

2006

Wisconsin
Marriages
and Divorces

*Bureau of Health Information and Policy
Division of Public Health
Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services*

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Introduction

This report presents key information about marriages and divorces that occurred in Wisconsin in 2006. It also contains information from selected previous years, as well as information on the number and rate of marriages and divorces, both in Wisconsin and nationally. The sources of data for Wisconsin are marriage and divorce certificates on file with the Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services.

The collection of marriage and divorce data is mandated by Chapter 69 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Chapter 69 authorizes the Department of Health and Family Services to supervise and direct the collection of these data. This statute also specifies how local registrars are to collect and file certificates of marriage.

The Department of Health and Family Services produced this publication. Staff of the Vital Records Registration and Statistics Unit, Bureau of Health Information and Policy, collected and compiled the marriage and divorce records. Joyce Knapton drafted the summaries in this report and produced the computer programs to generate the tables. Patricia Nametz edited the report. The report was prepared under the supervision of John Kiesow, State Registrar, Vital Records Section, and Jane Kraus, Supervisor, Registration and Statistics Unit. Patricia Guhleman, Interim Director, Bureau of Health Information and Policy, provided overall direction.

The Bureau of Health Information and Policy would like to thank the County Clerks and Clerks of Tribal Court for issuing accurate marriage licenses, the local Register of Deeds offices for their accurate recording of all marriage records, and all County Clerks of Court and Clerks of Tribal Court for their timely filing of completed divorce or annulment certificates.

This report is available on the Department of Health and Family Services Web site, at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/stats/marriages.htm>.

Comments, suggestions, and requests for additional marriage or divorce data may be addressed to:

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Key Findings

- A total of 33,437 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2006, representing a decrease from the 33,876 marriages that occurred in 2005. These counts reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin (of both residents and non-residents of the state).
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2006 was 6.0 per 1,000 total population, lower than the 2005 rate (6.1). The marriage rate has gradually declined since 1980, when the rate was 8.7.
- The marriage rate in Wisconsin has been consistently lower than the national rate for more than 80 years. The United States provisional marriage rate for the 12 months ending in July 2006 was 7.4 per 1,000 population.
- The median age for first marriages in 2006 was 25.1 years for women and 26.6 years for men. In 1960, the median age at first marriage was 20.4 for brides and 22.9 for grooms.
- Since 1960, the bride in a first marriage, on average, has been a year or two younger than the groom.
- In 2006, the months with the highest number of marriages were June, August and September. September was the most popular month to marry.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2006 (4,832), followed by Dane County (2,719), Waukesha County (2,082), and Brown County (1,618). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties. All of these counties, except for Milwaukee County, had a decrease in the number of marriages from 2005 to 2006.
- A total of 16,730 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2006, for a divorce rate of 3.0 per 1,000 total population. This is slightly higher than the 2005 rate (2.9).
- The divorce rate in Wisconsin has been consistently lower than the national rate for more than 80 years. For the 12 months ending in July 2006, the provisional United States divorce rate was 3.6.
- The total number of Wisconsin divorces that occurred in 2006 was 50 percent of the total number of Wisconsin marriages that occurred. This is higher than the 2005 percentage (48 percent).
- The highest number of divorces in 2006 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,430 divorces and 11 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,421 divorces and 8 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,051 divorces), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- Fifty-two percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2006 involved families with children under 18 years of age. Among divorces involving children, an average of 1.8 children were affected by each divorce.

Table 1. Marriages and Marriage Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2006

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Wisconsin Marriages</u>	<u>Wisconsin Marriage Rate*</u>	<u>United States Marriage Rate*</u>
1920	22,293	8.4	12.0
1925	16,385	5.8	10.3
1930	15,328	5.2	9.2
1935	21,075	6.9	10.4
1940	23,379	7.5	12.1
1945	25,269	8.5	12.2
1950	29,081	8.4	11.1
1955	25,543	7.0	9.3
1960	24,573	6.2	8.5
1965	28,410	6.7	9.3
1970	34,415	7.8	10.6
1975	35,888	7.9	10.0
1980	41,113	8.7	10.6
1985	40,014	8.4	10.1
1990	38,934	8.0	9.8
1995	36,354	7.1	8.9
2000	36,100	6.7	8.5
2001	34,790	6.5	8.4
2002	34,241	6.3	7.9
2003	34,220	6.2	7.7
2004	34,056	6.2	7.8
2005	33,876	6.1	7.5
2006	33,437	6.0	7.4

Source: U.S. marriage rates are from the National Center for Health Statistics, *National Vital Statistics Reports*. Wisconsin numbers and rates are from the Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services. The Wisconsin marriage rate for 2006 was calculated using 2005 population figures.

* Rates shown are marriages per 1,000 total population.

Notes: The Wisconsin numbers and rates reflect marriages that occurred in Wisconsin. The U.S. marriage rate for 2005 is provisional based on marriages that occurred in the 12 months ending in December, 2005. The U.S. marriage rate for 2006 is provisional based on marriages that occurred in the 12 months ending in July, 2006.

- A total of 33,437 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2006, representing a decrease from the 33,876 marriages that occurred in 2005.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2006 was 6.0 per 1,000 total population, lower than the 2005 rate (6.1). The marriage rate has gradually declined since 1980, when the rate was 8.7.

Table 2. Median Age at First Marriage and All Remarriages, Wisconsin 1960-2006

Year	First Marriages		All Remarriages	
	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom
1960	20.4	22.9	39.9	45.1
1965	20.6	22.5	40.4	45.2
1970	20.8	22.6	37.4	42.6
1975	20.8	22.7	32.4	37.1
1980	21.7	23.5	31.7	34.9
1985	22.9	24.7	33.7	36.9
1990	23.8	25.5	38.3	41.6
1991	23.9	25.6	38.6	41.7
1992	24.1	25.7	38.8	42.3
1993	24.2	25.8	39.0	42.0
1994	24.3	25.8	39.4	42.3
1995	24.5	26.0	39.9	42.6
1996	24.6	26.2	40.4	43.6
1997	24.6	26.3	40.7	43.4
1998	24.6	26.3	41.1	43.9
1999	24.6	26.3	41.6	44.5
2000	24.7	26.3	41.7	44.6
2001	24.7	26.3	42.3	45.2
2002	24.8	26.3	42.9	45.5
2003	24.8	26.4	43.3	46.0
2004	24.9	26.4	43.7	46.6
2005	25.0	26.4	44.4	47.1
2006	25.1	26.6	44.6	47.2

Source: Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services.

Note: The median age is one way of expressing the average age, and represents the midpoint of all persons in the group (half are older and half are younger than the median age). For example, in 2000 the median age for brides at first marriage was 24.7, meaning that half of all brides being married for the first time in 2000 were younger, and half were older, than 24.7. The numbers in this table reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in the stated years.

- The median age for first marriages in 2006 was 25.1 years for women and 26.6 years for men. In 1960, the median age at first marriage was 20.4 for brides and 22.9 for grooms.
- Since 1960, the bride in a first marriage, on average, has been a year or two younger than the groom.

Marriages

Table 3. Marriages and Remarriages by Age of Bride and Groom, Wisconsin 2006

Age in Years	Bride					Groom				
	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More
	33,437	24,081	7,254	1,716	386	33,437	24,130	7,440	1,553	314
16	71	71				8	8			
17	110	110				21	21			
18	460	459	1			151	151			
19	760	759	1			348	348			
20	1,144	1,137	7			595	595			
21	1,467	1,453	14			982	978	4		
22	1,957	1,919	38			1,300	1,292	8		
23	2,390	2,350	40			1,766	1,749	16	1	
24	2,653	2,555	96	1	1	2,166	2,137	28	1	
25-29	9,496	8,529	929	34	4	10,102	9,503	588	11	
30-34	4,225	2,725	1,334	151	15	5,245	4,042	1,135	67	1
35-39	2,673	1,070	1,309	262	32	3,314	1,782	1,342	170	20
40-44	2,163	521	1,211	363	68	2,396	858	1,246	263	29
45-49	1,737	260	1,011	376	90	1,962	400	1,167	335	60
50-54	1,033	105	596	261	71	1,298	166	772	295	65
55-59	533	41	298	138	56	836	66	514	199	57
60-64	249	11	154	56	28	437	18	253	112	54
65-69	139	2	86	36	15	222	12	143	52	15
70-74	89		69	16	4	111		88	18	5
75+	88	4	60	22	2	177	4	136	29	8

Source: Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services.

Note: Totals shown represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2006.

- For first-time brides and grooms, the highest number of marriages occurred between the ages of 22 and 29.

Marriages

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2006

County	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
State Total	33,437	1,125	1,462	1,431	2,013	3,158	4,308	3,998	4,132	4,885	3,668	1,552	1,705
Adams	112	6	7	1	10	16	7	11	20	13	10	7	4
Ashland	162	7	5	8	5	12	22	24	31	23	15	6	4
Barron	347	14	14	9	21	36	47	45	42	54	41	11	13
Bayfield	148	6	4	6	5	7	24	21	25	28	13	1	8
Brown	1,618	49	84	76	100	154	211	193	189	227	159	82	94
Buffalo	74	1	3	1	3	3	11	14	12	16	8	2	
Burnett	116	6	3	5	7	12	13	11	14	27	9	2	7
Calumet	201	6	9	7	9	20	22	21	26	34	28	10	9
Chippewa	416	20	9	14	25	40	62	53	51	75	36	15	16
Clark	216	9	10	7	15	19	27	21	22	29	29	14	14
Columbia	434	20	18	18	25	37	54	55	50	61	55	23	18
Crawford	119		9	8	7	11	14	16	16	20	10	5	3
Dane	2,719	99	107	121	179	290	337	335	328	396	260	128	139
Dodge	445	11	24	21	25	48	57	58	46	68	48	16	23
Door	425	12	14	10	19	45	51	52	48	70	65	21	18
Douglas	265	10	16	16	8	23	29	36	45	36	22	11	13
Dunn	219	6	19	11	13	17	40	21	28	28	18	12	6
Eau Claire	632	16	28	27	47	60	89	80	64	88	69	26	38
Florence	18		1			3	3	3	3	4			1
Fond du Lac	628	21	27	21	36	52	78	72	84	94	75	31	37
Forest	67	2	3	1	3	7	4	10	12	10	9		6
Grant	281	6	7	6	15	34	37	39	36	47	33	13	8
Green	197	2	11	9	16	15	29	29	19	29	29	6	3
Green Lake	145	3	2	6	4	13	22	17	22	23	22	9	2
Iowa	174	3	8	6	10	12	23	26	24	34	18	8	2
Iron	42	4	3	1	1	1	3	5	9	8	3	2	2
Jackson	130	5	3	6	9	17	20	17	14	17	11	2	9
Jefferson	515	15	33	33	26	50	62	63	47	67	57	24	38
Juneau	152	5	13	3	12	10	15	21	17	22	20	9	5
Kenosha	770	33	26	29	47	66	111	93	89	116	85	37	38
Kewaunee	115	1		5	7	13	16	12	17	17	13	6	8
La Crosse	756	21	28	32	43	70	103	90	113	112	79	34	31
Lafayette	92	5	5		8	3	15	11	12	12	11	5	5
Langlade	138	6	10	7	6	10	20	17	13	19	16	8	6
Lincoln	192	6	9	6	8	16	29	21	24	35	20	5	13
Manitowoc	516	10	18	16	33	52	70	62	59	83	66	25	22
Marathon	840	28	30	33	52	66	116	102	111	118	93	37	54
Marinette	239	6	9	8	11	25	35	22	38	39	22	8	16
Marquette	79	2	2	6	2	8	11	8	9	16	4	5	6
Menominee	30	2	1	1		1	5	3	7	3	4	1	2
Milwaukee	4,832	180	269	253	360	472	576	559	518	626	522	245	252
Monroe	280	8	12	12	12	30	41	20	31	43	41	12	18

Marriages

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2006

<u>County</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
Oconto	197	8	8	9	13	16	23	25	22	35	22	5	11
Oneida	261	10	12	12	9	21	29	36	44	40	24	9	15
Outagamie	1,282	41	57	64	80	118	146	147	167	183	144	69	66
Ozaukee	440	14	16	12	20	42	63	56	57	66	57	21	16
Pepin	61	1	2	3	3	7	10	7	8	7	10	3	
Pierce	203	3	4	6	14	18	28	22	34	28	27	9	10
Polk	271	8	11	14	11	20	38	24	36	37	33	11	28
Portage	389	10	10	17	21	40	61	53	44	53	42	15	23
Price	78	3	3		5	3	14	13	9	13	8	2	5
Racine	890	29	39	43	49	73	112	111	124	127	91	48	44
Richland	121	3	5	7	10	8	14	16	13	15	16	10	4
Rock	796	32	21	46	49	80	98	107	105	108	79	35	36
Rusk	90	2	3	2	1	12	18	7	19	11	9	4	2
St. Croix	421	15	16	14	26	35	47	60	58	59	52	15	24
Sauk	521	22	29	17	30	57	60	48	57	82	59	35	25
Sawyer	126	7	3	11	3	17	17	18	14	17	10	3	6
Shawano	240	14	8	14	18	14	28	24	24	30	37	15	14
Sheboygan	814	27	39	38	46	72	90	90	99	120	99	38	56
Taylor	128	4	2	2	4	12	19	17	22	25	17	1	3
Trempealeau	162	3	4	7	10	12	21	17	24	32	23	2	7
Vernon	203	5	10	5	12	16	32	28	24	27	23	15	6
Vilas	158	4	6	4	7	16	15	20	35	28	11	5	7
Walworth	840	24	35	26	36	73	99	122	110	140	91	39	45
Washburn	129	8	8	1	6	8	20	14	16	21	13	6	8
Washington	681	26	22	32	32	75	82	77	87	97	85	32	34
Waukesha	2,082	60	87	83	123	199	302	234	265	308	220	100	101
Waupaca	403	8	18	10	19	43	64	37	57	72	48	11	16
Waushara	172	5	10	11	11	16	22	22	20	26	12	9	8
Winnebago	890	34	38	35	67	94	125	103	97	117	99	38	43
Wood	492	23	23	20	34	45	50	54	56	74	59	23	31

Source: Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services.

Note: These numbers represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2006.

- In 2006, the months with the highest number of marriages were June, August and September. September was the most popular month to marry.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2006 (4,832), followed by Dane County (2,719), Waukesha County (2,082), and Brown County (1,618). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties. Each of these counties had a decrease in the number of marriages from 2005 to 2006 except for Milwaukee County, whose number of marriages increased slightly.
- The lowest number of marriages occurred in the counties of Florence (18), Menominee (30) and Iron (42).

Table 5. Divorces and Divorce Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2006

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Wisconsin Divorces</u>	<u>Wisconsin Divorce Rate*</u>	<u>United States Divorce Rate*</u>
1920	2,425	0.9	1.6
1925	2,467	0.9	1.5
1930	2,553	0.9	1.6
1935	3,543	1.2	1.7
1940	3,599	1.1	2.0
1945	6,393	2.2	3.5
1950	4,845	1.4	2.6
1955	4,720	1.3	2.3
1960	3,672	0.9	2.2
1965	5,232	1.2	2.5
1970	8,930	2.0	3.5
1975	13,187	2.9	4.8
1980	17,589	3.7	5.2
1985	16,596	3.5	5.0
1990	17,727	3.6	4.7
1995	17,313	3.4	4.4
2000	17,388	3.2	4.2
2001	17,457	3.3	4.0
2002	17,471	3.2	4.0
2003	17,150	3.1	3.8
2004	16,802	3.0	3.7
2005	16,297	2.9	3.6
2006	16,730	3.0	3.6

Source: U.S. divorce rates are from the National Center for Health Statistics, *National Vital Statistics Reports*. Wisconsin numbers and rates are from the Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services. The Wisconsin divorce rate for 2006 was calculated using 2005 population figures.

* Rates shown are divorces and annulments per 1,000 total population.

Notes: The Wisconsin numbers and rates represent divorces and annulments occurring in Wisconsin. The U.S. divorce rate for 2005 is provisional based on divorces that occurred in the 12 months ending in December, 2005. The U.S. divorce rate for 2006 is provisional based on divorces that occurred in the 12 months ending in July, 2006.

- A total of 16,730 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2006, for a divorce rate of 3.0 per 1,000 population. This is slightly higher than the 2005 rate (2.9).
- The total number of Wisconsin divorces that occurred in 2006 was 50 percent of the total number of Wisconsin marriages that occurred. This is higher than the 2005 percentage (48 percent).

Divorces

Table 6. Divorces and Annulments by County, Wisconsin 2006

<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>
Total	16,682	48			
Adams	63		Marathon	313	
Ashland	65		Marinette	134	
Barron	164		Marquette	51	1
Bayfield	57		Menominee	1	1
Brown	711	1	Milwaukee	2,430	11
Buffalo	39		Monroe	211	1
Burnett	61		Oconto	123	
Calumet	104		Oneida	138	
Chippewa	237		Outagamie	496	1
Clark	74		Ozaukee	179	2
Columbia	182	1	Pepin	15	
Crawford	45		Pierce	110	
Dane	1,421	8	Polk	145	
Dodge	304		Portage	180	
Door	88		Price	56	
Douglas	152		Racine	417	2
Dunn	88		Richland	66	
Eau Claire	299		Rock	586	1
Florence	16		Rusk	55	1
Fond du Lac	280	1	St. Croix	269	1
Forest	37		Sauk	218	1
Grant	130	1	Sawyer	64	
Green	137		Shawano	146	
Green Lake	53	1	Sheboygan	367	1
Iowa	70		Taylor	73	
Iron	30		Trempealeau	89	
Jackson	66		Vernon	78	
Jefferson	229		Vilas	66	
Juneau	86		Walworth	385	
Kenosha	556	1	Washburn	48	
Kewaunee	73	1	Washington	419	2
La Crosse	292	1	Waukesha	1,051	
Lafayette	38		Waupaca	157	1
Langlade	75		Waushara	88	
Lincoln	82		Winnebago	540	4
Manitowoc	224	1	Wood	290	

Source: Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services.

Note: These numbers represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin in 2006.

- The highest number of divorces occurred in Milwaukee County (2,430 divorces and 11 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,421 divorces and 8 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,051 divorces), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- The lowest number of divorces occurred in the counties of Menominee (1 divorce and 1 annulment), Pepin (15 divorces) and Florence (16 divorces).

Divorces

Table 7. Divorces Affecting Children Under 18 Years of Age by County, Wisconsin 2006

<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces Granted</u>	<u>Those Affecting Children < 18</u>	<u>No. of Children < 18 Affected</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces Granted</u>	<u>Those Affecting Children < 18</u>	<u>No. of Children < 18 Affected</u>
State Total	16,730	8,777	16,035				
Adams	63	31	55	Marathon	313	168	319
Ashland	65	42	72	Marinette	134	73	136
Barron	164	84	159	Marquette	52	27	48
Bayfield	57	29	56	Menominee	2	1	1
Brown	712	362	638	Milwaukee	2,441	1,170	2,175
Buffalo	39	24	42	Monroe	212	120	217
Burnett	61	38	71	Oconto	123	68	142
Calumet	104	53	108	Oneida	138	72	121
Chippewa	237	138	240	Outagamie	497	269	479
Clark	74	45	85	Ozaukee	181	98	175
Columbia	183	110	195	Pepin	15	6	10
Crawford	45	25	40	Pierce	110	62	118
Dane	1,429	676	1,215	Polk	145	81	167
Dodge	304	162	274	Portage	180	96	176
Door	88	45	84	Price	56	27	50
Douglas	152	72	122	Racine	419	205	369
Dunn	88	52	97	Richland	66	31	53
Eau Claire	299	155	280	Rock	587	342	627
Florence	16	6	15	Rusk	56	29	55
Fond du Lac	281	153	272	St. Croix	270	141	258
Forest	37	20	34	Sauk	219	116	222
Grant	131	83	159	Sawyer	64	27	46
Green	137	70	117	Shawano	146	90	158
Green Lake	54	34	61	Sheboygan	368	208	395
Iowa	70	43	83	Taylor	73	38	68
Iron	30	16	27	Trempealeau	89	50	93
Jackson	66	34	63	Vernon	78	40	72
Jefferson	229	122	211	Vilas	66	28	44
Juneau	86	46	79	Walworth	385	206	369
Kenosha	557	315	563	Washburn	48	29	51
Kewaunee	74	44	80	Washington	421	237	436
La Crosse	293	147	290	Waukesha	1,051	573	1,071
Lafayette	38	26	50	Waupaca	158	76	148
Langlade	75	44	87	Waushara	88	53	85
Lincoln	82	35	59	Winnebago	544	274	492
Manitowoc	225	119	246	Wood	290	146	259

Source: Bureau of Health Information and Policy, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services.

Note: These numbers represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin in 2006.

- Fifty-two percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2006 involved couples with children under 18 years of age. Among divorces involving children, an average of 1.8 children were affected by each divorce.

Technical Notes

Marriage Reporting Requirements

As specified in Chapter 69, Wisconsin Statutes, the following is a brief outline of the sequence of events which take place when a marriage occurs in Wisconsin:

- The filing party (officiant) must register the certificate of marriage with the local Register of Deeds (where the marriage took place) within 3 days after the event.
- The local Register of Deeds must transmit the marriage certificate to the State Registrar within 10 working days after its receipt.

Divorce Reporting Requirements

As specified in Chapter 69, Wisconsin Statutes, the following is what takes place when a divorce occurs in Wisconsin:

- At the end of every biweekly period the filing party (clerk of any court) must send to the State Registrar a report of every divorce or annulment of marriage granted during that period.

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