

2022-23

# Community Assessment



MAPS Head Start  
Merrill, Wisconsin

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PREPARED BY: DEB PECK, QAA  
*Updated: January 26, 2023*

## **Introduction**

### **Executive Summary:**

Merrill Area Public Schools (MAPS) has been the grantee for MAPS Head Start for decades. In 2012, the district moved our program into an elementary school building that was closed because of declining enrollment. Our location is now called Pine River School for Young Learners. We are two programs melded together into one coordinated experience for eligible three and four year old children and their families: Head Start and Early Childhood Special Education. The MAPS Early Childhood Special Education program complements the Head Start program by providing services for children with disabilities. When applicable, children meeting eligibility requirements may be enrolled in both of these programs. We operate on the same calendar as the Merrill Area Public School District, with children attending a morning, afternoon, or full day session four days a week. The full day session was added in January of 2022 in an effort to meet the diverse needs of our students and families. One day a week, staff members attend training or meetings, and conduct home visits or family activities to include families in their children's learning.

The mission of Pine River School for Young Learners is to engage, educate, enrich and empower young children and their families. Our program vision is that we will provide a safe environment and will promote effective communication with students, families, the community and each other. We will be strong advocates for learning and independence by building confidence, initiative, persistence and curiosity for all. Our curriculum is based on individual student needs, the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, Common Core State Standards, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and we assess all Head Start Students using Teaching Strategies GOLD.

The MAPS Head Start center based program serves 88 students from low-income families with our Federal Head Start Grant and 5 students with a Wisconsin State Head Start Grant. To be eligible for the Head Start Program, children must be at least three years old and meet the Head Start enrollment criteria. The program also has a point system in place to help ensure that the children on our waiting list with the greatest needs are the first enrolled.

**Service Area:**

Pine River School for Young Learners, which houses our Head Start program, is located at W4165 State Highway 64, Merrill, WI 54452. This is on the eastern edge of the city of Merrill. Our service area is the Merrill Area Public School District. This includes the city of Merrill and the rural area around it. We serve a large portion of Lincoln County. The following maps show where the Merrill School District is located in the State of Wisconsin.



Detail map of CESA 9. Merrill school district is in the middle in a darker blue



**Methodology:**

In order to complete our mission; we will engage, educate, enrich and empower all children and their families, we must strive for excellence. This excellence is achieved through assessment, planning, growth and evaluation. Our purpose in conducting this community assessment is to determine if the needs of our students and their families are being met by the resources available to them. We hope this will help us find ways of keeping our families informed and support them to make more use of available resources. Assistance in compiling this assessment was obtained from many sources including our staff, the families of MAPS Head Start, the Policy Council, the Merrill Area Public School District, the U.W. Extension Office, Lincoln County Social Services and the Lincoln County Health Department. We utilized our program information report, our assessment tools, interviews, surveys, census data and data collected from our community partners in compiling this report.

**Findings and Recommendations:**

Live Well Lincoln is an organization led by the Lincoln County Health Department, Aspirus Health, Aging & Disability Resource Center of Central Wisconsin and Lincoln County Department of Social Services. They are currently undergoing a community health assessment and improvement planning process which occurs every five years. This organization has identified the following as priority health issues in Lincoln County: Poor Mental Health & Well-Being, Poor Well-Being caused by Overweight/Obesity and Support & Caregiving for the Aging Population.

Mental Health and Well-Being is a focus and concern of many community organizations including our program. We utilize Conscious Discipline which is a curriculum that focuses on helping children with social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation through daily greetings, breathing techniques, safe places and other strategies. Conscious Discipline includes a parent curriculum that we are able to share with families

Nutrition and healthy food are always a concern. The 2022 County Health Rankings state that 34% of adults in Lincoln County are obese and our program records indicate that 43% of our students in 2021-2022 were overweight or obese. Experts predict that today's children may be the first generation to not outlive their parents. The children in our program are served a healthy breakfast / snack and lunch each day. These meet all of the nutritional requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. In addition to making sure the children receive meals while they are at school, we have partnered with WIC / Fit Families to offer classes and programs to our families on nutrition and how to cook healthy meals. Our school participates in the Food for Kids program which provides a bag of food and snacks every weekend during the school year. These bags of food are delivered to our school and then sent home in our students' backpacks every Friday. WIC attends our annual Health Fair in August and meets with our families to sign up for the WIC program. Our family service workers have worked with our families to get them in WIC and to help them keep their appointments during the year so they

stay current in the program. WIC has adjusted their program to utilize available technology to connect with families.

Interviews with our families confirm our own data that the lack of oral health care has been an ongoing problem for our community. We strive to connect our families with oral health care and work closely with the Lincoln County Health Department to connect with appropriate dental care. Dental care for low-income families is offered in adjacent communities but many providers have fallen behind scheduling appointments and families are waiting six months or more for appointments. Connecting families with “out of town” providers creates a challenge with transportation. We strive to connect our families with transportation through Veyo if the program is available to them. We have also arranged for a dental hygienist to come to our program to perform dental exams for children who have not been able to receive dental exams any other way. We will continue to work with our community partners to expand these programs and find other ways to connect our families with the oral health care they need.

Research shows that reliable, affordable transportation is another problem facing low-income families in our area. Because we are located in a rural area, transportation is a necessity for most life tasks. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the average travel time to work for Lincoln County is 22.8 minutes. The City of Merrill does have a bus transit system but only within the city limits. There is also a taxi service but this can be rather expensive. Our program works with the Merrill School system to provide free transportation to all of our students. Transportation for our families to evening events, medical and dental appointments, and other necessities are more difficult. Our family service workers spend a lot of time helping families make arrangements and find transportation for these events. We hope to continue to work with the community to offer solutions to the transportation problems our community faces.

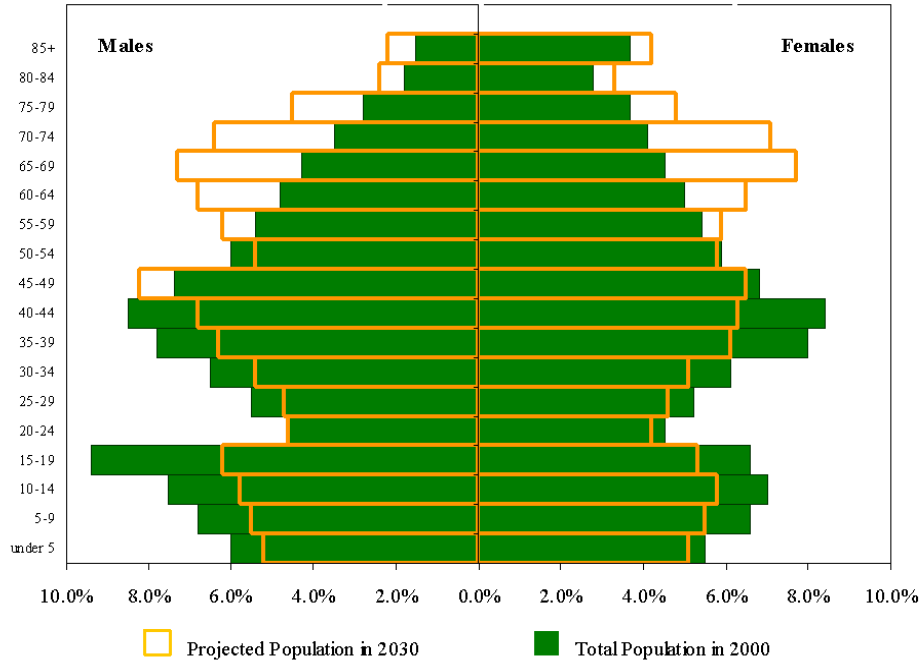
## **Demographics and Economics of the Service Area**

### **Population:**

**Key Finding:** As shown by the projection data collected from the UW Extension, Lincoln County trends toward an aging population. This is evidenced in the information collected from the U.S. Census Bureau on the following pages. 22.6% of Lincoln County’s population is 65 years old and older. This is 4.7% higher than the State of Wisconsin’s percentage of people 65 and older which is at 17.9%. This is also evidenced by the statistics from the Community Health survey that was done in 2022 by Live Well Lincoln as 41.4% of the respondents indicated that they were retired. Lincoln County has seen a decrease in population since 2010. The largest group of minorities in Lincoln County is Hispanic or Latino, which makes up about 2.2% of the population. About 94.3% of Lincoln County is white.



## Aging Population of Lincoln County Projections



Source: UW-Extension Applied Population Lab/Dan Veroff/ Derived from state Department of Administration data.

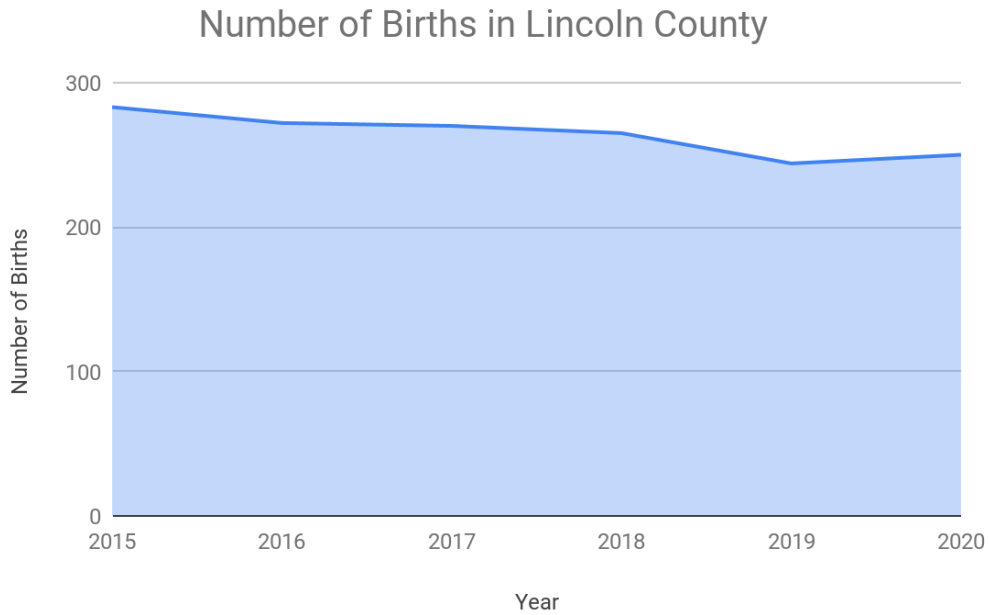
## Employment Statistics for Lincoln County

### Current employment status

|                                  | # Responses | % Responses |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Employed                         | 341         | 45.3%       |
| Retired                          | 311         | 41.4%       |
| Self-employed                    | 40          | 5.3%        |
| Unable to Work                   | 33          | 4.4%        |
| Homemaker or stay-at-home parent | 18          | 2.4%        |
| Out of work less than 1 year     | 6           | 0.8%        |
| Out of work 1+ years             | 2           | 0.3%        |
| Student                          | 1           | 0.1%        |
| Total Responses                  | 752         | 100%        |

Of the 752 responses on the current employment status all were valid answers and able to be used. The most common employment status is “Employed” at 45.3% (n=341). The second most common is “Retired” at 41.4% (n=311) with the third being at “Self-employed” at 5.3% (n=40).

Source: Live Well Lincoln 2022 Community Health Survey [www.welllincoln.org](http://www.welllincoln.org)



Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/birth/form.htm>, accessed 1/23/2023

### Top Social and Economic Concerns in Lincoln County

#### Social and Economic Factors (choose up to 2 options)

|  | # Responses | % Responses   |
|--|-------------|---------------|
| Not enough money for housing, household expenses and food              | 268         | 38.7%         |
| Caregiving for your family (child care, aging relative, special needs) | 251         | 36.2%         |
| Aging related health concerns  | 232         | 33.5%         |
| Family issues (divorce, parenting)                                     | 122         | 17.6%         |
| Employment opportunities   | 112         | 16.2%         |
| Lack of social or community support                                    | 75          | 10.8%         |
| Lack of job related skills   | 57          | 8.2%          |
| Availability and affordability of education                            | 36          | 5.2%          |
| Violence in the home and community                                     | 36          | 5.2%          |
| Race/ethnic relations (harassment, discrimination)                     | 31          | 4.5%          |
| Other  | 26          | 2.7%          |
| <b>Total Responses</b>   | <b>1246</b> | <b>178.8%</b> |

693 responses (553 selected two options, 140 selected one option) 59 left blank

Source: Live Well Lincoln 2022 Community Health Survey [www.welllincoln.org](http://www.welllincoln.org)



**United States Census Bureau**  
Quick Facts - Lincoln County, Wisconsin

| <b>Fact</b>   | <b>Lincoln County</b> | <b>State of Wisconsin</b> |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Population</b>   |                       |                           |
| Population estimate July 1, 2021                          | na                    | 5,892,539                 |
| Population, Census, April 1, 2020                         | 28,415                | 5,893,718                 |
| Population, Census, April 1, 2010                         | 28,743                | 5,686,986                 |
| <b>Age and Sex</b>  |                       |                           |
| Persons under 5 years, percent                            | 4.5%                  | 5.4%                      |
| Persons under 18 years, percent                           | 18.1%                 | 21.6%                     |
| Persons 65 years and over, percent                        | 22.6%                 | 17.9%                     |
| Female persons, percent                                   | 48.9%                 | 49.9%                     |
| <b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>                           |                       |                           |
| White alone, percent                                      | 96.1%                 | 86.6%                     |
| Black or African American alone, percent                  | 1.0%                  | 6.8%                      |
| American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent          | 0.9%                  | 1.2%                      |
| Asian alone, percent                                      | 0.7%                  | 3.2%                      |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent | <0.1%                 | 0.1%                      |
| Two or More Races, percent                                | 1.4%                  | 2.2%                      |
| Hispanic or Latino, percent                               | 2.2%                  | 7.5%                      |
| White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent              | 94.3%                 | 80.2%                     |
| <b>Population Characteristics</b>                         |                       |                           |
| Veterans, 2017-2021                                       | 1,711                 | 315,815                   |
| Foreign born persons, percent, 2017-2021                  | 1.2%                  | 5.0%                      |
| <b>Housing</b>  |                       |                           |
| Housing units, July 1, 2021, (V2021)                      | 16,167                | 2,748,940                 |
| Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2017-2021               | 78.4%                 | 67.4%                     |
| Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2017-2021   | \$144,600             | \$200,400                 |

|  |          |            |
|--|----------|------------|
| Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2017-2021                        | \$1,204  | \$1,471    |
| Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2017-2021                     | \$459    | \$578      |
| Median gross rent, 2017-2021   | \$672    | \$916      |
| Building permits, 2021   | 188      | 25,444     |
| <b>Families and Living Arrangements</b>  |          |            |
| Households, 2017-2021  | 12,055   | 2,401,818  |
| Persons per household, 2017-2021   | 2.30     | 2.39       |
| Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2017-2021             | 89.8%    | 86.8%      |
| Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2017-2021 | 2.5%     | 8.6%       |
| <b>Computer and Internet Use</b>   |          |            |
| Households with a computer, percent, 2017-2021   | 90.1%    | 92.0%      |
| Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2017-2021                  | 81.5%    | 86.4%      |
| <b>Education</b>   |          |            |
| High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2017-2021            | 92.6%    | 92.9%      |
| Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2017-2021               | 18.7%    | 31.5%      |
| <b>Health</b>  |          |            |
| With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2017-2021                              | 9.8%     | 8.1%       |
| Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent                          | 7.0%     | 6.4%       |
| <b>Economy</b>   |          |            |
| In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2017-2021         | 60.0%    | 66.0%      |
| In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2017-2021        | 57.0%    | 62.6%      |
| Total accommodation and food services sales, 2017 (\$1,000)                            | 28,837   | 13,496,207 |
| Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)               | n/a      | 48,477,876 |
| Total transportation & warehousing receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)                    | 64,150   | 15,551,340 |
| Total retail sales, 2017 (\$1,000)   | 340,997  | 91,763,765 |
| Total retail sales per capita, 2017  | \$12,290 | \$15,840   |
| <b>Transportation</b>  |          |            |
| Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2017-2021                   | 22.8     | 22.2       |

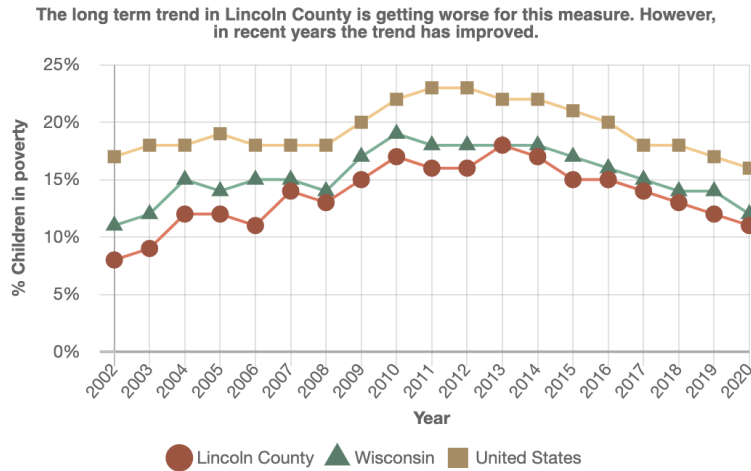
| <b>Income and Poverty</b>  |          |             |
|--|----------|-------------|
| Median household income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021             | \$61,363 | \$67,080    |
| Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 | \$32,283 | \$36,754    |
| Persons in poverty, percent                                      | 10.2%    | 10.8%       |
| <b>Businesses</b>  |          |             |
| Total employer establishments, 2020                              | 674      | 141,326     |
| Total employment, 2020   | 8,299    | 2,599,347   |
| Total annual payroll, 2020 (\$1,000)                             | 359,489  | 131,209,701 |
| Total employment, percent change, 2019-2020                      | -8.0%    | -0.4%       |
| Total nonemployer establishments, 2019                           | 1,717    | 356,561     |
| All employer firms, 2017   | 496      | 104,780     |
| Men-owned firms, 2017  | 256      | 59,600      |
| Women-owned firms, 2017  | NA       | 17,085      |
| Minority-owned firms, 2017                                       | NA       | 5,817       |
| Non Minority-owned firms, 2017                                   | 419      | 90,255      |
| Veteran-owned firms, 2017  | NA       | 5,771       |
| Non Veteran-owned firms, 2017                                    | 356      | 87,592      |
| <b>Geography</b>   |          |             |
| Population per square mile, 2020                                 | 32.3     | 108.8       |
| Population per square mile, 2010                                 | 32.7     | 105.0       |
| Land area in square miles, 2010                                  | 878.97   | 54,157.80   |

Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lincolncountywisconsin,WI/PST045219> downloaded January 19, 2023

**Poverty:**

**Key Finding:** The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 10.2% of the people living in Lincoln County were in the poverty level in 2021 and that the median household income is \$61,363. The County Health Rankings show that in 2022, 11% of the children in Lincoln County were living in poverty. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction indicates that In October of 2019, 49.23% of students in the Merrill Area Public Schools received free or reduced lunch rates.

**Children in poverty in Lincoln County, WI County, state and national trends**

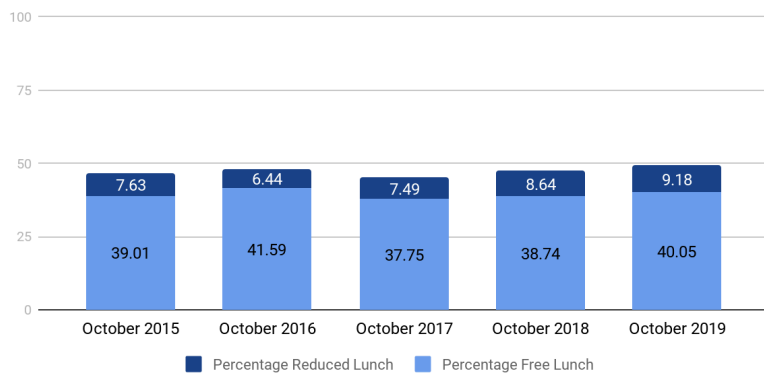


Notes:  
Prior to 2005, Children in poverty was based on the Current Population Survey; beginning in 2005, it was based on the American Community Survey.

Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

**Students at Merrill Area Public Schools Receiving Free and Reduced Lunch**

Source: WI Dept of Public Instruction <https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/program-statistics> - Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many school food authorities including MAPS were not included in the October 2020 & 2021 report as they were operating under the Seamless Summer Option or Summer Food Service Program.

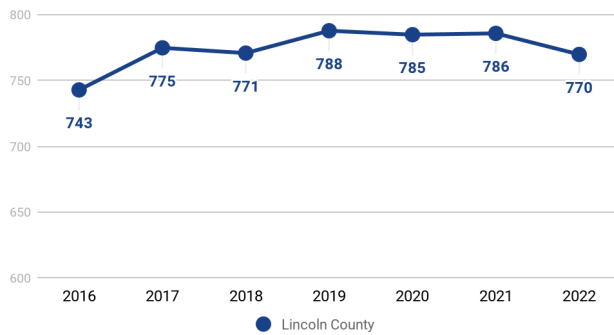


## Employment and Transportation:

**Key Finding Employment:** According to data collected from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, the number of business establishments in Lincoln County has been pretty consistent since 2017 after a large decrease the previous years. Unemployment data for Lincoln County which shows that unemployment was decreasing but jumped back up during the pandemic which coincides with the state and national unemployment rates. According to the County Health Rankings, unemployment in Lincoln County was at 5.9% in 2022.

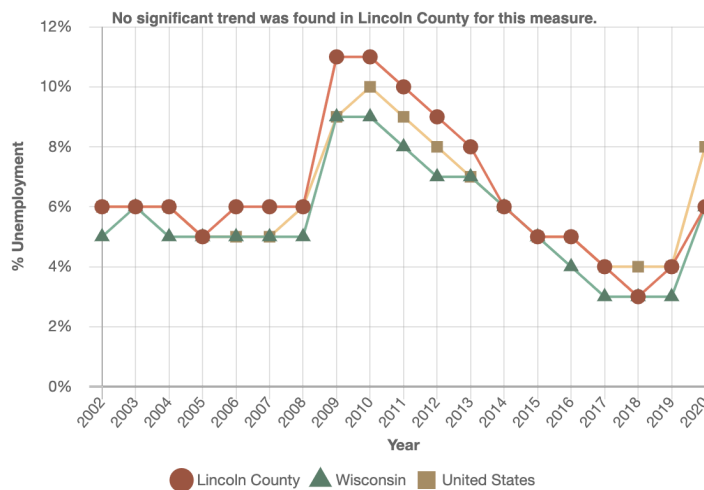
**Key Finding Transportation:** The average travel time to work in Lincoln County is 22.8 minutes according to the U.S Census Bureau. County Health Rankings estimates that 83% of Lincoln County drives to work alone. The city of Merrill does have a bus transit system that operates within the city limits called the Merrill-Go-Round. This service is available from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. There is also a taxi service available through Blue Jay Taxi Service.

**Average Number of Business Establishments**



Source: <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/wisconomy/query>

**Unemployment in Lincoln County, WI  
County, state and national trends**



Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

**PROMINENT EMPLOYERS OF LINCOLN COUNTY**

Source: <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/wisconomy/query>

| <b>Employer Name</b>         | <b>Industry</b>                      | <b>Location</b> | <b>Number of Employees</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Agra Industries              | Manufacturing                        | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Aspirus Merrill Hospital     | Hospital                             | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Church Mutual Insurance Co   | Insurance Agencies & Brokerages      | Merrill         | 500-999                    |
| Dave's County Market         | Grocers - Retail                     | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Elgin Fastener Group         | Wire Products                        | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Harley-Davidson Motor Co     | Motorcycle ATV & Other Vehicle Mfg   | Tomahawk        | 250-499                    |
| Incredible Bank              | Banking                              | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Interflex Group Inc          | Manufacturing                        | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Lincoln County               | Government Offices                   | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Lincoln Wood Products Inc    | Millwork                             | Merrill         | 250-499                    |
| Louisiana-Pacific Corp       | Building Materials                   | Tomahawk        | 100-249                    |
| Merrill Public Schools       | School                               | Merrill         | 250-499                    |
| Pine Crest Nursing Home      | Nursing Care Facilities / Government | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Reindl Printing Inc          | Printers                             | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Samuel Pressure Vessel Group | Manufacture                          | Tomahawk        | 100 -249                   |
| Systems Technologies Inc     | Electrical Consultants               | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Tomahawk Historical Society  | Museums                              | Tomahawk        | 100-249                    |
| Tomahawk School District     | School                               | Tomahawk        | 100-249                    |
| Trig's                       | Grocers - Retail                     | Tomahawk        | 100-249                    |
| Walmart Supercenter          | Department Stores                    | Merrill         | 100-249                    |
| Weinbrenner Shoe Co.         | Footwear Manufacturing               | Merrill         | 100-249                    |

## Lincoln County Jobs by Industry

Source: <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/wisconomy/query>

| Industry                         | Average<br>2017 | Average<br>2018 | Average<br>2019 | Average<br>2020 | Average<br>2021 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Natural Resources & Mining       | 191             | 209             | 190             | 183             | 190             |
| Construction                     | 516             | 494             | 479             | 436             | 410             |
| Manufacturing                    | 2,632           | 2,638           | 2,518           | 2,187           | 2,294           |
| Trade, Transportation, Utilities | 2,176           | 2,137           | 2,105           | 2,004           | 2,030           |
| Information                      | 85              | 82              | 82              | 67              | 64              |
| Financial Activities             | 1,066           | 1,059           | 1,090           | 1,092           | 1,053           |
| Professional & Business Services | 444             | 453             | 466             | 397             | 426             |
| Education & Health Services      | 1,643           | 1,712           | 1,686           | 1,785           | 1,718           |
| Leisure & Hospitality            | 1,023           | 1,021           | 1,038           | 897             | 938             |
| Other Services                   | 247             | 239             | 226             | 217             | 236             |
| Public Administration            | 1,022           | 1,046           | 1,026           | 826             | 799             |
| Unclassified                     | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               |
| <b>Total, All Industries</b>     | <b>11,043</b>   | <b>11,090</b>   | <b>10,905</b>   | <b>10,090</b>   | <b>10,158</b>   |

Number employed is the average monthly local number employed in that sector during the year.

### Education:

**Key Finding School District:** Merrill Area Public Schools offers a comprehensive curriculum that emphasizes reading, mathematics, science, language arts, history, fine arts, foreign languages and a broad scope of vocational programs. Areas of highlight include Title services; solid ELA and Math curricula; school-to-work and apprenticeship programs; at-risk student programs; computer education and others. The MAPS Special Education Program is a multi-dimensional program that is designed to meet the educational needs of children who display many different types of learning and other disabilities. The 2021-22 District Report Card shows that 19.6% of MAPS students have a disability and 45.5% are economically disadvantaged.

The Merrill Area Public Schools presently serves students in grades 9-12 (one high school with 801 students), in grades 5-8 (one middle school with 594 students), in grades 3-4 (Washington Elementary School with 229 students) and in kindergarten through 2nd grade (Kate Goodrich Elementary School with 375 students). The district also maintains one school forest and a pre-kindergarten facility that is operated by the school district for Head Start students, 4K students and Early Childhood students with disabilities. Our community-based pre-kindergarten program began in 2010-11. There are 166 three and four year old children enrolled in these integrated programs. MAPS also offers virtual courses through Bridges Virtual Academy (4K-12) whose enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year is approximately 733 students.



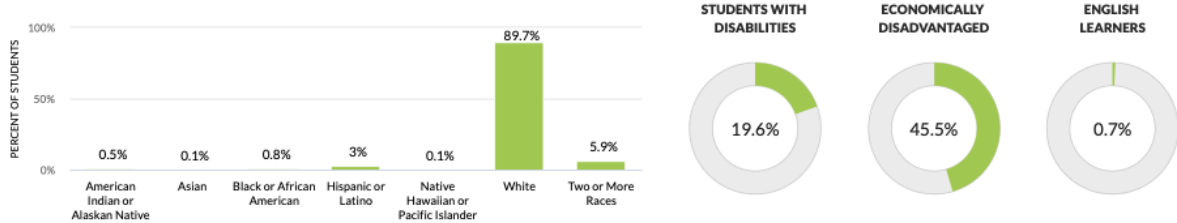


## OVERVIEW

### District Details

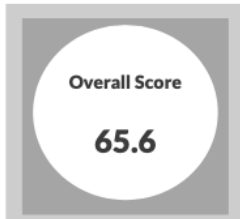
Grades : K4-12  
Enrollment : 2,224  
Percent open enrollment : 2.8%

### Student Groups



### Score Summary

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please use caution when interpreting scores and ratings. Careful review of the detailed data on all pages is encouraged. Also, see <https://dpi.wi.gov/accountability/resources>.



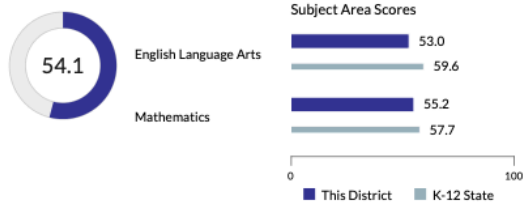
Meets Expectations  
★★★

#### PRIORITY AREA WEIGHTS

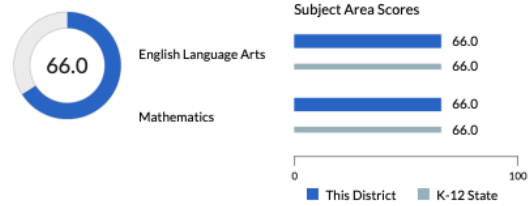


### Priority Area Scores

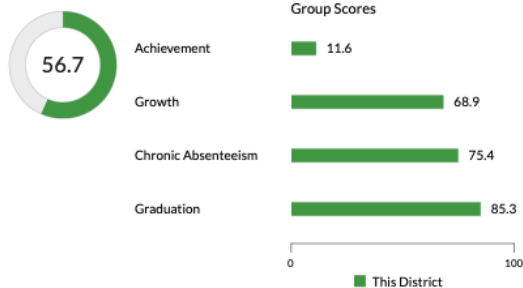
#### ACHIEVEMENT



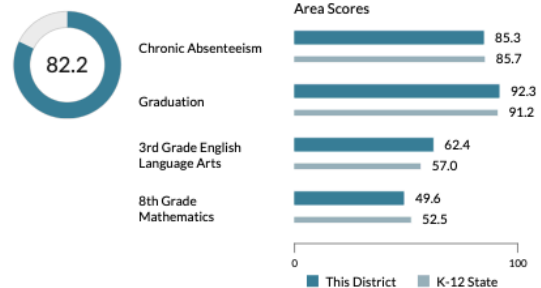
#### GROWTH



#### TARGET GROUP OUTCOMES

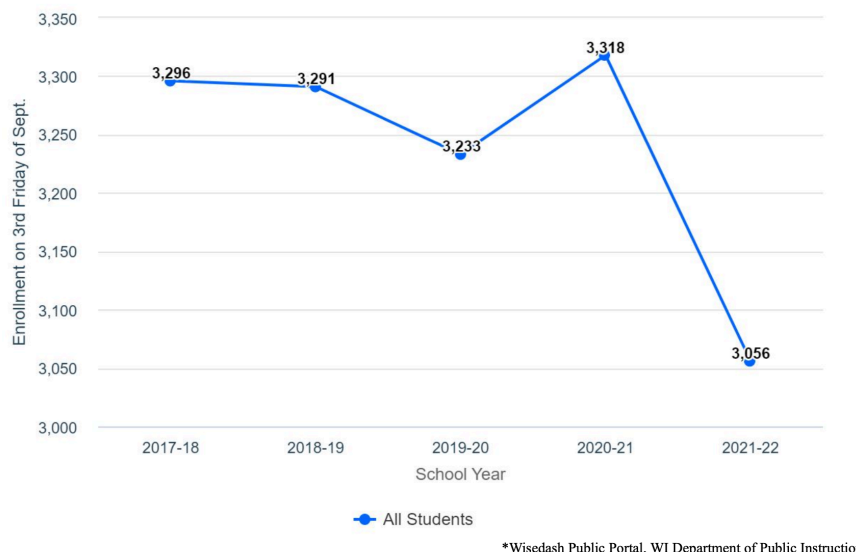


#### ON-TRACK TO GRADUATION



Merrill Area Public Schools has experienced declining enrollment. This has caused many budget issues and the closing of several rural elementary schools.

### Merrill Area Public School District Declining Enrollment - Full Time Equivalent / September FTE



The graph above displays Merrill Area Public Schools Revenue Limit membership (September FTE) counts for the past few years. Source: MAPS 2022 Annual Budget Report

**Key Finding Adult Education Attainment:** The 2022 Lincoln County Health Rankings statistics show that 92% of the adults in Lincoln County have a high school diploma and 59% have some college education. According to the United States Census Bureau, 18.7% of the Lincoln County adults have a Bachelor’s Degree or higher as of 2021. English is by far the most common language spoken in homes in Lincoln County. The Census Bureau reports that only 2.5% of homes use a language other than English.

### Disabilities:

**Key Finding Early Intervention Services:** Early intervention for children with disabilities is offered by the Birth to Three Program. Children with disabilities who are three years old to kindergarten age are served in the melded MAPS Head Start/Early Childhood program or in other preschool option programs operated by the Merrill Area Public Schools special education department. Preschool option programs are designed to fit the individual needs of the children and include itinerant speech in their home school or homebound, the MAPS preschool option play group, or whatever combination best fits their needs. After the child is kindergarten age, they continue to be served in their elementary, middle, and high school by the MAPS special education department.

**Key Finding School District:** MAPS special education staff members engage students by creating a learning environment which fosters academic growth through exposure to grade-level curriculum with support as identified through an IEP (individualized education plan). The Special Education Department of Merrill Area Public Schools currently employs 31 special education professional staff members. Service areas offered by the department include, but are not limited to, Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), Emotional Behavior Disorders (EBD), Intellectual Disabilities (may include Autism) (ID), Speech/Language (S/L), Significant Developmental Delays (SDD), and Other Health Impairments (OHI).

MAPS is also home to the Northern Achievement Center (NAC), which provides an alternative placement for special education students experiencing behavioral challenges, which seriously impedes learning in the building environment. The program consists of two levels, one designed to meet the needs of students in grades Kindergarten through fifth grade and the other designed for students from sixth grade through high school. NAC’s vision is to provide students with the tools necessary to successfully transition back to the programming offered by MAPS or the student’s resident district.

| <b>Merrill Area Public Schools<br/>Students' Primary Disabilities</b> | <b>2021-22<br/>School<br/>Year</b> |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Autism  | 44                                 |
| Intellectually Disabled   | 30                                 |
| Emotional Behavioral Disability                                       | 52                                 |
| Hearing Impaired  | 6                                  |
| Other Health Impaired   | 78                                 |
| Significant Developmental Delay                                       | 26                                 |
| Specific Learning Disabilities  | 187                                |
| Speech or Language Impaired   | 136                                |
| <b>TOTALS</b>   | <b>559</b>                         |

Source: Merrill Area Public Schools (2021-2022 State of the District Report)

## **Health Care:**

**Key Findings Health Priorities:** Live Well Lincoln is an organization led by the Lincoln County Health Department, Aspirus Health, Aging & Disability Resource Center of Central Wisconsin and Lincoln County Department of Social Services. They are currently undergoing a community health assessment and improvement planning process which occurs every five years. This organization has identified the following as priority health issues in Lincoln County: Poor Mental Health & Well-Being, Poor Well-Being caused by Overweight/Obesity and Support & Caregiving for the Aging Population.

**Mental Health:** Lincoln County has a shortage of mental health professionals available to meet the community’s needs. In 2022 County Health Rankings, it states that there is one primary care physician per 1,720 people, one dentist per 1,840 people, and one mental health provider per 1,450 people in Lincoln County. This shortage of mental health professionals has also been noted in interviews with MAPS Head Start families. To try to combat this shortage, Lincoln County has published and distributed the Lincoln County Mental Health Resource Guide to provide resources for people seeking mental health services. According to the Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board, from 2011-2015, Lincoln County is ranked #2 in the state for the percent of the population that has 4 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences. Measured from 2000-2015, Lincoln County is among the top counties for suicide rates, state data shows. Live Well Lincoln recently published the results of their survey in 2022 which shows that top concerns of Lincoln County residents are drug and alcohol abuse.

### Top Concerns for Clinical Care in Lincoln County

Clinical Care (choose up to 2 options)

|  | # Responses | % Responses |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Availability and affordability of health care                                | 432         | 59.1%       |
| Availability and affordability of dental care                                | 306         | 41.9%       |
| Lack of mental health care providers   | 270         | 36.9%       |
| Lack of doctors and other healthcare providers                               | 190         | 26.0%       |
| Low rates of routine vaccinations (flu, infant vaccines)                     | 64          | 8.8%        |
| Limited use of preventive services (ex: annual exam, mammogram, colonoscopy) | 54          | 7.4%        |
| Other  | 21          | 4.8%        |
| Total Responses  | 1337        | 184.9%      |

731 responses (606 selected two options, 125 selected one option) 21 left blank

Source: Live Well Lincoln 2022 Community Health Survey [www.welllincoln.org](http://www.welllincoln.org)

## Top Concerns for Health Behaviors in Lincoln County

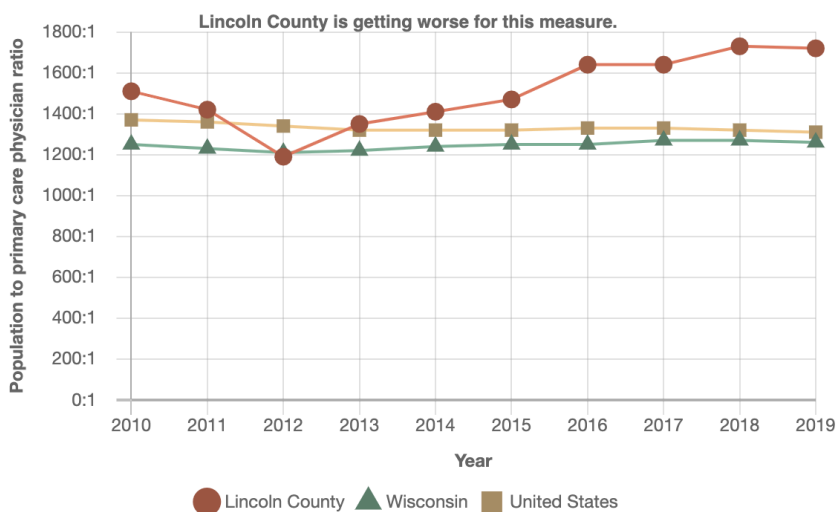
### Health Behaviors (choose up to 2 options)

|   | # Responses | % Responses |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Drug abuse (prescribed and illegal)                                   | 334         | 46.2%       |
| Alcohol use/misuse  | 308         | 42.6%       |
| Physical inactivity   | 174         | 24.1%       |
| Overall well-being  | 139         | 19.2%       |
| Tobacco, e-cigarettes/vaping  | 106         | 14.7%       |
| Poor oral or dental health  | 80          | 11.1%       |
| Unintentional injury (motorvehicle, bicycle, ATV, snowmobiling, etc.) | 40          | 5.5%        |
| Intentional injury (self-harm, suicide)                               | 37          | 5.1%        |
| Other   | 8           | 0.8%        |
| Total Responses   | 1226        | 169.3%      |

723 responses (618 selected two options, 105 selected one option) 29 left blank

Source: Live Well Lincoln 2022 Community Health Survey [www.welllincoln.org](http://www.welllincoln.org)

### Primary care physicians in Lincoln County, WI County, state and national trends

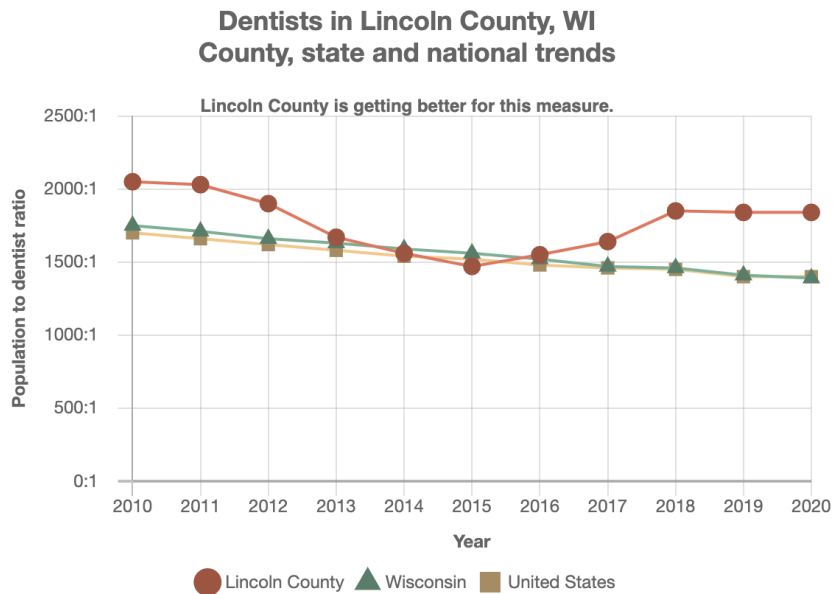


#### Notes:

The data in this table reflect the average population served by a single primary care physician.

Source: [County Health Rankings](#)

**Oral Health:** According to a survey conducted in 2011 by the Lincoln County Health Department, the biggest barrier to getting dental care for Lincoln County adults and their families was the cost. 71.1% of the people responded this way. The next highest response (6.5%) was the lack of doctors/medical providers and the lack of transportation was a close third (5.4%). 31.1% of respondents said that someone in their family had not received dental care in the last two years and 25.8% said that they do not visit a dentist regularly. Access to regular dental care has only gotten worse since the COVID 19 pandemic as dental offices were unable to keep up with appointments and now patients are booked out six months or more for appointments.



Notes:  
The data in this table reflect the average population served by a single dentist.

Source: [County Health Rankings](#)

## 2022 County Health Rankings

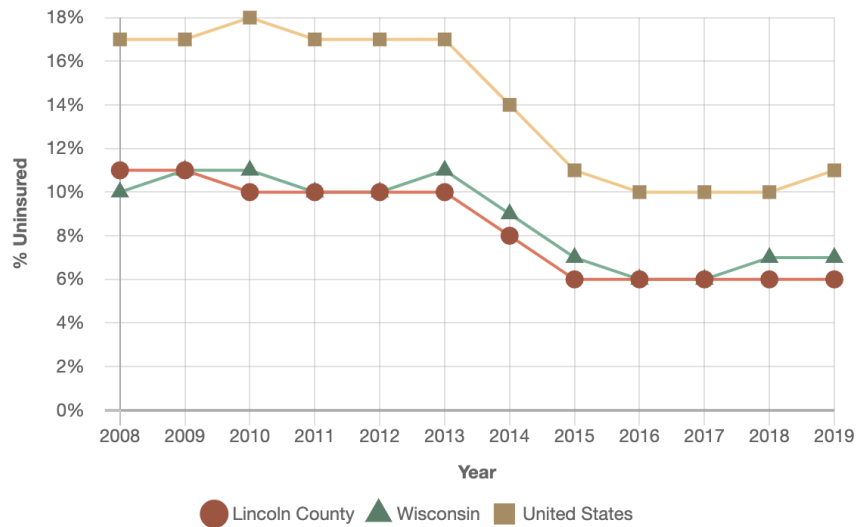
Source: [County Health Rankings](#)

|  | Lincoln County | Wisconsin | United States | Rank (of 72) |
|--|----------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>County Demographics</b>                       |                |           |               | <b>50</b>    |
| <b>Population</b>                                | 27,566         | 5,832,655 |               |              |
| % below 18 years of age                          | 18.0%          | 21.6%     |               |              |
| % 65 and older                                   | 22.8%          | 18.0%     |               |              |
| % Rural  | 54.0%          | 29.8%     |               |              |
| <b>Health Outcomes</b>                           |                |           |               |              |
| <b>Length of Life</b>                            |                |           |               |              |
| Premature death (yrs lost before 75 per 100,000) | 6,900          | 6,600     | 7.300         |              |
| <b>Quality of Life</b>                           |                |           |               |              |
| Poor or fair health                              | 15%            | 17%       | 15%           |              |
| Poor physical health days                        | 3.7            | 3.9       | 3.6           |              |
| Poor mental health days                          | 4.5            | 4.5       | 4.4           |              |
| Low birthweight                                  | 8%             | 8%        | 8%            |              |
| <b>Health Factors</b>                            |                |           |               |              |
| <b>Health Behaviors</b>                          |                |           |               |              |
| Adult smoking                                    | 19%            | 16%       | 16%           |              |
| Adult obesity                                    | 34%            | 34%       | 32%           |              |
| Food environment index                           | 8.7            | 8.7       | 7.8           |              |
| Physical inactivity                              | 25%            | 22%       | 26%           |              |
| Access to exercise opportunities                 | 64%            | 78%       | 80%           |              |
| Excessive drinking                               | 27%            | 25%       | 20%           |              |
| Alcohol-impaired driving deaths                  | 44%            | 36%       | 27%           |              |
| Sexually transmitted infections                  | 235.6          | 499.4     | 551.0         |              |
| Teen births                                      | 20             | 14        | 19            |              |
| <b>Clinical Care</b>                             |                |           |               |              |
| Uninsured  | 6%             | 7%        | 11%           |              |
| Primary care physicians                          | 1,720:1        | 1,260:1   | 1,310:1       |              |
| Dentists   | 1,840:1        | 1,390:1   | 1,400:1       |              |
| Mental health providers                          | 1,450:1        | 440:1     | 350:1         |              |
| Preventable hospital stays                       | 2,854          | 3,260     | 3,767         |              |
| Mammography screening                            | 56%            | 49%       | 43%           |              |
| Flu vaccinations                                 | 53%            | 53%       | 48%           |              |
| <b>Social &amp; Economic Factors</b>             |                |           |               |              |
| High school graduation                           | 92%            | 93%       | 89%           |              |
| Some college                                     | 59%            | 70%       | 67%           |              |
| Unemployment                                     | 5.9%           | 6.3%      | 8.1%          |              |
| Children in poverty                              | 11%            | 12%       | 16%           |              |
| Income inequality                                | 4.0            | 4.2       | 4.9           |              |
| Children in single-parent households             | 15%            | 23%       | 25%           |              |
| Social associations                              | 15.6           | 11.4      | 9.2           |              |
| Violent crime                                    | 181            | 298       | 386           |              |
| Injury deaths                                    | 92             | 89        | 76            |              |
| <b>Physical Environment</b>                      |                |           |               |              |
| Air pollution-particulate matter                 | 6.4            | 7.5       | 5.2           |              |
| Drinking water violations                        | No             |           |               |              |
| Severe housing problems                          | 9%             | 17%       | 14%           |              |
| Driving alone to work                            | 83%            | 75%       | 80%           |              |
| Long commute-driving alone                       | 31%            | 37%       | 28%           |              |



## Uninsured in Lincoln County, WI County, state and national trends

Although Lincoln County is getting better for this measure, please note state and national trends.



Source: [County Health Rankings](#)

## COVID 19 Vaccinations in Lincoln County, Wisconsin

Source: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>

| People Vaccinated                 | At Least One Dose | Completed Primary Series | Updated (Bivalent) Booster Dose |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Total                             | 16,571            | 15,696                   |                                 |
| % of Total Population             | 60.1%             | 56.9%                    |                                 |
| Population ≥ 5 Years of Age       | 16,531            | 15,678                   | 4,535                           |
| % of Population ≥ 5 Years of Age  | 62.8%             | 59.6%                    | 17.2%                           |
| Population ≥ 12 Years of Age      | 16,200            | 15,386                   | 4,507                           |
| % of Population ≥ 12 Years of Age | 66.2%             | 62.9%                    | 18.4%                           |
| Population ≥ 18 Years of Age      | 15,494            | 14,705                   | 4,449                           |
| % of Population ≥ 18 Years of Age | 68.6%             | 65.1%                    | 19.7%                           |
| Population ≥ 65 Years of Age      | 6,134             | 5,866                    | 2,867                           |
| % of Population ≥ 65 Years of Age | 95%               | 95%                      | 46.9%                           |

**Nutrition:**

**Key Finding Nutrition:** A concern that was raised by Live Well Lincoln’s survey was poor well-being caused by overweight/obesity. The 2022 County Health Rankings report that 34% of the adults living in Lincoln County are obese. They also tell us that 64% of people living in Lincoln County report having access to exercise opportunities. Our program works with WIC/Fit Families to offer healthy cooking classes for our parents several times a year.

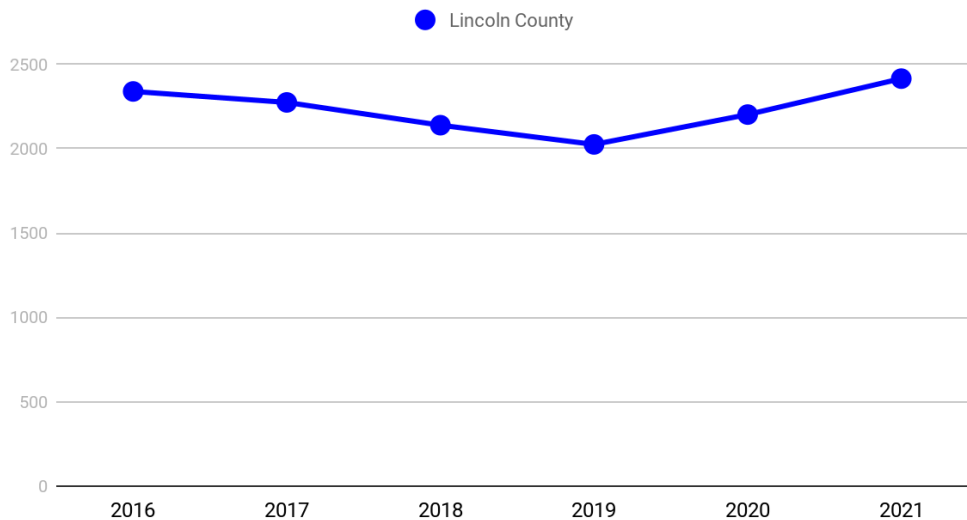
**LINCOLN COUNTY 2019 FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH**

Source: Wisconsin Department of Instruction

| SFA Name     | School Name                                  | Enrollment | # Free/ Reduced | % F/R  |
|--------------|--|------------|-----------------|--------|
| Merrill Area | Jefferson Elementary                         | 204        | 114             | 55.88% |
| Merrill Area | Kate Goodrich Elementary                     | 369        | 205             | 55.56% |
| Merrill Area | Maple Grove School                           | 82         | 25              | 30.49% |
| Merrill Area | Merrill High                                 | 832        | 351             | 42.19% |
| Merrill Area | Pine River School for Young Learners (PRSYL) | 102        | 98              | 96.08% |
| Merrill Area | Prairie River Middle                         | 578        | 273             | 47.23% |
| Merrill Area | Washington Elementary                        | 250        | 124             | 49.60% |
| Tomahawk     | Tomahawk Elementary                          | 560        | 273             | 48.75% |
| Tomahawk     | Tomahawk High                                | 378        | 122             | 32.28% |
| Tomahawk     | Tomahawk Middle                              | 290        | 97              | 33.45% |

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many school food authorities including MAPS were not included in the October 2020 & 2021 report as they were operating under the Seamless Summer Option or Summer Food Service Program

**Food Share Unduplicated Assistance Groups Served**

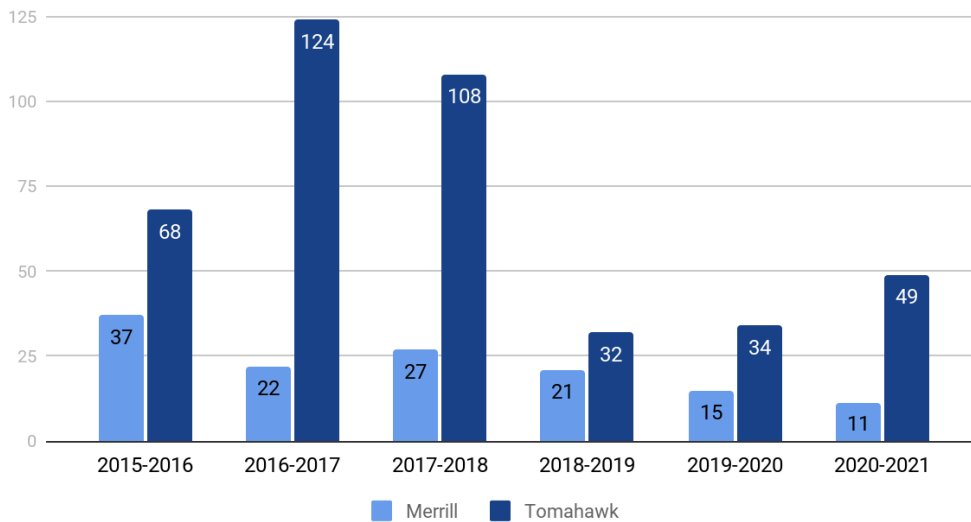


Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/rsdata.htm>

**Social Services:**

**Key Finding Homeless:** According to the information provided by the Wisconsin Department of Instruction in 2020-21, 11 students in the Merrill Area Public School District were homeless. Homelessness is an increasing problem in Lincoln County. The city of Merrill opened a warming house in November of 2014 to help fill the needs of the community.

Number of Students Identified as Homeless in School District



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction - <https://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov/Dashboard/dashboard/18110>

**Key Finding Foster Children:** Lincoln County Social Services provided the following chart about foster children in Lincoln County.

Lincoln County Social Services Placements

| Year | Out of Home Care Placement | Of these # who were under five |
|------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2022 | 70                         | 17 (3-5 yrs)                   |
| 2021 | 89                         | 16 (3-5 yrs)                   |
| 2020 | 33                         | 14                             |
| 2019 | 35                         | 22                             |
| 2018 | 52                         | 18                             |

Source: Lincoln County Social Services

## Housing and Households:

**Key Findings:** The 2022 County Health Rankings report that 15% of children in Lincoln County live in single-parent households. They also report that 9% of people living in Lincoln County have severe housing problems. The following graph provides more information about the current housing available in Lincoln County.

### Housing in Lincoln County, Wisconsin (January 2023)

| HOUSING                                   | Lincoln Cty, Wisconsin | United States |
|---|------------------------|---------------|
| Median Home Age                           | 46                     | 41            |
| Median Home Cost                          | \$138,700              | \$291,700     |
| Home Appreciation Last 12 months          | 6.0%                   | 15%           |
| Home Appreciation Last 5 yrs.             | 25.2%                  | 42.4%         |
| Home Appreciation Last 10 yrs.            | 36.1%                  | 77.0%         |
| Property Tax Rate                         | \$16.79                | \$11.36       |
| Homes Owned                               | 57.5%                  | 56.2%         |
| Housing Vacant                            | 26.4%                  | 12.1%         |
| Homes Rented                              | 16.1%                  | 31.6%         |
| <b>AVERAGE RENT FOR HOME OR APARTMENT</b> |                        |               |
| Studio Apartment                          | \$503                  | \$821         |
| 1 Bedroom Home or Apartment               | \$584                  | \$930         |
| 2 Bedroom Home or Apartment               | \$757                  | \$1,148       |
| 3 Bedroom Home or Apartment               | \$1,055                | \$1,537       |
| 4 Bedroom Home or Apartment               | \$1,138                | \$1,791       |
| <b>VACANT HOUSING</b>                     |                        |               |
| Vacant For Rent                           | 0.8%                   | 2.0%          |
| Vacant Rented                             | 0.0%                   | 0.4%          |
| Vacant For Sale                           | 0.8%                   | 0.9%          |
| Vacant Sold                               | 0.5%                   | 0.5%          |
| Vacant Vacation                           | 20.3%                  | 4.0%          |
| Vacant Other                              | 3.9%                   | 4.3%          |

Source: Sperlings Best Places <http://www.bestplaces.net/housing/county/wisconsin/lincoln>

## Child Care:

**Key Findings:** The following chart gives information about the daycares in the area. There are no providers offering overnight or weekend care or late hours. \*Three of the group day care sites are also 4 year old kindergarten partners with the Merrill Area Public Schools. They offer half days of 4-K during the school year.

**CHILD CARE FACILITIES IN THE MERRILL AREA**

| <b>FACILITY NAME<br/>ADDRESS</b>   | <b>CONTACT<br/>PHONE NUMBER<br/>CATEGORY</b> | <b>HOURS<br/>MONTHS<br/>LICENSED DATE</b> | <b>LICENSED CAPACITY<br/>LICENSED AGES<br/>YOUNG STAR RATING</b> |
|--|--|---|--|
| Crystal's Country ChildCare<br>W5398 Taylor St, Merrill, WI 54452-0353         | Crystal Grund<br>715-889-1291                | Hours: 6:00am - 4:30pm<br>Jan - Dec       | Capacity: 8<br>Ages: 0 to 12 years                               |
| Dolly's DayCare<br>511 W Riverside Ave, Merrill, WI<br>54452-3377              | Darlene Tanck<br>715-536-7581                | Hours: 5:30am-5:30pm<br>Jan - Dec         | Capacity: 8<br>Ages: 0 to 12 yrs                                 |
| Karen's Family Child Care<br>W5006 Hillside Dr, Merrill, WI 54452-8781         | Karen Grund<br>715-218-3698                  | Hours: 4:30am - 4:30pm<br>Jan - Dec       | Capacity: 8<br>Ages: 0 to 13 years                               |
| MAPS Head Start<br>W4165 State Hwy 64, Merrill, WI<br>54452-9005               | Ryan Martinovici<br>715-536-2392             | Hours: 7:30am - 3:30pm<br>Sept - June     | Capacity: 140<br>Ages: 3 to 6 years                              |
| *New Beginnings Christian Child Care<br>N2519 Cty Rd K, Merrill, WI 54452-9405 | Elizabeth Hohman<br>715-536-5130             | Hours: 5:30am - 5:30pm<br>Jan - Dec       | Capacity: 70<br>Ages: 0 to 13 years                              |
| Parkside Preschool Center<br>207 E First St, Merrill, WI 54452-2305            | Paula Koelsch<br>715-536-7716                | Hours: 5:30am - 6:00pm<br>Jan - Dec       | Capacity: 51<br>Ages: 2 to 14 years                              |
| *Parkside Preschool Center 4K<br>105 E First St, Merrill, WI 54452-2303        | Amy Pikus<br>715-536-7716                    | Hours: 5:30am - 6:00pm<br>Jan - Dec       | Capacity: 19<br>Ages: 2 to 14 years                              |
| *St. Francis Xavier<br>1708 Tenth St., Merrill, WI 54452                       | Kate Shimel<br>715-536-6083                  | Hours:                                    |  |
| Trinity Christian Day Care<br>201 Stange Street, Merrill, WI 54452             | Beth Riste<br>715-722-0523                   | Hours: 6:00am-6:00pm<br>Jan-Dec           | Ages: 3 to 12 yrs  |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/lcc-directories>

## Profile of Head Start Children and Families Served

### Demographics and Economics:

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services census numbers, there were 244 four year olds and 250 three year olds in Lincoln County for the 2022-23 school year. According to the 2022 County Health Rankings, 11% of children in Lincoln County are living in poverty. That would mean approximately 27 four year olds and 28 three year olds living in Lincoln County would qualify for our program this year. Our current enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year shows 46 four year olds and 44 three year olds. We have three openings yet to fill. We currently do not have any children on our waiting list. Sixteen of the Head Start children in our program have IEP's and participate in the Early Childhood portion of our program to help meet their special needs. There are also ten children with special needs enrolled in the Early Childhood portion of the program but not in Head Start.

The breakdown of how our families have qualified for our program the last five years is shown below. When enrolling students, we use a point system to ensure that the neediest children are enrolled first. The Point System for Student Applications can be found on the following page.

|         | Foster Children | Homeless Children | Receive Public Assistance | Income Eligible | Income Between 100% and 130% of Poverty | Over Income |
|---------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---|-------------|
| 2017-18 | 2               | 4                 | 13                        | 64              | 12                                      | 2           |
| 2018-19 | 2               | 2                 | 10                        | 58              | 21                                      | 1           |
| 2019-20 | 2               | 2                 | 8                         | 41              | 13                                      | 1           |
| 2020-21 | 1               | 4                 | 10                        | 48              | 11                                      | 1           |
| 2021-22 | 10              | 5                 | 6                         | 42              | 19                                      | 4           |

Source: MAPS Head Start Program Information Reports

In 2021-22, two of our families listed Spanish as their family's primary language. All of our families spoke English in the 2020-21 school year. Two of our families in 2019-20 listed Spanish as their primary language at home. Only one family listed Spanish as their primary language in 2018-19. We use translators who are employed by Merrill Area Public Schools when necessary to help with home visits, parent/teacher conferences, translating newsletters and other miscellaneous communication that is needed.

**Point System for Student Applications** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Session Points \_\_\_\_\_

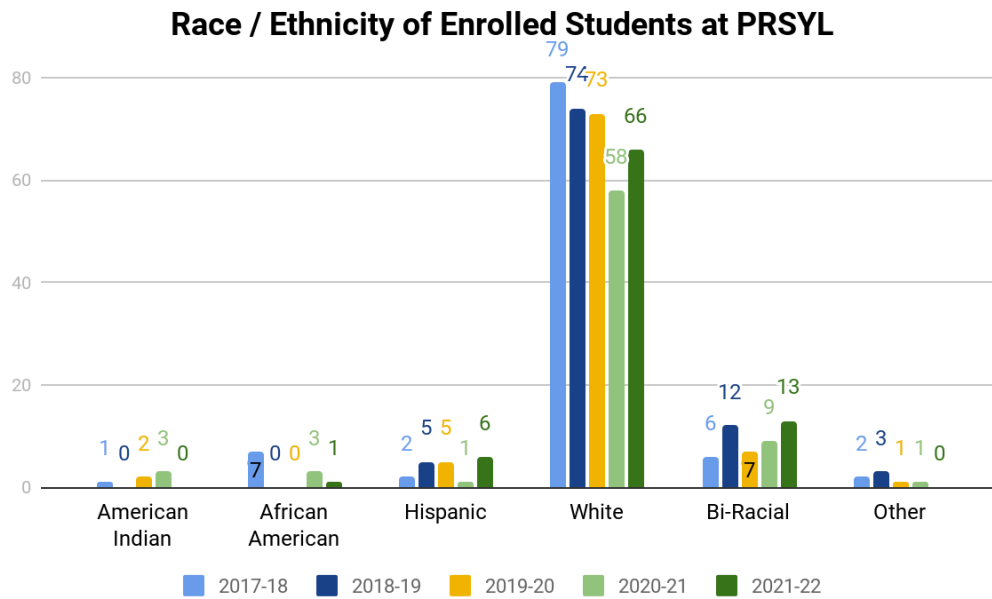
**Enrollment Points**

|   | Points Possible | Points Counted |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>Homelessness</i>                           | 100             |                |
| <i>Foster Child</i>                           | 100             |                |
| <i>SSI Qualified</i>                          | 100             |                |
| <b>Parental Status</b>                        |                 |                |
| Guardian                                      | 8               |                |
| Two parent                                    | 3               |                |
| Shared custody                                | 4               |                |
| Single Parent                                 | 5               |                |
| Adopted child                                 | 3               |                |
| <b>Age</b>                                    |                 |                |
| 4 by September 1                              | 20              |                |
| 3 yr. old with Existing, Center-based Sibling | 8               |                |
| 3 by September 1                              | 4               |                |
| Just 3  | 3               |                |
| <b>Income</b>                                 |                 |                |
| Receiving SNAP                                | 4               |                |
| At or below 100% poverty                      | 4               |                |
| <i>Over income Between 101 and 130 %</i>      |                 |                |
| 3 year old                                    | 2               |                |
| 4 year old                                    | 3               |                |
| <i>Over income beyond 130%</i>                |                 |                |
| 3 year old                                    | -4              |                |
| 4 year old                                    | -3              |                |
| <b>Language/Location</b>                      |                 |                |
| ELL – English spoken in the home              | 3               |                |
| ELL – English not spoken in the home          | 12              |                |
| Isolated Area                                 | 3               |                |
| Lack of Transportation                        | 3               |                |
| <b>Family</b>                                 |                 |                |
| Only child                                    | 2               |                |
| Large family (5 or more)                      | 2               |                |
| Family sibling history of poor attendance     | -4              |                |
| Extenuating Factors                           | 5               |                |
| Military Family                               | 5               |                |
| Blended family                                | 4               |                |
| <b>Referral</b>                               |                 |                |
| Outside Agency                                | 4               |                |
| Previous disability                           | 3               |                |

\*Highlighted items will not be used for determining full day status

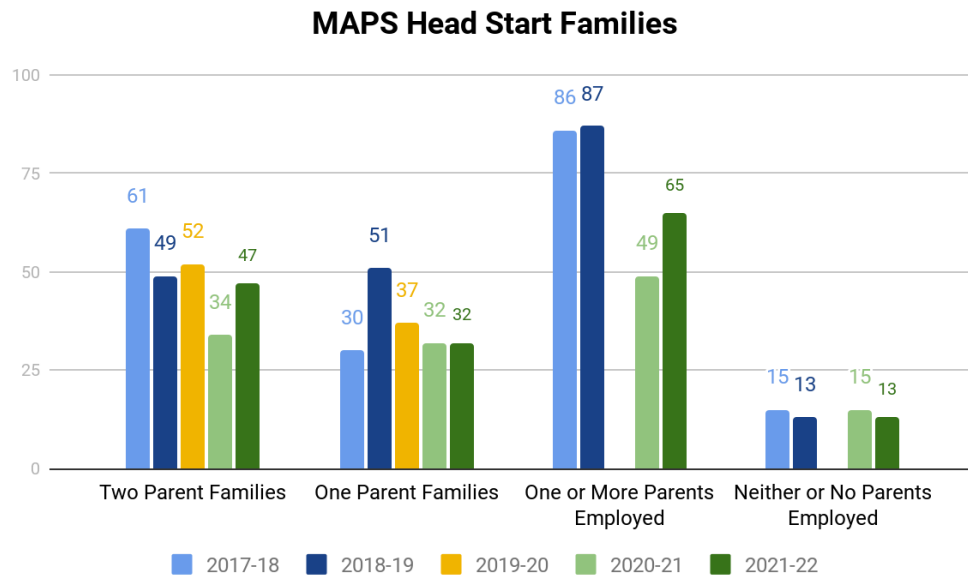


The chart below shows the race and ethnicity of our enrolled students for the last four years.

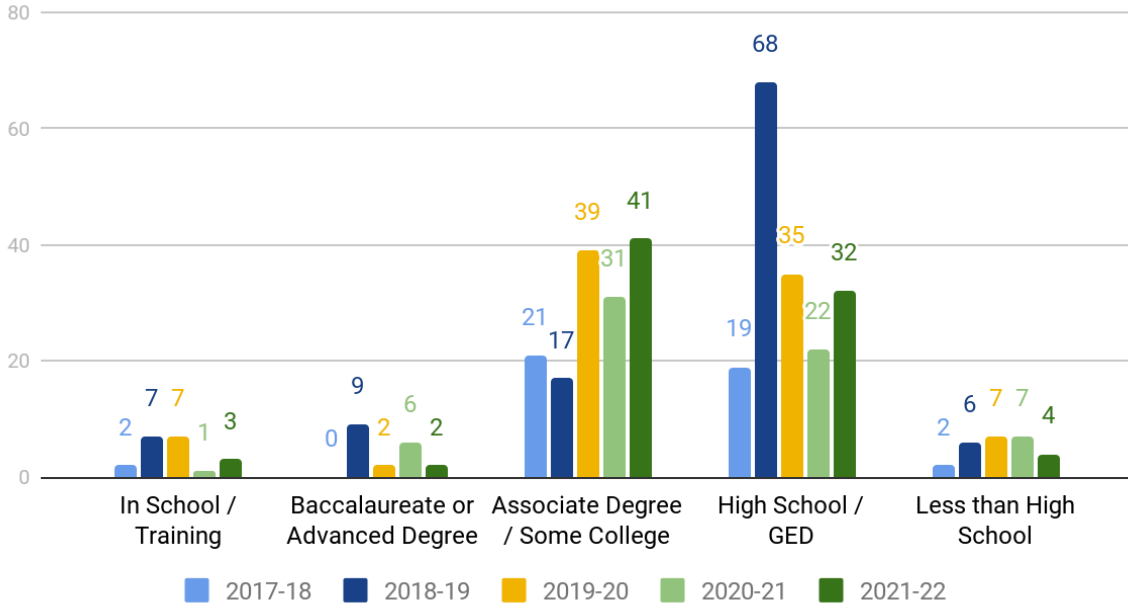


Source: MAPS Head Start Program Information Reports

The following graphs give a breakdown of what the families in our program look like. Most years about half of our students come from families with only one parent in the home. The majority of our families have one parent who is working and most of our parents have at least a high school diploma or a GED. Data about employment of parents is not available for 2019-20 due to Covid-19.



## Education of MAPS Head Start Parents

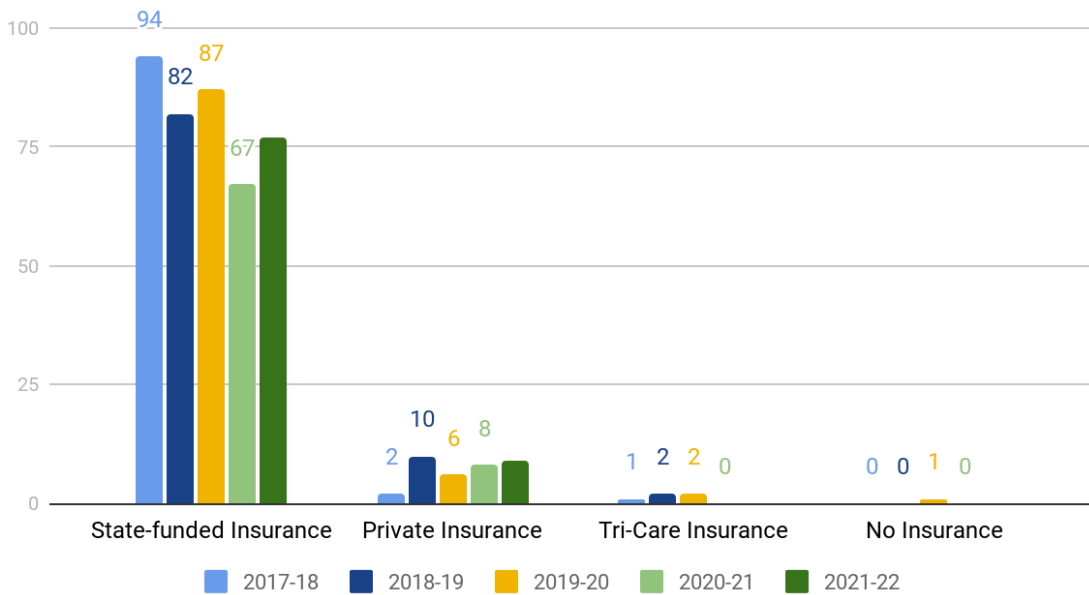


Source: MAPS Head Start Program Information Reports

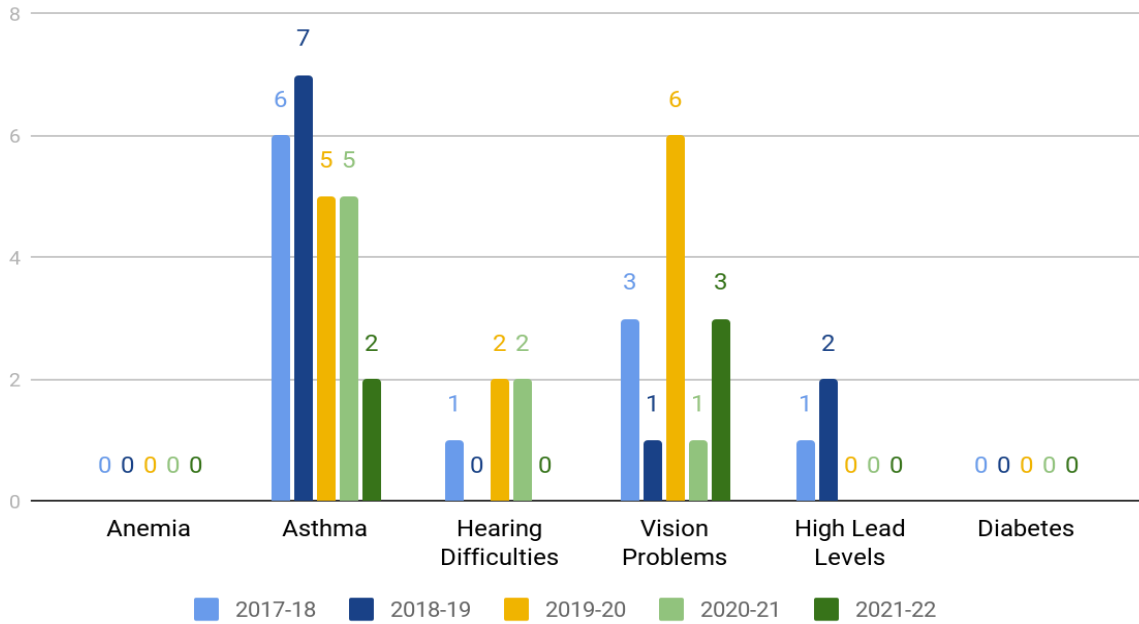
## Health:

Our program strives to help our families with all of their health needs. The following graphs show some statistics involving the health of our students.

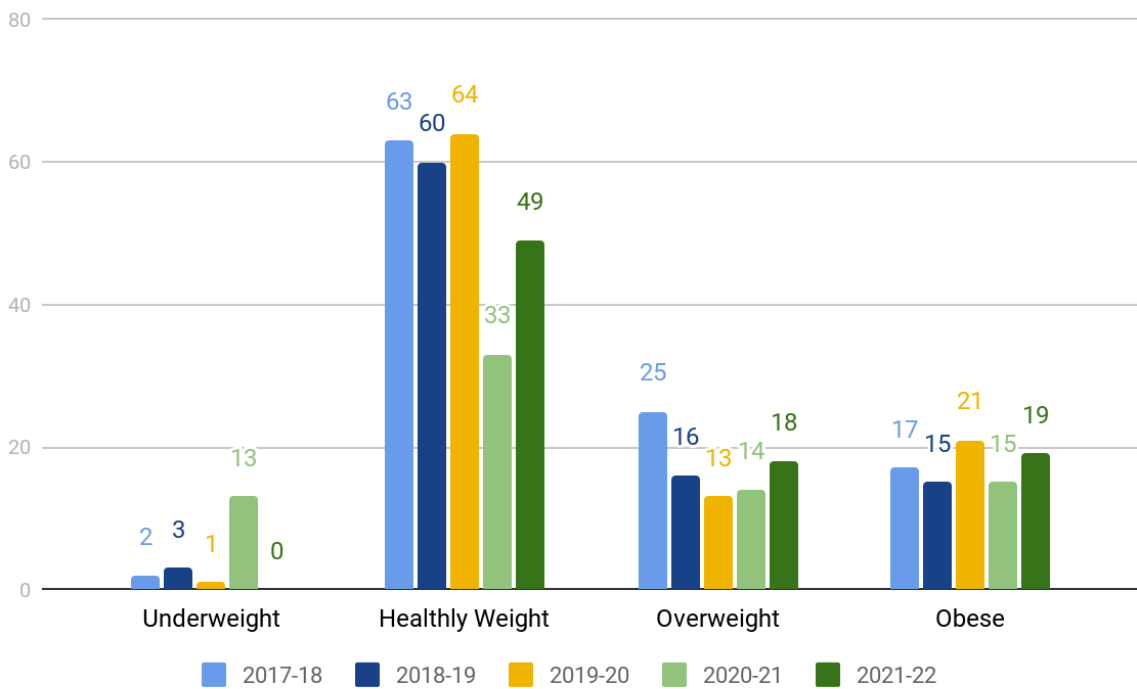
## MAPS Head Start Student Insurance at End of Enrollment



## MAPS Head Start Children with Medical Conditions



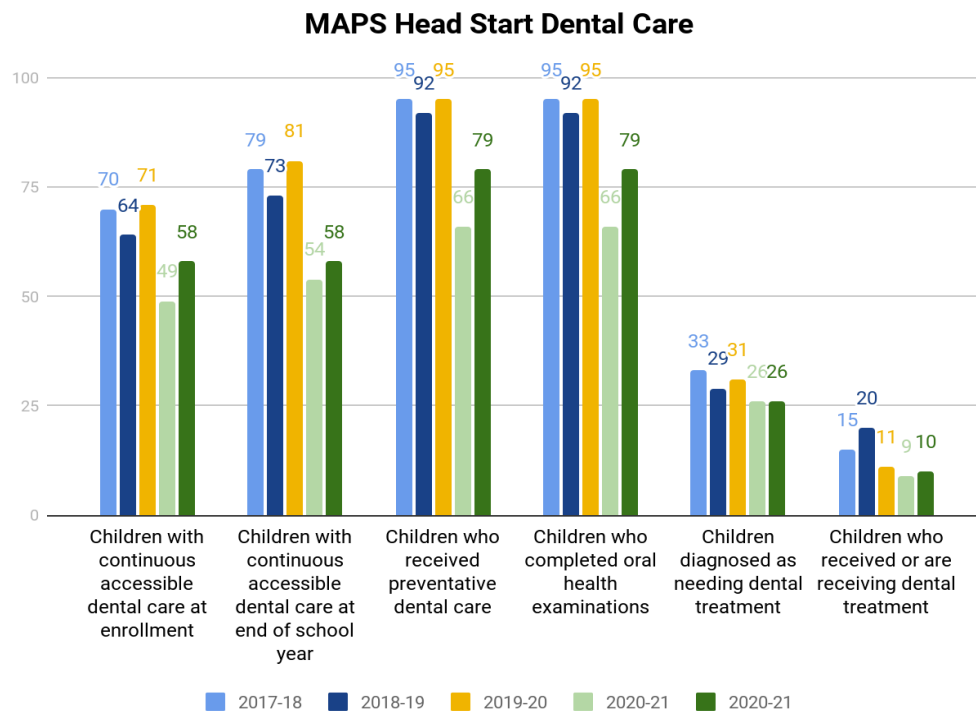
## MAPS Head Start Students BMI



Source: MAPS Head Start Program Information Reports

Our program works with families to make sure that all of our students receive preventative dental care and any treatment needed. The main reasons given for students not receiving the recommended dental treatments are the lack of providers in the area that will accept BadgerCare Insurance and lack of access to transportation. The availability of dental providers that will accept insurance carried by low-income families and are capable of completing dental work on young children is an ongoing problem in our area. The one provider in our county that accepted the BadgerCare is no longer providing services. Through work with the Lincoln County Health Department we are able to provide our families with information about several facilities in the adjacent communities that accept BadgerCare and provide pediatric dental care. We have also linked the website for Veyo to our program’s website as a resource that provides transportation to medical and dental appointments if the family qualifies. Our program partners with the Lincoln County Health Department to provide dental exams for our students who are unable to get to a dentist. A dental hygienist will come to our school and complete the exam during school hours with parental permission.

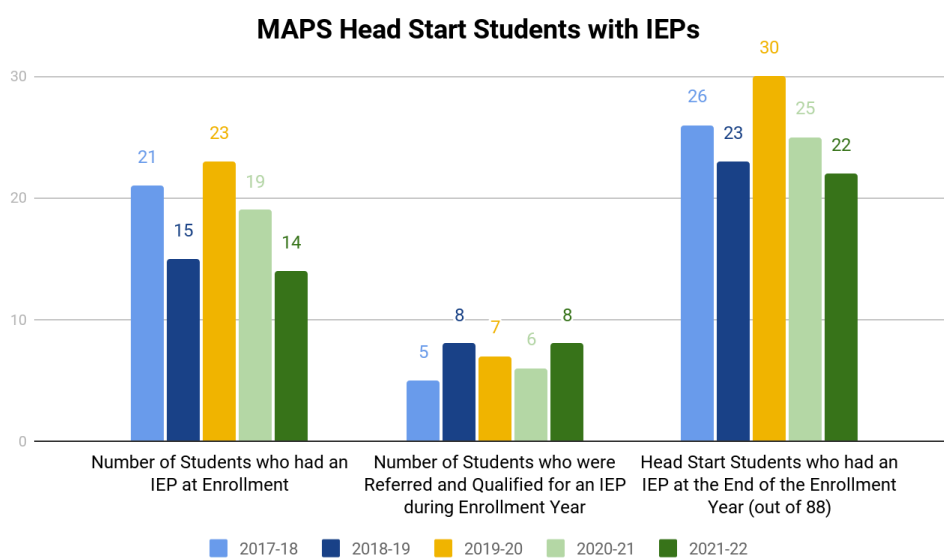
Many of our students are unable to get appointments and have been put on a waitlist for several months. We have several students who have waited six months or more to get an appointment for dental work in adjacent communities. Many have driven 100 miles or more to have work completed and this usually involves several trips to the dentist.



To help meet the mental health needs of our students and families, we share a school psychologist with the elementary school in the Merrill School District. Our staff uses the Conscious Discipline curriculum which focuses on helping children with social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation through daily greetings, breathing techniques, safe places and other strategies.

**Education:**

The graphs below represent the Head Start students who have an Individualized Education Plans (IEP). MAPS Early Childhood Program is integrated into Pine River School for Young Learners. In 2022-23, PRSYL has 16 students who are enrolled in Head Start and have IEPs. In addition there are ten students with IEPs who are enrolled in the Early Childhood program.



Source: MAPS Head Start Program Information Reports

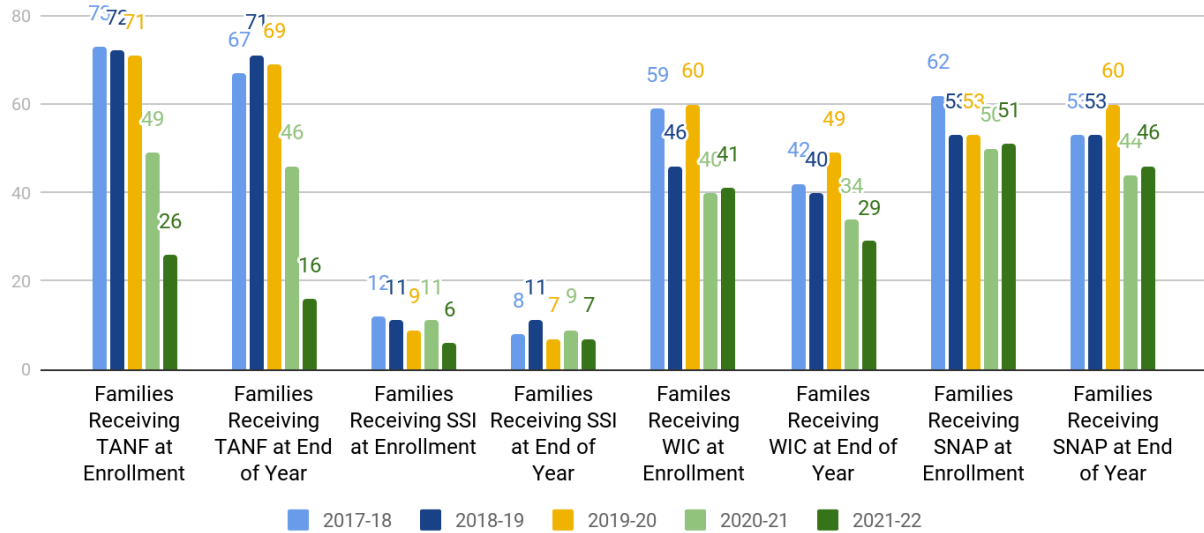
**Social Services:**

In interviewing our family service workers, they stated that the biggest struggle for our families is finding affordable housing that meets the needs of their family. We have seen more families doubled up and living in homes with multiple children sharing a bedroom. All housing is hard to find in our community. Low income housing is even more difficult. Many of our families have been looking for housing and are unable to find anything that they are able to afford. Housing that they are able to afford and is not always appropriate for the size of their family.

We have also seen more grandparents raising their grandchildren for various reasons. Sometimes this will be part of the housing issues and because the family is doubled up. We

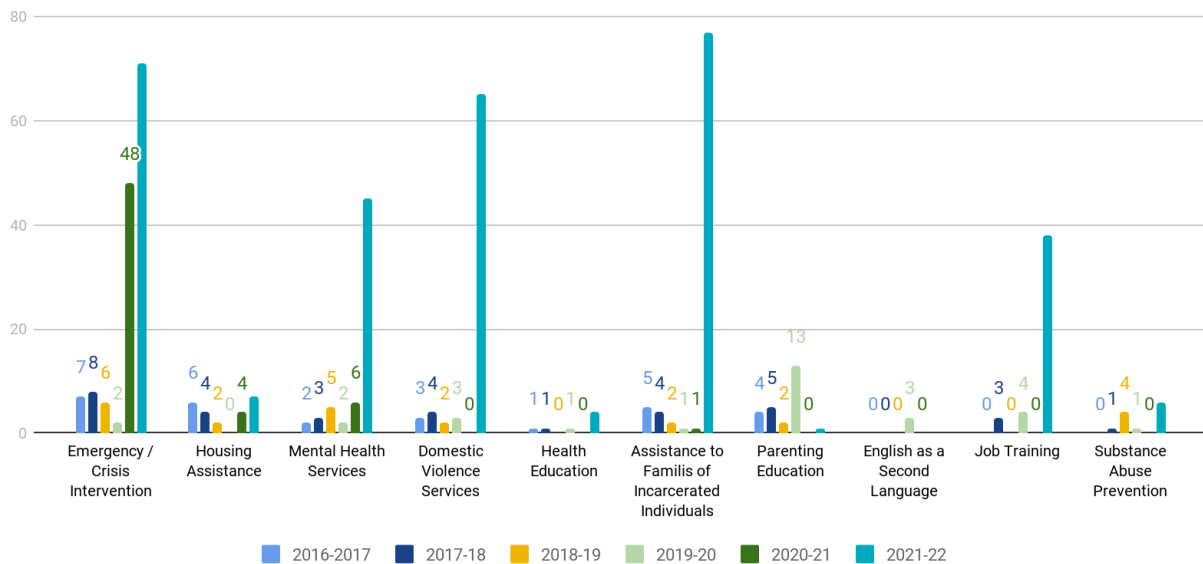
have seen an increase in the number of grandparents that are becoming guardians through the foster care system as well.

### Benefits Received by MAPS Head Start Families



Source: MAPS Head Start Program Information Reports

### Services Used by MAPS Head Start Families



Source: MAPS Head Start Program Information Reports

**Program Accessibility:**

According to survey results, most of the families involved in our program are satisfied with our program. When asked about attending our events, the most common reason for not attending was “work schedules.” We plan our events for evenings to try to accommodate as many of our families as we can. When setting up home visits, our staff has many options to accommodate the different schedules including “late nights” once a month where the staff plans evening hours to visit families who work during the day. Since Covid-19, our staff has been using virtual platforms and phone calls to conduct home visits and parent teacher conferences if parents are not comfortable or unable to do in-person visits.

On January 18, 2022, we implemented our first full day classrooms for Head Start students. This was in response to the Head Start initiative to increase the duration of hours for Head Start students and based on a survey of our parents where we asked for their opinion about full day Head Start for their children. The results of the survey showed that 82% of parents supported the full days. Implementation of the full days included many adjustments including reorganization of space and staff to accommodate an additional classroom. This allowed us to increase the hours for 45% of our students without decreasing the number of students that we served. We utilized our point system to determine which students would be offered full days. We then allowed those parents to choose full days or half days.

**Community Resources**

Pine River School for Young Learners is involved in a number of community groups in an effort to provide more resources for our families. We are represented at the Lincoln County Interagency Advisory Council, the Parenting Support Network, and the Healthy Minds Coalition. Because we are connected to Merrill Area Public Schools, we benefit from a unique relationship with the school district which allows us to provide resources through the school system that we would not have access to otherwise. These include many of the specialists that are involved with our special education department. We have a contract with the Lincoln County Health Department which provides us with nursing services in our school as well as resources for our families. These connections allow us to refer our parents to community resources and keep us current with the problems and solutions in our community.



| MEMBERS OF LINCOLN COUNTY INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL                      |   |  |  |
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| Lincoln County Respite Care Committee                                       | Linda Plautz<br>Michelle Voigt<br>Tricia Lazare     | <a href="mailto:blplautz@hotmail.com">blplautz@hotmail.com</a><br><a href="mailto:mgmvoigt@peoplepc.com">mgmvoigt@peoplepc.com</a><br><a href="mailto:tricia.lazare@inclusa.org">tricia.lazare@inclusa.org</a>           | 715-536-8717<br>715-536-8446<br>715-539-0520 |
| MAC Home  | Theresa Anthony                                     | <a href="mailto:machomemerrillwi@gmail.com">machomemerrillwi@gmail.com</a>   | 715-722-1200                                 |
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|   |   |  |  |
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| Merrill Police Department                       | Corey Bennett<br>Tyler Tesch  | <a href="mailto:corey.bennett@ci.merrill.wi.us">corey.bennett@ci.merrill.wi.us</a><br><a href="mailto:tyler.tesch@ci.merrill.wi.us">tyler.tesch@ci.merrill.wi.us</a>   |  |
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| North Central Healthcare-Merrill Center         | Holly Westberg<br>Stephanie Jewell                                    | <a href="mailto:hwestberg@norcen.org">hwestberg@norcen.org</a><br><a href="mailto:sjewell@norcen.org">sjewell@norcen.org</a>   | 715-571-9825                                 |
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| Psychological Resource Center                   | Betty McCluskey   | <a href="mailto:betty@psychsctr.com">betty@psychsctr.com</a>   |  |
| St. Vincent de Paul's Outreach                  | Sue Norenberg   | <a href="mailto:stvincentdepauloutrich@gmail.com">stvincentdepauloutrich@gmail.com</a>   | 715-539-2666                                 |
| Tomahawk Area Interfaith Volunteers, Inc        | Joan Litwitz  | <a href="mailto:taivdirector@hotmail.com">taivdirector@hotmail.com</a>   | 715-453-8200                                 |
| Tomahawk Food Pantry                            | Patty Derieth   | <a href="mailto:gordoderleth@yahoo.com">gordoderleth@yahoo.com</a>   |  |
| Tomahawk Head Start                             | Lisa Bernarde   | <a href="mailto:tomcent@familyandchild.org">tomcent@familyandchild.org</a>   |  |
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| Tomahawk Senior Center                          | Patti Panfil  | <a href="mailto:ppanfil@cityoftomahawk.com">ppanfil@cityoftomahawk.com</a>   | 715-453-5757                                 |
| Tomahawk STAR Foundation                        | Kay Kissinger Wolf  | <a href="mailto:kay.kiss.wolf@gmail.com">kay.kiss.wolf@gmail.com</a>   |  |
| Tomahawk Together                               | Sue Hawkins   | <a href="mailto:hawkins95@frontier.com">hawkins95@frontier.com</a>   | 715-612-7555                                 |
| United Way 2-1-1                                | Megan Schreiber   | <a href="mailto:mschreiber@unitedwaymc.org">mschreiber@unitedwaymc.org</a>   | 715-298-5727                                 |
| UW Madison Division of Extension Lincoln County | Melissa Yates   | <a href="mailto:melissa.yates@wisc.edu">melissa.yates@wisc.edu</a>   | 715-539-1072<br>715-539-1081                 |
| Wisconsin Department of Corrections             | Michelle Hubbard  | <a href="mailto:michelle.hubbard@wisconsin.gov">michelle.hubbard@wisconsin.gov</a>   | 715-409-3306                                 |

**Conclusion:**

The Merrill Area Public Schools Head Start appreciates the community resources and support provided to our families. It is through our joint efforts that we serve the greatest number of children and families in the greatest need and support them in being successful in the future.

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Policy Council Approval: 2-14-23  
MAPS BOE Approval: 2-15-23

Google Drive/Head Start Standards/ERSEA/Community Assessment/Community Needs Assessment 22-23