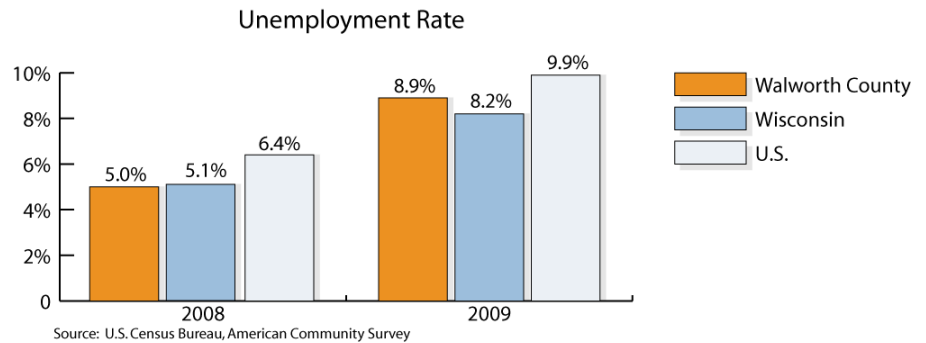


The Recession's Impact on Walworth County

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

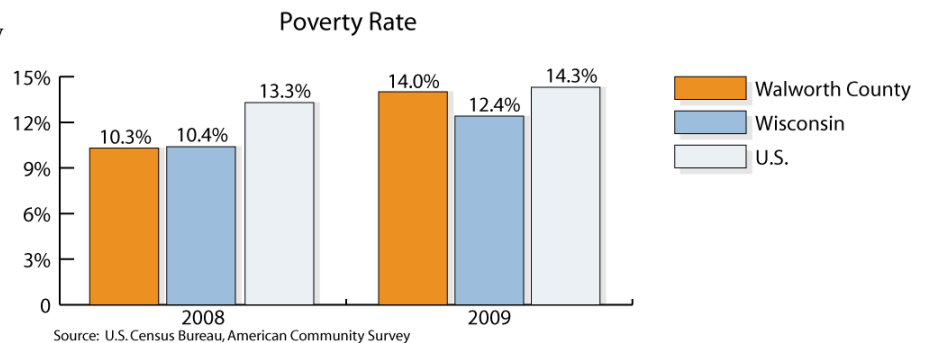
Unemployment Rate in Walworth County Has Risen

The unemployment rate in Walworth County rose from 5.0 percent in 2008 to 8.9 percent in 2009. With this increase, the unemployment rate in Walworth County in 2009 was higher than the Wisconsin average, which rose from 5.1 percent in 2008 to 8.2 percent in 2009. The increase means that about 2,300 more people in Walworth County were out of work in 2009 than in 2008.



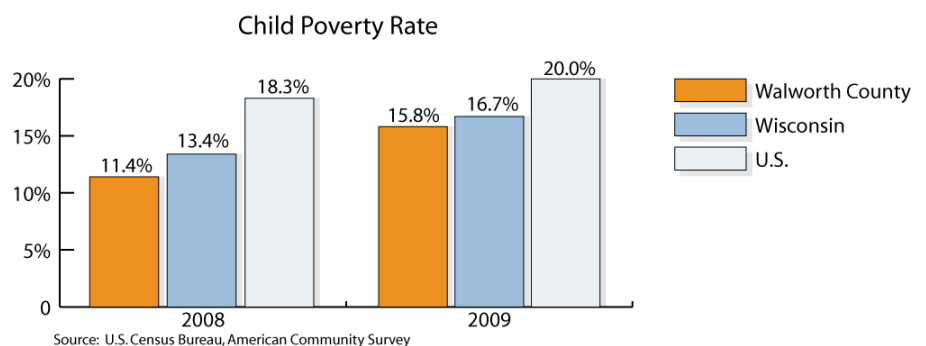
Poverty in Walworth County Has Increased

As a result of the recession, the total poverty rate in Walworth County increased from 10.3 percent in 2008 to 14.0 percent in 2009. With this increase, the poverty rate in Walworth county in 2009 was higher than the Wisconsin average, which rose from 10.4 percent in 2008 to 12.4 percent in 2009. Both Walworth County and Wisconsin have poverty rates that are lower than the national average.



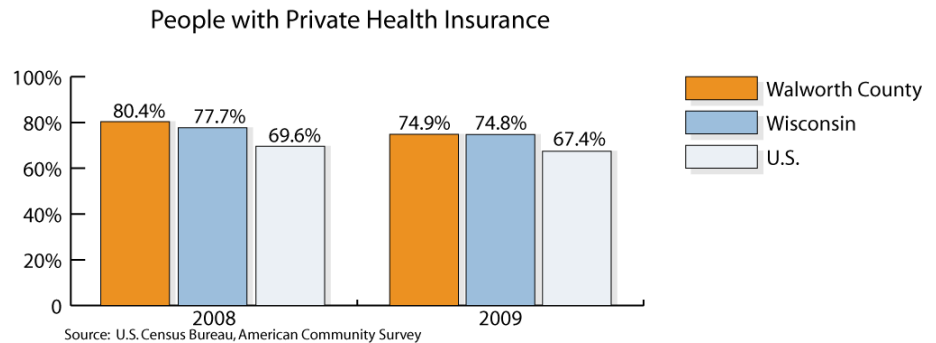
More than One out of Six Children in Walworth County Now Lives in Poverty

The child poverty rate in Walworth County rose from 11.4 percent in 2008 to 15.8 percent in 2009. The statewide average rose from 13.4 percent in 2008 to 16.7 percent in 2009. Nearly 1,000 additional children slipped into poverty in Walworth County between 2008 and 2009, which represents a population greater than the town of Sharon.



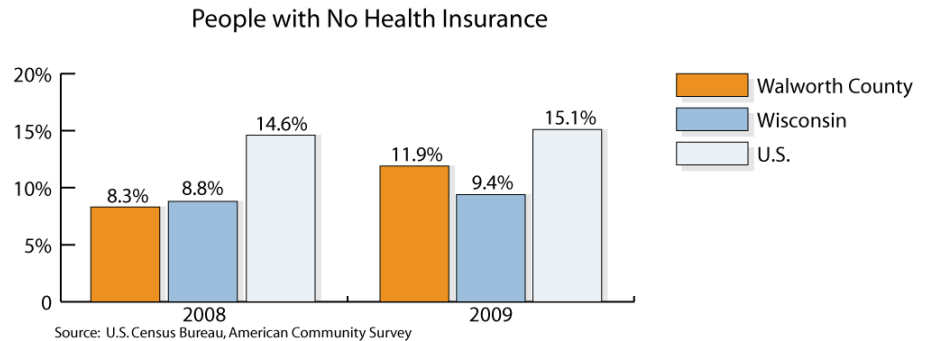
Fewer People in Walworth County Have Private Health Insurance

The percent of people in Walworth County with private health insurance decreased, from 80.4 percent in 2008 to 74.9 percent in 2009. The increase in the unemployment rate impacted health insurance coverage, since most families obtain insurance through their employers. Walworth County and Wisconsin in general still have significantly higher rates of private health insurance coverage than the nation as a whole.



BadgerCare Plus Cushions Increase in the Uninsured

The percent of Walworth County residents that have no health insurance increased from 8.3 percent in 2008 to 11.9 percent in 2009. BadgerCare Plus enrollment in the county grew by more than 2,100 people (23 percent) in 2009, which kept the drop in employer coverage from resulting in an even larger increase in the uninsured. Both Walworth County and Wisconsin have a much smaller share of their population without health insurance than the national average.



Addressing the Impact of the Recession

Walworth 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, Walworth 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 Walworth 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.