

# Children and Families

## ***Community Strengths:***

### **POVERTY**

Poverty levels for Winnebago County are half that of the U.S. and almost 1/3 less than Wisconsin's rate.

### **HUNGER**

There are a variety of hunger relief programs available to address the daily needs of individuals in our community.

A Hunger Task Force exists for the purpose of improved coordination of food distribution services.

## ***Community Challenges:***

### **CHILD CARE**

Many people entering regulated child care field are untrained

Subsidized child care, in Winnebago County, has increased by 200% between 1998 and 2001.

Expenditures for subsidized child care, in Winnebago County, has increased by 104% since 1998.

### **HUNGER**

There has been a slight increase in meals served to seniors since 1997.

### **ABUSE**

Community needs to support seniors in overcoming barriers to report abuse incidents.

85-95% of elder abuse cases are never reported.

## ***Issues to Watch:***

### **HUNGER**

Whether community programs keep pace with the growing population of senior citizens

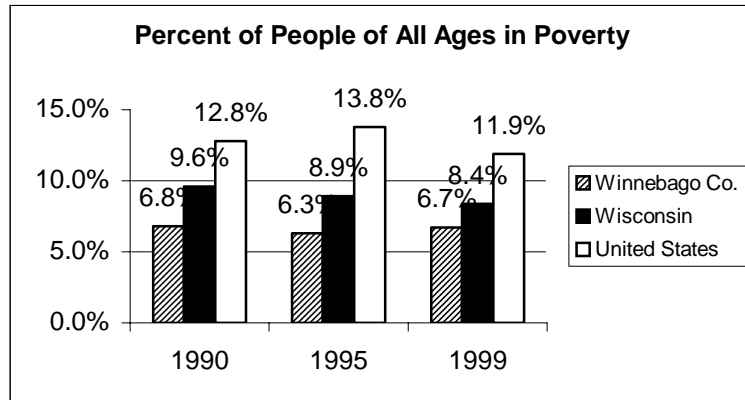
### **CHILD CARE**

With fewer people entering the child care field the trend may result in insufficient numbers of child care slots available in the community.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

While incidents of domestic abuse in Winnebago County experienced a short-lived downward trend, a sharp increase was experienced between 1999 & 2000.

## Percent of Winnebago County residents living in poverty



- The Census Bureau estimated in 1999 that 9,940 of Winnebago county residents or 6.7 percent of the population lived in poverty.
- In 1999, an estimated 2,396 children under 18 in Winnebago County lived in poverty.
- In 1999 the Census reported that 3.8 percent of Winnebago County families were living in poverty.
- The 2001 median family income in the United States was \$42,228.
- The 2001 median family income in Wisconsin was \$45,346.
- For 2001, the US poverty level was set at \$17,650 for a family of four.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
<http://www.census.gov>

**Children Under Age 18 Living in Poverty**

	Winnebago Co.	Wisconsin	United States
1990	9.0%	14.7%	19.6%
1995	9.3%	13.9%	20.8%
1999	8.1%	10.9%	17.1%

### Why are we concerned?

Living in poverty negatively impacts the quality of life because people that live in poverty do not have adequate income to meet housing, nutritional, health, and other basic needs.

### People in Poverty

Poverty rates at the city level and by household are determined from the U.S. Census that is conducted and published only every ten years. For the years between the censuses, the U.S. Census Bureau calculates estimates at the state and county levels using statistical estimation techniques.

The official definition of poverty

is set forth each year by the federal government that calculates a "poverty line" to determine who is poor. The poverty line is defined to be three times the income needed to purchase the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economy Food Plan.

Women are most likely to be victims of poverty. Across the nation, 30.8 percent of female householders, with no husband present, in 2001 were living below the poverty line compared to 5.3 percent of married-couple households.

Gender, age, and race all play a role in poverty. Education level, unemployment, and teen pregnancy have proven to be direct correlates of poverty.

## Number of meals served to Winnebago County residents 60 years or older

- On any given day, between 500 and 600 meals are served either through home delivery or meal sites. Meals are provided to Winnebago County's older persons 60 years or older who are low-income, frail, disabled, socially isolated or a minority.
- For information about food pantries and/or food distributors throughout Winnebago County, check the Information and Referral site: <http://iandr.winnefox.org>
- Wisconsin Nutrition Website offers helpful information including the Nutrition Intervention Manual: <http://www.wisnutrition.com>

### Why Are We Concerned?

Food is a basic human need. Struggling to keep food on the table for oneself and family diminishes the quality of life.



### Hunger in Winnebago County

The lack of adequate nutrition has a number of negative impacts on a community's residents including: poor health, reduced productivity, learning disabilities, and an increased demand for social services.

A number of hunger-relief services exist in the county to help alleviate hunger especially for our older population. These organizations provide groceries, meal sites, home delivered meals, nutrition education, and other services to county residents. The number of hungry people in Winnebago County is not known. The fact that these services are being utilized helps to document a food need in the county.

One agency that addresses food needs through the entire county is Advocap. Advocap

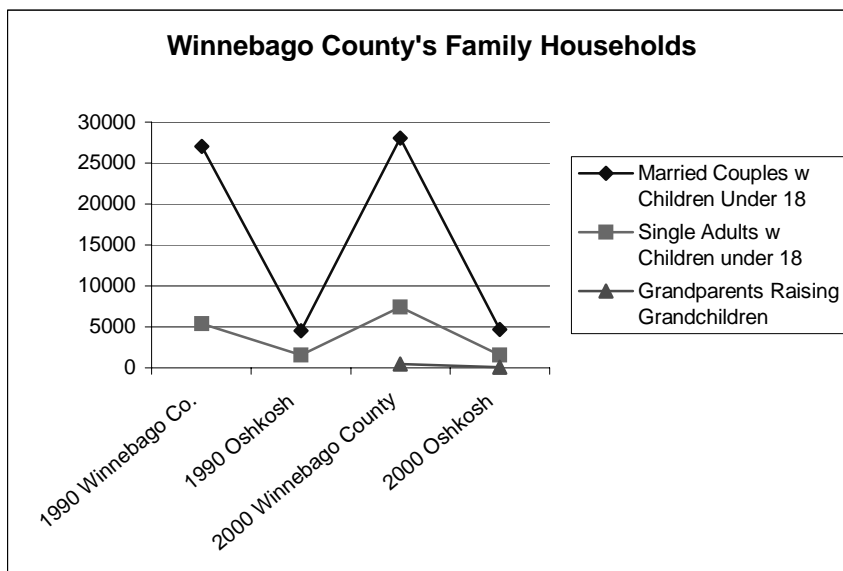
serves approximately 136,500 meals per year or 500 meals per day at 12 meal sites with special emphasis on service to older persons. The purpose of this program is to provide nutrition services that assist older individuals in Winnebago County to live independently in their communities. Participation in the meal programs does not measure all hungry people in Winnebago County. However, the combination of meals served, and utilization of all food pantries and/or food distributors does measure one aspect of hunger in our county.

Source: Winnebago County Department of Human Services, Aging Services

# Family Households

## Family households with children in Winnebago County

- In 2000, there were 37,193 households with children in Winnebago County. Almost twenty percent (7,426) were single parent or non-married couple family households.
- In 2000 grandparents headed 2.5 (442) percent of the households with children in Winnebago County. In the City of Oshkosh there are 96 households with children headed by grandparents.
- Wisconsin 2000 data indicates there were 975,905 (71%) households with children headed by a married couple and 297,634 (21%) households with children headed by a single adult.



### Why Are We Concerned?

Typically, children who grow up in married-couple families have more support and resources available to them than those who live in other family structures. The quality of life of children is likely to be higher when they live in a married-couple family.

### Married-Couple Families

Over the last few decades, changes have been occurring in the family structure. While it was typical for a child to be born to married parents and to live with them throughout childhood and adolescence, today's child is more likely to live apart from at least one parent before reaching adulthood. The increase in the divorce rate, increase in grandparents raising grandchildren and the increased number of children born out of

wedlock are responsible for the changes in family structure.

Half of all children will witness the breakup of a parent's marriage. Of these, close to half also will see the breakup of a parent's second marriage.

The U.S. Census Bureau changed the questions on the 2000 census forms making it impossible to determine the percent of children living in married-couple families. The data defines a family household as a householder and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**Wisconsin State Law requires that anyone caring for 4 or more children under the age of 7 years must have a state issued child care license.**

- Annually in Winnebago County, over \$31.2 million is spent on fees for regulated child care.
- The median household income in Winnebago County is \$44,445. The average weekly cost of full time infant child care in the county is \$143.25. Considering those figures, a family in Winnebago County should expect to pay 17% of their income for single infant childcare.
- Families whose gross income is equal to or less than 185% of the federal poverty limit meet the income requirements for participation in Wisconsin Shares, the state child care assistance program.
- The cost of full-time care for an infant has risen 24% since 1998.
- Wages for child care workers have not increased at the same rate as the cost of care.
- The average starting wage for a teacher with a 4-year degree employed in a group child care center is \$8.35 per hour.
- The fastest growing form of regulated child care is untrained, provisionally certified family child care.

Sources: *Child Care Resource and Referral, Inc.*  
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/ftp/resources/parent.html>

Wisconsin's child care regulations, although complex, have been established so that child care programs meet minimum training, health and safety standards when they provide care. The types of child care licensed by the State include *group child care centers* and *family child care homes*. Licensed group centers care for 9 or more children, while licensed family child care homes may not care for more than 8 children at one time. Typically, child care programs are licensed to care for children up to 12 years of age. The ages of children in attendance may impact the total number of children a person may care for at one time. When it passed a law stating that children in subsidized child care must be in regulated care, the State created another form of regulated family child care that is monitored by the county called certified family child care.

### **Child Care and the Local Economy**

A stable child care arrangement means that a worker can report to work on a regular schedule and stay focused on his or her job. When workers are successful, they are also more likely to be self-sufficient. Over 70% of Wisconsin's children under the age of 5 years are in some form of child care outside of the home.

According to 2000 census data, there are 9,406 children under the age of 5 years residing in Winnebago County. As of October 2002, the regulated

child care capacity in Winnebago County is 4,474 (full time equivalent) slots. It is estimated that regulated child care meets the needs of 58% of Winnebago County's children under the age of 5 years. Children who are not in regulated child care are in unregulated care with neighbors, relatives or friends.

### **The Local Child Care Workforce**

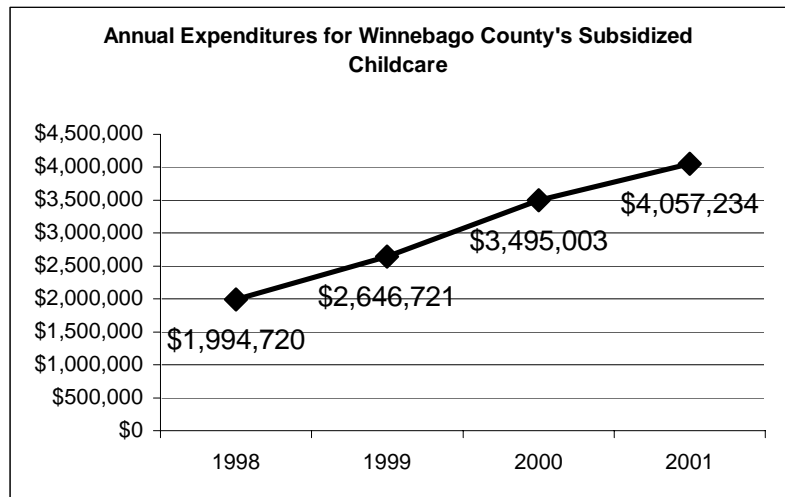
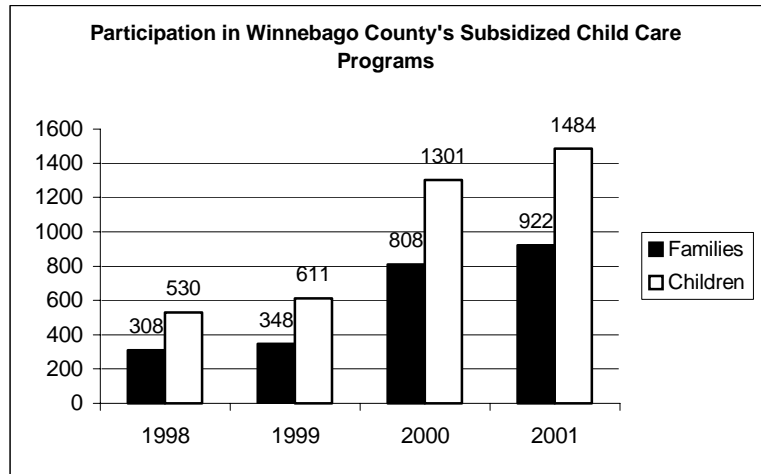
Over 950 people are employed in child care in Winnebago County. The majority of the local child care workforce is female, many of them single or the single head of household. Annually, the full-time wages for a child care teacher is \$17,368, which is under the \$18,100 federal poverty level for a family of four.

While a child care program may meet minimum regulatory requirements, it does not automatically mean that the program maintains quality standards. Quality child care starts with the teacher. Research confirms that the more training and experience a teacher has in the field of early care and education, the higher quality care and education she or he provides to children (**Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Team (1995) University of Colorado-Denver**). Teacher turnover in child care is high and, fewer people are entering the child care workforce with required qualifications.

# Subsidized Childcare

## Number of children and families participating in, and money spent on, Winnebago County's subsidized childcare programs

- Family participation in subsidized childcare in Winnebago County increased by 200% between 1998 and 2001.
- The annual expenses for subsidized child care in Winnebago County increased by \$2,062,514 (104%) since 1998.
- According to Child Care Resource and Referral, the average cost for full-time infant childcare in Winnebago County, during 2001, was approximately \$143.25 per week per child.



### Why Are We Concerned?

Many low to moderate income families find it difficult to afford childcare when working or furthering their education. A community with strong financial support for subsidized childcare enables parents to improve their situation, benefits children, and families, and enhances the quality of life.

### Subsidized Childcare

Childcare costs vary depending on the type of setting, age, number of children, and other factors.

The state's welfare program

underwent reform in September 1997. Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) was eliminated and new standards were applied to the process of obtaining subsidized childcare. This program is called Wisconsin Shares. The Wisconsin Shares program enables low-income families to work, seek employment, or attend educational and training programs by helping to finance childcare expenses. While Wisconsin Shares was designed to serve more families,

the program remains under-utilized by choice or barriers. Qualifications for this program include asset tests, income eligibility, and caregiver guidelines. However, legislation has been proposed to reduce such barriers. Various local providers subsidize childcare programs to families who don't qualify for Wisconsin Shares.

Source: Wisconsin Shares Program

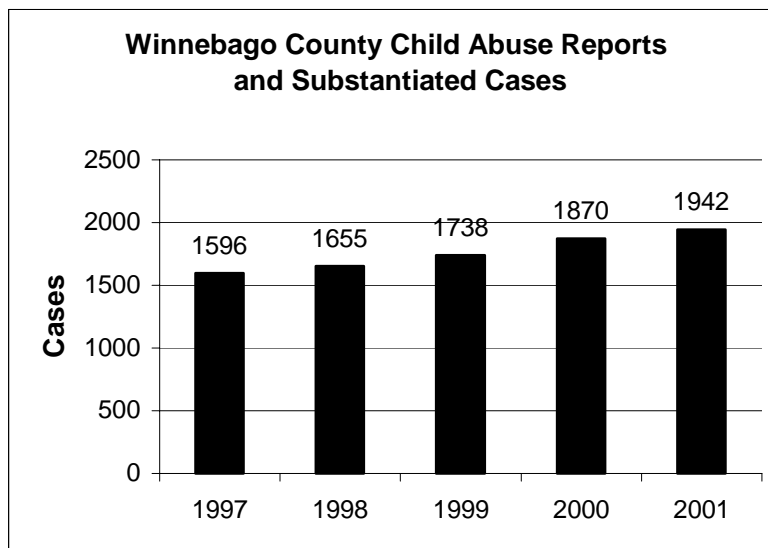
# Child Abuse and Neglect

## Winnebago County child abuse and neglect reports and substantiated cases

- In 2001, of the 40,215 reported child abuse cases in Wisconsin, 9,795 (24.4%) were substantiated.
- There were 1,942 reports of child maltreatment in Winnebago County in 2001, and 270 of those cases were substantiated. (Substantiated cases refer only to the cases where maltreatment has been confirmed)

### Why Are We Concerned?

The social problem of child maltreatment in our society presents many challenges. The long-term impact of abuse and neglect greatly reduces the quality of life for our children and our entire society.



### Child Abuse and Neglect

The safety of Winnebago County's children is the responsibility of all residents. While state law requires certain individuals who work with children to report suspected abuse, any concerned individual who suspects a child is being neglected or emotionally, physically, or sexually abused can make a referral to the Winnebago County Department of Human Services or a local law enforcement agency.

All children deserve to be safe and to have a basic level of care. When this does not occur, intervention by a social service and a law enforcement agency is

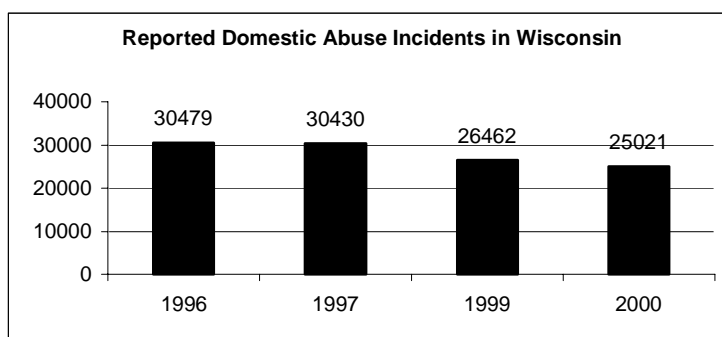
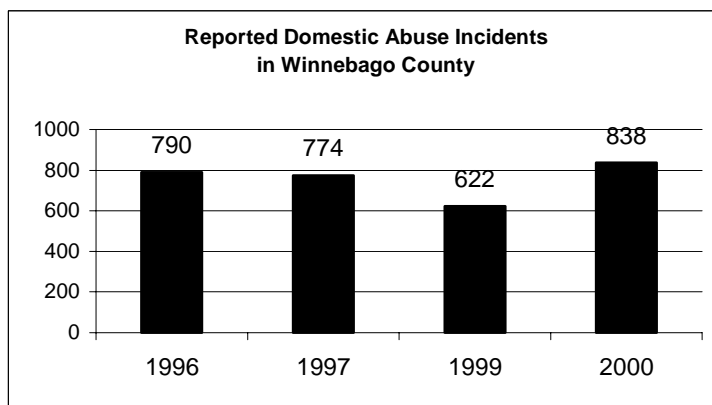
necessary. The investigation identifies families who require support and services to assure child safety and care. The Protective Service system promotes the well being of children in their home setting whenever possible or provides for another safe and stable placement.

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services and Winnebago County Department of Human Services – Access Unit  
<http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us>

# Domestic Abuse

## Number of domestic abuse incidents reported in Winnebago County

- Wisconsin data reveals that most domestic violence incidents are perpetrated by cohabitants, followed next by spouses.
- Wisconsin's Mandatory Arrest Law requires law enforcement to arrest a suspect if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person has committed a criminal act deemed to be domestic abuse.
- In 2000, 25,021 incidents of domestic abuse were reported to the Wisconsin Department of Justice. This represents a decrease from 1999 (when 26,462 incidents were reported) and is the lowest number of reported incidents in Wisconsin since 1991 (when 24,163 incidents were reported).
- In 2000, 838 incidents of domestic abuse were reported in Winnebago County. This represents an increase of 216 incidents reported in 1999 and the highest number reported in four years.



### Why Are We Concerned?

For many years, domestic abuse was considered a personal matter and law enforcement officials looked the other way. Current legislation requires arrests to be made so batterers are now being held accountable for their actions. When abusers are held responsible, the quality of life of domestic abuse victims can begin to improve.

### Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse destroys families. It has negative life-long impacts on children. In addition to the physical wounds caused by domestic abuse, power and control are used to intimidate, threaten, isolate, and financially and emotionally trap victims. It knows no boundaries and affects all socio-economic classes, age levels, and ethnic groups.

Wisconsin law defines domestic abuse as the intentional infliction of physical pain, injury or illness,

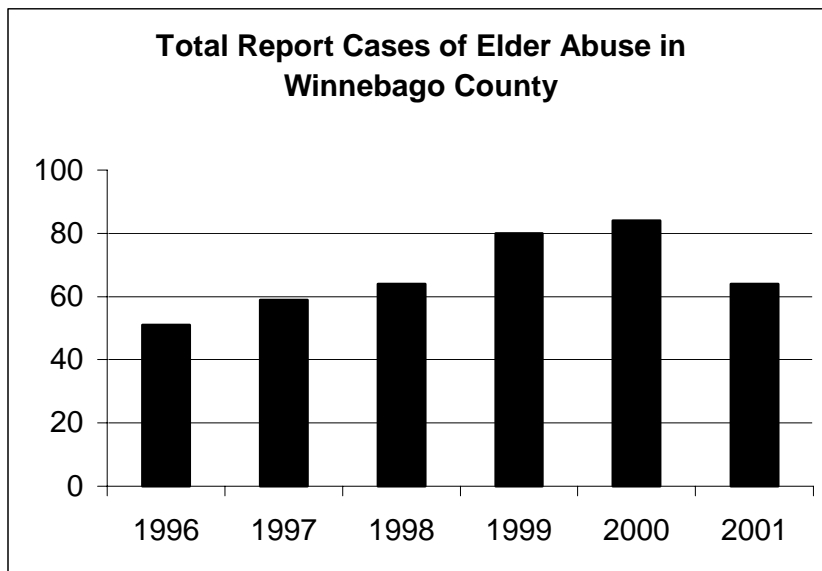
intentional impairment of a physical condition, a sexual assault, or a physical act that causes another person to reasonably fear that any of these actions will happen. The law applies to acts by adult persons against a spouse, former spouse, or against an adult with whom the alleged abuser resides, or formerly resided with, or with whom the alleged abuser has a child in common. Wisconsin's Mandatory Arrest Law requires an officer to make an arrest if there are reasonable grounds to believe a person has committed a criminal act deemed to be domestic abuse.

This data is limited due to the complicated dynamics of domestic abuse and because many incidents are never reported.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Justice  
<http://www.doj.state.wi.us/cvs/pubs/pubs.asp>

## Number of elder abuse reports in Winnebago County

- Neglect is the most common form of elder abuse.
- Self-abuse or self-neglect was the most frequently reported category of elder abuse, comprising 54 percent countywide in 2000-2001.
- The majority of alleged abusers are relatives of the victim.
- Female victims, at 66%, outnumbered male victims, at 34% (2000)
- There were 3,152 reports of elder abuse in Wisconsin during 2000. One out of every 12 involved either a fatal or life-threatening situation.



### Why Are We Concerned?

Inflicting pain, misusing money, or denying adequate food and shelter to an elder constitute abuse and neglect. The elderly deserve to live out their lives without abuse and in an environment that preserves their quality of life.

### Elder Abuse

Elder abuse reporting is voluntary and, unlike child abuse, is not required by medical professionals or others. Suspected abuses can be reported to the Winnebago County Department of Human Services or any law enforcement agency.

If an elder person is legally competent, he or she may refuse an investigation or any help that is offered. Thus, the number of reports and those substantiated do not totally embrace the problem of elder abuse. It is estimated that between 85 and 95 percent of elder abuse cases are never reported. Shame, fear, or not knowing how to get help are several reasons abuse may not be reported.

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services & Winnebago County Department of Human Services*