THE STATE OF BLACK WISCONSIN: DIVING INTO OUR STATE'S RACIAL DISPARITIES

with Sen. LaTonya Johnson

DISPARITY DATA UNDER TRUMP

Since Inauguration Day
The Trump Administration has removed key public health data from federal agency websites, including CDC and FDA pages on racial disparities, HIV prevalence, and clinical trial diversity
Executive orders have eliminated references to racial equity, gender identity, and DEI programs from government materials.
Legal challenges have been filed arguing that these removals hinder research and healthcare efforts, especially for marginalized communities
Experts warn that restricting access to racial health data will worsen disparities, but the Trump administration appears indifferent.

We know that for too long Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities have been left behind and intentionally harmed by our policies and systems in place.

In order for us to move forward, we must know the current landscape. By diving into some of the data about disparities and challenges affecting BIPOC prosperity, we hope to equip stakeholders with some of the tools needed to advocate for change.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Where Wisconsin is Currently

All of the data that we will be discussing next are the result of many factors known as the social determinants of health. This includes social and economic disparities, lack of access and quality care, environmental quality, etc.

HOUSING SECURITY

Where Wisconsin is Currently
On a given day in 2024, Wisconsin had **5,037** people sleeping in places not meant for human habitation, up from **4,861** people in 2023
In 2022-23, **18,455** children attending Wisconsin public schools lacked a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
Wisconsin's housing shortage disproportionately impacts the lowest income households. in 2023, Milwaukee alone needed 72,000 housing units for people making under $15 per hour and are paying more than 30% of their income for housing. Wisconsin has an estimated **188,100 households** earning less than 30% of median income, with **only 69,000 homes** considered affordable for those families.
Black Wisconsinites are 11 times as likely to experience homelessness than their white counterparts. According to the 2021 'point in time' count, **58 percent** of homeless Milwaukeeans are Black, despite African Americans making up just **38.6 percent** of the city's total population. In contrast, 36.9 percent of homeless people in Milwaukee are white, yet white Americans account for 44.4 percent of the city's entire population.

POVERTY

Where Milwaukee is Currently in Poverty
Poverty among Milwaukee's African American children is **38.8%** which is the **3rd worst** out of 50 largest metropolitan areas.
African American homeownership in Milwaukee is just **27.5%** ranking us next to last among the largest 50 metro areas, this disparity ranks **Milwaukee 48th in Black-White Non Hispanic homeownership.**
According to WHEDA the state needs around 30,000 more African American homeowners to close the racial divide.

POVERTY

Where Milwaukee is Currently in Poverty
The median household income for African Americans living in Milwaukee in 2022 was **$37,182**. This income ranks Milwaukee **50th out of the top 50** largest metropolitan cities.
Just **13.4%** of African Americans living in Milwaukee in 2022 earned over **$100,000** which is the lowest percentage out of the **50 largest** metropolitan areas.
Milwaukee's African American **poverty rate is 30.1%**, which is the worst out of the largest metro cities. Creating the widest margin among Black- White Non Hispanic poverty disparity.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Where Wisconsin is Currently on Criminal Justice
There are currently 37 facilities that make up the Department of Corrections. Wisconsin prison population as well as our Department of Corrections budget is exceptionally high. in large part due to the number of inmates we incarcerate. Our adult prisons were designed to hold a capacity of only 17,631 inmates however, as of February 14, 2025 The Wisconsin Department of Corrections reported a adult inmate capacity of 23,062. These individuals are incarcerated at a cost of $44,000-$55,000 per year.
95% of incarcerated inmates return back to their community within 5 years. Approximately 7,000 inmates are released from prison and returned to the community every year.
On March 24, 2023 Former DOC Secretary Carr stated there were approximately 6600 inmates incarcerated for non statutorily violent crimes that could be more beneficially served in the community at $4400 per year vs $44,000-$55,000 per year. Republicans said releasing these inmates were a nonstarter. During this same period of time prisons were averaging 33% employment vacancy rates, except Kettle Moraine employment vacancy of 50.32% and Waupun's vacancy rate of 50%.
If drastic prison reforms aren't taken the population is expected to top 24,000 by the end of the 2025-27 budget.
Community Supervision as of November 30, 2024 40,775 Probation 22,218 Parole 63,003 Total
Per a study by the University of Wisconsin Madison African American males are incarcerated 14 times the rate of white males.
42% of Men incarcerated in adult prison have an undiagnosed mental illness, 90% of females with 29% having a serious mental health need.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Where Wisconsin is Currently in Gun Deaths
In 2022, Wisconsin experienced 830 gun-related deaths, comprising 529 suicides and 277 homicides.
Gun homicides, assaults, and shootings by police cost Wisconsin **$9 billion** each year, amounting to more than **$1500** per person in the state.
Milwaukee Police Department Data: In 2023, Milwaukee police confiscated 3,297 guns, of which 2,843 of those guns were evidence guns.
In 2024, Milwaukee reported 132 homicides, a 23% decrease from 172 in 2023 which indicates a positive downward trend.
In 2024, we Milwaukee also reported 639 non-fatal shootings a 24% decrease from the previous year of 837.
Black residents, comprising 6.3% of Wisconsin's population, accounted for 75.5% of firearm homicide victims in 2022.
The rate of gun deaths in Wisconsin increased by 54% from 2014 to 2023, compared to a 34% increase nationwide.

SHOTSPOTTER ACTIVATIONS

Boundary Area	2022	2023	2024	2023-2024 % Change
North Boundary	14,617	13,224	10,527	*-20%*
South Boundary	1,519	1,462	1,117	*-24%*
Total	**16,136**	**14,686**	**11,644**	**-21%**

ShotSpotter data was obtained from the ShotSpotter Insight Portal for the time period of January 1-December 31, 2022-2024 and counts distinct ShotSpotter activations and excludes incidents determined by ShotSpotter to be non-gunfire/firework.

CRASH DATA

Crime Type	2022	2023	2024	2023-2024 % Change
Fatal Injuries	77	74	66	*-11%*
Hit & Run	5,897	5,409	5,411	*0%*
All Crashes	**15,265**	**14,493**	**14,346**	***-1%***

Fatal Injuries data was obtained from the OMAP Fatal Crash database and counts victims for the time period of January 1–December 31, 2022-2024. Overall crashes and hit and run crash data was obtained from the TraCS 10 system and counts distinct incidents for the same time period.

RECKLESS DRIVING & TOWS

May 1, 2022 – December 31, 2024
- Reckless driving tows: 582
- Unregistered tows: 573
- Repeat tows: 9

January 1 – December 31, 2024
- Reckless driving tows: 132
- Unregistered tows: 124
- Repeat tows: 8

Crime Type	2022	2023	2024	2023-2024 % Change
CAD Calls – Reckless Vehicle	1,618	1,290	974	*-25%*
Arrests	711	831	734	*-12%*
Reckless Driving Citations with Speeding	16,753	14,580	12,543	*-14%*

Calls for service was obtained from Tiburon and Hexagon Computer Aided Dispatched (CAD) systems and counts distinct calls for the time period of January 1-December 31, 2022-2024. Arrest data was obtained from JailInform and counts distinct arrests for the same time period. Citation data was obtained from TraCS 10 system and counts distinct citations for the same time period. Reckless driving statutes include “346.04(2)”, “346.04(2t)”, “346.04(3)”, “346.37”, “346.37(1)(a)1”, “346.37(1)(b)”, “346.37(1)(c)1”, “346.37(1)(c)3”, “346.37(1)(d)1”, “346.37(1)(e)1”. “346.39(1)”, “346.46(1)”, “346.57”, “346.57(2)”, “346.57(3)”, “346.57(4)(a)”, “346.57(4)(e)”, “346.57(5)”, “346.59(1)”, “346.62(2)”, “346.62(3)”, “346.62(4)”, “346.89(1)”, “346.89(3)(a)”, “346.89(5)”, “346.94(1)”, “346.94(12)”, and “346.92(2)”. Tow data was obtained from the Department of Public Works (DPW) Towing Management System, counting distinct Tow ID’s. A valid reckless riving tow requires one registration violation and one additional factor. Registration categories include the subsections for the following statutes: Failure to Display – “341.15”, Suspended Plates – “341.03”, Improper Registration – “341.04” or “341.61”. The additional factor category includes the following statutes: Fleeing – “346.04(2t)” or “346.04(3)”, Reckless Driving – “346.63(2)”, Speeding 25mph and over – “346.57(5)”, Racing on Highway – “346.94(2)”.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Gov. Evers' Proposed 2025-27 State Budget
Raise the age for adult corrections from 17 to 18 **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
Expand the Earned Release Program to include educational, vocational, and treatment programs, as well as create a residential parenting earned release program**(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
Increase alternatives to revocation funding with over $2.9 million in FY 2025-26 and $5.9 million in FY 2026-27 to expand community-based options **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
A plan to close Wisconsin's second oldest Prison Green Bay Correctional Institution. Expand Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center In Madison, and opening a new Type 1 (maximum secure) juvenile facility in Milwaukee will allow the closure of Lincoln Hills and Cooper Lake Schools this states only maximum secure juvenile detention center and reopening Lincoln Hills and Cooper Lake Schools as a 500 bed correctional facility for adults. A second Type 1 juvenile facility will also be proposed for Dane County and a third for Northern Wisconsin. **(Green Bay Closure plan removed by GOP, Type 1 funding provided)**
Fund community reentry centers with $4 million over the biennium to help formerly incarcerated individuals reintegrate into society **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**

PERSONAL SAFETY

Gov. Evers' Proposed 2025-27 State Budget
$43 million allocated for a Civil Legal Assistance Grant Program, providing legal aid for eviction prevention, unemployment claims, consumer protection, domestic violence survivors, and health insurance issues **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$13.4 million over the biennium for after-school programming, expanding literacy and math programs for low-income students **(Lowered to $5.5 million by Republicans)**
Universal background checks for firearm sales **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$3.5 million in FY 2025-26 and $8.5 million in FY 2026-27 to the newly created Wisconsin Office of Violence Prevention, supporting community violence intervention programs **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$60 million for traffic calming grants **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**

MILWAUKEE SENATE DISTRICTS 4 & 6

Districts 4 & 6
Milwaukee's two predominantly African American Districts saw a mass exodus compared to other Senate Districts in both the city of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County.
Senator Dora Drake - District 4, lost a total of 15,389 residents
Senator LaTonya Johnson - District 6, lost a total of 16,528 resident
TOTAL = 31,917

DISPARITIES IN HEALTH

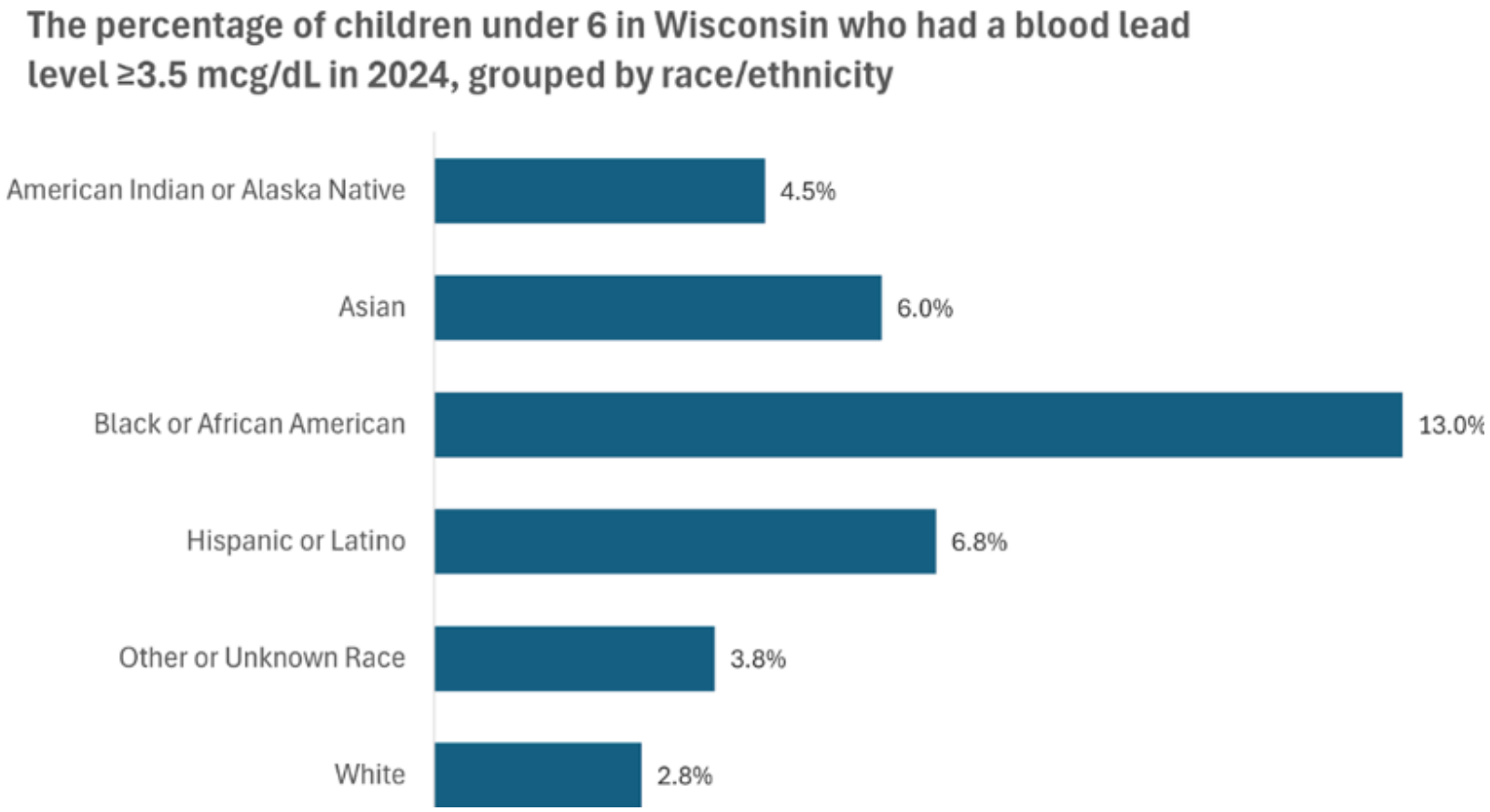
Where Wisconsin is Currently in Disparities of Public Health
In 2023 there were 59, 739 births in Wisconsin of those 5,586 were African American births. 16.8% of African American babies were born with low birth weight compared to just 7.9% statewide. This means African American babies resulted in double the number of low birthweight babies.
2023, also had 80 African American infant deaths which was 14.3 deaths per 1,000 births compared to 5.7 deaths per 1,000 births for the entire state.
Wisconsin ranks as one of the highest Black Infant Mortality rates in the nation.
Black babies in Wisconsin are 3x as likely to die before their first birthday as compared to white babies. Specifically, the infant mortality rate in Wisconsin is 15 deaths per 1000 live births for Black babies compared to just 5 deaths per 1000 live births for white babies. For zip code 53206 it's 29 deaths per 1000 live births.
These alarming numbers of infant mortality makes Wisconsin the highest of any state in the nation, at 30% above the nationwide average of 10.5 deaths per 1,000 live births. Based on 2018 CDC data.
Black mothers experience 1.75x the risk of significant complications from labor or delivery facing white mothers, and 5x the risk of dying in childbirth or from complications. According to the Wisconsin Maternal Review Team African American women represent 21% of pregnancy related deaths.

DISPARITIES IN HEALTH

Gov. Evers' Proposed 2025-27 State Budget
Postpartum BadgerCare coverage for new moms for 12 months **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$55 million allocated to the "Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies" initiative, which includes funding for maternal and child health grants, diaper banks, postpartum home visits, and increased Medicaid reimbursement for obstetric services **(Only Obstetric Reimbursement Included, but reduced from $18 million to $4.65 million. All others removed)**
Funding for lead poisoning prevention, with $6.2 million over the biennium to local health departments for lead hazard investigations and support services for children exposed to lead **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
Wisconsin Paid Family and Medical Leave Program, requiring employers with 50+ employees to provide 8 weeks of paid leave **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**

DISPARITIES IN HEALTH: LEAD

- Lead pipes like the ones in Flint threaten 70,000 residences in Milwaukee, 10,000 in Racine, 8,000 in West Allis, 6,500 in Manitowoc, 7,000 in Kenosha, almost 2,000 in Green Bay and 3,000 in Shorewood.
- In fact, the children in Milwaukee (5.5%) and Richland (5.7%) County still have a greater incidence of lead poisoning than the Flint children at the peak of the crisis (4.9%).



DISPARITIES IN HEALTH

Where Milwaukee is Currently in Disparities of Public Health

Milwaukee's neighborhoods on the north and south sides disproportionately affected African Americans and Hispanics by childhood lead poisoning. Lack of investment in impoverished areas, segregation and many other factors forced communities of color into certain communities with distressed housing.

DISPARITIES IN HEALTH: LEAD

Where Wisconsin is Currently in Chronic Illness
According to Wisconsin's 2022 Death Records African Americans were **2.73 times more likely** to die from **diabetes** than white residents. African Americans had 47.7 deaths per 100,000 in 2022 compared to just 17.5 deaths per 100.000 for Whites.
In 2022 **Strokes** resulted 66.9 deaths per 100,000 for African Americans which were double the rate of stroke deaths for Whites.
Heart disease in African Americans resulted in 249 deaths per 100,000 and 164.6 for Whites. African Americans died at a rate of **1.5 times the rate** of Whites from **heart disease.**
Black Wisconsinites had **1.4 times the risk** of asthma diagnosis compared to White residents, and African American children were twice as likely to have asthma as Whites. Also, African Americans are **1.26 times more likely** to be diagnosed with **kidney disease**.

DISPARITIES IN HEALTH: LIFE EXPECTENCY

*Wisconsin state death records indicate that White residents live an average **of 15 years longer** than Black residents.*

Disparities in Life Expectancy at Birth in Wisconsin by Race:	
White	Age 76
Asian American	Age 65
Native American	Age 62
Black	Age 61
All Races	Age 75

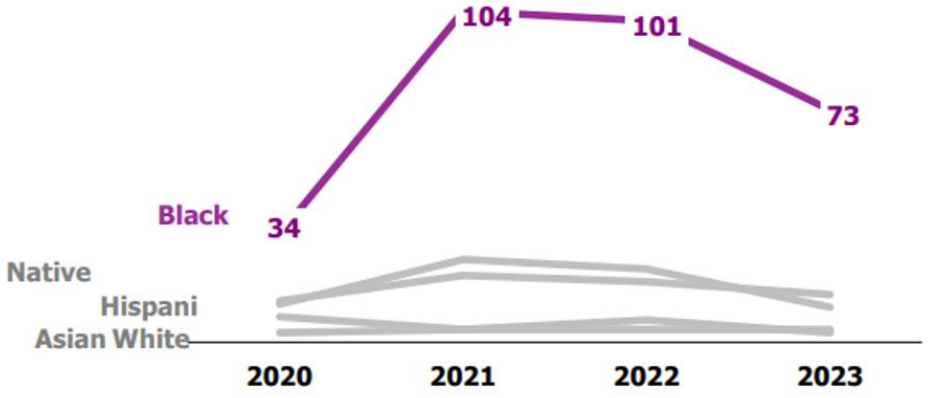
Where Wisconsin is Currently in Sexual Health

In 2023, there were 24,992 cases of Chlamydia reported which accounted for 74% of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) in Wisconsin, 1,021 per 100,000 cases were African American adolescents ages 15-19 or 4.8%. There were 7,005 cases of Gonorrhea which accounted for 21% of STI's with 810 per 100,000 for ages 15-19 or 16.7%.5% of Syphilis cases reported. African American adolescents had **the highest rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea,** and **syphilis,** at about **6.7 times** higher than the rate among white individuals.

In 2020, racial and ethnic minorities made up **just 19% of Wisconsin's population** but accounted for **61% of new HIV diagnoses.**

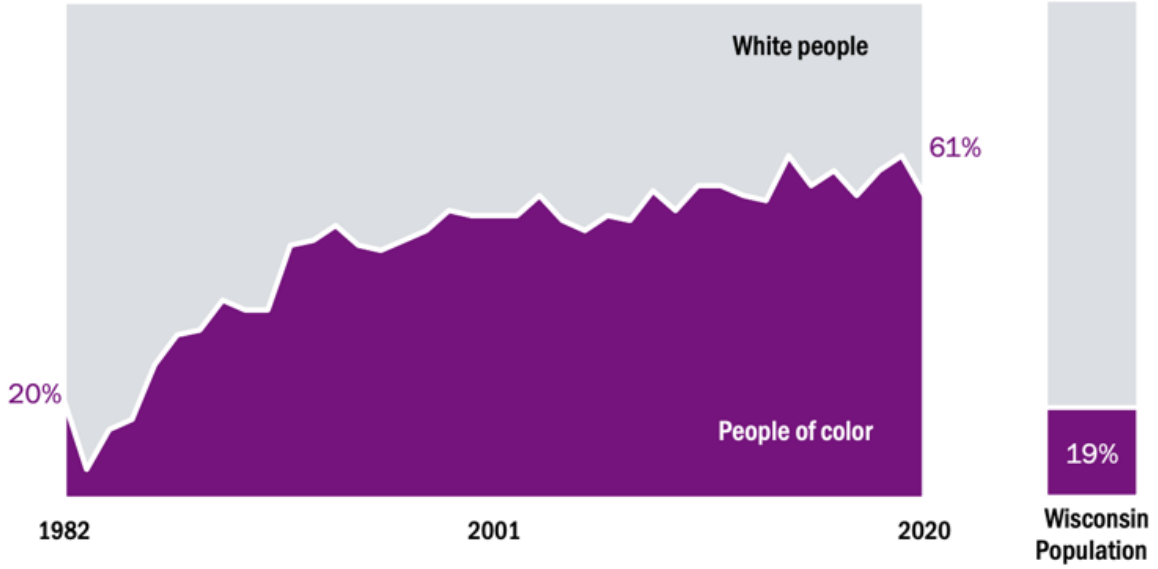
Over the past five years the rate of primary and secondary syphilis was higher among Black people, but it decreased by 28% among this demographic in 2023.

Rate of syphilis diagnoses per 100,000 people by race, Wisconsin: 2019–2023



The percentage of new HIV diagnoses among people of color is disproportionate to Wisconsin's racial and ethnic composition.

Percentage of new HIV diagnoses among White people and people of color, Wisconsin, 1982 -2020



OPPORTUNITY AND SCHOOL FUNDING

Where Wisconsin is Currently
Nearly 90% of Wisconsin's African American population live in the following six counties, all of which are located in Southeastern or Southern Wisconsin: **Milwaukee, Dane, Racine, Kenosha, Rock, and Waukesha.** When looking at African Americans as a percent of the total county population, **Milwaukee tops this list, with 38.6 percent.**
In Wisconsin, while 1 percent of Wisconsin's white children live in high poverty areas 35 percent of African-American children and 18 percent of Latino children do. **Black children make up about 9% of total Wisconsin public school students (Hispanic students is approx. 13%).** 43.7% of Wisconsin public school students are economically disadvantaged. **86.5% of MPS students are economically disadvantaged.**

OPPORTUNITY AND SCHOOL FUNDING

Where Wisconsin is Currently in Education
1 in 10 children in Wisconsin live in poverty while 3 in 10 African American children in Milwaukee live in poverty.
African American children makeup 10.1% of Wisconsin's population.
A stunning 22.5% of African American youth ages 16-24 living in Milwaukee were not in school and did not have employment resulting in us being ranked 3rd worst in the nation.
Graduation rate for white students was 92.7%, compared to a graduation rate of 71% for Black students. This gap in graduation rates for white and Black students is the largest in the country.
Wisconsin also had the 47th highest gap between Black and white students in its share of adults with either a high school or bachelor’s degree.

OPPORTUNITY AND SCHOOL FUNDING

Gov. Evers' Budget 2025-27 Proposal
$3.1 billion increase in general and categorical aids for K-12 schools, the largest proposed investment in Wisconsin's history **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
Expand "Bucky's Promise" so WI students with household income of less than $62,000 can attend any UW school tuition-free. **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$147 million to fully fund school breakfast and lunches for all children. **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
More than $1.1 billion in special education aid, increasing state reimbursement rates to 60% in both years **(Reduced to $504.68 million, or 42% of the cost)**

OPPORTUNITY AND SCHOOL FUNDING

Gov. Evers' 2025-27 Budget Proposal
$10 million in FY 2024-25 for the Milwaukee Math Partnership to improve math proficiency and professional development for current and aspiring Milwaukee teachers. **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$6 million over the biennium to improve access to driver's education for low-income students **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$26.7 million annually for a new Aid for English Language Acquisition program, expanding support for more than 50,000 English learners statewide **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
Expansion of in-state tuition eligibility for undocumented Wisconsin high school graduates, ensuring broader access to higher education **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**

At a Crossroad: Education and Juvenile Justice

The cost of disinvestment
With the passage of this budget, Wisconsin is estimated to spend just $15,477 per child per year on the average student in a public school.
On childcare, the Legislature passed $330 million over the biennium for an estimated 288,000 children statewide, breaking down to about $400 per child per year
In Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools, the only high-security juvenile detention centers in the state, the cost is $912,865 per child per year, and expected to rise to $1,006,670

MENTAL HEALTH

Insurance companies report a
100% increase
in the percentage of
self-harm, substance use, and mental health claims
for teens in 2020 as compared to 2019.

Source: Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health

Where Wisconsin is Currently in Mental Health
In 2023, **14.16%** of Wisconsin youth ages 12-17 reported **a major depressive episode** in the past year, with **1 in 10** attempting suicide in the past three years.
Black youth in Wisconsin are **15 times more likely** to be placed in a youth facility compared to their White counterparts.
Black residents in Wisconsin are approximately **23.9% more likely** to be hospitalized due to self-harm injuries compared to White residents.
Only **23% of Black adults** with mental health needs reported receiving treatment in the past year, compared to **43% of White adults.**

MENTAL HEALTH

Gov. Evers' Proposed 2025-27 State Budget
$300 million investment in school-based mental health services, the highest biennial investment ever **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$83.9 million annually to fund per-pupil payments for comprehensive school-based mental health programs **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$7.6 million over two years to support regional crisis stabilization facilities, providing short-term care for adults in crisis **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$20 million allocated to establish crisis urgent care and observation centers, reducing emergency detention cases **(REMOVED BY REPUBLICANS)**
$12.2 million for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, supporting call centers and meeting rising demand **(Reduced to $7 million by Republicans)**
$1.8 million to establish a psychiatric residential treatment facility, expanding psychiatric care for youth under 21 **(Included by Republicans)**

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