

**2013**

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**Wisconsin**  
**Marriages**  
**and Divorces**



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



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# **Wisconsin Marriages and Divorces**

## **2013**

**May 2014**

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*Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
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## Introduction

This report presents key information about marriages and divorces that occurred in Wisconsin in 2013. 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, Bureau of Operations in the Division of Public Health, edited the report. The report was prepared under the supervision of Oskar Anderson, State Registrar, State Vital Records Office, and 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 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://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 29,979 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2013, representing a decrease of 961 marriages from the 30,940 marriages that occurred in 2012. These counts reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin (of both residents and non-residents of the state).
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2013 was 5.2 per 1,000 total population. The marriage rate has declined since 1980, when the rate was 8.7.
- The marriage rate in Wisconsin has been consistently lower than the national rate for over 90 years.
- The median age for first marriages in 2013 was 26.4 years for women and 28 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 2013, 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 2013 (4,303), followed by Dane County (2,653), Waukesha County (1,821) and Brown County (1,598). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties.
- A total of 15,941 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2013, for a divorce rate of 2.8 per 1,000 total population. This is lower than the 2012 rate (2.9).
- In 2013, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 1.9 to 1 (there were 1.9 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 2013 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,390 divorces and 5 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,337 divorces and 7 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,134 divorces and 1 annulment), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- Fifty-three percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2013 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, 1920-2013**

<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	8.2
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	+
2013	29,979	5.2	+

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 2013 was calculated using 2012 population figures.

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

+ The national marriage rates for 2012 and 2013 were not available for this report.

Note: The Wisconsin numbers and rates reflect marriages that occurred in Wisconsin. The U.S. marriage rates for 2000-2011 are provisional.

- A total of 29,979 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2013, representing a decrease of 961 marriages from the 30,940 marriages that occurred in 2012.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2013 was 5.2 per 1,000 total population. The marriage rate has declined since 1980, when the rate was 8.7.

**Table 2. Median Age at First Marriage and All Remarriages, Wisconsin 1960-2013**

<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
1995	24.5	26.0	39.9	42.6
2000	24.7	26.3	41.7	44.6
2001	25.0	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
2012	26.2	27.7	45.7	48.5
2013	26.4	28.0	46.4	49.1

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 2013 was 26.4 years for women and 28 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 2013**

Age in Years	Bride					Groom				
	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More	Total Marriages	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More
	<b>29,979</b>	<b>21,898</b>	<b>6,270</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>29,979</b>	<b>21,928</b>	<b>6,419</b>	<b>1,346</b>	<b>286</b>
16	23	23				2	2			
17	39	39				8	8			
18	255	255				80	80			
19	471	470	1			201	201			
20	660	660				356	356			
21	872	859	13			562	559	3		
22	1,211	1,189	22			880	873	7		
23	1,658	1,630	28			1,173	1,161	12		
24	1,932	1,870	62			1,451	1,441	10		
25-29	9,791	9,077	680	33	1	9,193	8,795	391	7	
30-34	5,019	3,680	1,233	97	9	6,102	5,047	1,002	48	5
35-39	2,461	1,183	1,069	177	32	3,143	1,875	1,147	108	13
40-44	1,742	481	945	269	47	2,001	745	1,032	199	25
45-49	1,465	259	826	294	86	1,548	368	888	248	44
50-54	1,109	121	659	246	83	1,353	241	797	268	47
55-59	643	72	369	147	55	891	104	520	205	62
60-64	342	25	177	101	39	524	47	311	124	42
65-69	146	2	89	43	12	259	17	139	73	30
70-74	82	2	56	17	7	137	6	82	38	11
75+	58	1	41	14	2	115	2	78	28	7

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

Note: Totals shown represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2013.

- 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 2013**

<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>
<b>State Total</b>	<b>29,979</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>1,242</b>	<b>1,668</b>	<b>2,622</b>	<b>4,286</b>	<b>3,067</b>	<b>4,424</b>	<b>4,172</b>	<b>3,471</b>	<b>1,602</b>	<b>1,459</b>
Adams	108	3	3	7	2	7	23	8	12	23	10	2	8
Ashland	123	1	1	4	2	4	20	14	24	26	10	6	11
Barron	279	2	7	10	17	32	48	25	48	40	28	11	11
Bayfield	153	3	2	3	3	14	25	24	35	23	14	3	4
Brown	1,598	65	57	66	95	165	227	168	232	197	153	96	77
Buffalo	73	1	2	2	4	6	12	8	14	11	8	1	4
Burnett	102	2	1	4	6	7	19	12	14	13	15	6	3
Calumet	221	7	3	12	12	14	35	24	40	34	22	8	10
Chippewa	378	15	10	19	24	26	59	37	59	50	50	13	16
Clark	180	3	10	10	18	22	25	12	15	18	31	9	7
Columbia	422	8	21	20	32	44	40	42	60	47	53	28	27
Crawford	86	3		3	5	4	12	3	16	20	11	6	3
Dane	2,653	77	100	127	149	252	399	264	402	314	294	147	128
Dodge	394	14	12	18	34	45	50	29	45	48	52	19	28
Door	372	10	3	8	11	33	61	40	65	76	40	13	12
Douglas	196	8	7	7	5	13	24	23	35	35	18	10	11
Dunn	197	7	7	6	9	14	35	10	35	40	23	6	5
Eau Claire	593	17	21	22	37	49	90	55	100	98	62	15	27
Florence	19	1	1		1	1	2	2	5	3	2	1	
Fond du Lac	510	10	25	24	29	38	69	49	68	83	70	21	24
Forest	72	2	4	1	3	4	16	7	9	10	7	4	5
Grant	258	10	5	5	12	23	45	20	43	30	31	20	14
Green	156	1	6	11	8	14	25	13	25	19	17	10	7
Green Lake	143	6	4	2	10	9	26	14	22	28	16	3	3
Iowa	184	3	3	1	4	19	32	19	29	28	25	10	11
Iron	17	2	1			1	2	4	3	2	1		1
Jackson	96	3	2	5	9	6	10	10	15	17	14	3	2
Jefferson	420	16	16	18	24	38	62	48	60	56	44	23	15
Juneau	148	4	10	8	10	10	27	14	15	23	15	4	8
Kenosha	708	22	17	24	35	45	111	85	100	114	73	35	47
Kewaunee	87	5	1		8	7	9	5	15	10	11	7	9
La Crosse	667	15	15	20	38	71	100	69	103	82	85	31	38
Lafayette	86	2	4	3	3	4	14	10	8	11	17	5	5
Langlade	88	1	2		12	12	9	8	17	11	7	3	6
Lincoln	138	1	2	9	10	16	23	16	18	12	15	6	10
Manitowoc	430	6	12	22	24	25	66	51	70	56	50	19	29
Marathon	723	22	34	29	47	64	95	71	111	99	71	44	36
Marinette	193	3	8	6	10	10	26	21	34	31	25	10	9
Marquette	70	1	6	1	7	7	7	3	8	12	9	5	4
Menominee	28	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	5	5	1	4
Milwaukee	4,303	181	197	255	287	393	537	419	559	517	457	288	213
Monroe	267	12	11	14	15	21	33	32	39	30	36	15	9

## Marriages

**Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2013**

<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	170	6	5	4	5	16	27	18	23	22	27	8	9
Oneida	207	6	5	6	6	13	33	27	39	29	22	9	12
Outagamie	1,104	33	47	58	51	108	148	116	159	128	142	55	59
Ozaukee	400	11	10	11	15	36	60	49	60	54	51	24	19
Pepin	50	1	2	2	4	5	5	3	9	8	8	2	1
Pierce	184	6	3	8	7	17	29	16	37	33	14	7	7
Polk	226	6	8	5	15	16	26	31	42	35	19	14	9
Portage	299	10	7	12	10	22	49	35	46	48	37	8	15
Price	79		2	1	3	5	18	13	13	13	7	2	2
Racine	777	31	36	36	50	50	110	76	107	106	87	47	41
Richland	85	1	4	5	2	10	11	10	12	10	9	6	5
Rock	677	22	14	15	40	74	110	76	103	84	80	28	31
Rusk	70	2		1	3	8	13	5	18	9	7	2	2
St. Croix	439	15	19	12	16	33	71	35	82	60	59	16	21
Sauk	551	12	16	29	31	49	84	45	71	91	76	26	21
Sawyer	100	1	4	2	4	10	20	12	14	17	8	7	1
Shawano	178	6	5	4	11	16	21	22	29	23	26	10	5
Sheboygan	733	23	18	30	37	60	105	82	114	115	84	31	34
Taylor	100	2	1	2	3	5	18	10	19	19	12	5	4
Trempealeau	168	4	6	7	6	20	21	16	24	27	24	5	8
Vernon	158	1	1	5	10	17	23	13	25	28	23	10	2
Vilas	173	5	5	3	4	10	29	23	26	39	14	8	7
Walworth	818	14	19	29	41	78	121	90	107	144	87	49	39
Washburn	106	6	3	9	2	4	12	10	26	20	11	3	
Washington	558	20	13	18	25	44	78	60	82	88	75	30	25
Waukesha	1,821	47	41	57	101	151	250	194	262	272	247	115	84
Waupaca	346	8	12	5	12	33	45	38	42	62	46	26	17
Waushara	126	5	9	3	9	13	12	8	26	16	12	7	6
Winnebago	903	36	43	38	47	66	133	97	110	119	102	56	56
Wood	434	22	16	18	24	42	52	47	69	51	58	19	16

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

Note: These numbers represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2013.

- In 2013, 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 2013 (4,303), followed by Dane County (2,653), Waukesha County (1,821) and Brown County (1,598). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties.
- The lowest number of marriages occurred in the counties of Iron (17), Florence (19), Menominee (28) and Pepin (50).

**Table 5. Divorces and Divorce Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2013**

<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	3.6
2012	16,332	2.9	+
2013	15,941	2.8	+

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 2013 was calculated using 2012 population figures.

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

+ The national divorce rates for 2012 and 2013 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 2011 is provisional.

- A total of 15,941 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2013, for a divorce rate of 2.8 per 1,000 population. This is lower than the 2012 rate.
- In 2013, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 1.9 to 1 (there were 1.9 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 2013**

<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces</u>	<u>Annulments</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,920</b>	<b>21</b>			
Adams	59		Marathon	382	
Ashland	36		Marinette	118	
Barron	143		Marquette	53	
Bayfield	37		Menominee	1	
Brown	634		Milwaukee	2,390	5
Buffalo	40		Monroe	141	
Burnett	39		Oconto	94	
Calumet	141		Oneida	143	
Chippewa	213	1	Outagamie	531	
Clark	89		Ozaukee	206	
Columbia	174	1	Pepin	25	
Crawford	40		Pierce	89	
Dane	1,337	7	Polk	132	
Dodge	241		Portage	192	1
Door	76		Price	53	
Douglas	161	1	Racine	480	
Dunn	135		Richland	54	
Eau Claire	312		Rock	497	
Florence	12		Rusk	57	
Fond du Lac	271		St. Croix	284	1
Forest	26		Sauk	217	
Grant	105	1	Sawyer	52	
Green	122		Shawano	116	
Green Lake	48		Sheboygan	346	
Iowa	59		Taylor	51	
Iron	22		Trempealeau	71	
Jackson	74	1	Vernon	77	
Jefferson	198		Vilas	67	
Juneau	88		Walworth	300	1
Kenosha	558		Washburn	53	
Kewaunee	57		Washington	360	
La Crosse	312		Waukesha	1,134	1
Lafayette	43		Waupaca	177	
Langlade	58		Waushara	71	
Lincoln	59		Winnebago	406	
Manitowoc	214		Wood	267	

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 2013.

- The highest number of divorces in 2013 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,390 divorces and 5 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,337 divorces and 7 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,134 divorces and 1 annulment), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- The lowest number of divorces occurred in the counties of Menominee (1 divorce), Florence (12 divorces) and Iron (22 divorces).

## Divorces

**Table 7. Divorces Affecting Children Under 18 Years of Age by County, Wisconsin 2013**

<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces Granted</u>	<u>Divorces Affecting Children &lt; 18</u>	<u>No. of Children &lt; 18 Affected</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Divorces Granted</u>	<u>Divorces Affecting Children &lt; 18</u>	<u>No. of Children &lt; 18 Affected</u>
<b>State Total</b>	<b>15,941</b>	<b>8,386</b>	<b>15,558</b>				
Adams	59	29	54	Marathon	382	195	368
Ashland	36	23	44	Marinette	118	54	90
Barron	143	79	139	Marquette	53	33	55
Bayfield	37	15	21	Menominee	1		
Brown	634	350	634	Milwaukee	2,395	1,195	2,281
Buffalo	40	23	48	Monroe	141	83	159
Burnett	39	22	50	Oconto	94	42	76
Calumet	141	79	149	Oneida	143	68	123
Chippewa	214	98	186	Outagamie	531	291	552
Clark	89	53	114	Ozaukee	206	113	199
Columbia	175	88	162	Pepin	25	14	29
Crawford	40	15	29	Pierce	89	54	103
Dane	1,344	636	1,153	Polk	132	64	123
Dodge	241	120	227	Portage	193	103	186
Door	76	42	82	Price	53	22	44
Douglas	162	80	138	Racine	480	258	491
Dunn	135	76	145	Richland	54	30	61
Eau Claire	312	158	305	Rock	497	255	455
Florence	12	1	2	Rusk	57	35	65
Fond du Lac	271	149	256	St. Croix	285	168	307
Forest	26	13	20	Sauk	217	114	206
Grant	106	53	112	Sawyer	52	27	53
Green	122	73	136	Shawano	116	70	120
Green Lake	48	26	55	Sheboygan	346	186	344
Iowa	59	32	61	Taylor	51	34	68
Iron	22	12	16	Trempealeau	71	40	78
Jackson	75	41	78	Vernon	77	39	87
Jefferson	198	106	199	Vilas	67	22	41
Juneau	88	50	82	Walworth	301	164	299
Kenosha	558	308	577	Washburn	53	22	45
Kewaunee	57	37	78	Washington	360	191	341
La Crosse	312	169	310	Waukesha	1,135	637	1,179
Lafayette	43	26	57	Waupaca	177	98	182
Langlade	58	36	59	Waushara	71	38	61
Lincoln	59	34	64	Winnebago	406	212	382
Manitowoc	214	121	220	Wood	267	142	243

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 2013.

- Fifty-three percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 2013 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 that 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 three 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, 2013***  
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Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
Division of Public Health  
Office of Health Informatics  
State Vital Records Office