Wisconsin
Marriages and Divorces

2014

Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Division of Public Health
Office of Health Informatics
State Vital Records Office

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Introduction

This report presents key information about marriages and divorces that occurred in Wisconsin in 2014. 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 State Vital Records Office, Office of Health Informatics, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

The collection of marriage and divorce data is mandated by Chapter 69 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Chapter 69 authorizes the Department of Health 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 Services produced this publication. Staff of the State Vital Records Office, Registration and Statistics Unit, collected and compiled the marriage and divorce records. Joyce Knapton prepared the report and wrote the narrative. Patricia Nametz, Bureau of Operations in the Division of Public Health, edited the report. The report was prepared under the supervision of Lisa Walker, State Registrar, Vital Records Section; Lisa Hebl, Supervisor, External Operations Unit, Vital Records Section; and Oskar Anderson, Director of the Office of Health Informatics.

The State Vital Records Office 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 certificates, 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 Services website, at https://www.dhs.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 32,776 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2014, representing an increase of 2,797 marriages from the 29,979 marriages that occurred in 2013. These counts reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin (of both residents and non-residents of the state).

- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2014 was 5.7 per 1,000 total population. The marriage rate has declined since 1980, when the rate was 8.7, but in 2014 it increased to the 2007 rate.

- The marriage rate in Wisconsin has been consistently lower than the national rate for over 90 years.

- The median age for people marrying for the first time in 2014 was 27.5. In 1960, the median age at first marriage was 21.6.

- In 2014, the months with the highest number of marriages were June, August and September. August was the most popular month to marry. In each of the past eight years, the month with the most marriages averaged approximately 14-15 percent of that year's total marriages. In those same eight years, the month in which the fewest marriages occurred was January.

- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2014 (4,911), followed by Dane County (3,022), Waukesha County (1,929) and Brown County (1,674). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties.

- A total of 15,243 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2014, for a divorce rate of 2.7 per 1,000 total population. This is lower than the 2013 rate (2.8).

- In 2014, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 2.2 to 1 (there were 2.2 marriages for each divorce). This ratio had been falling since 1920, when it was 9.2 to 1; it was 6.7 to 1 in 1960; 2.2 to 1 in 1990; and 2.1 to 1 in 2000. Since 2011, it has risen slightly each year.

- The highest number of divorces in 2014 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,291 divorces and 7 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,296 divorces and 4 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,083 divorces and 1 annulment), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.

- Fifty-two percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2014 involved families with children under 18 years of age. Among divorces involving children, an average of 1.9 children were affected by each divorce.

Table 1. Marriages and Marriage Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2014

Year	Number of Wisconsin Marriages	Wisconsin Marriage Rate*	United States Marriage Rate*
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	8.2
2005	33,876	6.1	7.6
2006	33,437	6.0	7.5
2007	32,159	5.7	7.3
2008	31,444	5.6	7.1
2009	30,057	5.3	6.8
2010	29,952	5.3	6.8
2011	30,287	5.3	6.8
2012	30,940	5.4	6.8
2013	29,979	5.2	+
2014	32,776	5.7	+

Source: U.S. marriage rates are from the National Center for Health Statistics, *National Vital Statistics Reports*. Wisconsin numbers and rates are from the State Vital Records Office, Division of Public Health, Department of Health Services. The Wisconsin marriage rate for 2014 was calculated using 2013 population figures.

*   Rates shown are marriages per 1,000 total population.
\+   The national marriage rates for 2013 and 2014 were not available for this report.

Note: The Wisconsin numbers and rates reflect marriages that occurred in Wisconsin. The U.S. marriage rates for 200 2012 are provisional.

- A total of 32,776 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2014, representing an increase of 2,797 marriages from the 29,979 marriages that occurred in 2013.

- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2014 was 5.7 per 1,000 total population. The marriage rate had been declining since 1980, when the rate was 8.7, but in 2014 it increased to the 2007 rate.

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Table 2. Median Age at First Marriage and All Remarriages, Wisconsin 1960-2014

Year	First Marriage	All Remarriages
1960	21.6	42.5
1965	21.6	42.8
1970	21.7	40.0
1975	21.8	34.8
1980	22.6	33.3
1985	23.8	35.3
1990	24.7	40.0
1995	25.3	41.3
2000	25.5	43.2
2001	25.7	43.8
2002	25.6	44.2
2003	25.6	44.7
2004	25.7	45.2
2005	25.7	45.8
2006	25.9	45.9
2007	26.0	46.4
2008	26.1	46.6
2009	26.3	46.9
2010	26.5	47.3
2011	26.8	47.4
2012	27.0	47.1
2013	27.2	47.8
2014	27.5	47.6

Source: State Vital Records Office, Division of Public Health, Department of Health Services.

Note: The median age is one way of expressing the average age, and represents the midpoint of all people in the group (half are older and half are younger than the median age). For example, in 2014 the median age for people marrying for the first time was 27.5, meaning that half of those being married for the first time in 2014 were younger and half were older than 27.5. The numbers in this table reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in the stated years.

- The median age for people marrying for the first time in 2014 was 27.5. In 1960, the median age at first marriage was 21.6.

- The median age for people remarrying in 2014 was 47.6, compared to 42.5 in 1960.

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Table 3. Marriages and Remarriages by Age, Wisconsin 2014

Age in Years	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More
	48,095	**13,840**	**3,007**	**610**
16	17			
17	50			
18	316			
19	585			
20	980	8		
21	1,456	15		
22	2,006	20		
23	2,755	58	2	
24	3,521	70	1	
25-29	19,177	1,041	31	1
30-34	9,806	2,381	137	8
35-39	3,599	2,429	298	31
40-44	1,558	2,216	498	81
45-49	914	1,895	642	112
50-54	671	1,584	531	126
55-59	382	1,000	374	112
60-64	182	518	248	74
65-69	71	300	127	36
70-74	23	171	78	14
75+	26	134	40	15

Source: State Vital Records Office, Division of Public Health, Department of Health Services.

Note: Totals will not add to the total number of marriages occurring in 2014, as each person who was married is counted once.

- For people marrying for the first time, the age group with the highest number of people being married is 25-29.

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2014

County	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
State Total	**32,776**	**1,102**	**1,150**	**1,295**	**1,559**	**3,135**	**4,786**	**3,234**	**4,968**	**4,258**	**3,932**	**1,626**	**1,731**
Adams	135	4	7	3	5	9	19	16	23	21	20	3	5
Ashland	110	2	1	3	1	9	16	17	28	18	11	1	3
Barron	261	6	6	5	13	18	34	30	45	43	40	9	12
Bayfield	145	4	3	4	4	4	23	20	36	22	16	2	7
Brown	1,674	60	66	76	75	178	245	136	246	226	200	72	94
Buffalo	78	1		5	3	5	10	12	11	10	12	7	2
Burnett	105	3	2	4	4	4	21	15	17	12	11	7	5
Calumet	253	7	4	3	4	26	41	28	41	38	41	9	11
Chippewa	420	11	18	11	19	38	58	41	81	55	47	19	22
Clark	180	3	5	6	9	20	22	17	28	25	26	11	8
Columbia	469	14	14	29	19	44	67	46	63	55	60	34	24
Crawford	111	6	1	6	5	9	17	7	13	20	18	3	6
Dane	3,022	90	102	104	138	290	574	256	422	337	339	190	180
Dodge	432	15	18	20	16	48	51	49	61	46	53	24	31
Door	427	7	5	6	7	44	68	42	86	82	51	18	11
Douglas	227	8	12	13	7	17	25	29	36	38	22	8	12
Dunn	229	4	4	13	8	21	30	23	39	39	37	3	8
Eau Claire	629	24	23	21	28	65	82	55	105	91	81	26	28
Florence	34	1	2		1	4	6	5	6	1	4	2	2
Fond du Lac	551	19	15	21	42	49	70	60	88	69	68	22	28
Forest	58	2	2	1	4	7	9	3	10	8	7	1	4
Grant	243	8	11	7	15	25	39	22	27	37	28	12	12
Green	166	2	11	9	11	19	19	11	26	18	23	5	12
Green Lake	162	6	1	3	3	13	22	21	34	21	27	9	2
Iowa	228	4	5	8	11	24	33	28	35	35	31	12	2
Iron	33	2	1	3	1	1	7	5	6	2	2	2	1
Jackson	110	4	2	2	6	10	12	14	16	19	14	5	6
Jefferson	462	17	17	23	22	48	75	43	67	55	55	19	21
Juneau	123	3	6	5	11	11	15	11	16	15	15	6	9
Kenosha	764	19	16	26	40	70	121	69	118	97	102	43	43
Kewaunee	122	2	6	1	5	9	21	16	19	17	18	2	6
La Crosse	710	26	30	28	40	81	89	71	121	70	80	44	30
Lafayette	89	1	1	4	5	6	19	9	10	13	7	7	7
Langlade	98	4	3	7	5	6	18	9	13	14	10	5	4
Lincoln	169	8	13	2	8	18	18	15	28	23	21	9	6
Manitowoc	457	19	22	24	22	41	59	47	75	56	44	22	26
Marathon	794	29	23	29	26	76	117	80	118	101	100	43	52
Marinette	194	11	6	9	7	12	30	23	26	27	21	11	11
Marquette	80	8		4	7	9	10	9	10	7	9	4	3
Menominee	20					1	3	4	4		5	2	1
Milwaukee	4,911	180	218	242	300	450	737	446	681	554	537	297	269

Table 4. **Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2014**

County	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monroe	277	9	12	14	17	23	35	23	41	33	45	11	14
Oconto	178	7	6	8	8	16	25	21	25	21	17	13	11
Oneida	234	7	9	6	12	18	29	26	44	28	28	10	17
Outagamie	1,212	46	50	56	53	122	142	112	184	147	167	69	64
Ozaukee	423	18	7	9	14	38	59	42	73	61	56	20	26
Pepin	75	1		2	5	4	15	7	16	14	9	1	1
Pierce	172	3	2	4	11	16	32	19	30	23	19	8	5
Polk	252	8	4	7	5	15	29	30	47	50	34	12	11
Portage	336	9	8	22	12	34	45	31	55	35	45	21	19
Price	74	2	4	2	3	14	14	6	9	8	6	2	4
Racine	853	29	37	36	41	79	125	89	117	102	102	51	45
Richland	94	2	5	2	3	12	12	10	9	15	11	7	6
Rock	754	24	23	32	37	84	124	75	100	105	88	19	43
Rusk	84	3	3	3	6	5	13	7	14	13	10	2	5
St. Croix	474	15	12	18	18	48	73	54	76	69	50	18	23
Sauk	580	21	22	34	25	64	75	58	78	74	72	24	33
Sawyer	108	5	5	1	1	4	16	12	14	29	11	6	4
Shawano	228	14	7	8	9	24	36	15	35	40	31	4	5
Sheboygan	743	24	24	24	27	59	96	81	142	107	82	28	49
Taylor	103	3	4	6	8	10	15	10	14	21	9	1	2
Trempealeau	183	6	5	9	10	18	28	16	22	30	22	5	12
Vernon	206	5	6	6	10	23	26	25	31	26	27	13	8
Vilas	188	6	6	1	2	16	29	20	41	41	17	4	5
Walworth	952	30	26	27	28	106	121	117	162	136	118	38	43
Washburn	113	2	8	5	7	10	20	15	14	15	10	3	4
Washington	614	23	21	20	33	62	94	60	83	80	77	31	30
Waukesha	1,929	61	55	61	92	202	265	212	299	253	232	95	102
Waupaca	369	9	15	16	14	34	57	31	55	57	43	19	19
Waushara	137	5	3	5	11	10	12	16	22	19	16	9	9
Winnebago	946	41	36	47	64	89	123	91	122	121	115	35	62
Wood	400	20	23	14	16	37	49	43	59	48	50	17	24

Note: These numbers represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2014.

- In 2014, the months with the highest number of marriages were June, August and September. August was the most popular month to marry and had 15 percent of the total marriages. Since at least 2000, the month in which the fewest marriages occurred was January.

- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2014 (4,911), followed by Dane County (3,022), Waukesha County (1,929) and Brown County (1,674). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties.

- The lowest number of marriages occurred in the counties of Menominee (20), Iron (33), Florence (34) and Forest (58).

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Table 5.   Divorces and Divorce Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2014

Year	Number of Wisconsin Divorces	Wisconsin Divorce Rate*	United States Divorce Rate*
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
2005	16,297	2.9	3.6
2006	16,730	3.0	3.6
2007	16,458	2.9	3.6
2008	16,885	3.0	3.5
2009	16,705	2.9	3.4
2010	17,285	3.0	3.6
2011	16,635	2.9	3.6
2012	16,332	2.9	3.4
2013	15,941	2.8	+
2014	15,243	2.7	+

Source: U.S. divorce rates are from the National Center for Health Statistics, *National Vital Statistics Reports*. Wisconsin numbers and rates are from the State Vital Records Office, Division of Public Health, Department of Health Services. The Wisconsin divorce rate for 2014 was calculated using 2013 population figures.

*   Rates shown are divorces and annulments per 1,000 total population.
+   The national divorce rates for 2013 and 2014 were not available for this report.

Notes: Wisconsin numbers and rates represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin. The U.S. divorce rate for 2012 is provisional.

- A total of 15,243 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2014, for a divorce rate of 2.7 per 1,000 population. This is lower than the 2013 rate.

- In 2014, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 2.2 to 1 (there were 2.2 marriages for each divorce). This ratio had been falling since 1920, when it was 9.2 to 1; it was 6.7 to 1 in 1960; 2.2 to 1 in 1990; and 2.1 to 1 in 2000. Since 2011, it has risen slightly each year.

Table 6. Divorces and Annulments by County, Wisconsin 2014

County	Divorces	Annulments	County	Divorces	Annulments
Total	**15,223**	**20**			
Adams	53		Marathon	366	
Ashland	39		Marinette	101	
Barron	143		Marquette	60	
Bayfield	36		Menominee	2	
Brown	651		Milwaukee	2,291	7
Buffalo	31		Monroe	127	1
Burnett	45		Oconto	124	
Calumet	111		Oneida	126	
Chippewa	196		Outagamie	497	1
Clark	79		Ozaukee	248	
Columbia	185		Pepin	18	
Crawford	32		Pierce	101	
Dane	1,296	4	Polk	127	
Dodge	202		Portage	164	
Door	98		Price	46	
Douglas	134		Racine	434	
Dunn	121		Richland	41	
Eau Claire	261	1	Rock	432	
Florence	16		Rusk	42	
Fond du Lac	259	1	St. Croix	295	
Forest	26		Sauk	229	
Grant	125		Sawyer	54	
Green	103		Shawano	94	
Green Lake	64		Sheboygan	320	1
Iowa	56		Taylor	55	
Iron	15		Trempealeau	62	
Jackson	44		Vernon	74	
Jefferson	242		Vilas	63	
Juneau	73		Walworth	299	
Kenosha	507		Washburn	53	
Kewaunee	46		Washington	369	
La Crosse	282		Waukesha	1,083	1
Lafayette	39		Waupaca	158	1
Langlade	51		Waushara	64	
Lincoln	79		Winnebago	430	1
Manitowoc	223		Wood	211	1

Source: State Vital Records Office, Division of Public Health, Department of Health Services.

Note: These numbers represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin in 2014.

- The highest number of divorces in 2014 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,291 divorces and 7 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,296 divorces and 4 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,083 divorces and 1 annulment), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.

- The lowest number of divorces occurred in the counties of Menominee (2 divorces), Iron (15 divorces), Florence (16 divorces) and Pepin (18 divorces).

Table 7.   Divorces Affecting Children Under 18 Years of Age by County, Wisconsin 2014

County	Divorces Granted	Divorces Affecting Children < 18	No. of Children < 18 Affected	County	Divorces Granted	Divorces Affecting Children < 18	No. of Children < 18 Affected
State Total	**15,243**	**7,865**	**14,676**				
Adams	53	26	46	Marathon	366	194	372
Ashland	39	17	30	Marinette	101	41	70
Barron	143	67	137	Marquette	60	34	54
Bayfield	36	20	37	Menominee	2	2	4
Brown	651	333	627	Milwaukee	2,298	1,074	2,042
Buffalo	31	17	34	Monroe	128	73	136
Burnett	45	20	41	Oconto	124	61	109
Calumet	111	62	128	Oneida	126	47	71
Chippewa	196	105	206	Outagamie	498	273	497
Clark	79	48	94	Ozaukee	248	132	261
Columbia	185	87	148	Pepin	18	10	17
Crawford	32	16	31	Pierce	101	50	98
Dane	1,300	659	1,208	Polk	127	63	113
Dodge	202	93	191	Portage	164	80	161
Door	98	41	65	Price	46	22	43
Douglas	134	66	128	Racine	434	233	427
Dunn	121	63	119	Richland	41	17	26
Eau Claire	262	141	249	Rock	432	232	430
Florence	16	9	16	Rusk	42	21	37
Fond du Lac	260	141	280	St. Croix	295	170	334
Forest	26	14	21	Sauk	229	118	221
Grant	125	71	131	Sawyer	54	25	53
Green	103	56	104	Shawano	94	54	99
Green Lake	64	34	59	Sheboygan	321	175	331
Iowa	56	26	51	Taylor	55	32	62
Iron	15	6	13	Trempealeau	62	29	52
Jackson	44	30	58	Vernon	74	41	77
Jefferson	242	135	267	Vilas	63	31	60
Juneau	73	26	52	Walworth	299	165	302
Kenosha	507	287	524	Washburn	53	22	41
Kewaunee	46	30	55	Washington	369	203	379
La Crosse	282	151	257	Waukesha	1,084	586	1,080
Lafayette	39	23	43	Waupaca	159	83	144
Langlade	51	26	55	Waushara	64	30	49
Lincoln	79	43	79	Winnebago	431	235	443
Manitowoc	223	125	213	Wood	212	93	184

Source: State Vital Records Office, Division of Public Health, Department of Health Services.
Note: These numbers represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin in 2014.

- Fifty-two percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2014 involved couples with children under 18 years of age. Among divorces involving children, an average of 1.9 children were affected by each divorce.

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Technical Notes

Marriage Reporting Requirements

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 marriage certificate with the local Register of Deeds (where the marriage took place) within three (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

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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