

Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015

Demographic Assessment



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

Demographic Assessment

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Demographic Assessment: Our People

This chapter presents a profile of the people who make up the Eau Claire community and identifies major demographic trends that may affect city planning over the next 15 years. Included are population and housing, race and ethnicity, age, household composition, income and employment.

Major Demographic Issues

The following are the major demographic issues identified through the analysis of conditions. Issues are questions to be discussed, debated and resolved during the planning process in light of other issues. The subsequent analysis of conditions has been prepared to help readers understand why these are issues and why they should be considered.

- 1. Household Income and Employment:** What, if anything, should the City do to promote the growth of living-wage jobs, help raise average incomes and reduce the rate of poverty, unemployment, under-employment and their debilitating personal effects among Eau Claire residents, particularly households with children? This issue was the most highly rated by members of the Citizens Advisory Committee on the *Comprehensive Plan*.
- 2. Age Structure:** What should the City do to attract and retain more people in the 25 to 34 year-old age group, those who are beginning their careers and families?
- 3. Regional and City Growth:** What additional steps should the City take, if any, to attempt to capture a portion of the projected population growth in the region?
- 4. Household Size and Housing Choices:** How should the Land Use Plan respond to the shrinking average size of households and the increased demand for multiple-family housing?
- 5. Population Composition:** How should the City work toward integrating and accommodating growing minority population groups?

Demographic Trends

The following are population trends that should be considered in the update of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

- 1. Income and Wages.** Income and wages in Eau Claire have lagged behind those of the Eau Claire metro area, the state and the Twin Cities metro area, and the gap is growing wider. Although Eau Claire's household, family and per capita incomes increased slightly during the 2000s, the income gap between the City and both the metro area and the state also grew somewhat during this period. Some of this difference may be

attributable to the disproportionately large number of college students in Eau Claire, but it exists even when comparing only earnings by full-time workers.

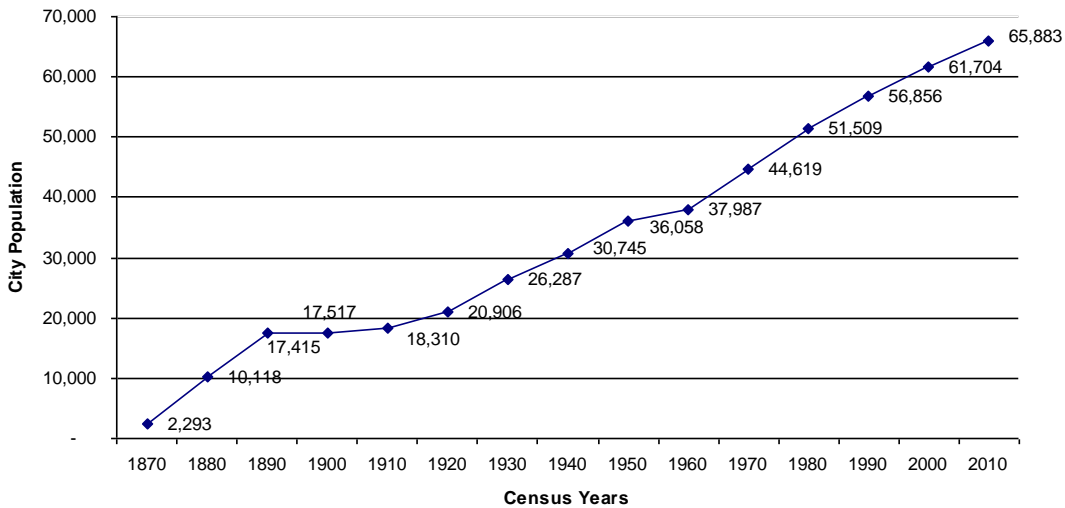
- 2. Low and Moderate Income Concentrations.** The residences of low and moderate-income households have typically but not exclusively been located in the older portions of the city. This pattern remained consistent in the 2010 Census.
- 3. Ethnic or Racial Minority Populations.** The population of Eau Claire is slightly more racially diverse than it was in 1980, 1990 or 2000. The Hmong, African-American and Hispanic populations in the City have all increased over this time frame. The residences of these groups tend to be located in the same neighborhoods although the pattern has become more dispersed over time.
- 4. Population, Household and Housing Growth.** The City's population and number of households are forecast to continue to increase at approximately the same rate as they have over the past 20 years. That rate translates into an average of approximately 350 new households (and housing units) annually. Since the 1993 *Comprehensive Plan*, the annual average has been 330 new housing units.
- 5. Household Size.** The construction of housing units in the past 20 years has shown a greater percentage of multiple-family compared to single-family dwellings. Households in many of these multiple-family units are much smaller than the City average; in fact, the majority are one-person households.
- 6. Town Growth.** Single-family housing is expected to continue to grow in several of the Towns near Eau Claire, including Pleasant Valley, Union and Washington and the Village of Lake Hallie, although the rate of such growth is expected to decline from its previous rapid pace.
- 7. Age of Persons.** The median age of the population has been increasing. The school-age population (5 to 24) has declined slightly as a percentage of the whole, while the percentage of people age 45 to 64 has increased slightly since 2000.
- 8. Household Composition.** Shifts in the City's household composition during the past 20 years include a decline in the percentage of family households. This corresponds with the increase in the percentage of single-person households during that time. The average number of persons per household and persons per family both continued their decline, consistent with national trends.
- 9. Employment and Jobs.** The official rate of unemployment has fallen back into a moderate range and the percentage of the population over age 16 that is employed is the same as it was in 2000. The economy is less reliant on heavy manufacturing and has diversified into more managerial, professional, technical and financial jobs. However, it is suspected that many people are working at less than their potential and that young adults are not finding local employment at a rate sufficient to maintain their share of the community age profile.

Demographic Characteristics

Population

Eau Claire was incorporated in 1872, with a population of 2,293. The lumber industry created a population boom in the years following, as the City’s population swelled to over 21,000 persons by 1885, making Eau Claire Wisconsin’s third largest city, twice the size of Madison. However, lumbering soon began to decline with the depletion of the timber forests to the north, leading to mill consolidations and closings. Between 1885 and 1890, Eau Claire lost twenty percent of its population but still finished the decade with a gain.

**Figure 2-1
Growth in Population, 1870 – 2010**



Despite the loss of the lumber industry, Eau Claire was able to make a transition to a diversified manufacturing base by the early 1900s and saw steady population growth through the 1940s, reaching a population of 36,058 in 1950. The City’s population continued to grow through the 20th century, with a broad-based economy featuring regional retail and medical centers, education, service businesses and a diversified industrial base. The last three decades have each seen steady population growth of approximately 7 to 10 percent as Eau Claire’s population reached 65,883 in 2010.

The population of the City of Eau Claire and the Eau Claire Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, has grown at a similar rate since 2000 as shown in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1
Population Growth from 2000 to 2010**

	2000	2010	Percent Change 2000 to 2010
West Central RPC Metro Planning Area	104,005	114,515	10.1 %
City of Eau Claire	61,704	65,883	6.8 %

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

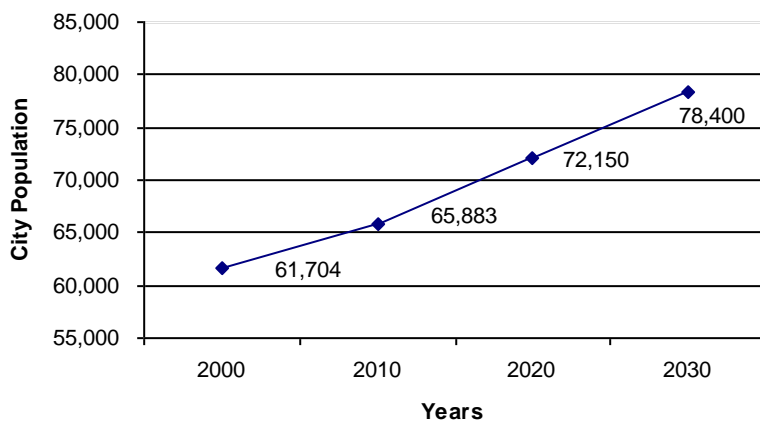
Forecasts by the City, the Eau Claire Area School District and the Wisconsin Department of Administration indicate that the City of Eau Claire and the MSA will continue to grow slightly faster than they have in the recent past. As illustrated in Table 2-2, the growth rate for the MSA is projected to be slightly higher than that of the City over this period. Based on these projections, Eau Claire’s population will increase by approximately 12,500 persons between the years 2010 and 2030.

**Table 2-2
Forecast Population Growth to 2030**

	2000	2010	2020	2030	Percent Change 2010- 2030
City of Eau Claire	61,704	65,883	72,150	78,400	19 %
West Central RPC Metro Planning Area	104,005	114,515	125,000	135,000	18 %
City / Metro	59 %	57 %	58%	58 %	

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census; West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, LRTP Update; City of Eau Claire, *Sewer Service Area Plans*, 2013.

**Figure 2-2
Forecast Population Growth to 2030**



As the City of Eau Claire has steadily grown in population, surrounding towns have also experienced population growth, which is also projected to continue through 2030. Table 2-3 illustrates population change between 1980 and 2010 for the towns surrounding and in the vicinity of Eau Claire. As indicated, the Towns of Pleasant Valley, Brunswick and Hallie

have experienced substantial population growth over this period. Other surrounding towns experiencing growth include Washington, Wheaton and Seymour. The Town of Union experienced a decline in population, largely due to several major annexations into the City of Eau Claire. The City of Altoona also experienced significant growth and is expected to accelerate that pace as it benefits from the realignment of US Highway 53, which was completed in 2006.

**Table 2-3
Population Change, 1980 to 2010**

	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 1980-2010	% Change 1980-2010
City of Altoona	4,393	5,889	6,821	6,706	2,313	52 %
Town of Brunswick	1,411	1,506	1,614	1,624	213	15 %
Village of Lake Hallie	4,275	4,531	4,644	6,448	2,173	51 %
Town of Pleasant Valley	1,908	2,076	2,697	3,044	1,136	59 %
Town of Seymour	2,824	2,754	3,003	3,209	385	14 %
Town of Union	2,689	2,456	2,407	2,663	26	<1 %
Town of Washington	6,489	6,269	6,980	7,134	645	10 %
Town of Wheaton	2,328	2,257	2,353	2,701	373	16 %
City of Eau Claire	51,509	56,856	61,704	65,883	14,374	28 %

Source: U.S. Census

Department of Administration projections indicate several towns in the vicinity of Eau Claire will experience substantial population growth over the next 10 years. Table 2-4 illustrates the projected high growth rates for the Town of Pleasant Valley, Village of Hallie, Town of Union and Town of Washington.

**Table 2-4
Projected Population Change in Nearby Cities, Villages and Towns**

	2010 Census	2030 Forecast	Change 2010 - 2030	% Change 2010 - 2030
City of Altoona	7,367	7,695	328	4 %
Town of Brunswick	1,624	1,898	274	17 %
Village of Lake Hallie	4,942	5,830	888	18 %
Town of Pleasant Valley	3,149	3,830	781	25 %
Town of Seymour	3,209	3,692	483	15 %
Town of Union	2,663	3,450	787	29 %
Town of Washington	7,182	9,154	1,972	27 %
Town of Wheaton	2,701	3,430	729	27 %
County of Eau Claire	98,736	118,728	19,992	20 %
County of Chippewa	62,415	75,152	12,737	20 %
City of Eau Claire	65,883	78,411	12,528	19 %

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration; City of Eau Claire, *Sewer Service Area Plans*, 2013; *Eau Claire County Comprehensive Plan*, 2009.

Households

Forecast of Households

The number of households in Eau Claire has been forecast in five-year increments from 2000 to 2030 as shown in Table 2-5. This households forecast is based on the forecast of population presented above.

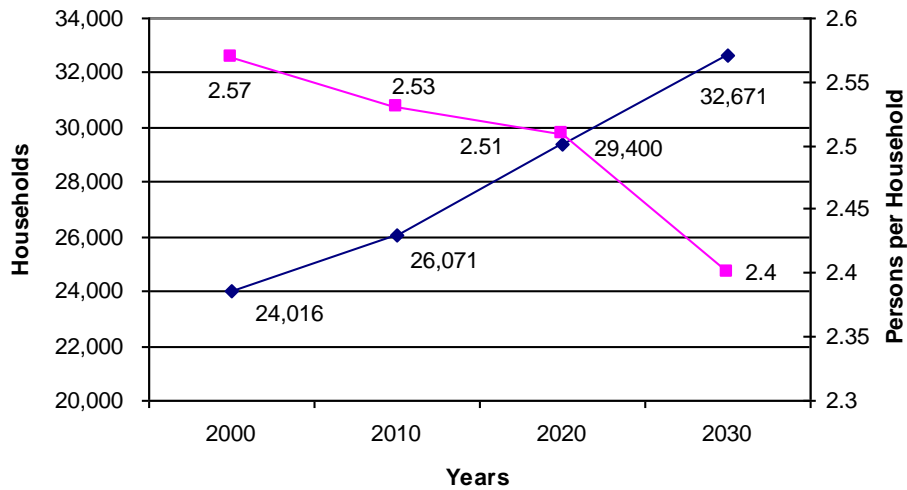
The rate of growth of households exceeds that of population because it is assumed that the average household size will continue to decrease slightly, following the trend of the past twenty years.

**Table 2-5
Forecast Number of Households and Persons per Household to 2030**

	2000	2010	2020	2030	Average Annual Percent Change 2010 - 2030
City of Eau Claire	24,016	26,071	29,400	32,671	1.2 %
Persons per Household	2.57	2.53	2.51	2.40	- 0.65 %

Source: City of Eau Claire, *Sewer Service Area Plans*, 2013.

**Figure 2-3
Forecast Number of Households and Persons per Household to 2030**



Average Household Size

The average number of people in a household across the city has been declining for many years and that trend is forecast to continue, mirroring statewide and national trends. The average size of family and non-family households has both declined, as shown in Table 2-9. This has implications for the type and size of housing units to be built. In general, families are having fewer children and more people are choosing to live independently.

An analysis of the housing constructed from 2000 to 2010 indicates that the size of the households in those new units (particularly the multiple-family units) is substantially less than the citywide household size of 2.53 persons per household. Numbers indicate that the City had an increase of 2,055 households during the decade, while during the same time frame the City grew by a population of only 4,809 persons. Table 2-9 indicates that the number of single-person households has increased from 28 percent in 1990 to 32 percent in 2010.

Forecast of Housing Units Needed

The City of Eau Claire saw an increase of 2,612 housing units during the 2000 to 2010 period as shown below in Table 2-6, an increase of 13.8 percent. The pace of housing development slowed substantially after the 2005 *Comprehensive Plan* compared to the period between the 2003 and the 2005 plans. The reason for this change was, of course, the Great Recession, the biggest world-wide economic shock since the 1930s. The average number of housing units constructed each year from 2000 through 2002 was 537, compared to 140 per year from 2009 through 2011 period. Of the 19 years from 1993 through 2012, multiple-family housing has accounted for more than half the annual number of new units every year except two. But since 2008, that trend has become more pronounced.

More complete descriptions of the nature of residential land development and housing characteristics are presented in the chapters on land use and housing.

Since the 2010 Census, the City has seen an increase of another 489 housing units during 2010 through 2012 as the market rebounded from the recession and captured pent-up demand.

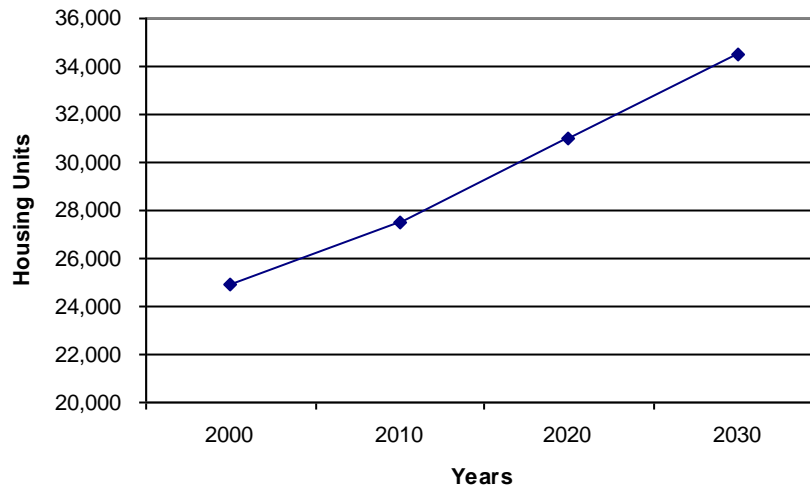
Forecasting the number of housing units that will be constructed in future years is also an important indicator when assessing needs for various services and facilities. Forecasts of Eau Claire households and housing units for years 2020 and 2030 were created for the *Sewer Service Area Plans*, which were prepared for each of the five adjacent Towns in 2013. Those forecasts, shown in Table 2-6, assumed a continued decline in the average household size, a percentage for infill and redevelopment activity, and successful annexation petitions from landowners in the Towns. The City's forecast is higher than that of the Wisconsin Department of Administration and probably more reliable.

**Table 2-6
Forecast Number of Housing Units to 2030**

	2000	2010	2020	2030	Change 2010 - 2030	
City Forecast	24,895	27,507	30,900	34,470	6,964	+25 %
State Forecast			28,400	31,000	3,493	+13 %

Sources: US Census; City of Eau Claire; *Sewer Service Area Plans*, 2013.

**Figure 2-4
Forecast Number of Housing Units to 2030**



Racial and Ethnic Composition

From 1980 to 2010, the Eau Claire community saw a substantial change in its racial composition. During this 30 year period, the City’s minority population increased from 1.3 percent of the total population to 6.6 percent of the population; still a small increase compared with many Wisconsin cities but a noticeable difference nonetheless. Table 2-7 illustrates this change.

**Table 2-7
Population by Race, City of Eau Claire**

	1990	1990 Percent of Total	2000	2000 Percent of Total	2010	2010 Percent of Total
White	54,042	95	57,657	93.4	60,226	91 %
African American	211	<1	429	0.7	752	1 %
Native American	332	<1	337	0.5	224	<1 %
Asian or Pacific Islander	2,150	4	2,282	3.7	3,043	5 %
Other	121	<1	209	0.3	356	<1 %
Two or More Races	--	--	90	1.3	1,159	2 %
TOTAL	56,856	100	61,704	100	65,883	100
Hmong			1,920	3.1	2,750	4.5
Latino			619	1.1	1,268	2.1

Sources: U.S. Census, 2010; “Hmong Population and Demographic Trends in the 2010 Census and 2010 American Community Survey”, Mark E. Pfeifer, *Hmong Studies Journal*, Volume 13 (2), 2010 Census Issue.

The most significant change occurred during the 1980s, when a large number of Hmong moved to Eau Claire from their home countries of Laos, China and Thailand. Census statistics indicate that the Hmong population is now somewhat dispersed within the community, whereas they were initially concentrated in several locations in the City . However, several smaller concentrations of Hmong still remain in northern portions of the City to the east of the airport and within the North Riverfront and North Side Hill neighborhoods located to the north and northeast of downtown. The 1990s and 2000s saw smaller increases in the Hmong population.

The population of other racial or ethnic groups, including Hispanics (1,268 in 2010?), increased slightly since 1980 but remain in the 1 to 2 percent range.

Age Distribution

Census statistics show that the largest concentration of persons by age were in the 5 to 19 and 20 to 24 age groups, which comprised 19 and 16 percent of the population in 2010 (see Table 2-8). The high percentage of the population in the 20 to 24 group is attributable to the presence of the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire and the Chippewa Valley Technical College campuses within the City.

The number of students enrolled in the high schools of the Eau Claire Area School District is presently at a low ebb, but a surge at the elementary school level is expected to soon change

that. (Source: *Planning for the Schools of Tomorrow*, Eau Claire Area School District, 2012.)

Since 1990, the percentage of the population in the 25 to 44 age range is down 3.4 percent while the percentage in the 45 to 64 group is up 7.5 percent. Thus, the percentage of the community in the important age range when families are started and careers are launched has declined.

**Table 2-8
Population by Age, City of Eau Claire**

Age Group	1990	%	2000	%	Age Group	2010	%	Percent Change 1990-2010
Under 5	3,975	7	3,574	6	Under 5	3,889	6	+1 %
5-17	9,118	16	9,784	16	5-19	12,726	19	-3 %
18-24	12,287	22	13,650	22	20-24	10,827	16	0 %
25-34	8,636	15	8,161	13	25-34	9,785	15	0 %
35-44	7,612	13	7,916	13	35-44	6,749	10	-3 %
45-54	4,229	7	7,402	12	45-54	7,405	11	+4 %
55-64	3,758	7	3,849	6	55-64	6,822	10	+3 %
65 +	7,241	13	7,368	12	65 +	7,680	12	-1 %
TOTAL	56,856	100	61,704	100		65,883	100	
Median			29.4			29.8		

Source: U.S. Census

Nevertheless, the median age in Eau Claire in 2010 was 29.8 years, which compares with 36.2 years for the Eau Claire Metropolitan Statistical Area and 38.5 for the state. Eau Claire’s median age is also lower than other similarly sized communities such as La Crosse, Oshkosh, Waukesha, Appleton, Janesville, Sheboygan and Wauwatosa, perhaps because of the large number of college-age residents.

Household and Family Composition

Table 2-9 provides a summary of information pertaining to household and family composition for the City for 1990, 2000 and 2010. As shown, family households as a percentage of the total declined by 4 percent during the prior decade. (Family households are those where two of more persons living in a household are related.) Correspondingly, the non-family households significantly increased during the 2000s and now represent 47 percent of the City’s households. This is a major change since 1990, when the family to non-family ratio was 61:39. In addition, one-person households increased to 32 from 28 percent of the total households during the 2000s.

**Table 2-9
Household and Family Composition, City of Eau Claire**

	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%
Household Type						
- Family household	12,838	61	13,567	57	14,293	53
- Non-family household	8,280	39	10,449	43	12,510	47
TOTAL	21,118	100	24,016	100	26,803	100
Married Couple Families	10,391	49	10,866	45	10,618	40
- With children	5,029	23	5,017	21	4,266	16
Female Householder	1,995	9	2,014	8	2,522	9
- With children	1,385	11	1,391	10	1,777	6
Persons Per Household	2.49		2.38		2.29	
Persons Per Family	3.07		2.99		2.89	
Hshd's with one or more persons 65 years or more	5,022	24	4,826	20	5,637	21
Persons in Group Quarters	5,839	28	6,182	26	4,536	17
One-person Households	5,869	28	7,157	30	8,485	32

Source: U.S. Census

The composition of family households in Eau Claire has also undergone some changes during the decade. The percentage of married-couple families with children has decreased from 23 percent of all families in 1990 to 16 percent in 2010. That certainly has contributed to the shrinking average family size. The percentage of female-headed households with children at home has declined from 11 percent in 1990 to 6 percent in 2010, a helpful trend.

It is also interesting to note that the number of households with a member age 65 or older has declined from 24 percent to 21 percent since 1990. That percentage should rise as the Baby Boom generation began to reach that age in 2011.

Income and Poverty

Income levels for the City of Eau Claire and surrounding areas have traditionally lagged behind income levels of the State of Wisconsin and the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. Table 2-10 and the accompanying graph provide this information for 2000 and 2010.

Comparing the 2000 and 2010 figures shows that incomes have increased within the City and MSA. However, a comparison of these income figures indicates that the gap between the City and the MSA widened substantially during the decade, while the gap between the City and the State widened only slightly. Thus, Eau Claire is becoming less like the surrounding communities in terms of income.

It is important to note the difference in income between people who live in Eau Claire and those who live nearby. Many upper-income residents have chosen home locations outside the City for a variety of reasons. This has skewed the data on median income, the proportion of residents at various income levels, and the percentage of the City population with incomes below the defined poverty level. Related negative effects include reduced demand for upper-

value housing, reduced support for neighborhood revitalization, a greater sense of “us versus them,” reduced support for solving city problems, increased driving and increased loss of farm land.

**Table 2-10
Earnings and Income Comparisons, 2000 and 2012**

	2000					2010 or 2012				
	Eau Claire	Metro Area	City / Metro	State	City / State	Eau Claire	Metro Area	City / Metro	State	City / State
Mean Hsld. Earnings	44,531	NA	NA	53,084	84 %	52,026	61,132	85 %	66,710	78 %
Median Household Income	36,399	39,372	92 %	43,791	83 %	39,376	48,691	81 %	51,059	77 %
Median Family Income	49,320	48,922	101 %	52,911	93 %	60,513	62,636	97 %	65,154	92 %
Per Capita Income	18,230	18,875	96 %	21,271	86 %	22,858	25,267	90 %	26,994	85 %
Median Earnings, All Workers	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	20,468	24,862	82 %	30,039	68 %
Median Earnings, Male Full-Time	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	39,121	41,288	95 %	46,898	83 %
Median Earnings, Female Full	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	31,946	32,266	99 %	36,535	68 %

Sources: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010; American Community Survey, 2012. NA: Data is not available.

Rates of Poverty

Rates of poverty by any measure in Eau Claire are higher than those of the state. Table 2-11 illustrates that although Eau Claire and Wisconsin had similar poverty rates in 2000, the City had slipped behind by 2010.

**Table 2-11
Poverty Rates, 2000 and 2010**

	2000		2010	
	Eau Claire	State	Eau Claire	State
% Families Below Poverty Level	5.5	5.6	10.2	8.9
% With Children Under 18 Years	8.5	8.8	18.2	15.4
% With Children Under 5 Years	13.8	12.2	28.3	16.2

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010.

The federal Census figures for families below the defined poverty level is a single indicator that does not portray the full scope of economic stress. Anecdotal and other information paint a picture of spreading and chronic unemployment, underemployment and lagging income among individuals, households and families, with women and children suffering the most. These local and national problems have been exacerbated by the Great Recession although falling rates of unemployment since 2011 have mitigated the effect somewhat.

The City of Eau Claire and the Department of Housing and Urban Development identify areas in the City having concentrations of Low and Moderate Income (LMI) families in order to provide programs and services for these families. These LMI areas have typically been located in the older portions of the City extending out from downtown. Based on the Census statistics, several LMI areas are also located on or near the periphery of the City within more recently developed multiple family housing projects. These additional lower income areas need to be recognized and considered as decisions are made concerning needed services from departments such as Parks and Recreation, Police, City-County Health, etc.

Statewide, 43 percent of public school students qualified for free or reduced-price school meals in 2013-14, which is a 14 percent increase from 2003-04. The threshold to be eligible for that the federal free meals program is a household income under 130 percent of the defined federal poverty level; for the reduced-price meals it is 185 percent of the household poverty level. (Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2014.)

Locally, of the 19 public schools in the Eau Claire Area School District, 8 have a school-wide meals assistance program and 4 have targeted meals assistance.

Poverty Rate excluding Students

The US Census Bureau estimated the rate of poverty by city, including and excluding students not living with their parents. The data source was the American Community Survey for the years 2009 through 2011, which is an estimate based on a small-sample survey that is not as accurate as the 2010 decennial census. Note that the poverty rate for Eau Claire, counting all people, is much higher than the statewide average. However, when discounting students not living with their parents, the rate is much closer to the average but still higher. The difference in rates for Eau Claire with and without children is comparatively high.

**Table 2-12
Poverty Rate excluding Students, 2013**

City	Poverty Rate for all People	Poverty Rate for all People excluding College Students Not Living with Relatives	Difference
Eau Claire	20.0	13.8	6.20
Appleton	11.9	11.6	0.3
Beloit	26.0	25.7	0.3
Fond du Lac	15.6	15.0	0.6
Green Bay	16.9	16.2	0.6
Janesville	14.8	14.6	0.2
Kenosha	17.8	17.3	0.5
La Crosse	22.9	13.9	9.00
Neenah	9.5	9.2	0.3
Oshkosh	19.0	14.5	4.00
Racine	21.7	21.5	0.1
Sheboygan	13.2	13.2	0.0
Superior	15.7	15.4	0.4
Wausau	21.2	20.5	0.8
State of Wisconsin	12.9	11.8	1.1

Bishaw, Alemayehu, "Examining the Effect of Off-Campus College Students on Poverty Rates," US Census Bureau, Social, Economic and Housing Statistics Division, Poverty Statistics Branch, 2013.

Poverty status was determined for individuals in housing units and non-institutional group quarters. The poverty universe excludes children under age 15 who are not related to the householder, people living in institutional group quarters, and people living in college dormitories or military barracks.

Organizations Working to Mitigate the Effects of Poverty (CDBG Only)

These not-for-profit organizations work in Eau Claire to help alleviate the effects of poverty, support families, build self-sufficiency and provide affordable housing.

Boulton Refuge House

Vocational Advocacy Program

This is a self-sufficiency project for victims of domestic, intimate partner violence, stalking and/or sexual abuse. This project will provide advocacy services for victims who are of low or moderate income. It focuses on community education, workplace training and system advocacy.

Catholic Charities

Sojourner House

The mission of Sojourner House is to provide a safe, clean place for single men or women to sleep overnight, shower, clean their clothing, have breakfast, and be accepted and encouraged in their ambitions or hopes, while ensuring guests' personal dignity, respect, and safety.

Children's Service Society

Building Families Program

Building Families-Eau Claire is a prevention and education program for parents who live in Eau Claire. Its goal is to ensure that children will reach school age socially, emotionally and physically healthy -- ready to learn.

Chippewa Valley Health Clinic

Health Services

The Chippewa Valley Free Clinic provides health care and advocates for people who have no reasonable health care alternative. Eligible patients must be 18 years or older, have an income equal to or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, and not qualify for government medical benefits.

The Community Table

Soup Kitchen

The Community Table is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization that serves a nutritious meal and hospitality 365 days a year. The Community Table serves on a "no questions asked" basis. However, for Block Grant purposes they survey guests to ensure that at least 51 percent of those served are at or below 80 percent of the area median income.

Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association

Community Liaison Program

The Hmong Community Liaison Program aims to increase awareness of crime in the Hmong community. It aims to bridge the cultural divide at the City level by providing culturally sensitive services to the Hmong community under the direction of the Chief of Police at the Eau Claire Police Department and the Executive Director of the Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association.

Organizations Working to Mitigate the Effects of Poverty (continued)

Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association

Housing Liaison Program

The bi-lingual Housing Liaison works with families to ensure that services are accessible to Hmong community members who have limited proficiency in English. The liaison works with the Housing Authority of the City of Eau Claire, management companies, private landlords and the Hmong community to provide culturally-specific services to landlords and tenants.

Eau Claire Interfaith Hospitality Network

Homeless Shelter

The Eau Claire Interfaith Hospitality Network, Inc., operates a shelter, Beacon House, for families that are homeless in the Eau Claire area. The shelter can serve six families at a time. Over 400 volunteers from area congregations, UW-EC and civic groups provide more than 7,000 volunteer hours annually. In addition, these volunteers provide most of the necessary food needed to feed all six families three meals a day every day of the year.

Literacy Volunteers Chippewa Valley

Building Economic Self-Sufficiency

Federal Community Development Block Grant money is used to provide outreach materials to support employment skills education for adults. The grant will also provide books, registration fees, and certification test fees for certification classes such as Business Speech, Child Care Provider, Computer Literacy, CPR, Customer Service, Forklift Driving, Introduction to Business, Resume and Job Interview Skills, ServSafe Food Handler, and Workplace Skills.

Western Dairyland

Job and Business Development

The Western Dairyland Business Center (WDBC) uses CDBG funds to assist 3 low-income entrepreneurs in starting or expanding a business. Targeted participants will include low-income (below 80 percent of area median income) women, minorities, veterans, people with disabilities, and other low income individuals. Participants can take classes or Webinars created by Western Dairyland.

Western Dairyland

Homeless Haven Program

Western Dairyland operates several homeless shelters in Eau Claire. Their fully-furnished single-family apartments provide 31 to 60 days of emergency shelter to families with children who are homeless because of foreclosure, eviction, domestic violence, natural disaster, and job or income loss.

Employment

In 2014, Eau Claire County enjoyed a relatively healthy 5.4 percent rate of unemployment, which was close to the rate reported ten years earlier, near the peak of an economic expansion. But the intervening recession hit this city and county hard, as unemployment shot up to 8.1 percent. The statewide rate was even worse.

The City of Eau Claire is buffered from economic turmoil by its strong agricultural region and employers such as hospitals, clinics, schools and government offices, which resist recession. However, anecdotes and evidence say that the official rate of unemployment does not paint an accurate picture of the situation, as many discouraged job-seekers have dropped out of the labor force and others have taken new jobs at lower pay or responsibility.

Since 1990, Eau Claire has weathered losing the Uniroyal Tire factory and has diversified its economy, reducing its reliance on manufacturing while increasing its jobs in other categories. Unemployment spiked to 8.5 percent in 1990 then declined to only 1.9 percent by September 1999, the lowest rate of the past 25 years. When the *Comprehensive Plan* was adopted in 2005, the rate had crept up to 3.3 percent before rising sharply during the recession.

**Table 2-13
Reported Rate of Unemployment**

	Eau Claire County	Wisconsin
March 2014	5.4 %	6.1 %
July 2009	7.2 %	9.2 %
March 2004	5.3 %	4.5 %

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.
Peak rate for Eau Claire County: 8.1 percent in February, 2010.

In 2000, 33,423 residents of the City (16 years and older) were employed, representing 67 percent of that population. By 2012, that number stood at 37,448, still representing 67 percent after taking a dive during the intervening years.

Table 2-14 indicates that from 1990 to 2010 the largest increase in employment came in the managerial and professional industries, which accounted for 34 percent of the people employed. This is a change from the decade of the 1990s, when the retail and service sector led the way. The percentage of the Eau Claire population employed in production and transportation declined by 6 percent during the 2000s.

**Table 2-14
Occupation, 1990 to 2010, City of Eau Claire**

Category	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%	% Change 1990-2010
Managerial, professional & related occupations	8,184	30	10,096	30	12,883	34	+4
Service occupations	4,635	17	6,092	18	6,722	18	+1
Sales & office occupations	8,204	30.	9,994	30	11,422	31	+1
Construction, extraction & maintenance	1,148	4	2,207	7	2,178	6	+2
Production, transportation & material moving	4,574	17	4,924	15	4,243	11	-6
TOTAL	26,961	100	33,423	100	37,448	100	

Source: U.S. Census

A comparison of employment between the City and Metropolitan Area shows only minor differences between the two (see Table 2-15). Eau Claire has a slightly higher percentage of persons employed in the professional, service and sales sectors, while the percentage of residents employed in the construction and production / transportation sectors is higher across the MSA.

**Table 2-15
Year 2010 Employment Comparison**

Category	Eau Claire	Metro Area
Managerial, professional & related occupations	34 %	32 %
Service occupations	18 %	17 %
Sales & office occupations	31 %	27 %
Natural resources, construction & maintenance	6 %	9 %
Production, transportation & material moving	11 %	15 %
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Source: U.S. Census