Driver’s license revocations issued to county residents have dropped by 67% since 2009 under state legislative reforms. Suspensions for “failure to pay forfeiture” increased statewide during the recession.

Driver’s license revocations issued to Milwaukee County residents decreased by 17,000 from 2009 to 2011, with substantial drops in revocations to drivers in Milwaukee’s poorest neighborhoods. Under legislative reforms initiated by the Center for Driver’s License Recovery and Employability, mandatory revocations for OAR (operating after revocation) and for OWS (operating while suspended) were eliminated. Drug conviction suspensions (many unrelated to driving) have been nearly eliminated, which should reduce problems for released prisoners and unlicensed teens.

Suspensions for “failure to pay forfeiture” (FPFs) have risen in Wisconsin since the recession hit, with 220,453 issued statewide in 2011 (including 97,036 issued to Milwaukee County residents). Three-fourths of license suspensions in the county are for FPFs rather than for unsafe driving.

All ages of African American males showed large numbers with license suspensions and revocations. For men in their prime early work years more African Americans had suspensions and revocations than clear licenses. The highest numbers of suspensions and revocations were issued to those in their twenties (including to over 6,500 young men driving without a license or with an expired license). Prior ETI reports have shown the driver license to be essential for getting and keeping employment and exceeding high school completion as a predictor of sustained employment.

Monthly Economic Data for Milwaukee County

Unemployment: The est. unemployment rate among Milwaukee County workers was 8.5% in May (with an estimated 419,784 residents employed and 38,832 unemployed).

Plant closing and mass layoff notices: In May Hostess Brand (in Greenfield) announced a plant closing to affect 33 workers and Shorehaven Behavioral Health (in Brown Deer) announced new layoffs for 71 workers.

Unemployment insurance: 26,961 laid-off workers in the county were receiving weekly UI payments in mid-June, as growing numbers of laid-off workers exhaust their benefits.

FoodShare: 276,551 residents received FoodShare benefits in May, another monthly high.

BadgerCare Plus: 206,829 county residents are using BadgerCare Plus health insurance. Enrollments in the Core Plan for adults without dependents are down to 7,733, from 22,963 in January 2010.

Wisconsin Shares: 24,316 children from 13,492 Milwaukee County families received federal subsidies for full-time and part-time child care averaging $773 per family in April 2012.

“W-2”/TANF Income Support: 9,608 Milwaukee County families received “W-2” cash assistance payments in May, and 2,568 families received case management services without payments.

Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development (6/25/2012).