

# Generational Diversity

Characteristics and Values of Millennials  
in the United States and Wisconsin



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## Contents

List of Tables and Figures .....	4
Overview.....	5
Key Findings.....	5
Methodology .....	5
Demographic Characteristics of Millennials.....	7
Size of the Generation.....	7
Ethnicity .....	7
Socioeconomic Status .....	10
Education.....	12
Religion.....	14
Family Structure .....	14
Millennials' Formative Experiences.....	17
Social Trends.....	17
Pivotal Events .....	23
Millennials' Values and Priorities .....	26
Social Identity.....	26
Relation to Government.....	31
Process Orientation.....	35
Goals for the Future .....	36
Conclusion .....	39
Appendix.....	40
References.....	64

## List of Tables and Figures

### Tables

Table 1. Wisconsin and U.S. Population of Four Generations, 2010 Census .....	7
Table 2. Four Generations at the Age of 18-30: Ethnic Diversity in the United States .....	8
Table 3. Three Generations as Young Adults: Ethnic Diversity in Wisconsin .....	8
Table 4. Wisconsin Population Changes by Race and Ethnicity, 2000-2010 .....	9
Table 5. Statewide Enrollment by Economic Status (all school types combined) .....	12
Table 6. Highest Educational Attainment of Four National Generations at the Age of 18-30 .....	13
Table 7. Highest Educational Attainment of Wisconsin Residents by Age Cohort in 2010 .....	13
Table 8. Religion Composition of Age Groups .....	14
Table 9. Religious Affiliation among Young Adults (18-29) by Decade .....	14
Table 10. Four Generations at the Age of 18-30, Marital Status .....	15
Table 11. Generational Differences in Family Environment .....	15
Table 12. U.S. Family Income and Net Worth by Percentile, 2007 .....	21
Table 13. Religious Opinions by Age Group .....	28
Table 14. Wisconsin Feelings on Diverse Citizenship .....	28
Table 15. Generational Attitudes toward Marriage and Parenting: Views on What Trends Are Bad for Society .....	29
Table 16. Millennials vs. Generation X (when they were young adults) .....	29
Table 17. Wisconsin Approval Ratings on Civil Unions and Same-Sex Marriage, 2003-2006 .....	30
Table 18. Satisfaction with the Way Things Are Going in Wisconsin Today .....	31
Table 19. Who Should Handle Today's Complex Economic Problems .....	32
Table 20. Wisconsin Feelings on Health Care .....	33
Table 21. Millennial Views on Foreign Policy (from 2004) .....	33
Table 22. Percentage of Citizens of Different Ages Who View Own Culture as Superior .....	33

### Figures

Figure 1. Percentage Increase in Non-White Population by Wisconsin County, 1990-2010 .....	10
Figure 2. U.S. Census Bureau Reports of Gini Index for U.S. Household Income .....	20

## Overview

The Alverno College Research Center for Women and Girls is pleased to present our analysis of the Millennial Generation in the United States and specifically in Wisconsin. The generation known nationally as Millennials, born between 1982 and 2000, is the largest generation in American history. As with all generations, the events and social forces they experienced as they came of age have shaped them. Millennials share some attitudes and values with people of different ages; they also have some distinguishing features that mark them, as a group, as different from the generations before. Our analysis of the Millennial Generation offers us glimpses into the lives of Millennial women and girls. The Millennial Generation's attitudes, beliefs, and values are good reflections of what the future has in store. The purpose of this report is to look at national data—and Wisconsin data when available—about Millennials to provide insight into the general characteristics of this generation as it begins to become politically, economically, and socially active in our society.

## Key Findings

The report is divided into three descriptive sections about Millennials: Demographics, Formative Experiences, and Values and Priorities.

Overall, this large generation is more diverse than its predecessors on a number of dimensions, including race, religion, and family structure. They have come of age in a socially progressive era and view tolerance toward individual differences to be a key value. Their experience with Internet technology has led them to expect constant connection, flexibility, and immediacy in their everyday lives. Because of the age at which Millennials processed the events of September 11, 2001, and subsequent wars, they have—on average—a view of the role of the United States in the world that is different from that of older generations. Although Millennials are currently facing significant economic challenges, and have lost more ground in the recent recession than other generations, they remain optimistic about their potential to lead fulfilling lives—as defined for themselves in a way that differs from their predecessors. They also hold generally optimistic views about the ability of government to function effectively to deal with important issues.

## Methodology

Although there are several names for this group, here we use the most common term, *Millennials*. When we were able to analyze data by specific birth year, we used the birth cohort of 1982-2000, as consistent with other research reports. In some cases, when data have been previously grouped and represent a different birth cohort, we note that fact for the reader. Because our interest is focused on the Millennial Generation nationally but also in Wisconsin, we primarily use national data and supplement it with Wisconsin data wherever possible.

A report that attempts to sum up an entire generation of people by necessity will be general in its conclusions. We do not expect that any of the analyses here perfectly describe an entire group of diverse individuals. At the same time, we believe that there are some important

experiences and values shared by people of this age that may be of interest to audiences dealing with Millennials. To the extent that findings seem to relate simply to being young—for instance, that current 25-year-olds behave in a particular way that current 45-year-olds shared 20 years ago but no longer share—we do not include them. We are here aiming for features of this generation that, to the best of our analysis, appear to be distinctive and may shape their reactions to future political, economic, and social events.

We cast a wide net in terms of the sources used. When providing descriptive data, we used nonpartisan academic sources. However, when discussing trends and experiences, we combined these sources with media accounts, some more rigorous in their analysis than others, and with varying political affiliations or ideologies. Some of the source material was written for Millennials themselves; other pieces were written for audiences seeking to connect with this generation. The goal in using the broader sources was to provide a vivid picture of national and state conversations about members of the Millennial Generation. Although we will argue that the claims presented here, even those based on popular media, have multiple sources pointing to their validity, readers are invited to review the sources in the reference list and evaluate the claims for themselves.

## Demographic Characteristics of Millennials

This section describes the generation known as Millennials “by the numbers.” We provide national data for all categories and supplement with Wisconsin data when possible; in some cases only national data are available. In general, Millennials are a large group (nationally, the largest generation ever) (Pew Research Center, 2010e) and are increasing in racial (Pew Research Center, 2010d) and religious diversity (Pew Research Center, 2010e). They are struggling disproportionately with the current economic climate (Pew Research Center, 2012c), though they are well educated as a group (Pew Research Center, 2010d, 2010e). They have grown up with nontraditional family structures, including single-parent household and same-sex parents, and are more comfortable with those family experiences than members of other generations (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

### Size of the Generation

Millennials are the biggest generation in U.S. history, more numerous even than the Baby Boom Generation, though by a slight margin (Pew Research Center, 2010e). In Wisconsin, they comprise a slightly smaller proportion than the Baby Boom Generation, yet are still a large fraction of the population and significantly more numerous than the generation that preceded them, known as Generation X (see Table 1). Although a substantial proportion of the generation is not yet active in political and economic life because of their age, as this generation matures they will become an important force in Wisconsin society.

**Table 1. Wisconsin and U.S. Population of Four Generations, 2010 Census**

Generation* (year of birth)	Age in 2010	U.S. 2010 Population	Percentage of U.S. Population	Wisconsin 2010 Population	Percentage of Wisconsin Population
Millennial (1981-2000)	10 to 29 years old	85,405,385	27.6%	1,534,035	27.0%
Generation X (1966-1980)	30 to 44 years old	61,032,705	19.8%	1,075,013	18.9%
Baby Boom (1946-1965)	45 to 64 years old	81,489,445	26.4%	1,573,564	27.7%
Silent (1936-1945)	65 to 74 years old	21,713,429	7.0%	400,496	7.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010e

\*Note: Generation names are taken from Pew Research Center and used throughout this report for purposes of consistency. See Pew (2010e) for a discussion of these labels. Percentages do not add to 100% because generation names used in this report do not describe all living Americans; approximately 39% of U.S. residents were 75 years old or older in the 2010 Census.

### Ethnicity

Ethnic diversity is on the rise in the United States (Associated Press, 2006; Pew Research Center, 2010d). The Millennial Generation is more racially and ethnically diverse than previous

generations (see Table 2), with the most marked change seen in the share of the population identifying as Hispanic.

**Table 2. Four Generations at the Age of 18-30: Ethnic Diversity in the United States**

Generation	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other
Millennial	61%	13%	19%	4%	2%
Generation X	68%	14%	14%	3%	1%
Baby Boom	77%	12%	9%	0%	2%
Silent	84%	11%	4%	0%	1%

Source: Pew Research Center, 2010d

This trend is evident in Wisconsin as well (see Table 3). Although White people are still clearly the majority group in Wisconsin, the percentage of the population comprising minority group members rose from 7.8% in 1990 to 11.1% in 2000 (University of Wisconsin Extension & Applied Population Laboratory, 2001) and 13.8% in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010h). This percentage remains lower than the national figure of 21.9% in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010h). The changes in minority population figures are distributed across several ethnic groups, with the largest increase seen among Hispanic residents of Wisconsin (Tables 3 and 4). While it is still true that the ethnic makeup of Wisconsin is overwhelmingly White, the growth in other ethnic groups over the past decade has been far larger than that of the White majority, and has echoed a nationwide pattern of increasing diversity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000f, 2010i).

**Table 3. Three Generations as Young Adults: Ethnic Diversity in Wisconsin**

Generation	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Millennial	78.2%	7.7%	7.8%	3.6%
Generation X	83.3%	6.6%	5.7%	2.3%
Baby Boom	93.6%	4.4%	1.6%	n/a

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 2000a-e, 2010a-e

\*Note: Millennials would have been 18-30 in 2011 but the age group used is 17-29 because 2010 census data was used. Generation X would have been 18-30 in 1997 but the age group used is 21-33, since 2000 census data was used. Baby Boomers would have been 18-30 in 1980 but because of 1980 census age grouping, the 18-29 age group is used.

**Table 4. Wisconsin Population Changes by Race and Ethnicity, 2000-2010**

	Population 2000	% of Population in 2000	Population 2010	% of Population in 2010	% Growth in Population 2000-2010
White	4,769,857	88.9%	4,902,067	86.2%	2.8%
Black	304,460	5.7%	359,148	6.3%	18.0%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	47,228	0.9%	54,526	1.0%	15.5%
Asian	88,763	1.7%	129,234	2.3%	45.6%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	1,630	>0.1%	1,827	0.1%	12.1%
Other race	84,842	2.0%	135,867	2.4%	60.1%
Two or more races	66,895	1.2%	104,317	1.8%	55.9%
Hispanic, any race	192,921	3.6%	336,056	5.9%	74.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000f, 2010i

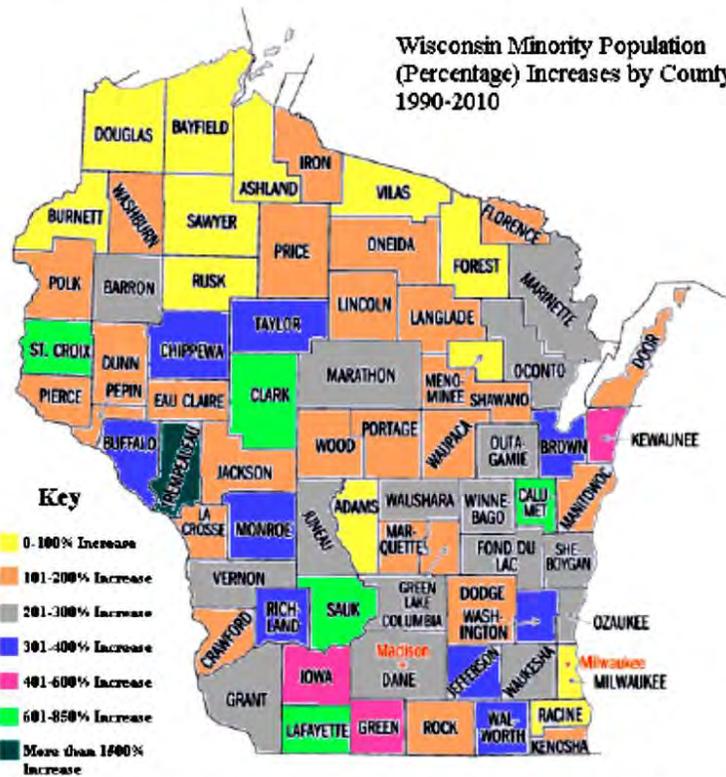
In Wisconsin, on a county-by-county level, there are considerable differences in ethnic diversity (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2010f). In order to assess changes in the ethnic makeup of the counties, we used the years 1990-2010 to approximate the span of a generation. In that time, Wisconsin counties that have low numbers of minority group members as residents and those that are relatively diverse showed growth in minority populations (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2010f). For some counties, the growth was considerable, as seen in Figure 1. No county in Wisconsin saw a decrease in minority populations between 1990 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2010f). Of all the counties in Wisconsin, the lowest growth in non-White population was 11%, in Menomonee County (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2010f). Most counties had growth in excess of 100%, and Calumet, Clark, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, St. Croix, and Trempealeau counties had growth in minority populations in excess of 500% (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2010f). The changes in minority populations can seem very high when expressed as percentages, in part because the initial numbers were quite low for some counties. However, even in areas of Wisconsin where there has been a relatively homogeneous population, racial diversity is increasing.

Although ethnic diversity is increasing in terms of population percentage, Wisconsin residence patterns show that minority populations tend to concentrate in specific areas of the state (University of Wisconsin Extension & Applied Population Laboratory, 2001; University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2011). Southeastern Wisconsin houses the largest populations of almost all minority groups; however, as a percentage of the number of residents, Asian populations are relatively large in central and eastern Wisconsin while Native American populations are relatively large in northern Wisconsin (University of Wisconsin Extension & Applied Population Laboratory, 2001).

Not surprisingly, counties that house larger cities like Milwaukee and Madison comprise populations that are more diverse than most smaller communities (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2010f). Among youth in Milwaukee, the concentration of minority group families can be seen in

housing patterns within city and county boundaries. Among Wisconsin residents, 92% of African American youth under the age of 15 live within the city of Milwaukee, while only 14% of White youth under the age of 15 live in the city of Milwaukee (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2011).

**Figure 1. Percentage Increase in Non-White Population by Wisconsin County, 1990-2010**



Source: State map adapted from Wikipedia Commons, 2012; data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2010f.

\*Note: Percentages may inflate minority growth population due to initial low population counts; see Appendix for population counts.

**Socioeconomic Status**

The oldest Millennials are 30 years old in 2012; the youngest are 12. For obvious reasons, many members of the generation are not in the workforce and are still dependent on their families for

support. Therefore, any attempt to compute average income or net worth (wealth) for the group will include large numbers of Millennials who have not established individual households, and will be difficult to interpret. Even if the raw figures are challenging to interpret, however, looking at changes in these averages over time can give a picture of economic conditions for the generation. For example, in 1984, the median household net worth for people under the age of 35 was more than \$11,000, whereas in 2009 it was under \$4,000 (both figures in 2010 dollars) (Fry, Cohn, Livingston, & Taylor, 2011). In comparison, for householders between the ages of 45 and 65, there was little change, and for householders over the age of 65, median net worth increased from about \$120,000 to about \$170,000 (Fry et al., 2011). In other words, looking across time at household wealth, in the space of one generation the youngest householders have gone from having one tenth the wealth of the oldest to having one forty-seventh (Fry et al., 2011).

Nationally, among those Millennials who are in the workforce or hoping to be in the workforce, the majority are having difficulty finding full-time employment in their chosen field (Hiltonsmith, Ruetschlin, Smith, Mishory, & O'Sullivan, 2011). The unemployment rate for 18- to 24-year-olds is nearly double the unemployment rate for the nation as a whole (Millennials by the Numbers, 2012). The percentage of employed 18- to 34-year-olds who were "very confident" or "extremely confident" that they could find work if they left their current position dropped from 65% in 1998 to 25% in 2009; current data suggest the figure is around 43% (Pew Research Center, 2012c).

The majority of employed Millennials earn annual incomes between \$10,000 and \$30,000 (Hiltonsmith et al., 2011). For many Millennials, this situation has led to delayed economic independence from their parents; a substantial minority (38%) of young adults say that their current financial situation is linked to their parents', including receiving direct financial assistance or living at home with their parents (Parker, 2012). One third of Millennials have delayed marriage, parenthood, or both because of economic considerations (Pew Research Center, 2012c). Living with one's parents has lost its former stigma, as the practice is widespread among this generation (Parker, 2012). One quarter of Millennials have had the experience of living on their own but have then returned to living with their parents for financial reasons (Pew Research Center, 2012c). Based on the frequency of this experience within this generation, Millennials are sometimes referred to as the "boomerang" generation in the media (Reimold, 2012).

Younger Millennials—the tail end of the Millennial Generation—are also facing increasing economic hardships. Data from Wisconsin schools demonstrate one of the consequences of the challenges faced by young middle-class and working-class families (see Table 5). From 2000 to 2010, there was an increase of 15.2% in the number of economically disadvantaged students (Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools [WINSS], 2011). "Economically disadvantaged students" are defined as "(1) students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and (2) students not identified in (1) but for whom other evidence indicates that the student's household income is at or below the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price meals" (WINSS, 2011). Families are eligible for the free school lunch program at or below 130% of the federal poverty level, and for reduced-price lunch at or below 185% of the federal poverty level (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2011).

**Table 5. Statewide Enrollment by Economic Status (all school types combined)**

Academic Year	Total Fall Enrollment PreK-12	% Economically Disadvantaged
2010-2011	871,550	39.3
2009-2010	871,252	37.2
2008-2009	872,303	33.6
2007-2008	873,681	32.2
2006-2007	875,534	31.4
2005-2006	874,087	30.3
2004-2005	863,480	29.4
2003-2004	878,217	27.8
2002-2003	870,225	27.6
2001-2002	877,535	26.1
2000-2001	877,379	24.1

Source: WINSS, 2011

As students age out of public school systems, paying for college becomes an issue for some. The magnitude of student loan debt, and the wide range of students who have incurred it, are distinctive for the Millennial Generation. In the United States, student loan debt is estimated to be between 550 billion and one trillion dollars (Pareene, 2011). The total outstanding student loan debt in the United States surpassed total credit card debt for the first time in 2010 ("Student Debt: Your Threat," 2012). The average college graduate now leaves school with loan debt of around \$20,000, and six-figure debt is no longer uncommon ("Student Debt: Your Threat," 2012). In Wisconsin, student loan debt for graduates of public universities now averages \$27,000, up from \$5,000 in 1982 (Herzog, 2012). Those Millennials who have graduated into the difficult economic situation of the past several years may have their ability to repay their debt compounded by difficulty finding a job in their chosen field.

### Education

Nationally, Millennials are on their way to becoming the most educated generation in history (Pew Research Center, 2010d, 2010e), as assessed by the highest degree attained. As Table 6 indicates, college participation and completion rates are high among this group compared to previous generations, even though not all members of the generation are yet old enough to enter college (Pew Research Center, 2010d). The currently high number of graduate school applications nationally (Council of Graduate Schools, 2011) indicates increased involvement in higher education for Millennials compared to previous generations.

**Table 6. Highest Educational Attainment of Four National Generations at the Age of 18-30**

	Millennial (10-29 years)		Generation X (30-44 years)		Baby Boom (45-64 years)		Silent (65-74 years)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Less than High School	15%	12%	18%	16%	21%	19%	32%	31%
High School	35%	28%	36%	32%	41%	47%	40%	49%
Some College	34%	40%	33%	37%	25%	23%	19%	15%
4 or 4+ Years of College	15%	20%	13%	15%	13%	11%	9%	6%

Source: Pew Research Center, 2010d

According to a 2010 national report, Wisconsin has not only steadily increased its overall high school graduation rate but by 2008 was one of only two states that was close to reaching the national goal of a 90% graduation rate by 2020 (Richards, 2010). The report lauded Wisconsin for being one of twelve states that made substantial gains over the six-year period of the study. However, within this overall positive news, there remain troubling racial disparities in the state's high school graduation rate (Richards, 2010).

Wisconsin Millennials are, like the national group, more likely than past generations to pursue higher education as they become old enough to do so (see Table 7). Specifically, Wisconsin high school graduates are more likely than past generations to go to college or technical school rather than directly to employment, the military, or job training after high school (WINSS, 2010). The change in participation over time, however, is a slight upward trend rather than a dramatic change (WINSS, 2010).

**Table 7. Highest Educational Attainment of Wisconsin Residents by Age Cohort in 2010**

	18-24 years old		25-34 years old		35-44 years old		45-64 years old		Over 65 years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Less than High School	15.8%	10.7%	10.2%	7.2%	9.0%	6.8%	7.7%	6.6%	19.3%	17.6%
High School	34.6%	30.2%	31.1%	20.9%	31.1%	24.0%	35.7%	33.2%	37.9%	46.7%
Some College	42.0%	48.1%	34.2%	37.0%	30.6%	35.7%	30.4%	34.0%	19.4%	20.1%
4 or 4+ Years of College	7.6%	11.1%	24.6%	34.9%	29.3%	33.5%	26.2%	26.2%	23.3%	15.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010j

Wisconsin faces a potential risk to its ability to leverage its educated Millennial Generation because of the problem known as "brain drain," wherein Wisconsin citizens with advanced skills move to other states for job opportunities (Conniff, 2011; Herzog, 2010). Wisconsin university-educated students may not see Wisconsin as a place with optimal career opportunities (Herzog, 2010). Even when Wisconsin retains its homegrown talent—experiencing approximately the

same level of talent attrition as other Midwestern states—it does not do well at attracting college-educated workers from other areas, resulting in a net export of talent (Still, 2008; Ziff 2010). The causes of the exodus are not definitively understood, even by researchers who are well acquainted with the phenomenon, and this is therefore an area where more research would be welcome.

## Religion

The majority of Millennials in the United States identify as Christian, though the size of that majority is significantly smaller than it has been for previous generations (Pew Research Center, 2010e). The change in religious identification is not mainly owing to a greater allegiance to other religious affiliations but to the absence of religious affiliation (see Table 8). One of the clearest ways that Millennials are different from other generations is the relatively large percentage of Millennials who decline to identify with any particular religion (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

**Table 8. Religion Composition of Age Groups**

Religion	Age Group				
	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
Christian	68%	76%	80%	80%	84%
Other*	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%
Unaffiliated	25%	19%	15%	14%	10%

Source: Adapted from Pew Research Center, 2010e

\*"Other" includes Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, other world religions, and other faiths.

The Millennial Generation also includes the largest percentage of people who were raised in a particular religion but no longer consider themselves a part of any religion (Pew Research Center, 2010e). The trend of young people declining to identify with a particular religion is marked, and appears to be accelerating even within the Millennial Generation itself (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Combined with people who were raised without religious affiliation, the move of some Millennials away from organized religion means that the current under-30 generation includes the largest share of people who do not affiliate with religious organizations in U.S. history (see Table 9).

**Table 9. Religious Affiliation among Young Adults (18-29) by Decade**

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Unaffiliated	12%	12%	16%	23%
Affiliated	88%	88%	84%	77%

Source: Pew Research Center, 2010e

## Family Structure

Millennials are redefining family norms by establishing nuclear families much later than their generational counterparts (Parker, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2010d). By many measures Millennials are waiting to marry compared to previous generations (see Table 10). In 2011 only about one fifth of 18- to 29-year-olds were married compared to three fifths of the same group

in 1960 (Pew Research Center, 2011a). Put another way, the median age for a first marriage has increased for both men and women. In 1960 the male median age at first marriage was 22.8 years and the female median age was 20.3 years (Pew Research Center, 2011a). Today the male median age for first marriage is 28.7 years and the female median age is 26.5 (Pew Research Center, 2011a).

**Table 10. Four Generations at the Age of 18-30, Marital Status**

	Married	Separated/Divorced	Single/Not Married
Millennial	21%	4%	75%
Generation X	29%	5%	67%
Baby Boom	42%	6%	52%
Silent	54%	3%	43%

Source: Pew Research Center, 2010d

The extended dependence of some Millennials on their families for financial support may be one of the reasons that this generation is, on average, marrying later in life. Approximately 36% of Millennials depend on their families for financial help (Pew Research Center, 2010e). As might be expected by the numbers of Millennials seeking higher education, there is a significant gap in dependence on parents for financial support between the 18-24 age group (50% dependent) and the 25-29 age group (16% dependent) (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

Millennials are the least likely of current generations to have grown up in a traditional nuclear family (see Table 11); as discussed later in this report, family is important to them, but can be defined in a fluid way. This trend is likely to accelerate, given recent reports that the majority (53%) of births nationally to women under 30 are to single women, a finding that is "both a symbol of the transforming family and a hint of coming generational change" (DeParle & Tavernise, 2012).

**Table 11. Generational Differences in Family Environment**

Response to "With whom did you live most of the time while growing up?"

	Millennial	Generation X	Baby Boom	Silent
Both Parents	61%	68%	80%	80%
One Parent	31%	25%	16%	14%
Neither Parent	7%	7%	4%	6%

Source: Pew Research Center, 2010e

In Wisconsin, the same patterns are evident. Marriage rates have been declining for the last four decades, and have been lower in Wisconsin than national averages for almost a century (Wisconsin Department of Health Services [Wisconsin DHS], 2011). In the earliest data reported by the Wisconsin DHS, in 1920 the marriage rate for Wisconsin was 8.4 marriages per 1000 total population, while the national rate was 12.0 marriages per 1000 population (2011). In the decades that followed, the national marriage rate declined to 6.8 marriages per 1000 population by 2009, as the Wisconsin rate dropped to 5.3 marriages per 1000 population by 2009 (Wisconsin DHS, 2011). For the data in the DHS report, which cover marriage rates every five

years, Wisconsin's rate on average is 74.2% of the national rate, and ranges from 56.3% of the national rate in 1925 to 83.2% in 1985; it is currently 77.9% of the national rate (Wisconsin DHS, 2011). In addition to the decline in the marriage rate over time, the median age at first marriage for both men and women is more than five years older now than it was a generation ago in Wisconsin (Wisconsin DHS, 2011). More than half of divorces in Wisconsin involve families with children under 18, suggesting that Wisconsin families, like the rest of the nation, are familiar with "nontraditional" family structures (Wisconsin DHS, 2011).

## Millennials' Formative Experiences

Each generation faces defining moments that shape its nature. Millennials are coming of age in an era that has some significant differences from the environments of generations past. No single event or social movement will affect each member of a generation in the same way, and this is not to say that members of other generations were not shaped by the same forces as the Millennials. However, the age at which Millennials encountered these events affected them, as a group, to a different degree than previous generations.

The events discussed here are national and international in scope, so in this section we rely largely on national data, though we continue to include Wisconsin data when available. In general, we describe two types of formative experiences. One type is long-term social trends, such as the social movement toward tolerance of individual differences, changes in technology, and the effects of intensive parenting practices. Also included among social trends are the effects of increasing economic stratification, the effects of immediate awareness of and connection to global communities, and changes in political practice that comprise the entire political experience of this generation. In the second part of this section, we discuss two specific events that have had specific effects on Millennials that may differ from other generations: the attacks on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent wars, and the economic downturn that began in 2008.

## Social Trends

### Changes in Social Mores: Progressive Era

Millennials have grown up in a relatively progressive social era. Although many age cohorts experience a shift from liberal to conservative ideology as they age, the Millennial Generation is notable as to how far left on the political spectrum, on average, they are now (Pew Research Center, 2010e). They have been called "the most politically progressive age group in modern history" (Keeter & Taylor, 2009). As a group, they support the idea of an activist government at a much higher rate than older generations (Pew Research Center, 2011b).

Such an ideology may be a product of the kinds of social norms that Millennials take for granted, as overt racism and sexism have become socially stigmatized. This is exemplified by a 2010 Pew Research Center survey stating that U.S. citizens find young people have better values toward other races and groups than adults (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Although it can be argued that these prejudices have transformed into more subtle expressions (Brochu, Gawronski, & Esses, 2008), the typical Millennial opposes overt discrimination based on race or sex as reflected in their distinctive acceptance of homosexuality, interracial dating, and expanded roles for women and immigrants (Pew Research Center, 2010e). The pace of social change within their lifetimes continues to increase; Millennials are the first generation to grow up with a biracial president, see the legalization of same-sex marriage in a number of states, and see women serve as Cabinet members. Millennials are much less likely than previous generations to see hot-button political issues, like gay marriage and immigration policy, as important (Madland & Teixeira, 2009). In some ways they have difficulty imagining why these issues have been contentious in U.S. political life, and have as a group little interest in debating them (Madland & Teixeira, 2009). And

because Millennials have experienced so much change, they may see it as inevitable and not see a particular need to push for some kinds of reform. For instance, older women are more likely than Millennial women to think social change is necessary (Pew Research Center, 2008b).

In terms of specific social issues, Millennials are overwhelmingly tolerant of interracial marriage and dating, with 90% of the cohort expressing no reservation about a family member's marriage to a member of a different ethnic or racial group (Pew Research Center, 2010a). This acceptance may be related to the fact that interracial marriage is now common enough to be routine, with one of every seven marriages in the United States crossing racial or ethnic lines (Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010).

Millennials are the most likely of any generation to favor the legalization of same-sex marriage, with 53% of the generation in favor and 39% opposed (Pew Research Center, 2010c). They are also the most likely of any generation to say that they have a relative or friend who is gay; more than half (54%) of Millennials report knowing an openly gay person, compared to 46% of Generation X, 44% of Baby Boomers, and 26% of the Silent Generation (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

#### Technological Advances

Before the leading edge of the Millennial Generation was born, in 1982, most people in the United States had no experience with the Internet. Most did not have home computers, and cell phones were an exclusive luxury item. Technology—especially the Internet—has transformed many aspects of life in the past few decades, but Millennials have no memory of life before these changes. The Beloit College Mindset List, which describes characteristics of incoming college freshmen each year, notes that the class of 2015 was “the first generation to grow up taking the word ‘online’ for granted and for whom crossing the digital divide has redefined research, original sources and access to information, changing the central experiences and methods in their lives” (Beloit College, 2011).

The technological shift has been rapid. The percentage of people who claim that owning a television is a necessity has dropped from 64% in 2006 to 42% in 2010 (Taylor & Wang, 2010). Telephone landline ownership has declined from 97% of American households in 2001 to 74% in 2010 (Taylor & Wang, 2010). Meanwhile, cell phone use has increased: 53% of adults used cell phones in 2000, growing to 82% in 2010 (Taylor & Wang, 2010). And as the devices have changed, so has the way that Millennials use them to relate to the world. Millennials are most likely of all generations to get their news from the Internet (59%) (Pew Research Center, 2010e). This news source shift has potential political implications, as the Internet allows users to get their information from sources that share their worldview, and avoid challenging their own assumptions. This phenomenon has been referred to as “the Daily Me” (Negroponte, 1995) or the “echo chamber” effect (Weinberger, 2004).

The patterns of technology use and information sharing that Millennials have experienced as they came of age are expected to have persistent effects throughout their life spans (Pew Research Center, 2010f).

### Parenting Practices

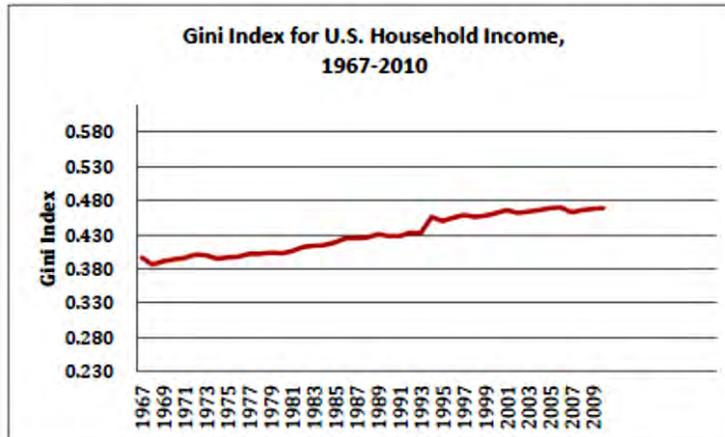
Although there are widely varying experiences in parent–child relationships in every generation, as a social trend Millennials in childhood have experienced more indulgent and intensive parenting than previous generations (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). Owing partly to cultural beliefs about the importance of high self-esteem, partly about concern over how activities will enhance chances of elite college applications, and partly to perceived danger in leaving children to play unattended, this generation has had more parental involvement in school and extracurricular activities than any generation before (Sweeney, 2006; Wilson & Gerber, 2008). The term *helicopter parents* was coined to help describe the way Millennials were raised: by parents who constantly hover nearby (Pew Research Center, 2010e; Sweeney, 2006; Wilson & Gerber, 2008). Technology also facilitates helicopter parenting, in that even when Millennials leave for college, their parents can talk to and text them multiple times per day. These practices have been hypothesized to have shaped the Millennial character and expectations about the responsiveness of the outside world (Gibbs, 2009; Twenge, 2006).

### Increased Economic Stratification

One way to observe increasing economic stratification in the United States is through the Gini index. The Millennial Generation has come of age in a time of historically high and increasing economic stratification (Stiglitz, 2012). The current U.S. economic system includes a wealth and income gap unseen since the 1920s (Furchtgott-Roth, 2011; Lubin, 2010; Yen, 2011). Income inequality was first formally assessed in the 1910s, and it climbed until the Great Depression; in the post-World-War-II era, it was at its lowest point on record. Since that time, it has climbed steadily upward and has now returned to Gilded Age levels (Saez, 2012).

The Gini index is a standard measure of inequality in distributions, and is used by economists to assess income and wealth inequality. It can assume values between the theoretical endpoints of 0 (perfect equality; everyone exactly equal) and 1 (perfect inequality; one person has everything and everyone else has nothing). In 2009, the U.S. Census Bureau calculated a Gini coefficient for the income distribution of the United States as 0.468, which represented a 20% increase in income inequality over the course of four decades (Leonard, 2011). Relative income equality can be observed in societies with relatively high standards of living, such as Sweden (.230), or relatively low standards of living like Ethiopia (.300) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007). The measure assesses the concentration of income among a small number of members of the society. Figure 2 shows the Gini index reported by the U.S. Census Bureau since it began official reporting of the index in 1967.

Figure 2. U.S. Census Bureau Reports of Gini Index for U.S. Household Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010g. Gini index axis based on *CIA World Factbook* range for income distribution around the world.

\*Note: *Income* is defined as money gained from working (hourly wages, salary, etc.), money gained from assets (rent, dividends, interest, etc.), and pensions before taxes (Saez, 2012). *Wealth* is defined as assets (Wolff, 2010). Wealth inequality is generally more concentrated (unequal) than income (Davies, Sandström, Shorrocks, & Wolff, 2008).

The Gini index for one country alone can be misleading if no comparative data accompany it. For example, if all countries in the world have a Gini index close to 1, it would not be surprising for any country (developed or otherwise) to also have an index close to 1. However, if most developed countries in the world are closer to zero and a developed country has an index closer to 1, it might be more shocking. The United States has an income Gini index similar to Cameroon, Iran, Cambodia, and Bulgaria, ranking 80<sup>th</sup> of 140 countries on income equality (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007). For comparison purposes, values for other modern economies include 0.340 for the United Kingdom, 0.270 for Germany, and 0.321 for Canada (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007). This trend has resulted in an increasing concentration of income and wealth among a small percentage of the population. Recent figures for the top 10% and top 1% of the U.S. population are included in Table 12. The top 1% of the population earns 21.3% of all income in the United States, while the remaining 99% of the population earns 78.7% of all income (Wolff, 2010). Wealth is more unequally distributed than income, which is normal for societies, but here means that the wealthiest 1% of Americans hold more than one third of the country's wealth, and the other 99% of Americans hold 65.4% (Wolff, 2010). Table 12 also provides data for the top 10% of the population, which includes the top 1%.

**Table 12. U.S. Family Income and Net Worth by Percentile, 2007**

Percentile of U.S. population	Percentage of Income	Percentage of Net Worth
Bottom 90%	52.8%	26.9%
Top 10%	47.1%	73.1%
Top 1%	21.3%	34.6%

Source: Wolff, 2010

The Gini index for the net worth (wealth) distribution in the United States in 2007 was 0.834 (Wolff, 2010). In one comparison of 151 countries, the United States was fifth most unequal in its wealth distribution, more equal only than Namibia, Zimbabwe, Denmark, and Switzerland (Davies et al., 2008).

Economic stratification is particularly visible to the Millennial Generation, as the wealth gap between older and younger adults has accelerated over the past three decades (Fry et al., 2011). Whereas households headed by older Americans have seen a 42% increase in net worth between 1984 and 2009, households headed by younger adults have seen a 68% decline, compared to their same-age counterparts in 1984 (Fry et al., 2011). However, the magnitude of this change is not accurately perceived by most people; Americans at all demographic levels significantly underestimate the level of wealth inequality in this country (Norton & Ariely, 2011). Still, recent discussions of economic inequality in the media are something that the Millennials have experienced as they begin their political and economic participation, and therefore whether or not they understand the magnitude of the effect, the discussion of inequality as a social trend has the potential to affect their view of the world.

Wisconsin has also seen increased income inequality in recent decades. From the late 1980s to the mid-2000s, the poorest fifth of Wisconsin residents has seen average real income increase by 7%, the middle fifth has seen average real income increase by 14%, and the richest fifth has seen average real income increase by 36% (Center on Wisconsin Strategy & Wisconsin Council on Families and Children, 2008). The national figures for changes in real income for these quintiles are similar to the figures for Wisconsin. However, Wisconsin's lowest quintile fares slightly worse than the national lowest quintile (Center on Wisconsin Strategy & Wisconsin Council on Families and Children, 2008).

Income inequality has effects that go beyond purchasing power, and these effects have the potential to shape the worldview of Millennials. In a study of the happiness levels of Americans from 1972 to 2008, researchers found that Americans were happier during the years in which there was more income equality, and that the happiness was not owing to personally having more cash to spend (Oishi, Kesebir, & Diener, 2011). Rather, people saw income distribution as reflecting the basic fairness and trustworthiness of the society. Although this effect did not hold for respondents with the highest 20% of income, it did hold for the rest of American society (Oishi et al., 2011). A related study shows that income inequality has an effect on the way citizens view themselves within a given society (Loughnan et al., 2011). In a cross-cultural investigation of 15 countries, the tendency for citizens to exaggerate their own virtues and ignore their shortcomings was predicted by the level of income inequality within a society (Loughnan et al., 2011). This study compares national averages, and so cannot be interpreted to

say that individuals at a particular point in the income distribution hold particular attitudes. Rather, the authors claim that in countries where income inequality is greater, so is the tendency for its citizens to view themselves in a favorably biased way (Loughnan et al., 2011). As Millennials have come of age, therefore, the trend toward increasing income stratification may contribute to characteristics and values beyond simple satisfaction with their personal income and wealth.

#### Global Connectedness

Millennials have had the opportunity to develop an understanding of the global context in which the United States exists with an immediacy and personal connection that other generations did not have. Twenty-four-hour news on television and the Internet, especially social media, has brought news from around the world to this generation with unprecedented vividness and personal impact. As a result, Millennials empathize with concerns on a broad global scale, though their awareness of some significant global issues can be spotty (Greenburg & Weber, 2008). Where their attention and compassion is engaged, they "consider isolationism contrary to their social and political mores" (Greenburg & Weber, 2008).

This global connectedness is not limited to the virtual world. American Millennials participate in service projects around the world, and college students participate in study-abroad programs in larger numbers than in the past (Stone, 2009).

#### Changes in Political Practices

Partisan politics has been the norm for Millennials in a way that was not the case for older living generations. The early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have been marked by increasing deterioration of bipartisanship in U.S. politics (Galston, 2011). Americans are now more divided politically than they have been over the last 25 years, with most of that polarization becoming entrenched during the last two presidential administrations (Pew Research Center, 2012b). The threat of "government shutdown" has become a routine part of the political cycle. The emergence of superPACs and the flood of anonymous money into campaigns has exacerbated the spread of partisan rhetoric, with small numbers of wealthy donors having unprecedented influence on election platforms and results. As funding for media appeals has flooded into the elections, particularly in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* 558 U.S. 310 (2010), advertising has taken a marked turn for the negative (Thomas, 2011). The vast majority (89%) of ads are now focused on negative aspects of the opponent (Thomas, 2011). Millennials have never experienced a political environment in which "attack ads" were not plentiful, or in which compromise was an effective goal for politicians in the best interest of representing the populace. Instead, they have seen only a political system in which "compromise has become a dirty word" (Pereira, 2011).

Partisanship in political discourse has been visible in Wisconsin politics as well, and represents a shift in Wisconsin culture (Kaufman, 2012). The *New York Times Magazine* recently titled an extensive story, "How Did Wisconsin Become the Most Politically Divisive Place in America?" (Kaufman, 2012). Both parties have shifted away from bipartisan dialogue, and have moved away from party leaders who are seen as too conciliatory with the other side. As a result, the leadership in both parties has become more partisan (Greenblatt, 2009), a shift that is certainly

in keeping with the rest of the nation, but which has happened rapidly in a state where Republican and Democratic leaders in recent memory have worked effectively across party lines (Kaufman, 2012).

In 2010, Wisconsin voters elected Republican Scott Walker as governor, and Republicans gained control of the state senate while maintaining control of the assembly (Kaufman, 2012). The electorate's response to laws and policies passed since the election has indicated a state sharply divided along partisan lines; most voters identifying as Republican strongly support the new agenda, and most voters identifying as Democrat strongly oppose it (Kaufman, 2012). Although party affiliation influenced perceptions of legislation for both Democratic and Republican administrations in the past in the state, the extremity of opinion and small number of undecided voters is a visible sign of increasing polarization in the Wisconsin electorate (Gilbert, 2012a, 2012b). The response to the 2011 "Budget Repair Bill," particularly provisions about collective bargaining for public employees, resulted in a number of unprecedented events, including the fleeing of 14 Wisconsin Democratic legislators to Illinois to avoid voting on the bill and three months of citizen protest at the Capitol (Kaufman, 2012). There have been nine state legislators engaged in recall elections, as well as recall elections for Governor Walker and Lieutenant Governor Kleefisch (Kaufman, 2012). Despite a barrage of advertising, most voters in Wisconsin have not changed their minds about Governor Walker, and the favorable/unfavorable split is roughly equal, with a very small percentage of undecided voters (Gilbert, 2012a, 2012b). Wisconsin Millennials have thus had a detailed view of partisan politics at the state and national levels, with little direct memory about other ways that political systems can operate.

### Pivotal Events

In addition to trends that Millennials have experienced, they have also been affected in different ways by pivotal events in our national history. Of course, these events have affected Americans of all generations, and it is certainly possible to overgeneralize about generational differences while missing important similarities. Because the intent of this report is to focus on ways that Millennials may differ from other generations, we focus here on specific differences in their experiences without suggesting that these differences are the only important way to view these experiences.

#### September 11 and Iraq/Afghanistan Wars

On a national level, Millennials have grown up with the idea of war, although the stated political objectives for the wars are, for many of them, matters of history rather than personal experience. Members of the Millennial Generation were between 1 and 19 years of age on September 11, 2001. Certainly older members of the generation can vividly recollect the events of that day and understand the shift in the American psyche that resulted, but a substantial proportion of the generation have only a child's understanding of the events, or no recollection at all (Towns, 2011). On the other hand, they have seen the cost of war in a vivid way, through the deaths of family members or friends, the increasingly visible presence of young disabled veterans, or political debates about the cost of funding wars in a time of economic hardship.

Millennials, based on their place in history, were influenced by 9/11 (Towns, 2011). Many Millennials resist security measures that involve targeting people who may look like potential

security threats (Towns, 2011). Instead, Millennials prefer strategies for reducing global threats that include increased communication through volunteering, learning about other cultures, and supporting collaboration between countries (Towns, 2011; see also Singer, Messera, & Orino, 2011). Even after 9/11, studying abroad continued to surge (Institute of International Education, 2004). The Center for American Progress released a report about the response of Millennials to September 11, which said in part, "Millennials, in spite of or in response to the 9/11 attacks, are more eager than our predecessors to engage with other cultures firsthand and some have embraced opportunities to be a more global generation" (Towns, 2011). Although this progressive think tank may not speak for more conservative members of the Millennial Generation, given the liberal leanings of the generation as a group, the sentiment may be taken as descriptive of many members.

One aspect of the September 11 attacks that made it such a shocking event to adults at the time was that it challenged an unstated assumption that the continental United States could not be attacked on its own soil (Pyle, 2011). Most of the Millennial Generation has, in contrast, grown up with the notion that the United States could be attacked at any time (Pyle, 2011). According to a recent report by the Brookings Institution, 85% of Millennials think terrorism will always be a factor for the United States (Singer et al., 2011). Even if all generations have similar views on the likelihood of terrorism today, that view represents a loss of safety for previous generations whereas it is business as usual for Millennials.

This difference in visceral experience is related to Millennial perspectives about national security, tolerance, and civic participation. Millennials did not have to face the emotional consequences of sudden realization that the United States was vulnerable to foreign attack. Without this reaction, they attempt to evaluate policies with different frames of reference, making most members of the generation opposed to policies such as the Patriot Act or the "enhanced interrogation" of detainees at Guantanamo Bay. For many Millennials, safety lies less in aggressive military action and more in communication:

While Millennials consider themselves patriotic, according to 2007 polling, almost 70 percent say they would be unwilling to join the U.S. military. In fact, in general, Millennials are more likely to reject the primacy of military force in fighting terrorism or keeping America safe. Millennials share a more progressive stance on international affairs, oriented toward a multilateral and cooperative foreign policy. (Towns, 2011)

#### 2008-2012 Economic Challenges

The recent economic recession affected the United States across the board, but had a distinct effect on Millennials because of the age at which they encountered the downturn (Pew Research Center, 2010e) and the long-term effects of early negative economic circumstances on lifetime earnings (Fulham, 2011). The general population, when surveyed, agrees that Millennials have had more difficulty from the economic downturn than middle-aged and older adults (Pew Research Center, 2012c). In addition, employment of young adults ages 18-24 has hit its lowest point (54%) since 1948 (Pew Research Center, 2012c). Those young adults who do have jobs still face difficulties. Among all the generations, they have experienced the greatest drop in weekly earnings (6%) over the past four years (Pew Research Center, 2012c).

The recovery from the recession has favored the wealthiest Americans to a much stronger degree than most Americans (Saez, 2012). The top 1% of wage earners (incomes of more than \$352,000 per year in 2010) saw their assets shrink during the recession, absorbing about half the losses in the country's decreased asset values (Saez, 2012). However, once the recovery began, this group received two thirds of the gains from recovered prices. In terms of income growth, the bottom 99% of wage earners saw their real income increase by a factor of 0.2% from 2008 to 2010, while the top 1% saw income gains of 11.6% during the same period, 58 times the growth of the rest of the population (Saez, 2012). This means that of all the income gains seen in the recovery, 93% went to the top 1% of wage earners (Saez, 2012). Since very few Millennials are represented in that group, the Great Recession impacted them both in the short term (loss of wages, unemployment) and in the long term (loss in lifetime earnings, initially slow wealth accumulation).

The recession and recovery have affected a wide cross-section of Americans. But because the recession started as the oldest Millennials were entering the workforce, it caused some members of the generation to depend on their parents for more support than previous generations did when they were the same age (Pew Research Center, 2010e; Wilson & Gerber, 2008). Some Millennials, still in school as the recession hit, decided to stay in school longer than previous generations (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Thus the description of Millennials as the most educated generation in American history may in part be owing to the timing of the recession relative to their opportunities to enter the workforce.

## Millennials' Values and Priorities

In this section we review public polling data and qualitative examples of Millennials' values and priorities, focusing on ways in which this generation differs from its predecessors. Most of the generational values data here is national in scope and supplemented with Wisconsin data when available. We provide an overview of four clusters of attitudes. The first two of these, Millennial identity and attitudes toward government, are fairly straightforward. The third set of attitudes, which we call "process orientation," is somewhat more abstract and is supported largely by qualitative observations rather than polling data. The final section deals with Millennials' goals for the future, in hope of answering the question "What do Millennials want?"

### Social Identity

Millennials' experiences have contributed to a characteristic identity that is unique in some ways and differs from that of previous generations. Although there are individual differences within the generation, some general observations can be made about the ways in which Millennials differ from their elders.

### Connected via Technology

Millennials have experienced an information-technological revolution like no generation before them. They take for granted the idea of being connected continuously with other people, and the idea that information on any topic is always readily available. In other words, what makes Millennials distinctive from other generations is not only the technological devices they have access to but the degree of primacy that these devices have in their lives and in the way they relate to other people. They have become accustomed to multiple demands on their attention in a way that would be distracting to someone reared in a different technological environment. There are some arguments that the speed of response that Internet technology has provided will create long-term tendencies toward instant gratification, although the divergent approach to problem solving afforded by multitasking in an online environment is expected to be positive overall (Pew Research Center, 2012a).

Technology serves a different psychological function for Millennials than it has for previous generations. It is not only a way to get work done but is also a way to shape identity. Millennials' postings on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr allow them to express aspects of their identity that they control. So important is technology to this generation that it has become almost an extension of the Millennial body, as many Millennials sleep with their phones under their pillows (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

Millennials are keenly aware of their need for technology; reports of facetious Millennial diseases based on technology are appearing in the media. These include Phantom Red Light Syndrome (Roy, 2010), which is the experience of thinking you see a glowing red light on your phone, alerting you that you have a new text message or missed call, when in fact there is no light. Also on this list is *nomophobia*, or fear of being without one's mobile phone (Thier, 2012), and FOMO (fear of missing out), the obsessive need to check in with friends via technology to

avoid missing important social events (Reimold, 2012).

#### Individualist and Self-Focused

As Millennials have had unprecedented freedom to create their own identity, they have also spent more time considering what that identity is. This tendency has been seen as so central to the Millennial character that it has inspired alternative names for the generation based on the self, such as Generation Me or iGen, the latter referring both to their connection to the Internet and to their focus on themselves (Twenge, 2006). Millennials value self-expression and use multiple channels to express themselves. Three quarters of the generation have posted a profile on a social networking site, and 20% have uploaded a video of themselves to the Internet (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Aside from technological expression, Millennials are more likely to use body art than previous generations, with nearly 40% having at least one tattoo and nearly 25% having a body part other than an earlobe pierced (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

Millennials think of themselves as unique as a generation, with 61% telling pollsters that their age group is distinct from other generations (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Uniqueness is highly valued among Millennials, perhaps as a result of intensive focus from "helicopter parents" who have reinforced the message that they are each special. Millennials value the right to create their own identity, and to highlight characteristics of their choosing.

There is some evidence to suggest that Millennials are self-focused to an unusual degree. This generation is most likely to claim to be uniquely talented, and some members are unrealistic about the degree of rewards they should expect from their efforts. They tend to be very confident—sometimes overconfident—about their ability to succeed (Twenge, 2006; see also Pew Research Center, 2010e; Sweeney, 2006; Wilson & Gerber, 2008). Depending on the data source, there are conflicting pictures about whether this interest in the self interferes with Millennials' concern for others. While survey data about interests and priorities suggest that Millennials are more focused on money and fame than on community values (Twenge, Campbell, & Freemason, 2012), a contradictory picture emerges from the evidence of Millennial volunteerism and desire for feedback and cooperation (Pew Research Center, 2010e; Sweeney, 2006).

#### Tolerant of Individual Differences

As Millennials see identity creation as a right of personal expression, they tend to be less inclined to make judgments of others based on categories such as race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or disability (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Tolerance for individual differences is the largest factor in Millennials' identification with liberal politics, as reflected in their progressive stances on nontraditional marriages and immigration (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Ironically, Millennials tend to be strongly intolerant of perceived intolerance, one place where the generational ethos of "live and let live" weakens considerably (Winograd & Hais, 2011).

Millennials view diversity in a way that is more encompassing than previous generations. Whereas older generations tend to view diversity through lenses of race and ethnicity, for Millennials the idea of diversity includes other dimensions including sex, gender, sexual

orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and age (Ousley, Cook Francis, & Antonellis, 2005).

Millennials' source of ethical guidance, when it comes to how to treat others, is less likely to be based in formal religion than was the case for previous generations (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Fewer Millennials endorse the idea that religious belief is required for morality than do older Americans. And fewer Millennials—although still nearly half of the generation—believe that religion is very important in a general sense (see Table 13).

**Table 13. Religious Opinions by Age Group**

Age Groups	% Agreeing that It Is	
	Necessary to Believe in God To Be Moral	% Agreeing that Religion Is Very Important
18-29	46%	41%
30-49	50%	48%
50+	58%	56%

Source: Horowitz, Poushter, & Barket, 2011

Millennial tolerance is reflected in Wisconsinites' feelings toward diversity in the United States. Wisconsin residents under 30 years old were least likely to say that a diverse citizenry is a weakness for the United States (see Table 14). On this same question, Wisconsin Millennials resembled both Generation X and the Baby Boom Generation in the degree to which they viewed diversity as a strength for the country; members of all three of these generations were more likely than the oldest individuals polled to view diversity as a strength.

**Table 14. Wisconsin Feelings on Diverse Citizenship**

Percent of each group responding to: "Generally speaking, is it a source of strength or a source of weakness for the United States that its citizens come from so many different places?"

	Strength	Weakness	Both	Don't Know
Under 30	84%	7%	7%	2%
30 to 44	85%	10%	3%	2%
45 to 59	84%	9%	5%	2%
Over 60	69%	21%	7%	3%

Source: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, 2002

#### Family-Oriented

Millennials have a fluid view of family, having come of age in a time when marriage rates are at historic lows (Pew Research Center, 2011a) and other forms of cohabitation have risen. They are more likely to have grown up in a nontraditional household, more likely to have broader definitions of family, and less likely to stigmatize nontraditional families (see Table 15). Even among the Millennials' already-tolerant generation, approval for nontraditional family practices has become more pronounced in the last five years (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

**Table 15. Generational Attitudes toward Marriage and Parenting: Views on What Trends Are Bad for Society**

Trend	Percent of Generation Stating Trend Is Bad for Society			
	Millennial	Generation X	Baby Boom	Silent
More Single Women Deciding to Have Kids	59%	54%	65%	72%
More Gay Couples Raising Kids	32%	36%	48%	55%
More Mothers of Young Kids				
Working Outside the Home	23%	29%	39%	38%
More People Living Together Without Getting Married	22%	31%	44%	58%
More People of Different Races Marrying Each Other	5%	10%	14%	26%

Source: Pew Research Center, 2010e

Millennials report personal goals related to family roles that reflect their belief that different kinds of domestic arrangements can be viewed as family. To Millennials (and in contrast to other generations), being a good parent is more likely to be listed as an important goal than having a successful marriage. This set of priorities represents a shift from Generation X when they were young adults of comparable ages to today's Millennials (see Table 16). Still, focusing only on differences between Millennials and older generations can be misleading. Even though Millennials have flexible concepts of family, they still identify family as important (Pew Research Center, 2010e). In a study conducted with 16- to 18-year-old Millennials, the vast majority (85%) said family was a top priority for them (Sandfort & Haworth, 2002).

**Table 16. Millennials vs. Generation X (when they were young adults)**

	% Saying Goal Is One of the Most Important Things in Life	
	Being a Good Parent	Having a Successful Marriage
Generation X (in 1997)	42%	35%
Millennials (in 2010)	52%	30%

Source: Pew Research Center, 2010e

Wisconsin Millennials mirror national trends for beliefs and behaviors related to families. As noted earlier, the marriage rate in Wisconsin has been declining since 1980 (Wisconsin DHS, 2011). The acceptance of nontraditional families is higher among Millennials than in any other generation (see Table 17) (University of Wisconsin Survey Center, 2003, 2006).

**Table 17. Wisconsin Approval Ratings on Civil Unions and Same-Sex Marriage, 2003-2006**

	Year	Age			
		< 30	30-44	45-59	60+
Approval of	2003	67%	50%	46%	37%
Civil Unions	2006	79%	60%	57%	39%
Approval of	2003	52%	41%	31%	12%
Gay Marriage	2006	58%	44%	36%	20%

Source: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, 2003, 2006

It is important to recognize that although many Millennials think of family in a way that might be unusual to members of older generations, they still value family connections and relationships as their predecessors did. The advertising agency J. Walter Thompson reported that this generation is "brimming with adultlike respect for American institutions, family values, and work ethics" ("Millennials' Show Respect for Values," 2008).

#### Cooperative

Even though Millennials generally demonstrate aspects of a strong individualist identity, they still exhibit a desire to cooperate and engage in teamwork (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). This preference applies to both small-scale situations like classroom activities (Sweeney, 2006; Wilson & Gerber, 2008) and large-scale phenomena like foreign policy (Madland & Teixeira, 2009). An extension of Millennials' inclination toward teamwork is their engagement in volunteerism, which has risen significantly compared to the last generation (Leiphon, 2008). Although some comparisons over time are problematic because of an increasing trend for schools to require community service (Twenge et al., 2012), the overall picture seems to be one of active involvement in solving community problems.

This national trend is evident in Wisconsin as well. Wisconsin can boast that more than one third of its citizens engage in volunteer activity, ranking eighth in the nation in volunteer participation (Johnson & Held, 2011). Millennials in Wisconsin compared especially favorably to their peers nationwide in volunteering (Johnson & Held, 2011).

#### Accustomed to Flexibility

Living with ever-increasing technological innovation, along with attending carefully to their own needs and desires, has left Millennials used to expecting a degree of flexibility that was unusual for previous generations. When it comes to products and services, they expect customization (Sweeney, 2006). For example, Millennials consume musical media, but not by listening to a playlist determined by a radio station. Instead, they stream free music via the Internet, using sites like Pandora and Grooveshark that allow the user to create stations based on artists, songs, or genres that the user likes. Users can also "kick" songs that they dislike off the list (Malone, 2011).

At work, Millennials value flextime and customizable schedules, and feel constrained by an 8-to-5 workday (Raines, 2002). They support consensus-based solutions and cooperation (Leiphon,

2008). They are connected to technology proportionally more than previous generations and expect flexibility (Sweeney, 2006).

### Optimistic

The Millennial Generation faces some challenges, particularly on the economic front, but they are still notably more optimistic about their economic prospects than were previous generations (Pew Research Center, 2010e). A majority of the generation (88%) believe that they will have enough money to live on in the future, a significantly higher rate of confidence than older adults (Pew Research Center, 2012c). Although current data show that more than half of Millennials think it is harder to get ahead now than ten years ago (Pew Research Center, 2008a), their optimism about their economic future remains unchanged since that time. This attitude is a marked contrast from that of members of the Baby Boom Generation, who are coping relatively well financially on average but are the most pessimistic generation about their economic future (Pew Research Center, 2008a).

In Wisconsin, Millennials demonstrate a similarly optimistic attitude in terms of their satisfaction with the direction of “the way things are going” (see Table 18). In a University of Wisconsin Badger Poll conducted in 2010, when asked how they think things are going in Wisconsin, Millennials were much more satisfied than older generations.

**Table 18. Satisfaction with the Way Things Are Going in Wisconsin Today**

Ages	Dissatisfied	Mixed	Satisfied
18-34	12%	0%	88%
35-49	39%	4%	57%
50-64	54%	9%	37%
65+	49%	5%	44%

Source: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, 2010

### Relation to Government

#### Expectations for Government Responsibility

Millennials tend to trust the institution of the national government more than other generations, at least in the abstract (Howe & Strauss, 2003; Keeter & Taylor, 2009). They tend to favor government involvement in solving problems as opposed to relying on businesses and individuals to solve them (Pew Research Center, 2010e). They think the government should have a hand in creating jobs and improving education (Borsuk, 2009). Their attitudes about the overall social safety net are not particularly different from those of older generations, although that may in part be because older generations are more in favor of some safety-net programs (Medicare, Social Security) than other government programs (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Millennials do not demonstrate antibusiness or antitrade attitudes. They emphasize that the government should be “made better and not smaller” (Madland & Teixeira, 2009; Molyneux & Teixeira, 2010). This confidence in the institutions of government strikes some observers as a significant

change:

Young Americans today across the ideological spectrum share a far more favorable view of the federal government than do their elders. Importantly, this so-called Millennial Generation may hold the key to reversing historic declines in public confidence in government.... (Molyneux & Teixeira, 2010)

In Wisconsin, a slight majority of Millennials (plus the young end of the Generation X population) advocate for a strong government to handle national economic issues, but do not differ significantly from their older peers in this way (see Table 19). One difference in the views of Wisconsin Millennials compared to older generations is that Millennials are the least likely to advocate for the free market to solve national problems (University of Wisconsin Survey Center, 2010).

**Table 19. Who Should Handle Today's Complex Economic Problems?**

Ages	Strong Government	Free Market	Other	Don't Know
18-34	53%	33%	10%	0%
35-49	49%	42%	6%	3%
50-64	49%	45%	2%	2%
65+	59%	37%	3%	1%

Source: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, 2010

Millennials' experiences and values shape their beliefs toward specific policies. For example, health care reform is a significant issue for Millennials, no doubt in part because Millennials are least likely to have health insurance. Most (61%) of the Millennial Generation are covered, but the rate is lower than for older generations: 73% of Generation X, 83% of Baby Boomers, and 95% of the Silent Generation have health insurance coverage (Pew Research Center, 2010g). A substantial majority of Millennials nationwide support government intervention in health care; 73% favor government requiring all people to have health insurance and provisions to assist those who cannot afford it, a higher rate of support than other generations (Pew Research Center, 2010g). Millennials are also more inclined than other generations to be in favor of the "public option," a government health plan designed to compete with private insurance; two thirds of Millennials support this option. They are, however, not particularly engaged in the political debate about the issue (Pew Research Center, 2010f).

In a University of Wisconsin Badger Poll conducted in 2009 (see Table 20), a significant majority of Wisconsin Millennials favored a government-run health care program versus a system of only private insurance plans.

**Table 20. Wisconsin Feelings on Health Care**

Response to "Do you favor or oppose a federal government-run health insurance plan to compete with private health insurance plans?"

Ages	Favor Gov't Plan	Neither Favor nor Oppose	Opposed to Gov't Plan	Don't Know
18-29	73%	4%	20%	3%
30-44	56%	1%	41%	1%
45-59	56%	2%	40%	0%
60+	52%	2%	43%	3%

Source: University of Wisconsin Survey Center, 2009

As another example of generational policy differences, Millennials embrace a more multilateral, community-oriented foreign policy than generations before them (Madland & Teixeira, 2009). On average, they are less likely to support assertive military action as part of national security policy than previous generations (see Table 21), preferring cooperation and negotiation (Pew Research Center, 2010b).

**Table 21. Millennial Views on Foreign Policy (from 2004)**

	Percent agreeing with statement	
	Age 18-25	Age 26+
Using overwhelming force is the best way to avoid terrorism.	29%	49%
Relying too much on military force leads to hatred and more terrorism.	67%	41%
The United States should consider interests of allies and compromise.	62%	52%

Source: Adapted from Madland & Teixeira, 2009

Millennials, as a group, are much less inclined than older generations to see the United States as having sufficient military or moral force to solve many complex problems (Singer et al., 2011). Their view of the United States is different from that of their predecessors, with a majority (73%) believing that the United States is not globally respected (Singer et al., 2011) and a majority rejecting the idea of American exceptionalism, as seen in Table 22.

**Table 22. Percentage of Citizens of Different Ages Who View Own Culture as Superior**

Ages	Percent agreeing with the statement "Our people are not perfect but our culture is superior"				
	U.S.	Germany	Spain	Britain	France
18-29	37	45	39	38	20
30-49	44	42	34	20	20
50-60	60	51	55	38	35

Source: Horowitz et al., 2011

### Degree of Civic Participation

Millennials present a mixed picture of civic engagement, depending on how the term is measured. In public opinion polls, Millennials desire civic-centered politics (Fairbanks, 2011; Stone, 2009) but show lower participation in political processes compared to older generations (Twenge et al., 2012). A smaller percentage of eligible Millennial voters cast votes compared to older generations (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

The term *slacktivism* was coined to describe the tendency of Millennials to use technology to register political or social protest, such as joining a Facebook movement or signing an online petition (Morozov, 2009). It is unclear to what degree engaging in virtual activism increases the likelihood of activism in the real world, perhaps by raising awareness or gaining a sense of shared identity, and to what degree it decreases such tendencies by allowing participants to feel that they have done enough with the click of a computer mouse.

Millennials have increased their levels of volunteer and community work since 2001 (Pyle, 2011). The number of applicants to service programs such as AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, and Teach for America is at the highest level since the programs began (Steinhorn & Rackow, 2010; Stone, 2009). In one study of 16- to 18-year-olds, 96% of interviewees had engaged in some type of community service within the last year (Sandfort & Haworth, 2002). Nearly six in ten Millennials report volunteering in the past 12 months, a higher rate than the Baby Boom and Silent generations. Using consumer action to facilitate change—boycotting or “buycotting”—is also a familiar strategy for Millennials, which they use at about the same rate as other generations (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

### Current Voting Patterns

More than half of the Millennial population is of voting age (Sweeney, 2006). Millennials were a notable force in the 2008 presidential election (Rock the Vote, 2008) and are expected to play a significant role in the 2012 presidential election (Baker, 2011).<sup>8</sup>

The racial diversity of the Millennial population is reflected in the Millennial voting pool, in that the diversity of Millennial voters is greater than that of previous generations (Rock the Vote, 2008). In addition to greater racial diversity in the Millennial population, there are differential turnout rates compared to other generations: the voting turnout for Whites and Asians ages 18-29 decreased from 2000 to 2004, while the voting turnout for Blacks and Hispanics of the same age group increased (Rock the Vote, 2008).

Millennials' political affiliation is highlighted by their social views, which differ from previous generations in the breadth of support for acceptance of gay rights, interracial relationships, women in expanded social roles, and tolerance for immigrants (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Millennial tolerance along with their more open view of family and religion may be why this generation, with few exceptions (Sanchez, 2003), is noted for its liberal proclivity. About 50% of

<sup>8</sup> See also <http://cdn.billmovers.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/State-of-Young-America-PollResults.pdf> for racial breakdown of party affiliation and voting tendencies among Millennials.

Millennials consider themselves Democrats or lean toward Democratic platforms, whereas 36% affiliate with or lean toward Republican platforms (Pew Research Center, 2011b).

The liberal tendencies of the Millennial generation can be seen in voting patterns in the 2008 presidential election. Millennials supported Barack Obama over John McCain by a 2:1 ratio (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Voters older than 30 were more evenly split. The disparity between young voters and the rest of the electorate was the largest in history (Pew Research Center, 2010e), suggesting that part of the effect is a generational, not only a life cycle, value.

In Wisconsin, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) estimates that there will be 866,000 18- to 29-year-old eligible voters in 2012. In the 2008 presidential election, an estimated 58% of voters in this age bracket voted, a high rate by historical standards but still below the rate of those over 30 years old. Among voters over the age of 30, 76% of registered voters voted in the 2008 election (CIRCLE, 2011).

### Process Orientation

Millennials have come of age in an era with a great deal of uncertainty, from the way they define themselves to the potential economic opportunities and challenges they face. As they negotiate through flexible identities and roles, we believe that Millennials display a marked interest in fairness and transparency (Hais & Winograd, 2011). They want rules not only to be clear but to be followed (Hais & Winograd, 2011). This observation is difficult to support with polling data, in that it is difficult to ask people to what degree a focus on process rather than results shapes their reactions. Still, looking at Millennials' relationship with larger society suggests to us that there is something different about their emphasis on process that is not as strong a theme in older generations.

The recent Occupy Wall Street movement may be the most visible reflection of Millennials' desire for fair process. The movement itself is leaderless and horizontal; members focus on clear rules such as action by consensus (Hais & Winograd, 2011). A protest movement that has no single clear orienting message, but instead has a set of processes by which people may bring forth concerns for discussion, has occasionally been difficult for outside observers to understand (Winick, 2011). However, it is a reasonable fit for a generation that values flexible identity and individual voices.

The focus on fair process is also reflected in the message of political activists working to reach youth voters. Such activists have argued for the importance of understanding political and economic systems in order to support reform of those systems; through reform, they argue, the systems themselves can be made more transparent or fair. Current problems may arise because "...the system is messed up; but we [Millennials] are not powerless because of faults in the system" (Beale & Abdalla, 2003).

To Millennials, increasing economic inequality is at least in part objectionable because of recent vivid examples that may be seen to violate the principle of fair and open processes (Hais & Winograd, 2011). For example, college students struggling with loan debt may view the lower-interest loans offered to the automobile industry or large banks as unfair (Hais & Winograd,

2011). Some members of the generation viewed the government's assistance to large investment firms, the "Wall Street Bailout," as a reward for irresponsible behavior that has caused serious damage to the economy (Hais & Winograd, 2011). "It's as if America's most important parent [the President] has forgotten the first tenet of every Millennial family—not abiding by the rules will have consequences" (Hais & Winograd, 2011).

Politically, aside from issues of protest, Millennials prefer to engage in discussion and citizen-centered politics as a way of getting involved in their home communities. They value opportunities for engagement and are less likely than previous generations to be satisfied with a model of citizenship that focuses mainly on voting or joining community groups (Leiphon, 2008).

In Wisconsin, Millennial concern about fair process can be heard in the reactions to Governor Walker's Budget Repair Bill. Clearly, for many protestors on both sides of the issue, reactions centered mainly on the contents of the bill and in particular on the limiting of collective bargaining rights for public employee unions (Knutsen, 2011). In addition, however, some of the reaction of Millennials (including the Teaching Assistants' Association at the University of Wisconsin, one of the larger groups involved in protests) had to do with the way the bill was written, debated, and passed, and whether those steps involved open processes (Knutsen, 2011). To the degree that the changes appeared to be imposed unilaterally, the reaction was strongly negative (Knutsen, 2011), regardless of the financial benefits to the state budget. None of this is to suggest that fair process is all that matters to Millennials. Like generations before them, their opinions on policies will be shaped by their values and by the impact of the policies on them and their families. It may be fairer to say that where processes appear to be inequitably applied, or unclearly stated, many Millennials are likely to be more dissatisfied by that perceived violation than were previous generations.

## Goals for the Future

### Individual Fulfillment

Despite the contrast in some Millennials' experiences compared to previous generations, in general the goals that Millennials hold for their future lives are not terribly different (Zukin & Szeltner, 2012). They want a fulfilling family life (Pew Research Center, 2010e)—though they may expect more flexibility at the workplace in order to achieve it (Raines, 2002). They want to help others—though they may be inclined to do so in different ways from previous generations (Towns, 2011). Career achievement is important, but not as important as marriage and parenting (Pew Research Center, 2010e). Religion is one area of difference; fewer Millennials are likely to find religious belief or practice to be central to a fulfilling life than previous generations (Pew Research Center, 2010e).

Millennials are the only current generation who do not consider their careers to be a central part of their identities, although it is possible that this will change as they spend more time in the workforce. They are more likely than older people to endorse the idea of working for lower pay in order to pursue individual interests or to engage with friends and family (Egan, 2010; Shapira, 2010). They report that a balanced life is a high priority (Egan, 2010; Shapira, 2010). Having a flexible job, which supports a healthy work-life balance, is highly valued (Notter, 2002). Many Millennials, especially younger Millennials, do not consider their jobs to be lifelong vocations or

careers (Pew Research Center, 2012c). At work, although Millennials want clear, fair rules, they are also more likely to rate “fun and stimulation” as a top workplace priority compared to older generations (“Millennials’ Show Respect for Values,” 2008). At least some Millennials attribute this change to a way of coping with limited opportunities:

Our pastimes have become our expressions of mastery, a substitute for the all-consuming career.... That’s what we’re doing when we decide that we can be okay with having more unpredictable careers and more modest lifestyles, if that’s what’s in store: Even as we hold out hope that something will reverse the trajectory, we are managing our decline, we are making do. (Malone, 2011)

### Economic Security

Perhaps paradoxically, despite the lower profile of a career in the identity of a typical Millennial, Millennials are paying close attention to the potential economic opportunities they will face. They have come of age during trying economic times, and can by no means take for granted a standard of living higher than that of their parents (Pew Research Center, 2012c). Almost half of 18- to 34-year-olds think they will be less successful than their parents (Hiltonsmith et al., 2011), and they have good reason to think that. Young adult unemployment has been consistently higher than the national average, incomes are relatively low and stagnant for this age group, and increasing debt, especially student loans, plagues them. Millennials themselves, as well as members of other generations, recognize that this generation will face significant economic challenges as they grow older (Hiltonsmith et al., 2011; Pew Research Center, 2012c).

Millennials face a contradiction between the common and cherished view of the United States as “the land of opportunity” and the economic realities that they have experienced. The middle class, a group to which most Americans believe they belong regardless of their income (Cruces, Truglia, & Tetaz, 2011; Rampell, 2011), has not shared in the income and wealth growth experienced by more privileged members of society (Censky, 2011; Schmitt, 2005). As both poverty and wealth are increasing on the ends of the economic spectrum, the number of members of the middle class is decreasing, a phenomenon referred to as an “hourglass economy” (Leonard, 2011). Three quarters of the Millennial population in one survey expressed some concern about the potential for the middle class to disappear, and more than half (57%) said that they were very concerned about this possibility (Hiltonsmith et al., 2011).

A quintessential American value—the “American Dream”—suggests that with hard work and perseverance any person can achieve economic security, and can even become wealthy. Statistically, such movement across social classes is becoming increasingly unlikely, particularly from the lower strata of the economy into the middle range. Americans’ socioeconomic status is now more closely tied to their parents’ status than is true in other Western nations (DeParle, 2012). While this change is increasingly acknowledged by scholars across the political spectrum, the majority of Millennials don’t think the change is affecting them, and continue to expect the potential for social mobility; “69% of young people surveyed still think they can reach the American Dream” (Hiltonsmith et al., 2011).

In this context, it is not surprising that economic security and opportunity are key to Millennials’ goals for the future. Millennials, as with other generations, identify jobs as a key concern

(Newport, 2011). Increasingly, attention to student loan debt is part of their perception of their future opportunities, both in terms of their ability to meet their obligations and their opportunities to use education to advance the cause of economic mobility (Martin & Lehren, 2012). Millennials' striving for economic security may also be seen in some of their signature characteristics like self-motivation (Wilson & Gerber, 2008), efficiency, practicality, and multitasking (Sweeney, 2006).

## Conclusion

Millennials are a large and complex group, and hold a wide range of opinions about the world. Still, some generalizations can be made when comparing them to previous generations. They are more diverse (racially and religiously) than their predecessors. Even in Wisconsin, where racial minorities comprise a relatively small percentage of the population compared to national figures, the rapid growth of minority populations will increase the heterogeneity of the state over time. Millennials are also more diverse than previous generations in terms of religion and family structure, and are as a group very tolerant of individual differences.

It is no surprise that experts on this generation refer to them as “connected” (Pew Research Center, 2010e). They have been shaped by technology and it is part of their identity and means of dealing with the world. They see the world through a digital lens, and expect immediacy and customization in most aspects of their lives. They are confident that they can succeed and that they can influence the world, though even these goals are likely to be fulfilled in part by rapidly changing technology. They define themselves constantly, and fluidly, and think about their identities and self-worth more than those who preceded them. They have been told all their lives that they are uniquely special, and for better or worse, many of them believe that message.

Their formative experiences have shaped them, as previous generations were shaped by major events such as the Great Depression or the Cold War. The Millennials were children when the attacks of September 11, 2001, occurred, and have grown up with two ongoing wars, an experience that most of their parents did not have, although their grandparents did. They have experienced increasing inequality and decreased mobility in the U.S. economic system. And as they strike out to take their place in the adult world, they face a particularly difficult job environment. Still, they remain confident that they will eventually make their way to economic success.

In the next decade, this group will take its place as a major force in the electorate, and their views on social, economic, and political issues will hold considerable sway. They will continue to change, individually and as a group, in response to life events they have yet to experience, and in the way current social and economic conditions play out in the coming years. They recognize the challenges they are facing, and remain optimistic that they will manage to overcome difficulties. They trust that government institutions are important and useful in dealing with difficult problems. They are beginning their participation in American society as a diverse, tolerant, cooperative, expressive, technologically sophisticated generation, and those attributes are unlikely to disappear completely in the coming years. In understanding some of these commonly shared Millennial traits, it may be possible for members of other generations to work more effectively with this important group of individuals.

## Appendix

County Year	Adams		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	15,001	19,409	
African American	375	633	
Asian and Pacific Islander	56	86	
AIAN <sup>o</sup>	125	205	
Other	125	266	
Hispanic	308	783	
Total Minority	989	1,973	99%
Total	15,682	20,875	

County Year	Ashland		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	14,749	13,662	
African American	17	48	
Asian and Pacific Islander	46	63	
AIAN <sup>o</sup>	1,478	1,791	
Other	17	56	
Hispanic	106	302	
Total Minority	1,664	2,260	36%
Total	16,307	16,157	

County Year	Barron		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	40,346	44,076	
African American	40	407	
Asian and Pacific Islander	95	226	
AIAN <sup>o</sup>	209	406	
Other	60	236	
Hispanic	164	862	
Total Minority	568	2,137	276%
Total	40,750	45,870	

<sup>o</sup> AIAN: American Indian and Alaska Native

County Year	Bayfield 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	12,707	13,024	
African American	29	46	
Asian and Pacific Islander	24	49	
AIAN	1,240	1,435	
Other	8	29	
Hispanic	50	158	
Total Minority	1,351	1,717	27%
Total	14,008	15,014	

County Year	Brown 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	186,621	214,415	
African American	1,012	5,491	
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,522	6,828	
AIAN	3,869	6,715	
Other	570	9,155	
Hispanic	1,525	17,985	
Total Minority	9,498	46,174	386%
Total	194,594	248,007	

County Year	Buffalo 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	13,521	13,253	
African American	5	37	
Asian and Pacific Islander	29	28	
AIAN	22	38	
Other	7	122	
Hispanic	42	237	
Total Minority	105	462	340%
Total	13,584	13,587	

County Year	Burnett 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	12,497	14,163	
African American	22	81	
Asian and Pacific Islander	24	55	
AIAN	532	718	
Other	9	67	
Hispanic	43	194	
Total Minority	630	1,115	77%
Total	13,084	15,457	

County Year	Calumet 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	33,910	46,187	
African American	29	246	
Asian and Pacific Islander	173	1,047	
AIAN	146	203	
Other	33	705	
Hispanic	149	1,690	
Total Minority	530	3,891	634%
Total	34,291	48,971	

County Year	Chippewa 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	51,854	59,504	
African American	31	982	
Asian and Pacific Islander	276	788	
AIAN	150	310	
Other	49	182	
Hispanic	174	800	
Total Minority	680	3,062	350%
Total	52,360	62,415	

County Year	Clark 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	31,437	33,338	
African American	29	80	
Asian and Pacific Islander	38	135	
AIAN	91	174	
Other	52	773	
Hispanic	116	1,292	
Total Minority	326	2,454	653%
Total	31,647	34,690	

County Year	Columbia 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	44,469	54,468	
African American	243	717	
Asian and Pacific Islander	136	330	
AIAN	136	277	
Other	104	441	
Hispanic	358	1,444	
Total Minority	977	3,209	228%
Total	45,088	56,833	

County Year	Crawford 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	15,791	16,080	
African American	50	296	
Asian and Pacific Islander	56	66	
AIAN	26	39	
Other	17	36	
Hispanic	67	150	
Total Minority	216	587	172%
Total	15,940	16,644	

County	Dane		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	344,617	413,631	
African American	10,511	25,347	
Asian and Pacific Islander	8,666	23,201	
AIAN	1,201	1,730	
Other	2,090	12,064	
Hispanic	5,744	28,925	
Total Minority	28,212	91,267	224%
Total	367,085	488,073	

County	Dodge		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	74,700	83,294	
African American	1,142	2,381	
Asian and Pacific Islander	197	513	
AIAN	215	385	
Other	305	1,309	
Hispanic	911	3,522	
Total Minority	2,770	8,110	193%
Total	76,559	88,759	

County	Door		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	25,387	26,839	
African American	29	144	
Asian and Pacific Islander	47	116	
AIAN	178	162	
Other	49	249	
Hispanic	153	671	
Total Minority	456	1,342	194%
Total	25,690	27,785	

County Year	Douglas 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	40,454	41,166	
African American	170	486	
Asian and Pacific Islander	266	384	
AIAN	805	868	
Other	63	82	
Hispanic	201	494	
Total Minority	1,505	2,314	54%
Total	41,758	44,159	

County Year	Dunn 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	34,929	41,545	
African American	172	220	
Asian and Pacific Islander	95	1,158	
AIAN	633	168	
Other	80	228	
Hispanic	188	626	
Total Minority	1,168	2,400	105%
Total	35,909	43,857	

County Year	Eau Claire 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	82,202	91,946	
African American	238	874	
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,124	3,328	
AIAN	467	471	
Other	152	519	
Hispanic	437	1,804	
Total Minority	3,418	6,996	105%
Total	85,183	98,736	

County Year	Florence		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White			
African American	4,562	4,306	
Asian and Pacific Islander	4	10	
AIAN	4	14	
Other	14	31	
Hispanic	6	14	
Total Minority	11	37	
Total	39	106	172%
	4,590	4,423	

County Year	Fond Du Lac		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	88,760	95,674	
African American	257	1,305	
Asian and Pacific Islander	448	1,169	
AIAN	297	471	
Other	321	1,700	
Hispanic	937	4,368	
Total Minority	2,260	9,013	299%
Total	90,083	101,633	

County Year	Forest		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	7,842	7,690	
African American	127	76	
Asian and Pacific Islander	14	24	
AIAN	780	1,256	
Other	13	32	
Hispanic	30	138	
Total Minority	964	1,526	58%
Total	8,776	9,034	

County Year	Grant 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	48,838	49,655	
African American	76	588	
Asian and Pacific Islander	234	317	
AIAN	76	103	
Other	40	221	
Hispanic	160	649	
Total Minority	586	1,878	220%
Total	49,264	51,208	

County Year	Green 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	30,173	35,593	
African American	23	140	
Asian and Pacific Islander	66	209	
AIAN	51	65	
Other	26	490	
Hispanic	119	1,033	
Total Minority	285	1,937	580%
Total	30,339	36,842	

County Year	Green Lake 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	18,386	18,425	
African American	21	88	
Asian and Pacific Islander	103	91	
AIAN	42	52	
Other	99	268	
Hispanic	192	743	
Total Minority	457	1,242	172%
Total	18,651	19,051	

County	Iowa		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	20,093	23,127	
African American	7	87	
Asian and Pacific Islander	19	134	
AIAN	21	36	
Other	10	102	
Hispanic	48	336	
Total Minority	105	695	562%
Total	20,150	23,687	

County	Iron		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	6,121	5,790	
African American	1	3	
Asian and Pacific Islander	2	18	
AIAN	25	36	
Other	4	13	
Hispanic	8	35	
Total Minority	40	105	163%
Total	6,153	5,916	

County	Jackson		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	15,814	18,258	
African American	47	400	
Asian and Pacific Islander	30	73	
AIAN	674	1,271	
Other	23	144	
Hispanic	145	519	
Total Minority	919	2,407	162%
Total	16,588	20,449	

County Year	Jefferson 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	66,702	78,632	
African American	189	681	
Asian and Pacific Islander	287	578	
AIAN	176	257	
Other	429	2,479	
Hispanic	1,160	5,555	
Total Minority	2,241	9,550	326%
Total	67,783	83,686	

County Year	Juneau 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	21,307	25,077	
African American	31	557	
Asian and Pacific Islander	78	122	
AIAN	166	398	
Other	68	188	
Hispanic	152	687	
Total Minority	495	1,952	294%
Total	21,650	26,664	

County Year	Kenosha 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	119,187	139,416	
African American	5,295	11,052	
Asian and Pacific Islander	669	2,482	
AIAN	472	814	
Other	2,558	7,880	
Hispanic	5,580	19,592	
Total Minority	14,574	41,820	187%
Total	128,181	166,426	

County Year	Kewaunee		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	18,766	19,955	
African American	24	69	
Asian and Pacific Islander	23	65	
AIAN	52	77	
Other	13	219	
Hispanic	54	463	
Total Minority	166	893	438%
Total	18,878	20,574	

County Year	La Crosse		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	94,319	105,540	
African American	438	1,610	
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,667	4,770	
AIAN	340	493	
Other	140	371	
Hispanic	640	1,741	
Total Minority	4,225	8,985	113%
Total	97,904	114,638	

County Year	Lafayette		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	16,009	16,292	
African American	14	39	
Asian and Pacific Islander	19	58	
AIAN	21	48	
Other	13	303	
Hispanic	37	522	
Total Minority	104	970	833%
Total	16,076	16,836	

County Year	Langlade 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	19,291	19,267	
African American	13	72	
Asian and Pacific Islander	22	63	
AIAN	137	191	
Other	42	100	
Hispanic	104	324	
Total Minority	318	750	136%
Total	19,505	19,977	

County Year	Lincoln 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	26,712	27,929	
African American	84	157	
Asian and Pacific Islander	78	134	
AIAN	96	100	
Other	23	131	
Hispanic	118	340	
Total Minority	399	862	116%
Total	26,993	28,743	

County Year	Manitowoc 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	78,730	76,402	
African American	115	442	
Asian and Pacific Islander	1,071	2,060	
AIAN	318	450	
Other	187	1,069	
Hispanic	582	2,565	
Total Minority	2,273	6,586	190%
Total	80,421	81,442	

County Year	Marathon		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	112,189	122,446	
African American	89	841	
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,499	7,178	
AIAN	490	634	
Other	133	1,223	
Hispanic	470	2,992	
Total Minority	3,681	12,868	250%
Total	115,400	134,063	

County Year	Marinette		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	40,280	40,559	
African American	8	108	
Asian and Pacific Islander	63	227	
AIAN	150	238	
Other	47	176	
Hispanic	156	552	
Total Minority	424	1,301	207%
Total	40,548	41,749	

County Year	Marquette		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	12,174	14,920	
African American	31	77	
Asian and Pacific Islander	18	68	
AIAN	49	86	
Other	49	126	
Hispanic	149	391	
Total Minority	296	748	153%
Total	12,321	15,404	

County	Menominee		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	416	451	
African American	0	19	
Asian and Pacific Islander	0	1	
AIAN	3,469	3,701	
Other	5	6	
Hispanic	55	178	
Total Minority	3,529	3,905	11%
Total	3,890	4,232	

County	Milwaukee		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	718,918	574,656	
African American	195,470	253,764	
Asian and Pacific Islander	15,308	32,785	
AIAN	6,994	6,808	
Other	22,585	51,429	
Hispanic	44,671	126,039	
Total Minority	285,028	470,825	65%
Total	959,275	947,735	

County	Monroe		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	35,983	41,940	
African American	141	512	
Asian and Pacific Islander	143	329	
AIAN	301	510	
Other	65	764	
Hispanic	234	1,661	
Total Minority	884	3,776	327%
Total	36,633	44,673	

County	Oconto		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	29,926	36,418	
African American	18	73	
Asian and Pacific Islander	36	116	
AIAN	212	467	
Other	34	198	
Hispanic	107	519	
Total Minority	407	1,373	237%
Total	30,226	37,660	

County	Oneida		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	31,320	34,787	
African American	58	152	
Asian and Pacific Islander	56	193	
AIAN	223	323	
Other	22	82	
Hispanic	90	385	
Total Minority	449	1,135	153%
Total	31,679	35,998	

County	Outagamie		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	136,043	161,238	
African American	206	1,736	
Asian and Pacific Islander	1,904	5,294	
AIAN	1,965	2,982	
Other	392	2,728	
Hispanic	987	6,359	
Total Minority	5,454	19,099	250%
Total	140,510	176,695	

County Year	Ozaukee 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	71,676	82,010	
African American	492	1,177	
Asian and Pacific Islander	438	1,529	
AIAN	127	208	
Other	98	483	
Hispanic	517	1,956	
Total Minority	1,672	5,353	220%
Total	72,831	86,395	

County Year	Pepin 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	7,070	7,337	
African American	2	21	
Asian and Pacific Islander	9	14	
AIAN	18	19	
Other	8	35	
Hispanic	20	72	
Total Minority	57	161	182%
Total	7,107	7,469	

County Year	Pierce 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	32,366	39,614	
African American	82	232	
Asian and Pacific Islander	172	308	
AIAN	87	151	
Other	58	201	
Hispanic	196	623	
Total Minority	595	1,515	155%
Total	32,765	41,019	

County Year	Polk 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	34,348	42,807	
African American	23	96	
Asian and Pacific Islander	50	166	
AIAN	321	454	
Other	31	226	
Hispanic	131	656	
Total Minority	556	1,598	187%
Total	34,773	44,205	

County Year	Portage 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	59,972	65,981	
African American	161	383	
Asian and Pacific Islander	786	1,983	
AIAN	255	265	
Other	231	546	
Hispanic	572	1,853	
Total Minority	2,005	5,030	151%
Total	61,405	70,019	

County Year	Price 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	15,479	13,750	
African American	7	39	
Asian and Pacific Islander	27	126	
AIAN	77	54	
Other	10	42	
Hispanic	59	153	
Total Minority	180	414	130%
Total	15,600	14,159	

County Year	Racine		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	152,098	155,731	
African American	16,999	21,767	
Asian and Pacific Islander	1,004	2,174	
AIAN	521	781	
Other	4412	10,046	
Hispanic	9,034	22,546	
Total Minority	31,970	57,314	79%
Total	175,034	195,408	

County Year	Richland		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	17,411	17,540	
African American	12	82	
Asian and Pacific Islander	38	99	
AIAN	34	46	
Other	26	119	
Hispanic	59	360	
Total Minority	169	706	318%
Total	17,521	18,021	

County Year	Rock		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	130,803	140,513	
African American	6,638	7,978	
Asian and Pacific Islander	985	1,669	
AIAN	369	516	
Other	715	5,948	
Hispanic	1,754	12,124	
Total Minority	10,461	28,235	170%
Total	139,510	160,331	

County Year	Rusk 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	14,821	14,398	
African American	31	61	
Asian and Pacific Islander	114	42	
AIAN	82	74	
Other	31	37	
Hispanic	85	173	
Total Minority	343	387	13%
Total	15,079	14,755	

County Year	St. Croix 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	49,895	80,914	
African American	44	552	
Asian and Pacific Islander	148	923	
AIAN	121	313	
Other	43	483	
Hispanic	192	1,692	
Total Minority	548	3,963	623%
Total	50,251	84,345	

County Year	Sauk 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	46,459	58,588	
African American	54	357	
Asian and Pacific Islander	79	350	
AIAN	288	769	
Other	95	1,156	
Hispanic	207	2,675	
Total Minority	723	5,307	634%
Total	46,975	61,976	

County Year	Sawyer 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	11,962	13,123	
African American	18	77	
Asian and Pacific Islander	15	49	
AIAN	2,167	2,757	
Other	19	42	
Hispanic	101	268	
Total Minority	2,320	3,193	38%
Total	14,181	16,557	

County Year	Shawano 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	35,251	37,254	
African American	42	143	
Asian and Pacific Islander	70	193	
AIAN	1,762	3,172	
Other	32	366	
Hispanic	129	905	
Total Minority	2,035	4,779	135%
Total	37,157	41,949	

County Year	Sheboygan 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	100,389	103,861	
African American	430	1,684	
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,061	5,345	
AIAN	357	444	
Other	640	2,297	
Hispanic	1,668	6,329	
Total Minority	5,156	16,099	212%
Total	103,877	115,507	

County Year	Taylor 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	18,807	20,248	
African American	2	58	
Asian and Pacific Islander	44	64	
AIAN	39	43	
Other	9	128	
Hispanic	42	316	
Total Minority	136	609	351%
Total	18,901	20,689	

County Year	Trempealeau 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	25,160	27,230	
African American	12	62	
Asian and Pacific Islander	46	127	
AIAN	32	63	
Other	13	1,086	
Hispanic	53	1,667	
Total Minority	156	3,005	1826%
Total	25,263	28,816	

County Year	Vernon 1990 Population	2010 Population	Minority Population % Increase
White	25,509	29,085	
African American	12	109	
Asian and Pacific Islander	42	99	
AIAN	36	61	
Other	18	145	
Hispanic	98	394	
Total Minority	206	808	292%
Total	25,617	29,773	

County	Vilas		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	16,116	18,658	
African American	9	35	
Asian and Pacific Islander	38	62	
AIAN	1,534	2,370	
Other	10	45	
Hispanic	61	268	
Total Minority	1,652	2,780	68%
Total	17,707	21,430	

County	Walworth		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	72,747	93,935	
African American	454	980	
Asian and Pacific Islander	494	888	
AIAN	201	308	
Other	1,104	4,604	
Hispanic	2,017	10,578	
Total Minority	4,270	17,358	307%
Total	75,000	102,228	

County	Washburn		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	13,585	15,343	
African American	25	36	
Asian and Pacific Islander	33	65	
AIAN	122	186	
Other	7	49	
Hispanic	34	208	
Total Minority	221	544	146%
Total	13,772	15,911	

County Year	Washington		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	94,465	126,317	
African American	125	1,155	
Asian and Pacific Islander	337	1,445	
AIAN	208	401	
Other	193	1,052	
Hispanic	670	3,385	
Total Minority	1,533	7,438	385%
Total	95,328	131,887	

County Year	Waukesha		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	298,313	363,963	
African American	1,096	4,914	
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,699	10,852	
AIAN	672	1,066	
Other	1,935	4,041	
Hispanic	5,448	16,123	
Total Minority	11,850	36,996	212%
Total	304,715	389,891	

County Year	Waupaca		Minority Population % Increase
	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	45,695	50,916	
African American	22	154	
Asian and Pacific Islander	92	200	
AIAN	125	258	
Other	170	425	
Hispanic	406	1,307	
Total Minority	815	2,344	188%
Total	46,104	52,410	

County	Waushara		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	19,094	23,012	
African American	29	454	
Asian and Pacific Islander	43	108	
AIAN	70	131	
Other	149	509	
Hispanic	379	1,329	
Total Minority	670	2,531	278%
Total	19,385	24,496	

County	Winnebago		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	136,822	154,445	
African American	697	2,975	
Asian and Pacific Islander	1,728	3,880	
AIAN	685	1,036	
Other	388	2,188	
Hispanic	1,144	5,784	
Total Minority	4,642	15,863	242%
Total	140,320	166,994	

County	Wood		Minority Population % Increase
Year	1990 Population	2010 Population	
White	72,157	71,048	
African American	90	393	
Asian and Pacific Islander	722	1,328	
AIAN	481	587	
Other	155	593	
Hispanic	386	1,680	
Total Minority	1,834	4,581	150%
Total	73,605	74,749	

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