



LIFE in our Community

“Excellence” for the Fox Cities is defined as:

Community leadership proactively makes decisions that are in the best interests of citizens in the long run. Citizens of all ages, religions, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, and income levels...

- Experience a sense of community and belonging
- Do not experience discrimination
- Have full access to services
- Are informed on community issues
- Have the opportunity to participate fully in community life through civic involvement/voting, volunteer work, and faith communities
- Experience a community infrastructure and amenities promoting a good quality of life

LIFE in Our Community

Community Perceptions	Perceptions of quality of life Stability of neighborhoods and respect for others Opportunities and involvement in spiritual life
Diversity	Respect for diverse people Demographic trends Perceptions of quality of life for subgroups of diverse residents
Governance and Infrastructure	Uncontested local elections Voter participation rates Citizen perceptions of quality of public services
Leadership	Direction of Fox Cities area Perceptions of transportation system Perceptions of leadership effectiveness
Philanthropic Vitality	Volunteering in past year, quality of volunteers Citizen percent of discretionary income donated to charity Number of nonprofits Citizen support for charitable organizations in past year

For more information on the community:

Demographic statistics <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/index.html>
LIFE focus group and survey findings <http://www.foxcitieslifestudy.org>
Fox Cities Rotary Multicultural Center <http://www.foxcitiesmulticultural.org/>
Election results and voter turnout <http://elections.state.wi.us/section.asp?linkid=155&locid=47>
County government information <http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us>, www.co.outagamie.wi.us and
www.co.calumet.wi.us

Selected additional information for each section of the 2006 LIFE Report can be found in Appendices at our website: <http://www.foxcitieslifestudy.org>

Community Perceptions

Data Highlights

- **Figure 1** In 2005, 40% of citizens believed that the Fox Cities area “excels” as a place to live (in 2000, 21% did so).
- **Figure 2** While citizens indicated their families are respected to a high degree, citizens rated the area close to average as a place where “people of different racial/ethnic backgrounds get along well” and where “all people are treated respectfully regardless of differences.”
- **Figure 3** 57% of Fox Cities area households (both owners/renters) have resided in their current home since 1999.
- **Figure 4** Most aspects of the Fox Cities area were rated “good” by both citizens and leaders, with education and safety nearing excellent. The ability of some citizens to meet basic needs and be self-sufficient scored somewhat lower (between average and good).
- 80% of residents had attended a religious service in the past year. 88% of leaders think the Fox Cities area provides good or excellent opportunities for spiritual growth.

Figure 1

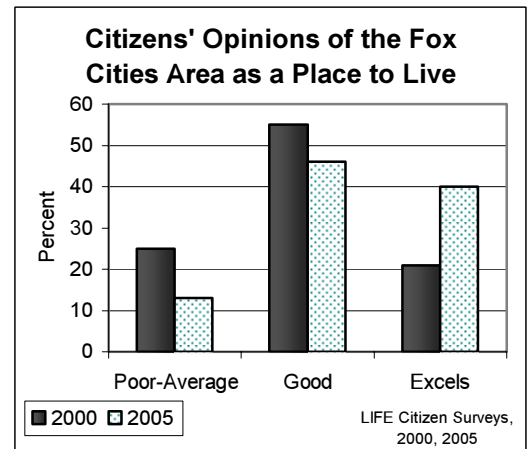


Figure 2

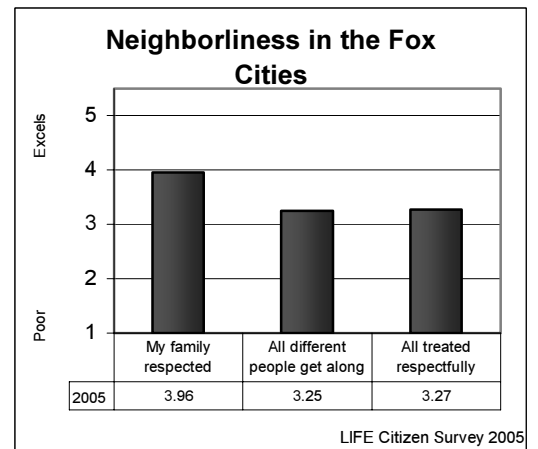


Figure 4

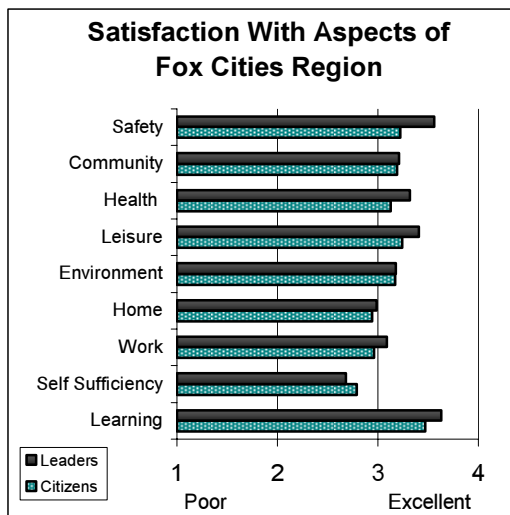
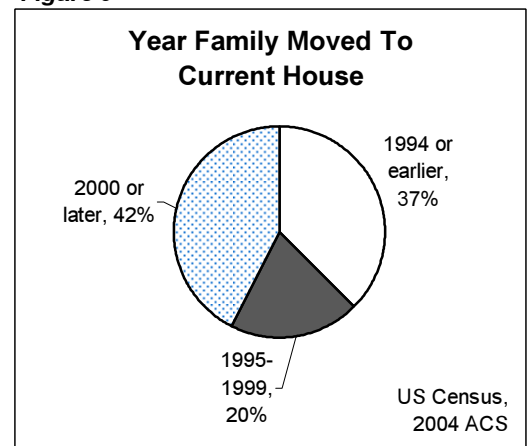


Figure 3



Progress and Concerns

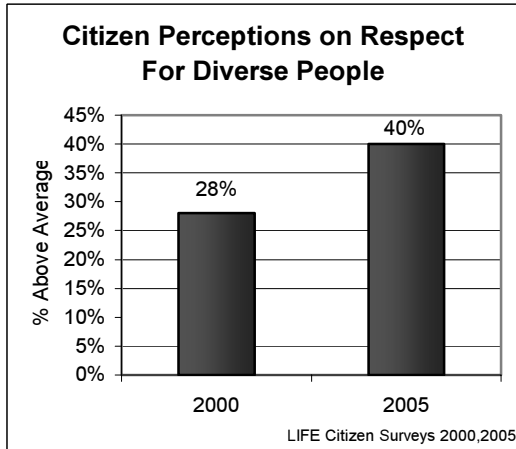
Focus group and survey findings agree that the region has many strengths, especially opportunities for families, quality education, leisure opportunities, natural surroundings, and growing diversity. Leaders tended to view the area even more positively than citizens.

On the other hand, these data show that residents see the challenges of a changing economy, shrinking government services, growing human needs (due to poverty, aging, mental illness) and environmental concerns.

80% of citizens reported having attended a religious or worship service in the past year.

Diversity

Figure 1



Data Highlights

- **Figure 1** In 2005, a higher percentage of citizens (40% vs. 28% in 2000) believed that in the Fox Cities, “all people are treated respectfully, regardless of their race, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, income level, disability, or age.”
- **Figure 2** About half of Fox Cities residents thought the area was a good/excellent place to live for people of color and about 2/3 said it was good/excellent for people with disabilities. 90% believe the region excels for families.
- **Figure 3** The minority population in the region is increasing. In 2004, 93% of the area was white, non-Hispanic compared to 94% in 2000. The number of persons of Hispanic origin grew by 26% and African Americans by 21% during that time.
- 36% of leaders agreed that the Fox Cities is a place where people of color take on leadership roles in the community.

Figure 2

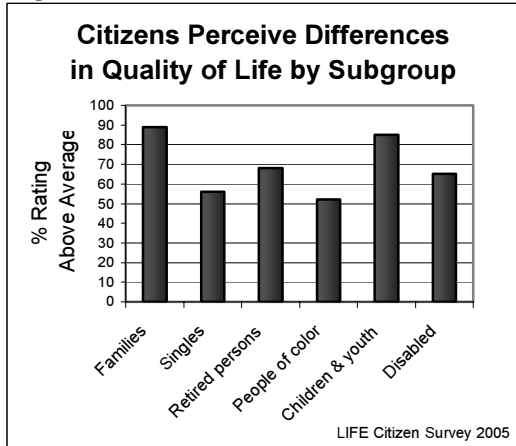
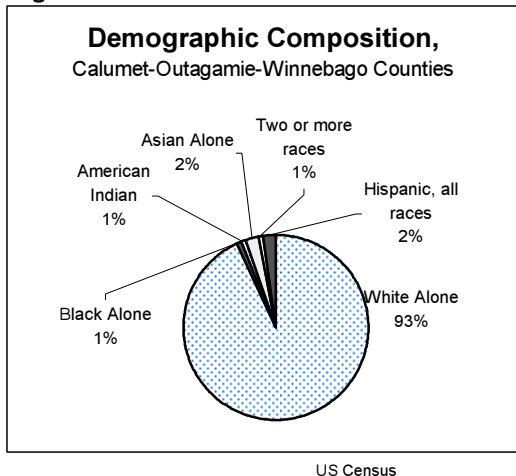


Figure 3

	2000	2004	Net	% Change
White Alone	336,938	345,781	8,843	2.6%
Hispanic, all races	6,751	8,489	1,738	25.7%
Asian	7,266	8,035	769	10.6%
American Indian	3,147	3,455	308	9.8%
African American	2,824	3,416	592	21.0%
Two or more races	2,556	2,836	280	11.0%
Pacific Islander	100	98	-2	-2.0%
Total	359,582	372,110	12,528	3.5%

US Census/ECWRPC

Figure 3



Progress and Concerns

The newly opened Fox Cities Rotary Multicultural Center (2004) hosted a lively focus group with local people of color. Participants noted many positives about the area and progress within the region (e.g., schools, safety, programs to learn English). The New North, Northeast Wisconsin’s economic development initiative, chose diversity as one of its top priorities.

In several of our focus groups, participants perceived that the area is ready to “walk the talk” by encouraging leadership by non-dominant segments of the community (e.g., women, minorities, young people).

For many people of color, concerns include transportation, access to legal services, access to rehabilitation for substance abuse, and housing (including fair housing practices, affordable rental housing, and home ownership).

55% of leaders rated the Fox Cities above average as a place where people with different racial/ethnic backgrounds get along well.

Governance and Infrastructure

Data Highlights

- **Figure 1** In the April 2006 elections, 80% of county board supervisory elections were uncontested in the three counties combined. In Winnebago and Calumet Counties, several county board districts had no candidates running at all.
- **Figure 2** Voter participation rates in the Fox Cities area surpassed national rates and reached almost 3/4 of the voting age population in 2004.
- **Figure 3** The 2005 Citizen Survey revealed an improved perception of the quality of public services and drinking water compared to the 2000 results.
- When asked, "If you could change one thing about the Fox Cities area, what would it be?" 14% of respondents pointed to traffic concerns (construction and traffic safety). The second most-common answer (10%) dealt with the need for municipalities to collaborate and jointly make plans to address common issues.
- 30% of leaders indicated that "building a broader regional partnership" should be one of the Fox Cities' highest priorities.

Progress and Concerns

More than half of citizens scored their local government services as good or excellent. In most of the focus groups, experts commented on the high level of collaboration across county and municipal lines, especially related to safety, health, and human services.

The need to "regionalize" government services was one of the more prominent themes of the 2006 LIFE Study. Survey and focus group results converge on this idea. Whether talking about economic development, recreation programs, roads, taxes, safety, planning for land use, and more, the advantages of a "Fox Cities" perspective (in contrast to multiple municipalities) was clear to people we heard from. This regional approach, in their opinions, would reduce duplication and improve efficiency. Recent efforts like the New North, emergency response teams, and the three-county waste disposal agreement were cited as examples.

Figure 1

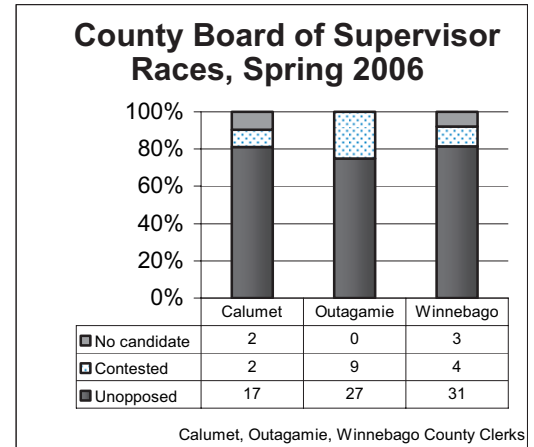


Figure 2

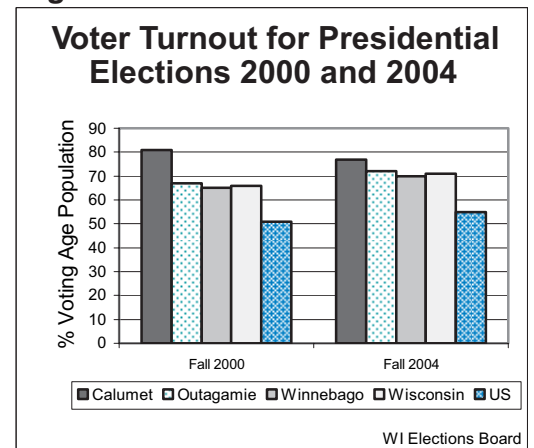
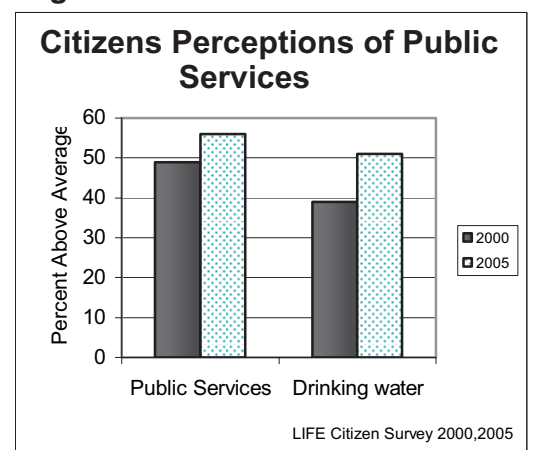


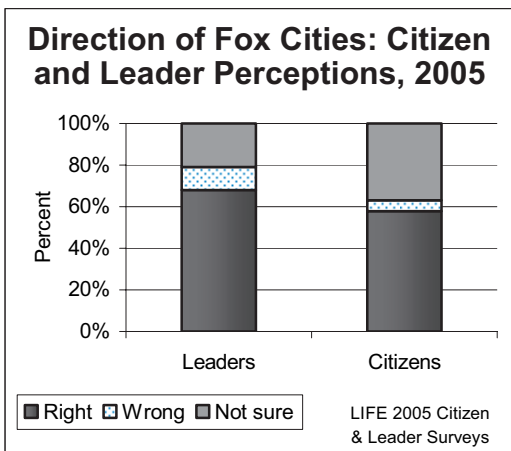
Figure 3



42% of citizens (vs. 32% in 2000) felt that the Fox Cities' transportation system was keeping up with growth, scoring it above average.

Leadership

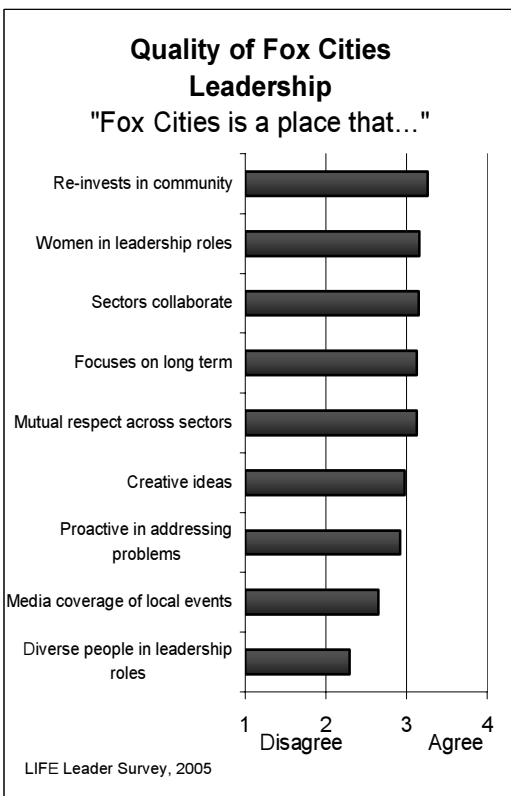
Figure 1



Data Highlights

- **Figure 1** 68% of leaders and 58% of citizens thought the area is heading in the right direction. Significantly, 37% of citizens responded “not sure.”
- **Figure 2** We asked leaders a series of questions about the effectiveness of regional leadership (both public and private). Leaders gave highest marks to the region’s re-investment in the community, women in leadership roles, and collaboration. Lowest ratings were given to the area’s inclusion of diverse persons in leadership roles, media coverage of local events, and the region’s effectiveness at proactively addressing problems.
- In two focus groups (young professionals and multicultural), the need for more inclusive leadership came up and generated animated discussion. Obtaining increased input from young people, diverse people, and other new voices was prioritized.

Figure 2



Progress and Concerns

In almost every focus group, participants highlighted community leadership as a unique strength of the area. People noted the willingness of these leaders to act on problems faced by the community.

Many agreed that existing local leadership must “walk the talk” by involving different types of persons in leadership roles. This was especially important to young professionals and people of color in our discussions with them.

In several of the focus groups, participants suggested that local leaders take a long term perspective on decisions facing them. They felt that, too often, local leaders have resorted to quick fixes or temporary solutions which, in some cases, had led to greater long term challenges. Focus group participants across the board acknowledged that the funding of government services has reached a point where no further expansion (and possibly reductions) will occur.

50% of leaders rated Fox Cities leadership fair or poor at implementing wise land development policies in the area.

Philanthropy

Data Highlights

- **Figure 1** Since 2000, there was a slight decline in the amount of financial and volunteer support for charitable and religious organizations reported by survey respondents.
- **Figure 2** In 2006, there were 728 public and private 501 (c) (3) charitable organizations in Fox Cities communities. (No historical comparison data were available from this source).
- **Figure 3** In 2003, Fox Cities residents donated to charity at a level similar to national and regional averages. Calumet County residents donated 8.3% of income; Winnebago County, 5.2%; and Outagamie County 6.4%, matching the national average.
- Several focus groups noted the high quality of volunteers supporting nonprofits in the Fox Cities area. The growing willingness of employers to provide paid volunteer release time has added to the strength of area nonprofits.
- In 2005 the Volunteer Center of East Central Wisconsin connected over 58,000 people to volunteer opportunities, up from 27,600 in 2000. The agency handles a growing number of requests from employers to develop volunteer programs.
- In 2005, United Way Fox Cities raised nearly \$6.4 million, exceeding its goal by 4%. The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region received \$49 million and in its 04-05 fiscal year provided 541 grants to nonprofit organizations.

Figure 1

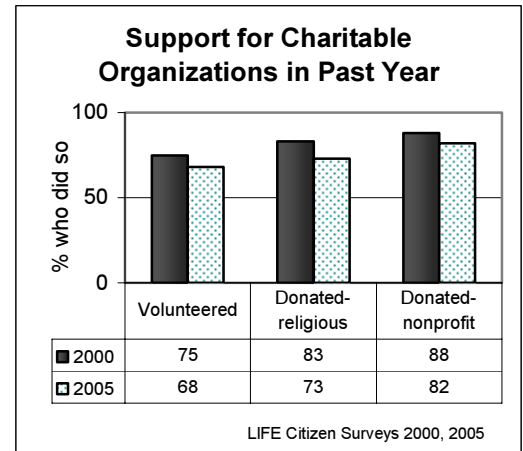


Figure 2

501 (c)(3) Organizations in Fox Cities Area

Appleton	405
Hortonville	13
Kaukauna	30
Kimberly	16
Little Chute	16
Menasha	73
Neeah	175
TOTAL	728

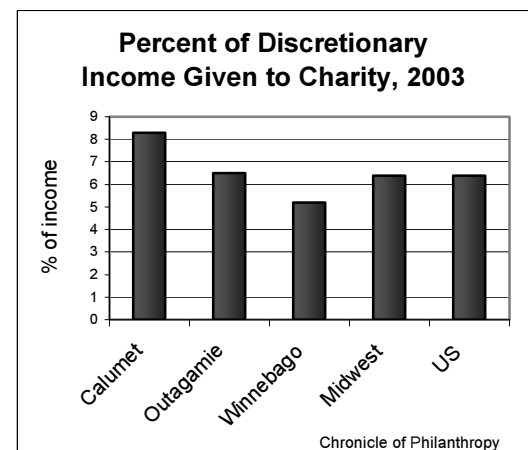
<http://www.guidestar.org>

Progress and Concerns

Many nonprofit organizations serve the Fox Cities area communities well; these organizations tend to be well supported by volunteer and charitable giving. Volunteers are used increasingly in schools and the area has recently observed greater business support for volunteer release time.

Nonprofit human service organizations increasingly take on the role of “safety net” as government services at all levels experience constrained funding. Nonprofit professionals attempt to serve growing numbers of impoverished families. At the same time, competition for funding has increased; many nonprofits with whom we spoke believed that obtaining sustaining funding for existing services was more difficult as many grants and awards are restricted to new programs.

Figure 3



In more than half of the LIFE Study Focus groups, “strong nonprofit organizations” was cited as a key strength of the Fox Cities area.