

2010

Wisconsin
Marriages
and **Divorces**



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

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Introduction

This report presents key information about marriages and divorces that occurred in Wisconsin in 2010. 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 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, State Vital Records Office, and Jane Kraus, Supervisor, Registration and Statistics Unit, State Vital Records Office.

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 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 Services website, at <http://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 29,952 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2010, representing a slight decrease of just over 100 marriages from the 30,057 marriages that occurred in 2009. 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 2010 was 5.3 per 1,000 total population, identical to the 2009 rate (5.3). The marriage rate has been gradually declining 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 June 2010 was 7.0 per 1,000 population.
- The median age for first marriages in 2010 was 25.7 years for women and 27.2 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 2010, the months with the highest number of marriages were August, July and June. August was the most popular month to marry. In each of the past six years, the month with the most marriages averaged approximately 14 percent of that year's total marriages. In those same six years, the month in which the fewest marriages occurred was January.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2010 (4,228), followed by Dane County (2,613), Waukesha County (1,860) and Brown County (1,546). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties. Of these four counties, Milwaukee and Brown had a decrease in the number of marriages from 2009 to 2010.
- A total of 17,285 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2010, for a divorce rate of 3.0 per 1,000 total population. This is slightly higher than the 2009 rate (2.9).
- In 2010, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 1.7 to 1 (there were 1.7 marriages for each divorce). This ratio has 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.
- The highest number of divorces in 2010 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,341 divorces and 1 annulment), followed by Dane County (1,490 divorces and 11 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,079 divorces and 3 annulments), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- Fifty-three percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2010 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, 1920-2010

<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
2005	33,876	6.1	7.5
2006	33,437	6.0	7.3
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	+

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 2010 was calculated using 2009 population figures.

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

+ Beginning with 2010 marriages, the national rate will only be released annually and was not available for this report

Notes: The Wisconsin numbers and rates reflect marriages that occurred in Wisconsin. The U.S. marriage rate for 2009 is provisional based on marriages that occurred in the 12 months ending in December, 2009.

- A total of 29,952 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2010, representing a slight decrease of just over 100 marriages from the 30,057 marriages that occurred in 2009.
- The number of marriages has been declining annually since 1980.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2010 was 5.3 per 1,000 total population, identical to the 2009 rate (5.3). The marriage rate has been gradually declining since 1980, when the rate was 8.7.

Table 2. Median Age at First Marriage and All Remarriages, Wisconsin 1960-2010

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
2008	25.3	26.8	45.2	48.0
2009	25.5	27.1	45.5	48.2
2010	25.7	27.2	45.7	48.9

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 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 2010 was 25.7 years for women and 27.2 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 2010

Age in Years	Bride					Groom				
	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More
	29,952	22,053	6,100	1,511	288	29,952	22,103	6,243	1,304	302
16	38	38				2	2			
17	75	75				12	12			
18	344	344				107	107			
19	544	540	4			295	295			
20	830	825	5			487	485	2		
21	1,114	1,106	8			678	676	1	1	
22	1,602	1,581	21			990	984	6		
23	1,995	1,935	60			1,470	1,453	16	1	
24	2,225	2,159	65	1		1,787	1,759	28		
25-29	9,353	8,546	785	22		9,276	8,805	464	7	
30-34	4,310	3,009	1,178	111	12	5,434	4,409	973	51	1
35-39	2,275	1,014	1,017	224	20	2,870	1,618	1,111	126	15
40-44	1,635	437	889	265	44	1,918	748	962	188	20
45-49	1,489	242	859	316	72	1,588	392	896	242	58
50-54	999	126	571	242	60	1,233	204	718	242	69
55-59	560	52	296	164	48	824	92	470	207	55
60-64	311	16	184	92	19	515	46	284	133	52
65-69	136	6	81	42	7	223	10	136	61	16
70-74	61	2	40	15	4	124	2	87	27	8
75+	56		37	17	2	119	4	89	18	8

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

Note: Totals shown represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2010.

- For first-time brides and grooms, the highest number of marriages occurred between the ages of 23 and 29.

Marriages

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2010

<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	29,952	1,026	1,086	1,187	1,467	2,914	3,940	3,951	4,221	3,596	3,916	1,250	1,398
Adams	127	2	8	11	1	9	19	19	15	22	12	3	6
Ashland	139	2	4	4	6	10	17	28	24	24	13	1	6
Barron	314	16	8	5	20	18	49	50	54	32	44	9	9
Bayfield	126	1	2	2	4	5	23	20	21	29	9	3	7
Brown	1,546	66	43	51	89	146	209	204	208	175	209	69	77
Buffalo	63				3	4	8	10	14	14	7	1	2
Burnett	80	4	2	5	3	4	14	14	15	11	5	1	2
Calumet	213	8	3	8	8	30	21	36	24	24	35	10	6
Chippewa	346	16	8	13	15	41	59	53	43	34	46	6	12
Clark	191	2	11	8	18	18	22	20	33	20	22	10	7
Columbia	380	9	15	16	20	46	50	40	62	36	61	12	13
Crawford	92	1	4	4	10	10	10	10	18	7	14	2	2
Dane	2,613	85	98	102	111	283	321	362	365	311	324	110	141
Dodge	381	18	7	23	18	36	46	53	41	40	58	17	24
Door	411	6	8	8	16	32	67	64	77	63	47	12	11
Douglas	212	14	8	7	13	17	27	27	33	21	30	9	6
Dunn	209	7	8	15	7	25	26	28	28	24	19	11	11
Eau Claire	623	30	24	18	31	58	86	82	86	74	80	26	28
Florence	31	1	1	1	1		4	5	6	8	2		2
Fond du Lac	497	13	19	22	35	55	74	63	64	38	76	20	18
Forest	47	1	1	1	2	4	9	9	8	4	7	1	
Grant	268	7	2	10	14	37	37	43	32	35	26	20	5
Green	157	6	7	4	3	16	26	21	22	9	26	11	6
Green Lake	168	6	2	3	6	16	23	19	32	29	22	4	6
Iowa	157	2	7	5	6	14	29	16	21	26	25	3	3
Iron	29		1	1		3	3	4	4	4	3	2	4
Jackson	84	2	6	5	6	9	13	6	17	3	14		3
Jefferson	461	18	12	13	21	46	54	58	67	57	63	24	28
Juneau	147	5	9	11	8	6	16	18	21	23	16	8	6
Kenosha	665	15	26	37	28	61	88	83	106	77	85	25	34
Kewaunee	90	3	2	1	9	4	6	13	14	17	16	2	3
La Crosse	677	18	19	19	33	68	106	93	106	61	101	30	23
Lafayette	93	3	2	2	5	5	14	17	11	8	14	8	4
Langlade	99	2	4	3	5	8	15	13	17	12	16	1	3
Lincoln	133	4	7	3	4	15	25	17	17	11	16	4	10
Manitowoc	471	22	14	12	21	38	66	78	62	56	63	26	13
Marathon	715	18	35	23	35	75	92	81	110	89	89	25	43
Marinette	216	5	6	3	9	19	28	35	34	30	32	8	7
Marquette	75	6	2	1	8	9	9	11	8	5	10	4	2
Menominee	27		1	1	2	3	3	6	3	2	3	3	
Milwaukee	4,228	175	204	234	236	374	512	495	533	505	505	237	218
Monroe	254	6	8	17	13	29	32	40	39	11	31	10	18

Marriages

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2010

<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	147	4	9	4	7	19	14	17	22	14	24	5	8
Oneida	241	3	13	10	9	12	37	36	53	22	29	8	9
Outagamie	1,118	35	52	36	48	107	155	137	167	116	155	49	61
Ozaukee	348	10	10	16	17	33	37	52	59	48	46	13	7
Pepin	37	1	2			3	7	4	5	6	7	2	
Pierce	153	6	2	5	7	16	30	15	18	12	28	6	8
Polk	224	9	4	9	6	18	28	32	34	28	37	9	10
Portage	323	15	11	9	11	31	41	46	49	43	40	10	17
Price	64	3	5	1	6	5	5	14	8	9	7		1
Racine	855	30	42	40	42	78	96	124	112	95	112	42	42
Richland	94		6	3	6	16	8	12	14	10	14	1	4
Rock	722	28	29	22	35	88	103	80	91	85	107	26	28
Rusk	85	3	1	2	6	7	12	11	10	10	13	3	7
St. Croix	406	20	11	14	20	46	50	53	52	50	57	11	22
Sauk	543	20	21	15	32	58	64	68	70	77	79	21	18
Sawyer	114	4	6	4	7	10	16	7	18	22	12	3	5
Shawano	211	6	1	3	9	24	29	24	36	28	38	5	8
Sheboygan	669	24	22	24	36	60	100	108	77	81	70	28	39
Taylor	114	6	4	4	7	12	21	11	18	4	16	4	7
Trempealeau	164	6	8	13	12	19	18	17	16	24	20	5	6
Vernon	178	4	6	9	12	17	25	22	26	22	19	7	9
Vilas	168	5	7	6	6	9	25	27	26	25	19	7	6
Walworth	824	28	21	21	28	94	98	107	124	128	110	27	38
Washburn	101	3	4	2	8	8	18	18	17	18	3	4	2
Washington	593	23	18	29	23	57	74	75	73	74	91	19	37
Waukesha	1,860	54	54	65	80	192	234	254	273	232	249	86	87
Waupaca	325	8	14	13	10	30	46	41	53	42	45	10	13
Waushara	159	5	5	5	8	16	23	20	20	21	25	3	8
Winnebago	834	29	26	52	51	79	103	104	113	113	84	38	42
Wood	423	9	14	19	15	44	65	51	52	56	64	14	20

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

Note: These numbers represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2010.

- In 2010, the months with the highest number of marriages were August, July and June. August was the most popular month to marry. In each of the past six years, the month with the most marriages averaged approximately 14 percent of that year's total marriages. In those same six years, the month in which the fewest marriages occurred was January.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2010 (4,228), followed by Dane County (2,613), Waukesha County (1,860) and Brown County (1,546). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties.
- The lowest number of marriages occurred in the counties of Menominee (27), Iron (29), Florence (31) and Pepin (37).

Table 5. Divorces and Divorce Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2010

<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
2008	16,885	3.0	3.5
2009	16,705	2.9	3.4
2010	17,285	3.0	+

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 2010 was calculated using 2009 population figures.

- Rates shown are divorces and annulments per 1,000 total population.
- + Beginning with 2010 divorces, the national rate will only be released annually and was not available for this report.

Notes: Wisconsin numbers and rates represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin. The U.S. divorce rate for 2009 is provisional based on divorces that occurred in the 12 months ending in December, 2009.

- A total of 17,285 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2010, for a divorce rate of 3.0 per 1,000 population. This is slightly higher than the 2009 rate (2.9).
- In 2010, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 1.7 to 1 (there were 1.7 marriages for each divorce). This ratio has 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.

Divorces

Table 6. Divorces and Annulments by County, Wisconsin 2010

<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>
Total	17,246	39			
Adams	77		Marathon	379	
Ashland	53		Marinette	114	1
Barron	178		Marquette	58	
Bayfield	52		Menominee		
Brown	747	3	Milwaukee	2,341	1
Buffalo	33		Monroe	164	
Burnett	63		Oconto	121	
Calumet	148		Oneida	177	
Chippewa	218	1	Outagamie	637	1
Clark	83		Ozaukee	253	1
Columbia	216	2	Pepin	17	
Crawford	51		Pierce	111	
Dane	1,490	11	Polk	144	
Dodge	327		Portage	201	
Door	94		Price	54	
Douglas	161		Racine	414	1
Dunn	148	1	Richland	80	
Eau Claire	271		Rock	511	1
Florence	18		Rusk	65	
Fond du Lac	328	2	St. Croix	342	
Forest	30		Sauk	230	
Grant	144		Sawyer	45	
Green	125		Shawano	125	
Green Lake	50		Sheboygan	302	
Iowa	67	1	Taylor	70	1
Iron	17		Trempealeau	91	1
Jackson	52		Vernon	95	
Jefferson	333		Vilas	57	
Juneau	102		Walworth	327	
Kenosha	591	3	Washburn	47	
Kewaunee	62		Washington	408	1
La Crosse	341		Waukesha	1,079	3
Lafayette	43		Waupaca	203	
Langlade	59	1	Waushara	85	
Lincoln	72		Winnebago	568	2
Manitowoc	231		Wood	256	

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 2010.

- The highest number of divorces occurred in Milwaukee County (2,341 divorces and 1 annulment), followed by Dane County (1,490 divorces and 11 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,079 divorces and 3 annulments), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- The lowest number of divorces occurred in the counties of Pepin (17 divorces), Iron (17 divorces) and Florence (18 divorces). There were no divorces or annulments in Menominee County in 2010.

Divorces

Table 7. Divorces Affecting Children Under 18 Years of Age by County, Wisconsin 2010

<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	17,285	9,216	16,897				
Adams	77	45	72	Marathon	379	194	374
Ashland	53	33	67	Marinette	115	65	120
Barron	178	99	199	Marquette	58	29	39
Bayfield	52	27	47	Menominee			
Brown	750	388	716	Milwaukee	2,342	1,122	2,121
Buffalo	33	20	32	Monroe	164	80	155
Burnett	63	33	58	Oconto	121	68	129
Calumet	148	91	164	Oneida	177	88	138
Chippewa	219	117	211	Outagamie	638	348	656
Clark	83	49	88	Ozaukee	254	128	221
Columbia	218	120	209	Pepin	17	9	16
Crawford	51	32	67	Pierce	111	61	115
Dane	1,501	730	1,284	Polk	144	77	144
Dodge	327	203	387	Portage	201	108	205
Door	94	40	61	Price	54	33	65
Douglas	161	78	122	Racine	415	228	425
Dunn	149	79	149	Richland	80	38	56
Eau Claire	271	142	262	Rock	512	281	553
Florence	18	9	15	Rusk	65	30	61
Fond du Lac	330	158	274	St. Croix	342	192	345
Forest	30	16	27	Sauk	230	117	221
Grant	144	91	180	Sawyer	45	26	40
Green	125	75	140	Shawano	125	67	137
Green Lake	50	26	51	Sheboygan	302	167	313
Iowa	68	43	77	Taylor	71	38	71
Iron	17	8	13	Trempealeau	92	52	99
Jackson	52	27	42	Vernon	95	53	102
Jefferson	333	202	370	Vilas	57	24	42
Juneau	102	50	87	Walworth	327	193	354
Kenosha	594	327	589	Washburn	47	25	42
Kewaunee	62	37	60	Washington	409	231	422
La Crosse	341	193	359	Waukesha	1,082	631	1,133
Lafayette	43	26	47	Waupaca	203	109	206
Langlade	60	36	71	Waushara	85	38	73
Lincoln	72	36	56	Winnebago	570	306	545
Manitowoc	231	132	241	Wood	256	142	265

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 2010.

- Fifty-three percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2010 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

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

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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Wisconsin Marriages and Divorces, 2010

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