

reported high poverty levels in 2000, all in the range of 13 to 14%. Next to Ozaukee, counties with low poverty rates included Waukesha, Washington and Calumet, all in the very low range of 3 to 4%.

Changes in poverty rates for Wisconsin counties are closely linked to changes in income. Nevertheless, there are some important exceptions. According to the 2000 Census, 9% of Wisconsinites lived in households having incomes below the 1999 poverty thresholds, a reduction in rate of 19% over the previous decade. During the same period, poverty declined nationally by almost 6% to an overall rate of 12%.

As with growth in income levels, the decline in poverty was shared across almost all Wisconsin counties. The only two counties where poverty increased, Ozaukee and Washington, were ones which had very low poverty rates in 1989. Despite the increases, both counties still had poverty rates of less than 4 percent. Oconto County fared the best with an 86 percent reduction in its poverty rate (Fig. 67).

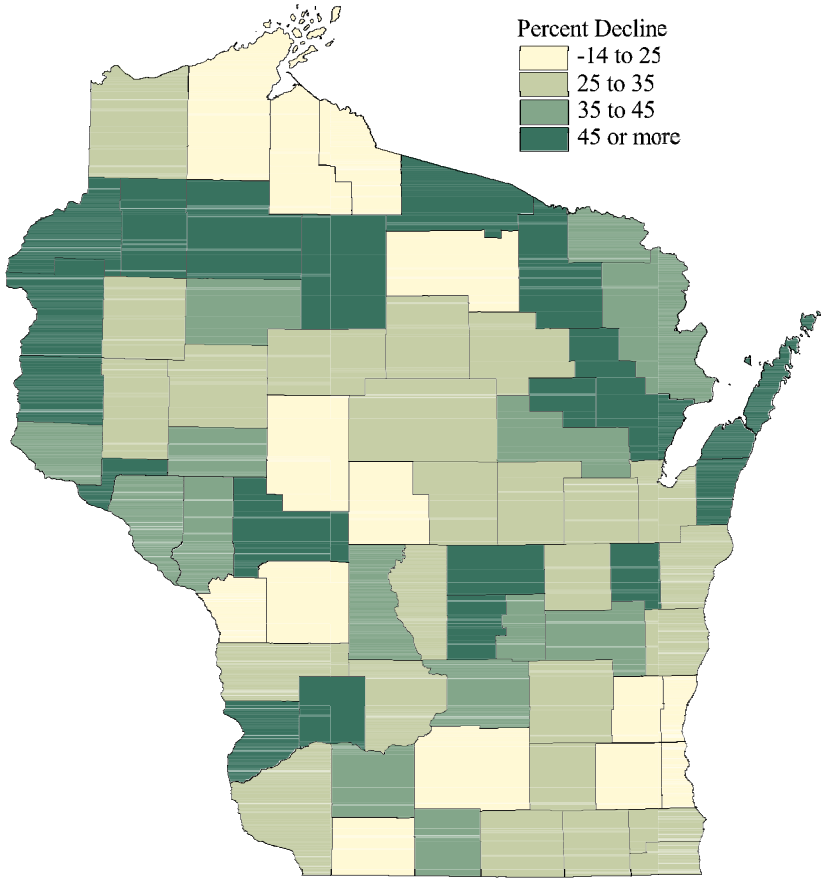
## **Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment is a measure based on the highest level of schooling completed by an individual. It is common practice to restrict this measure to the population aged 25 and older on the assumption that the majority of persons in this age group have completed their formal educations. Figure 68 shows that Wisconsin adults who have not graduated from high school declined between 1990 and 2000, from 21% to 15%. This decline is largely the result of what demographers call “demographic renewal.” Very elderly Wisconsin residents in 1990 – people who finished their formal educations at a time when high school completion rates were low – were lost to the Wisconsin population by 2000 either through death or migration to another state. In one sense, they were replaced by young people who passed their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday between 1990 and 2000 – most of whom had graduated from high school.

Wisconsinites with a high school education (but no further schooling) have also declined as more high school graduates continue their education. The share of those who have completed at least a college degree was 22% in 2000 – up from 18% in 1990.

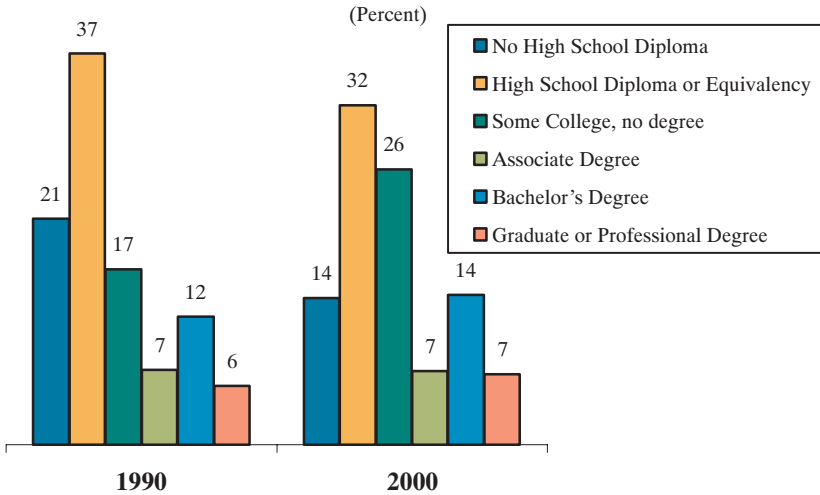
Compared to the country as a whole, Wisconsin in 2000 had a lower proportion of its adult population who had not completed high school. It also had a lower proportion of adults with a college degree. Two of Wisconsin’s neighbor states, Minnesota and Illinois, have adult populations with a higher share of college graduates than Wisconsin (Fig. 69).

Figure 67  
**Declines in Poverty Rate,  
 Wisconsin Counties: 1989-1999**



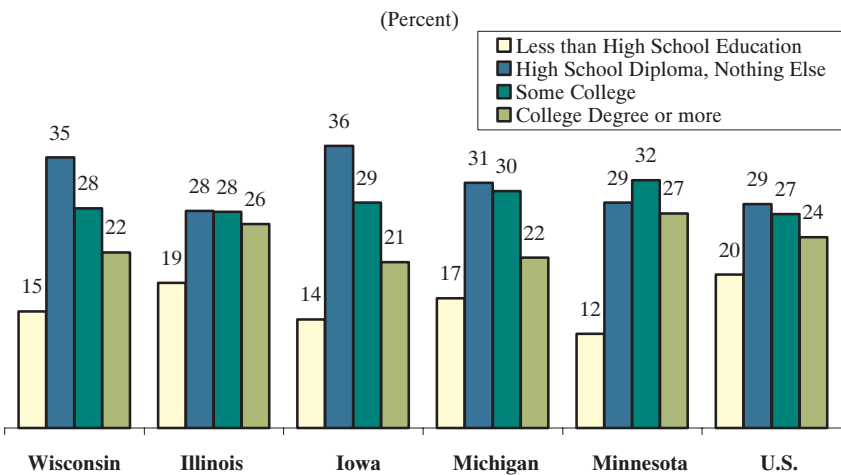
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population, 1990 & 2000

Figure 68  
**Educational Attainment Among Persons 25 and Older,  
 Wisconsin: 1990 & 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population, 1990 & 2000

Figure 69  
**Educational Attainment Among Persons 25 and Older,  
 Wisconsin, Neighboring States and U.S.: 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population, 2000