

2011

Wisconsin
Marriages
and **Divorces**



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

Wisconsin Marriages and Divorces

2011

June 2012

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Introduction

This report presents key information about marriages and divorces that occurred in Wisconsin in 2011. 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 30,287 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2011, representing an increase of 335 marriages from the 29,952 marriages that occurred in 2010. These counts reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin (of both residents and non-residents of the state).
- Until 2011, the number of marriages had declined annually since 1980.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2011 was 5.3 per 1,000 total population, identical to the 2010 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 median age for first marriages in 2011 was 26 years for women and 27.5 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 2011, the months with the highest number of marriages were July, August and September. September was the most popular month to marry. In each of the past seven years, the month with the most marriages averaged approximately 14 percent of that year's total marriages. In those same seven years, the month in which the fewest marriages occurred was January.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2011 (4,231), followed by Dane County (2,656), Waukesha County (1,827) and Brown County (1,553). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties. Of these four counties, only Waukesha had a decrease in the number of marriages from 2010 to 2011.
- A total of 16,635 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2011, for a divorce rate of 2.9 per 1,000 total population. This is slightly lower than the 2010 rate (3.0).
- In 2011, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 1.8 to 1 (there were 1.8 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 ratio increased slightly from 1.7 in 2010 to 1.8 in 2011.
- The highest number of divorces in 2011 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,343 divorces and 6 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,382 divorces and 8 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,028 divorces and 3 annulments), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- Fifty-four percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2011 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, 1920-2011

<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	6.8
2011	30,287	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 2011 was calculated using 2010 population figures.

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

+ The national marriage rate for 2011 was not available for this report.

Notes: The Wisconsin numbers and rates reflect marriages that occurred in Wisconsin. The U.S. marriage rate for 2010 is provisional.

- A total of 30,287 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2011, representing an increase of 335 marriages from the 29,952 marriages that occurred in 2010.
- Until 2011, the number of marriages had declined annually since 1980.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2011 was 5.3 per 1,000 total population, identical to the 2010 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 1960-2011

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
2011	26.0	27.5	45.9	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 2011 was 26 years for women and 27.5 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 2011

Age in Years	Bride					Groom				
	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More
	30,287	22,077	6,381	1,485	344	30,287	22,180	6,444	1,395	268
16	24	24				5	5			
17	57	57				9	9			
18	289	289				83	83			
19	522	521	1			227	227			
20	786	782	4			430	430			
21	1,056	1,044	12			707	707			
22	1,398	1,380	18			978	976	2		
23	1,825	1,779	44	2		1,305	1,286	19		
24	2,185	2,127	57	1		1,645	1,622	23		
25-29	9,812	8,960	826	25	1	9,450	9,015	426	9	
30-34	4,598	3,250	1,239	105	4	5,749	4,671	1,032	45	1
35-39	2,283	977	1,080	196	30	2,966	1,704	1,135	120	7
40-44	1,700	420	949	284	47	2,040	727	1,068	215	30
45-49	1,477	244	824	329	80	1,555	382	878	252	43
50-54	1,071	145	615	228	83	1,257	190	777	243	47
55-59	576	52	334	144	46	868	97	482	227	62
60-64	348	19	198	97	34	523	37	286	151	49
65-69	142	3	86	40	13	239	8	138	75	18
70-74	90	2	62	21	5	124	1	86	29	8
75+	47	1	32	13	1	127	3	92	29	3

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

Note: Totals shown represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2011.

- For first-time brides and grooms, the highest number of marriages occurred between the ages of 25 and 29.

Marriages

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2011

<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	30,287	1,030	1,088	1,194	1,660	2,689	3,837	3,916	3,923	4,218	3,635	1,709	1,388
Adams	124	8	8	7	3	9	20	7	19	19	10	12	2
Ashland	115		7	5	3	8	18	22	23	17	4	1	7
Barron	318	12	16	9	12	24	36	47	43	54	38	11	16
Bayfield	136	5	3	3	6	10	21	19	29	20	9	4	7
Brown	1,553	49	59	58	92	133	212	210	182	211	176	89	82
Buffalo	58	1	2	1	5	3	10	5	9	10	11		1
Burnett	108	3	4	5	3	8	13	15	20	17	13	3	4
Calumet	190	2	6	5	7	17	22	25	28	31	32	10	5
Chippewa	364	11	8	11	26	34	44	51	44	58	42	16	19
Clark	195	7	10	8	9	15	21	23	30	24	23	7	18
Columbia	402	18	18	17	28	47	49	55	44	43	37	23	23
Crawford	115	2	3	8	6	8	13	18	11	18	16	7	5
Dane	2,656	107	83	107	143	256	358	369	311	337	301	150	134
Dodge	392	13	21	21	13	36	51	45	47	56	50	22	17
Door	428	8	7	9	16	27	65	73	76	72	48	19	8
Douglas	247	14	15	6	14	15	28	35	39	32	21	16	12
Dunn	183	10	4	5	13	12	22	27	22	22	27	8	11
Eau Claire	616	21	19	33	30	55	76	71	78	91	78	36	28
Florence	28			2	1	1	2	9	3	5	3	1	1
Fond du Lac	566	11	19	23	30	50	77	66	68	89	73	34	26
Forest	47	1	1	3		3	4	5	8	9	8	2	3
Grant	269	4	3	8	9	24	41	26	40	43	41	24	6
Green	168	12	4	6	9	18	27	24	11	22	20	12	3
Green Lake	180	4	3	5	15	19	26	16	26	26	32	4	4
Iowa	170	5	3	2	6	18	25	16	28	26	27	9	5
Iron	29	1	1		5	2	3	2	7	2	4	1	1
Jackson	103	4	1	2	7	10	19	12	9	17	12	3	7
Jefferson	434	17	18	16	28	46	51	44	51	60	59	23	21
Juneau	141	9	5	7	10	18	9	16	22	11	17	11	6
Kenosha	752	23	31	40	46	77	104	96	88	93	78	45	31
Kewaunee	86	1	1	5	2	8	16	8	10	13	13	3	6
La Crosse	682	21	22	28	32	73	88	87	90	80	82	40	39
Lafayette	71	5	1		4	6	6	9	8	9	14	5	4
Langlade	81	5	3	4	3	3	12	15	10	8	10	4	4
Lincoln	142	5	6	2	8	12	18	23	22	22	14	3	7
Manitowoc	459	13	14	15	21	35	57	61	64	63	64	20	32
Marathon	700	21	26	31	36	59	80	87	103	114	84	36	23
Marinette	200	7	8		7	17	34	27	24	33	25	11	7
Marquette	77	2	3	7	4	14	9	14	7	11	3		3
Menominee	30		1	2	2	6	4	3	2	4	3	1	2
Milwaukee	4,231	168	194	221	293	349	490	503	504	542	476	287	204
Monroe	280	5	7	11	15	28	37	35	31	39	37	23	12

Marriages

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2011

<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	166	6	10	5	9	9	23	20	22	19	27	10	6
Oneida	225	11	10	8	11	20	29	22	39	36	19	11	9
Outagamie	1,071	45	42	42	67	102	136	126	154	134	109	64	50
Ozaukee	359	18	13	11	19	30	42	49	43	48	46	23	17
Pepin	46		1	1	6	3	5	5	6	9	4	4	2
Pierce	155	5	5	2	9	12	22	26	18	25	18	2	11
Polk	256	13	6	10	7	10	30	34	43	46	32	10	15
Portage	336	7	7	6	22	36	49	41	41	53	45	17	12
Price	79	4	5	4	9	2	11	14	10	11	2	3	4
Racine	853	25	43	51	48	70	118	94	96	106	115	54	33
Richland	89	2	3	3	3	10	10	15	10	12	10	8	3
Rock	771	17	24	33	36	77	94	104	84	126	95	42	39
Rusk	85		2		5	11	11	8	17	12	12	3	4
St. Croix	440	11	17	15	17	35	59	57	61	68	62	20	18
Sauk	534	14	22	16	30	46	72	63	71	78	73	25	24
Sawyer	104	6	4	4	7	5	8	14	18	17	15	4	2
Shawano	199	8	11	6	9	23	22	31	23	26	22	12	6
Sheboygan	698	26	19	25	35	54	77	92	103	108	81	45	33
Taylor	112	3	4	4	9	3	10	19	17	18	18	5	2
Trempealeau	162	3	2	6	9	15	16	19	26	24	22	10	10
Vernon	168	2	3	9	7	22	20	20	23	25	21	7	9
Vilas	143	5	3	4	3	8	30	26	23	24	13	2	2
Walworth	854	24	19	18	39	86	98	124	115	135	115	55	26
Washburn	80					10	10	15	10	14	13	1	7
Washington	590	17	28	24	31	52	73	88	81	73	69	35	19
Waukesha	1,827	61	49	54	96	182	237	232	228	270	225	104	89
Waupaca	371	10	10	15	15	29	53	51	55	50	51	22	10
Waushara	125	4	5	5	5	13	13	22	18	19	10	4	9
Winnebago	852	29	40	43	48	64	92	111	114	109	109	48	45
Wood	411	19	13	12	27	37	49	53	64	51	47	23	16

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

Note: These numbers represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2011.

- In 2011, the months with the highest number of marriages were July, August and September. September was the most popular month to marry. In each of the past seven years, the month with the most marriages averaged approximately 14 percent of that year's total marriages. In those same seven years, the month in which the fewest marriages occurred was January.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2011 (4,231), followed by Dane County (2,656), Waukesha County (1,827) and Brown County (1,553). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties.
- The lowest number of marriages occurred in the counties of Florence (28), Iron (29), Menominee (30) and Pepin (46).

Table 5. Divorces and Divorce Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2011

<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
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	+

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 2011 was calculated using 2010 population figures.

• Rates shown are divorces and annulments per 1,000 total population.

+ The national divorce rate for 2011 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 2010 is provisional.

- A total of 16,635 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2011, for a divorce rate of 2.9 per 1,000 population. This is slightly lower than the 2010 rate (3.0).
- In 2011, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 1.8 to 1 (there were 1.8 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 ratio increased slightly from 1.7 in 2010 to 1.8 in 2011.

Divorces

Table 6. Divorces and Annulments by County, Wisconsin 2011

<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>
Total	16,598	37			
Adams	65		Marathon	337	
Ashland	42		Marinette	118	2
Barron	184		Marquette	55	
Bayfield	54		Menominee		
Brown	663	1	Milwaukee	2,343	6
Buffalo	34	2	Monroe	145	
Burnett	55		Oconto	133	
Calumet	124		Oneida	119	
Chippewa	226		Outagamie	652	
Clark	79		Ozaukee	230	3
Columbia	202		Pepin	18	
Crawford	48		Pierce	111	
Dane	1,382	8	Polk	182	
Dodge	274		Portage	187	1
Door	76	1	Price	40	
Douglas	127		Racine	437	
Dunn	132		Richland	79	
Eau Claire	315		Rock	484	
Florence	23		Rusk	43	
Fond du Lac	285		St. Croix	313	3
Forest	37		Sauk	243	
Grant	113		Sawyer	44	
Green	116	1	Shawano	147	
Green Lake	42		Sheboygan	327	
Iowa	65		Taylor	66	
Iron	14		Trempealeau	101	
Jackson	62		Vernon	92	
Jefferson	264		Vilas	67	
Juneau	101		Walworth	341	
Kenosha	547		Washburn	52	
Kewaunee	45		Washington	403	2
La Crosse	343	1	Waukesha	1,028	3
Lafayette	45		Waupaca	179	1
Langlade	65		Waushara	84	
Lincoln	65		Winnebago	578	2
Manitowoc	238		Wood	268	

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 2011.

- The highest number of divorces in 2011 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,343 divorces and 6 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,382 divorces and 8 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,028 divorces and 3 annulments), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- The lowest number of divorces occurred in the counties of Iron (14 divorces), Pepin (18 divorces) and Florence (22 divorces). There were no divorces or annulments in Menominee County in 2011.

Divorces

Table 7. Divorces Affecting Children Under 18 Years of Age by County, Wisconsin 2011

<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	16,635	8,919	16,840				
Adams	65	29	65	Marathon	337	173	337
Ashland	42	24	51	Marinette	120	69	125
Barron	184	102	203	Marquette	55	24	51
Bayfield	54	26	48	Menominee			
Brown	664	318	595	Milwaukee	2,349	1,240	2,426
Buffalo	36	23	39	Monroe	145	86	166
Burnett	55	30	51	Oconto	133	75	139
Calumet	124	71	142	Oneida	119	55	105
Chippewa	226	127	241	Outagamie	652	370	700
Clark	79	35	68	Ozaukee	233	135	253
Columbia	202	124	219	Pepin	18	10	18
Crawford	48	28	54	Pierce	111	63	125
Dane	1,390	686	1,240	Polk	182	91	170
Dodge	274	156	281	Portage	188	108	195
Door	77	30	57	Price	40	22	46
Douglas	127	61	104	Racine	437	250	442
Dunn	132	75	152	Richland	79	33	64
Eau Claire	315	160	299	Rock	484	276	527
Florence	23	12	22	Rusk	43	24	44
Fond du Lac	285	141	258	St. Croix	316	188	366
Forest	37	17	33	Sauk	243	136	251
Grant	113	63	123	Sawyer	44	23	44
Green	117	71	133	Shawano	147	86	164
Green Lake	42	23	43	Sheboygan	327	177	327
Iowa	65	44	97	Taylor	66	39	67
Iron	14	6	7	Trempealeau	101	61	108
Jackson	62	34	65	Vernon	92	57	113
Jefferson	264	144	259	Vilas	67	32	50
Juneau	101	47	74	Walworth	341	190	388
Kenosha	547	303	584	Washburn	52	26	52
Kewaunee	45	25	53	Washington	405	221	404
La Crosse	344	173	334	Waukesha	1,031	538	1,001
Lafayette	45	25	49	Waupaca	180	99	178
Langlade	65	33	60	Waushara	84	44	86
Lincoln	65	29	61	Winnebago	580	312	598
Manitowoc	238	140	264	Wood	268	151	282

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 2011.

- Fifty-four percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2011 involved couples with children under 18 years of age. Among divorces involving children, an average of 1.9 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 Department of Health Services
Division of Public Health
Office of Health Informatics
State Vital Records Office