

Rural Pulse™ 2016



RURAL PULSE™ RESEARCH

Rural/Urban Findings – June 2016



Blandin Foundation™
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

Contents

Executive Summary

Project Goals and Objectives 9

Methodology 10

Demographics 12

Research Findings 17

Appendix

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Executive Summary

Project Objectives

The Foundation chose to undertake Rural Pulse™ to accomplish the following objectives:

- Understand the issues and priorities rural residents and leaders have within their communities;
- Learn if community needs are being adequately addressed;
- Identify emerging trends and any unmet concerns;
- Compare and contrast issue movement in comparison to past Rural Pulse studies; and
- Gain an understanding of how the opinions of urban Minnesotans and those of ethnic and cultural communities compare to at-large findings.

Methodology

- Telephone interviews were conducted with 1,144 rural Minnesotans, providing a statistical reliability of +/-2.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. The study area excluded the seven-county Twin Cities metro area and those in zip codes with populations of 35,000 or more.
- Telephone interviews were also conducted with 450 Minnesota residents within the seven-county metro area, as well as cities with a population of more than 35,000, providing a statistical reliability of +/-4.7 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.
- Data was weighted to reflect state demographics.
- The survey was also administered to 511 alumni of the Blandin Community Leadership Program and the Blandin Reservation Community Leadership Program; 300 community members of the Blandin Foundation's home area – defined as the Grand Rapids and Itasca County area, including the communities of Blackduck, Hill City, Northome and Remer; and an oversample of 400 cultural group community members within rural Minnesota, inclusive of African-American, Asian, Native American, Hispanic/Latino and immigrants (e.g., Hmong, Somali, Southeast Asian), as well as multi-cultural individuals. Note: The findings for these additional studies are compiled in separate reports.



Key Findings

Economic Lens: Despite improved economy, job creation continues to be a critical concern.

- Thirty-one percent of rural respondents surveyed feel their local economy has improved over the past year, a nine-point upswing from 2013 study findings. Another 49 percent believe it stayed the same, and 18 percent indicate that their local economy has worsened.
- Those age 25 to 34 are the most likely (41%) to feel the economy has improved; residents with the lowest incomes (\$35,000 or less) are the least likely to believe such (23%).
- Two-thirds (66%) of rural Minnesotans – and 81 percent of urban residents – feel their community successfully maintains and grows job opportunities. Although, only 52 percent of rural Minnesotans – and 71 percent of urban residents – feel attracting entrepreneurs and new businesses is being sufficiently accomplished.
- Nearly half (48%) of rural Minnesotans – and 27 percent of urban residents – feel that living-wage job opportunities in their community are inadequate, though that is an improvement from 2013 rural study findings (58% rural, 41% urban).
- Only 52 percent of rural residents – compared to 71 percent of those in urban areas – feel their community successfully attracts new businesses.
- Women and those with the lowest incomes are the least likely to feel positively about local job growth and opportunities.
- Job growth and development – including maintaining and growing existing local job opportunities, and attracting new businesses – are considered the top priorities by 29 percent of rural Minnesotans.
- While a third of rural Minnesotans say that their household income has increased over the past year, many (22%) are still struggling with a decrease in wages. The percentage of those citing an increase in household income is up eight percentage points from 2013.
- Residents with the highest incomes (\$100,000+) are the most likely to claim an increase in wages over the past year (54%), while those with the lowest incomes (\$35,000 or less) are more likely to have seen a decrease in household income (33%).



Optimism Continues: Most rural Minnesotans feel their community is vibrant and resilient, though not all believe that they can shape its future.

- Sixty-nine percent of rural Minnesotans – and 87 percent of urban residents – say that they believe their community is a vibrant place to live and work.
- Seventy-three percent of rural residents – and 83 percent of urban residents – also believe their community is strong, resilient and able to recover from difficult situations, although that is an 11-point downturn from 2013 rural findings.
- More than seven in 10 (72%) feel quality of life will improve over the next five years. Those with the lowest incomes (\$35,000 or less) are the least optimistic (66%).
- When asked how optimistic they feel about their community's future, more than seven in 10 (74%) rural respondents feel positively.
- Three in five (61%) rural residents – and 71 percent of urban Minnesotans – feel a sense of ownership over the direction of their community and that they are able to contribute to its future, a significant downturn from 2013 rural findings (76%). Younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24), as well as residents with incomes of \$35,000 or less, are decidedly less likely to feel they are in a position to help shape the future of their community (48% and 49% respectively).

Collaboration: Most rural Minnesotans feel their community works together effectively across differences.

- About three-quarters (73%) of rural residents say that they feel their community works together cohesively and are able to work across differences such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.

Quality of Life: Rural Minnesotans feel their community adequately provides most services, and believe residents have equal access to basic services. Younger Millennials are less convinced.

- About four in five rural residents (79%) believe that their community offers equal access to essential services.
- Transportation is a concern for more than two in five rural Minnesotans. Forty-two percent do not feel their community provides adequate public transportation opportunities, such as buses and trains. This finding is an increase of 11 percentage points from 2013.



- Sixty-three percent of rural Minnesota residents believe their community provides adequate cultural and arts opportunities.
- Four in five (79%) rural Minnesotans believe their community is a good environmental steward, though this sentiment represents a 10-point downturn from 2013 study findings. Younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) are the least confident in local environmental consciousness, with only two-thirds (66%) agreeing.
- The majority (83%) of rural Minnesotans believe their community provides quality educational opportunities. When asked who they feel is responsible for ensuring such, more than three in five feel it is up to the government (63%) or parents (62%). From 2013 to 2016, this represents an 11 percentage point increase in those who believe the government should take on the obligation for improved education. Urban residents place even higher responsibility on the government (67%) versus parents (57%).
- Millennials place the highest obligation on the government for improved education, with a compelling four in five (80%) believing such.
- Just under two-thirds (64%) of rural residents feel their community provides adequate access to the internet, a significant 18 percent downturn from 2013 findings.
- Rural residents with the lowest incomes show the least confidence in the performance of their community for nearly all basic services.

Rural Voice: Are their opinions being valued?

- When asked if the needs and well-being of rural Minnesota communities are as important to legislators and policymakers as those from metropolitan cities, only 57 percent are comfortable that their voice is being heard. Those with the highest incomes (\$100,000 or more) are by far less likely to agree (45%).
- Nearly nine in 10 (89%) rural Minnesotans agree that it is important to support political candidates who address rural issues. Those age 65+ place the highest importance on such (64% very important), yet less than half (46%) of Millennials feel backing political candidates who address rural issues is of great importance.
- While social media is seen as an important communication vehicle for local information by less than two-thirds (64%) of rural Minnesotans, women (70%) and Millennials (76%) are more likely to believe such.



A Changing Landscape: Minnesota continues to diversify, but leadership is not wholly reflective of this change.

- More than half (53%) of rural residents – and two-thirds of those in urban areas – feel their community’s ethnic or racial makeup has become more diverse over the past five years.
- Despite this changing landscape, only 71 percent of rural residents – and 84 percent of urban residents – say that they feel their community is welcoming to people of all backgrounds, an 11-point decrease from 2013 rural findings.
- Half of rural residents – and 68 percent of urban residents – believe local community leadership is comprised of people from different backgrounds. Women and younger Millennials are the least likely to agree.
- Forty-one percent of rural residents – and 35 percent of urban residents – say that they have served in a community leadership role, a 12-point decrease from 2013 rural findings. Younger Minnesotans and those with lower incomes are the least likely to have served in leadership.
- While many have not yet served in a leadership role, more than three in five (62%) rural residents say they would consider doing so if asked, nine percent higher than 2013 study results.

Migration: One in five rural Minnesotans have considered relocation to a metro area.

- Looking forward, 17 percent of rural Minnesotans – and 21 percent of urban area residents – say that they do not expect to be living in their current locale five years from now. In fact, 20 percent of rural Minnesotans indicate that they have considered leaving their community for a larger city/metro area within the past two years, a five-point increase from 2013 findings. The largest age group to contribute to these numbers are Millennials.
- Of those who have considered a move, close to half (46%) of rural Minnesotans say it would be to pursue job opportunities. Quality of life is the main factor for 43 percent of rural residents and 65 percent of urban area residents.
- While men are much more likely to say a potential move would be for quality of life (52% men, 31% women), women are significantly more likely to cite job opportunities as the motivating factor (32% men, 52% women).
- Rural Minnesotans ages 18 to 49 are the most likely to cite job opportunities as a primary factor for considering a move to a metro area, compared to those older who say the reason would be to achieve improved quality of life.

RURAL AND URBAN FINDINGS

Note: The following analysis reflects findings from rural residents with a comparison of significant differences to urban resident results.

Russell Herder
Strategy wins.



Project Goal and Objectives

Rural Pulse™ is a research study that has been commissioned by the Blandin Foundation since 1998 to gain a real-time snapshot of the concerns, perceptions and priorities of rural Minnesota residents. This initiative was last conducted in 2013 and has served to identify trends within significant, complex subject areas including the economy, education, employment and quality of life, as well as to contrast rural opinions with those of larger metropolitan areas through an urban dimension to this research.

The Foundation chose to undertake this study again in 2016 to accomplish the following objectives:

Understand the issues and priorities rural residents and leaders prioritize within their communities;

Learn if community needs are being adequately addressed;

Identify emerging trends or unmet concerns;

Compare and contrast issue movement in comparison to past Rural Pulse studies; and

Gain an understanding of how the opinions of urban Minnesotans compare to at-large findings.



Methodology

Russell Herder, an independent research and communications consulting firm, was retained to conduct this study. The survey instrument for Rural Pulse™ 2016 was developed in cooperation with Blandin Foundation leadership. Where possible and relevant, certain questions from past studies were repeated for comparison purposes.

Telephone interviews were conducted among rural Minnesotans February 16 – March 3. A random sample of landline and wireless phone numbers was purchased for use in this study, excluding the seven-county Twin Cities metro area and those in zip codes with populations of 35,000 or more. An oversample consisting of ages 18 to 34 was achieved to make sure Millennial residents were well represented. The resulting total of 1,144 rural residents provides a statistical reliability of +/-2.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

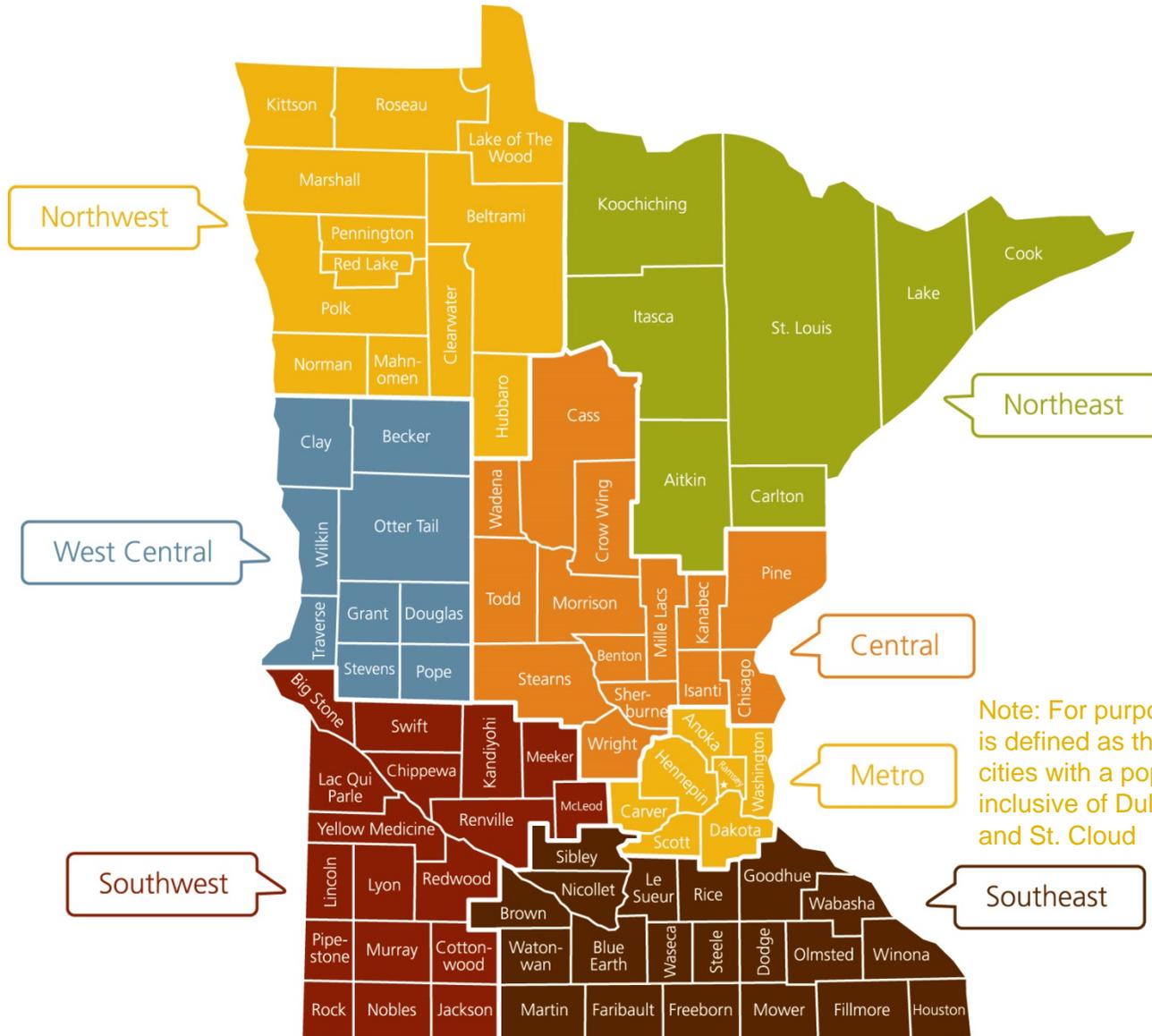
To compare rural opinions with those in urban areas, a parallel study was conducted among Minnesota residents within the seven-county metro area, as well as cities with a population of more than 35,000. Telephone interviews were undertaken February 18 – March 5 with 450 urban residents, providing a statistical reliability of +/-4.7 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

The survey was also administered to 511 alumni of the Blandin Community Leadership Program and the Blandin Reservation Community Leadership Program; 300 community members of the Blandin Foundation's home area – defined as the Grand Rapids and Itasca County area, including the communities of Blackduck, Hill City, Northome and Remer; and an oversample of 400 cultural group community members within rural Minnesota, inclusive of African-American, Asian, Native American, Hispanic/Latino and immigrants (e.g., Hmong, Somali, Southeast Asian), as well as multi-cultural individuals. Note: The findings for these additional studies are compiled in separate reports.

All completed questionnaires were processed and analyzed using SPSS software. The data was sorted by gender, age, income, region and business ownership, and weighted to reflect state demographics.



Study Regions



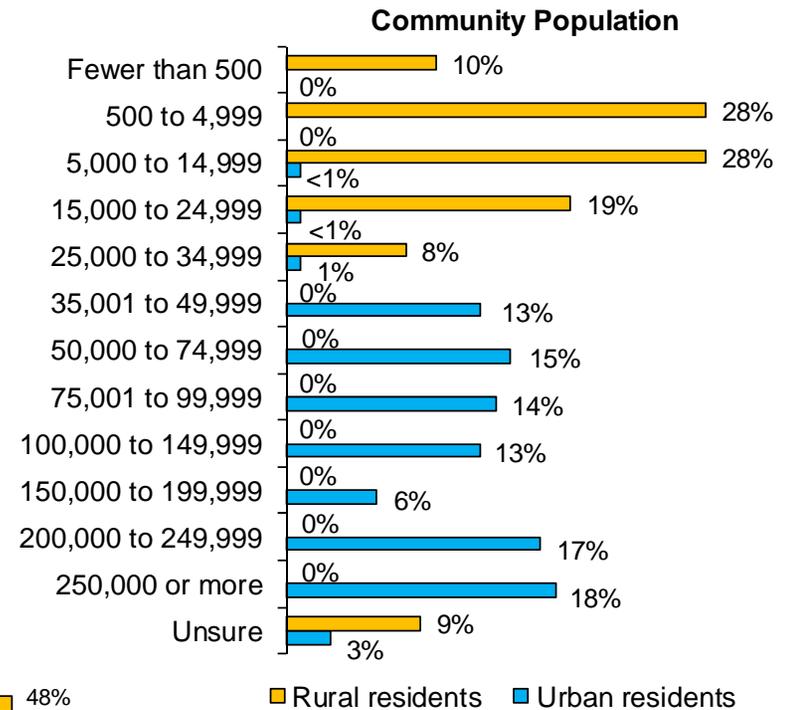
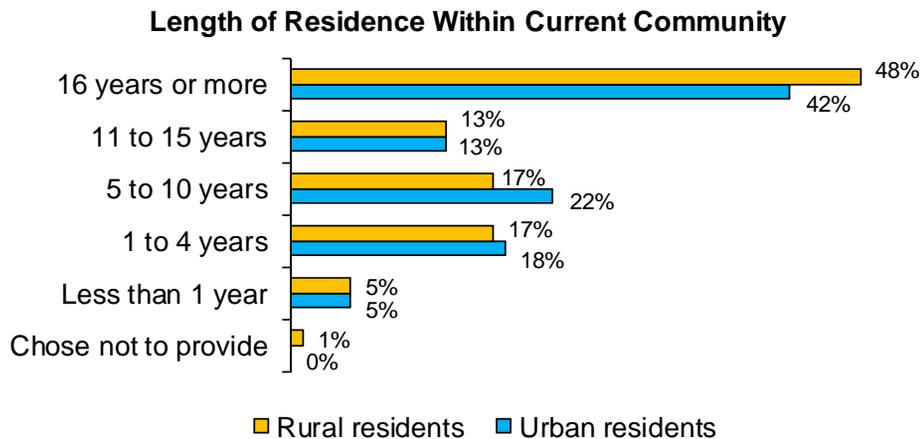
Note: For purposes of this study, urban Minnesota is defined as the seven-county metro area plus cities with a population of more than 35,000, inclusive of Duluth, Mankato, Moorhead, Rochester and St. Cloud



Demographics

Twenty-eight percent of rural respondents said the community they live in, or nearest to, has a population of either between 500 and 4,999 people or 5,000 and 14,999. Another 19 percent cited a population size of 15,000 to 24,999, followed by fewer than 500 (10%), and 25,000 to 34,999 (8%). Nine percent were unsure of the size of their community.

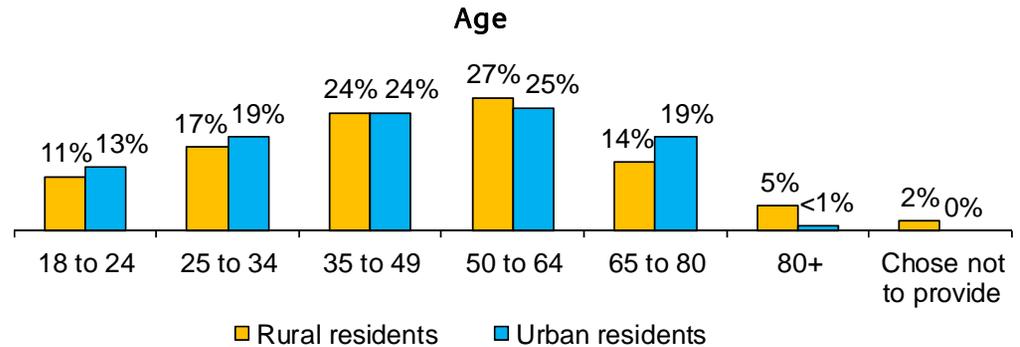
Forty-three percent of urban respondents said they live in a city with a population of fewer than 100,000. Another 36 percent said between 100,000 and 249,999, while 18 percent said the city they reside in has a population of 250,000 or more.



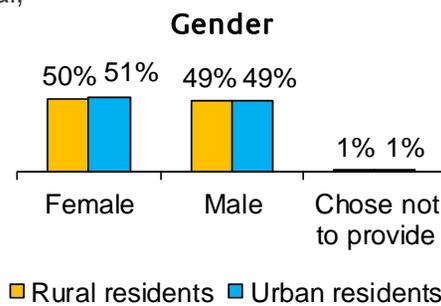
Nearly half (48%) of rural respondents – and 42 percent of urban residents – said that they have lived in their community for 16 or more years, followed by five to 10 years (17% rural, 22% urban), one to four years (17% rural, 18% urban), 11 to 15 years (13% each), and less than one year (5% each). One percent of rural respondents did not provide this information.



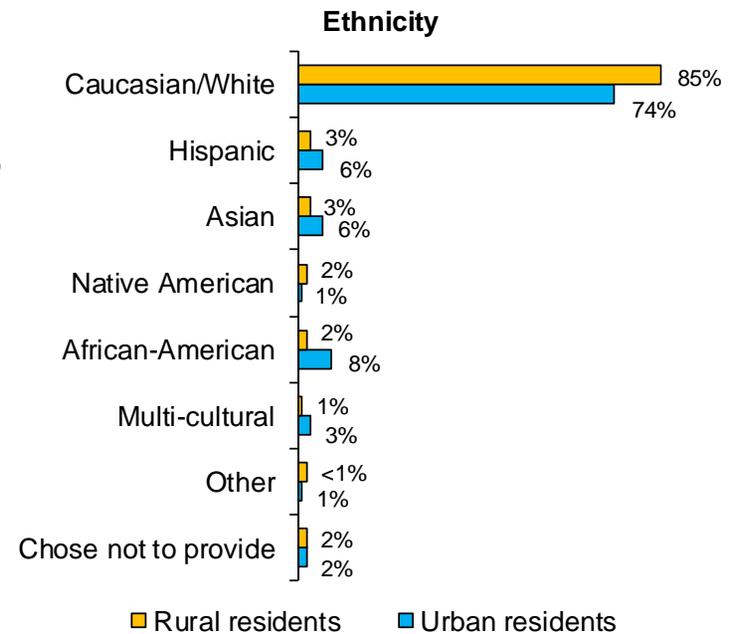
Twenty-eight percent of rural Minnesota respondents – and 32 percent of urban residents – were age 18 to 34, followed by age 35 to 64 (51% rural, 49% urban), and age 65 or older (19% each). Two percent of rural residents did not provide age information.



Gender was nearly equally represented, with 50 percent women and 49 percent men responding from rural Minnesota. One percent chose not to provide gender information. Urban gender composition was similar.

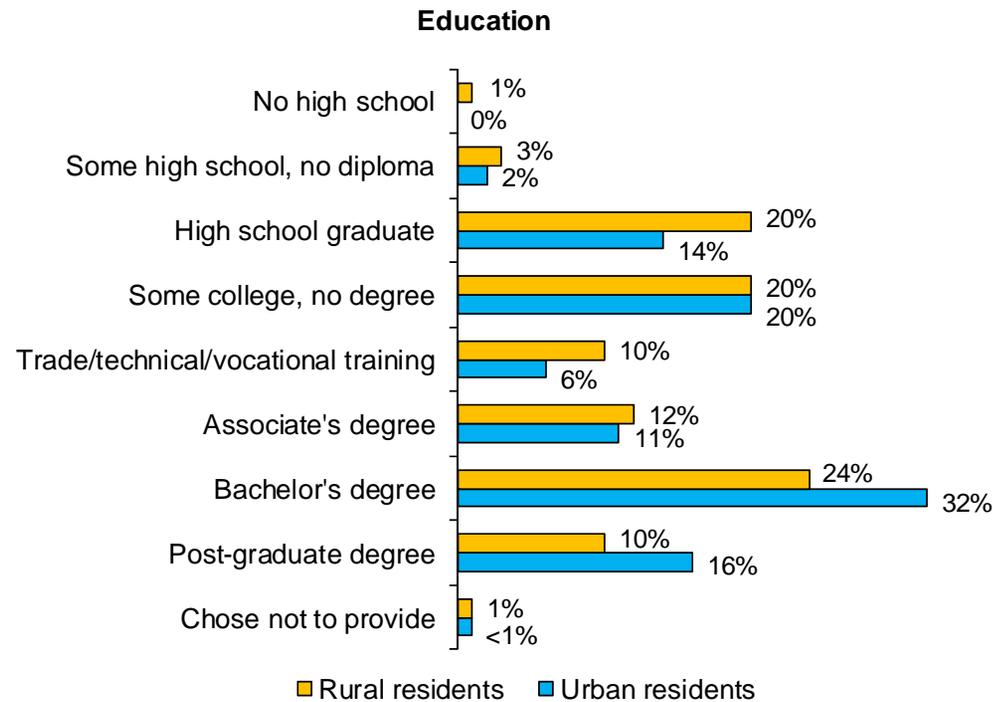


Eighty-five percent of rural respondents – and 74 percent of urban residents – were Caucasian. Other ethnicities included Hispanic (3% rural, 6% urban); Asian (3% rural, 6% urban); Native American (2% rural, 1% urban); and African American (2% rural, 8% urban); and about one percent were other nationalities. One percent of rural residents – and three percent of those in urban areas – considered themselves multi-cultural, while four percent overall chose not to provide this information.





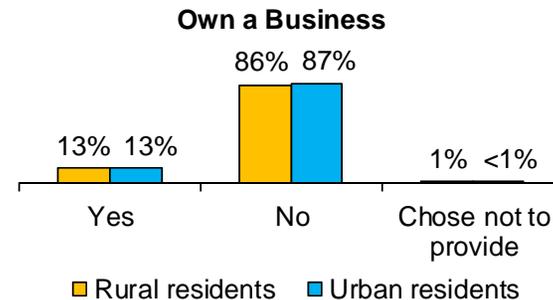
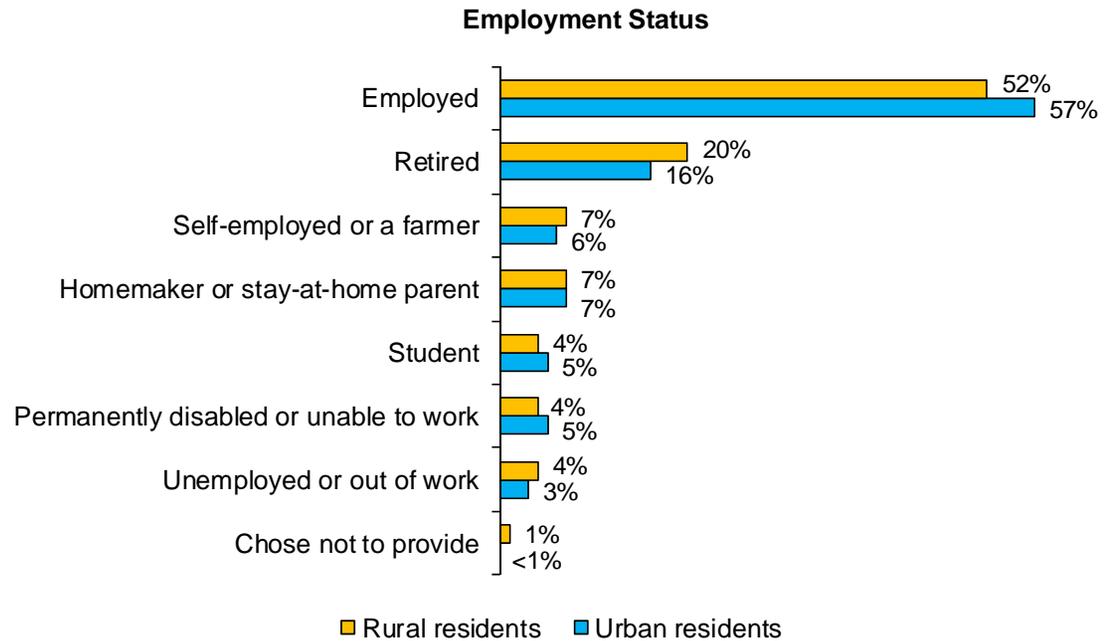
The educational experience of survey respondents was as follows: a bachelor's degree (24% rural, 32% urban); some college experience but no degree (20% each); a high school graduate (20% rural, 14% urban); an associate's degree (12% rural, 11% urban); trade, technical or vocational training (10% rural, 6% urban); a post-graduate degree (10% rural, 16% urban); some high school but no diploma (3% rural, 2% urban); and one percent of rural residents said they have never attended high school. Another one percent chose not to provide education information.





Fifty-two percent of rural Minnesotans – and 57 percent of urban residents – said they are employed, while others noted being self-employed or a farmer (7% rural, 6% urban). For those who said they are not employed, 20 percent of rural residents – and 16% of urban Minnesotans – said they are retired; followed by being a homemaker (7% each); a student (4% rural, 5% urban), have a permanent disability (4% rural, 5% urban) or that they were unable to work for another reason (4% rural, 3% urban). About one percent did not provide employment information.

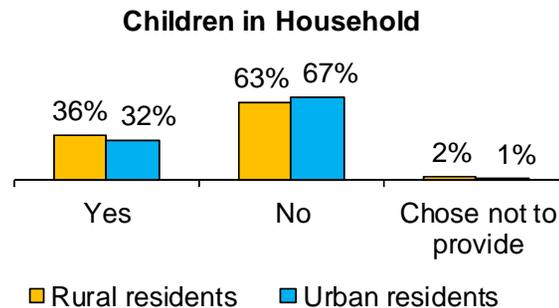
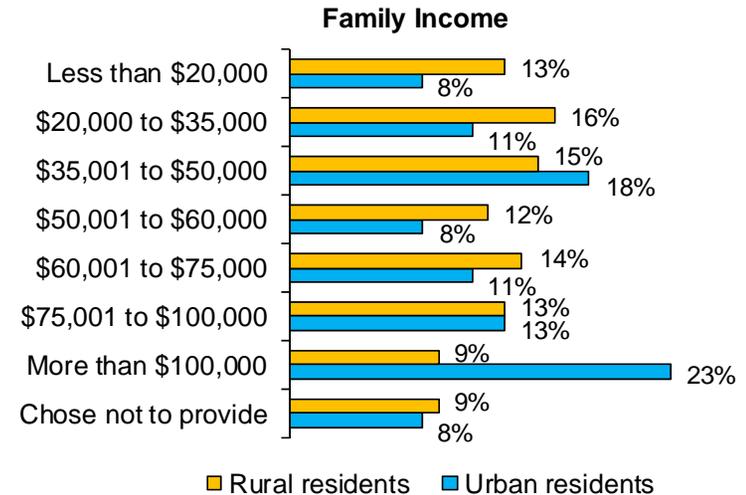
Thirteen percent of both rural and urban respondents said they own a business of some type.





Forty-four percent of rural Minnesotans surveyed – and 37 percent of urban residents – cited their family income as \$50,000 or less. Another 29 percent of rural residents – and 32 percent of those in urban areas – reported their household income to be between \$50,001 and \$100,000. Nine percent of rural residents said their household income is more than \$100,000. Urban residents were two and a half times more likely to have said their household income is more than \$100,000, with 23 percent indicating such. Seventeen percent of Minnesotans surveyed did not provide income information.

Thirty-six percent of rural Minnesotans – and 32 percent of those in urban areas – noted that at least one child 18-years-old or younger resides in their household.

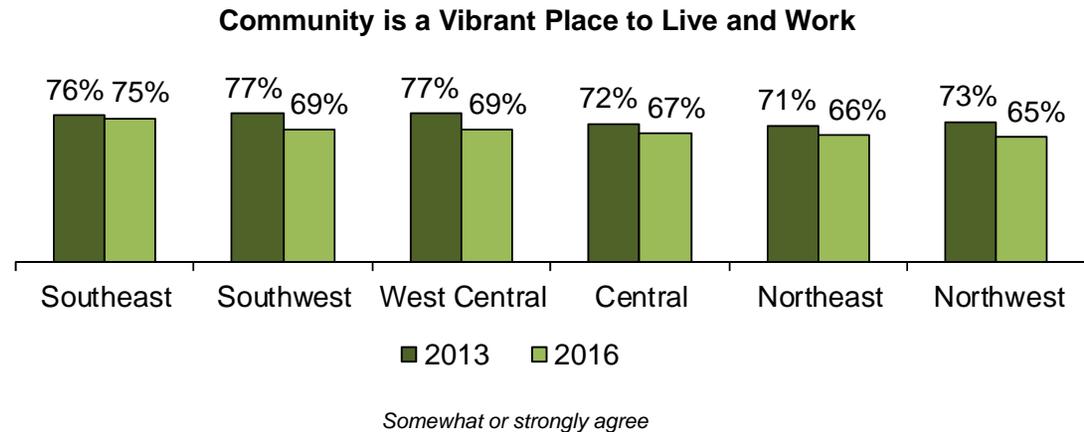
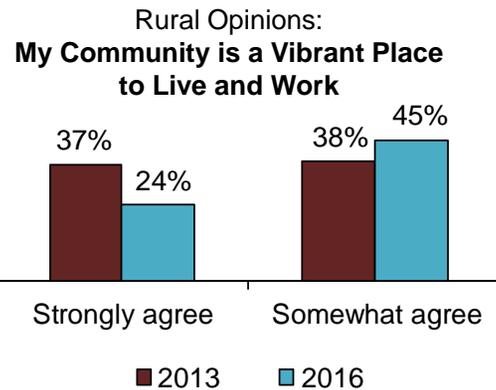
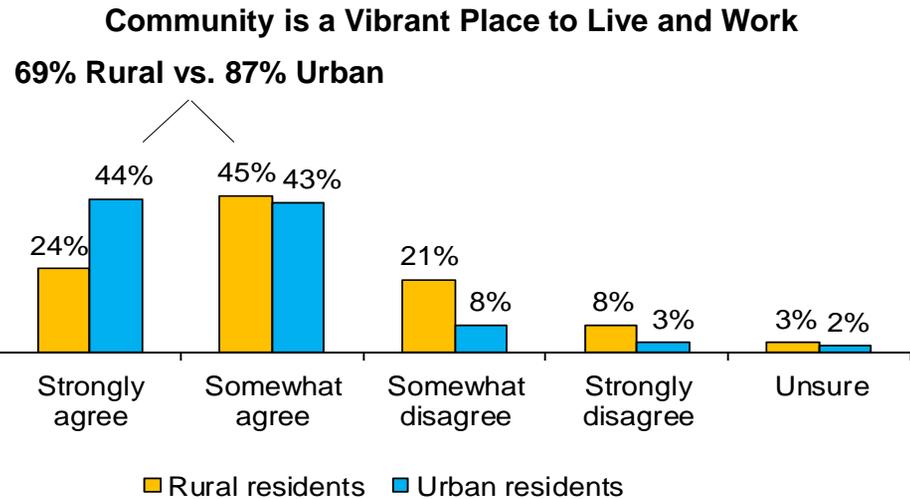




Community Perspective

Sixty-nine percent of rural Minnesotans said that they believe their community is a vibrant place to live and work, while 29 percent did not agree. Satisfaction has declined since Rural Pulse 2013 (75% vs. 69%). Urban residents were more likely to acknowledge community vibrancy (83% urban, 69% rural).

Those in the southern and West Central regions were the most likely to feel community vibrancy.

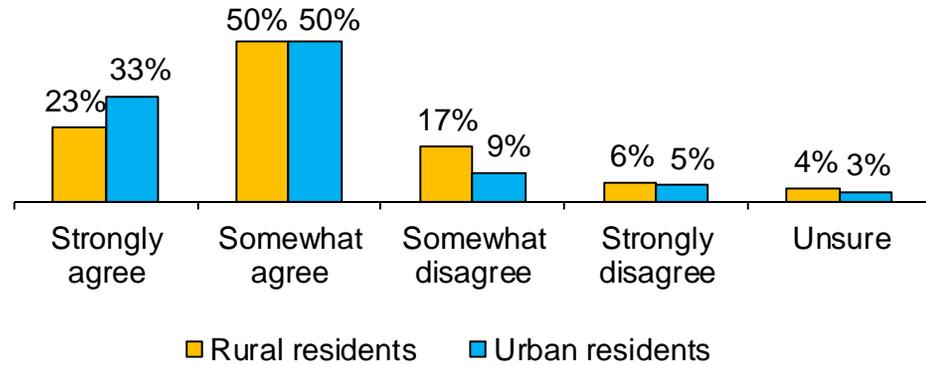




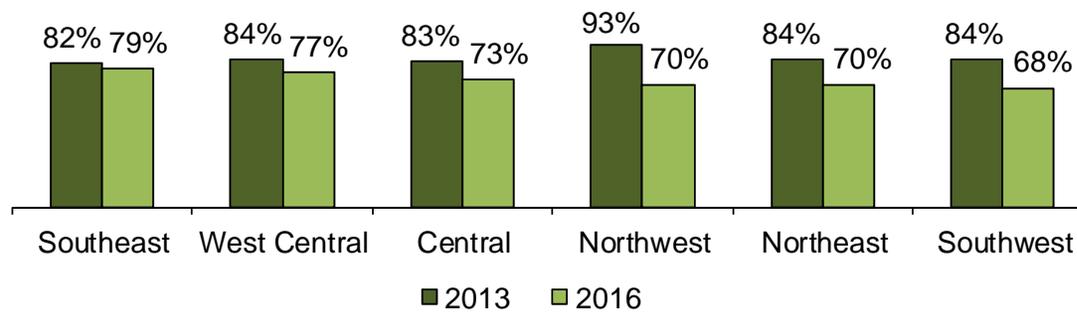
An even greater number of rural residents (73%) believed their community is strong, resilient and able to recover from difficult situations. Twenty-three percent did not agree. Urban residents placed even more confidence in their city's strength and resilience (83% urban, 73% rural).

Those in the Southeast, West Central and Central regions were the most likely to feel their community is resilient, although the sentiment has decreased throughout greater Minnesota from 2013 findings. The greatest decline was in the Northwest (down 23%).

Community is Strong, Resilient and Able to Recover from Difficult Situations



Community is Strong, Resilient and Able to Recover from Difficult Situations



Somewhat or strongly agree



Looking at personal demographics, women and those with lower incomes were the least likely to have said their rural community is vibrant and resilient.

In addition, there was also variation by age. Younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) were more skeptical than those older about their community being strong and able to recover from challenging situations.

Rural Minnesotans: Believe Community is Vibrant and Resilient

	Men	Women
Believe community is a vibrant place to live and work	73%	65%
Believe community is strong, resilient and able to recover from difficult situations	76%	70%

Age					
	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Believe community is a vibrant place to live and work	69%	68%	70%	66%	74%
Believe community is strong, resilient and able to recover from difficult situations	66%	72%	79%	72%	76%

Age					
	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Believe community is a vibrant place to live and work	69%	68%	70%	66%	74%
Believe community is strong, resilient and able to recover from difficult situations	66%	72%	79%	72%	76%

Strongly or somewhat agree

■ Lowest agreement



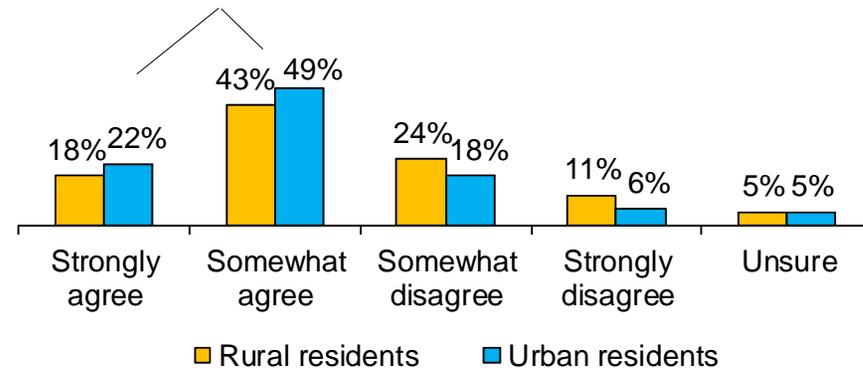
Personal Ability to Affect Change

Those surveyed were asked whether they feel a sense of ownership over the direction of their community and able to contribute to its future. Three in five (61%) agreed, while 35 percent did not. Urban residents (71%) felt stronger about their ability to contribute.

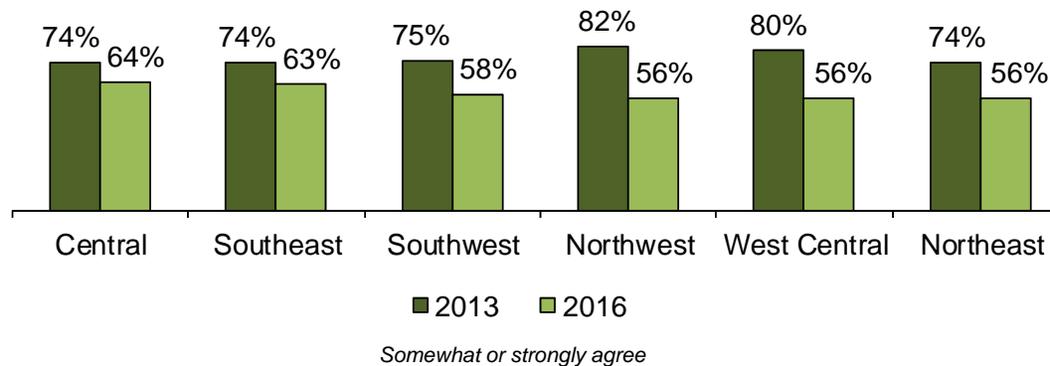
Those in the Central and Southeast regions were the most likely to feel they are able to contribute. That opinion has significantly decreased since 2013, however, with the largest decline being in the Northwest (down 26%) and West Central (down 24%) regions.

Feel Ownership of Community and Able to Contribute to Its Future

61% Rural vs. 71% Urban



Feel Ownership of Community and Ability to Contribute to Its Future

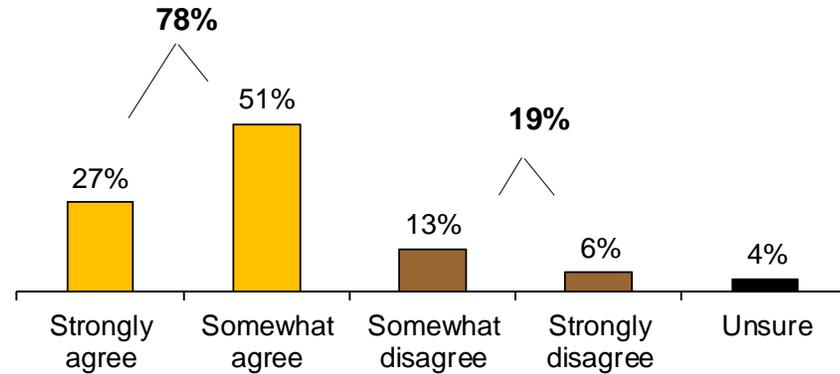




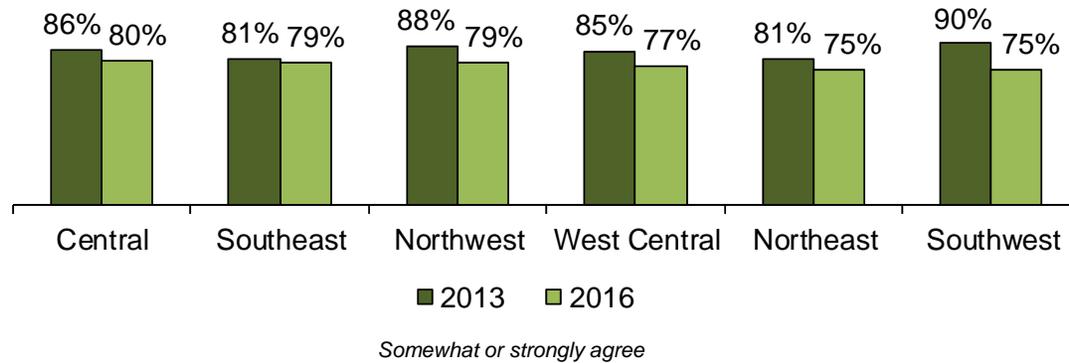
While rural Minnesotans expressed some concerns about their local community, they were optimistic about being able to personally make an impact and improve local quality of life. Nearly four in five (78%) felt they can impact change, while 19 percent did not agree.

Residents in the Central, Southeast and Northwest regions were the most likely to feel they can personally impact their community in a positive way, although this has somewhat declined overall since 2013. The largest difference was in the Southwest (down 15%).

Rural Minnesotans: Able to Make a Positive Community Impact



Able to Make a Positive Community Impact





Men and business owners felt most positively about having a sense of community ownership and being able to work together effectively.

Rural Minnesotans: Sense of Ownership and Personal Impact

	Men	Women
I feel a sense of ownership over the direction of my community and feel that I am able to contribute to its future	66%	56%

	Business Owners	Non-Business Owners
Residents like me are able to make an impact and make our community a better place to live.	84%	78%
I feel a sense of ownership over the direction of my community and feel that I am able to contribute to its future	71%	59%

Strongly or somewhat agree

 Highest agreement



Rural Minnesotans: Sense of Ownership and Personal Impact

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
I feel a sense of ownership over the direction of my community and feel that I am able to contribute to its future.	48%	62%	65%	59%	65%
Residents like me are able to make an impact and make our community a better place to live.	73%	78%	83%	75%	81%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
I feel a sense of ownership over the direction of my community and feel that I am able to contribute to its future.	49%	61%	69%	74%
Residents like me are able to make an impact and make our community a better place to live.	72%	81%	84%	82%

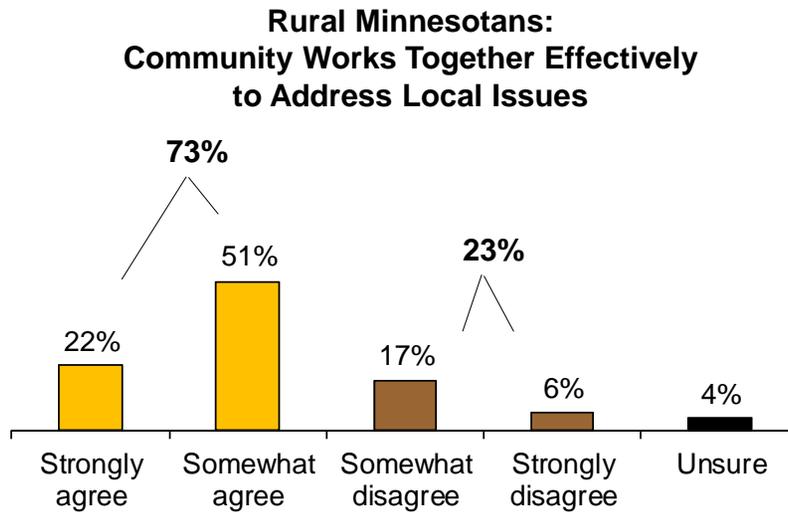
Strongly or somewhat agree

Lowest agreement

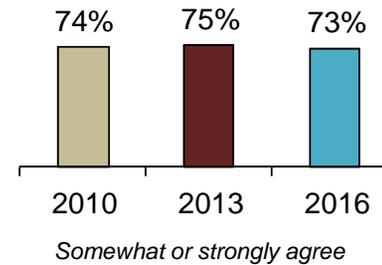
Younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) and those with lower incomes were the least positive about their ability to contribute and make an impact in their community. Millennials at large (ages 18 to 34) were more likely than those older to feel that differences such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality make working together more problematic in their community.



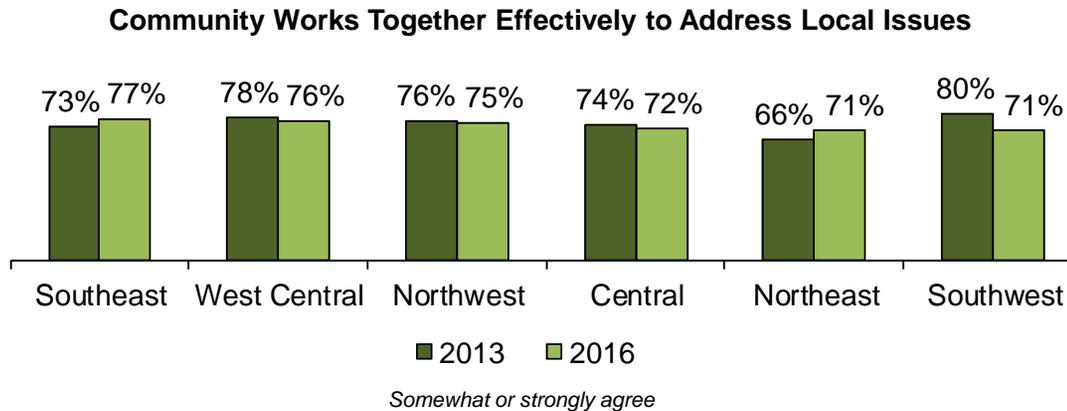
When asked whether they feel local community members work well together, confidence was slightly lower. Nearly one in four (23%) rural residents said that they do not feel their community works together cohesively, compared to 73 percent who said that they feel it does, similar to previous study findings.



**Rural Minnesotans:
Community Works Together Effectively**



Residents in the Southeast, West Central and Northwest regions were the most likely to believe in community cohesion.

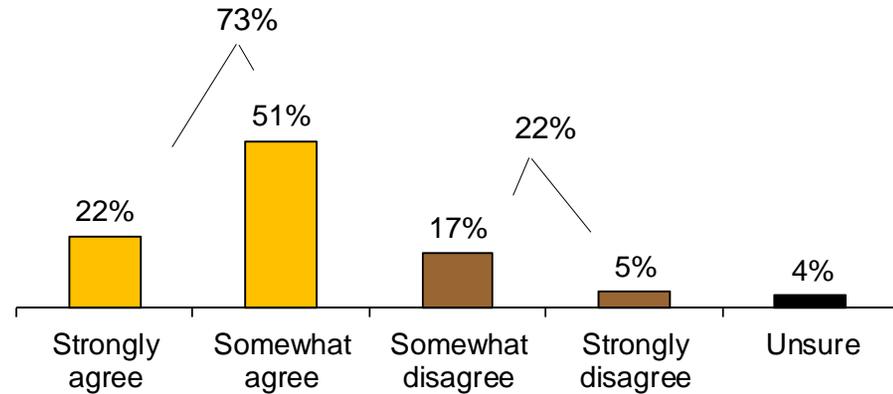




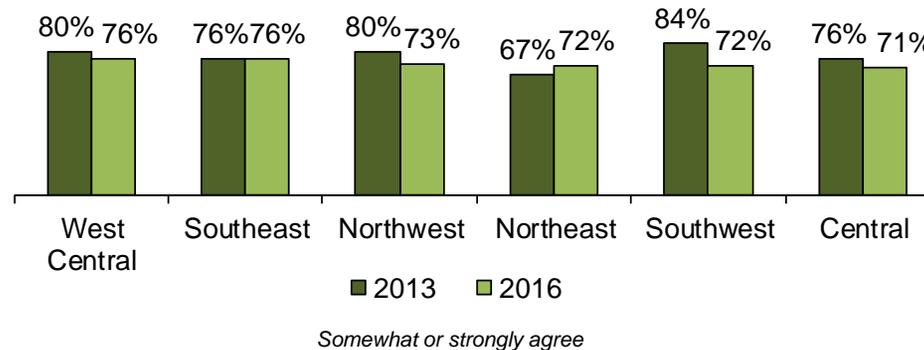
When specifically asked if they feel residents are able to work across differences such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality, the findings were similar. Close to three in four (73%) agreed, while 22 percent did not.

Residents in the West Central and Southeast regions felt the most positively. Those in the Southwest showed the most decline in their views about residents being able to work across differences since 2013 (down 12%).

Rural Minnesotans: Residents are Able to Work Across Differences



Residents are Able to Work Across Differences





Millennials, those with incomes of \$35,000 or less and non-business owners were the least likely to believe their community works cohesively and across differences.

Rural Minnesotans: Working Cohesively and Across Differences

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Residents in my community work together effectively to address local issues	70%	69%	77%	71%	82%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Residents in my community work together effectively to address local issues.	70%	76%	76%	77%
Residents in my community are able to work across differences such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality	71%	75%	78%	77%

	Business Owners	Non-Business Owners
Residents in my community are able to work across differences such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality	81%	73%

Agree or strongly agree

Lowest agreement



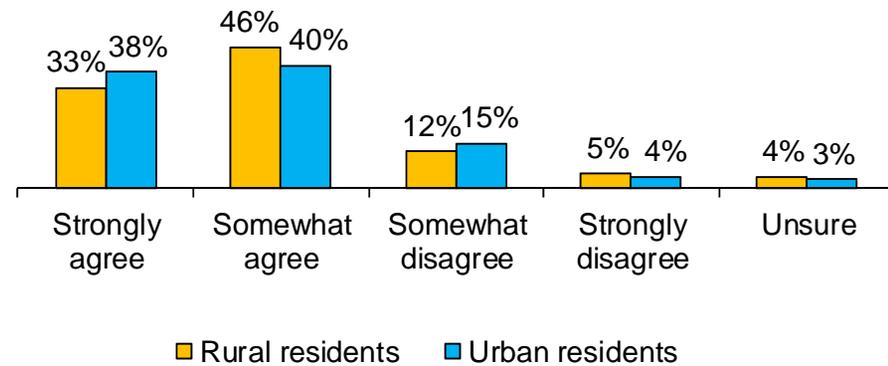
Confidence Exists for Service Quality, Access

About four in five rural residents (79%) believed that their community offers equal access to essential services, while 17 percent did not.

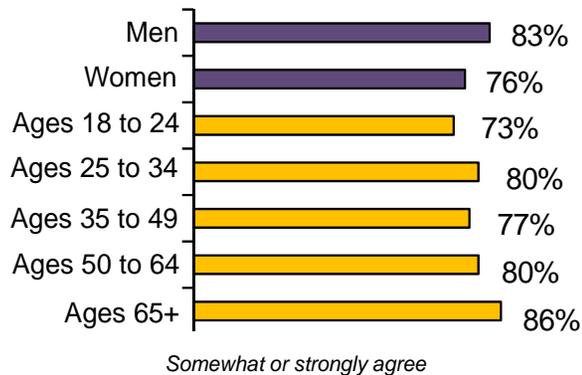
Residents in the Southeast, West Central and Central regions were the most satisfied with community service offerings. Those in the Northwest had the most significant decline in service satisfaction since 2013 (down 20%).

Women and Younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) were the least likely to agree that all sectors within their rural community are equally served.

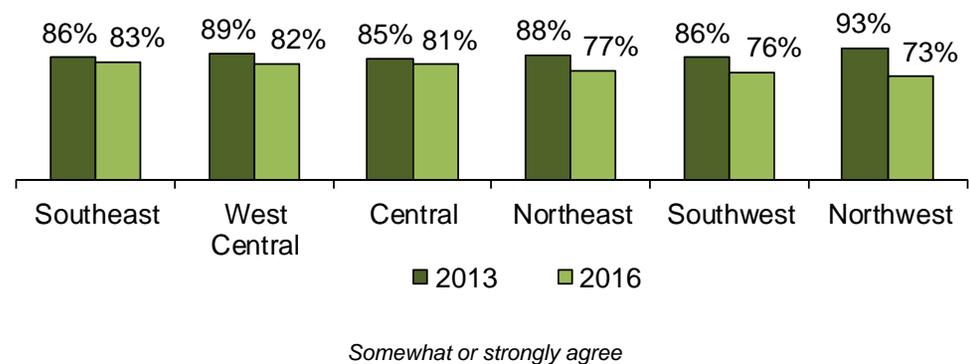
Equal Access to Essential and Basic Services



Rural Minnesotans: Equal Access to Essential and Basic Services



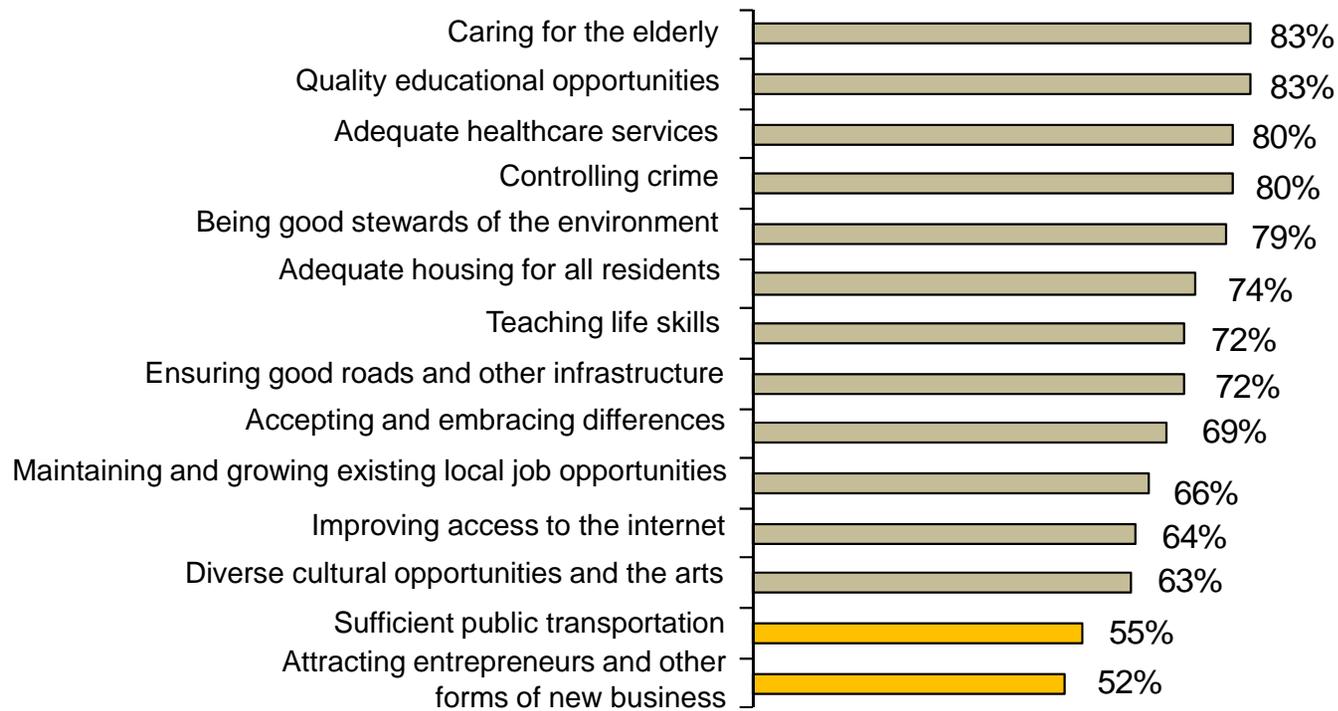
Equal Access to Essential and Basic Services





Snapshot: Rural Community Performance

Rural residents were asked to rate their agreement regarding how well they believe their local community handles different services and functions. The most highly rated areas were caring for the elderly, education, healthcare, crime control and environmental stewardship. They assigned the lowest community ratings to attracting new businesses and providing public transportation, such as buses and trains. Urban resident findings were similar. Other items mentioned by rural Minnesotans that were considered important for their community to address included drug use and underage drinking, childcare, mental health, unemployment, poverty, parks and recreation, taxes, spending and governance, and retail outlets, among others. (See Appendix for full listing of other responses.)



Agree or strongly agree



In looking at community performance by age group, younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) were the least satisfied with numerous service offerings and functions compared to those older.

Rural Minnesotans: Good Community Performance

	Age				
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Providing adequate healthcare services	76%	83%	79%	77%	89%
Caring for the elderly	79%	82%	86%	85%	87%
Providing quality educational opportunities	76%	81%	84%	81%	90%
Teaching life skills	72%	77%	74%	69%	75%
Ensuring good roads and other infrastructure	64%	71%	68%	75%	80%
Providing sufficient public transportation	53%	57%	55%	48%	63%
Having adequate housing for all residents	70%	73%	75%	74%	79%
Controlling crime	75%	80%	78%	80%	89%
Good stewards of the environment	66%	76%	78%	83%	87%
Considering diverse cultural opportunities and the arts	58%	67%	65%	59%	68%
Improving access to the internet	62%	71%	66%	60%	61%

Somewhat or strongly agree

 Lowest agreement



Rural Minnesotans with household incomes of \$35,000 or less were the least content with most service offerings compared to those with higher incomes.

Rural Minnesotans: Good Community Performance

	Income			
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Providing adequate healthcare services	76%	84%	82%	92%
Caring for the elderly	82%	84%	89%	92%
Providing quality educational opportunities	77%	88%	85%	88%
Teaching life skills	65%	76%	76%	78%
Ensuring good roads and other infrastructure	68%	74%	78%	69%
Providing sufficient public transportation	59%	53%	56%	53%
Having adequate housing for all residents	68%	77%	80%	80%
Controlling crime	74%	83%	83%	93%
Good stewards of environment	75%	78%	83%	92%
Considering diverse cultural opportunities and the arts	62%	62%	69%	68%
Improving access to the internet	62%	69%	67%	67%

Strongly or somewhat agree

■ Lowest agreement



Men were more agreeable than women that their rural community offers adequate services to residents.

Rural business owners were more satisfied with public transportation opportunities in their community than those who do not own a business. Non-business-owners showed higher confidence in internet access within their community than those who own a business.

Rural Minnesotans: Good Community Performance

	Men	Women
Caring for elderly	87%	82%
Adequate housing	77%	72%
Ensuring good roads and other infrastructure	76%	69%
Providing sufficient public transportation	59%	50%
Considering diverse cultural opportunities and the arts	67%	60%

	Business Owners	Non-Business Owners
Providing sufficient public transportation	62%	54%
Improving access to the internet	58%	65%

Strongly or somewhat agree

■ Lowest agreement



Below is a summary of community performance by region, highlighting areas with the least satisfaction.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Good Community Performance**

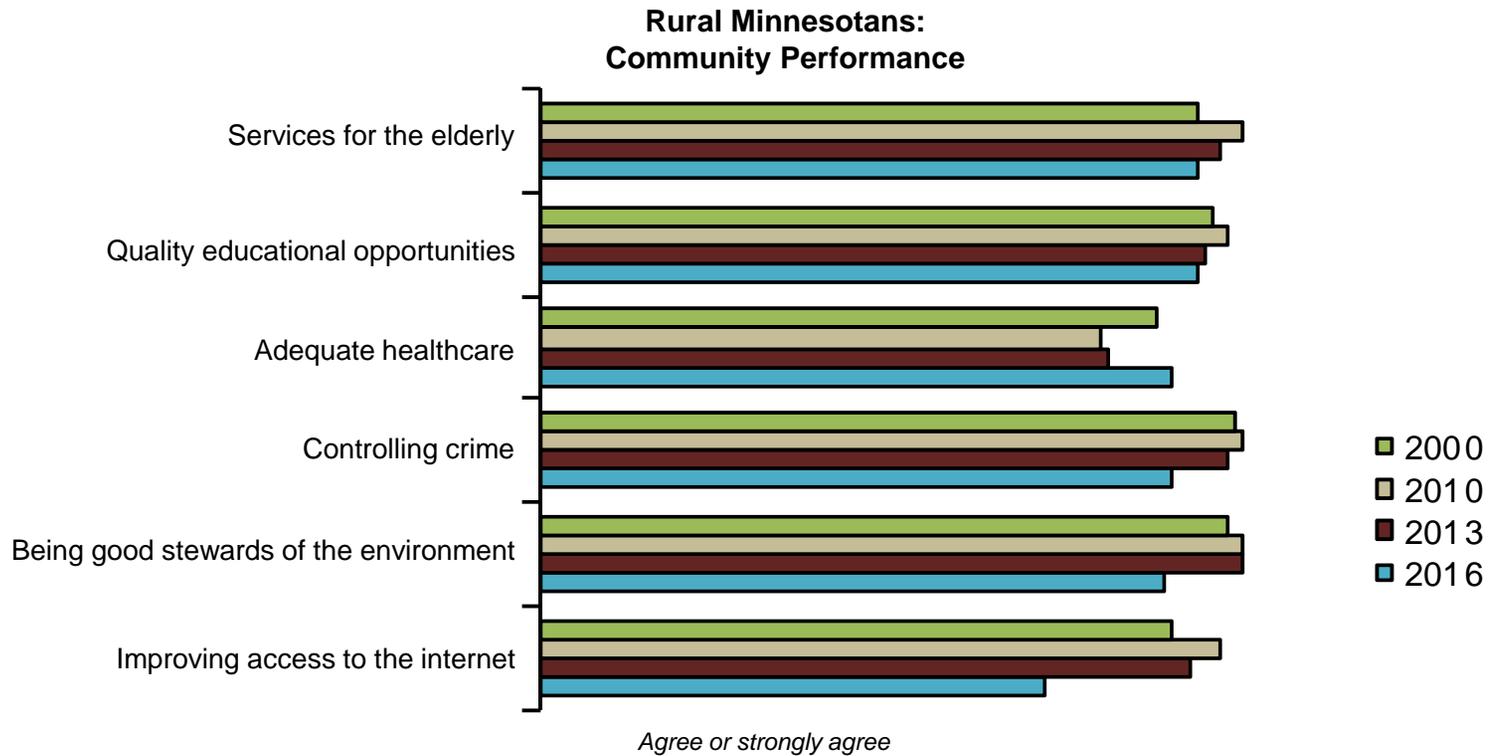
	Southwest	Southeast	Central	West Central	Northwest	Northeast
Adequate healthcare services	75%	83%	81%	86%	71%	81%
Caring for the elderly	81%	86%	84%	87%	84%	81%
Quality educational opportunities	81%	84%	85%	84%	79%	79%
Teaching life skills	73%	74%	75%	71%	70%	63%
Ensuring good roads and other infrastructure	72%	75%	75%	66%	78%	64%
Sufficient public transportation	55%	60%	50%	60%	53%	54%
Adequate housing	71%	78%	78%	78%	63%	70%
Controlling crime	76%	81%	81%	85%	75%	80%
Good stewards of environment	75%	82%	80%	78%	80%	76%
Considering diverse cultural opportunities and the arts	62%	72%	60%	61%	66%	59%
Improving access to the internet	63%	70%	63%	63%	61%	61%

Strongly or somewhat agree

■ Lowest agreement



There is change over time with regard to community performance of services. Rural residents overall expressed being less satisfied with many services in 2016 versus 2013, although they were more confident in their communities' ability to provide adequate healthcare compared to previous years.





Caring for the Elderly

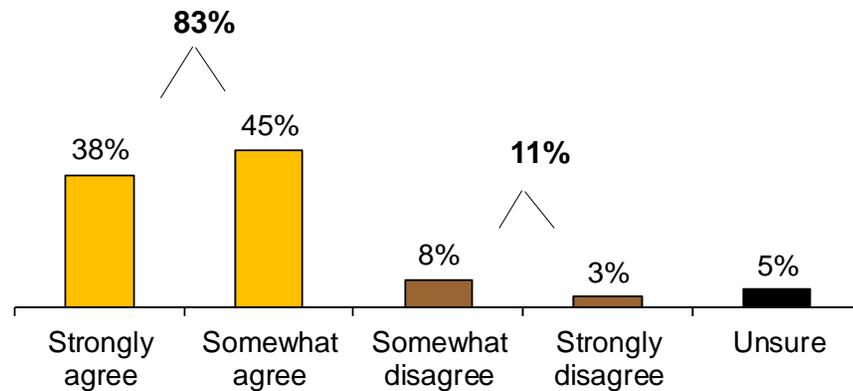
Most (83%) rural residents said that they have confidence in their community's ability to provide services for the elderly, while 11 percent did not agree.

Crime Control

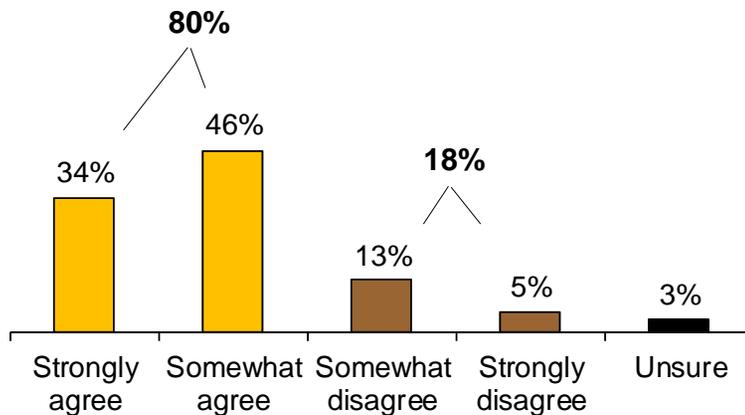
Four in five (80%) rural residents were satisfied in their community's ability to control crime. Eighteen percent disagreed.

While all rural regions diminished in resident confidence regarding crime control, the West Central region reflected the highest satisfaction. The Southwest region exhibited the largest decline since 2013 (down 15%).

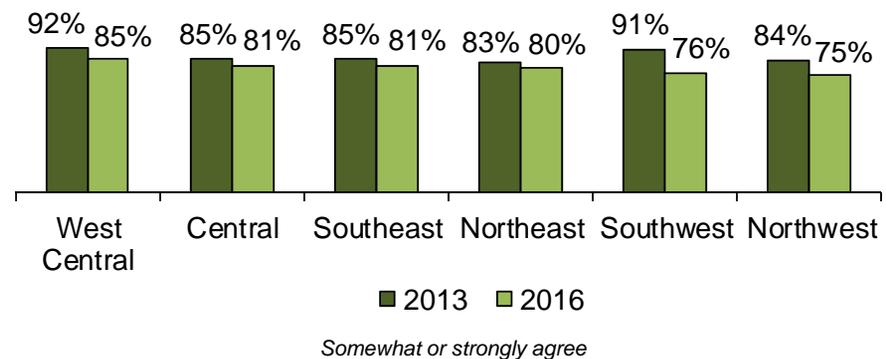
**Rural Minnesotans:
Community Does a Good Job Caring for the Elderly**



**Rural Minnesotans:
Community Does a Good Job Controlling Crime**



Controlling Crime





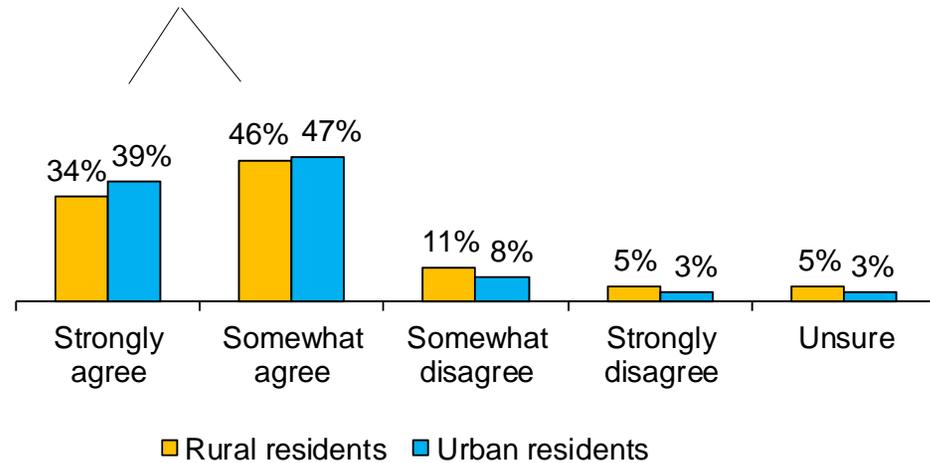
Healthcare

Four in five (80%) rural Minnesotans agreed that their community provides adequate healthcare services to residents, while only 16 percent did not feel that this is the case. Urban residents showed slightly higher satisfaction with local healthcare availability (86%).

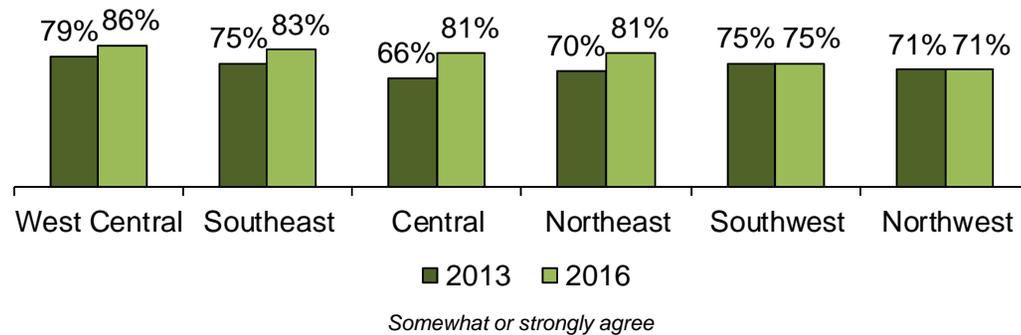
Healthcare was a service that either stayed the same or improved in satisfaction from 2013 rural findings overall. Residents in the West Central and Southeast regions held the highest agreement that healthcare services in their community are adequate. Those in Central Minnesota showed the highest improvement from 2013 (up 15%).

Community Does a Good Job Providing Adequate Healthcare Services

80% Rural vs. 86% Urban



Adequate Healthcare Services





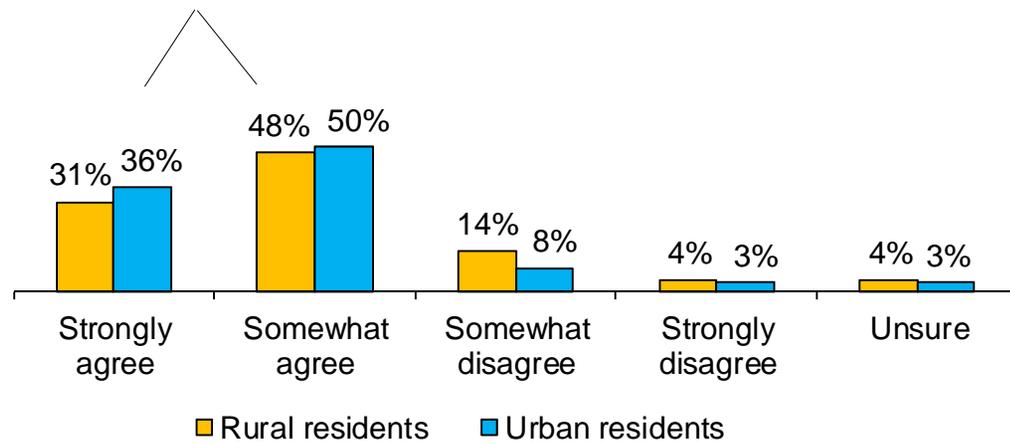
The Environment

About four in five (79%) rural residents said that they believe their community is a good steward of the environment, while 18 percent did not agree. Urban residents were slightly more likely to have said environmental stewardship is agreeable.

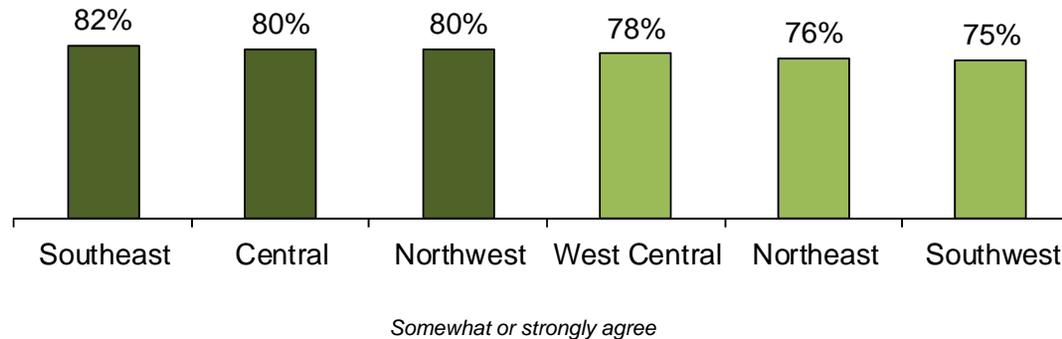
All rural regions showed somewhat diminished contentment with environmental stewardship since 2013, with those in the Southwest showing the sharpest decline (down 17%).

Community Is Good Steward of the Environment

79% Rural vs. 86% Urban



Good Steward of Environment



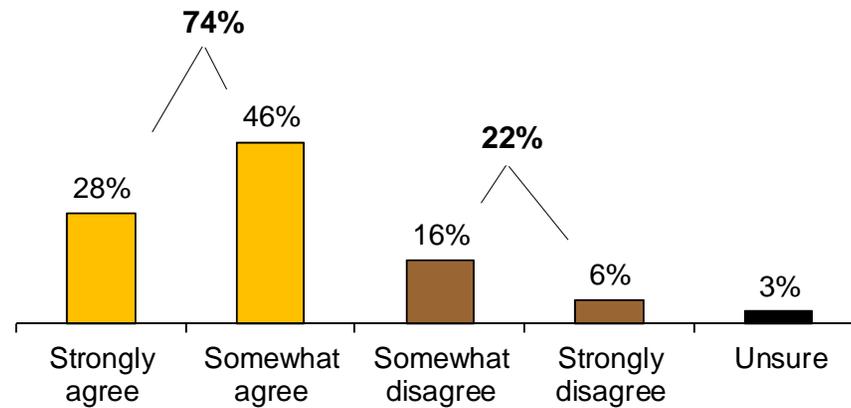


Housing

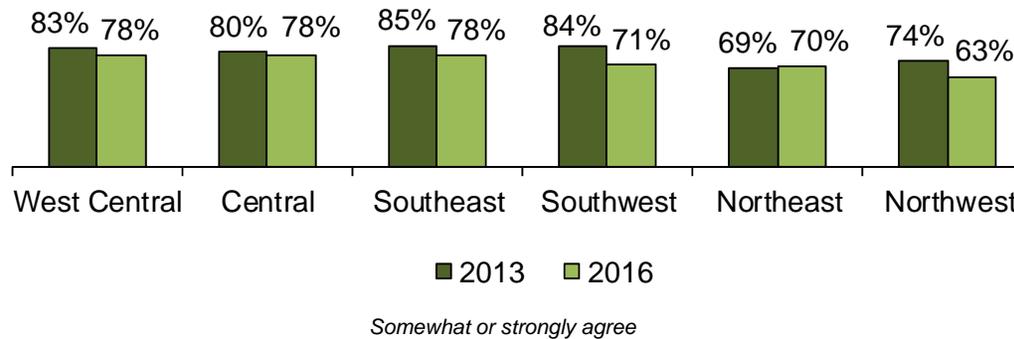
While about three-quarters (74%) of rural Minnesotans agreed that there is sufficient housing in their community, 22 percent were concerned about adequate availability.

Those in the West Central, Central and Southeast regions were the most likely to have felt positively about adequate housing in their community. Those in the Southwest region showed the largest decline in housing satisfaction from 2013 findings (down 13%).

Rural Minnesotans: Community Does a Good Job Providing Adequate Housing



Adequate Housing for Residents



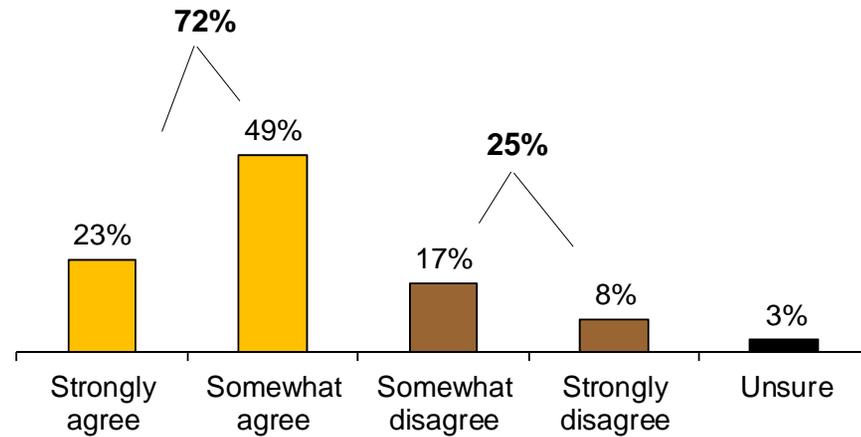


Roads and Transportation

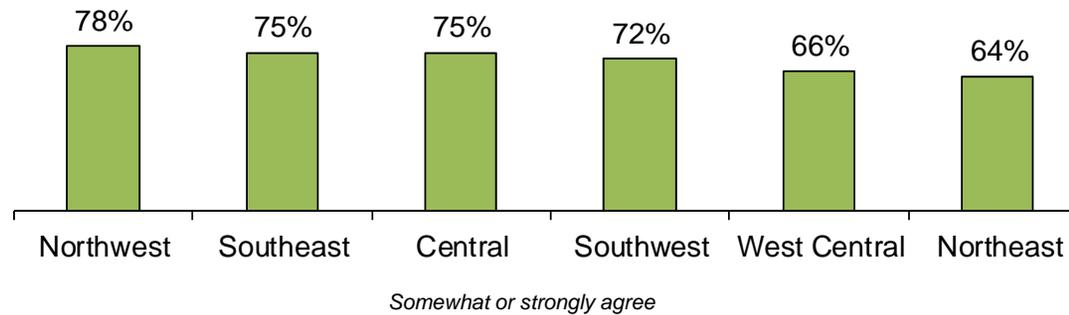
While 72 percent of rural Minnesotans agreed that their community ensures good roads and other infrastructure, a quarter of those surveyed expressed concern about such.

While those in the Northwest, Southeast and Central regions were the most likely to have felt positively about road infrastructure in their community, West Central and Northeast residents were the most likely to disagree.

Rural Minnesotans: Community Does a Good Job Ensuring Good Roads and Other Infrastructure



Good Roads and Infrastructure

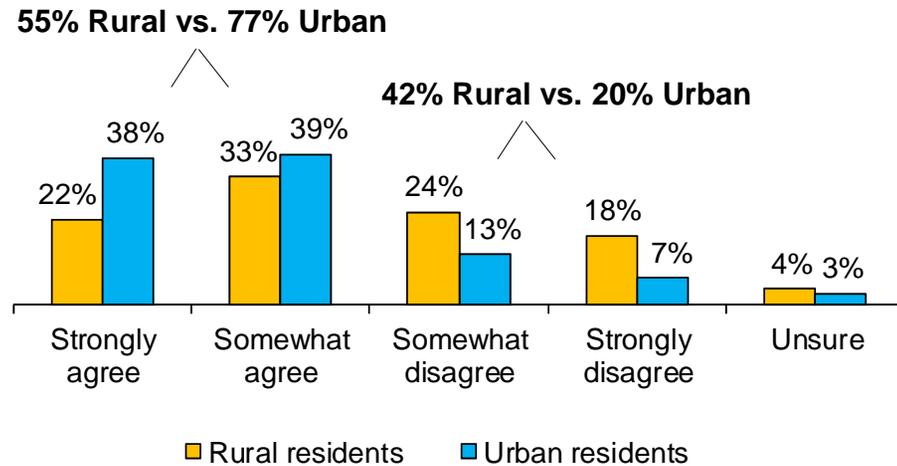




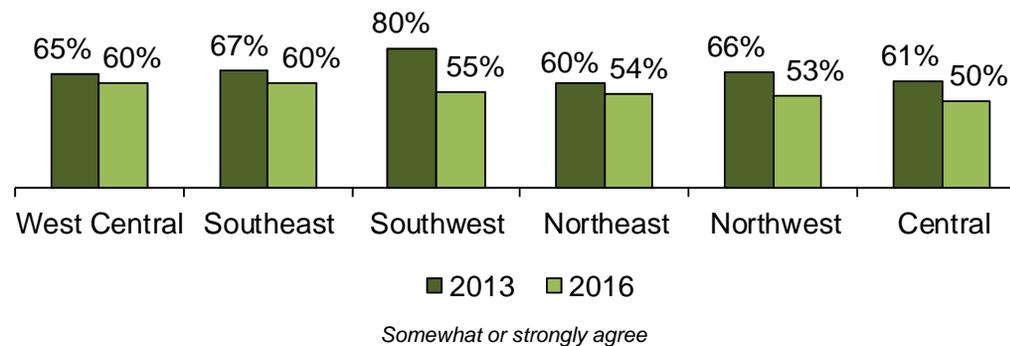
Public transportation was a concern for more than two in five rural Minnesotans. While just over half (55%) agreed that their community provides adequate transportation opportunities such as buses and trains, 42 percent did not feel that this is the case. Urban area residents were much more likely than those in rural Minnesota (77% urban, 55% rural) to feel they have access to adequate transportation options.

Rural residents overall, regardless of region, were less likely than those surveyed in 2013 to have expressed satisfaction with public transportation options, with those in the Southwest showing the steepest decline in satisfaction (down 25%).

Community Does a Good Job Providing Sufficient Public Transportation



Sufficient Public Transportation





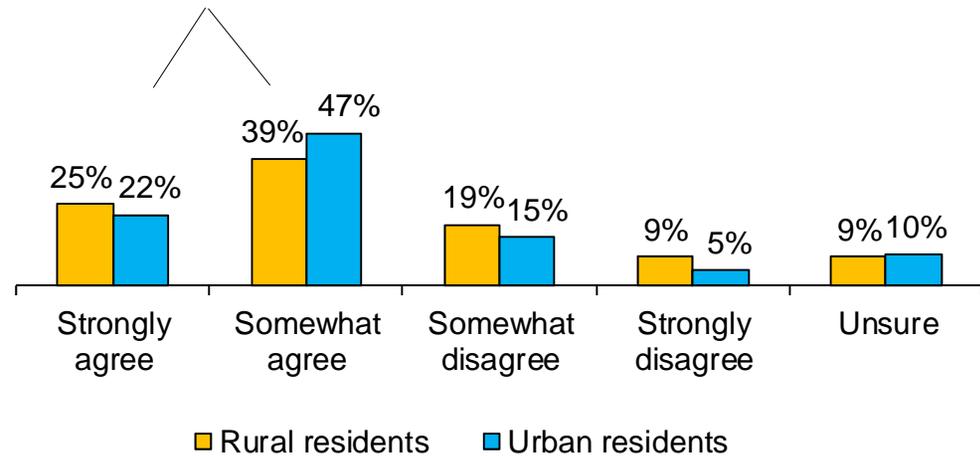
Internet Access

Nearly two-thirds (64%) felt their community does an agreeable job at improving access to the internet. Twenty-eight percent disagreed. Urban area residents were slightly more likely to have felt internet access has improved.

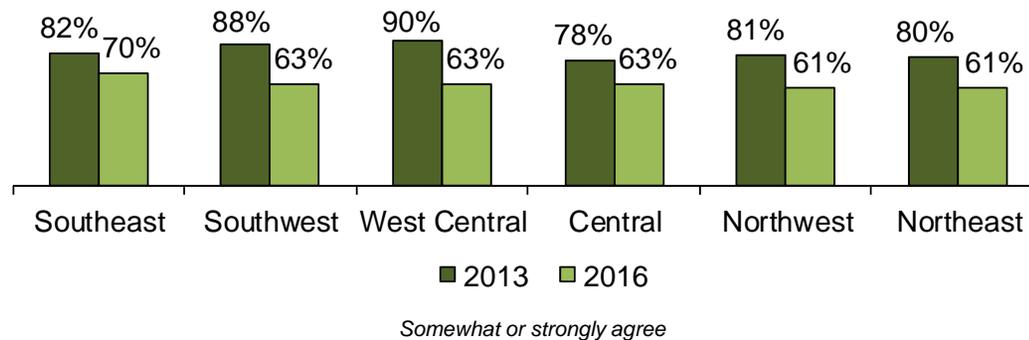
Again, rural residents overall, regardless of region, were less likely than those surveyed in 2013 to have expressed satisfaction with improved internet access in their area, with the West Central and Southwest regions displaying the sharpest declines (27% and 25% respectively).

Community Does a Good Job Improving Access to the Internet

64% Rural vs. 68% Urban



Improving Access to the Internet





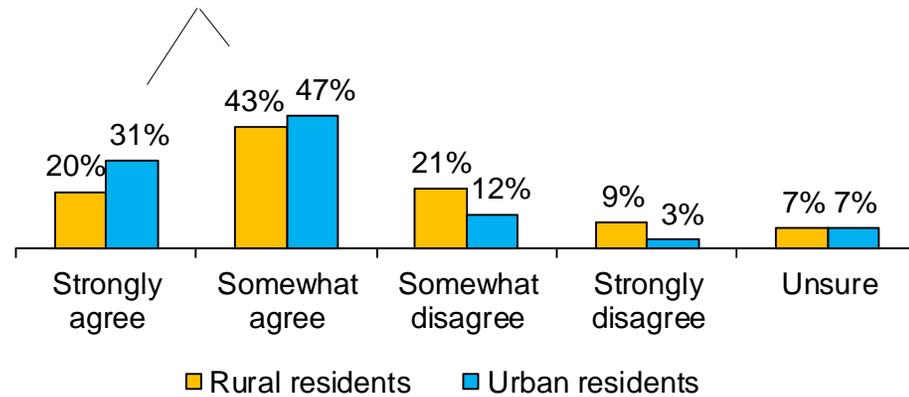
Culture and the Arts

Providing diverse cultural and arts opportunities was a concern for three in 10 rural Minnesota residents, with just over three in five (63%) feeling local needs are being met – a slight increase from 2013 findings (59%).

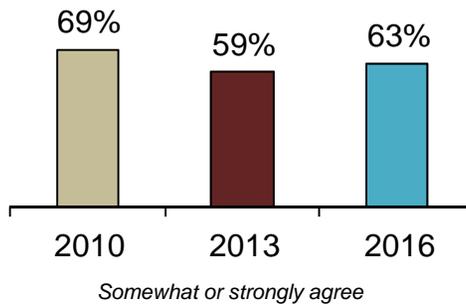
While most rural Minnesota regions showed improvement in this area over 2013 findings, West Central Minnesota experienced a decline. Those in the Southeast and Northwest were the most likely to feel their communities do an adequate job considering diverse culture and arts opportunities.

Community Does a Good Job Considering Diverse Cultural Opportunities and the Arts

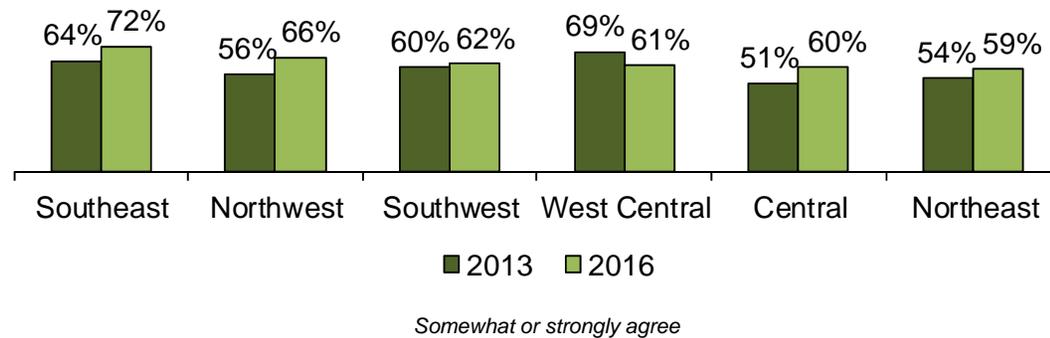
63% Rural vs. 78% Urban



Rural Minnesotans: Community Considers Diverse Cultural Opportunities and the Arts



Diverse Cultural Opportunities and the Arts



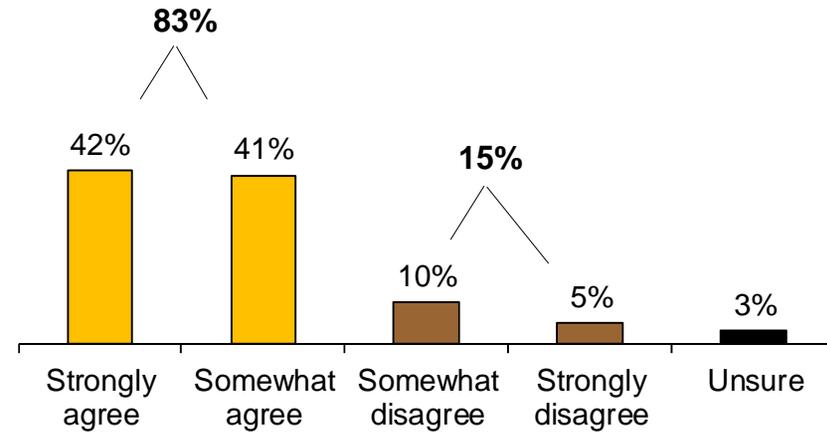


Education

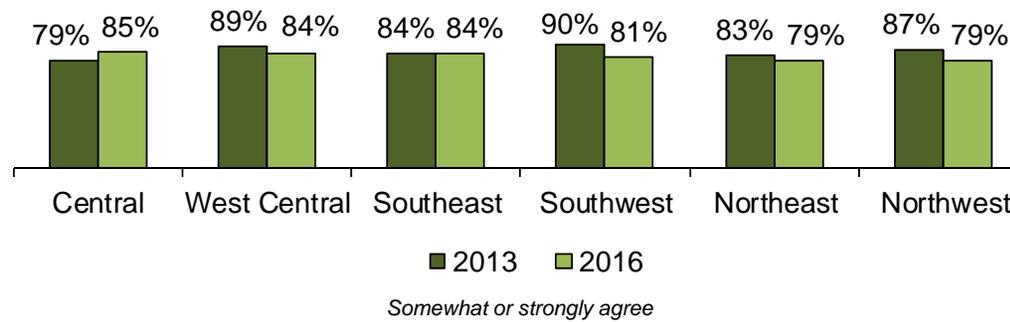
The majority (83%) of rural Minnesotans believed their community provides quality educational opportunities, with 42 percent strongly agreeing and 41 percent somewhat agreeing. Fifteen percent disagreed that their community ensures adequate educational opportunities.

Residents in the Southwest and Northwest lost the most significant confidence in educational quality since 2013.

Rural Minnesotans: Community Does a Good Job Ensuring Quality Educational Opportunities



Quality Educational Opportunities

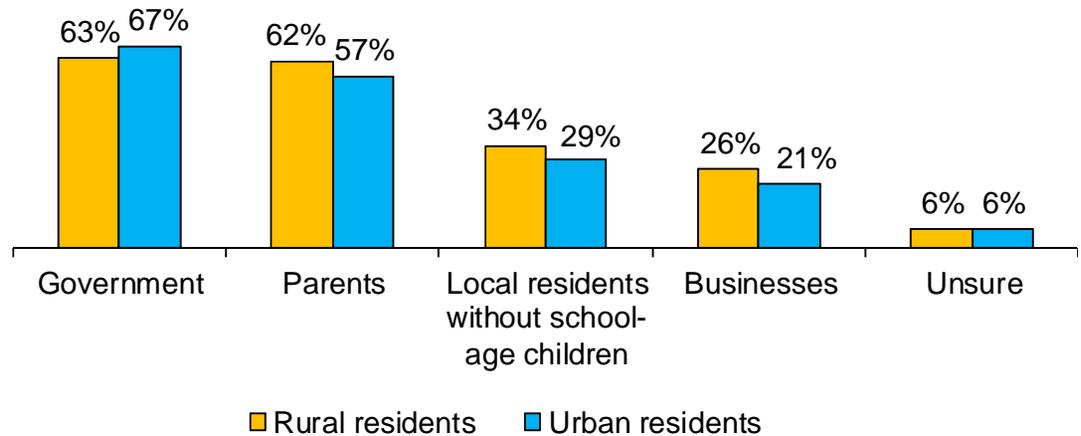




When asked who they feel is responsible for ensuring that adequate, quality educational opportunities are available in their community, more than three in five said that they believe it is up to the government (63%) or parents (62%). From 2013 to 2016, this represents an 11 percentage point increase in those who said they feel the government should take on the obligation for improved education.

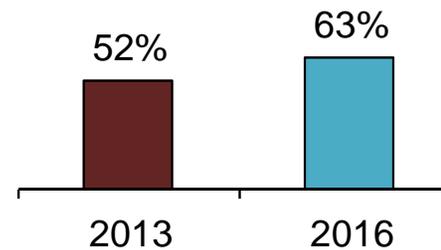
About a third (34%) of rural respondents felt local residents without school-age children should also play a role in assisting with this effort, while 26 percent also named business owners. Urban area residents were somewhat more likely to place the burden on government versus parents (67% vs. 57% respectively).

Who Is Responsible for Ensuring Adequate, Quality Educational Opportunities



Multiple responses allowed

Rural Minnesotans: Government is Responsible for Ensuring Quality Education





A higher number of women than men felt that all groups have a responsibility toward promoting quality education in their rural communities.

Millennials were the most likely age group to feel government holds primary responsibility. Specifically, four in five (80%) of those ages 18 to 24 held that belief. Those ages 65 or older more frequently assigned responsibility to parents.

Rural Minnesotans: Responsible for Ensuring Educational Opportunities

	Men	Women
Government	60%	67%
Parents	60%	65%
Local residents without school-age children	31%	38%
Businesses	24%	28%

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Government	80%	71%	65%	58%	53%
Parents	55%	64%	65%	59%	68%
Local residents without school-age children	31%	34%	38%	31%	38%
Businesses	20%	22%	28%	28%	29%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Government	61%	66%	62%	70%
Parents	57%	67%	63%	69%
Local residents without school-age children	28%	37%	34%	47%
Businesses	24%	26%	24%	37%

Multiple responses allowed

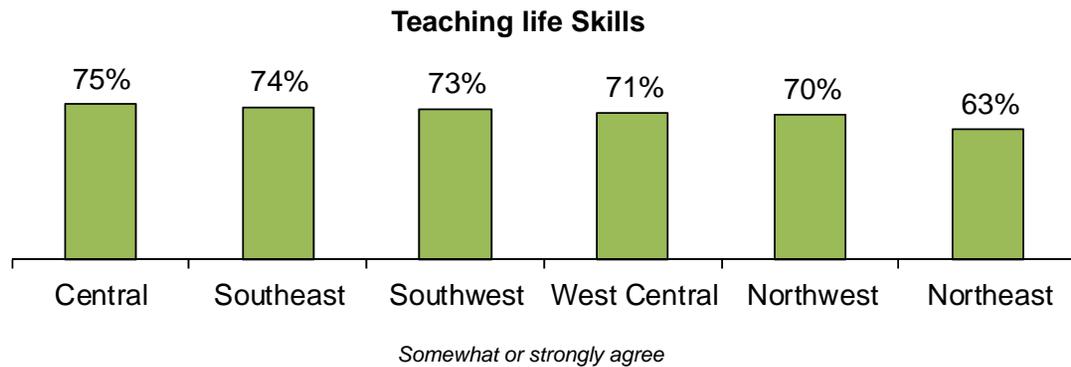
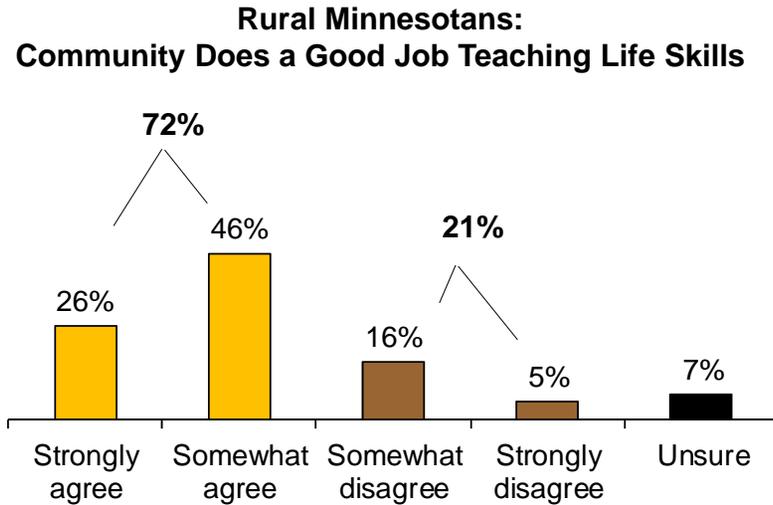
■ Highest percentage within each role

Russell Herder
Strategy wins.



About seven in 10 (72%) rural Minnesotans believed their community does an adequate job teaching life skills to residents. Twenty-one percent disagreed.

Those in the Northeast region of the state were the least likely to have said they feel life skills are adequately being taught in their communities.





Optimism Exists About Rural Quality of Life

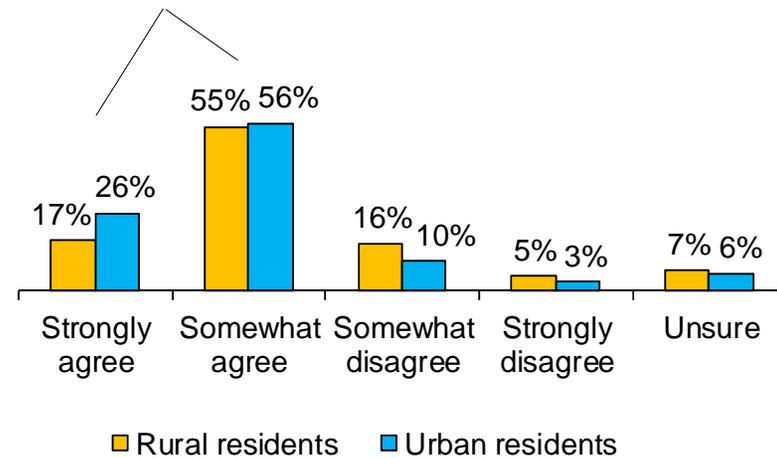
Rural Minnesotans were also queried about their community's quality of life. More than seven in 10 (72%) felt quality of life would improve over the next five years, while 21 percent felt it would not. That is a slight improvement from 2013 survey findings (72% vs. 69%).

Urban Minnesotans had a more positive outlook for improved quality of life than those in rural areas (82% urban, 72% rural).

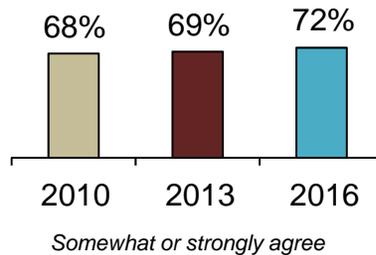
Residents in the Southeast and Central regions were the most confident that quality of life in their community would improve; those in the Northeast were the least convinced (62%).

Quality of Life Will Improve Over Next Five Years

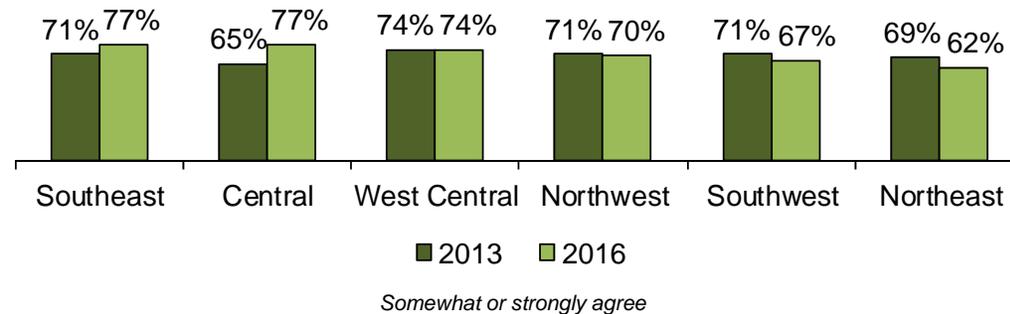
72% Rural vs. 82% Urban



Rural Minnesotans: Quality of Life Will Improve Over Next Five Years



Quality of Life Will Improve Over Next Five Years





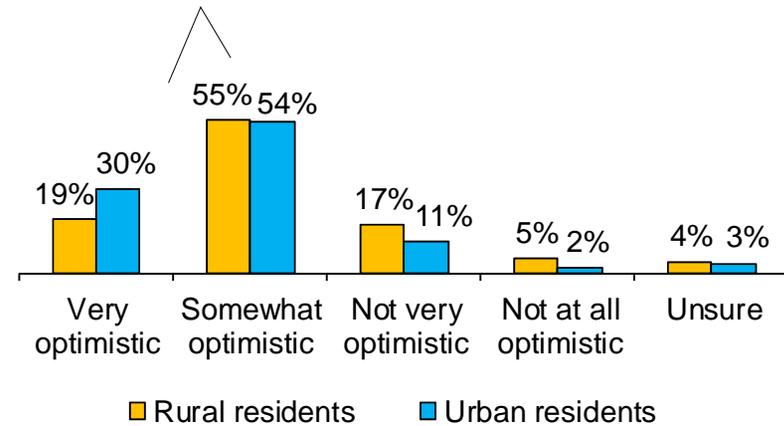
When asked how optimistic they feel about their community's future, again, more than seven in 10 (74%) rural respondents felt positively, while 22 percent did not share that sentiment. This was a slight increase from 2013 findings.

Those in urban areas showed more optimism (84% urban, 74% rural), while residents in the Northeast and West Central regions were the least optimistic about their community's future.

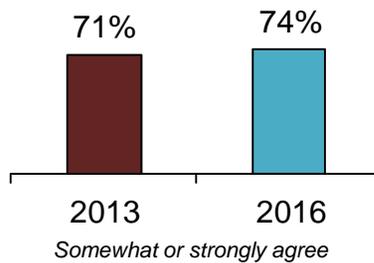
Central Minnesota residents showed the strongest upswing in optimism (up 13%) compared to Rural Pulse 2013.

Optimistic About Future of Their Community

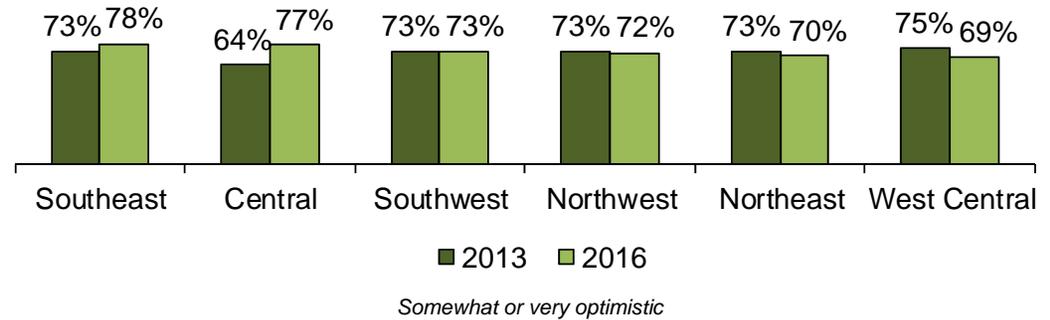
74% Rural vs. 84% Urban



Rural Minnesotans: Optimistic About Future of Their Community



Optimistic About Future of Their Community





Men were slightly more assured than women that quality of life will improve in their rural community. Older Millennials (ages 25 to 34), as well as rural residents with higher incomes, felt the most positively about the future of their community.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Quality of Life and Future of Community**

	Men	Women
Quality of life in my community will improve over the next five years	75%	70%

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Quality of life in my community will improve over the next five years	69%	82%	76%	71%	66%
Optimistic about the future of your community	76%	78%	78%	72%	73%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Quality of life in my community will improve over the next five years	66%	76%	79%	80%
Optimistic about the future of your community	72%	76%	80%	78%

Somewhat or strongly agree

■ Highest agreement



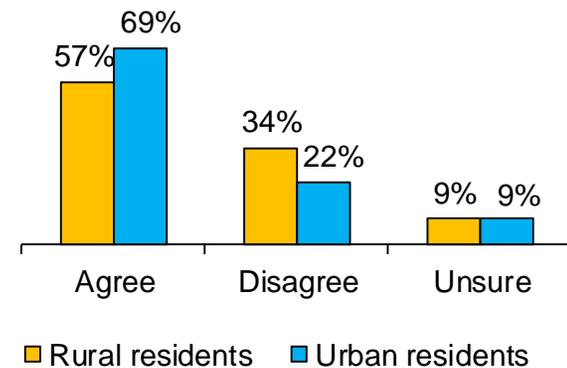
Rural Voice

Rural Minnesotans expressed concern about the priority placed upon their interests. When asked if the needs and well-being of rural Minnesota communities are as important to legislators and policymakers as those of metropolitan cities, a third (34%) were of the opinion that they are not. Fifty-seven percent were comfortable that their voice is being heard, a six percent decrease from 2013 findings.

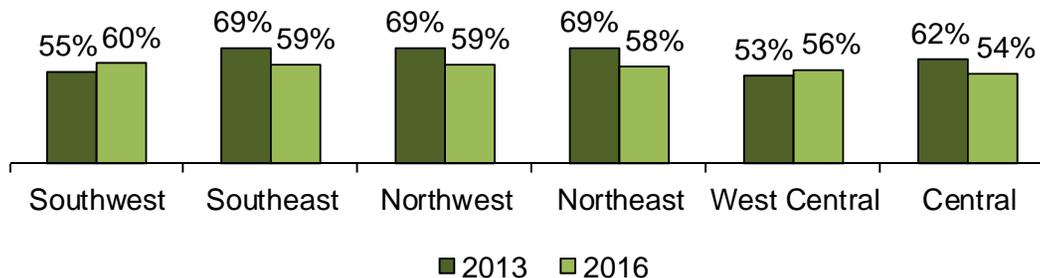
About seven in 10 (69%) urban area residents believed that rural Minnesota is important to lawmakers.

Central Minnesota residents were the least likely to believe rural needs are of the same value to lawmakers as metropolitan areas.

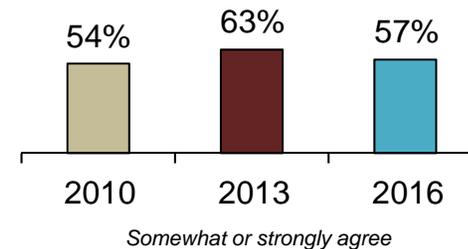
Needs and Well-Being of Rural Communities are as Important to Legislators, Policymakers as Metropolitan Areas



Needs of Rural Communities are as Important to Legislators, Policymakers as Metropolitan Areas



Rural Minnesotans: Needs and Well-Being of Rural Communities Important to Legislators and Policymakers

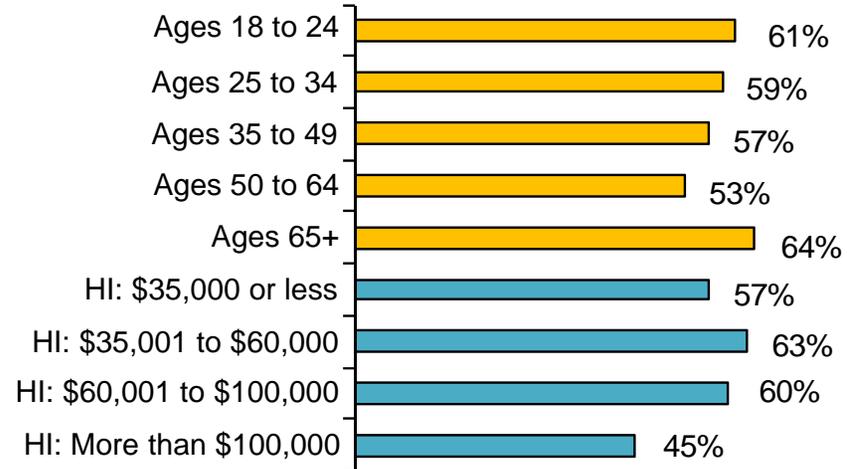




Rural residents ages 65 and older were the most likely to believe the needs of rural communities are adequately prioritized by lawmakers. Those with middle-class household incomes (\$35,001 to \$100,000) were also more likely to believe this to be true.

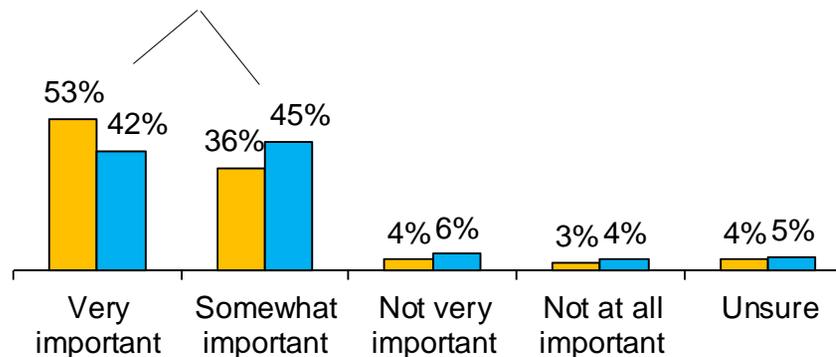
Nearly nine in 10 (89%) rural Minnesotans agreed that it is important to support political candidates who address rural issues. Only seven percent disagreed.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Agree That Needs and Well-Being of Rural Minnesota Communities Are As Important to Legislators and Policymakers as in Metro Counterparts**



**Importance of Supporting Political Candidates
Who Address Rural Issues**

89% Rural vs. 87% Urban

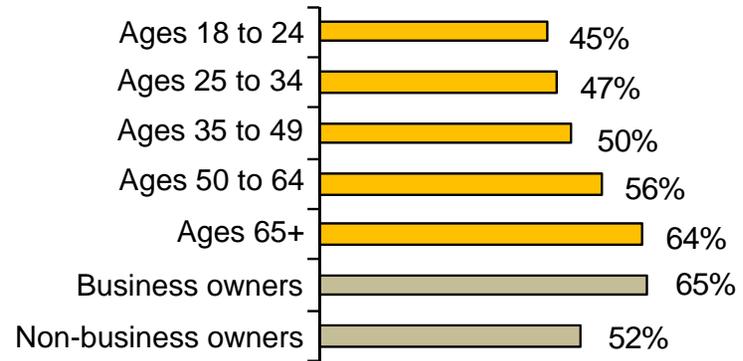




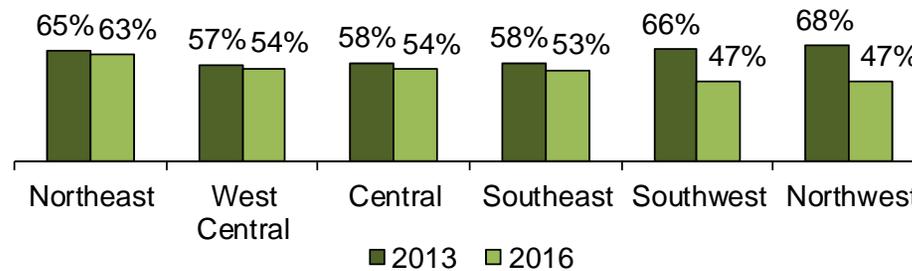
Eighty-nine percent of rural Minnesota residents said it is important to support political candidates who actively address rural issues. While more than nine in 10 agreed that supporting political candidates who address rural issues is important, those who placed the highest importance on support were ages 65 and older, business owners and residents in the Northeast region.

Millennials did not place as much emphasis on supporting candidates based on rural issues.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Very Important to Support Political Candidates
Who Actively Address Rural Issues**



**Very Important to Support Political Candidates
Who Actively Address Rural Issues**

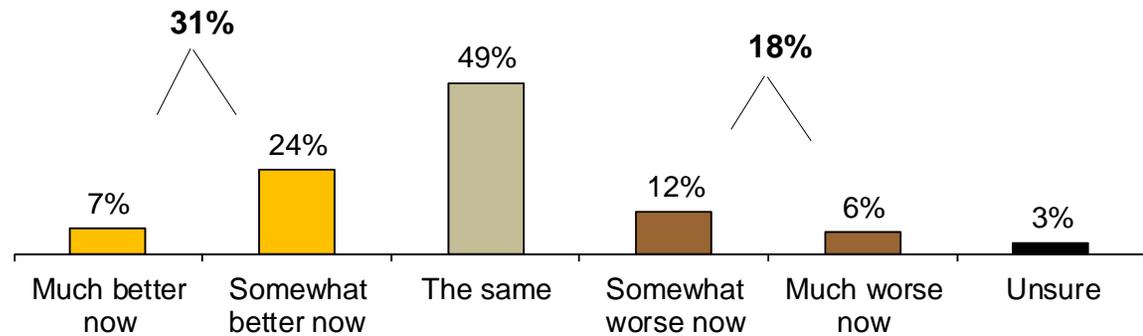




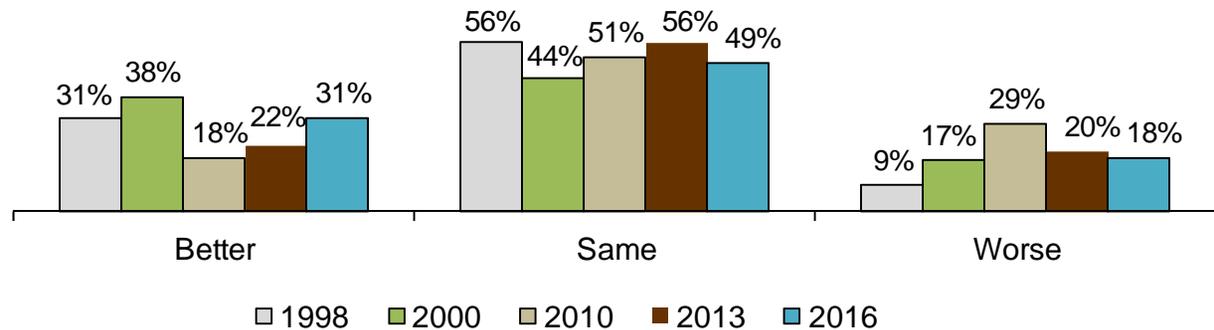
Economic Concerns Continue, But Show Slight Improvement

Survey participants were asked to gauge the condition of their community's economy now as compared to a year ago. Thirty-one percent of rural respondents said that they felt it had improved, 49 percent believed it stayed the same, and 18 percent indicated that their local economy had worsened over the last year. Belief that the economic condition has improved was nine percent higher than opinions expressed in Rural Pulse 2013.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Condition of Local Economy Compared to One Year Ago**



**Rural Minnesotans:
Change in Economy**



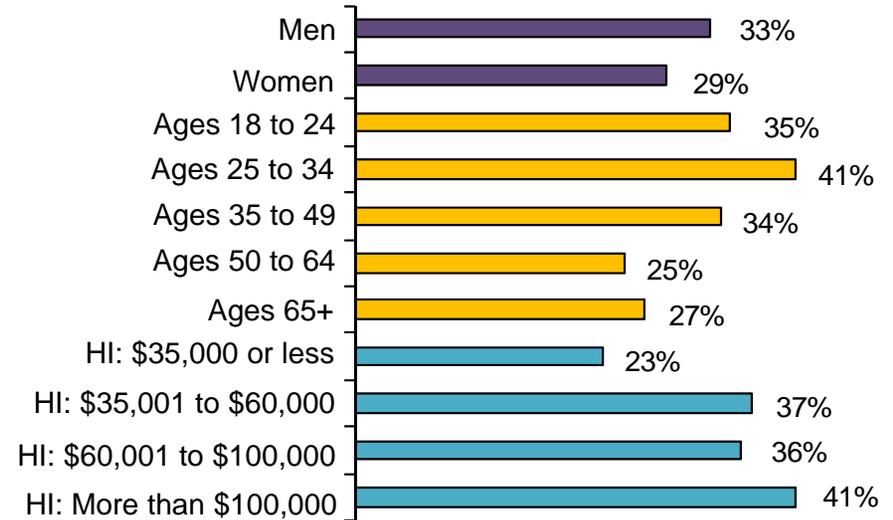


Women, those ages 50 and older and those with incomes of \$35,000 or less voiced the least confidence in their rural community's current economy.

Older Millennials (ages 25 to 34) showed higher optimism than other age groups that the local economy had shown recent improvement.

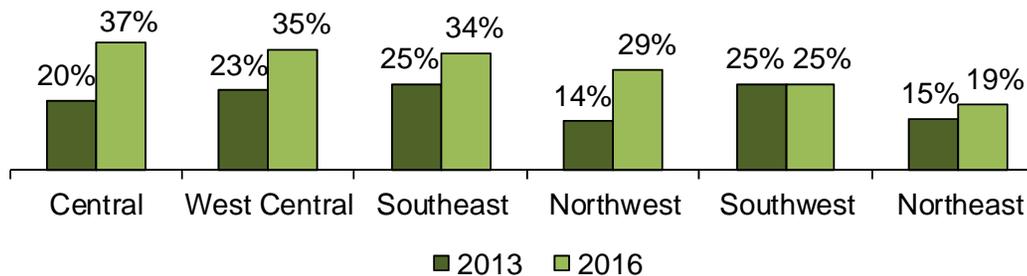
Those residing in the Northeast region were the most skeptical about the improvement of the economy, although the outlook compared to 2013 in all rural regions was more positive, if not the same.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Condition of Community's Economy Has Improved,
Compared to a Year Ago**



Somewhat or much better

**Condition of Community's Economy Has Improved,
Compared to a Year Ago**

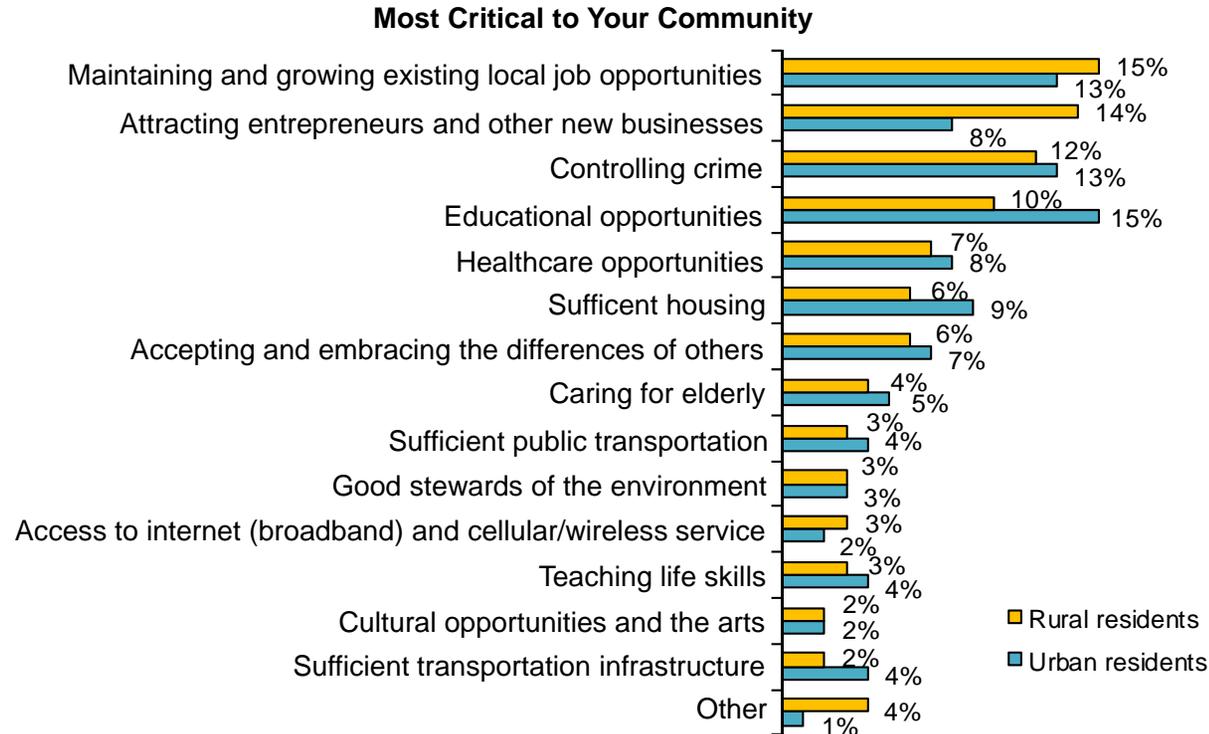


Somewhat or much better now



Critical Community Issues

Job growth and development, including maintaining and growing existing local job opportunities, and attracting new businesses, were considered the top priorities by 29 percent of rural Minnesotans. Crime control was seen as the most important priority by 12 percent of rural residents, followed by educational opportunities (10%). Urban area residents also considered job growth and development to be critical issues in their city (21%), as well as educational opportunities (15%) and crime control (13%). Other issues that were seen as critical to some respondents included local spending and taxes, among others. (See Appendix for full listing of other responses.)



Note: Issue options provided in 2016 varied from previous years.



Demographically, those ages 50 to 64 with incomes of more than \$60,000 were the most likely to say that job growth and development are the most critical to their rural community.

Controlling crime was given higher importance by younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) than those older. As well, those with lower incomes showed more concern about crime control than other income groups.

Rural Minnesotans: Top Three Critical Issues by Age

	Age				
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Maintaining and growing existing local job opportunities	9%	12%	15%	22%	11%
Attracting entrepreneurs and other forms of new business	8%	15%	14%	17%	12%
Controlling crime	16%	11%	15%	9%	9%

■ Highest agreement

Rural Minnesotans: Top Three Critical Issues by Income Level

	Income			
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Maintaining and growing existing local job opportunities	10%	17%	19%	17%
Attracting entrepreneurs and other forms of new business	8%	14%	14%	25%
Controlling crime	17%	12%	8%	6%

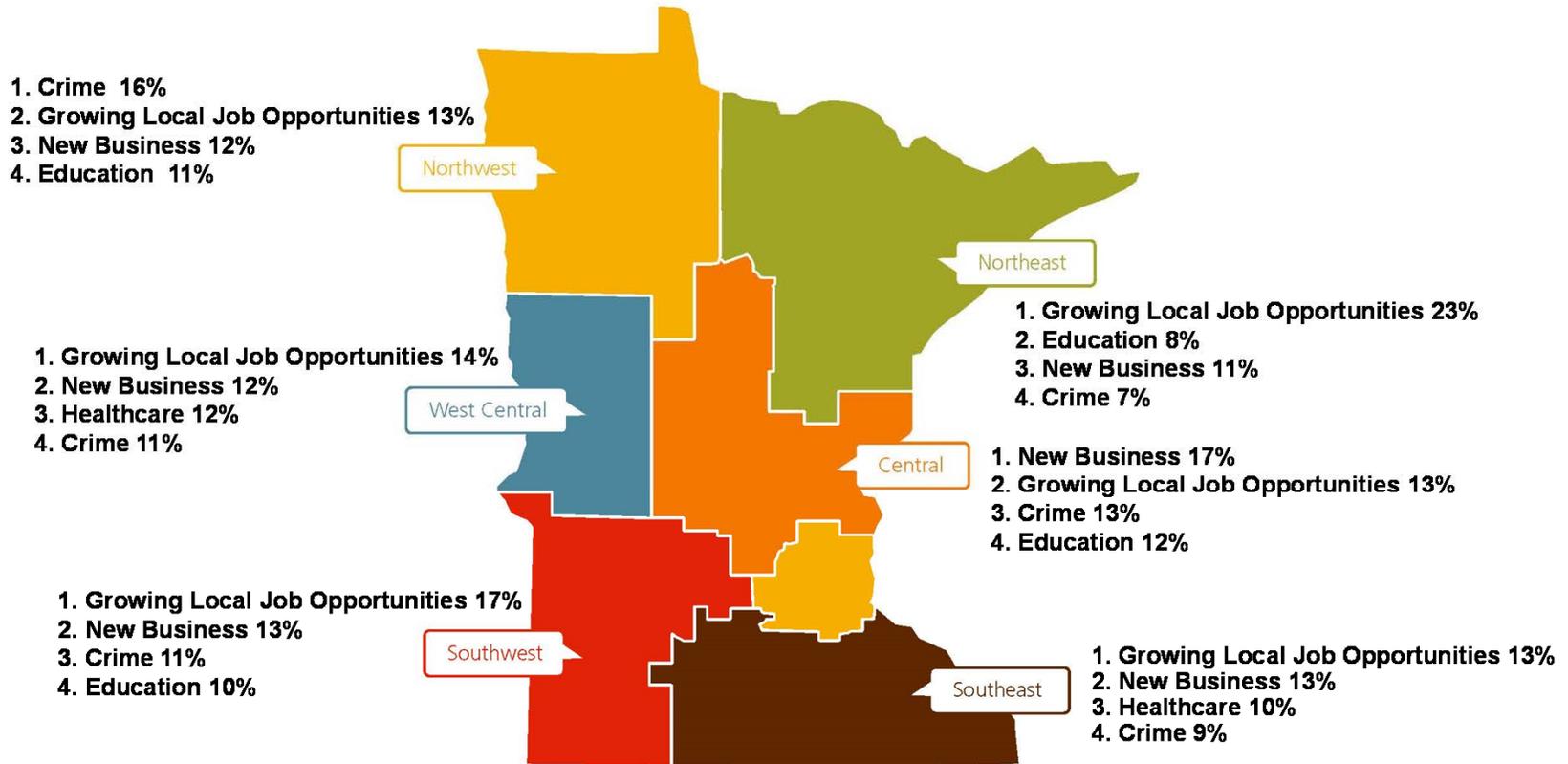
■ Highest agreement

Note: Issue options provided in 2016 varied from previous years.



Residents in the Northeast (34%) were the most likely to say job growth and development initiatives are critical to their community, followed by the Southwest and Central regions (30% each).

Rural Minnesotans: Top Four Concerns by Region

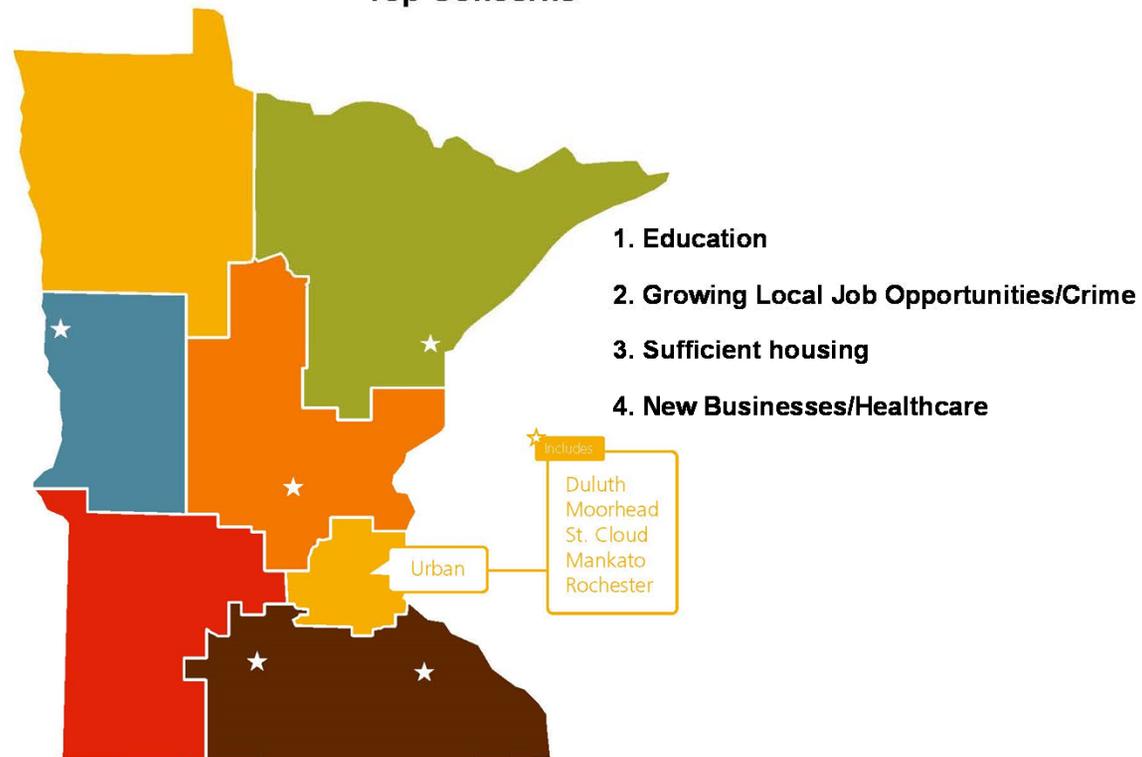


Note: Issue options provided in 2016 varied from previous years.



Job growth and development was also the greatest priority to urban residents, although to a lesser degree than rural regions. Urban residents were more likely than rural Minnesotans to say education (15%) is the most critical issue to address.

Urban Minnesotans: Top Concerns





Jobs Continue to be an Overwhelming Concern

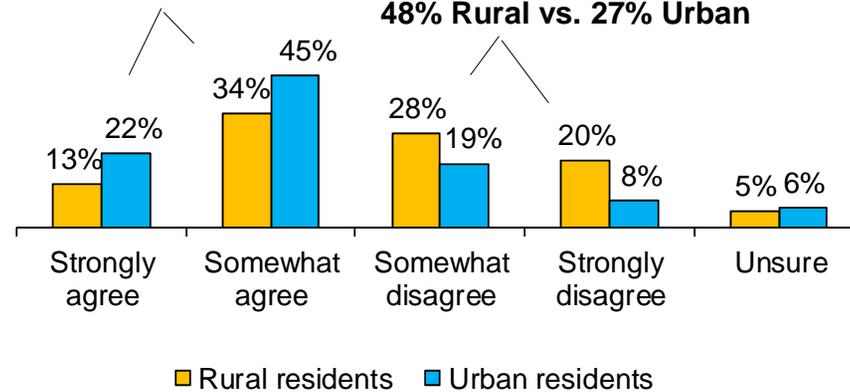
Although the belief that there are adequate jobs paying household-supporting wages increased nine percentage points since Rural Pulse 2013, there is still a lack of confidence in the employment market. Nearly half (48%) of rural Minnesotans felt that there are inadequate living-wage job opportunities in their community. Urban area residents were much less likely to believe that their city does not provide adequate living-wage jobs (27% urban, 48% rural).

While most regions were more optimistic about living-wage jobs than they were in 2013, those in northern Minnesota were the least likely to have agreed.

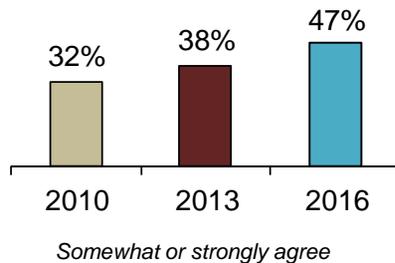
Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages

47% Rural vs. 67% Urban

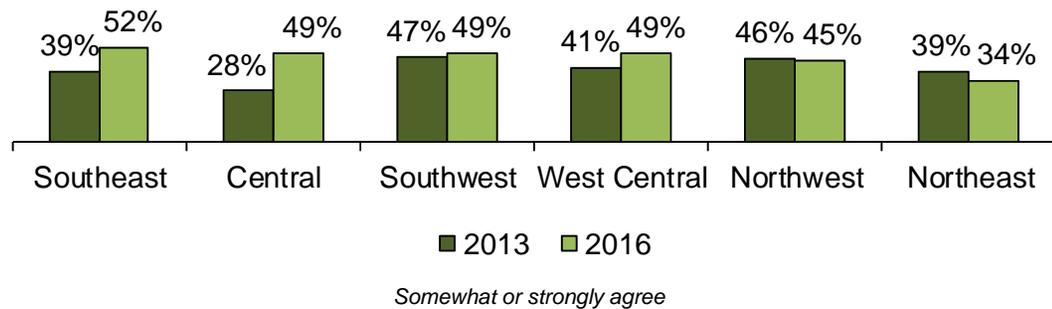
48% Rural vs. 27% Urban



Rural Minnesotans: There are Adequate Jobs That Pay Household-Supporting Wages



Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages

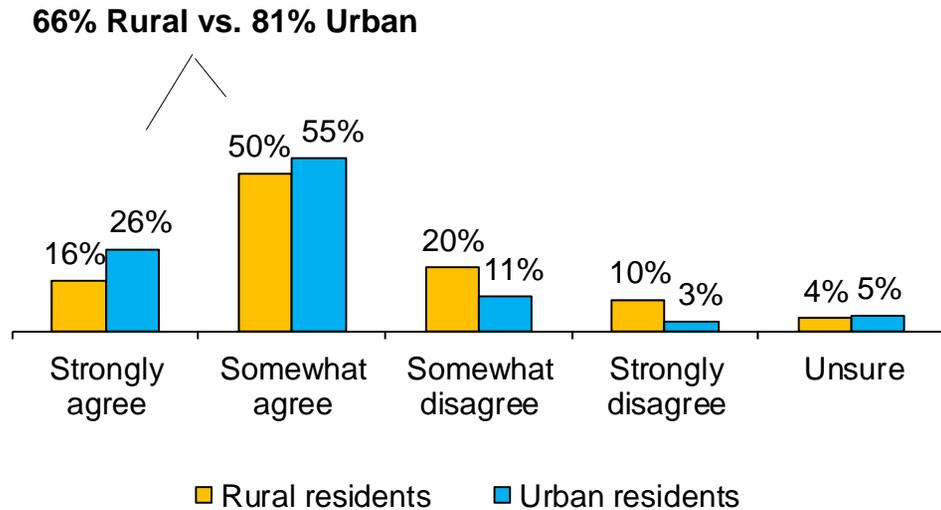




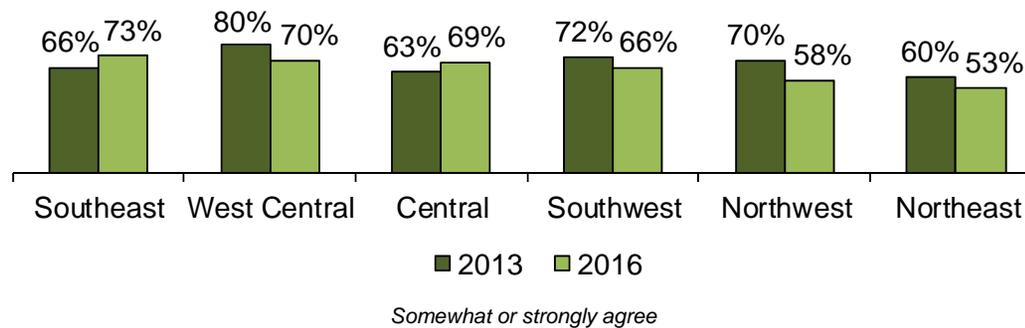
While there is concern about inadequate jobs that pay higher wages, about two-thirds (66%) of rural Minnesotans – and four in five (81%) urban area residents – believed that their community maintains and grows existing job opportunities. Three in 10 (30%) rural respondents – and only 14 percent of urban Minnesotans – disagreed.

Residents in the northern regions were the least likely to have felt their community successfully maintains and grows existing jobs.

Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities



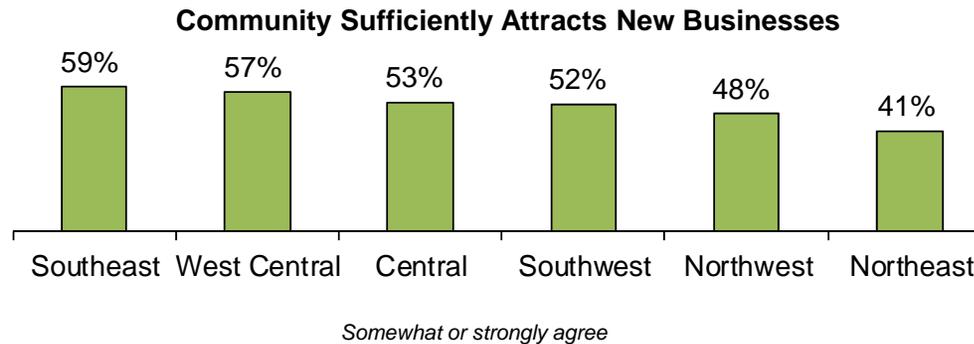
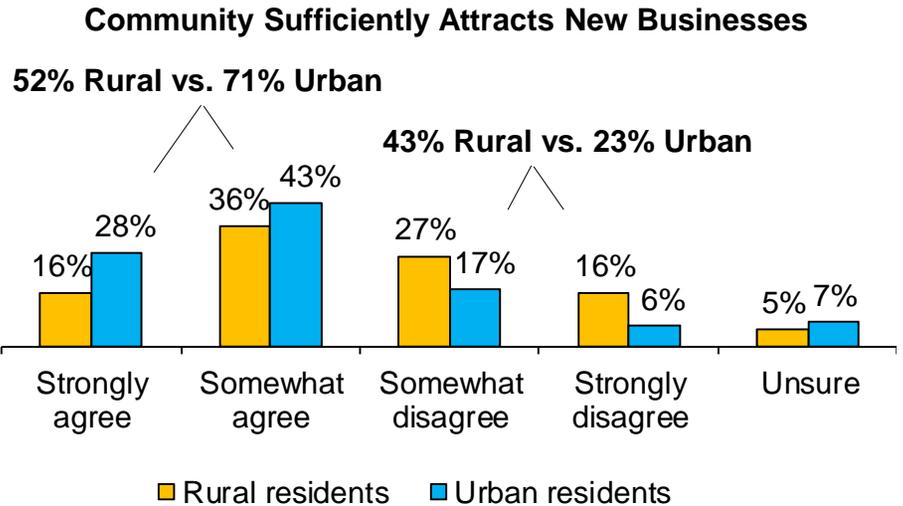
Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities





While there is less concern about current local business, more than four in five (43%) rural Minnesotans – and 23 percent of urban area residents – felt that their community does not do enough to attract new businesses and entrepreneurs. Just over half (52%) of rural respondents – and seven in 10 (71%) urban Minnesotans – felt positively toward their community’s ability to attract new industry.

Those in the Southeast and West Central regions were the most inclined to believe that their community sufficiently draws new businesses to their area, with the Northeast showing the highest disagreement.





Rural Minnesotans: Agree That Community Provides Adequate Job and Business Opportunities

	Men	Women
There are an adequate number of job opportunities in my community that pay household-supporting wages	53%	43%
Maintaining and growing existing local job opportunities	71%	62%
Attracting entrepreneurs and other forms of new business	58%	47%

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
There are an adequate number of job opportunities in my community that pay household-supporting wages	55%	42%	51%	41%	44%
Maintaining and growing existing local job opportunities	71%	65%	68%	61%	72%
Attracting entrepreneurs and other forms of new business	56%	55%	57%	46%	55%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
There are an adequate number of job opportunities in my community that pay household-supporting wages	43%	49%	53%	49%
Maintaining and growing existing local job opportunities	63%	69%	70%	68%
Attracting entrepreneurs and other forms of new business	52%	52%	58%	50%

Somewhat or strongly agree

■ Lowest agreement

Personal demographics play a role in how the job and business climate is viewed. Women and those ages 50 to 64 in rural areas were the least confident in the adequacy of living-wage jobs and ability of their community to provide an environment to promote job growth. Younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) were among the more satisfied with job opportunities.

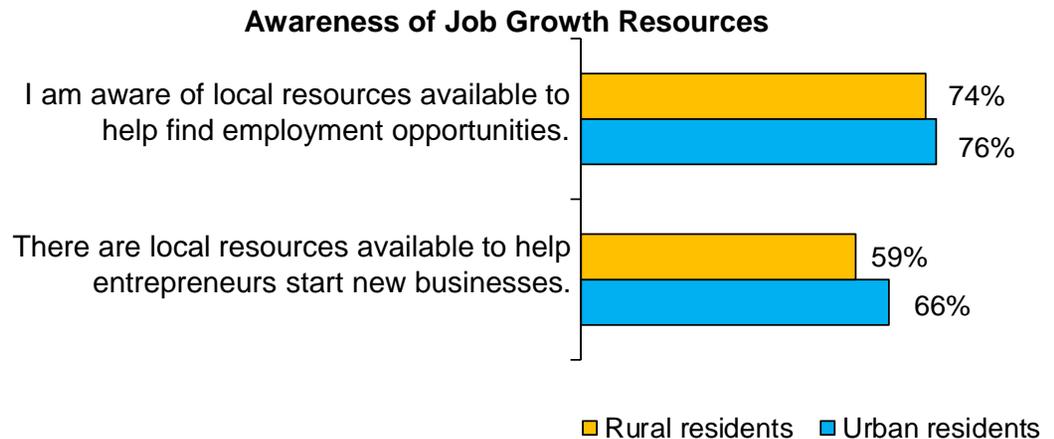
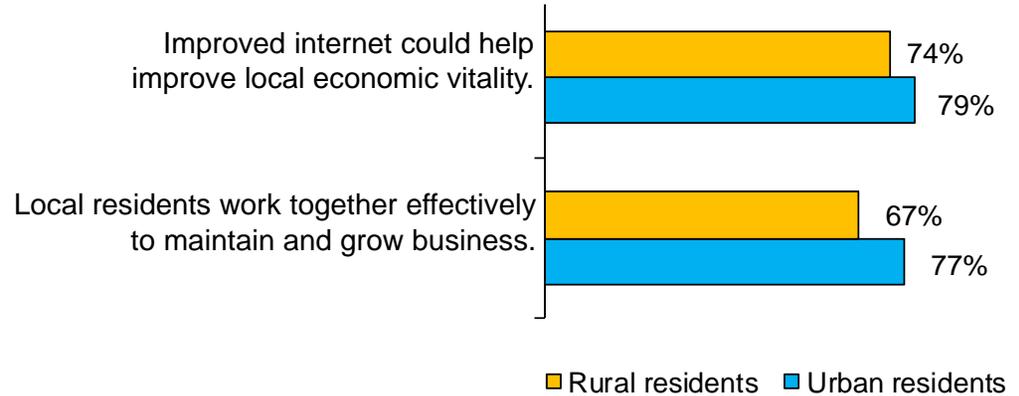
While rural residents with incomes of \$35,000 or less were the least convinced that current job opportunities exist and pay adequate wages, those with incomes of more than \$100,000 were the least confident in their communities working toward attracting new businesses to their area.



Job Growth Resources

Rural residents surveyed were slightly less likely than those in urban areas (74% rural, 79% urban) to believe improved internet could assist with local economic vitality. About two-thirds (67%) of rural Minnesotans – and 77 percent of those in urban areas – felt their local area works together to maintain and grow businesses.

About three in four Minnesota residents (74% rural, 76% urban) said that they are aware of available resources to assist in finding employment. Skepticism continues to exist, however, regarding whether there are enough local resources available to help entrepreneurs start new businesses, as only about three in five (59%) rural Minnesotans – and two-thirds (66%) in urban areas – showed confidence in such.





Confidence in local job growth assistance and resources varied by region, gender, age and income.

Rural Minnesotans: Opinions About Local Job Growth and Resources

	Region					
	Southwest	Southeast	Central	West Central	Northwest	Northeast
Improved internet could help improve local economic vitality.	71%	76%	76%	78%	69%	76%
Local residents work together effectively to maintain and grow local business.	68%	70%	67%	70%	69%	60%
I am aware of local resources available to help find employment opportunities.	71%	78%	72%	77%	74%	75%
There are local resources available to help entrepreneurs start new businesses.	57%	63%	59%	61%	56%	54%

	Men	Women
I am aware of local resources available to help find employment opportunities.	77%	72%
Local residents work together effectively to maintain and grow business.	71%	65%
There are local resources available to help entrepreneurs start new businesses.	63%	55%

■ Lowest agreement



Rural Minnesotans: Opinions About Local Job Growth and Resources

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Improved internet could help improve local economic vitality.	78%	77%	76%	73%	73%
I am aware of local resources available to help find employment opportunities.	76%	76%	79%	71%	71%
Local residents work together effectively to maintain and grow business.	67%	71%	69%	59%	75%
There are local resources available to help entrepreneurs start new businesses.	58%	62%	58%	56%	62%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
I am aware of local resources available to help find employment opportunities.	74%	78%	77%	72%
Local residents work together effectively to maintain and grow business.	63%	67%	70%	72%
There are local resources available to help entrepreneurs start new businesses.	57%	56%	65%	58%

■ Lowest agreement

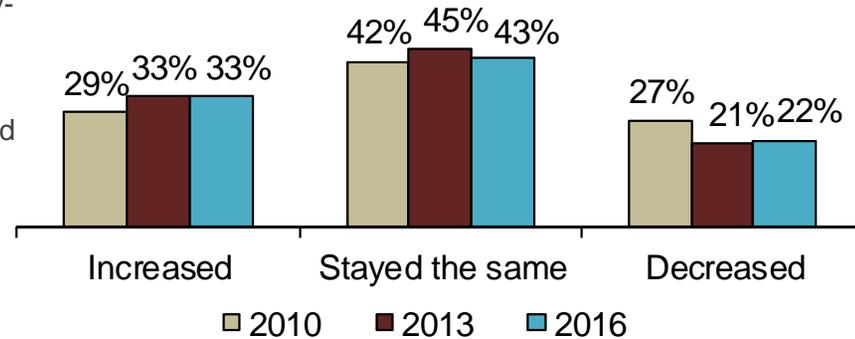


Impact of the Economy on Families

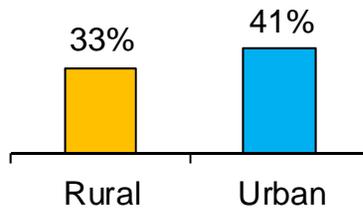
While a third of rural Minnesotans said that their household income has increased over the past year, many households are still struggling with a decrease in wages (22%), similar to Rural Pulse 2013 findings. Forty-three percent said their household income had not changed within the past 12 months. Urban residents were slightly more likely to have said that their household income saw an increase (41% urban, 33% rural).

Northeast residents were the least likely to say their income went up.

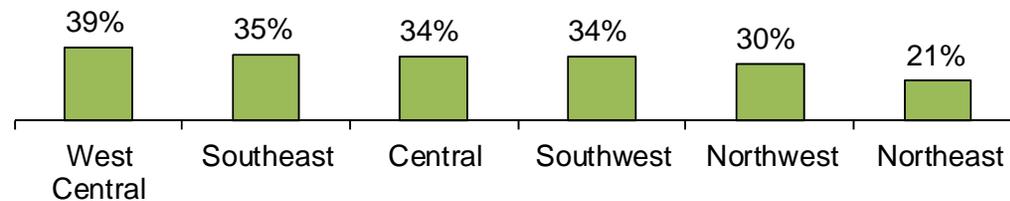
**Rural Minnesotans:
In the Past Year, Has Your Household Income
Increased, Decreased or Stayed the Same?**



**Household Income Increased
Over Past Year**



Household Income Has Increased Over Past Year





Women were slightly more likely than men to say that their household income has decreased (25% vs. 20%).

Younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) and those with lower incomes were also most likely to have felt negative financial impact.

Further, business owners were more likely than those who don't own a business to have said their income has decreased (31% vs. 21%).

More specifically, 15 percent of rural residents – and 13 percent in urban areas – said that someone in their household has lost a job.

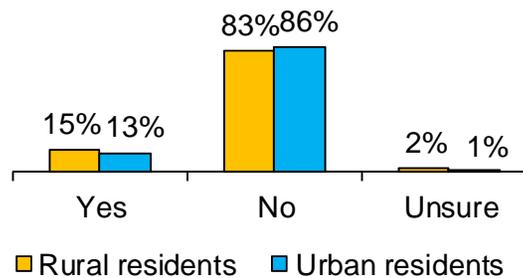
Rural Minnesotans: In the Past Year, Has Your Household Income Increased, Decreased or Stayed the Same?

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Increased	42%	49%	43%	28%	9%
Stayed the same	28%	31%	36%	47%	66%
Decreased	25%	20%	20%	23%	23%

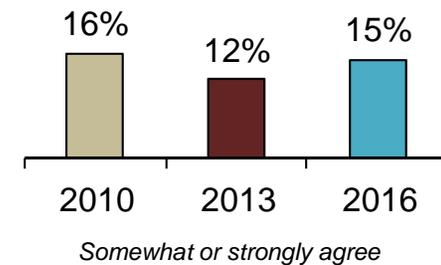
Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Increased	16%	37%	46%	54%
Stayed the same	51%	37%	40%	38%
Decreased	33%	25%	14%	8%

■ Highest agreement

Someone In Household Lost a Job Over Past Year



Rural Residents: Someone in Household Lost a Job Over Past Year

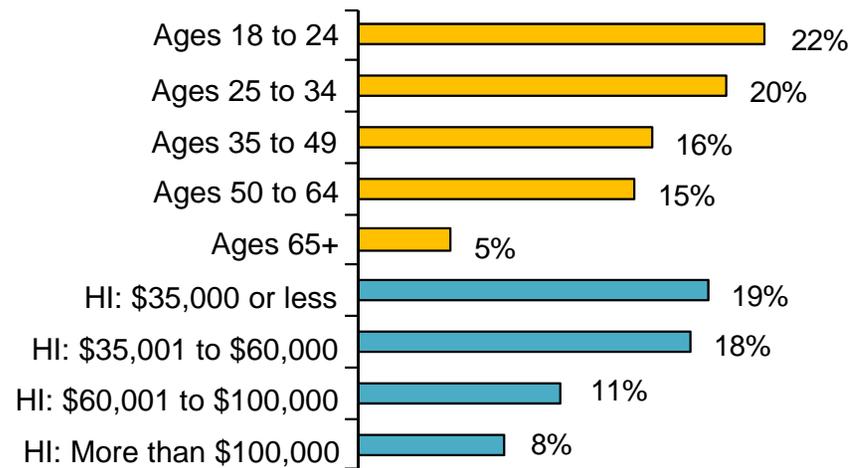


Somewhat or strongly agree



In looking at response demographics, rural residents most likely to have experienced a job loss were Millennials and those with lower household incomes.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Someone in Household Lost a Job Over Past Year**



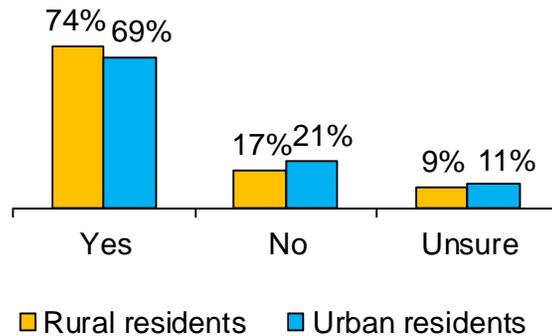


Migration

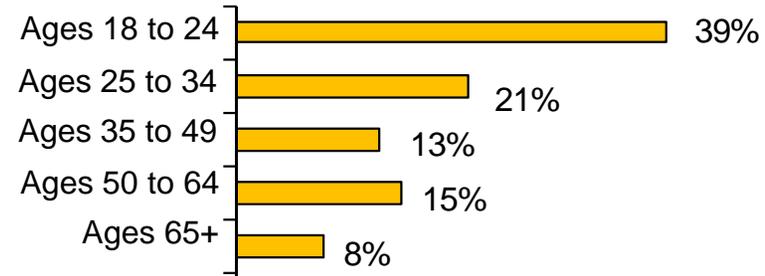
Looking forward, 17 percent of rural Minnesotans – and 21 percent of urban area residents – said that they do not expect to be living in their current locale five years from now.

Notably among rural Minnesotans, nearly two in five (39%) of younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) said that they would likely relocate. Southwest residents were also the most likely to expect relocation.

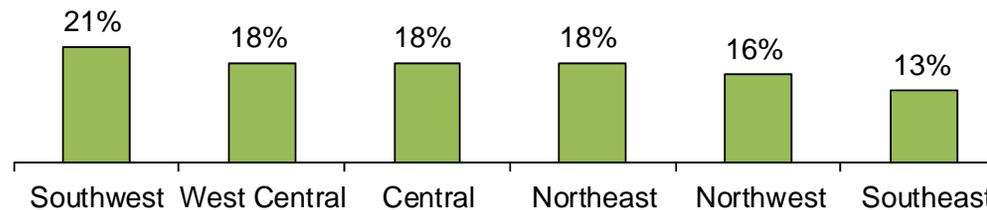
Expect to Live in Same Community Five Years From Now



Rural Minnesotans: Do Not Expect to Live In Their Community Five Years From Now



Do Not Expect to Live in Their Community Five Years From Now

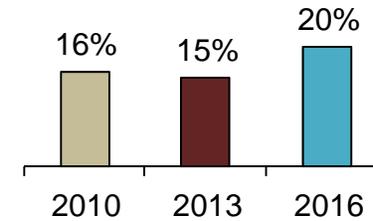




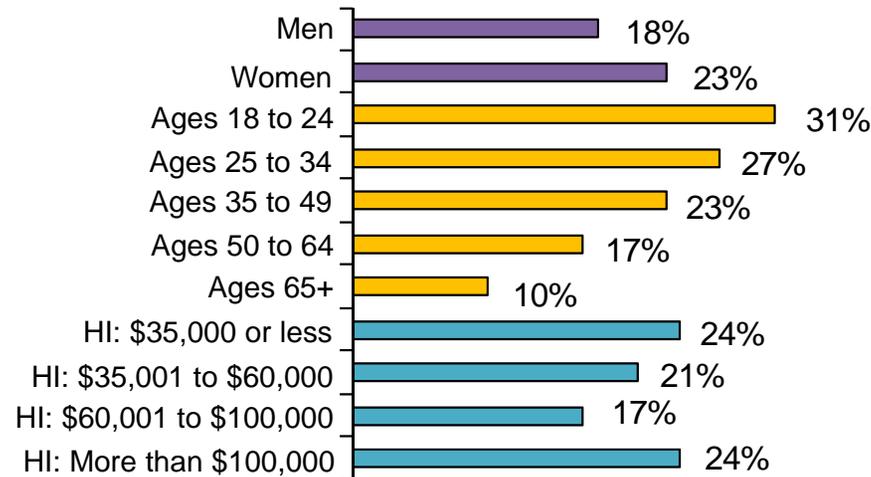
One in five (20%) rural Minnesotans indicated that they have considered leaving their community for a metro area within the past two years, up slightly from 2013 findings (15%). Urban residents had nearly identical consideration for moving to a less-populated area (21%).

Women were slightly more likely than men to have contemplated such a move. Millennials, especially those ages 18 to 24, were also inclined to migrate. Those with the highest and lowest incomes were also more likely to have considered a change in residential locale.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Considered Moving to a Metro Area
Within Past Two Years**



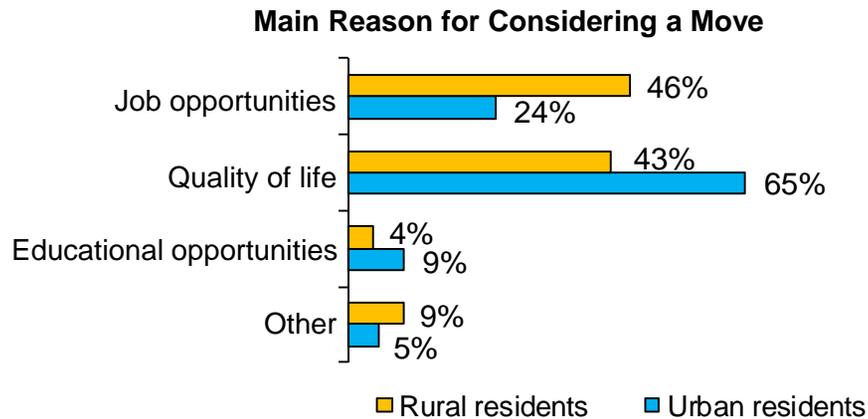
**Rural Minnesotans:
Considered Moving to Larger City or Metropolitan Area
Within Past Two Years**





Of those who have considered a move, close to half (46%) of rural residents, compared to only 24 percent of those in urban areas, said it would be to pursue job opportunities. Quality of life was cited as the main factor for 43 percent of rural residents and 65 percent of urban area residents. Education was also cited by a few as a consideration for a potential move (4% rural, 9% urban). Other responses included being closer to family and housing availability, among others. (See Appendix for full listing of other responses.)

Women were much more likely to have said the pursuit of job opportunities is a primary migration consideration, while men were much more likely to have said quality of life would be their goal for such a move.



**Rural Minnesotans:
Main Reason for Considering a Move**

	Men	Women
Job opportunities	32%	52%
Quality of life	52%	31%

■ Top reason within gender



Those ages 25 to 49 were the most likely to have said job opportunities are the reason they have considered making a move away from their rural community, while those age 50 and older cited quality of life to a higher degree.

Responses also varied by income level.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Main Reason for Considering a Move**

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Job opportunities	42%	52%	53%	32%	27%
Quality of life	38%	34%	37%	48%	43%
Educational opportunities	14%	1%	4%	3%	0%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Job opportunities	47%	37%	58%	26%
Quality of life	37%	45%	28%	61%
Educational opportunities	4%	5%	3%	13%

■ Top reason within demographic



A Changing Landscape

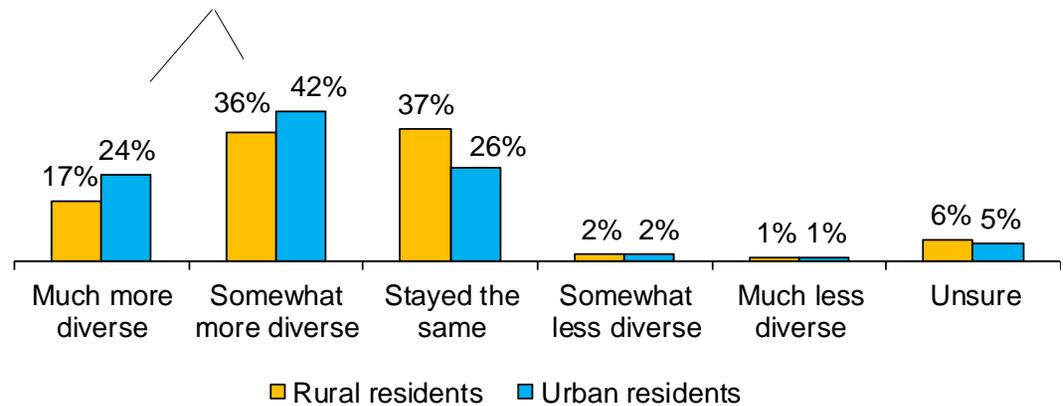
More than half of rural residents surveyed felt their community's ethnic or racial makeup has become more diverse over the past five years. In fact, 53 percent agreed with this, versus 37 percent who said it has stayed the same.

Urban residents were more likely than their rural counterparts to feel the population has diversified in recent years (66% urban, 53% rural).

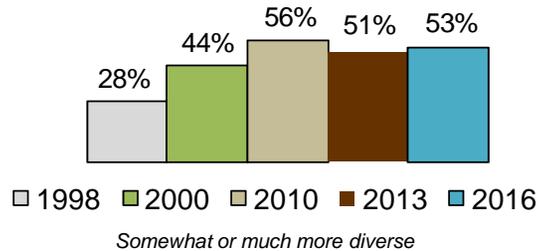
West Central and Southeast residents were the most likely to believe that their communities are diversifying.

Community's Ethnic or Racial Make-Up Has Become More Diverse Over Past Five Years

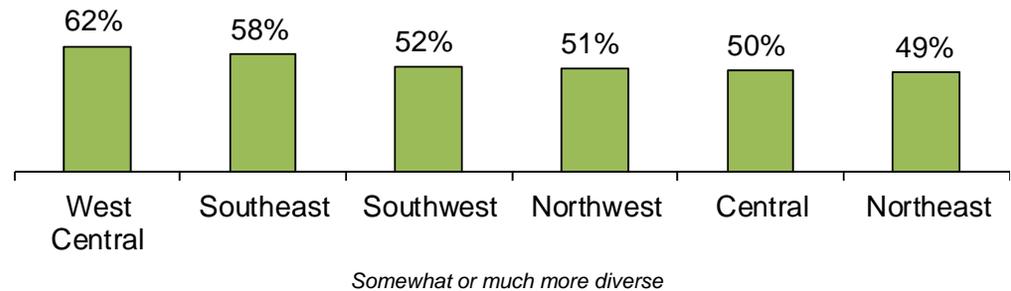
53% Rural vs. 66% Urban



Rural Minnesotans: Population Has Become More Diverse Over Past Five Years



Population Has Become More Diverse Over Past Five Years





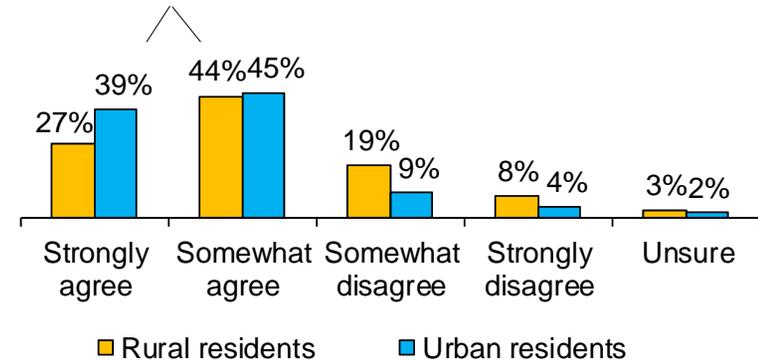
Though there is belief that diversity is increasing in rural Minnesota, the environment appears to be less amicable to residents of differing backgrounds and perspectives.

Nearly three in 10 (27%) of rural residents surveyed did not feel their community is welcoming to people of varying backgrounds and perspectives. Seven in 10 (71%) said that they feel their community is inviting, compared to 84 percent of urban residents who said that they feel that way. This represents a significant 11-point downturn from 2013 rural findings.

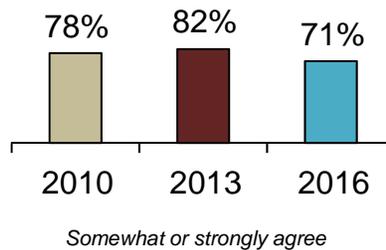
Those in Northwestern Minnesota were the least likely to agree that their community is welcoming.

Community is a Welcoming Place for People of All Backgrounds and Perspectives

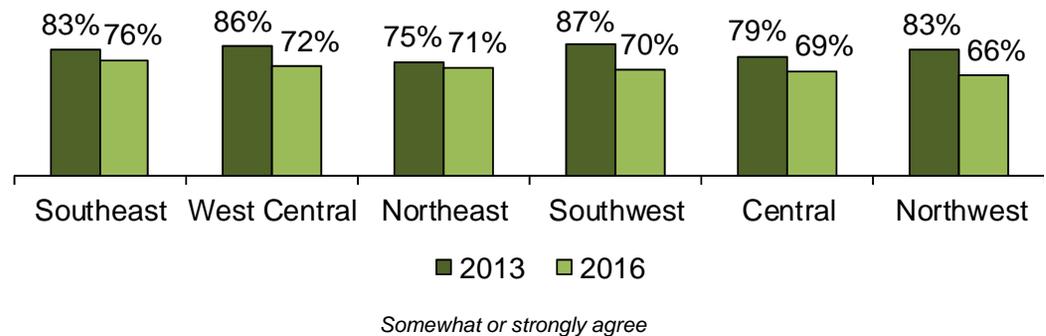
71% Rural vs. 84% Urban



Rural Minnesotans: Community is a Welcoming Place for People of All Backgrounds



Community is a Welcoming Place for People of All Backgrounds and Perspectives



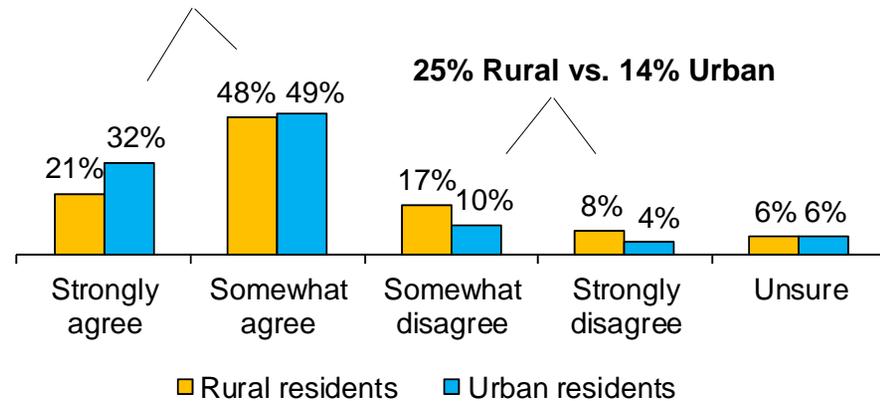


Similarly, when asked if they feel their community does a good job accepting and embracing differences, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or nationality, about seven in 10 (69%) rural residents surveyed felt it does, compared to 81 percent of urban residents. About one in four (25%) felt their community does not do so.

Residents in Northwestern and Central Minnesota were the least likely to have felt that their communities are accepting.

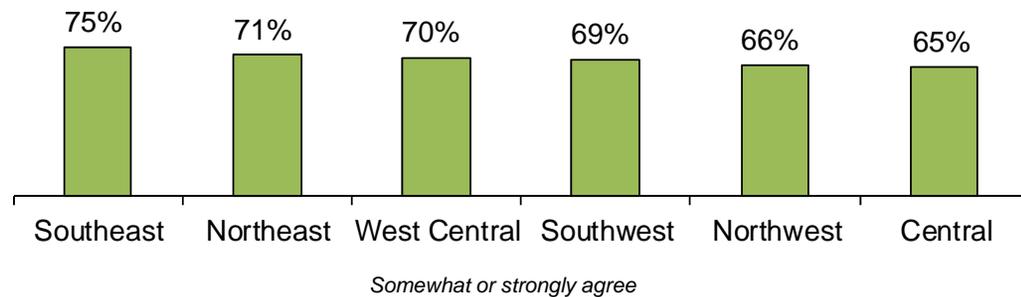
Community Accepts and Embraces Differences
(e.g., Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Nationality)

69% Rural vs. 81% Urban



25% Rural vs. 14% Urban

Community Accepts and Embraces Differences
(e.g., Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Nationality)





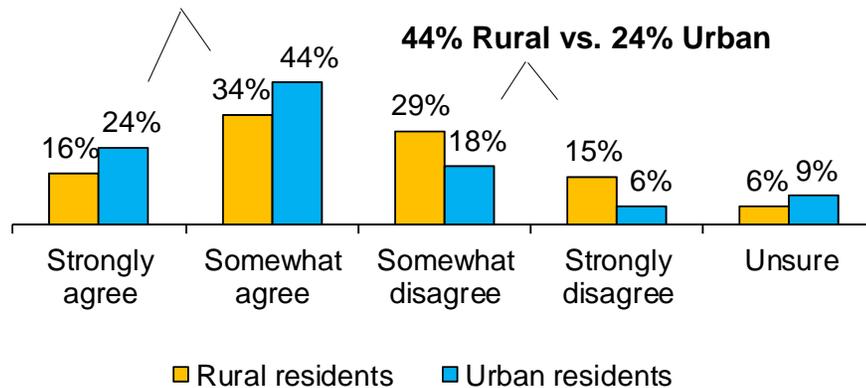
Leadership Composition

Rural Pulse study findings showed a slight decrease from 2013 to 2016 in rural resident opinions about diversity within community leadership roles. While half of rural residents said that they feel local community leadership is comprised of people from different backgrounds, 44 percent felt that this is not the case. Urban residents were much more likely than their rural counterparts to agree (68% urban, 50% rural).

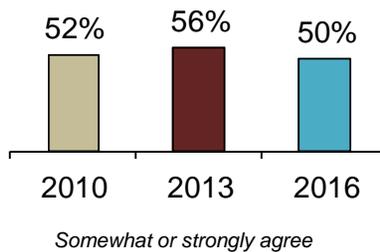
West Central residents were the least likely to agree.

People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within The Community

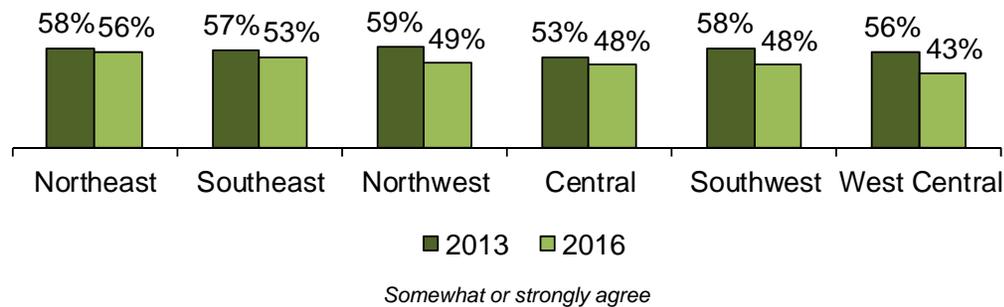
50% Rural vs. 68% Urban



Rural Minnesotans: People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Rural Leadership Roles



People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within Community





Women, younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) and those with household incomes of \$60,000 or less were the least confident in local leadership inclusivity.

Rural Minnesotans: Diversity Perspectives

	Men	Women
My community is a welcoming place for people of all backgrounds and perspectives	74%	69%
People from diverse backgrounds fill leadership roles within my community	57%	42%

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
My community is a welcoming place for people of all backgrounds and perspectives	67%	69%	73%	71%	75%
People from diverse backgrounds fill leadership roles within my community	44%	50%	56%	46%	53%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
People from diverse backgrounds fill leadership roles within my community	49%	47%	55%	54%

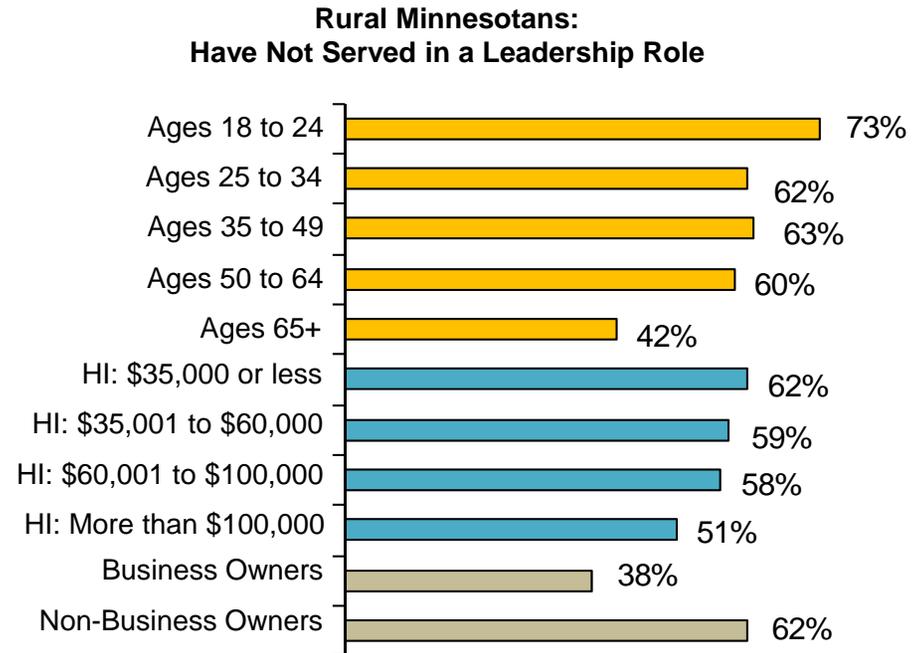
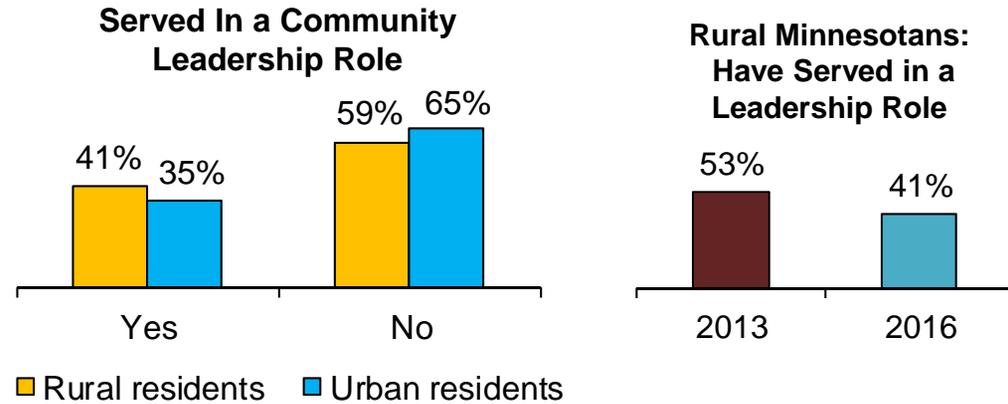
Agree or strongly agree

Lowest agreement



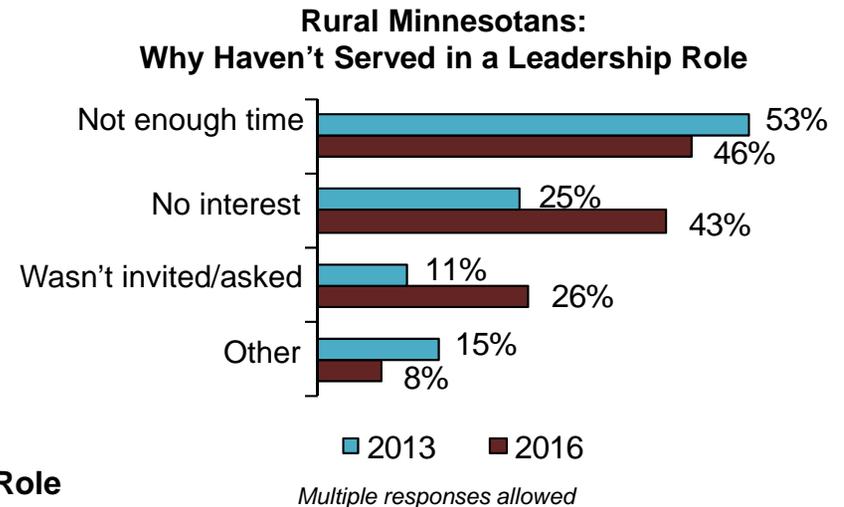
Only 41 percent of rural residents said that they have served in a leadership role, whether it be youth sports, city government or with a local nonprofit organization. This constitutes a significant 12 percent decline since 2013 study findings. Urban area residents were even less likely to have said that they have served (35% urban, 41% rural).

Demographics clearly appear to play a role in the likelihood to serve. Older residents, those with incomes of more than \$100,000 and business owners were the most likely to have said that they have served in leadership. Younger Millennials (ages 18 to 24) were the least likely.





Close to half (46%) who had not served as a leader said that the main reason was lack of time. Forty-three percent said they would have no interest in doing such, a significant 18-point increase from Rural Pulse 2013. About one in four (26%) said that they have never been invited to participate as a leader, more than twice as high a percentage as 2013 findings. Another eight percent cited other reasons such as a disability or being new to the area, among others. (See Appendix for full listing of other responses.)



**Rural Minnesotans:
Why Haven't Served in a Leadership Role**

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Wasn't invited/asked	34%	35%	24%	23%	19%
No interest	52%	45%	42%	40%	42%
Not enough time	48%	47%	49%	42%	44%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Wasn't invited/asked	30%	26%	23%	24%
No interest	46%	42%	42%	22%
Not enough time	40%	48%	48%	67%

Multiple responses allowed

■ Top reason by demographic group

Many Millennials, especially those ages 18 to 24, cited having no interest in serving in a leadership role. Residents ages 35 and older were more apt to have said the reason is a lack of time.

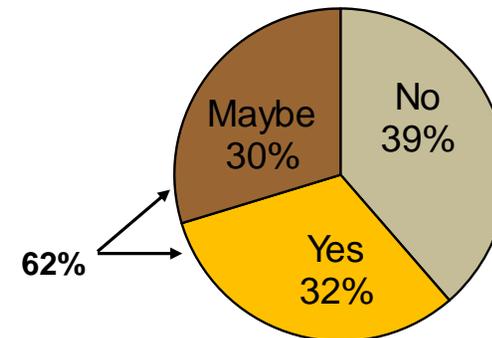
Those with incomes of \$35,000 or less were less likely to show interest in being a leader, while higher income groups said a lack of time keeps them from serving in a leadership role.



Although many had not served in a leadership role within their community to date, more than three in five rural residents showed interest in doing so, nine percentage points more than 2013 study findings. About a third (32%) indicated that they would definitely be interested in being invited to serve, and another 30 percent said they might consider doing so. Thirty-nine percent said that they have no interest.

Residents of Northwest Minnesota were also more likely to say that they would definitely consider serving in a leadership role, compared to other rural regions.

Rural Minnesotans: Would You Consider Serving If Asked?

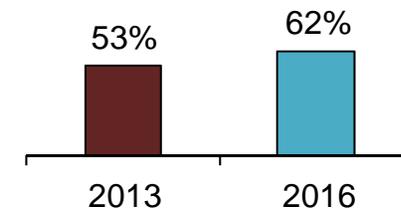


Would Definitely Consider Serving If Asked



Those who have not served in leadership in the past

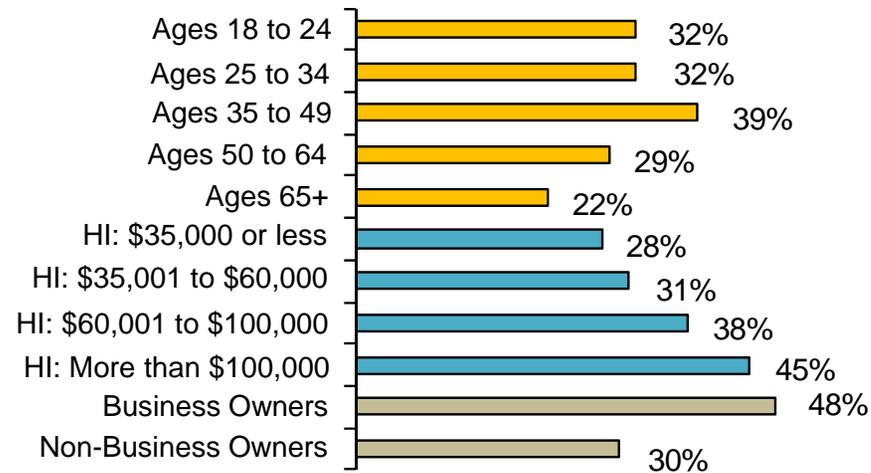
Rural Minnesotans: Might or Would Consider Serving in a Leadership Role if Asked





Age, income and whether or not the person owns a business plays a role in consideration of serving in community leadership. Rural Minnesotans ages 35 to 49, those with the highest incomes and business owners were the most likely to say they would definitely consider a leadership role if asked.

**Rural Minnesotans:
Would Definitely Consider Serving in a Leadership Role if Asked**



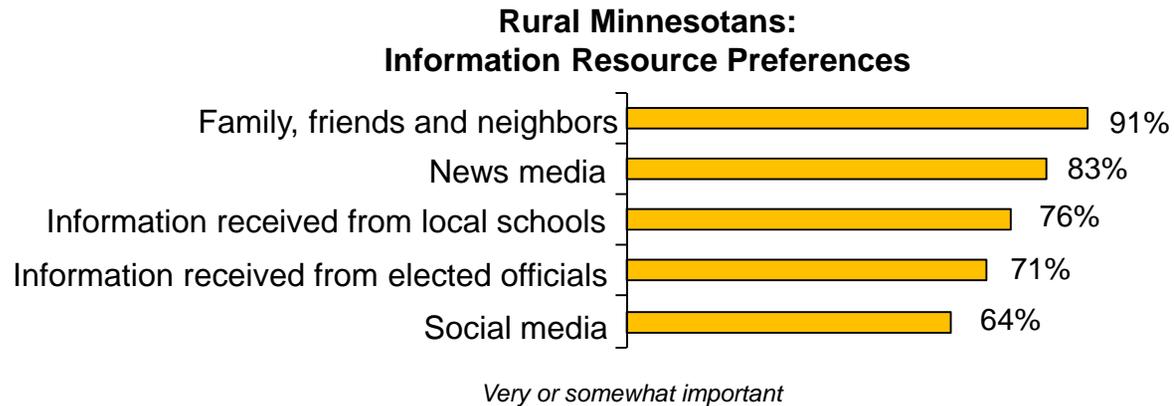
Those who have not served in leadership in the past



Information Source Preferences

When asked about preferences for information sources, rural Minnesotans said that they rely heavily on family, friends and neighbors (91%) to keep them updated about their local area. Other top information sources included the news media (83%), information received from local schools (76%), and information received from elected officials (71%).

This year, study participants were asked about the importance of social media as a resource for obtaining community information. About two-thirds (64%) of rural residents agreed social media has become a significant personal resource. Women were more likely than men to believe social media is an important communication vehicle for local information (70% women, 59% men).



Other information sources cited by survey participants included community events, community centers and newsletters, among others. (See Appendix for full listing of other responses.)



Information source preferences varied somewhat by age and income. While Millennials agreed with those older that the news media would be the best information source, aside from friends and family, they were much more likely to have placed importance on the use of social media to assist in keeping updated about their local community.

Rural Minnesotans: Information Resource Preferences

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
News media	80%	80%	84%	84%	91%
Information received from local schools	72%	76%	81%	78%	72%
Information received from elected officials	63%	64%	71%	76%	76%
Social media	75%	77%	67%	62%	49%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
News media	83%	88%	84%	81%
Information received from local schools	68%	79%	83%	80%
Information received from elected officials	68%	73%	74%	68%
Social media	63%	68%	72%	59%

Very or somewhat important

■ Most important by demographic group

APPENDIX



Blandin Foundation: Rural Verbatim Responses

28. Other than those I just mentioned, are there other issues that you feel your community is not addressing?

- Drugs – 8
- Daycare/childcare – 5
- Unemployment – 3
- Parks and recreation – 3
- Shopping outlets – 3
- Bullying – 2
- Corruption/dysfunctional city council – 2
- Politics – 2
- Property taxes – 2
- Underage drinking – 2
- Activities for children
- Overall, our community, like many others, has no real community cohesion. We don't operate well as a community, just as individuals. Little sense of mutuality in the community and mutual concern.
- Thousands of laid-off miners.
- Mines are down – unemployment
- Help average middle-class
- Collect recyclables
- Corky town/almost run by a few people. They make all the rules and regulations.
- A place for the youth to go when not in school
- No fun and safe activities for kids, teens, young adults or really anything to do. Too many big city lowlifes coming in and destroying the area. Not safe anymore for my kid and nothing to go do with her, especially during the winter.
- Economics of farms
- Excessive cost of government
- Filling vacancies quickly
- Flooding
- Formalism
- Genetically modified organization
- Growing the community, attracting new families
- Gun control
- Immigration
- Indiscrimination of minorities
- Influence of the state on our small community
- Jobs with benefits
- Just making sure everyone is understanding policies and law of the community. Other people conforming to the rules of the society. Politeness.

- Justice
- Keeping public areas clean and promoting drinking water (no water fountains at parks).
- Lacking in strong community leadership
- Lacks utilities
- Laws
- Location of certain things like the community center
- Mental healthcare and management
- More community ed
- More public interest
- More salt on roads
- Multiple reasons
- Need to keep the eagle watchers in check and keep their children off the train tracks before someone gets killed. I know the city draws a lot of money from this. No one is watching out for the kids; the train tracks are not a place they need to be ever be. Reid's Landing is insane.
- Not enough concern for traffic
- No diversity of industry
- Noise enforcement laws
- Nothing for entertainment
- Overpopulating Somalian population
- People from different culture not encouraging insurance. Teaching insurance. The city is also very expensive.
- Chemical use in potatoes
- Poverty
- Support of public library
- Really try to sell this city
- Recreation
- Religion in the schools
- Rent too damn high!
- Run-down, nothing to do, utility rates too high. We don't need new schools. Roads need to be fixed.
- Running the museum, which needs funding and extra help and volunteers
- Schools
- Self-sufficiency
- Social security
- Special needs
- Spending money without community support
- State gives in too much to minority thinking and not majority issues
- Strong concerns with the northern border control
- Taxes
- The amount of rent in Duluth is too high
- The President sucks
- There are very few places to shop in town and very few restaurants.
- Clean-burning gas; let farmers produce these products
- Total control
- Younger girls are dressing inappropriately and having sex at younger ages, like around 10 years old. Anorexia and eating disorders in younger girls. There is nothing to enforce eating disorders and put those people in treatment for it. Underage girls prostituting for

money. Not much drugs or violence around here, but it is slowly being taken over by Somalians. They are all rude, don't drive well and don't speak English. It's very frustrating. They act like they own these areas and they do whatever they want.

- Utility expenses are very high
- Utility rates are too high
- Waste money and too much money on taxes. Everything they do is dumb. They don't listen to the community.
- Water quality
- Welfare of animals and pets
- Wildlife
- Do not welcome many new businesses, such as Walmart or a non-city owned liquor store.
- Cleanup Week is getting too restrictive

29. Which *one* issue would you say is the most critical to your community?

- Job opportunities – 27
- All of the above – 4
- Community leaders – 2
- Attracting new residents to the area
- Economic growth
- Local spending
- Lower taxes
- Mines
- Politicians
- Prostitution
- Recreation
- Retail
- Water quality

35. Why have you not served in a leadership role in your area?

- Just moved here – 15
- Disabled/health issues – 10
- Not a leader – 2
- Not involved – 2
- Too old – 2
- No Boy's Club in area
- Crowds
- Different culture
- Haven't taken time to get to involved
- Introvert
- Live far away
- Never home
- No children in school
- No groups that match my beliefs
- No opportunities

- No union for farmers
- Not accepted if you're new and all spots have been filled forever. No one leaves.
- Not willing to tell
- Population is going down
- Private person
- Social anxiety
- They don't help me, so why should I help them?
- Too stuck up to ask me
- Unable to drive myself anywhere
- Wasn't able to
- Work overtime
- Don't know – 4

42. Are there any other ways to keep you updated about your area?

- Local businesses/stores – 15
- Churches – 13
- Law enforcement – 11
- Internet/websites – 11
- Word of mouth – 10
- Workplace/employer – 10
- Community meetings – 7
- Library – 5
- Parks and recreation – 5
- Community centers – 4
- City/community newsletter – 3
- Community – 3
- Community areas – 2
- Community events – 2
- City activities – 2
- City government employees – 2
- *Farming News* – 2
- Mail – 2
- Social Services – 2
- Awareness group
- Billboards
- Buses
- By getting to know your neighbors and building relationships with them
- By looking for community-oriented programs
- Chamber of commerce website
- City Council
- Community survey
- Contact a community affairs officer in your local area
- Flyers
- Information from local authorities and medical facilities
- Involve local law enforcement in community events
- Initiating buddy system to prevent unwanted crimes in the community

- Legion
- Local Chamber
- Local community clubs
- Local organizations
- Main Street
- Mandate
- Mayo Clinic
- Media outside of my country
- Senior living facilities
- State-level
- State representatives

46. What would you say was the main reason you have considered moving to a larger city or metropolitan area?

- Family – 8
- More housing – 3
- All of the above – 2
- Less travel to work – 2
- Friends
- Prefer big cities
- Work move
- More diversity
- Peaceful

53. How would you describe your ethnic and cultural background?

Listing of Multi-cultural:

- White And Native American – 3
- African-American and White – 2
- White, Black and Native American
- White and Mexican
- White and Hispanic



Blandin Foundation: Urban Verbatim Responses

28. Other than those I just mentioned, are there other issues that you feel your city is not addressing?

- Law enforcement – 3
- Taxes – 3
- Poverty – 2
- Illegal immigration – 2
- Immigration – 2
- Accessibility
- Adequate care for veterans
- Adequate childcare and play areas
- County does not support childcare programming within the city
- Change in council
- City council dishonesty
- Clean water
- Community support programs
- Family and infrastructure
- Federal issues
- Food and jobs
- Fresh/organic foods
- Funding the new sports stadium
- Hard services and hinder services
- Higher education
- Home care
- Homeless/poor/housing
- Homelessness
- Housing and low income families
- Insurance
- Lack of grocery stores
- Mental health
- Noise and light pollution
- Parks and recreation
- Environmentally friendly parks
- Police brutality
- Population growth
- Renewable energy
- Small town
- Somalian immigration
- Teenage drinking
- Wage inequality

29. Which *one* issue would you say is the most critical to your city?

- Jobs – 5
- High taxes – 2
- Bouncing all those issues
- Local spending
- Neighborhood
- Too much money on transformation

35. Why have you not served in a leadership role in your area?

- Not a leader – 4
- Disabled – 2
- Health issues – 4
- Just moved here – 2
- Too old – 2
- Mental illness disability
- No opportunity
- Not good transportation
- Different culture
- World perspective is different

42. Are there any other ways to keep you updated about your area?

- Internet/websites – 7
- Churches – 6
- Law enforcement – 5
- Parks and recreation – 5
- City council – 4
- City website – 3
- Internet news – 3
- Emergency services – 3
- Newsletters – 3
- Library – 3
- Community centers – 3
- Community meetings – 3
- Community events – 2
- Employer – 2
- Area and neighborhood
- Community members/friends
- Community programs
- Email
- Local business
- Local government
- Local protest

- Mayo Clinic
- Neighbor block clubs
- Outlet malls
- Restaurant
- University
- Word of mouth
- Working effectively as one community

46. What would you say was the main reason you have considered moving to a less-populated, rural area?

- Taxes – 2
- All of the above
- Family
- New house

53. How would you describe your ethnic and cultural background?

Listing of Multi-Cultural and Other:

- Asian and White – 2
- Hmong – 2
- German, Scottish, Asian and American
- Half White
- Hispanic and Japanese
- Hispanic and White
- Mixture
- Peruvian, Japanese and Hispanic
- White and Black
- White and Mexican