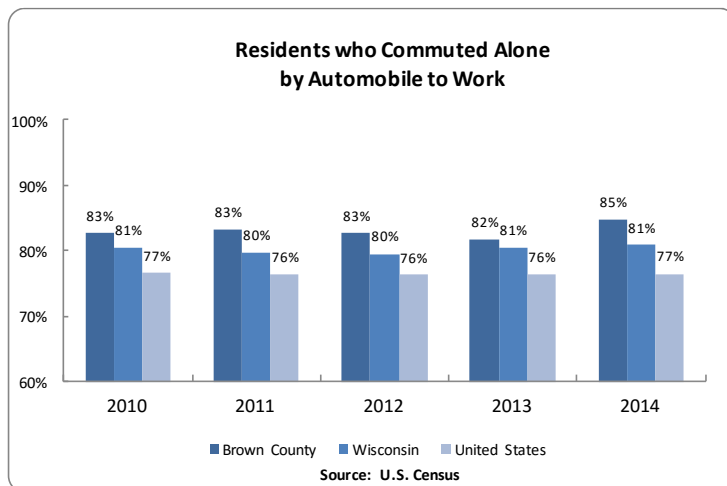


Figure 3

Current	Trend	Indicator
△	△	Percent of days with good quality air
▽	▽	Miles of impaired surface water

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

LIFE of Recreation and Leisure

Overview

An analysis of data related to recreation and leisure indicates that there have been many positive developments in recent years.

Community leaders and community members overwhelmingly believe that the area provides a variety of recreation and leisure opportunities for residents, as shown in Figure 1. In 2016, 80% of community members said that Brown County does an excellent or good job at providing a variety of opportunities for residents, which is an increase of 7 percentage points from the 2011 survey.

Community leaders also have positive views about recreation and leisure opportunities in the area. In the 2016 survey, 83% of community leaders said that Brown County does an excellent or good job at providing a variety of opportunities for residents. That is nearly identical to the percentage in 2011 (85%).

Figure 2 indicates that the amount of total direct visitor spending has steadily increased since 2010. In 2010, the amount of total direct visitor spending was \$480,000,000. By 2015, the amount of total direct visitor spending increased to \$613,700,000. From 2014 to 2015, the two most recent years in the data series, the amount of direct visitor spending increased by about 4.22%. The number of people who are employed in tourism-related jobs has been quite stable over the past few years. If tourism continues to grow in this area, the community may consider having a discussion about how the workforce can adapt to tourism growth.

Figure 3 provides a look at the leading indicators for this section. Overall, the number of trail miles and the amount of acreage devoted to parks has been stable over the past few years. The amount of direct visitor spending has increased substantially in the past five years.

Figure 1

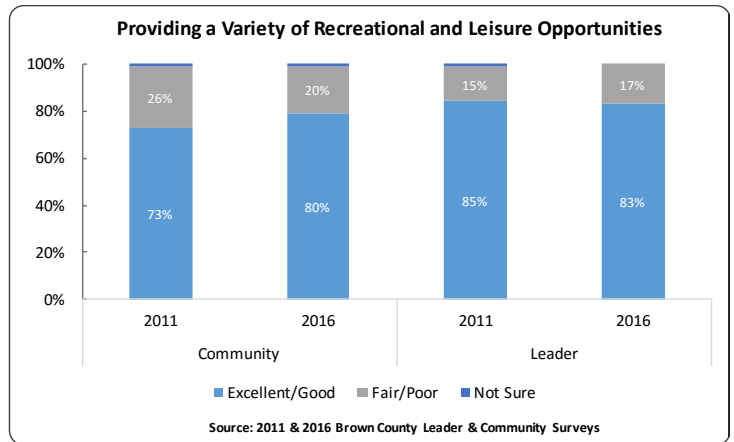


Figure 2



Figure 3

Current	Trend	Indicator
▷	▷	Total trail miles
▷	▷	Park acreage
△	△	Direct visitor spending

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

A Safe LIFE

Overview

Across a wide variety of indicators, safety in Brown County has generally improved since the release of the 2011 LIFE Study. The public safety landscape in the area also has changed with the development of new policies, programs, and initiatives that address drunk driving, drug use, and alternative courts, among others.

In 2016, 89% of community survey respondents rated the quality of law enforcement agencies in their communities as excellent or good. In contrast, 10% rated the agencies as fair or poor. In 2011, 86% of respondents rated the quality of law enforcement agencies in their communities as excellent or good. In that year, just 13% of community survey respondents rated agencies as fair or poor. These trends are displayed in Figure 1.

Another positive development has been a decrease in alcohol related crashes in Brown County. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation defines an alcohol-related crash as when “either a driver, bicyclist, or pedestrian is listed on a police report or coroner report as drinking alcohol before the crash.”

The number of alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes declined from 2008 to 2013. Over the six year period, alcohol-related crashes decreased by more than 40% from a high of 325 in 2008 to 184 in 2013. Although the decrease was relatively consistent, the largest reduction was recorded between 2010 and 2011.

As Figure 3 indicates, there have been positive developments for all of the leading indicators in this area. Overall, crime statistics and community survey data largely support the opinions of area public safety experts—Brown County remains a relatively safe community.

Based on available data, the trends associated with many indicators of public safety also appear to be moving in the right direction. At the same time, residents are generally pleased with the public safety services they receive.

Figure 1

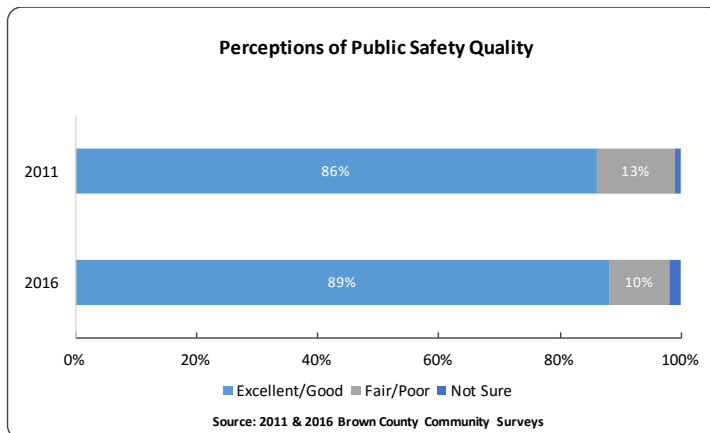


Figure 2

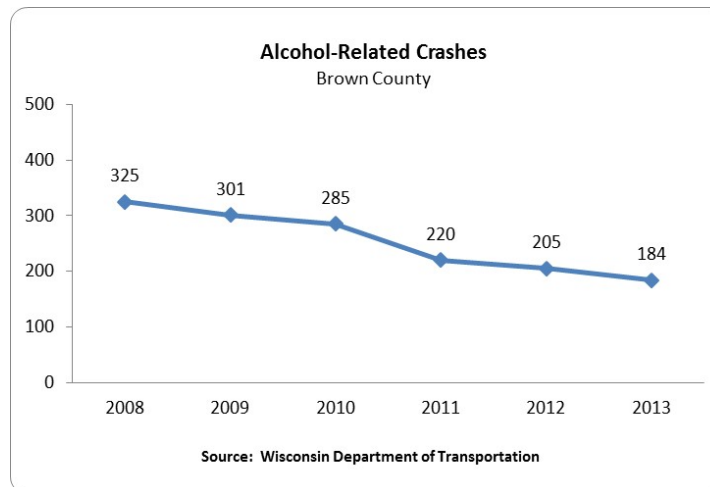


Figure 3

Current	Trend	Indicator
△	△	Substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect
△	△	Juvenile arrest rate
△	△	Rate of reported domestic violence incidents
△	△	Violent and property crime rates
△	△	Alcohol related crashes and deaths

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

LIFE of Self-Sufficiency

Overview

Figure 1 illustrates that the percentage of Brown County students in free and reduced-fee lunch programs has been stable over time. In the most recent year in the data series, 40% of students were enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs. That figure is similar to previous years.

When asked whether they felt very secure about their financial stability, Brown County residents expressed mixed views. In 2016, 54% of people in Brown County said that they felt very secure about their finances all or most of the time. That year, 23% of people said they sometimes felt very financially secure and 20% said they seldom or never felt very secure about their finances. The responses for 2016 were fairly similar to the responses in the 2011 community survey. It is worth noting that there are some important differences in perceptions about financial security when community members are stratified by race/ethnicity. Among people who reported being white, 55% said that they felt very secure about their finances all or most of the time. For people who were not White, that number was 32%. Among Whites, 22% of people said they felt very financially secure some of the time. Among non-Whites, that number was 32%. A larger percentage (24%) of non-Whites say that they seldom or never feel very financially secure compared to Whites (19%).

Figure 3 provides an overview of the leading indicators for this section. The number of renter households with a housing cost burden (spending more than 30% of income on housing) has remained stable over time, as has the number of students getting free and reduced lunch in area public schools. The number of FoodShare recipients in Brown County increased from 2006 to 2012. Since 2013, there has been a slight decline in the number of FoodShare recipients.

Figure 1

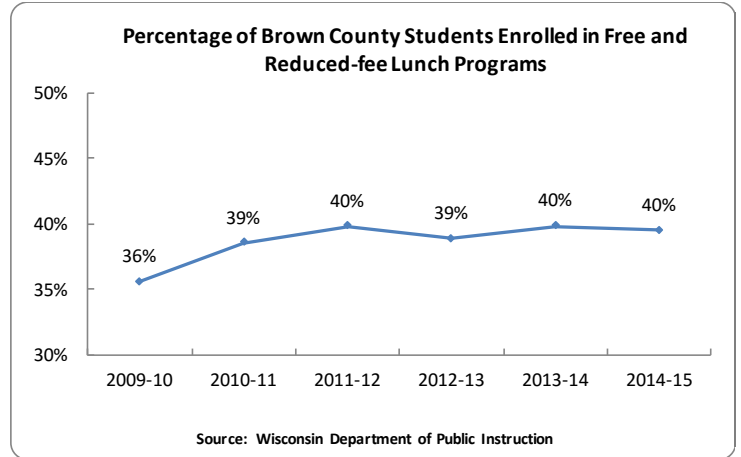


Figure 2

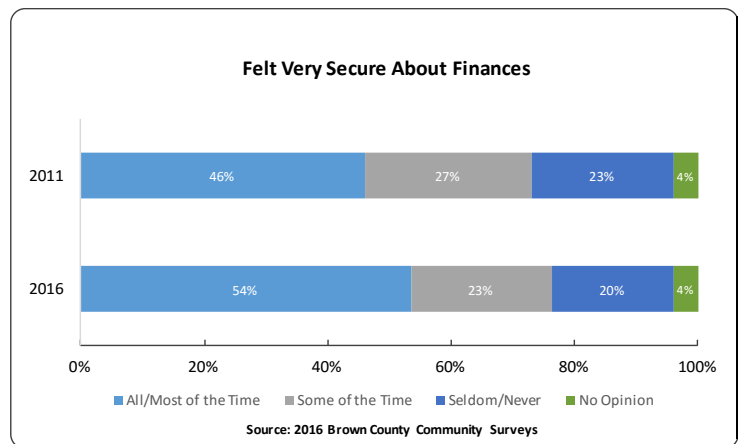


Figure 3

Current	Trend	Indicator
▽	▷	Percent of renter households with cost burden
▽	▽	Number of FoodShare recipients
▷	▷	Free and reduced-fee lunch rates in public schools

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

LIFE at Work

Overview

Since the 2011 LIFE Study, Brown County has either remained stable or improved across a variety of economic indicators. This is particularly important given the economic challenges that have defined much of the last decade. For residents, or for those considering moving to the area, Brown County continues to be a very affordable place to live.

Unemployment rates in Brown County (shown in Figure 1) were reflective of the economic challenges and recovery experienced by the state and country more broadly. Prior to 2009, the unemployment rate in the county was 4.6%. The rate peaked in 2010 (8.7%) and has since declined to 4.1%, a rate lower than those recorded prior to the recession.

During the entire period, the unemployment rate in Brown County has been lower than the Wisconsin rate, though in most years the difference was small. The primary exception was during the peak of the recession when the rate in Brown County was notably lower than the state as a whole.

According to Figure 2, which presents data from the survey of leaders in Brown County, 46% of respondents in 2016 rated Brown County as excellent or good at attracting, cultivating, and rewarding talented young professionals. Alternatively, 47% indicated Brown County was fair or poor. When compared to 2011, the percentage of leaders who selected excellent or good increased by 19 percentage points.

Figure 3 provides a look at the leading indicators for this section. Overall, a number of the indicators reveal stability over time. For example, the cost of living, income distribution, and employment in the manufacturing sector have remained fairly stable over the past few years. The unemployment rate has declined in recent years, which is a positive sign.

In addition, the dollar value of residential building permits has increased recently. Since 2011, the value has grown fairly consistently from one year to the next and in 2015 it surpassed pre-recession levels (\$132.2 million).

Figure 1

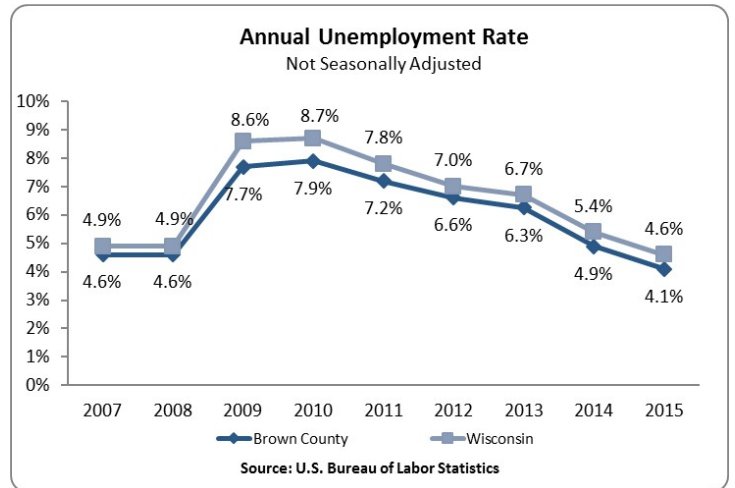


Figure 2

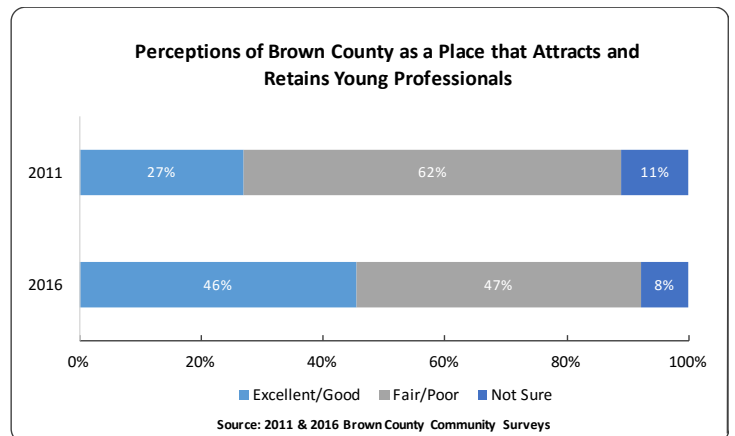


Figure 3

Current	Trend	Indicator
△	▷	Cost of living index
▷	▷	Income distribution
△	△	Unemployment rate
△	△	Dollar value of residential building permits
▷	▷	Employment in the manufacturing sector

Legend: Fair ▷ Good △ Poor ▽

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Cover Design by: Jong Vang

The Sponsors of the the Brown County LIFE Study would like to acknowledge Northeast Wisconsin Technical College for their in-kind publication of this report.

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