2015

Wisconsin
Marriages
and Divorces

Introduction

This report presents key information about marriages and divorces that occurred in Wisconsin in 2015. 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 records 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.

The Department of Health Services produced this publication. Staff of the State Vital Records Office collected and compiled the marriage and divorce records. Joyce Knapton, Program and Policy Analyst, prepared the report and wrote the narrative. The report was prepared under the supervision of Lisa Walker, State Registrar, Vital Records Section; Lisa Hebl, Supervisor, External Operations Unit, Vital Records Section; and Oskar Anderson, 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 review and acceptance of all marriage information, and the County Clerks of Court and Clerks of Tribal Court for their timely filing of divorce and annulment worksheets.

This report is available on the Department of Health Services website, at https://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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Table of Contents

Key Findings

- A total of 32,385 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2015, representing a decrease of 391 marriages from the 32,776 marriages that occurred in 2014. These counts reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin (both residents and non-residents of the state).

- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2015 was 5.6 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 individuals marrying for the first time in 2015 was 27.6. In 1960, the median age at first marriage was 21.6.

- In 2015, the months with the highest number of marriages were August, September, and October. August was the most popular month to marry. In each of the past eight years, the month with the most marriages averaged approximately 14-16 percent of that year's total marriages. The month in which the fewest marriages occurred was January.

- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2015 (4,856), followed by Dane County (2,843), Waukesha County (1,976) and Brown County (1,711). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties.

- A total of 14,986 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2015, for a divorce rate of 2.6 per 1,000 total population. This is lower than the 2014 rate (2.7).

- In 2015, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 2.2 to 1 (there were 2.2 marriages for each divorce). This ratio had 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. Since 2011, it has risen slightly each year.

- The highest number of divorces in 2015 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,186 divorces and 3 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,232 divorces and 7 annulments) and Waukesha County (940 divorces), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.

Table 1. Marriages and Marriage Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2015

Year	Number of Wisconsin Marriages	Wisconsin Marriage Rate*	United States Marriage Rate*
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	6.8
2013	29,979	5.2	6.8
2014	32,776	5.7	6.9
2015	32,385	5.6	+

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 2015 was calculated using 2014 population figures.

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

+ The national marriage rate for 2015 was not available for this report.

Note: The Wisconsin numbers and rates reflect marriages that occurred in Wisconsin. The U.S. marriage rates for 200 2014 are provisional.

- A total of 32,385 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 2015, representing a decrease of 391 marriages from the 32,776 marriages that occurred in 2014.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 2015 was 5.6 per 1,000 total population. The marriage rate has been declining since 1980, when the rate was 8.7.

Table 2. Median Age at First Marriage and All Remarriages
Wisconsin 1960-2015

Year	First Marriage	All Remarriages
1960	21.6	42.5
1965	21.6	42.8
1970	21.7	40.0
1975	21.8	34.8
1980	22.6	33.3
1985	23.8	35.3
1990	24.7	40.0
1995	25.3	41.3
2000	25.5	43.2
2001	25.7	43.8
2002	25.6	44.2
2003	25.6	44.7
2004	25.7	45.2
2005	25.7	45.8
2006	25.9	45.9
2007	26.0	46.4
2008	26.1	46.6
2009	26.3	46.9
2010	26.5	47.3
2011	26.8	47.4
2012	27.0	47.1
2013	27.2	47.8
2014	27.5	47.6
2015	27.6	48.4

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 2015 the median age for individuals marrying for the
first time was 27.6, meaning that half of the individuals being married for the first
time in 2015 were younger, and half were older than 27.6. The numbers in this
table reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in the stated years.

- The median age for individuals marrying for the first time in 2015 was 27.6. In 1960, the median age
at first marriage was 21.6.
- The median age for individuals remarrying in 2015 was 48.4, compared to 1960 when the median age
was 42.5.

Table 3. Marriages and Remarriages by Age of Individuals Marrying, Wisconsin 2015

Age in Years	First	Second	Third	Fourth or More
	47,765	**13,523**	**2,868**	**614**
16	16			
17	33			
18	259			
19	556	1		
20	964			
21	1,356	5		
22	1,927	9		
23	2,587	36	1	
24	3,297	63	1	
25-29	19,121	940	27	1
30-34	9,995	2,177	119	7
35-39	3,861	2,366	261	26
40-44	1,507	2,064	458	72
45-49	942	1,985	570	94
50-54	647	1,633	533	121
55-59	370	1,051	382	120
60-64	183	569	249	82
65-69	101	312	150	63
70-74	31	149	66	18
75+	12	163	51	10

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

Note: The totals will not add to the total number of marriages occurring in 2015 as each individual who was married is counted once.

- For individuals marrying for the first time, the age group with the highest number of individuals being married is 25-29.

Table 4. **Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2015**

County	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
State Total	32,385	1,131	1,150	1,260	1,491	3,289	4,156	3,515	5,049	4,329	4,183	1,370	1,462
Adams	111	7	2	3	6	13	13	9	17	16	15	7	3
Ashland	128	3	3	4	4	14	14	18	32	22	8	2	4
Barron	314	5	8	7	7	30	47	38	57	52	35	12	16
Bayfield	139	6	4	3	1	7	15	17	30	29	21	3	3
Brown	1,711	67	82	67	98	183	222	204	237	181	238	75	57
Buffalo	75	1	2	2	2	6	13	6	16	18	5		4
Burnett	109	2	4	1	5	5	9	15	30	16	14	5	3
Calumet	247	4	9	10	9	26	32	30	41	36	36	12	2
Chippewa	384	19	18	16	13	34	49	37	62	59	43	12	22
Clark	189	5	7	7	13	17	23	22	24	30	25	7	9
Columbia	500	16	29	22	31	46	53	50	81	62	70	18	22
Crawford	110	5	6	2	6	6	15	11	14	13	26	3	3
Dane	2,843	115	110	119	128	344	351	317	409	345	341	129	135
Dodge	429	10	14	16	17	63	48	29	59	59	63	21	30
Door	452	10	7	6	16	43	73	70	75	75	62	8	7
Douglas	221	5	12	6	12	20	25	28	42	25	29	6	11
Dunn	232	3	3	7	4	23	38	22	40	47	28	6	11
Eau Claire	626	28	23	24	44	80	68	70	99	62	70	24	34
Florence	34			2		2	5	3	10	5	4	1	2
Fond du Lac	530	21	24	28	22	46	68	64	80	60	78	22	17
Forest	43		2	1	1	1	4	7	12	8	3	4	
Grant	242	6	8	7	16	24	39	23	26	36	34	12	11
Green	183	9	9	8	7	20	28	18	22	24	29	6	3
Green Lake	187	4	2	3	8	25	25	23	35	28	22	7	5
Iowa	197	4	6	3	8	20	28	15	32	39	35	6	1
Iron	24	2	1	1		2	2	3	4	4	4		1
Jackson	112	3	3	6	4	7	15	18	24	13	12	4	3
Jefferson	449	11	11	16	19	55	61	45	65	64	68	13	21
Juneau	127	9	5	4	5	5	15	14	15	23	20	5	7
Kenosha	763	20	33	37	32	76	95	89	116	99	103	25	38
Kewaunee	108	1	2	3	6	21	10	9	16	13	21	2	4
La Crosse	715	21	11	21	42	81	92	75	104	114	91	35	28
Lafayette	89		2	2	3	9	10	15	15	6	11	10	6
Langlade	106	2	2	4	1	8	12	16	23	12	12	7	7
Lincoln	139	6	3	8	10	6	22	16	31	17	10	4	6
Manitowoc	399	14	15	15	19	35	50	43	60	52	61	17	18
Marathon	819	32	32	34	35	75	116	95	135	101	94	25	45
Marinette	196	7	4	6	8	17	29	24	30	29	22	10	10
Marquette	58	2	3	2	1	5	11	7	9	7	6	3	2
Menominee	23	1			2		4	2	3	8	2		1

Table 4.   **Monthly Marriage Totals by County, Wisconsin 2015**

County	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Milwaukee	4,856	201	210	262	311	487	555	465	673	597	533	291	271
Monroe	264	10	15	10	14	29	38	20	42	33	31	8	14
Oconto	172	6	5	4	8	15	23	21	30	19	28	7	6
Oneida	219	7	8	3	6	16	33	28	35	38	32	1	12
Outagamie	1,114	50	43	49	54	109	144	116	173	121	155	49	51
Ozaukee	436	10	13	8	16	42	63	56	68	68	56	17	19
Pepin	69	4	1	2	2	5	7	4	18	11	11	1	3
Pierce	196	5	6	5	8	17	28	17	38	36	24	5	7
Polk	245	7	4	5	3	18	47	23	51	33	36	9	9
Portage	340	9	2	13	11	40	41	47	65	41	42	10	19
Price	81	5	1	1	1	6	10	9	24	12	9	1	2
Racine	883	51	37	37	43	92	103	95	133	105	109	35	43
Richland	89	2	3	1	7	4	19	6	14	11	7	7	8
Rock	729	21	28	30	33	81	91	76	101	111	84	34	39
Rusk	94	4	3	4	6	8	13	11	22	10	7	2	4
St. Croix	466	8	13	22	15	36	84	43	78	76	60	15	16
Sauk	609	17	16	35	21	64	75	61	88	87	88	27	30
Sawyer	108	2	8	4	3	8	11	15	19	13	16	1	8
Shawano	200	8	6	9	4	18	35	17	36	24	27	9	7
Sheboygan	715	22	23	24	29	69	85	93	117	97	97	28	31
Taylor	106	4	1	2	1	4	14	14	22	19	12	6	7
Trempealeau	158	4	3	11	7	11	22	14	20	31	25	8	2
Vernon	194	2	2	10	9	23	29	21	29	27	27	5	10
Vilas	180	4	5	2	3	11	26	20	42	35	24	5	3
Walworth	1,053	24	30	25	42	123	123	127	161	164	154	48	32
Washburn	101		5	4	1	7	16	14	17	18	11	4	4
Washington	579	26	14	23	17	55	74	53	94	85	93	20	25
Waukesha	1,976	57	60	60	76	209	257	228	299	258	281	94	97
Waupaca	339	15	10	8	12	40	47	31	60	44	56	6	10
Waushara	127	1	9	3	5	9	20	12	22	17	16	8	5
Winnebago	882	46	32	35	39	90	113	90	153	125	98	28	33
Wood	442	13	13	16	19	43	61	51	73	54	63	12	24

Source: State Vital Records Office, Division of Public Health, Department of Health Services.
Note: These numbers represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 2015.

- In 2015, the months with the highest number of marriages were August, September, and October. August was the most popular month to marry and had 16 percent of the total marriages. The month in which the fewest marriages occurred was January.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 2015 (4,856), followed by Dane County (2,843), Waukesha County (1,976) and Brown County (1,711). These are Wisconsin's four most populous counties.
- The lowest number of marriages occurred in the counties of Menominee (23), Iron (24), Florence (34), and Forest (43).

Table 5.   Divorces and Divorce Rates, Wisconsin and United States, Selected Years, 1920-2015

Year	Number of Wisconsin Divorces	Wisconsin Divorce Rate*	United States Divorce Rate*
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	4.0
2005	16,297	2.9	3.6
2006	16,730	3.0	3.7
2007	16,458	2.9	3.6
2008	16,885	3.0	3.5
2009	16,705	2.9	3.5
2010	17,285	3.0	3.6
2011	16,635	2.9	3.6
2012	16,332	2.9	3.4
2013	15,941	2.8	3.3
2014	15,243	2.7	3.2
2015	14,986	2.6	+

Source: U.S. divorce rates are from the National Center for Health Statistics, *National Vital Statistics Reports*. Wisconsin numbers and rates are from the State Vital Records Office, Division of Public Health, Department of Health Services. The Wisconsin divorce rate for 2015 was calculated using 2014 population figures.

*   Rates shown are divorces and annulments per 1,000 total population.
+   The national divorce rate for 2015 was not available for this report.

Notes: Wisconsin numbers and rates represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin. The U.S. divorce rates for 2000-2014 are provisional.

- A total of 14,986 divorces occurred in Wisconsin in 2015, for a divorce rate of 2.6 per 1,000 population. This is lower than the 2014 rate (2.7).
- In 2015, the ratio of Wisconsin marriages to Wisconsin divorces was 2.2 to 1 (there were 2.2 marriages for each divorce). This ratio had 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.

Table 6. Divorces and Annulments by County, Wisconsin 2015

County	Divorces	Annulments	County	Divorces	Annulments
Total	**14,964**	**22**			
Adams	35		Marathon	327	1
Ashland	30		Marinette	91	
Barron	133		Marquette	54	
Bayfield	40		Menominee	1	
Brown	715	1	Milwaukee	2,186	3
Buffalo	35		Monroe	158	2
Burnett	42		Oconto	107	
Calumet	127		Oneida	126	
Chippewa	174		Outagamie	528	1
Clark	87		Ozaukee	239	
Columbia	141		Pepin	15	
Crawford	42		Pierce	108	
Dane	1,232	7	Polk	128	
Dodge	231		Portage	174	
Door	85		Price	34	1
Douglas	116		Racine	471	2
Dunn	139	1	Richland	42	
Eau Claire	275		Rock	431	
Florence	15		Rusk	46	
Fond du Lac	290		St. Croix	258	
Forest	26		Sauk	189	1
Grant	118		Sawyer	39	
Green	119		Shawano	117	
Green Lake	44		Sheboygan	299	
Iowa	49		Taylor	59	
Iron	16		Trempealeau	79	
Jackson	47		Vernon	74	
Jefferson	244		Vilas	53	
Juneau	76		Walworth	258	
Kenosha	514	1	Washburn	39	
Kewaunee	54		Washington	395	
La Crosse	302		Waukesha	940	
Lafayette	43		Waupaca	182	
Langlade	42		Waushara	71	
Lincoln	90	1	Winnebago	437	
Manitowoc	194		Wood	247	

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 2015.

- The highest number of divorces in 2015 occurred in Milwaukee County (2,186 divorces and 3 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,232 divorces and 7 annulments) and Waukesha County (940 divorces), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- The lowest number of divorces occurred in the counties of Menominee (1 divorce), Florence (15 divorces), Pepin (15 divorces), and Iron (16 divorces).

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 present the marriage record to the local Register of Deeds (where the marriage took place) within three days after the event.
- Within 10 days, the local Register of Deeds completes and accepts the marriage record and signs off on the record, which enables it to be registered at the State Vital Records Office.

Divorce Reporting Requirements

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.