

2007

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 2007. 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, 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 the 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 32,159 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2007, representing a decrease from the 33,437 marriages that occurred in 2006. These counts reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin (of both residents and non-residents of the state).
- The number of marriages has been declining annually since 1980.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2007 was 5.7 per 1,000 total population, lower than the 2006 rate (6.0). 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 2007 was 7.3 per 1,000 population.
- The median age for first marriages in 2007 was 25.2 years for women and 26.8 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 2007, 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 2007 (4,501), followed by Dane County (2,622), Waukesha County (1,996), and Brown County (1,523). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties. All of these counties had a decrease in the number of marriages from 2006 to 2007.
- A total of 16,458 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2007, for a divorce rate of 2.9 per 1,000 total population. This is slightly lower than the 2006 rate (3.0).
- 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 2007, the provisional United States divorce rate was 3.6.
- The total number of Wisconsin divorces that occurred in 2007 was 51 percent of the total number of Wisconsin marriages that occurred. This is higher than the 2006 percentage (50 percent).
- The highest number of divorces in 2007 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,433 divorces and 10 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,290 divorces and 6 annulments) and Waukesha County (998 divorces), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- Fifty-two percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2007 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, 1920-2007

<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	7.3
2007	32,159	5.7	7.3

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 2007 was calculated using 2006 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 2006 is provisional based on marriages that occurred in the 12 months ending in December, 2006. The U.S. marriage rate for 2007 is provisional based on marriages that occurred in the 12 months ending in July, 2007.

- A total of 32,159 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2007, representing a decrease from the 33,437 marriages that occurred in 2006.
- The number of marriages has been declining annually since 1980.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2007 was 5.7 per 1,000 total population, lower than the 2006 rate (6.0). 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 1960-2007

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
2007	25.2	26.8	45.1	47.6

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 2005 the median age for brides at first marriage was 25.0, meaning that half of all brides being married for the first time in 2005 were younger, and half were older, than 25.0. The numbers in this table reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in the stated years.

- The median age for first marriages in 2007 was 25.2 years for women and 26.8 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 2007

Age in Years	Bride					Groom				
	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More
	32,159	23,222	6,936	1,643	358	32,159	23,340	6,952	1,557	310
16	83	83				4	4			
17	105	105				12	12			
18	394	394				167	167			
19	687	687				331	331			
20	985	980	5			539	537	2		
21	1,385	1,370	14	1		902	901	1		
22	2,009	1,975	34			1,255	1,249	6		
23	2,219	2,175	43	1		1,673	1,654	19		
24	2,384	2,316	66	2		2,032	2,000	32		
25-29	9,368	8,465	862	37	4	9,723	9,209	502	10	2
30-34	4,118	2,693	1,300	114	11	5,190	4,074	1,053	59	4
35-39	2,581	1,066	1,233	252	30	3,186	1,754	1,237	176	19
40-44	1,916	445	1,075	334	62	2,222	721	1,198	271	32
45-49	1,706	254	984	373	95	1,853	397	1,083	319	54
50-54	1,085	133	628	252	72	1,291	194	749	274	74
55-59	567	49	347	132	39	824	78	480	209	57
60-64	301	22	176	81	22	473	35	257	138	43
65-69	129	3	79	36	11	196	11	122	52	11
70-74	78	4	54	14	6	137	9	96	24	8
75+	59	3	36	14	6	149	3	115	25	6

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 2007.

- 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 2007

<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>
State Total	32,159	1,068	1,322	1,522	1,819	2,841	4,470	4,034	4,146	4,574	3,292	1,415	1,656
Adams	125	4	4	4	6	7	19	13	23	20	9	8	8
Ashland	128		5	6	6	7	28	17	22	23	6	5	3
Barron	293	8	9	12	17	23	47	44	38	44	31	10	10
Bayfield	140	3	2	4	10	4	25	24	23	28	11	1	5
Brown	1,523	66	62	70	83	145	222	179	171	210	150	80	85
Buffalo	72		1	2	7	3	17	10	14	7	6	1	4
Burnett	107	6	2	3	5	8	19	17	11	18	12	1	5
Calumet	205	10	7	4	12	26	29	26	21	32	26	4	8
Chippewa	377	8	19	19	16	40	57	46	51	61	36	13	11
Clark	212	9	8	10	15	17	26	20	28	34	22	9	14
Columbia	471	9	15	17	24	47	72	76	63	59	45	23	21
Crawford	93	1	5	7	2	11	13	13	14	15	7	1	4
Dane	2,622	77	87	122	162	231	344	328	339	388	280	121	143
Dodge	444	16	26	24	23	37	64	44	50	70	52	19	19
Door	399	8	17	13	25	31	54	50	53	65	51	15	17
Douglas	226	6	14	11	12	26	26	25	24	36	21	9	16
Dunn	212	9	10	10	11	10	22	34	30	30	28	8	10
Eau Claire	638	29	17	30	29	73	96	70	75	79	80	25	35
Florence	28		2	1	2	1	4	1	4	7	3	2	1
Fond du Lac	576	14	25	34	40	52	84	63	82	68	52	32	30
Forest	69	2	7	2	5	3	8	10	8	9	8	4	3
Grant	278	6	10	8	15	25	48	37	36	40	29	12	12
Green	185	5	10	14	16	15	24	32	10	23	21	6	9
Green Lake	144	4	3	5	4	11	18	20	26	27	13	8	5
Iowa	168	3	6	8	2	14	27	21	25	20	25	9	8
Iron	43	3	1		1	1	5	8	7	13	2	1	1
Jackson	115	1	1	3	11	11	17	13	17	13	13	6	9
Jefferson	458	14	15	18	32	39	68	61	51	63	45	26	26
Juneau	162	5	6	8	8	14	24	14	15	23	19	14	12
Kenosha	833	38	38	42	52	58	103	119	110	99	85	43	46
Kewaunee	105	2	3	5	8	9	14	18	15	13	11	5	2
La Crosse	748	22	30	29	39	77	100	93	108	106	81	27	36
Lafayette	96		5	6	5	10	11	11	12	12	9	6	9
Langlade	135	3	8	9	7	11	20	22	19	12	10	6	8
Lincoln	176	5	6	8	13	11	35	20	21	25	22	4	6
Manitowoc	474	18	17	19	29	32	81	53	53	73	52	25	22
Marathon	786	33	22	43	40	64	103	110	134	101	75	22	39
Marinette	260	7	15	8	12	24	47	37	33	31	22	9	15
Marquette	84	7	9	5		7	11	11	12	12	4	3	3
Menominee	22	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2
Milwaukee	4,501	156	237	239	303	405	530	531	545	606	459	246	244
Monroe	302	9	16	12	16	42	40	37	30	36	38	13	13

Marriages

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2007

<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	187	7	8	6	11	15	35	33	19	21	18	6	8
Oneida	262	8	11	17	10	19	38	38	42	38	25	10	6
Outagamie	1,204	49	57	57	70	115	169	107	168	160	122	61	69
Ozaukee	403	11	17	11	18	39	60	52	57	62	43	8	25
Pepin	41	1	3	1	3	4	5	4	8	5	4	2	1
Pierce	205	12	5	10	8	16	35	29	22	32	22	7	7
Polk	261	8	14	14	16	29	43	38	27	34	19	10	9
Portage	420	18	20	19	20	28	64	52	50	71	39	15	24
Price	86	3	4	4	3	10	15	14	14	8	6	1	4
Racine	855	33	44	55	42	74	110	115	108	105	88	40	41
Richland	106	4	6	4	8	9	20	18	18	11	4	4	
Rock	784	30	29	38	35	63	111	124	91	113	69	31	50
Rusk	98	2	1	2	8	6	16	12	17	17	10	4	3
St. Croix	405	10	19	17	20	25	59	42	57	66	41	18	31
Sauk	513	23	15	33	32	42	61	63	59	78	50	25	32
Sawyer	112	4	8	6	9	10	15	14	13	21	7	2	3
Shawano	224	13	8	11	15	13	24	21	35	35	30	9	10
Sheboygan	795	30	25	41	40	58	97	108	118	127	92	25	34
Taylor	129	5	2	5	9	15	20	12	18	20	8	6	9
Trempealeau	173	4	4	7	13	10	31	16	20	27	25	6	10
Vernon	188	2	13	11	6	20	22	26	21	36	17	5	9
Vilas	155	3	3	6	5	14	22	27	24	33	9	2	7
Walworth	811	16	20	37	31	78	129	112	99	129	78	39	43
Washburn	137	3	2	9	6	14	26	17	16	23	13	3	5
Washington	704	24	23	28	38	72	101	73	86	108	68	35	48
Waukesha	1,996	58	66	96	106	196	273	249	261	274	224	93	100
Waupaca	381	11	27	16	18	36	57	51	49	53	38	7	18
Waushara	156	6	8	4	10	11	23	29	18	22	13	7	5
Winnebago	878	25	42	38	55	82	120	100	121	130	89	34	42
Wood	455	17	14	23	27	34	65	58	66	62	48	17	24

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 2007.

- In 2007, 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 2007 (4,501), followed by Dane County (2,622), Waukesha County (1,996), and Brown County (1,523). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties. Each of these counties had a decrease in the number of marriages from 2006 to 2007.
- The lowest number of marriages occurred in the counties of Menominee (22), Florence (28), Pepin (41) and Iron (43).

Table 5. Divorces and Divorce Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2007

<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
2007	16,458	2.9	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 2007 was calculated using 2006 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 2006 is provisional based on divorces that occurred in the 12 months ending in December, 2006. The U.S. divorce rate for 2007 is provisional based on divorces that occurred in the 12 months ending in July, 2007.

- A total of 16,458 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2007, for a divorce rate of 2.9 per 1,000 population. This is slightly lower than the 2006 rate (3.0).
- The total number of Wisconsin divorces that occurred in 2007 was 51 percent of the total number of Wisconsin marriages that occurred. This is higher than the 2006 percentage (50 percent).

Divorces

Table 6. Divorces and Annulments by County, Wisconsin 2007

<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>
Total	16,424	34			
Adams	62		Marathon	360	
Ashland	46		Marinette	161	
Barron	158		Marquette	51	
Bayfield	42		Menominee	2	
Brown	776		Milwaukee	2,433	10
Buffalo	48		Monroe	158	
Burnett	61		Oconto	134	1
Calumet	115		Oneida	117	1
Chippewa	190	1	Outagamie	535	1
Clark	93		Ozaukee	218	1
Columbia	194		Pepin	23	
Crawford	36		Pierce	105	
Dane	1,290	6	Polk	144	
Dodge	266	1	Portage	156	
Door	77	1	Price	45	
Douglas	158		Racine	504	
Dunn	111		Richland	62	
Eau Claire	287		Rock	565	
Florence	16		Rusk	51	
Fond du Lac	307		St. Croix	267	
Forest	36		Sauk	237	
Grant	136		Sawyer	56	
Green	115	1	Shawano	116	
Green Lake	64	1	Sheboygan	342	
Iowa	58		Taylor	63	
Iron	31		Trempealeau	78	
Jackson	68	1	Vernon	75	
Jefferson	263		Vilas	77	
Juneau	110		Walworth	271	
Kenosha	581	4	Washburn	59	
Kewaunee	55		Washington	389	
La Crosse	300	1	Waukesha	998	
Lafayette	42		Waupaca	181	
Langlade	71	1	Waushara	81	
Lincoln	51	1	Winnebago	526	1
Manitowoc	226		Wood	244	

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 2007.

- The highest number of divorces occurred in Milwaukee County (2,433 divorces and 10 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,290 divorces and 6 annulments) and Waukesha County (998 divorces), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- The lowest number of divorces occurred in the counties of Menominee (2 divorces), Florence (16 divorces) and Pepin (23 divorces).

Divorces

Table 7. Divorces Affecting Children Under 18 Years of Age by County, Wisconsin 2007

<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	16,458	8,636	15,669				
Adams	62	31	50	Marathon	360	203	368
Ashland	46	24	40	Marinette	161	95	163
Barron	158	76	128	Marquette	51	26	39
Bayfield	42	23	46	Menominee	2	1	2
Brown	776	411	733	Milwaukee	2,443	1,193	2,198
Buffalo	48	31	57	Monroe	158	95	168
Burnett	61	23	47	Oconto	135	62	114
Calumet	115	77	134	Oneida	118	58	94
Chippewa	191	118	224	Outagamie	536	303	558
Clark	93	48	95	Ozaukee	219	120	215
Columbia	194	103	196	Pepin	23	14	32
Crawford	36	23	42	Pierce	105	54	106
Dane	1,296	622	1,095	Polk	144	74	127
Dodge	267	142	239	Portage	156	86	158
Door	78	36	62	Price	45	25	44
Douglas	158	81	147	Racine	504	241	449
Dunn	111	52	98	Richland	62	35	66
Eau Claire	287	141	242	Rock	565	295	564
Florence	16	7	13	Rusk	51	26	55
Fond du Lac	307	180	329	St. Croix	267	159	290
Forest	36	19	37	Sauk	237	125	212
Grant	136	80	144	Sawyer	56	28	53
Green	116	45	76	Shawano	116	70	128
Green Lake	65	31	57	Sheboygan	342	188	343
Iowa	58	33	64	Taylor	63	33	290
Iron	31	19	38	Trempealeau	78	46	55
Jackson	69	35	69	Vernon	75	37	81
Jefferson	263	148	260	Vilas	77	39	69
Juneau	110	56	102	Walworth	271	159	304
Kenosha	585	309	557	Washburn	59	28	52
Kewaunee	55	34	66	Washington	389	202	374
La Crosse	301	143	268	Waukesha	998	537	976
Lafayette	42	27	49	Waupaca	181	99	182
Langlade	72	41	70	Waushara	81	41	71
Lincoln	52	27	50	Winnebago	527	292	498
Manitowoc	226	116	224	Wood	244	135	242

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 2007.

- Fifty-two percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2007 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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