

2005

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 2005. 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 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 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 33,876 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2005, representing a slight decrease from the 34,056 marriages that occurred in 2004. These counts reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin (of both residents and non-residents of the state).
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2005 was 6.1 per 1,000 total population, lower than the 2004 rate (6.2). 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 September 2005 was 7.5 per 1,000 population.
- The median age for first marriages in 2005 was 25.0 years for women and 26.4 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 2005, the months with the highest number of marriages were July, August and September. August was the most popular month to marry.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2005 (4,773), followed by Dane County (2,721), Waukesha County (2,164), and Brown County (1,635). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties. All of these counties, except for Brown County, had a decrease in the number of marriages from 2004 to 2005.
- A total of 16,297 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2005, for a divorce rate of 2.9 per 1,000 total population. This is lower than the 2004 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 September 2005, the provisional United States divorce rate was 3.6.
- The total number of Wisconsin divorces that occurred in 2005 was 48 percent of the total number of Wisconsin marriages that occurred. This is slightly lower than the 2004 percentage (49 percent).
- The highest number of divorces occurred in Milwaukee County (2,408 divorces and 13 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,335 divorces and 7 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,051 divorces and 2 annulments), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- Fifty-three percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2005 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, 1920-2005

<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

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 2005 was calculated using 2004 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 2004 is provisional based on marriages that occurred in the 12 months ending in December, 2004. The U.S. marriage rate for 2005 is provisional based on marriages that occurred in the 12 months ending in September, 2005.

- A total of 33,876 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2005, representing a slight decrease from the 34,056 marriages that occurred in 2004.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2005 was 6.1 per 1,000 total population, lower than the 2004 rate (6.2). 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 1960-2005

<u>Year</u>	<u>First Marriages</u>		<u>All Remarriages</u>	
	<u>Bride</u>	<u>Groom</u>	<u>Bride</u>	<u>Groom</u>
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

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 2005 was 25.0 years for women and 26.4 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 2005

Age in Years	Bride					Groom				
	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More
	33,876	24,259	7,476	1,744	397	33,876	24,334	7,536	1,669	337
16	81	81				2	2			
17	113	113				30	30			
18	501	501				151	151			
19	835	833	2			368	368			
20	1,179	1,174	5			640	635	5		
21	1,475	1,458	17			1,014	1,009	5		
22	2,132	2,098	34			1,353	1,346	7		
23	2,460	2,405	55			1,895	1,880	15		
24	2,544	2,471	73			2,240	2,193	46	1	
25-29	9,273	8,287	949	36	1	9,813	9,274	525	14	
30-34	4,355	2,816	1,368	155	16	5,433	4,147	1,210	70	6
35-39	2,783	1,073	1,361	304	45	3,361	1,754	1,397	192	18
40-44	2,209	561	1,225	359	64	2,516	819	1,374	286	37
45-49	1,695	231	1,012	366	86	1,939	424	1,138	308	69
50-54	1,103	112	652	249	90	1,351	190	754	336	71
55-59	538	26	329	133	50	805	65	457	223	60
60-64	315	12	188	87	28	432	29	251	116	36
65-69	136	4	88	35	9	255	10	162	64	19
70-74	74	3	60	7	4	123	5	79	28	11
75+	75		58	13	4	155	3	111	31	10

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 2005.

- 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 2005

<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	33,876	1,170	1,394	1,362	2,243	3,106	4,231	4,311	4,355	4,240	4,195	1,529	1,740
Adams	117	5	5	6	8	16	16	12	15	13	7	4	10
Ashland	104	4	3	3	5	4	17	15	21	12	16	2	2
Barron	298	11	15	8	16	24	40	52	39	31	38	11	13
Bayfield	131	4	2	3	4	9	13	27	27	22	10	6	4
Brown	1,635	60	64	56	113	146	226	209	198	200	204	68	91
Buffalo	79	1	5	1	7	8	10	4	11	16	9	3	4
Burnett	124	1	7	6	4	8	23	10	22	20	9	4	10
Calumet	215	7	6	5	17	24	25	17	31	34	31	8	10
Chippewa	425	19	8	17	24	40	55	50	58	52	57	22	23
Clark	208	8	9	7	19	19	30	19	28	27	30	4	8
Columbia	393	14	13	11	28	32	49	38	49	54	64	16	25
Crawford	114	1	3	3	12	8	14	14	14	16	10	10	9
Dane	2,721	104	117	110	176	291	344	391	323	305	330	119	111
Dodge	480	16	30	18	40	34	66	56	51	62	53	24	30
Door	451	16	8	18	15	28	71	60	71	64	66	17	17
Douglas	232	5	7	14	15	22	28	26	37	35	24	7	12
Dunn	239	10	12	14	14	14	31	37	27	30	27	12	11
Eau Claire	618	14	30	17	37	76	77	74	85	79	65	26	38
Florence	30	1	1	1	1	3	5	3	3	4	4	1	3
Fond du Lac	642	21	19	27	46	76	87	79	81	78	80	22	26
Forest	60	1		4	3	4	8	8	12	8	8	2	2
Grant	315	10	5	7	21	39	41	41	39	39	46	14	13
Green	186	3	9	7	11	14	24	13	25	25	32	14	9
Green Lake	170	10	7	6	13	17	21	15	25	20	22	5	9
Iowa	162		5	7	9	14	15	22	30	24	24	6	6
Iron	40	2			1	3	4	5	2	12	7	1	3
Jackson	134	6	7	8	9	10	9	10	18	21	18	10	8
Jefferson	498	16	20	22	30	55	60	43	56	62	78	30	26
Juneau	174	7	5	9	18	22	21	24	18	17	19	9	5
Kenosha	782	23	38	40	54	62	96	97	97	95	99	47	34
Kewaunee	91	1	4	2	8	8	13	7	9	13	20	4	2
La Crosse	779	22	23	32	61	74	105	94	106	94	92	36	40
Lafayette	72		2	6	9	7	10	11	10	6	9	1	1
Langlade	108	4	3	3	4	5	10	21	17	15	10	3	13
Lincoln	207	6	10	10	11	15	25	26	25	32	28	6	13
Manitowoc	525	15	20	20	37	49	59	66	66	64	78	27	24
Marathon	846	28	36	34	44	76	121	97	125	107	109	26	43
Marinette	281	13	6	11	18	31	34	40	45	28	36	9	10
Marquette	117	3	8	3	9	18	18	13	16	13	8	4	4
Menominee	31	1	1		2	5	3	5	4	1	3	1	5
Milwaukee	4,773	196	237	251	348	417	535	591	542	589	528	278	261
Monroe	264	14	16	13	16	19	29	31	34	35	32	11	14

Marriages

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2005

<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	199	4	8	6	11	17	20	31	23	31	28	8	12
Oneida	275	6	14	14	9	20	38	35	36	47	38	5	13
Outagamie	1,309	54	53	51	88	114	157	155	177	155	181	57	67
Ozaukee	486	13	13	21	25	41	64	75	59	52	74	23	26
Pepin	42	3	1	2	4	4	5	6	6	3	4	1	3
Pierce	176	9	9	7	15	15	23	17	28	18	22	5	8
Polk	282	12	11	15	19	22	34	39	33	34	34	12	17
Portage	418	17	21	15	27	38	50	55	63	46	51	14	21
Price	98	3	5	4	4	8	11	17	13	10	16	3	4
Racine	1,023	36	48	43	70	100	127	132	135	133	103	56	40
Richland	130	5	12	2	12	9	12	18	12	17	18	5	8
Rock	869	23	40	41	67	79	104	123	114	95	101	36	46
Rusk	97	2	2	2	5	7	12	11	18	15	15	3	5
St. Croix	398	9	17	8	33	22	52	42	58	52	66	14	25
Sauk	561	17	31	30	37	59	62	50	61	74	85	25	30
Sawyer	137	5	6	9	7	9	12	15	28	20	18	3	5
Shawano	245	9	10	11	11	30	28	33	25	30	32	11	15
Sheboygan	792	29	31	29	54	69	83	106	107	94	117	32	41
Taylor	124	4	3	2	4	14	17	22	18	13	15	2	10
Trempealeau	168	3	8	7	11	15	25	17	15	27	23	6	11
Vernon	201	6	6	7	15	10	25	31	31	32	20	12	6
Vilas	141	5	4	2	7	8	17	14	27	34	13	5	5
Walworth	825	25	28	33	55	66	122	125	105	111	95	31	29
Washburn	134	3	9	7	4	6	16	17	28	17	16	3	8
Washington	666	25	25	25	47	63	90	74	73	86	75	33	50
Waukesha	2,164	63	63	60	132	223	290	285	273	288	264	107	116
Waupaca	410	15	19	11	30	35	43	62	60	53	50	14	18
Waushara	161	4	4	7	19	18	26	18	19	17	14	4	11
Winnebago	958	37	46	35	53	92	121	131	128	104	110	44	57
Wood	516	21	21	16	31	47	57	82	70	58	57	25	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 2005.

- In 2005, the months with the highest number of marriages were July, August and September. August was the most popular month to marry.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2005 (4,773), followed by Dane County (2,721), Waukesha County (2,164), and Brown County (1,635). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties. Each of these counties had a decrease in the number of marriages from 2004 to 2005 except for Brown County, whose number of marriages increased slightly.
- The lowest number of marriages occurred in the counties of Florence (30), Menominee (31) and Iron (40).

Table 5. Divorces and Divorce Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2005

<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

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 2005 was calculated using 2004 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 2004 is provisional based on divorces that occurred in the 12 months ending in September, 2004. The U.S. divorce rate for 2005 is provisional based on divorces that occurred in the 12 months ending in September, 2005.

- A total of 16,297 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2005, for a divorce rate of 2.9 per 1,000 population. This is lower than the 2004 rate (3.0).
- The total number of Wisconsin divorces that occurred in 2005 was 48 percent of the total number of Wisconsin marriages that occurred. This is slightly lower than the 2004 percentage (49 percent).

Divorces

Table 6. Divorces and Annulments by County, Wisconsin 2005

<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>
Total	16,237	60			
Adams	56		Marathon	295	
Ashland	44		Marinette	127	
Barron	170	1	Marquette	44	1
Bayfield	50		Menominee	1	
Brown	740		Milwaukee	2,408	13
Buffalo	41		Monroe	161	
Burnett	60		Oconto	116	
Calumet	120		Oneida	127	
Chippewa	184	1	Outagamie	551	1
Clark	89		Ozaukee	205	
Columbia	184		Pepin	14	
Crawford	47		Pierce	107	
Dane	1,335	7	Polk	147	
Dodge	259	3	Portage	190	
Door	96		Price	46	
Douglas	150		Racine	451	1
Dunn	84		Richland	45	
Eau Claire	319	2	Rock	557	3
Florence	13		Rusk	63	
Fond du Lac	282	2	St. Croix	212	
Forest	34		Sauk	221	2
Grant	117	1	Sawyer	53	
Green	151	1	Shawano	121	
Green Lake	65		Sheboygan	321	
Iowa	62		Taylor	55	
Iron	20		Trempealeau	86	1
Jackson	68		Vernon	75	
Jefferson	240		Vilas	72	
Juneau	101		Walworth	292	1
Kenosha	626	7	Washburn	74	
Kewaunee	47	1	Washington	378	2
La Crosse	292	1	Waukesha	1,051	2
Lafayette	39		Waupaca	190	
Langlade	66	1	Waushara	92	
Lincoln	70		Winnebago	517	2
Manitowoc	194	1	Wood	257	2

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 2005.

- The highest number of divorces occurred in Milwaukee County (2,408 divorces and 13 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,335 divorces and 7 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,051 divorces and 2 annulments), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- The lowest number of divorces occurred in the counties of Menominee (1 divorce), Florence (13 divorces) and Pepin (14 divorces).

Divorces

Table 7. Divorces Affecting Children Under 18 Years of Age by County, Wisconsin 2005

<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	16,297	8,673	16,038				
Adams	56	31	59	Marathon	295	176	342
Ashland	44	17	30	Marinette	127	67	111
Barron	171	102	201	Marquette	45	25	51
Bayfield	50	20	35	Menominee	1	1	2
Brown	740	402	740	Milwaukee	2,421	1,132	2,057
Buffalo	41	21	46	Monroe	161	99	180
Burnett	60	37	77	Oconto	116	62	115
Calumet	120	65	125	Oneida	127	69	125
Chippewa	185	99	187	Outagamie	552	326	621
Clark	89	48	100	Ozaukee	205	100	189
Columbia	184	90	166	Pepin	14	7	14
Crawford	47	26	45	Pierce	107	51	85
Dane	1,342	692	1,243	Polk	147	80	156
Dodge	262	141	259	Portage	190	96	179
Door	96	47	84	Price	46	21	40
Douglas	150	72	124	Racine	452	249	445
Dunn	84	47	96	Richland	45	24	46
Eau Claire	321	167	331	Rock	560	324	600
Florence	13	4	7	Rusk	63	39	67
Fond du Lac	284	146	272	St. Croix	212	109	184
Forest	34	20	46	Sauk	223	105	209
Grant	118	64	135	Sawyer	53	31	56
Green	152	97	178	Shawano	121	67	128
Green Lake	65	37	71	Sheboygan	321	176	327
Iowa	62	31	59	Taylor	55	32	50
Iron	20	10	25	Trempealeau	87	57	95
Jackson	68	34	62	Vernon	75	48	81
Jefferson	240	146	272	Vilas	72	38	63
Juneau	101	55	104	Walworth	293	154	278
Kenosha	633	349	652	Washburn	74	41	75
Kewaunee	48	26	52	Washington	380	218	415
La Crosse	293	167	329	Waukesha	1,053	558	1,022
Lafayette	39	21	44	Waupaca	190	108	189
Langlade	67	36	64	Waushara	92	53	95
Lincoln	70	39	60	Winnebago	519	286	525
Manitowoc	195	91	163	Wood	259	147	278

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 2005.

- Fifty-three percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2005 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.