



Children in the States

WISCONSIN

July 2015

Child Population

1,300,189 children lived in Wisconsin in 2014; 28 percent were children of color.

- 72 percent were White
- 11 percent were Hispanic
- 9 percent were Black
- 3 percent were Asian
- 4 percent were two or more races
- 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

Child Poverty

Nearly 1 in 5 (18.4 percent) of Wisconsin's children were poor in 2013, a total of 236,697 children.¹

- Wisconsin ranked 19th in child poverty among states.²
- More than 1 in 14 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. More than 1 in 5 children under age 6 were poor; more than 2 in 5 of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in Wisconsin are disproportionately poor.

- More than 1 in 2 Black children, more than 1 in 3 Hispanic children, and nearly 1 in 2 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2013, compared to nearly 1 in 9 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

Child poverty in Wisconsin leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.

- Nearly 18,000 Wisconsin public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Wisconsin and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 20 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 29 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Wisconsin ranked 15th of 50 states in child food security and 18th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- More than 27 percent of Wisconsin children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- More than 84 percent of Wisconsin children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Wisconsin 24th of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

Although the majority of Wisconsin's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage or access to care, which can jeopardize their education and their future.

- In 2013, 90.4 percent of eligible children participated in Medicaid or BadgerCare Plus, Wisconsin's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 452,731 Wisconsin children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Medicaid, and 167,292 in BadgerCare Plus.

¹ A family of four was poor if it was living on less than \$23,834 a year, \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week and \$65 a day, and extremely poor if living on less than \$11,917 a year, \$993 a month, \$229 a week and \$33 a day.

² The state ranked 1st is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50th is the worst for children.

- More than 61,000 Wisconsin children ages 0-17 (4.7 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 13th lowest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 53,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Medicaid or BadgerCare Plus but not enrolled.

Early Childhood and Education

Lack of early childhood investments deprives children of critical supports in the early years and reduces school readiness.

- In 2013, the average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant was \$11,342 – 29.8 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 39 percent of Wisconsin's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 32 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Wisconsin's state-funded preschool programs met an average of 5.1 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

Wisconsin's schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.

- In 2013, 65 percent of Wisconsin's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 53 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 89 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 88 percent could not compute.
 - 83 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 77 percent could not compute.
- 92 percent of Wisconsin public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Wisconsin 3rd among states. 63 percent of Black students and 85 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 96 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 7 percent of Wisconsin public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Wisconsin 8th among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 34 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Wisconsin, 4,526 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 3.5 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 6,683 Wisconsin children in foster care.

Too many Wisconsin children are involved in the juvenile justice system.

- 68,681 children were arrested in Wisconsin in 2012 – a rate of 11,434 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 915 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 55 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 8 percent were Hispanic, and 31 percent were White.
- 27 Wisconsin children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Wisconsin spent 3.1 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

Wisconsin ranked 11th out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 37 children and teens were killed by guns in Wisconsin in 2013 – a rate of 2.5 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits