

October 2013

## Economic Recovery Slow for Rock County Families

### More People in Poverty, Fewer with Private Health Insurance

#### One out of Four Children in Rock County Now Lives in Poverty

The child poverty rate in Rock County rose to 25.7% in 2012 from 15.1% in 2008. Rock County's child poverty rate is higher than the statewide average, which rose to 18.2% in 2012 from 13.4% in 2008. More than 2,800 additional children slipped into poverty in Rock County between 2008 and 2012, which represents a population greater than the village of Clinton.

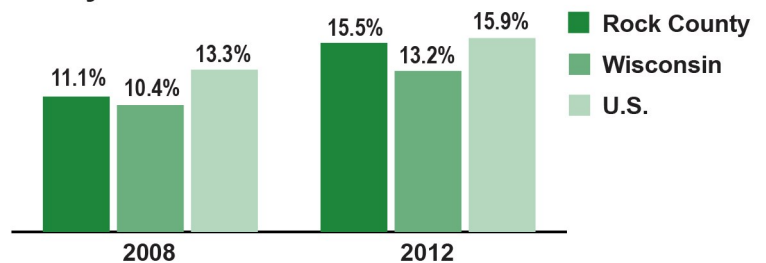
**Child Poverty**



#### Poverty in Rock County Has Increased

As a result of the recession, the total poverty rate in Rock County increased to 15.5% in 2012 from 11.1% in 2008. In 2012, Rock County's poverty rate was higher than the Wisconsin average, which rose to 13.2% in 2012 from 10.4% in 2008. The statewide poverty level was lower than the national average.

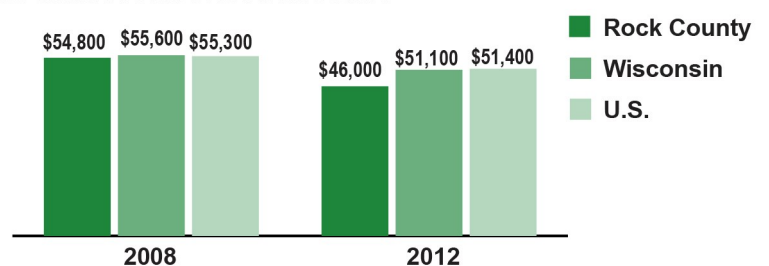
**Poverty**



#### Households in Rock County are Making Do with Less

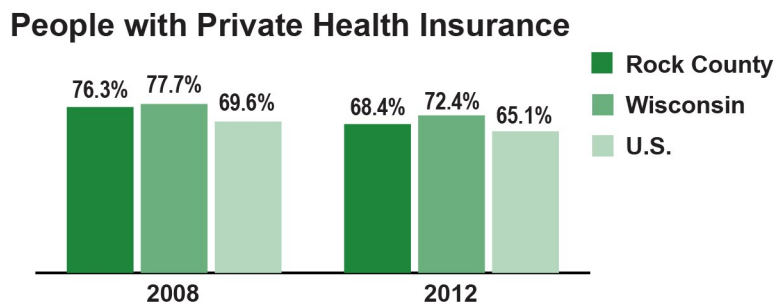
The typical household in Rock County earned \$8,800 less in 2012 than in 2008. Median household income dropped to \$46,000 in 2012 from \$54,800 in 2008. A typical household in Rock County earns roughly 10% less than the state and national average.

**Median Household Income**



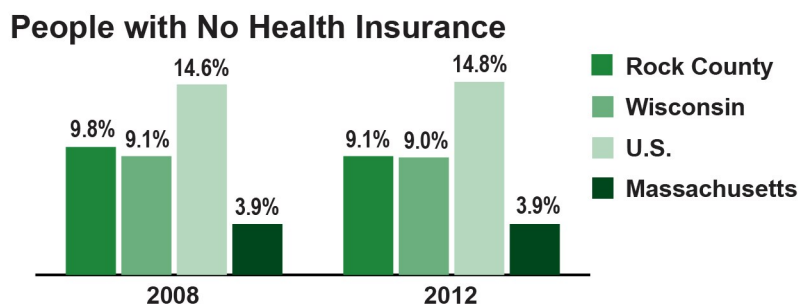
## Fewer People in Rock County Have Private Health Insurance

The percent of people in Rock County with private health insurance decreased to 68.4% in 2012 from 76.3% in 2008. The increase in the unemployment rate impacted health insurance coverage, since most families obtain insurance through their employers.



## Implementing Health Care Reform Could Significantly Improve Access to Insurance

The percent of Rock County residents lacking health insurance dropped to 9.1% in 2012 from 9.8% in 2008. Both Rock County and Wisconsin had a much smaller share of their population without health insurance than the national average, but far above the 3.9% rate in Massachusetts. That state implemented health care reforms in 2007 that served as the model for the Affordable Care Act.



## How to Help Rock County Families Affected by the Recession

Families in Rock County are still feeling the effects of the recession, when steep job loss pushed many residents into poverty and resulted in the loss of health care coverage. In several important respects, Rock County's economic situation is below the national average, and far too many families are struggling to make ends meet or going without health insurance.

It is discouraging that three years into the recovery, poverty rates and income remain stubbornly low, and the uninsured rate remains high. But there are some basic steps we can take to help boost the local economy and help Rock County families pull themselves out of poverty, including:

- Increase the minimum wage and then adjust it each year for inflation.
- Give businesses access to a well-trained workforce by providing schools and colleges the resources they need to prepare

students for employment. And provide students with the financial aid they need to succeed in their educational efforts.

- Adjust the Homestead tax credit for inflation each year, like the rest of the tax code.
- Create a strong public/private partnership to help Wisconsinites get insurance through the Affordable Care Act and to help reach the Governor's target of cutting the uninsured rate in half.
- Maintain funding for safety net programs such as food stamps and federal unemployment benefits that help lift families out of poverty and pump money into the still sluggish economy.
- Increase school readiness by improving children's early learning and development opportunities through high-quality child care, early education, home visiting, and parent engagement.