



## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC SAFETY & HEALTH

### Introduction & Background

Community Infrastructure refers to the physical framework of facilities and amenities that are considered to be necessary to support and comfortably sustain a community of people to live and work. This would include roads and bridges, public transportation, sidewalks, medical facilities, schools, parks and public spaces, sports and recreational facilities, water supply, stormwater management, garbage and recycling, electricity, and natural gas supply.

Along these same lines is the interest in local government to keep its citizens safe from crime, natural disasters, fire, contaminated drinking water, illness and disease, transportation related injuries, and hazardous material transport. The majority of these categories fall under the supervision of the Rockford Police and Fire Departments, and the Winnebago County Health Department.

Having adequate community infrastructure and public services provides a foundation for growth and are essential for community health, safety, and quality of life. The challenge comes in planning for all these inter-related services at once based on the current demand while also planning for the expected or future demand based on the growth and development patterns that are expected.

### Public Water Supply & Distribution

#### Water Supply Overview

The City of Rockford's Public Works Department Water Division is responsible for the largest municipally-owned ground water system in Illinois.<sup>i</sup> The city's water supply

comes from groundwater, specifically aquifers, accessed via 25 wells, evenly-spaced throughout the city at 24 locations, and including 28 reservoirs and two elevated water tanks. Public water supplies in the city, as well as the greater Rock River Valley, relies on sand and gravel aquifers, which are shallow and productive but susceptible to contamination easily from surface intrusions.<sup>ii</sup>

Rockford's drinking water is treated directly at the wells, then distributed, via booster pumps, to water mains delivering water to customers in the service area. In 2012, the City of Rockford completed a \$75 million dollar project named Rockford Water System Improvement Project (RWSIP) to improve many pumping stations with filtration and abandon old unused facilities. Since 2012, the Water Division has continued investing an additional \$16 million for the replacement and improvement of additional antiquated water treatment facilities with new modern removal treatment facilities. These improvements have resulted in fewer water quality complaints, reduction in iron levels, enhanced system reliability, and improved water pressure. These continued investments have maintained the water supply's compliance with drinking water standards and regulations.<sup>iii</sup>

#### Water Distribution Infrastructure

The City of Rockford has approximately 824 miles of water main in the city. The city owns and maintains approximately 98% of that water main, with the remaining being privately owned and maintained. The Water Division has an extensive water main replacement capital program for high risk water main. The most up to date meter, billing rates, and fee schedule can be found on the city website.

Monthly Consumption Charge		
Volume (cubic ft)	Non-residential	Residential
First 300 cubic feet	\$2.43	\$2.04
Next 3,700	\$3.66	\$3.26
Next 96,000	\$2.96	\$2.61
Above 100,000	\$1.77	\$1.56

Source: City of Rockford - Water Department

### Long-Term Water Capacity

Rockford's system annually produces 6 billion gallons of water, or approximately 16.5 million gallons daily on average. The system currently has the capacity to produce 44 million gallons per day, or approximately 14.6 billion gallons annually. However, the average daily amount consumed is 16.5 million gallons, which is well below capable capacities.

An analysis of the water levels at city wells revealed that zero are increasing, 22 are stable, three are decreasing, and three exhibit no discernible trend.<sup>iv</sup> This stability in the system reflects a declining pumping volume since records began in 1979, when 32 million gallons per day (MGD) were pumped, compared to only 16 MGD in 2019.<sup>v</sup> This decline is mostly a result of less industrial and manufacturing companies in operation, as well as the increased use of water-saving fixtures and appliances, such as high-efficiency faucets and washing machines in homes.

This overall reduction in groundwater use not only results in cost-savings for the city and consumers but also benefits the fragile aquatic ecosystem of the region. As Rockford looks at leveraging its stable freshwater levels to support aquatic wildlife and natural greenspaces, it is imperative to maintain current trends in water conservation.

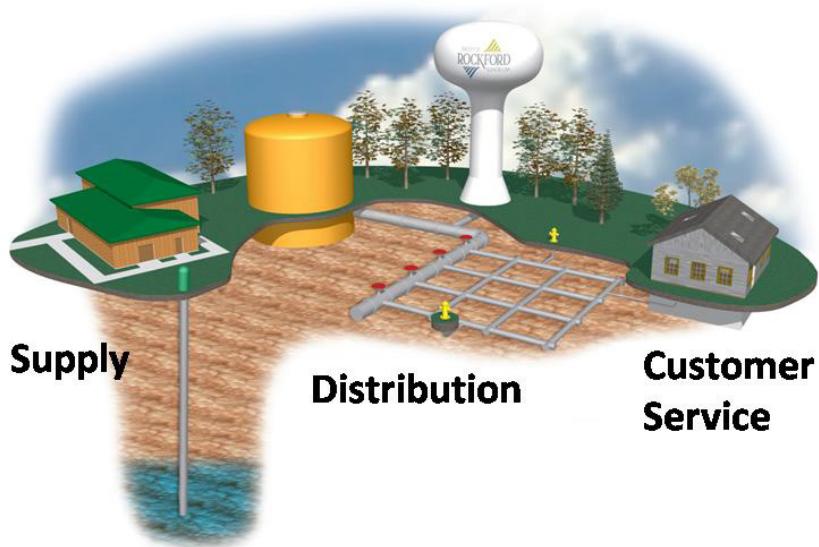
Meter Cost by Size for Residential and Non-Residential		
Size (in)	Non-residential	Residential
5/8 inch	\$16.87	\$16.87
3/4 inch	\$22.17	\$22.17
1 inch	\$32.76	\$32.76
1 1/2 inch	\$59.81	\$59.81
2 inch	\$61.53	\$91.53
3 inch	\$165.60	\$165.60
4 inch	\$271.37	\$271.37
6 inch	\$535.85	\$535.85
8 inch	\$946.35	\$946.35
10 inch	\$1,606.43	-
12 inch	\$2140.61	-

Source: City of Rockford - Water Department

Maximum Capacity vs Current Levels		
	Million Gallons per day	
Capacity	55	
Average Daily Use	16.5	
Available Capacity	44	
Peak usage	20	

Source: City of Rockford - Water Department

Although the City of Rockford has a relatively vast quantity of groundwater resources, the area does have a history of groundwater contamination. Under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), the Southeast Rockford Groundwater Contamination (SRGWC) was labeled on March 31st, 1989 as a Superfund site.<sup>vi</sup> Since that time, the city has been monitoring various wells to track pollutants that may affect drinking water quality and human health.



## Solid Waste Management & Recycling

Solid waste and recycling are managed by the City of Rockford's Community and Economic Development Department. Residential garbage collection, including hazardous waste, recycling products and yard waste, is contracted out to Rock River Disposal Services. In addition to Rock River Disposal, other waste management companies available are Advanced Waste Services, Advanced Disposal, Rock River Environmental Services, and Veolia Environmental Services located in Davis Junction, to name some.

Most of the solid waste collected in the city is taken to the Winnebago County Landfill, which is located just south of the city near Killbuck Creek, and is a part of Rock River Environmental Solutions. In addition to solid waste, the landfill also performs recycling and composting services.<sup>vii</sup> High hazard chemicals from environmental projects, industrial cleaning, and emergency responses can be disposed of at Rock River Environmental Solutions.<sup>viii</sup> Additionally, residential household hazardous waste, such as non-alkaline and automotive batteries, oil-based paint, pesticides, fertilizer and passenger tires, can be disposed of at their Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Center. Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful (KNIB) also offers recycling services for various items.

The only construction and demolition debris collection and disposal facility in Winnebago County is Advanced Disposal, located in Rockford's central city. This facility also provides commercial and residential waste collection, as well as commercial recycling and disposal. Residents curious as to how items can be disposed of, when their collection days are or want to report waste related problems, can now turn to the online Waste Wizard Tool on the city's website.<sup>ix</sup>

### Waste Performance Measures

The city uses several sanitation performance measures to determine its budget each year for solid waste collection and disposal. These performance measures allow the city to review the actual versus budgeted tonnage and forecast future costs. These measures are reported in the city's annual budget and include tonnage by waste, compost, recycling, landfill and diversion, as well as diversion rates.

Between 2011 and 2019, the city had its lowest tonnage of waste produced in 2012, with 45,497 tons. Since 2012, waste tonnage has steadily grown over time and peaked in 2016 at 51,141 tons. Since 2016, it has remained around 50,000 tons annually. Another measure of solid waste

management is compost tonnage. Composting is the biological decomposition or decay of organic wastes. Compost tonnage was at its highest in 2011, with 14,812 tons. However, compost tonnage has remained stable with an average of 12,500 tons annually. Recycling tonnage peaked in 2015 (8,230 tons) and remained fairly stable between 2011 and 2019. The final waste performance measure reported by the city relates to the diversion of recyclable materials from disposal to resource recovery. Diversion rates for Rockford have decreased since 2011, with the lowest rate of 26.7 percent occurring in 2017.

Tonnage by Type of Waste (2011 – 2019)						
Year	Waste Tonnage	Compost Tonnage	Recycling Tonnage	Landfill Tonnage	Diverted Tonnage	Diversion Rate (%)
2011	48,038	14,812	6,886	48,038	21,698	31%
2012	45,497	12,440	6,064	45,497	18,504	29%
2013	45,970	13,114	6,499	45,970	19,613	30%
2014	47,314	11,994	7,250	47,314	19,244	29%
2015	47,140	12,470	8,230	47,140	20,700	31%
2016	48,608	12,777	7,675	48,608	20,452	30%
2017	51,141	11,626	6,969	51,141	18,595	27%
2018	49,985	12,720	7,639	49,985	20,359	29%
2019	50,691	12,714	7,606	50,691	20,320	29%

*Source: City of Rockford - Water Department*

### Recycling and Diversion Opportunities

Rockford's largest recycling initiatives and programs are led by Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful (KNIB), a regional chapter of the Keep America Beautiful (KAB). KNIB is a non-profit organization with a mission to improve the environment through education, public awareness, and community involvement. One of the unique services KNIB provides is its medication drives. These events allow individuals to safely dispose of unused or expired prescription medicine and other pharmaceutical drugs. Prescriptions can also be dropped off at a 24-hour secure drop boxes located in the lobby of each Rockford Police Department District station and City Hall. Residents may drop off up to one, 1-gallon bag per visit, once a week.

City Hall also hosts an Eagle Scouts of America sponsored drop-off box for faded, torn, and worn out flags that need to be retired in accordance with the United States Flag Code.

Reviewing current waste disposal policies may introduce new opportunities to address community concerns and explore waste-to-energy initiatives. The benefits of a robust policy regarding sanitation, waste disposal, and re-

cycling are numerous and include waste reduction, lower reliance on landfills and other more disruptive disposal methods, and mitigating environmental impacts of dealing with human generated waste. Having a strong sanitation policy can ensure a clean water supply and reduce exposures to contaminants, both of which can become larger public health issues.

## Electricity & Natural Gas Supply/Demand

A stable supply of power is crucial to community health, well-being and safety, both for residents and businesses. Strong economic activity relies on stable, low cost sources of energy and Rockford benefits from the robust energy market of Northern Illinois. Competition in the Midwest has resulted in higher reliability while still maintaining lower costs. In fact, Illinois had the smallest increase in average electric prices in the U.S. between 1997 and 2016 at a 19 percent increase.<sup>x</sup> When compared to states with a similar climate, Illinois households spend two percent more for energy than the U.S. average.<sup>xi</sup> While Illinois households may pay slightly more for energy, they benefit from the stability in pricing and availability, making Rockford a desirable location for both residents and business.

Home and business heating makes up a greater portion of Illinois' overall energy use when compared to the national average, most likely a result of colder than average winters.<sup>xii</sup> In fact, over 80 percent of Illinois households use natural gas as their main space heating fuel.<sup>xiii</sup> According to the US Census's American Community Survey (ACS), 82.9 percent of housing units in Rockford were heated by utility gas in 2019, compared to 96 percent in 2010. More housing units in Rockford are now heated by electricity, which jumped from only 3.1 percent to 15.3 percent of housing units between 2010 and 2019.

Rockford's electricity and natural gas are supplied by Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd) and Northern Illinois Gas Company (Nicor Gas), respectively.

**Commonwealth Edison (ComEd):** ComEd was formed in September 1907 as a product of Thomas Edison's earlier Western Edison Light Company and is now part of the Exelon Corporation. The company serves four million customers in Northern Illinois. ComEd does not own power plants to produce electricity itself; instead, they serve as a facilitator between producers and consumers.<sup>xiv</sup>

**Northern Illinois Gas Company (Nicor Gas):** Nicor Gas operates and maintains natural gas pipes and distributes natural gas to certified marketers. They have been serving

Northern Illinois for six decades and currently have 2.2 million customers in more than 650 communities. With a 34,000-mile distribution system in eight interstate pipelines, Nicor Gas typically purchases gas during summer months, when it is less expensive, as a way to balance the cost and supply in the winter.<sup>xv</sup>

## Electricity

The sources of electricity in Illinois are becoming less carbon-intensive, but a considerable portion of electrical generation still originates from fossil fuels.<sup>xvi</sup> Looking at Northern Illinois in particular, 39 percent sourced by ComEd was fire-powered natural gas, followed by 35 percent of electricity sourced from nuclear power in 2020. Other sources of electricity were coal-fired (21 percent), wind power (3 percent), hydro power (1 percent), or some other source (1 percent). Coal generation accounted for 32 percent of electricity sourced in 2018, has decreased in recent years, while nuclear has increased. In 2020, Illinois generated most of its electricity from nuclear energy, with the states six nuclear plants accounting for 12 percent of total nuclear net generation in the nation.<sup>xvii</sup> However, given nuclear facility ages and public perception, the energy provided by these facilities may change in the future.

Due to the high percentage of electricity sourced from nuclear power, Northern Illinois had a stake in the most recent Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA). With 75 percent of the Byron nuclear plant's employees living in Lee, Ogle, or Winnebago Counties and every 100 jobs at the plant supporting an estimated 221 jobs in other industries, the planned plant shutdown put into jeopardy 2,305 jobs in the region.<sup>xviii</sup> The recently signed CEJA promises \$700 million in support for the cost-intensive nuclear energy sector.<sup>xix</sup> Wind and solar are also expected to be scaled up according to the legislation. Currently, wind energy accounts for only a small portion of the overall power generation in Illinois, but the state's environment could be excellent for further turbine development.<sup>xx</sup>

Electricity costs between January and March 2021 were 7.069 cents per Kilowatt-hour (kWh), with the transmission services charge accounting for 1.216 cents per kWh.<sup>xxi</sup>

## Solar Electric Production

The City of Rockford's allowance of solar panel installation in all major zones is codified in the city's zoning ordinance. Solar is permitted in every zone with a performance review that is conducted at the administrative level with planning and development staff. This performance review does not include a subjective design review process or design review committee. To review the full planning

ordinance pertaining to solar use in Rockford please, refer to the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance last amended in 2021 to cover new trends in solar.<sup>xxii</sup>

**Rockford currently has a few larger scale solar farms in the region.**

Horsman Quarry site, a previously polluted brownfield property owned by Trajectory Partners was developed in conjunction with the City of Rockford and other local stakeholders. The project was selected in the first round of the Illinois Solar for All program. Nexamp is the long-term owner and operator of this system, which was completed in November 2021. This project is bringing utility bill savings to over 500 low-income families in the Rockford Area and economic development to the environmental justice community the project is located in. Local low-income residents are able to subscribe to this project through the Give-A-Ray program.



Trajectory Energy Solar Project - Horsman Quarry

A Solar Farm just south of the Chicago Rockford International Airport in Rockford, Illinois, is one of the largest commercial airport solar farms in the United States and a landmark achievement in complex intergovernmental cooperation in solar power plant development. This 62 Megawatt Solar Project currently generates 3,900 MWh/year. The project's 3.06 MW Phase I is complete and fully operational in 2012 with 56 additional acres fully approved by Rockford, Winnebago County, State of Illinois, and the FAA for immediate development of the 14 MW Phase II and scaling the Project to 62 MW moving forward.

### **Natural Gas**

As noted above, the majority of homes within Rockford are heated through natural gas. Even a large portion of the electricity is produced by natural gas. Since 2018, natural gas has been increasing in its proportion of the total electricity produced increasing by 28.0 percent, but there could be a change in this as the cost per therm continues

to sharply increase.

Between April 2020 and April 2021, natural gas cost per therm doubled from \$0.26 to \$0.53, partially due to COVID-19. For residential users, Nicor charges a monthly rate of \$17.96, \$0.0838 per therm, and a Rider 6 gas supply cost.<sup>xxiii</sup>

### **Utility Cost-Saving Programs**

#### ComEd Programs

ComEd provides a variety of residential cost-saving programs to assist customers in heating and lighting their homes. One of their largest programs is their free energy assessments for single-family and multi-family properties and provides customers free or discounted products. ComEd also provides consumers with a number of rebates and discounts on Energy Star appliances, LED light bulbs, smart thermostats, heating and cooling, and pool pumps. ComEd supports multi-family housing by providing affordable housing developers access to the ComEd Multi-Family Standard, which is an integrated bundle of 13 energy-efficiency measures for building envelope, lighting, HVAC, hot water, and appliances.

In addition to residential assistance, ComEd also supports local businesses through their free Facility Assessment Program, which assists companies in identifying energy-saving opportunities in buildings and facilities, such as lighting, instant discounts, small business and facilities, HVAC, small biz kits- free and self-installing, refrigeration, lab equipment, variable speed drives (VSDS), commercial kitchen equipment, and high-performance building design for new construction. They also offer on-line energy management tools to analyze company energy usage and find programs that pay for utilizing less energy. Energy-reducing ideas, for buildings and facilities, are targeted specific to industry and sector.

#### Nicor Gas Programs

Current Nicor Gas initiatives support promising technologies that have the potential to generate natural gas savings for their customers. Similar to ComEd, Nicor Gas provides residential customers an energy assessment to receive a report on energy cost saving. As part of the assessment, customers also receive a free water-saving or weatherization kit.<sup>xxiv</sup> Additionally, some of the efficiency improvements identified in the assessment may qualify for rebates or an Energy Efficiency Loan if the work is performed by licensed contractors contactable through the website.

Another program is Nicor Gas's Sharing Program. This program is a one-time grant of \$350 or \$400 to assist consumers with their unpaid bills. To qualify residential customers must be above the federal poverty level (up to 300 percent) and the bill is in their name. The amount available is determined by a sliding scale. Similarly, Nicor Gas Energy Aide Program provides qualifying households with monetary relief for their natural gas bills.

Nicor Gas commercial customers can take advantage of a commercial energy assessment where a skilled energy advisor or certified engineer will conduct a free assessment of their building needs and to also identify energy efficiency opportunities. A report is generated following the assessment that highlights potential efficiency improvements. As with residential improvements, certain efficiency improvements may qualify for rebate if the work is performed by licensed contractors contactable through the website. Custom incentives are also available to commercial customers who install qualifying energy efficiency projects that are not eligible for rebates through other Nicor Gas offerings. There's also an opportunity for owners and property managers of multi-family rental properties with five units or more only. A multi-family energy assessment is conducted by an energy advisor who will collect information about their property's energy use. A report will be provided that details the energy needs, and opportunities for saving energy and money at each property.<sup>xxv</sup>

#### Other Programs for Residential Customers

Other energy assistance programs available to Rockford residents include:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LI-HEAP) - This program is available to all households up to 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline, with income on a sliding-scale based upon family size.

Percent of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) - PIPP allows eligible customers to pay a flat percentage of their income towards maintaining their utility service. Eligibility based upon an active residential customer utilizing natural gas heat having been LIHEAP approved and below 150 percent federal poverty level.

Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) - IHWAP offers weatherization (efficiency) improvements to low-income households based upon the combined household income not exceeding 150 percent of the federal poverty level for state and federal funding, or 200 percent federal poverty level for DOE

funding. Nicor offers similar services to customers with incomes up to 80 percent of the Area Median Income.

## Telecommunications Infrastructure

Telecommunications is a major industry shaping the economy, businesses, and daily lives of Rockford's residents. According to the Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook, telecommunications refers to "any origination, creation, transmission, emission, storage-retrieval, or reception of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, or intelligence of any nature, by wire, radio, television, optical, or other means." Unlike other utilities, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 allows any company or non-profit to enter the communications market. Additionally, the city cannot prohibit telecommunications services specifically, but can monitor and manage telecommunications facilities, towers, and usage of the public right-of-way. Current zoning ordinances addresses site location, co-location, design, height, setback, abandonment, variances, and approval standards.<sup>xxvi</sup>

All citizens, businesses, and organizations in Rockford should have access to the latest telecommunications services available on the market, as it provides its citizens with information in an affordable and timely manner, bridges educational and access gaps, cultivates communication, and fosters economic development.

### Fiber Optic Lines

Fiber optic cable lines transmit data at very high speeds and are located in city right-of-way, both above and below grade. Because fiber optic lines use public rights-of-way, the city must insure that they are used efficiently. Rockford currently has a permitting process for telecommunications and a franchising fee for SBC (Ameritech).

In March 2021, Rockford City Council signed a development agreement with SiFi Networks for utilization of public way for the establishment of a citywide fiber optic network system.<sup>xxvii</sup> The agreement is a private investment, in excess of \$200 million dollars, and includes additional opportunities to further Smart City Initiatives partnerships. Construction would likely take two to three years to fully install the citywide network. This improvement is expected to reduce internet and TV access costs for residents, could attract new providers, as well as attract economic development opportunities.

## Telecommunications Facilities

The need for and importance of towers will only continue to increase as time goes on. Currently, the major use of towers is to provide cellular phone service. Rockford is covered by a number of cellular phone towers from multiple companies.

The COVID-19 pandemic made telecommunication and the ability to work remotely an essential and necessary need for nearly every household. The pandemic highlighted the socioeconomic disparity between households with access to Wi-Fi compared to those without. As a result, cities have begun providing free Wi-Fi service in selected areas, such as in the city centers and low-income, high-minority neighborhoods. However, the growth in the Wi-Fi network will require additional towers in the area to facilitate new demands in service. The zoning ordinance cur-

rently only addresses antenna support structure and may need to be updated to accommodate the growing need for new antennas. The most important issues to address are permitted locations of antennas, safety, and cohesiveness.

## Public Safety & Emergency Responders

Protecting the public from crimes, natural disasters, and other threats are some of the most important services a city can provide to its citizens. However, preparing for and responding to these events can be a challenge for any city, especially in a city the size of Rockford, as it requires high levels of staff, resources, and money. Public safety for Rockford is primarily provided by the Rockford Police Department and the Rockford Fire Department. Both of these departments are under the responsibility of the three-member Board of Fire and Police Commissioners.

Understanding the historic and current public safety trends will help the city make decisions necessary to ensure a higher level of safety is provided in the future.

First, looking at crime rates between 2009 and 2019 the Rockford Police Department reported a significant improvement in the reduction of crimes. During this time period, there was a 38.1 percent decrease in the total number of crimes in the city, with an 18.7 percent decrease in violent crimes and a 41.9 percent decrease in property crimes.

Of the total number of crimes in the city, violent crimes made up 21.8 percent in 2019. Of the four categories of violent crimes, aggravated assaults were the most reported (70.2 percent), followed by robberies (20.1 percent), rape (8.8 percent), and homicide (0.9 percent). Both robberies and homicides saw the largest decreases between 2009 and 2019, with decreases of 52.7 percent and 35 percent, respectively. However, most recent reports from the Rockford Police Department have shown an increase of 20.6 percent of violent crimes<sup>xxviii</sup> between 2019 and 2020 (period of January to November). Both reports of shots fired and aggravated assault also saw double digit percent increases (49.4 percent and 33.2 percent, respectively). The recent increases in violent crimes is important to Rockford's public safety and needs to be recognized.

Property crimes accounted for 78.2 percent of all crimes reported in 2019, a 41.9 percent decrease from 2009. Larceny thefts (70.7 percent) and burglaries (19.8 percent) accounted for the largest number of property crimes, and also has had the largest percent decreases between 2009 and 2019 (39.2 percent and 56.7 percent, respectively).



During this period, arson was the only crime with an increase of 79.5 percent in the number reported. However, the number of arsons had decreased since 2013, when the number peaked at 107 incidents.<sup>xxix</sup> Looking at the most recent statistics, between 2020 and 2021, auto thefts and aggravated assaults saw significant increases in the number reported (80.3 percent and 21.7 percent, respectively). However, overall the total number of property crimes in 2020 (3,874) is significantly lower than the annual average (6,764.6) between 2009 and 2019.<sup>xxx</sup> Reports of robbery, auto theft, and other property crimes have also decreased between 2019 and 2020 (5.5 percent, 4.9 percent, and 17 percent, respectively).

In addition to crime, it is also important to look at the number and nature of calls for service received by the Rockford Fire Department. In 2018, the Rockford Fire Department received a total of 29,217 calls, an increase of 7.5 percent since 2016. The majority of calls received were for EMS Search and Rescue at 78.4 percent of all calls, followed by Service/Good Intent calls (11.4 percent), false alarms (5.7 percent), and fire (2.5 percent). Since 2016, the false alarms and good intent calls have had the largest increases with 11.3 percent and 18.5 percent, respectively.

Looking at structure fires, total value of buildings involved in a fire was \$29,719,819, of which only \$3,026,920 was lost. This means that the Rockford Fire Department (RFD) was able to save 89.8 percent of the value of the buildings from fires. Unfortunately, there have been causalities and injuries as a result of structural fires and the RFD always strives to reduce this number to zero.

Crime Statistics (2009-2020)											
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Homicide	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Rape	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%	9%	9%	8%	7%	8%	9%
Robbery	35%	27%	32%	29%	24%	27%	28%	29%	25%	21%	20%
Aggravated Assaults	57%	65%	59%	61%	66%	64%	62%	62%	67%	69%	70%
Violent Crimes	1,739	1,873	1,779	1,716	1,633	1,563	1,814	1,873	1,727	1,659	1,413
Arson	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Burglary	27%	29%	25%	28%	26%	25%	23%	24%	25%	21%	20%
Larceny Theft	68%	64%	67%	66%	67%	68%	67%	66%	65%	70%	71%
Motor Vehicle Theft	5%	6%	7%	5%	5%	6%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
Property Crimes	8,753	8,083	7,424	7,945	7,243	6,668	6,142	5,853	5,510	5,708	5,082
All Crimes	10,492	9,956	9,203	9,661	8,876	8,231	7,956	7,726	7,237	7,367	6,495

Source: FBI Crime Index Database

## Rockford Police Department

The role of the Rockford Police Department is protecting and serving the residents and visitors of the city. Under the direction of Police Chief Carla Redd, the city's first female police chief, the Rockford police force consists of 345 employees, consisting of 302 sworn officers, including a deputy chief, five assistant deputy chiefs, ten lieutenants, 32 sergeants, 74 investigators, and 178 patrol officers in 2021.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Some of their efforts to increase public safety include:

**Citizen Police Academy:** The mission of the Citizen Police Academy is to build cooperative relationships between citizens and the police through training and education. The police academy produces a network of informed citizens who can return to their neighborhoods to organize, encourage and mobilize others, and to partner with police in reducing crime in Rockford.

**Community Services Unit:** The Community Services Unit consists of Rockford police officers who are responsible for developing crime reducing and problem-solving partnerships with the citizens and businesses in their areas. Officers within this unit employ both traditional and non-traditional methods to solve these problems.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

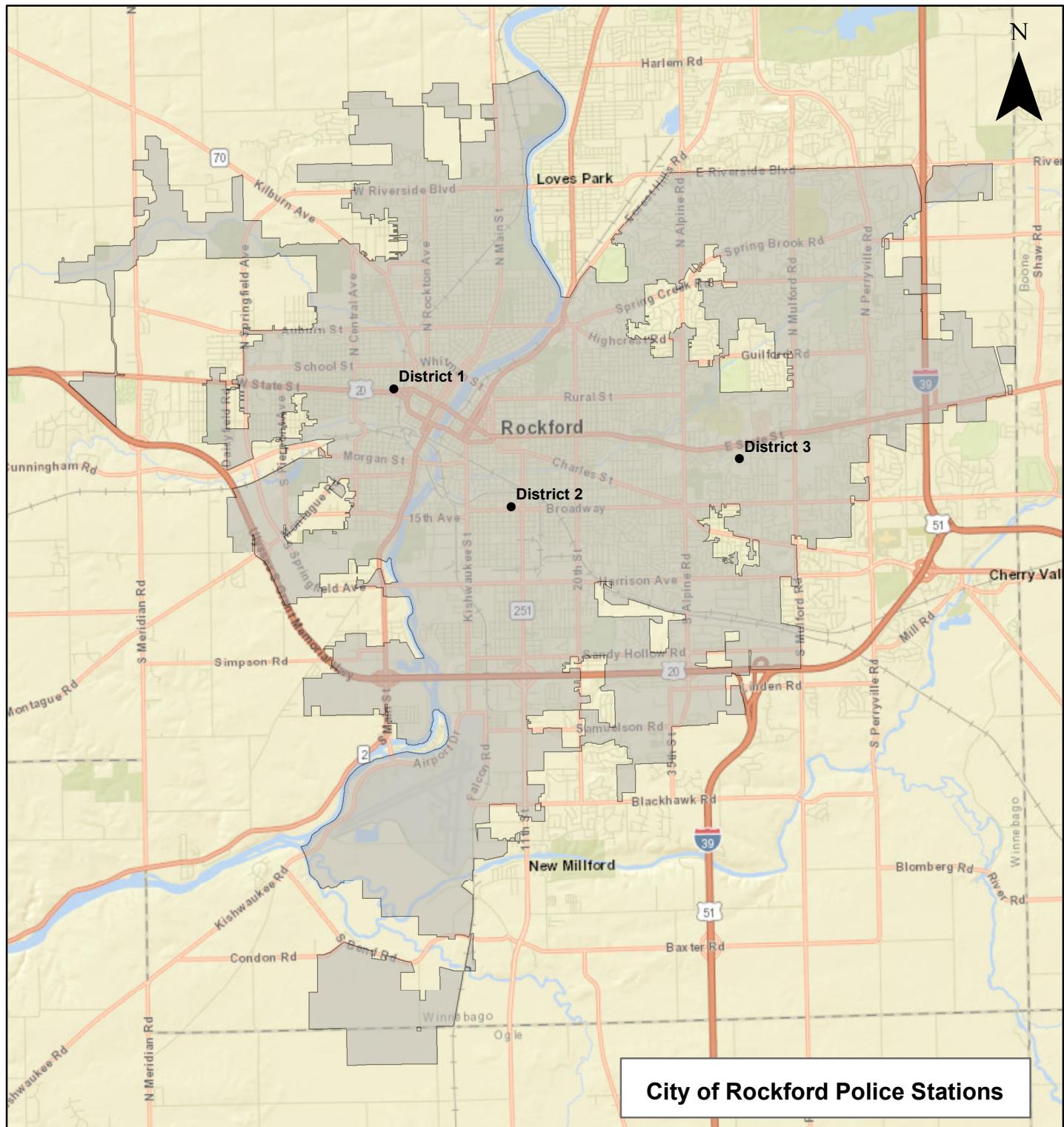
**Rock House:** In 2017, the Rockford Police Department launched its first two Resident Officer Community Keeper Houses. The houses are a part of the department's community policing initiatives aimed to cultivate and strengthen relationships within the community by having officers reside in the neighborhoods they are sworn to protect and serve. Officers work daily, managing their schedule, based on the needs of the neighborhoods.

In 2012, the police department announced its plans to move operations from one central location to a geo-policing method, which divides the policing tasks among three districts within the city in order to cut down on response times and increase public safety. Each of the city's three districts has its own commanding officer and focuses on the specific needs of their respective zones. Rockford's District 1 Police Station, located at 1045 West State Street, was opened in 2017 and is the sole department on the west side of the Rock River. The District 2 Police Station is located at 1410 Broadway, and District 3 Police Station, which is also the department headquarters, is located at 557 South New Towne Drive.

Calls for Service (2016-2018)						
	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Fire	679	2%	752	3%	716	2%
EMS Search & Rescue	21,580	79%	22,390	79%	22,892	78%
Hazardous Condition	550	2%	574	2%	550	2%
Service/Good Intent Call	2,805	10%	3,054	11%	3,323	11%
False Alarm/Call	1,505	6%	1,544	5%	1,675	6%
Other	70	0%	64	0%	61	0%
Total	27,189		28,378		29,217	

*Source: Rockford Fire Department 2016, 2017, & 2018*





## Rockford Fire Department

Under the direction of Fire Chief Michele Pankow, the city's first female fire chief, the Rockford Fire Department is the second largest fire department in the state of Illinois. There are over 300 employees of the fire department represented by uniformed firefighters, civilians, and 911 center personnel. Annually, the Rockford Fire Department responds to over 28,000 emergency incidents and provides firefighting, emergency medical, hazardous material mitigation, extrication, water rescue, educational opportunities, training, and other technical rescue services.

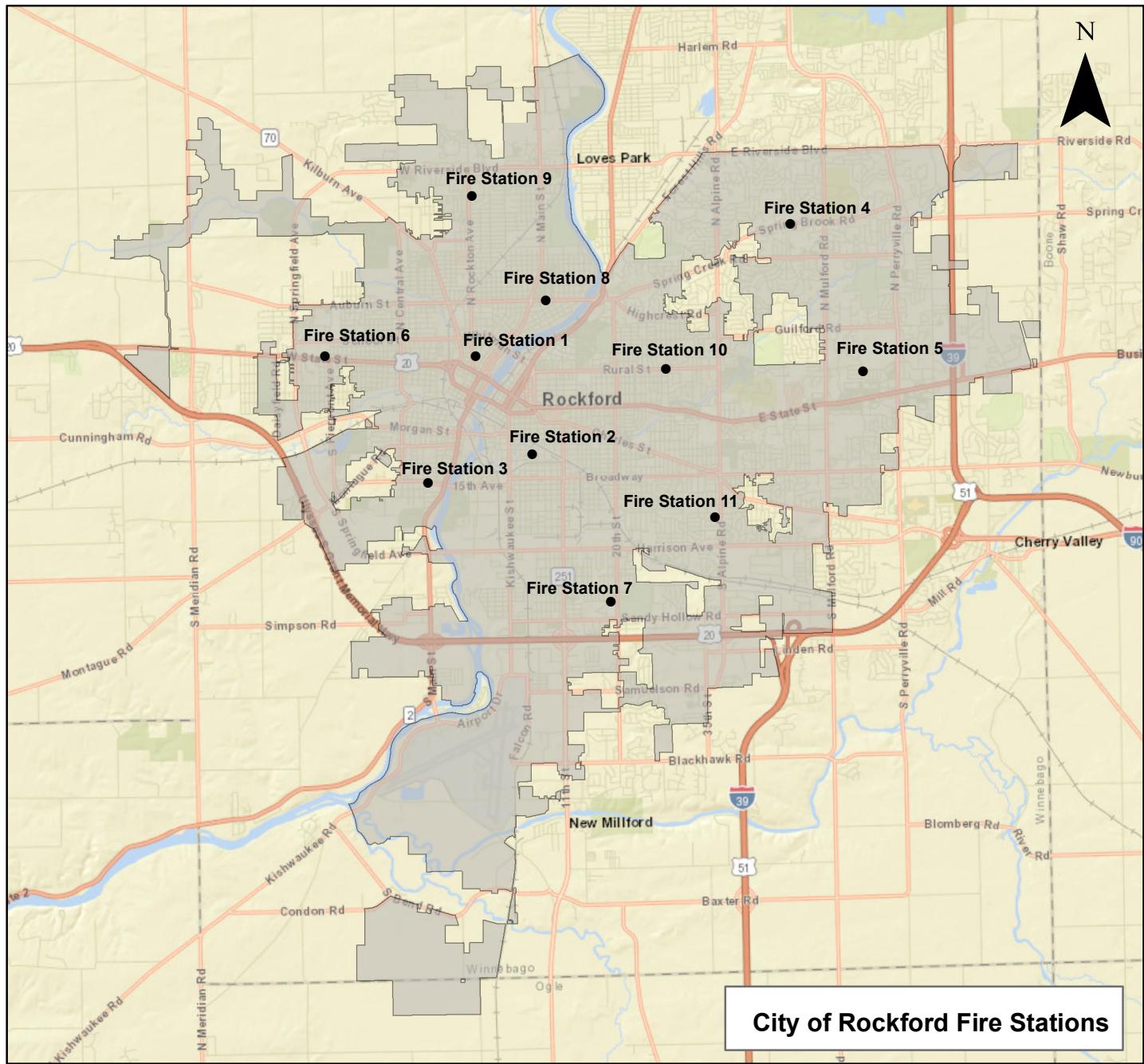
The city is protected by nine engines, four ladder trucks, and seven advanced life support ambulances housed at 11 fire stations strategically located throughout Rockford. The City of Rockford's water supply system plays a key role in the Rockford Fire Department efforts. The Fire Department is one of the few in Illinois to have received a "2" ranking from the Insurance Services Office (ISO), of which water supply accounts for 40 percent of the final determination. The fire department maintains the ISO Class 2 rating and has been accredited through the Center for Public Safety Excellence since 2011 and the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services since 2015.<sup>xxxiii</sup> The fire department also provides several classroom and youth education programs, home and commercial preemptive strategies, and a dive/drowning prevention team.

Dive Team/Drowning Prevention - The fire department's 22-member water rescue team responds to all bodies of water within the city limits as well as a 50-mile radius as part of the Winnebago County Water Rescue and Recovery Team.

School and Youth Programs - The Rockford Fire Department has active fire prevention programs for Rockford public and private school children, including age-appropriate presentations in English and Spanish; the Survive Alive House, a Home Escape Demonstration Simulator; the Juvenile Fire Setters Program, for local youth that have started fires in the past to show them the dangers of playing with fire; and Rockford Fire Explorers Post 413, for high school students interested in fire and EMS service to see first-hand the day-to-day operations of this profession.

Home and Commercial Preemptive Strategies - Each year, the Rockford Fire Department conducts home safety surveys throughout the city, where firefighters check smoke detectors and identify any fire hazards that may exist, as well as the Annual Commercial Pre-Plan Program, in which each individual fire company performs (30) detailed pre-plans of target hazard buildings in their typical response territory.





## Public Safety Facilities

While police and fire stations may not seem it, they are strategically placed in locations based on the type, frequency, and nature of the calls that each region of our city experiences. Often times, a great deal of thought is put into this process.

The placement of the police and fire department facilities has a direct impact on the areas they service and the residents within them. Because of the different ways in which police and fire services are handled, one constantly patrolling while the other responding to calls from fixed locations, their facilities are built and designed differently.

Because of the need to have fire protection and emergency response facilities within certain distances of populated areas, the demand for new fire stations will exceed those for police stations. Future fire stations may be needed if Rockford continues to grow. Specifically, a new station would be needed to the northwest if development continues north of Elmwood Road, west of the current city limits. An additional southwest station may be needed in the future, as the regions around US 20 Bypass continue to grow in density.

## Public Health

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of individuals and their communities.<sup>xxxiv</sup> By addressing public health issues, communities can improve quality of life, support community wellness, and see cost savings through preventative programming. Public health is a broad, evolving field and each community has unique public health issues to address. Some common public health concerns across all communities are chronic disease, healthcare access and equality, substance abuse, and long-term access to food and shelter. Public health policy and programming can help prevent the spread of diseases, save and extend lives, and empower community members to lead healthy lifestyles through public education, preventative care programs, and initiatives aimed at improving people's health no matter their age.

The City of Rockford works with the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) to address the array of unique community and public health issues through local initiatives and programs. Some of the burdens or challenges with public health policy include, but are not limited to, data collection and monitoring (especially for vulnerable groups), funding, public health issues with multiple causes, differing crises strategies, and new information needed to make informed decisions.

### Winnebago County Health Metrics

As noted, public health varies from community to community. Communities are able to be compared through several health metrics tracked to monitor public health and to aid in identifying areas of particular concern. Health metrics are often reported at the county-level and cover a broad range of topics. Some of the key health metrics for Winnebago County are detailed below.<sup>xxxv</sup>

#### Mortality

- Generally, infant mortality has remained relatively stable since 2018 at 7 deaths per 1,000. While White and Hispanic infant mortality rates have remained relatively the same between 2018 and 2021, Black infant mortality has gone from 12 to 15 deaths per 1,000 during the same period.
- Child mortality has increased by 40 percent since 2016. Child mortality peaked in 2017 at 70 deaths per 100,000 children and has remained at this rate as of 2021. Looking at child mortality rates by race, the mortality rate of Hispanic children has increased since 2018 and has stayed at the same peak level since 2019.
- Premature age-adjusted mortality per 100,000 increased

by 7 percent from 2016 to 2021. Premature deaths peaked in 2020, with 420 deaths per 100,000 residents. In 2021, Blacks had the highest average age-adjusted death rate at 623 deaths per 100,000, while Hispanics had the lowest age-adjusted death rate at 237 deaths per 100,000.

Mortality Rates by Race (2020)				
	Black	Hispanic	White	Asian
Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000)	15	5	5	-
Child Mortality Rate (Per 100,000)	130	50	70	-
Premature Age-Adjusted Rate (per 100,000)	640	260	420	170
Life Expectancy (Years)	72	84	77	87

*Source: Winnebago County Health Ranking Database*

- The number of drug overdose deaths in the county increased between 2016 and 2021, from 29 percent in 2016 to 45 percent in 2021. In 2020, Winnebago County had one of the highest number of drug overdose deaths for a county its size, with 147 deaths as a result of an overdose, up from 123 deaths in 2019.<sup>xxxvi</sup>
- As of 2021, the average life expectancy in Winnebago County is 76.8 years. Asians had the highest average life expectancy (85.8 years), followed by Hispanics (83.5 years), Whites (76.9), and Blacks (71.6 years).

### Other Health Outcomes or Behaviors

Overall, health behavior metrics of adult obesity, physical inactivity, access to exercise opportunities, food insecurity, and food environment have all improved between 2016 and 2021.

- In 2021, 30 percent of adult residents in Winnebago County were considered obese and 91 percent of adults had access to exercise activities, whether utilized or not.
- The percent of adults who smoke was 21 percent in 2021, an increase from 2016 when only 17 percent reported to smoke.
- Excessive drinking among residents has remained the same from 2016 - 2021, around 19 percent annually.
- Diabetes prevalence has remained relatively stable since 2016, around 11 percent.

- HIV prevalence per 100,000 has had a decrease of 3.7 percent between 2016 and 2019, however has fluctuated between 155 per 100,000 and 165 per 100,000 during that time frame.

- Teen births per 1,000 female county residents ages 15 through 19 has fallen across the majority of racial groups between 2016 to 2021, from 130 teen births per 1,000 births to 120 teen births per 1,000 births.

### Clinical Care in Winnebago County

- The rate of residents under age 65 without health insurance in Winnebago County has nearly halved between 2016 (13 percent) and 2021 (8 percent). The number of uninsured adults ages 18 to 65 has decreased between 2016 (17 percent) and 2021 (10 percent), reaching its lowest point ever in 2019 (8 percent). The rate of uninsured children fell by 25 percent between 2016 (4 percent) and 2021 (3 percent).

- In 2021, 51 percent of individuals received flu vaccinations. Flu vaccination rates were highest for Whites at 52 percent, followed closely for Asians (51 percent), Hispanics (42 percent), and Blacks (35 percent). Rates across all racial and ethnic groups have stayed relatively stable in recent years.

### Public Health Care Providers

Rockford residents enjoy easy access to globally competitive health care, as the city is fortunate to have several major healthcare systems including UW Health (formerly SwedishAmerican), MercyHealth, Crusader Community Health, and OSF Medical Group, in addition to a number of other smaller providers. The patient to health care provider, by type, for Winnebago County is provided in the table below.

Patient to Provider Ratio						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Patients to Primary Care Physicians Ratio	1,330:1	1,340:1	1300:1	1280:1	1410:1	1340:1
Patients to Dentists Ratio	1,440:1	1,390:1	1310:1	1270:1	1300:1	1190:1
Patients to Mental Health Providers Ratio	790:1	730:1	690:1	660:1	520:1	490:1

Source: Winnebago County Health Ranking Database

In addition to healthcare providers, residents can seek assistance from the Winnebago County Health Department.

### Winnebago County Health Department

The Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) provides services designed to protect, promote, and maintain the health of Winnebago County residents. Services address three primary goals: improving the length of useful life, reducing health disparities, and assuring access to preventive health services for every person in Winnebago County. WCHD has a variety of programs and centers designed to address and prevent public health issues in the county.

An overview of the major providers are listed below:

- Center for Environmental Health Improvement: The Center for Environmental Health Improvement promotes health for all through a healthy environment. The center provides education and inspection services related to public facilities.
- Center for Health Protection and Promotion: The Center for Health Protection and Promotion coordinates services that address preventive interventions related to the early identification of the disease process, education, and linkage with services either by community providers or directly offered clinical services. This includes disease control for reportable diseases like TB, HIV and sexually-transmitted infections, and outbreak investigation capacity.
- Family Health Services Center: The Family Health Services Center focuses on improving the well-being of mothers, infants, and children by providing a range of integrated services that offer educational and nutritional support for pregnant women, infants and children (with high-risk medical conditions). Other services include women, infant and children food assistant program (WIC), family case management, high-risk infant nursing, HealthWorks (Case Management for wards of the state), well-child exams/immunizations, lead screening, and daycare/nurse consultations.
- The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC): MRC is a national network of more than 200,000 volunteers organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. They provide close collaboration with both the city and county emergency disaster services and are essential to prevent, detect early, prepare, respond, and recover from major health incidences.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

## **UWHealth**

UWHealth (formerly SwedishAmerican) is a healthcare provider that has been serving Rockford for more than a century. Recently SwedishAmerican became a division of UW Health, an academic health system associated with the University of Wisconsin-Madison that encompasses research, education, and patient care activities. UWHealth has 17 locations for primary care, three hospitals with two emergency departments and an immediate care facility, and 33 specialty care locations throughout Northern Illinois. UWHealth primary campus is located in downtown Rockford and is home to their Women's and Children Hospital, Breast Health Center, Heart Hospital, Maternal-Fetal Medicine Clinic, Neuro & Headache Center, Palliative Care Clinic, and UW Health Surgery. UWHealth Regional Cancer Center and Creekside Clinic are recent additions that provide healthcare access to the city's far northeast side.

## **Mercyhealth**

Mercyhealth is a regional health system with seven hospitals and eighty-five other primary and specialty care locations throughout Northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. In Rockford, Mercyhealth has two hospitals and eight clinics, offering services for behavioral health, cancer care, diabetes care, dermatology, eye care, heart and vascular care, hospice care, neuroscience, home health, occupational health, pediatric care and specialties, plastic surgery, sports medicine, and women's health. Their Javon Bea Hospital-Rockton, formerly Rockford Memorial Hospital, is located on the city's west side on Rockton Avenue, while their newest hospital, Javon Bea Hospital-Riverside, opened on the city's far northeast side in 2019. However, it was an unfortunate and disappointing decision to close inpatient services at the Rockton Campus in early 2022. The reason for doing so was described as mostly due to an on-site flooding issue that the City of Rockford had no control over due to it being a privately owned property. Additionally, the majority opinion was that the flooding was mostly a result of an abundance of paved and impervious surfaces located at the medical facility. Of recent, a parking lot expansion made the issue worse.

## **OSF Medical Group**

OSF Medical Group runs the OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center, off of East State Street, and two immediate care sites in Rockford. OSF Medical Group provides the following services to the community at their Rockford location: behavioral & mental health, cancer care, emergency care, diabetes care, heart & vascular care, inpatient care, wound care, pediatric care, primary care, testing & diagnostics, women's health, wellness, and plastic surgery.

## **Crusader Community Health**

Crusader Community Health was created in 1972 and currently operates eight community health centers in our region. Their mission is to serve the Rock River Valley area with quality primary health care for all people in need, particularly low-income individuals. They have a total of eight locations in the Rock River Valley, with four locations in Rockford. Their recently built headquarters is located on the city's west side on West State Street. Crusader focuses on integrated care services related to family practice, pediatrics, women's health services with OB (and a midwife program), internal medicine, and dentistry; it also provides specialty services. They serve approximately 58,000 patients annually, of whom 68 percent are on Medicaid, 13 percent are uninsured, 6 percent are on Medicare, and 13 percent have private insurance. Looking at the demographics of their patients, 31 percent are White, 31 percent are Hispanic, 29 percent are African American, and 44 percent are under the age of 19. There are 1,100 average annual births, which represents 25 percent of all Winnebago County births, from this location.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

## **Rockford Regional Health Council**

Assisting these healthcare providers is the Rockford Regional Health Council, which is a nonprofit organization that provides health care support through data gathering and analysis, education, and advocacy. The collaboration of healthcare and community partners enables the non-partisan council to focus on health education and program development, while advocating for change and equality with regard to today's health issues.<sup>xxxix</sup>

## **Covid-19**

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Rockford took several steps to limit the spread of the coronavirus. For the general public, the city required face coverings and limited public gatherings based on the State of Illinois guidelines. In an effort to support businesses, the city developed outdoor dining guidelines and requirements, food sale guidelines, deferred tax collection (food, beverage, and hotel/motel tax), provided business workgroup opportunities, small business loans, and business resources. The Winnebago County Health Department has COVID-19 vaccination sites and testing available via online registration. In addition to these efforts, WCHD also regularly updates related guidelines and available resources as infection rates and mitigation efforts develop along with national standards.



# Goals Objectives and Implementation Strategies

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC SAFETY, & PUBLIC HEALTH

### Establish a public-private partnership to pilot waste conversion technologies

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Solicit proposals to develop conversion technology facilities to dispose of locally generated waste	\$	Long	Low
Work to attract investments by private companies to implement new technologies that are aimed at the reduction of locally generated waste with the overall goal of becoming a more sustainable city	\$	Long	Low

### Maintain and enhance infrastructure that delivers water to city residents and businesses

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Continue conducting system performance tests and maintenance as needed	\$	Short	Medium
Continue to budget for repair of water main infrastructure as needed	\$	Short	Medium
Implement city-wide valve exercising program to maintain working order. It's important to keep valves functional so they work when needed	\$	Medium	Medium
Continue to treat city water at well head locations as a best practice	\$\$	Short	High
Continue to perform fire-hydrant testing and flushing to keep the system in good working order (10-year rotation)	\$	Short	High
Implement well head protection plan (updated 2022) and new well head buffers for increased protection as part of the update to the Rockford Source Water Protection Plan. This may prohibit certain nearby land-uses within these protected areas	\$	Short	High
Rating of wells that are 25+ years, radon monitoring should continue	\$\$	Short	Medium
Identify, locate, and work to replace all residential lead service lines still left within the city	\$\$\$\$	Short	High

### Ensure all Rockford residents have access to city water as soon as possible

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Continue to require that all new development be served by city water	\$\$	Short	High
Continue annexation efforts to reduce islands/pockets where users already have city water but don't pay city taxes, thus creating a greater burden for the other users of the system	\$\$	Short	High
Current users that are located in unincorporated areas by 2x water fees... Is this enough? Does it cover costs? Can we increase fees to encourage voluntary annexation?	\$	Short	Medium

## Identify and upgrade aging water main infrastructure

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Assign risk score to all water mains based on condition and failure consequence levels to ensure proper replacement and service	\$\$	Medium	Low
Develop water main renewal forecast along with estimated annual costs estimates for maintenance and or future replacement	\$\$	Medium	Low
Develop and implement water main replacement funding	\$\$\$	Long	Medium
Coordinating transportation projects with water upgrades/maintenance with Four Rivers Sanitation Authority will save money and reduce duplicity	\$\$	Medium	High
Identify, locate, and work to replace all lead water lines in residential homes	\$\$\$\$	Short	High

## Ensure all Rockford residents have access to sanitary sewer

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Work with Four Rivers Sanitation Authority to develop a plan for expansion that creates the least disruption to existing residential areas and works to mitigate any risks associated with sanitation system failures	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Develop sanitary sewer CIP and focus on specific basins needing the most attention based on risk	\$\$\$	Long	Low
Develop implementable scenarios with Four Rivers Sanitation Authority that work to alleviate issues that limit development due to restrictions or lack of water and sewer service altogether	\$	Long	Low

## Develop and implement programs to decrease crime to improve actual and perceived public safety concerns

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Inventory and analyze existing public safety programs and communication platforms for improved real time information	\$	Long	Low
Continue implementation and operation of community policing strategy	\$\$\$	Short	High
Continue refining community metrics dashboards for neighborhood based crime reporting and mapping	\$	Short	Medium
Partner with local agencies and neighborhood associations to implement additional safe-routes-to-school by expanding the current system and routes	\$\$	Short	Medium
Continue and increase funding for Rock House youth engagement	\$\$	Medium	High
Continue and increase funding for Focused Deterrence Programs	\$\$	Short	High
Utilize neighborhood groups and associations and the information they provide to aid in crime reduction- Identify problem properties and concentrate resources to them	\$	Short	High
Target property owners that have a history of issues related to crime	\$\$	Short	High

## Provide and support community dialogue on safety concerns and preventative solutions

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Involve business and property owners in crime-preventative measures	\$	Long	Medium
Support and expand neighborhood watch associations in neighborhoods and business districts especially where crime is more prevalent	\$	Medium	Low
Expand neighborhood safety summits for neighborhood organizations	\$	Long	Low
Revitalize Neighborhood Groups	\$	Short	Low

## Develop and implement technology platforms to improve crime reporting by residents and business owners

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Host tech-innovation weekends to design and develop solutions to complement existing means of communication	\$	Long	Low
Increase awareness and utilization of 411 tips hot-line	\$	Medium	Medium
Continue investing in, and expanding, both the perimeter as well as the density of, Shot Spotter technology to aid in the assistance of early location of shots fired incidences	\$\$\$	Short	High

## Continue engaging youth through the development and implementation of youth-oriented educational programming that specifically supports the reduction of crime committed by youth offenders

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Increase youth outreach efforts through existing Rockford Police Department programming	\$\$	Short	High
Facilitate dialogue within the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council for addressing issues concerning crime among the youth population	\$	Short	High
Support Rockford School District initiatives that decrease expulsion, truancy, and dropout rates to keep more kids in school	\$\$	Short	High
Continue and expand funding for the Rockford Workforce Development Initiative that focuses on sidewalk construction by offering jobs to at risk youth through City of Rockford Public Works Department	\$\$\$	Short	High
Rock House expansion	\$\$	Medium	High
Increase community center youth programs - Northwest Community Center, Booker, etc.	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Provide life skills for youth not traditionally taught in schools to help ensure success and financial literacy	\$\$	Medium	Medium

**Continue to develop and implement life-coaching and counseling opportunities for youth in supporting the reduction of crime**

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Support active programming facilitated by existing outreach programs that target youth who have a history of committing crimes or high propensity to	\$\$	Long	Medium
Youth Services Network has many initiatives that align opportunities for at risk youth. These programs should continue to see funding	\$\$	Long	Medium

**Align with healthcare providers and institutions to mitigate barriers to access of health and wellness programs and outreach among low-income and aging populations at reduced rates**

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Coordinate with Rockford Health Council to increase the number of individuals utilizing regular health care resources, and provide possible options for cost saving measures and increased awareness of programs	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Improve access to oral healthcare	\$	Long	Low
Collaborate with healthcare providers and institutions to improve awareness of benefits for the regular use of healthcare to reduce chances of preventable illnesses, and identify medical issues before they become major	\$	Medium	Low
Increase the density of health facilities to low-income residents of need	\$\$\$	Long	Low
Improve and reduce costs of transportation to facilities for health appointments especially among low income residents	\$\$	Long	Low
Work to reduce medical costs and burdens for lower income populations who are generally more likely to be affected by poor health outcomes	\$\$	Medium	Low
Find ways to utilize Javon Bae Hospital-Rockton that recently reduced inpatient services for the much needed west side of the city	\$\$	Short	Medium
Coordinate with assisted living facilities health care needs that are not being met- what are the shortfalls that could be addressed?	\$	Medium	Medium

**Support increased collaboration with healthcare providers and institutions to improve public health outcomes**

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Improve awareness of preventative health care resources through coordination and alignment of additional funding sources	\$\$	Medium	Low
Increase access and availability of prenatal care resources to lower income residents	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
Work to decrease the percentage of low-birth weight children	\$	Long	Low
Continue to support and expand awareness of addiction programs	\$	Long	Medium
Involve community centers and churches on initiatives and events initiated by the city services department	\$	Short	Medium
Coordinate with neighborhood organizations to identify interested groups that stopped meeting regularly or at all as a result of Covid-19	\$	Medium	Low

## Provide convenient access to healthy food for all residents

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Facilitate the creation of more healthy food retail options and target typically under-served neighborhoods and population groups	\$	Long	Medium
Continue to support and expand the location of weekday and weekend farmer's markets	\$	Short	High
Continue to identify city owned properties that could support urban agriculture and community gardens and facilitate new locations for growing	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Continue to partner with non-profit agencies to plant new community gardens on city-owned properties identified as suitable for urban agriculture	\$	Medium	Medium
Continue to offer funding for the start and ongoing maintenance of community gardens and locate those in need of funding through community outreach and public announcement of the programs	\$	Short	Medium
Integrate a food-systems analysis in all major land use decisions such as zoning, transportation planning, and the Comprehensive Plan	\$	Long	Low
Increase local food pantry support, funding, and other additional resources	\$	Long	Low
Rockford City Market should work to include more fresh produce and healthy food options as the season allows	\$	Short	High
Work to identify locations that are under-served by healthy food options that can connect to organizations promoting distribution of these foods	\$\$	Long	Low
Encourage gardens at home by providing free information and resources to residents (provide resources through NIU extension and local master gardeners)	\$	Medium	Low
Continue to support neighborhood gardens through information and funding by City of Rockford community actions agency, and services agency	\$	Medium	Medium

## Support Local Foods Network

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Continue to offer the commercial kitchen for rent at indoor City Market	\$\$	Short	Medium
Establish a commercial community kitchen to offer interactive learning on food preparation, safety, and entrepreneurial start-up opportunities in food	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Continue to expand opportunities for local growers	\$	Medium	Low
Evaluate impediments to urban agriculture -Through administrative adjustments adjacent properties are notified before establishment. Plans following operation to revert lots back to original character- Through Zoning Office	\$\$	Long	Low
Update is needed for future land use map and create a new land use category for urban agriculture	\$	Short	Medium
Market suitable sites for indoor urban agriculture-contact others who have done this for advice- there has been interest locally by developers recently	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Support infrastructure for local and regional food processing and distribution locations	\$	Long	Low

Collaborate with local restaurants such as Olympic Tavern, Abreo, Magpie, Octane, Crust & Crumbles, Nursing Homes/Hospitals, and Crusader Clinic, for education on proper food consumption education; Churches could offer information and available land to be turned into a garden, could donate, or share	\$	Long	Low
--	----	------	-----

### Increase the use of renewable energy sources to reduce financial and environmental costs

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Increase planning and coordination to promote clean, reliable, and affordable energy especially for those experiencing cost burdens	\$	Medium	Low
Work with providers to increase amount of energy produced by co-generation and waste capture facilities	\$\$\$	Long	Low
Ensure the reliability of power delivery to our residents and businesses, especially during times of need like extreme hot or cold weather	\$	Long	High
Continue to promote and develop solar energy farms in the city where land use allows, especially that serve low-income residents such as the recent Horsman Quarry Solar Site, while preserving future residential growth areas	\$	Medium	Medium
Promote and reduce the burdens associated with installation of wind turbine technologies on business and residential locations	\$	Long	Low
Look into solar installation on City Hall or City Yards, Fire Station, Police Station, Schools -Are there grants for installation of solar on public or government institutions?	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Continue to work with solar installation companies to break down barriers to residential solar and sustainable energy installation projects in Rockford	\$	Short	Medium

### Improve energy efficiency through the modernization of energy delivery

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Continue to collaborate and work with ComEd (Exelon) to implement the smart grid for Rockford	\$\$	Short	Medium
Continue to integrate energy utility improvements with capital improvement projects	\$		
Encourage Best Practices such as burying electric lines with new construction	\$\$\$\$	Medium	High

### Continue improving our codes and regulations to facilitate cost effective sustainable development with new builds and rehabs

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Continue to work with historic preservation entities and code officials to reconcile the energy codes and preservation requirements currently in existence	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Energy Codes, windows, insulation vapor barriers, roof insulation, heat fans all need to be proactively enforced	\$	Short	High

**Locate telecommunication facilities in areas other than historic districts or in residential areas if possible**

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Obsolete with the technologies of today, cell and 5G towers can be placed at greater distances or hidden	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Review existing code requirements and provide recommended modification to codes to protect historic character	\$	Long	Low

**Expand affordable access to broadband to all residents and businesses**

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Support Wi-Fi hotspot initiatives targeting areas with low service coverage	\$	Long	Low
More provider options are needed to reduce high costs	\$	Medium	High
High speed internet options require the purchase of cable TV making it cost prohibitive for low-income residents	\$	Medium	Medium

**Expand access to broadband infrastructure to encourage technical innovation and recruitment of high-tech**

businesses	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Continue support for iFiber implementation and service expansion for residential and business use	\$\$\$	Short	High
Evaluate the installation of Wi-Fi infrastructure on city-owned assets	\$	Long	Low
5G communication towers should be placed where they are least noticeable	\$	Short	High
Address the technology gap being created, free cellphone programs in place but what about laptops/internet	\$\$	Short	Medium
Continue to provide computers at public locations for people to find and apply for jobs. Computer skills needed for most employment functions	\$	Short	Medium
Increase access to public computers at locations such as libraries	\$	Short	Medium

**Support education and training opportunities for tech-related business startups and occupations**

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Collaborate with NIU EigerLab and other technology cluster incubators to create advanced digital infrastructure for attracting and growing tech-related businesses	\$	Long	Low
Continue to support Rock Valley College Advanced Technology Center (ATC), CNC machining, mechatronics, truck driver training, welding, etc.	\$	Medium	Medium
Airport Training AAR, and internships for local businesses	\$	Long	Low
Increase public transportation options to employment clusters	\$\$	Medium	Medium

## Chapter Endnotes

- i. <https://rockfordil.gov/city-departments/public-works/water-division/about-the-water-system/>
- ii. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d91f8d9a141f4c1984d538826e0ffd2a>
- iii. "About the Water System." City of Rockford. Accessed May 06, 2021. <https://rockfordil.gov/city-departments/public-works/water-division/about-the-water-system/>
- iv. "Water Supply Planning for the Rockford Area." ArcGIS Story map. Accessed May 06, 2021. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d91f8d9a141f4c1984d538826e0ffd2a>
- v. Ibid.
- vi. "Water Supply Planning for the Rockford Area." ArcGIS Story map. Accessed May 06, 2021. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d91f8d9a141f4c1984d538826e0ffd2a>
- vii. Winnebago Landfill, LLC. 2021. Making an Impact on Quality of Life. Accessed May 24, 2021. <https://www.winnebagolandfill.com/about-us/>
- viii. Rock River Environmental Solutions. 2021. About Us. Accessed May 24, 2021. <https://www.rrenvsolutions.com/about-us>
- ix. City of Rockford. 2021. Sanitation, Solid Waste and Recycling Services. Accessed April 22, 2021. <https://rockfordil.gov/city-departments/community-and-economic-development/sanitation/>
- x. ComEd. "ComEd Encourages Economic Development and Growth in Illinois-By the Numbers." ComEd Economic Development FactSheet. April 2018. Accessed May 05, 2021. <https://rockfordil.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ComEd-Economic-Development-Factsheet-April-2018.pdf>
- xi. Ibid
- xii. Household Energy Use in Illinois A Closer Look at Residential Energy Consumption." EIA. Accessed May 05, 2021. [https://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/reports/2009/state\\_briefs/pdf/IL.pdf](https://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/reports/2009/state_briefs/pdf/IL.pdf)
- xiii. Ibid
- xiv. An Exelon Company." ComEd. Accessed May 06, 2021. <https://www.comed.com/AboutUs/Pages/CompanyInformation.aspx>
- xv. "About Us." Nicor Gas. Accessed May 06, 2021. <https://www.nicorgas.com/company/about-us.html>
- xvi. ComEd. "Environmental Disclosure Report." Accessed May 05, 2021. [https://www.comed.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/SafetyCommunity/Disclosure/Environmental\\_Disclosure\\_12\\_months\\_ending\\_06302020A.pdf](https://www.comed.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/SafetyCommunity/Disclosure/Environmental_Disclosure_12_months_ending_06302020A.pdf)
- xvii. "U.S. Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis." Illinois - State Energy Profile Overview - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). Accessed May 06, 2021. <https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=IL#tabs-5>

xviii. Byron Station - Economic Impact 2020 [www.oregonpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Byron-Station-Economic-Impact-2020.pdf](http://www.oregonpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Byron-Station-Economic-Impact-2020.pdf)

xix. <https://www.power-eng.com/emissions/exelon-promises-to-refuel-bryon-dresden-nuclear-power-plants-after-illinois-legislators-approve-700m-package/#gre>

xx. <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/wind/where-wind-power-is-harnessed.php>

xxi. <https://www.pluginillinois.org/FixedRateBreakdownComEd.aspx>

xxii. [https://rockfordil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/PZD-2b\\_Rockford\\_Solar\\_Zoning\\_Codes\\_4.5.19.pdf](https://rockfordil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/PZD-2b_Rockford_Solar_Zoning_Codes_4.5.19.pdf)

xxiii. <https://www.nicorgas.com/residential/pricing-rate-plans.html>

xxiv. "Ways to Save, Free Products and Services." Nicor Gas. Accessed May 06, 2021. <https://www.nicorgas.com/residential/ways-to-save/free-products-and-services.html>

xxv. <https://www.nicorgas.com/business/ways-to-save/energy-efficiency-assessments-for-businesses.html>

xxvi. <https://rockfordil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Zoning-Ordinance-Amendments-Approved-03312021.pdf>

xxvii. Agenda - Monday, March 8, 2021 <http://rockfordcityil.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=2010&InLine=True>

xxviii. FBI Crime Index. <<https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/explorer/agency/IL1010400/crime>>

xxix. <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/explorer/agency/IL1010400/crime>

xxx. <https://www.facebook.com/CityofRockford/photos/pb.10159046152839533/1015904612643453>

xxxi. <https://rockfordil.gov/city-departments/police>

xxxii. <https://rockfordil.gov/city-departments/police/community-services-unit/>

xxxiii. (City of Rockford n.d.)

xxxiv. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2021. "Introduction to Public Health." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. January 22. Accessed May 3, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/training/publichealth101/documents/public-health-key-terms.pdf>

xxxv. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/illinois/2019/rankings/winnebago/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

xxxvi. Drug OD Deaths - Website Report.xlsx (illinois.gov)

xxxvii. Winnebago County Health Department. 2021. "About WCHD." Rockford IL. Accessed May 24, 2021. <https://www.wchd.org/about-wchd>

xxxviii. <https://www.crusaderhealth.org/fact-sheet/>

xxxix. Rockford Regional Health Council. 2021. "About Us." Rockford, IL. Accessed May 24, 2021. <https://rockfordhealth.org/about-us-3-15-21/>