**Fiscal Facts: Indicators Show Positives, Concerns for Kenosha County’s Economy, Wellbeing**

As Kenosha County has landed several major economic development projects in the past decade, it

has trended favorably on economic measures such as unemployment and poverty rates, and compares favorably to peer counties nationally in its recent pace of employment growth.

Yet a new Wisconsin Policy Forum analysis also finds areas for potential improvement that local policymakers and business and civic leaders may wish to consider. Relative to 11 comparison counties, Kenosha County ranks at or near the bottom on economic indicators such as average worker pay, and on several key social indicators.

In the past decade, Kenosha County attracted new headquarters for major companies like Uline and Nosco and large new distribution and production facilities for Amazon and HARIBO. In the wake of this growth, the Kenosha Area Business Alliance (KABA) commissioned WPF to examine the broader question of how the county stacks up with other similar counties on key economic and social indicators.

In addition to documenting Kenosha County’s progress since 2010 on each indicator, the analysis

compares Kenosha County to a set of 11 comparison counties of similar size and demographics.

Positive indicators for Kenosha County from these data include:

* Kenosha County saw impressive growth in total employment in the last decade. There were 23.8% more jobs in Kenosha County in 2020 than in 2010, a larger increase than in all selected comparison counties.
* Kenosha County’s unemployment rate declined from 10.1% in 2010 to 4.3% in 2021, a larger percentage point decline than in all other comparison counties.
* The poverty rate decreased substantially in Kenosha County between 2010 and 2019 and the county's youth poverty rate was cut in half during this period.

Areas of concern that local leaders may wish to target for improvement include:

* Average annual earnings for all workers increased considerably in Kenosha County between 2010 and 2020, yet the county started and ended the decade with lower average pay than all comparison counties. Kenosha’s relatively low wages could reflect, in part, the types of industries concentrated there.
* Educational attainment is steadily increasing in Kenosha County. However, the share of the county's adult population with bachelor's degrees or higher (29.6%) continues to lag all comparison counties but Racine.
* The median household income for Black households in Kenosha County ($32,328) is less than half the median among white households ($70,416) and considerably lower than the national median among Black households ($43,862). The median income among Hispanic households in Kenosha County ($53,066) also lags.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at* [*wispolicyforum.org*](https://wispolicyforum.org/research/state-tax-burden-up-but-overall-burden-still-falling/)*.*