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# Drivers License Status Report for Milwaukee County

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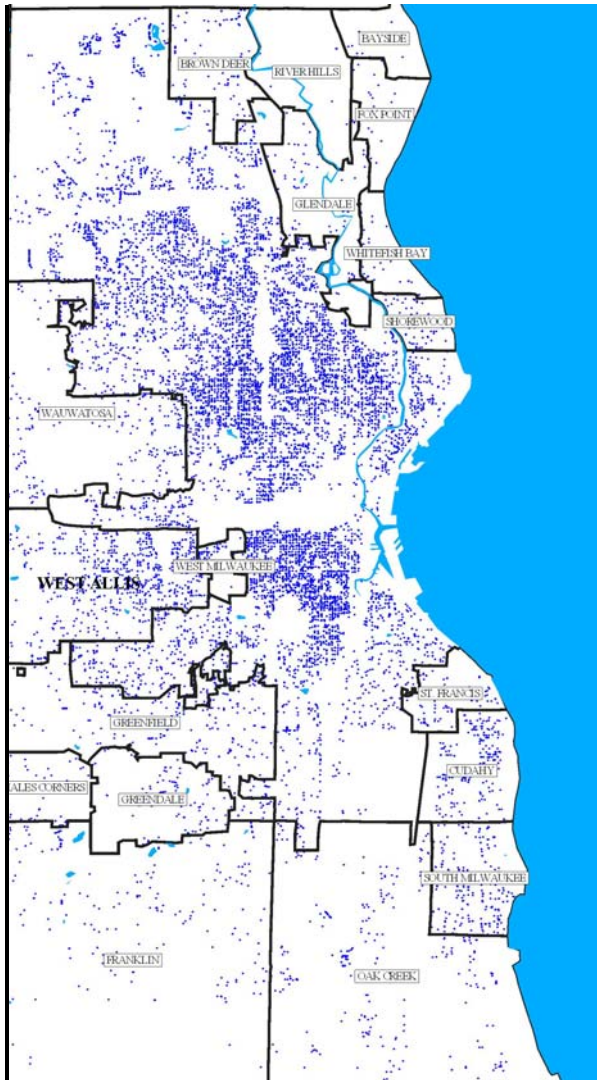
## Drivers Status Report for Milwaukee County

by John Pawasarat and Lois M. Quinn, Employment & Training Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, June 2012

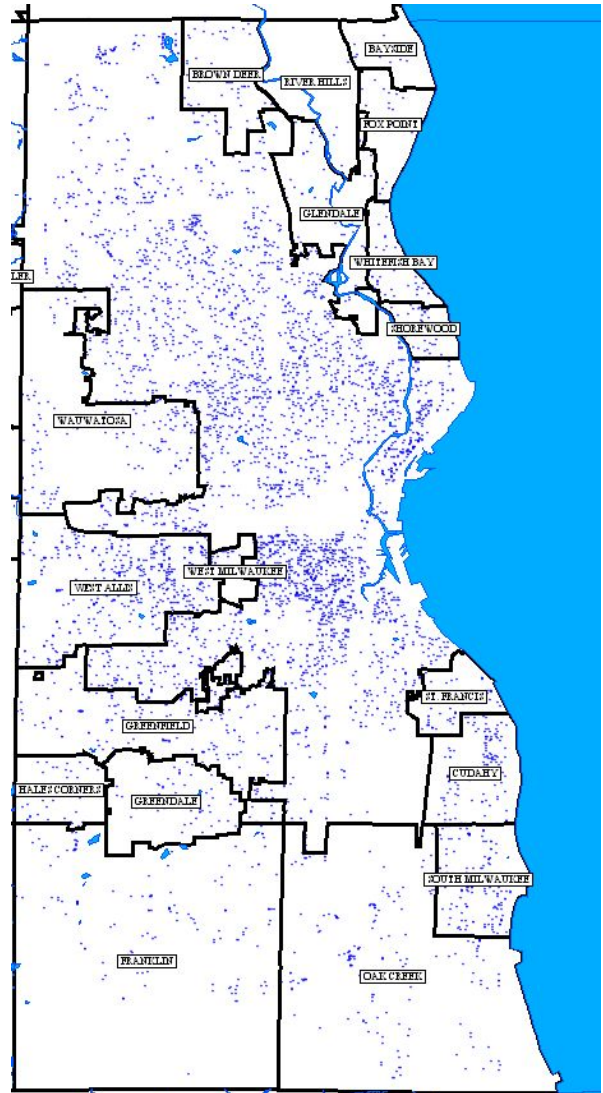
The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute reviewed the driving records of 629,222 Milwaukee County residents in the Department of Transportation files, including drivers with current licenses as of January 1, 2012 plus unlicensed residents who received suspensions and revocations from 2009 through 2011. This report details the driving status of county residents in order to identify problems in licensing, suspensions and revocations. Prior ETI reports have shown the driver license to be essential for getting and keeping employment and exceeding high school completion as a predictor of sustained employment.

- The annual number of license revocations issued to Milwaukee County residents was reduced by over 9,000 **after Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability legislative reforms were implemented** and show substantial drops in revocations to drivers in Milwaukee's poorest neighborhoods. The CDLRE successfully advocated for elimination of mandatory revocations for OAR (operating after revocation) and for OWS (operating while suspended).

14,736 County Residents Issued Revocations in 2009

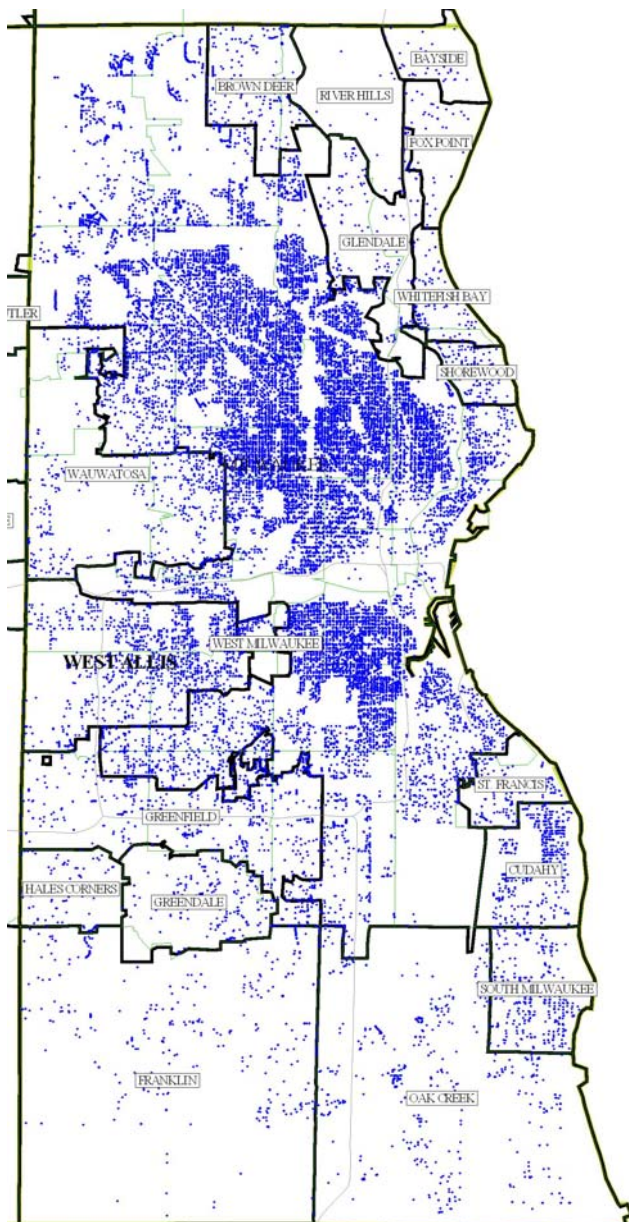


5,607 County Drivers Issued Revocations in 2011

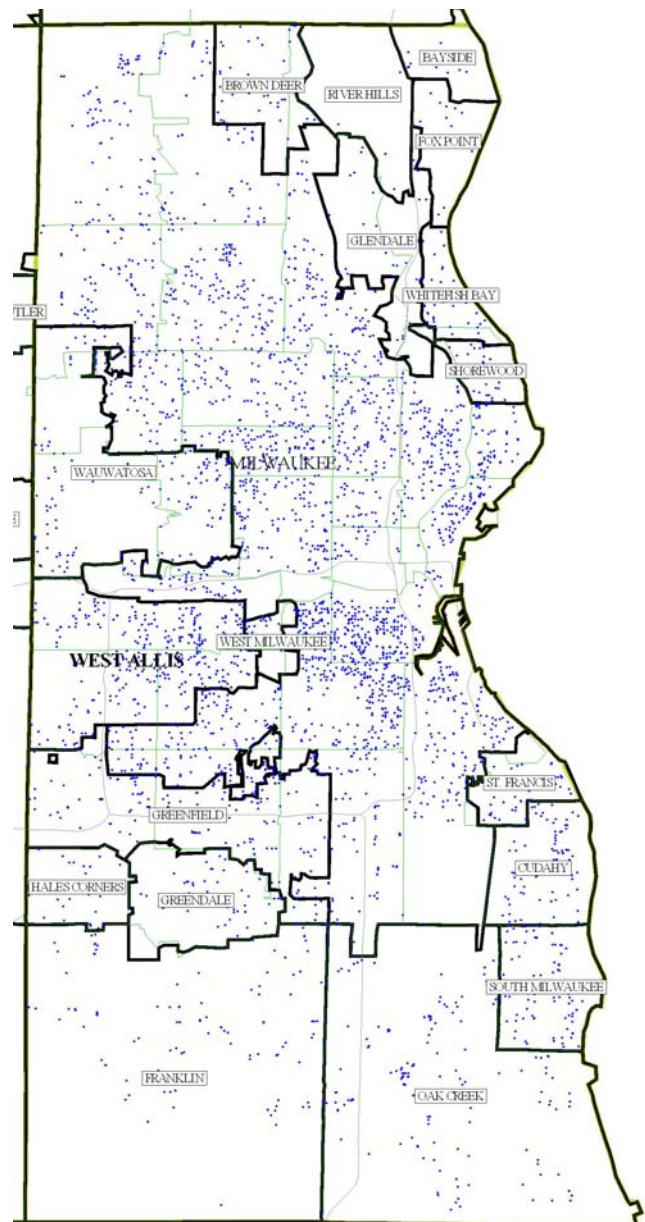


- Drivers with license **suspensions** remain heavily concentrated in lower income city neighborhoods, given the preponderance of suspensions issued for Failure to Pay Forfeitures rather than for unsafe driving. Two-thirds of the suspensions/revocations issued to Milwaukee County residents over the past three years were for failure to pay forfeitures (FPF) rather than for unsafe driving, and additional violations were issued for driving after receiving an FPF suspension.
- By contrast, alcohol-related violations (i.e., operating while intoxicated and blood alcohol concentration) accounted for 6% of suspensions/revocations. Residents receiving FPF suspensions were heavily concentrated in the city's poorest neighborhoods while OWI charges showed a more even distribution throughout the county.

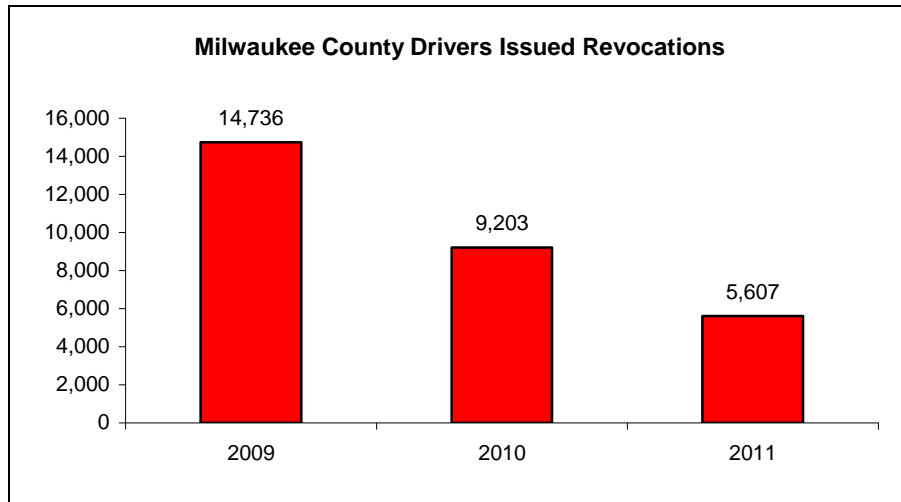
**Residents Issued Suspensions for Failure to Pay Forfeitures: 2009-2011**



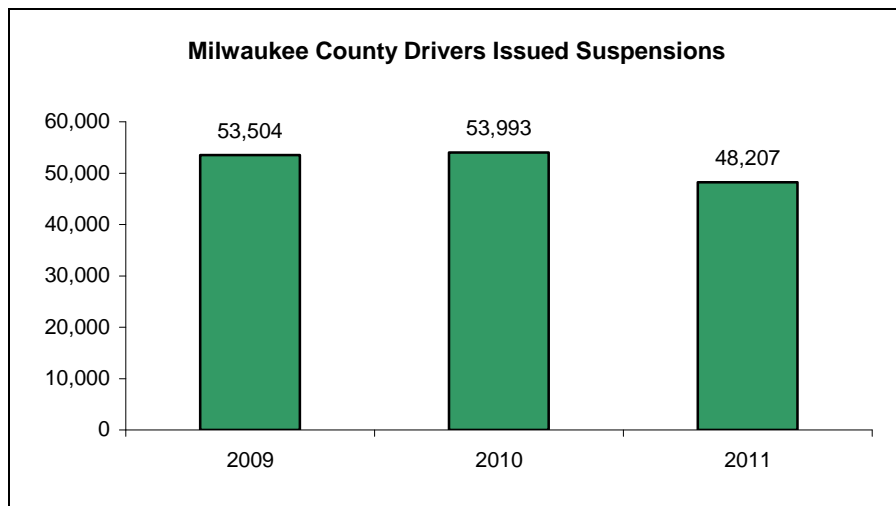
**Residents Issued Suspensions for Operating While Intoxicated: 2009-2011**



- The number of Milwaukee County residents issued license revocations dropped by 62% from 14,736 in 2009 to 5,607 in 2011, largely as a result of legislative reforms initiated by the Center on Driver's License Recovery & Employability. These reforms resulted in elimination of mandatory revocations for OAR (operating after revocation) and a large reduction in revocations for OAS (operating after suspension).



- The county has also seen a 10% reduction in the number of residents issued license suspensions.



A companion document, ***Suspension and Revocation Status Report for Milwaukee County*** provides detailed listings of the specific suspension and revocation charges issued to Milwaukee County residents in 2008 through 2011 and to state of Wisconsin residents from 2001 through 2011. The suspension/revocation report and other research on the driver's license issue by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute are available at [www.eti.uwm.edu](http://www.eti.uwm.edu).

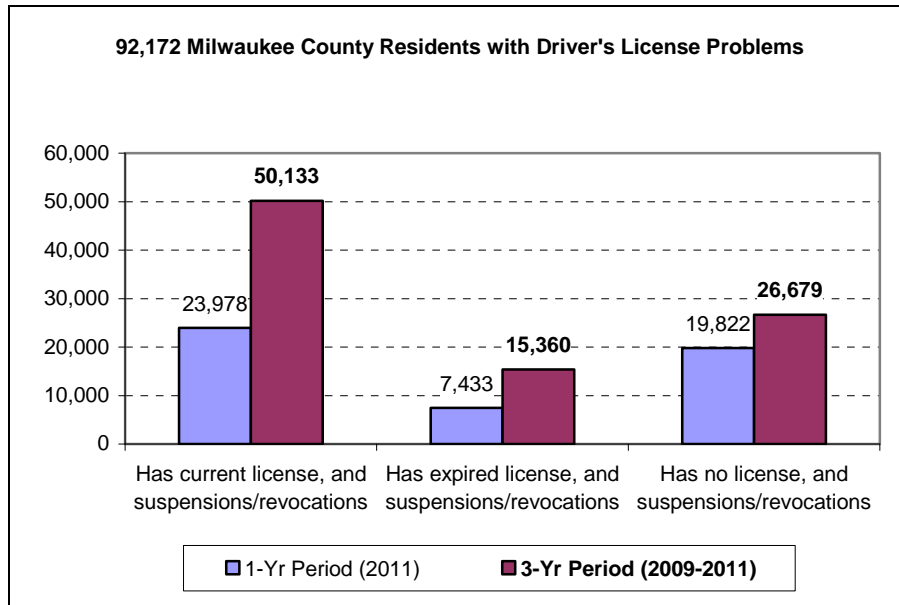
The Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability was established in 2007 to address driver's license issues through direct service programs for Milwaukee County residents seeking to clear their driving records, public policy and education initiatives, and collaboration with local and state agencies. The CDLRE is located at the Milwaukee Area Technical College and sponsored by Wisconsin Community Services with support from Legal Action of Wisconsin and the City of Milwaukee Municipal Court. (See [licenserecovery.org](http://licenserecovery.org).) Its successful work has included:

1. Aiding hundreds of county residents in handling their driver's license problems and restoring their driving privileges.
2. Dramatic reductions in the number of revocations issued in Milwaukee County and statewide.
3. Near elimination of drug conviction suspensions.
4. Promotion of programs to help lower-income teens secure affordable access to driver's ed and assistance in getting their license.
5. Recognition of the importance of helping ex-offenders restore their driving privileges.
6. Providing public education about the Failure to Pay Forfeiture ("driving while poor") suspension policies and modeling community service and installment payment alternatives.
7. Identifying the driver's license as a primary asset for employment.

### **Continuing Driver's License Challenges**

The state Department of Transportation data show thousands of county residents with license suspension and revocation problems including significant numbers driving with expired licenses or with no license ever obtained.

- In the one-year period of Calendar Year 2011 alone, 52,233 county residents received suspensions and/or revocations, including 23,978 with a current license (as of January 1, 2012), 7,433 with expired licenses, and 19,822 with no record of having ever obtained a Wisconsin driver license.
- Over the three-year period from 2009 through 2011, 92,172 Milwaukee County residents received suspensions and/or revocations. Only 50,133 (54%) of these residents had a current driver's license (as of January 1, 2012) while 15,360 (17%) had an expired license and 26,679 (29%) had no record of having ever obtained a Wisconsin driver's license.



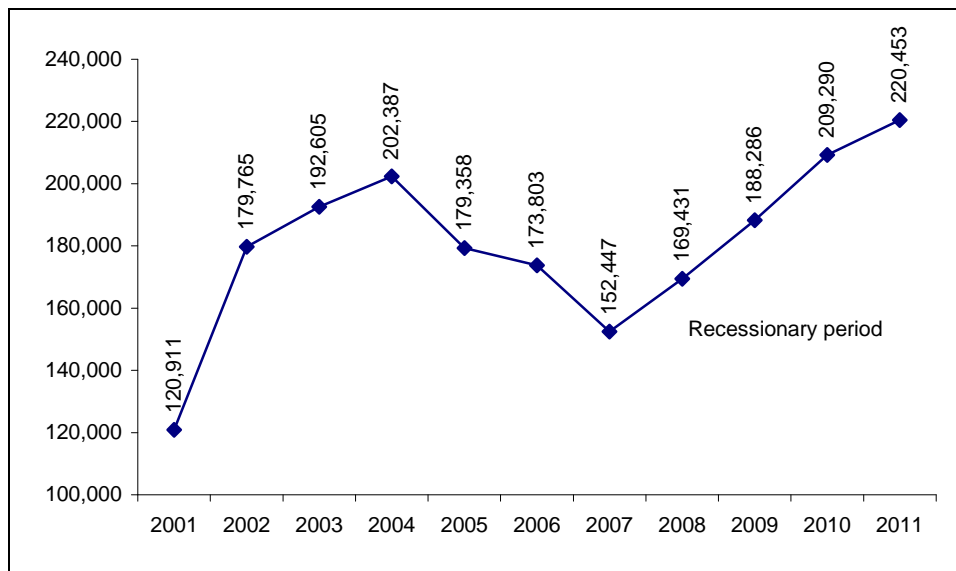
*Note: With recent changes in state law, some revocations may have been retroactively lifted, and additional individuals have resolved their suspensions/revocations through payment of fines and forfeitures. The DOT files provided did not allow calculations of the number of residents retroactively affected by law changes or with court actions clearing up their driving violations*

### Statewide Increases in Failure to Pay Forfeiture Suspensions during the Recession

The impact of the recession can be seen statewide in 2008 and after in the growth of suspensions based on failure to pay financial penalties rather than for unsafe driving.

- Failure to pay forfeiture (FPF) suspensions had been on the decline in Wisconsin with a recent low point in Calendar Year 2007; however, with the economic recession in 2008 these suspensions reversed direction and have shown dramatic increases. The annual number of FPF suspensions issued in Wisconsin jumped by 68,000 from 2007 to 2011. *Note: Some drivers receive multiple charges.*

### Failure to Pay Forfeiture Suspensions Issued in Wisconsin: 2001-2011



## Suspension and Revocation Problems Are Most Serious for African American Males

Driving problems differed by race/ethnicity, reflecting wide variations in licensing, suspensions and driving practices.

- Two-thirds of the residents receiving suspensions and revocations in 2009 through 2011 were men, and one-third were women.
- When gender and race/ethnicity are considered, suspension and revocation problems are most serious for African American males. Forty percent of black males in the DOT system have suspensions and/or revocations, and half of these are unlicensed. By contrast, 9% of white males in the DOT system have suspensions and/or revocations, with most of these having a current driver's license. (See analysis on pages 7-13.)

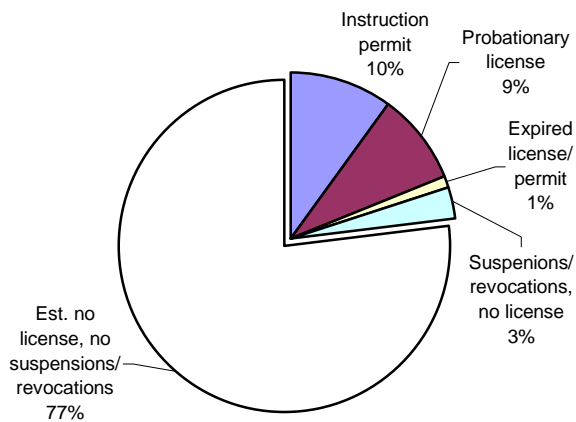
## Teens without Licenses or Learning Permits

The driver license status of Milwaukee County white and African American youth ages 16 and 17 was compared to the 2010 U.S. Census population counts in order to compare the experiences of **unlicensed teens**.

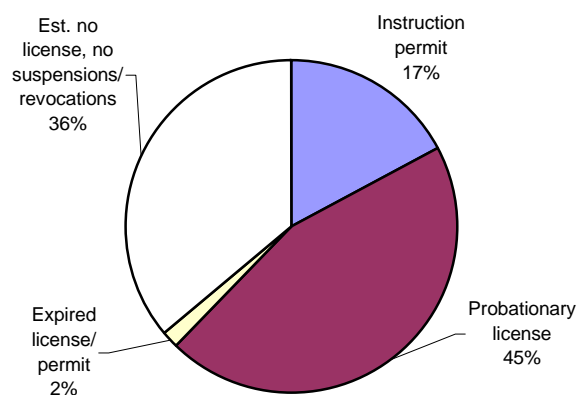
- The DOT data showed very different patterns of access to driver's education and license preparation by race, with less than a fifth of black males and less than a fourth of black female teens holding licenses or learner permits. Obtaining a driver's license and maintaining a clean driving record are essential ingredients for successful employment of African American males in Milwaukee.

### Driver's License Status of Milwaukee County Male Teens Ages 16-17 (as of 1/1/2012)

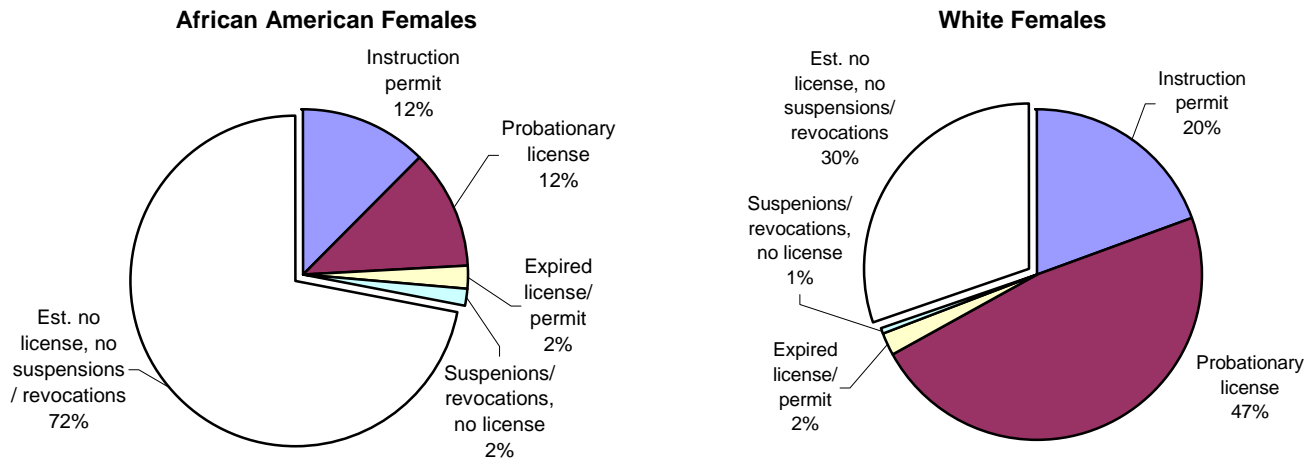
**African American Males**



**White Males**



### Driver's License Status of Milwaukee County Female Teens Ages 16-17 (as of 1/1/2012)



- More affluent teens are far more likely to secure instruction permits and probationary driver licenses (given the financial costs involved) than minority youth living in the city. In Wisconsin school-age youth must complete a school driver's education program or a commercial driving course, but state aid for driver's education in the high schools has been eliminated.

### Driver License Status of Milwaukee County Teens by Race

License status of 16-17 yr olds (as of January 1, 2012)	Females		Males		Females		Males	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
Instruction permit	612	914	493	833	12%	20%	10%	17%
Probationary license	575	2,224	447	2,160	12%	48%	9%	45%
Expired license/permit	116	103	77	86	2%	2%	1%	2%
Suspensions/ revocations, no license	87	26	139	18	2%	1%	3%	0%
Est. no license, no suspensions/ revocations	3,547	1,413	3,888	1,741	72%	30%	77%	36%
U.S. Census Count of 16-17 Year olds	4,937	4,680	5,044	4,838	100%	100%	100%	100%

The analysis below describes the licensing status of African American, Hispanic and white adults by age and gender.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

Licensing problems are most serious for Milwaukee County African American males. Over 28,000 of the 70,848 males in the DOT population had received suspensions and/or revocations in the past three years, and half of the males issued suspensions and revocations do not have current licenses.

### Driver's License Status of Milwaukee County African American Males in DOT Population

License Status (as of 1/1/2012)	3 Years (2009-2011)		1 Year (2011 only)	
Has a current license, no suspensions/revocations	42,712	60%	49,292	77%
Has a current license, and suspensions/revocations	14,098	20%	7,518	12%
Has an expired license, and suspensions/revocations	5,454	8%	2,913	4%
Has no license, and suspensions/revocations	8,584	12%	4,600	7%
Total African American males in DOT population*	70,848	100%	64,323	100%

\* The population includes persons with a current driver's license (regular, probationary, or instruction permit) plus persons with suspensions and revocations recorded in 2009 through 2011. Note: some revocations may have been lifted by new state legislation.

All ages of African American males showed large numbers with license suspensions and revocations. For men in their prime early work years (ages 20 to 34) more men had suspensions and revocations than clear licenses. The highest numbers of suspensions and revocations were issued to men in their twenties.

### License Status of African American Males by Age

Age (as of 1/1/2012)	Current License and no suspensions/revocations	Current license, with suspensions/revocations#	Unlicensed*, and suspensions/revocations	Number with suspensions/revocations
15 - 19	2,477	370	963	1,333
20 - 24	3,250	2,225	3,653	5,878
25 - 29	3,241	2,622	2,859	5,481
30 - 34	3,857	2,401	1,902	4,303
35 - 39	4,135	1,933	1,281	3,214
40 - 44	4,822	1,548	1,022	2,570
45 - 49	4,181	1,116	931	2,047
50 - 54	4,491	813	742	1,555
55 - 59	3,950	563	425	988
60 - 64	3,268	311	171	482

#Suspensions and revocations are counted for the three year period 2009 - 2011. Some revocations may have been lifted under new state legislation; other drivers may have cleared up their suspensions.

\* Unlicensed includes persons with no license or with an expired license.

## HISPANIC MALES

Licensing problems are also serious for Milwaukee County Hispanic males, where 29% of those in the DOT population had received suspensions and/or revocations in the past three years. Well over half of the males issued suspensions and revocations do not have current licenses.

### Driver's License Status of Milwaukee County Hispanic Males in DOT Population

License Status (as of 1/1/2012)	3 Years (2009-2011)		1 Year (2011 only)	
Has a current license, no suspensions/revocations	21,026	71%	22,944	85%
Has a current license, and suspensions/revocations	3,621	12%	1,703	6%
Has an expired license, and suspensions/revocations	2,402	8%	1,015	4%
Has no license, and suspensions/revocations	2,707	9%	1,215	5%
Total Hispanic males in DOT population*	29,755	100%	26,877	100%

\* The population includes persons with a current driver's license plus persons with recorded suspensions and revocations in 2009 through 2011.

Many Latinos, particularly under age 45, had problems with suspensions and revocations. Latinos in their early twenties showed more men with suspensions and revocations than with a clear license.

### License Status of Hispanic Males by Age

Age (as of 1/1/2012)	Current License and no suspensions/ revocations	Current license, with suspensions/ revocations#	Unlicensed*, and suspensions/ revocations	Number with suspensions/ revocations
15 - 19	1,095	134	294	428
20 - 24	1,582	691	1142	1,833
25 - 29	2,426	813	1313	2,126
30 - 34	3,553	694	957	1,651
35 - 39	3,342	478	589	1,067
40 - 44	2,854	331	387	718
45 - 49	2,046	214	219	433
50 - 54	1,519	134	105	239
55 - 59	1,129	70	61	131
60 - 64	730	45	28	73

#Suspensions and revocations are counted for the three year period 2009 - 2011. Some revocations may have been lifted under new state legislation; other drivers may have cleared up their suspensions.

\* Unlicensed includes persons with no license or with an expired license.

## WHITE MALES

By contrast to the experience of minorities living in Milwaukee County, only 8% of white males in the DOT files had received suspensions and/or revocations in the past three years. Most of the males issued suspensions and revocations had current licenses.

### Driver's License Status of Milwaukee County White Males in DOT Population

License Status (as of 1/1/2012)	3 Years (2009-2011)		1 Year (2011 only)	
Has a current license, no suspensions/revocations	180,528	91%	188,187	96%
Has a current license, and suspensions/revocations	13,685	7%	6,026	3%
Has an expired license, and suspensions/revocations	2,817	1%	1,164	1%
Has no license, and suspensions/revocations	947	1%	402	0%
Total White males in DOT population*	197,977	100%	195,779	100%

\* The population includes persons with a current driver's license plus persons with recorded suspensions and revocations in 2009 through 2011.

The highest number of suspensions and revocations were issued to men in their twenties.

### License Status of White Males by Age

Age (as of 1/1/2012)	Current License and no suspensions/ revocations	Current license, with suspensions/ revocations#	Unlicensed*, and suspensions/ revocations	Number with suspensions/ revocations
15 - 19	6,942	398	172	570
20 - 24	12,024	2,506	655	3,161
25 - 29	16,394	2,940	755	3,695
30 - 34	16,544	2,293	578	2,871
35 - 39	13,841	1,333	362	1,695
40 - 44	14,589	1,197	320	1,517
45 - 49	16,038	1,038	356	1,394
50 - 54	18,507	919	314	1,233
55 - 59	18,326	569	151	720
60 - 64	15,355	282	65	347

#Suspensions and revocations are counted for the three year period 2009 - 2011. Some revocations may have been lifted under new state legislation; other drivers may have cleared up their suspensions.

\* Unlicensed includes persons with no license or with an expired license.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALES

Licensing problems are very serious for African American females in Milwaukee County, where 23% of those in the DOT population had received suspensions and/or revocations in the past three years. About 2 in 5 of the females issued suspensions and revocations do not have current licenses.

### Driver's License Status of Milwaukee County African American Females in DOT Population

License Status (as of 1/1/2012)	3 Years (2009-2011)		1 Year (2011 only)	
Has a current license, no suspensions/revocations	57,822	77%	62,844	88%
Has a current license, and suspensions/revocations	9,850	13%	4,828	7%
Has an expired license, and suspensions/revocations	2,727	4%	1,434	2%
Has no license, and suspensions/revocations	4,549	6%	2,258	3%
Total African American females in DOT population*	74,948	100%	71,364	100%

\* The population includes persons with a current driver's license plus persons with recorded suspensions and revocations in 2009 through 2011.

The highest number of suspensions and revocations were issued to women in their twenties. Most drivers aged fifty and over had clear licenses.

### License Status of African American Females by Age

Age (as of 1/1/2012)	Current License and no suspensions/revocations	Current license, with suspensions/revocations#	Unlicensed*, and suspensions/revocations	Number with suspensions/revocations
15 - 19	4,591	817	1,406	2,223
20 - 24	5,408	2,532	2,278	4,810
25 - 29	5,787	2,254	1,380	3,634
30 - 34	6,297	1,611	794	2,405
35 - 39	5,965	1,082	497	1,579
40 - 44	5,983	684	351	1,035
45 - 49	5,445	434	290	724
50 - 54	4,727	215	165	380
55 - 59	3,463	128	64	192
60 - 64	2,210	51	15	66

#Suspensions and revocations are counted for the three year period 2009 - 2011. Some revocations may have been lifted under new state legislation; other drivers may have cleared up their suspensions.

\* Unlicensed includes persons with no license or with an expired license.

## HISPANIC FEMALES

Licensing problems were identified for 16% of Hispanic females in the DOT population who showed suspensions and/or revocations in the past three years. Half of those with suspensions/revocations had an expired license or had no record of a Wisconsin license.

### Driver's License Status of Milwaukee County Hispanic Females in DOT Population

License Status (as of 1/1/2012)	3 Years (2009-2011)		1 Year (2011 only)	
Has a current license, no suspensions/revocations	16,989	84%	17,829	92%
Has a current license, and suspensions/revocations	1,546	8%	706	4%
Has an expired license, and suspensions/revocations	624	3%	303	2%
Has no license, and suspensions/revocations	1,003	5%	476	2%
Total Hispanic females in DOT population*	20,162	100%	19,314	100%

\* The population includes persons with a current driver's license plus persons with recorded suspensions and revocations in 2009 through 2011.

The most Latina drivers with the most serious suspension and revocation problems are in their twenties and thirties.

### License Status of Hispanic Females by Age

Age (as of 1/1/2012)	Current License and no suspensions/revocations	Current license, with suspensions/revocations#	Unlicensed*, and suspensions/revocations	Number with suspensions/revocations
15 - 19	1,152	62	128	190
20 - 24	1,813	420	509	929
25 - 29	2,371	393	398	791
30 - 34	2,733	262	259	521
35 - 39	2,649	169	161	330
40 - 44	2,069	109	83	192
45 - 49	1,510	70	56	126
50 - 54	1,124	35	21	56
55 - 59	754	15	9	24
60 - 64	419	8	3	11

#Suspensions and revocations are counted for the three year period 2009 - 2011. Some revocations may have been lifted under new state legislation; other drivers may have cleared up their suspensions.

\* Unlicensed includes persons with no license or with an expired license.

## WHITE FEMALES

Very few of the Milwaukee County white females in the DOT population had received suspensions and/or revocations in the past three years. Most of those issued suspensions and revocations had current licenses.

### Driver's License Status of Milwaukee County White Females in DOT Population

License Status (as of 1/1/2012)	3 Years (2009-2011)		1 Year (2011 only)	
Has a current license, no suspensions/revocations	193,802	96%	197,110	99%
Has a current license, and suspensions/revocations	5,848	3%	2,540	1%
Has an expired license, and suspensions/revocations	937	1%	421	0%
Has no license, and suspensions/revocations	514	0%	229	0%
Total White females in DOT population*	201,101	100%	200,300	100%

\* The population includes persons with a current driver's license plus persons with recorded suspensions and revocations in 2009 through 2011.

Compared to African American and Hispanic females, relatively few white women in the county have suspended or revoked licenses. The highest numbers of white women with suspensions and revocations are in their twenties.

### License Status of White Females by Age

Age (as of 1/1/2012)	Current License and no suspensions/ revocations	Current license, with suspensions/ revocations#	Unlicensed*, and suspensions/ revocations	Number with suspensions/ revocations
15 - 19	7,248	234	157	391
20 - 24	13,331	1,577	386	1,963
25 - 29	18,096	1,589	333	1,922
30 - 34	17,734	928	191	1,119
35 - 39	13,842	460	104	564
40 - 44	14,615	367	91	458
45 - 49	16,712	257	81	338
50 - 54	19,447	218	57	275
55 - 59	18,845	103	32	135
60 - 64	16,082	60	11	71

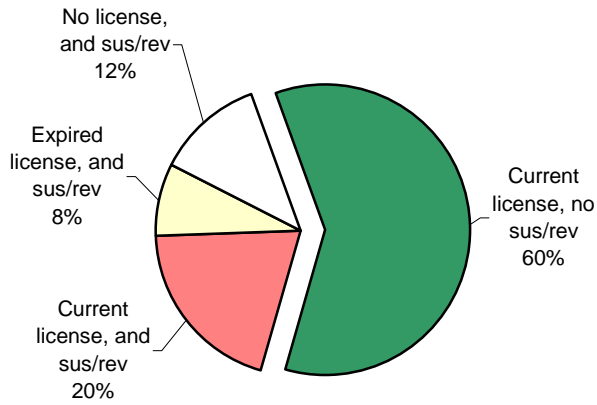
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\* Unlicensed includes persons with no license or with an expired license.

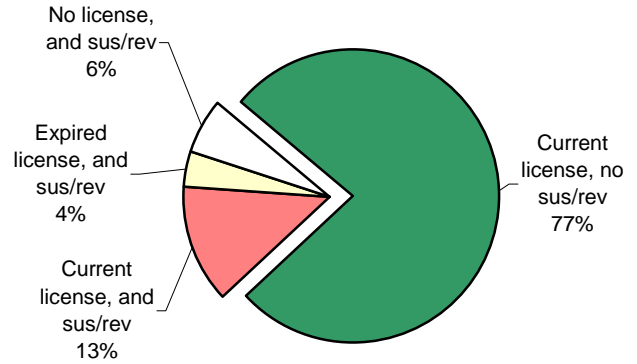
## License Status of Milwaukee County Residents in the DOT Files

Does not include residents with no license (as of 1/1/2012) and no suspensions/revocations (in 2009-2011)

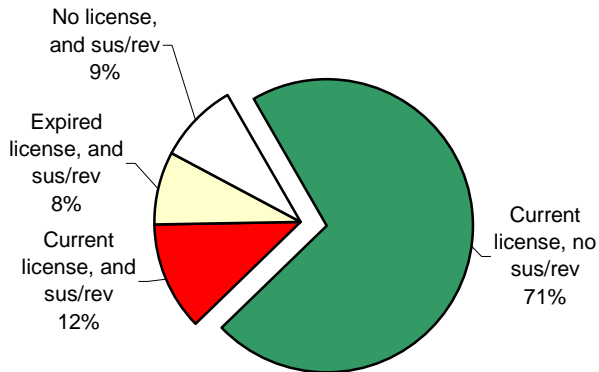
**African American Males**



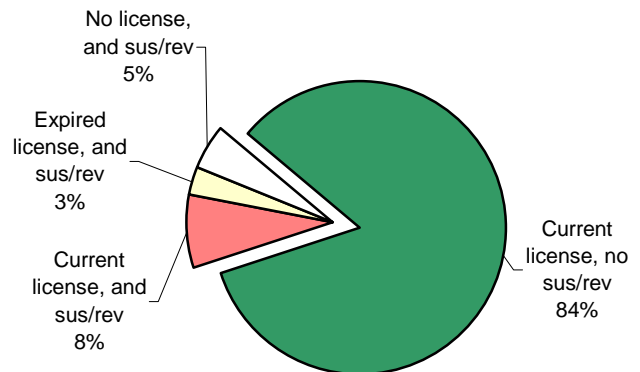
**African American Females**



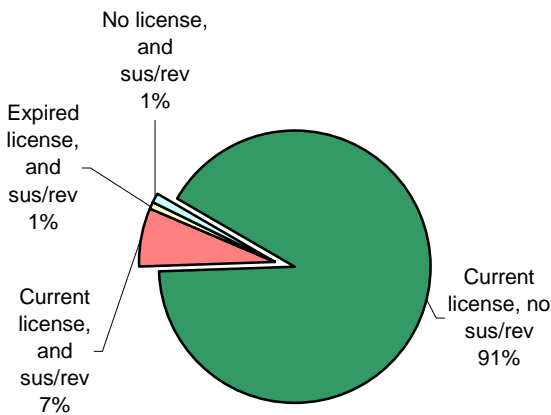
**Hispanic Males**



**Hispanic Females**



**White Males**



**White Females**

