



Families At-Risk in Anoka County

Priority Health Issue: **THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES ARE AT RISK** due to a variety of socio-economic conditions including: financial hardship, violence, and stress; as well as the lack of: health insurance, knowledge of community resources, family support, parenting skills, affordable housing, child and elder care.

Families face a number of economic and social conditions and barriers that influence their health.

These barriers may be short-term or long-term, and they impact the ability of a family to care for themselves and their individual members.

They impact emotional health, feelings of adequacy, learning and performance, health and nutritional status, and the ability to identify and obtain services.

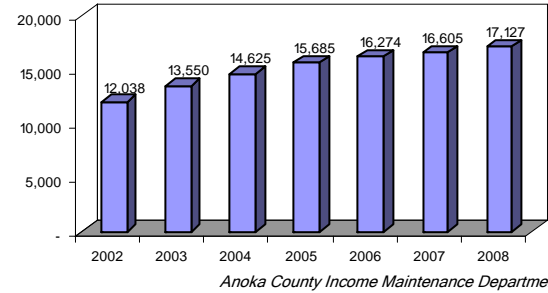
Families, for the first time, may face financial hardships and lack the knowledge about supportive community resources and how to access those resources.

The challenges facing families may include: economic hardship; stress; lack of family support; lack of parenting skills; lack of affordable housing; and lack of quality, affordable child care/elderly care.

Children who experience poverty are less likely to be healthy, both physically and mentally, less likely to become productive in the workforce, more likely to become teen parents, and more likely to become arrested and incarcerated.

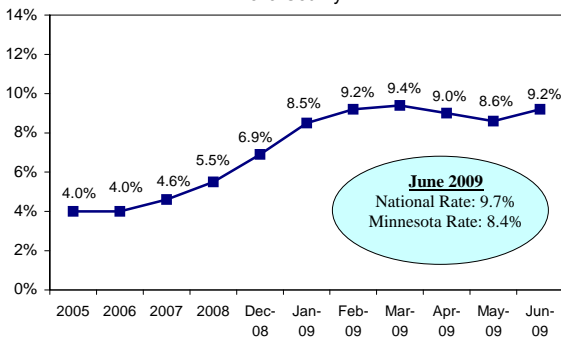
Services for Low Income

Income Maintenance Average Monthly Case Load Unduplicated Cases Anoka County

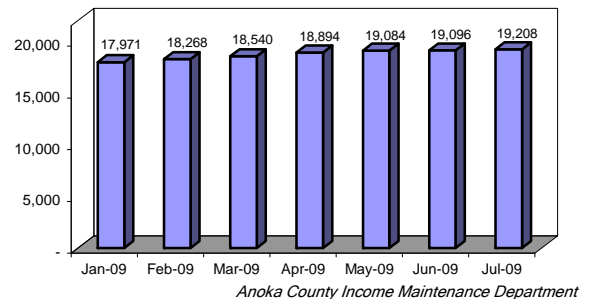


Unemployment and Poverty

Unemployment Rate Anoka County

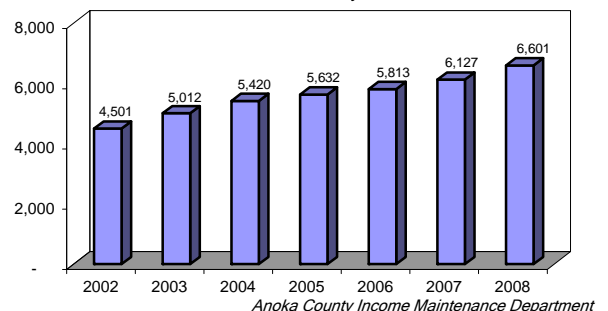


Income Maintenance Average Monthly Case Load Actual Cases - 2009 Anoka County

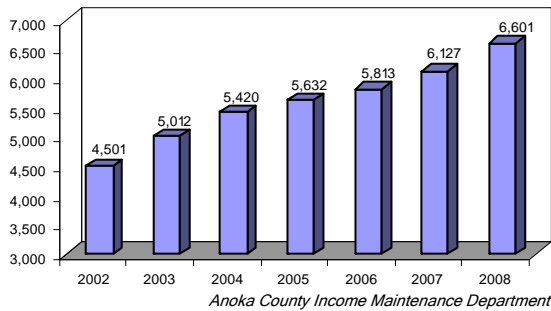


- An estimated 6.4% of Anoka residents in 2007, the latest information available, were in poverty. This was in contrast to 4.2% in the 2000 U.S. Census. It is probable that the 2010 U.S. Census continues to show an increase.
- An estimated 8% of children under the age of 18 were in poverty in 2007, as compared to 5.5% in the 2000 U.S. Census.

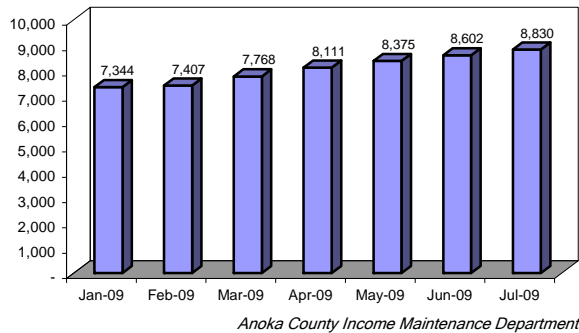
Income Maintenance - Food Stamps Average Monthly Case Load Anoka County



Income Maintenance - Food Stamps
Average Monthly Case Load
Anoka County

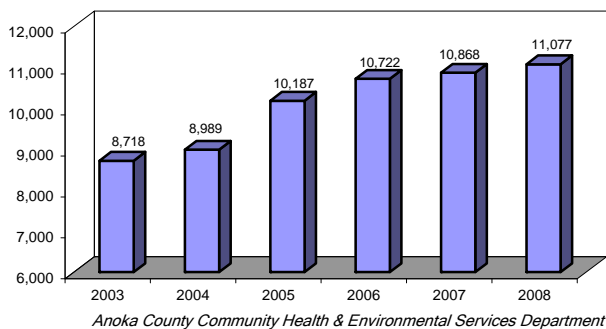


Income Maintenance - Food Stamps
Actual Cases - 2009
Anoka County



The number of residents receiving support from Income Maintenance and receiving food stamps on a monthly basis continues to increase.

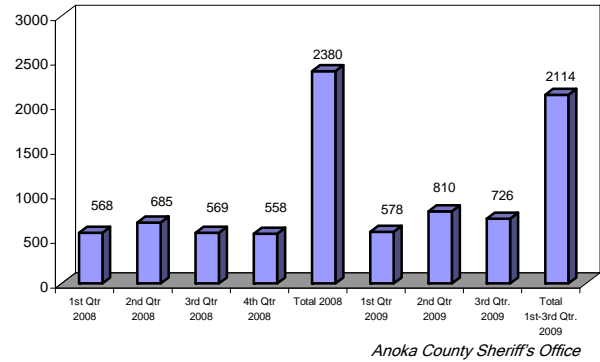
WIC Participants
Unduplicated Cases
Anoka County



Also continuing to have an increase in participants is WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), a federally funded program that provides short-term, low-cost preventative services for pregnant/nursing women, infants, and children under five years of age.

Housing

Mortgage Foreclosures
Anoka County



Data in 2008 showed that more residents were at risk for losing their homes and having to change their living situations. They may move from houses to apartments, move in with others, or have no housing at all.

The gap between the cost of housing and what people can afford is a major cause of homelessness. The number of Anoka residents who are considered homeless is growing.

- The Anoka County homeless count on January 24, 2008, identified 609 people experiencing homelessness. The number of children with adults was 191.
- The count on January 28, 2009, identified 1,004 people as homeless. (This was an increase of 64% in the number of homeless people counted, compared to the prior year.) The total number of homeless children was 385.

Parenting Skills

There are many factors that can contribute to the lack of skills a mother and father may have in trying to raise their children in a healthy and nurturing environment.

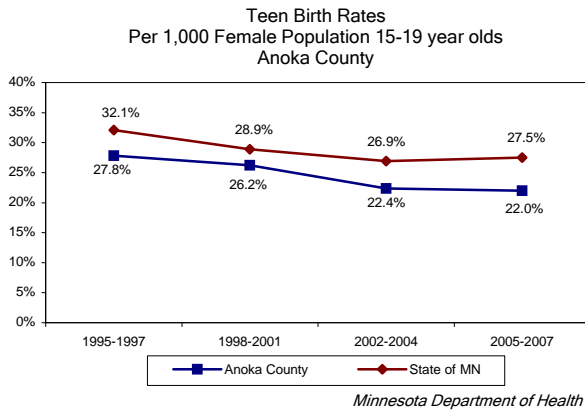
Some of these are related to lack of experience and knowledge, while others are the result of incidents or situations that a parent or parents experienced.

These may include such factors as

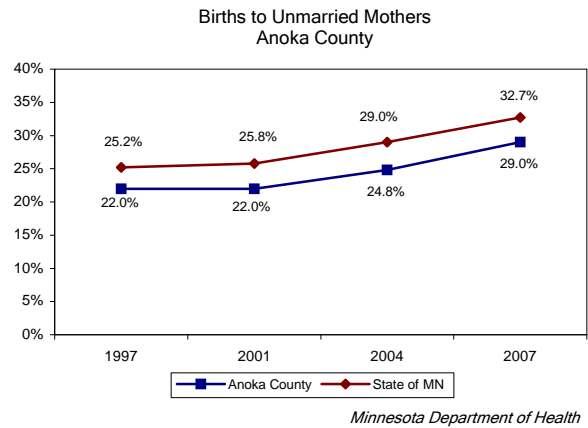
- Adolescent parents.
- Lack of knowledge of child growth and development.
- Insufficient financial resources to meet family needs.
- Family history of alcohol or other substance abuse.
- Family history of violence and neglect.
- Displaced persons such as refugees and immigrants.

- Lack of social support.
- Long-term welfare/family instability.
- Mental or physical health concerns.
- Homelessness.

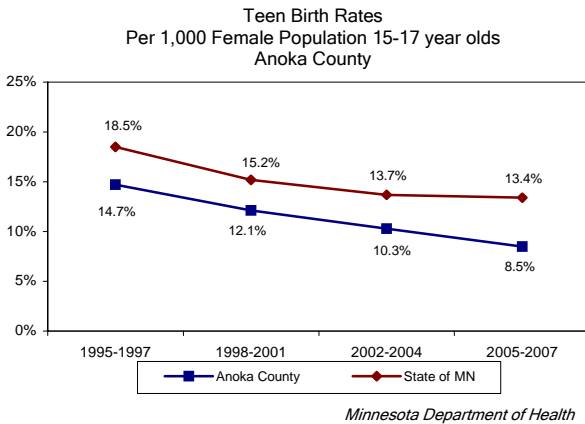
While the overall data for Anoka County showed that the number of young teen mothers was decreasing, the Community Health and Environmental Services Department's own data showed that the number of young teens visited by public health nurses did increase.



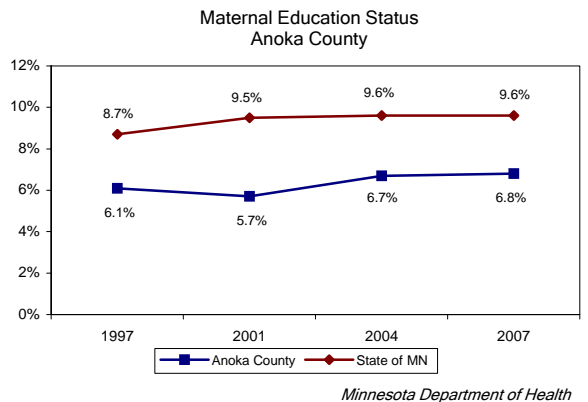
While teen birth rates have been decreasing since 1995, they leveled off between 2002 and 2007. Anoka's teen birth rate is 22 live births per 1,000 female population.



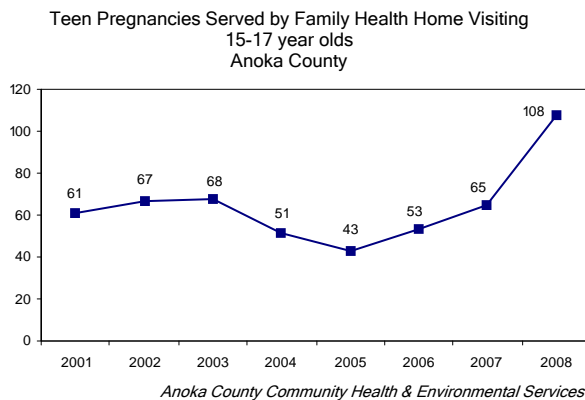
The percent of births to unmarried mothers in Anoka County has been increasing from 22% of the births in 1997 to 29% of births in 2007.



There was concern expressed in the CHES Community Health Assessment focus groups about the increasing number of younger teen single mothers.



There has also been a slight increase in the percentage of mothers whose education status is considered low. (This relates to mothers who did not complete 12 years of school by a certain age, but who were originally expected to do so.) In 1997, 6.1% of Anoka County mothers giving birth were considered to be in this category. This had increased to 6.8% in 2007.



Support and knowledge are also a consideration for others (such as single fathers or grandparents) who are assuming new parenting roles.

In 2007, the U.S. Census' American Community Survey (ACS) in Anoka County showed that 3,011 single fathers were parenting their own children under the age of 18.

Anoka County Community Corrections reported the following custody evaluation recommendations for 2004 to 2007:

- 2004 – 32% for father’s physical custody.
- 2005 – 20% for father’s physical custody.
- 2006 – 30% for father’s physical custody.
- 2007 – 21% for father’s physical custody.

The 2007 ACS report also showed that 2,164 grandparents were responsible for raising their grandchildren. Of these, 1,226 had been raising their grandchildren for three or more years.

Concerns were also raised in the community focus groups that the economic environment may put such stress on parents and family members that children’s needs may be set aside and children may feel isolated.

Child Care

Quality, affordable childcare has consistently been a challenge for families. The lack of the availability of such care has placed parents in the position of sometimes having to put their children in less than appropriate situations. This can impact the desired development and growth of children.

The effect of economic conditions may change the way in which children are cared for in the community. Parents may need support in defining and honing their parental skills.

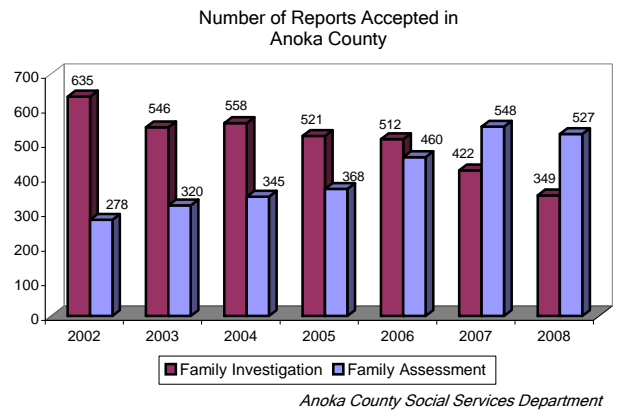
Violence

Violence is comprised of words and actions that hurt people. Interpersonal violence includes such areas as child maltreatment, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, youth violence, maltreatment of the elderly and vulnerable adults, workplace violence, and bias-motivated assaults.

It takes its toll in lives, suffering, injury, disability, mental health, security, human potential, and quality of life.

Families, communities, and systems often experience an intergenerational impact, as well.

Child Maltreatment

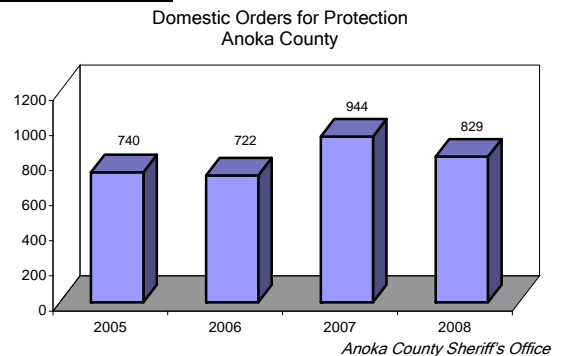


In 2002, a change in program services occurred. Anoka County children, who have been identified as possible victims of child maltreatment, may be served via the Family Assessment Program.

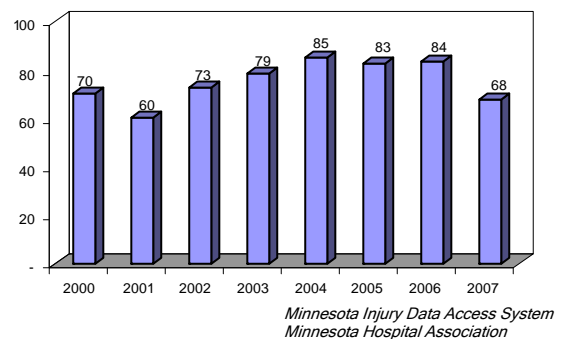
Children are included in the traditional program where there is reason to believe the child’s safety and well-being is in jeopardy.

In 2008, 527 children were in the Family Assessment Program in which they work with less severe abuse situations and provide support and build on the family’s strengths.

Adult Violence



Battering/Maltreatment Hospital Discharge Data Anoka County



Hospital discharge data are included from both the Emergency Department and Inpatient sources.

Staff at the Alexandra House, which provides 24-hour emergency shelter, support services and advocacy to victims of domestic and sexual violence, noted the following from their own service experiences:

- An increased level or severity of violence in 2008.
- A greater number of clients, who after they have left the abusive relationship, are actively stalked by their former partner.
- An increase in the number of cases involving abuse of an elder parent at the hands of an adult child.

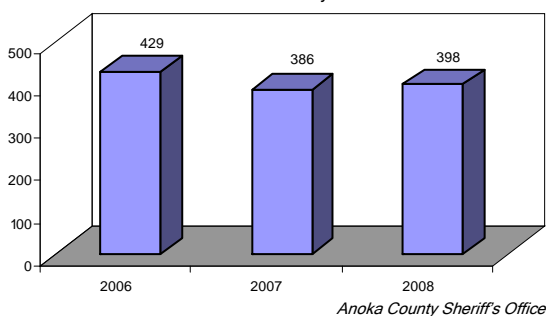
In 2007, Alexandra House staff provided the following to Anoka County residents:

- Criminal justice advocacy to 480 victims of domestic assault.
- Assisted 201 clients in filling orders for protection.
- Provided legal representation to 157 petitioners in their protection order proceedings.

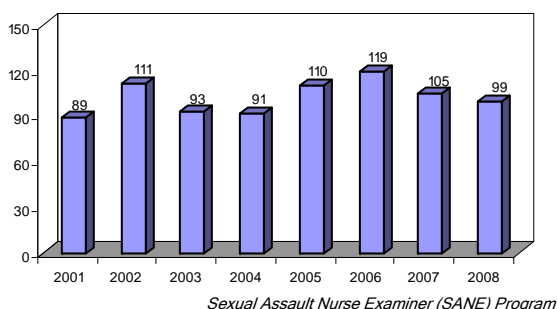
There was concern expressed in the community interviews that the current and continuing economic situation will have an impact on family violence in the community.

While focus groups suggested that violence will probably increase because of the high stress in people's lives, family violence may not be reported because of decisions by families to stay together because of economic concerns. There may be more instances of violence occurring behind closed doors.

Criminal Sexual Assault
Anoka County



Sexual Assault Victims
Anoka County



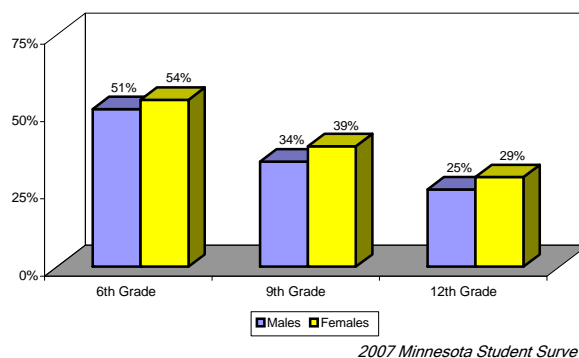
The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (SANE) provides the medical and forensic component for victims of sexual assault.

Student Violence

Anoka County students in the 2008 Minnesota Student Survey reported on the following issues:

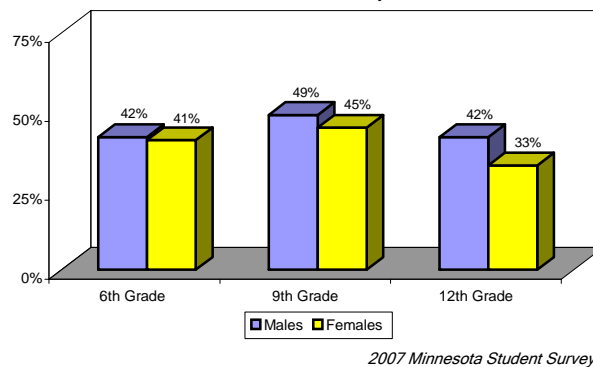
- 6th graders (regardless of gender), and 9th and 12th grade females are more likely to have been physically abused than 9th and 12th grade males.
- 1 in 7 of the 6th graders, 1 in 7 of the 9th grade females, and 1 in 9 of the 12th grade females reported physical abuse.

Anoka Students Who were Bullied
Anoka County



Females are more likely than males to have been bullied in the 30 days prior to the 2007 survey.

Anoka Students Who have Bullied Someone
in the Last 30 Days
Anoka County



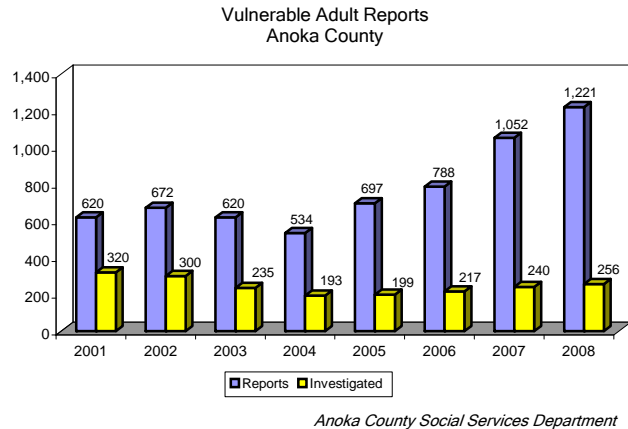
Over 40% of 6th and 9th graders (regardless of gender), and 12th grade males have bullied someone in the 30 days prior to the 2007 survey. The exception is 12th grade females; but, one-third still reported they bullied someone.

There has been a consistent decline in the number of students reporting over the years in the Minnesota Student Survey that they have hit or beat up another person in the past year.

Dating Violence

- 17% of 12th grade females reported in 2007 that someone they were dating hit, threatened, or made them feel afraid.
- 15% of 12th grade females reported in 2007 that someone they were dating forced them to have sex or do something sexual.

Vulnerable Adults



Focus groups identified the issue of seniors and disabled being another population who may be at risk for increased violence and fraud in the current economic climate.

Population Changes

During the later part of 2000, the population seeking and needing services changed. Economic challenges identified a new population who need support in addressing their on-going problems.

The community organizations have identified them as the “givers who have become the recipients.”

This new population has traditionally not sought help in feeding and housing their families, in addressing their stress and discouragement, and in knowing where to find help and support.

Organizations are having to find new strategies, resources, partners, and outreach methods to help this category of families at risk.

Sources

Data for this report was derived from the following sources:

Anoka County Community Health & Environmental Services Department
<http://www.anokacounty.us/>

Anoka County Income Maintenance Department
<http://www.anokacounty.us/>

Anoka County Social Services Department
<http://www.anokacounty.us/>

Anoka County Sheriff's Office
http://www.anokacounty.us/v3_sheriff/index.html

Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, Human Services, & Public Safety, “Minnesota Student Survey 1992-2007 Trends: Behaviors, Attitudes and Perceptions of Minnesota’s 6th, 9th, and 12th Graders” (2007)
<http://education.state.mn.us/>

Minnesota Department of Health
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/>

Positively Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
<http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/>