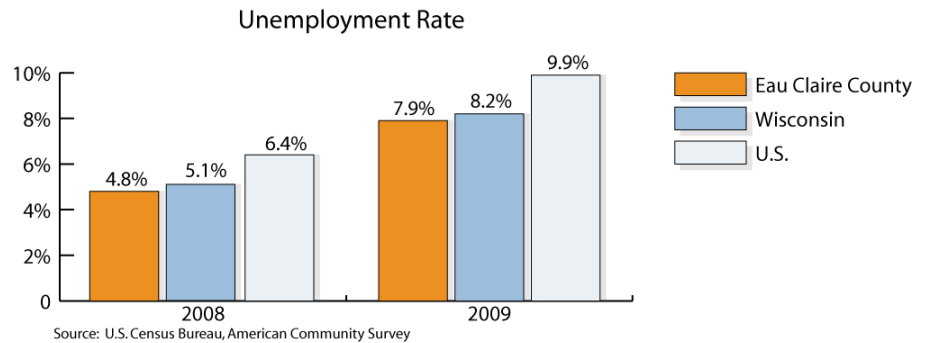


## The Recession's Impact on Eau Claire County

### Unemployment and Poverty Rates Are Up, Health Insurance Coverage is Down

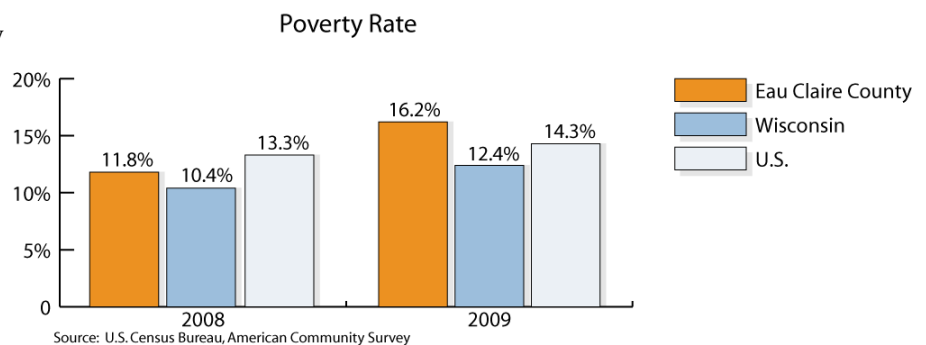
#### Unemployment Rate in Eau Claire County Has Risen

The unemployment rate in Eau Claire County rose from 4.8 percent in 2008 to 7.9 percent in 2009. With this increase, the unemployment rate in Eau Claire County mirrored the Wisconsin average, which rose from 5.1 percent in 2008 to 8.2 percent in 2009. The increase in Eau Claire's unemployment rate means that nearly 1,800 more people in the county were out of work in 2009 compared to 2008.



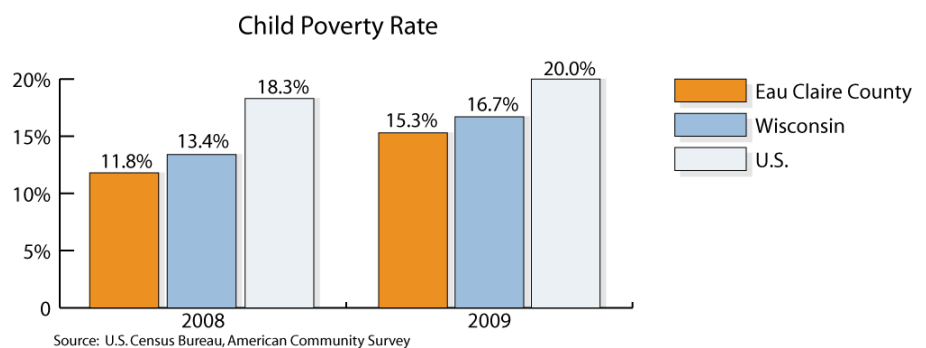
#### Poverty in Eau Claire County Has Increased

As a result of the recession, the total poverty rate in Eau Claire County increased from 11.8 percent in 2008 to 16.2 percent in 2009. Eau Claire County's poverty rate was higher than the Wisconsin average, which rose from 10.4 percent in 2008 to 12.4 percent in 2009. In 2009, Eau Claire County's poverty rate exceeded the national average.



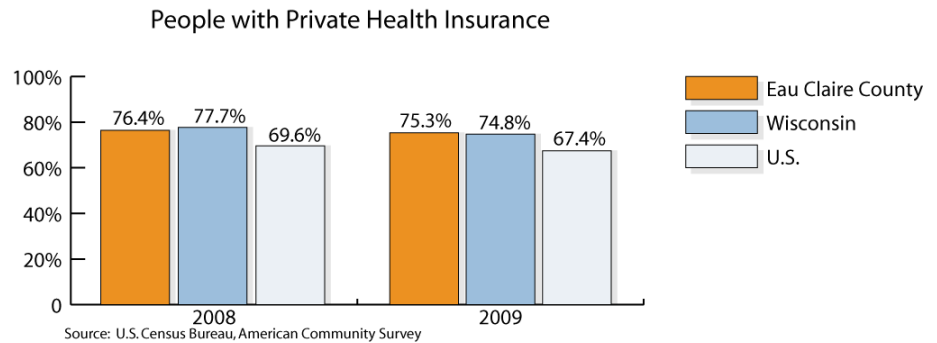
#### More than One out of Seven Children in Eau Claire County Now Lives in Poverty

The child poverty rate in Eau Claire County rose from 11.8 percent in 2008 to 15.3 percent in 2009. Eau Claire County's child poverty rate was still slightly lower than the statewide level, which rose from 13.4 percent in 2008 to 16.7 percent in 2009. More than 700 additional children slipped into poverty in Eau Claire County between 2008 and 2009, which represents a population greater than the village of Fairchild.



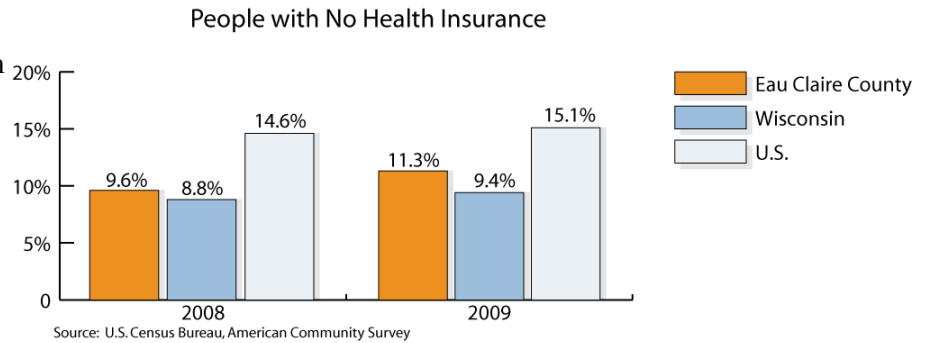
## Fewer People in Eau Claire County Have Private Health Insurance

The percent of people in Eau Claire County with private health insurance decreased, from 76.4 percent in 2008 to 75.3 percent in 2009. The increase in the unemployment rate impacted health insurance coverage, since most families obtain insurance through their employers. Eau Claire County and Wisconsin in general still have significantly higher rates of private health insurance coverage than the nation as a whole.



## Number of People Without Health Insurance Has Increased

The percent of Eau Claire County residents that have no health insurance increased from 9.6 percent in 2008 to 11.3 percent in 2009, which is almost 2 percentage points above the state level. Both Eau Claire County and Wisconsin have a much smaller share of their population without health insurance than the national average.



## Addressing the Impact of the Recession

Eau Claire County is feeling the impact of the national recession, as steep job loss has pushed many residents into poverty and forced the loss of health insurance coverage. These changes are particularly alarming considering they happened over a time period of just one year. Still, by many measures, Eau Claire County's economic situation is better than the national average.

Fortunately, the Recovery Act contained several changes in tax credits for low income families that softened the blow of the recession a little. However, those credits are scheduled to end at the close of the year and Congress will have to vote soon on whether to extend them.

Low-income households were also assisted by increased Medicaid funding in the Recovery

Act, which enabled Wisconsin to preserve eligibility for BadgerCare Plus. Without an extension of federal aid for states and continuation of the state's hospital assessment initiated in 2009, Wisconsin will be hard pressed to avoid sharp reductions in the low-income families served by BadgerCare Plus.

It will take a concerted effort to meet the needs of struggling families in Eau Claire County. Public services like health care, education, and economic support are especially important in times of economic crisis. To help Wisconsin families and communities back on the road to economic recovery, state and federal policymakers will need to employ a balanced approach to closing the budget deficit, while avoiding significant cuts to programs that help families hit hard by the national recession.