

Let's Talk Marathon County

Let's Talk, Marathon County was fully funded by **New Pluralists**: newpluralists.org.

WIPPS was awarded funding from a pool of almost 800 applicants and **no taxpayer dollars** were used for this project.

Let's Talk, Marathon County was launched in 2023 by the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS) to foster constructive conversations among community members on a variety of highly-charged and complex public issues.

Let's Talk, Marathon County uses deliberative dialogues as a way for members of the public to come together to weigh various approaches to solving problems and to find courses of action consistent with their community values.

PROGRAM GOALS:

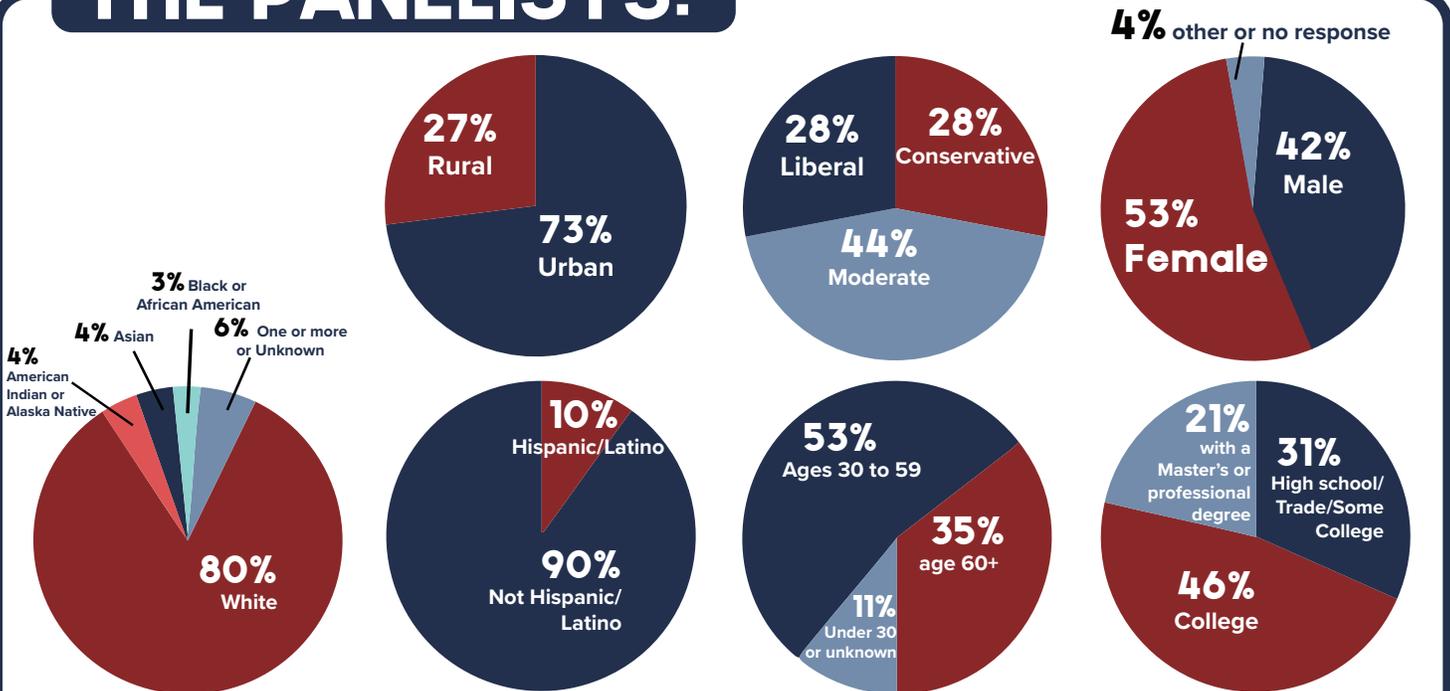
1 Create spaces for residents to address issues that matter in a civil and constructive manner.

2 Build and sustain a community culture of civil dialogue around important issues.

3 Improve feelings of trust among fellow residents despite differences in viewpoints.

4 Train local facilitators with capacity to moderate future community dialogues.

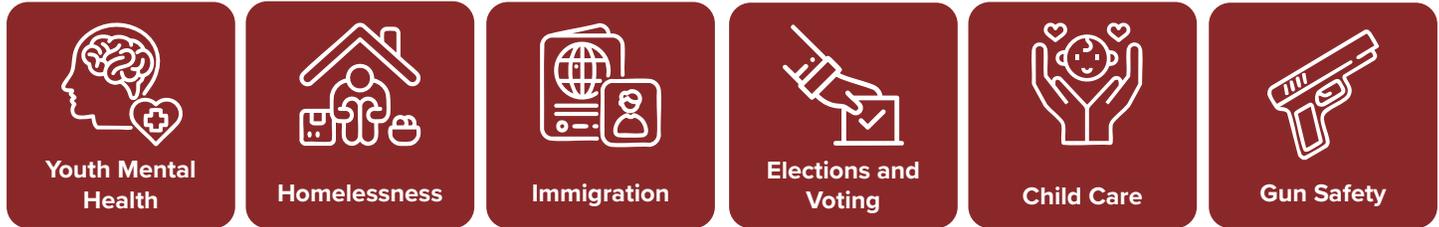
THE PANELISTS:



Over the course of the entire project, a total of 97 separate community members were included in the panel from across urban and rural areas of Marathon County. Of the 97 community members who were ever in the Let's Talk panel, 71% participated in at least one dialogue.

TOPICS AND PROCESS:

Let's Talk panelists met in groups of approximately 10 people to engage in conversations about the following public issues:



- The Let's Talk team created detailed issue guides that "named and framed" each topic and provided alternative approaches and actions, including drawbacks or tradeoffs.
- A total of 25 individuals were trained as dialogue moderators and observers.
- 50 dialogues were held; of these, 8 were conducted in Spanish.
- The dialogues were conducted largely in person and ran for approximately 120 minutes. Urban and rural areas of the county were host sites.
- Zoom dialogues were included for those who preferred a virtual option.
- Participants received a \$100 gift card for each dialogue.

More than 80% said the dialogues boosted confidence in their community's ability to have civil conversations.

At least 7 in 10 found "quite a bit" or "a great deal" of common ground on topics and solutions.

Three out of four said participants with differing views acted very respectfully.

Over half said dialogues improved their understanding of issues and solutions.

LET'S TALK, MARATHON COUNTY DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS REPORT...

Over half said the dialogues helped them consider new perspectives.

Nearly 9 in 10 valued the input from other participants "quite a bit" or more.

Two-thirds reported greater appreciation and comfort with differing viewpoints.

At least two-thirds said dialogues made them want to be more involved and learn more about community issues.

Want to Know More About Let's Talk, Marathon County?

Detailed summary reports and issue guides, can be found at wipps.org/lets-talk or use the QR code



Interested in Supporting Let's Talk or Hosting a Deliberative Dialogue?

Reach out to us at info@wipps.org

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