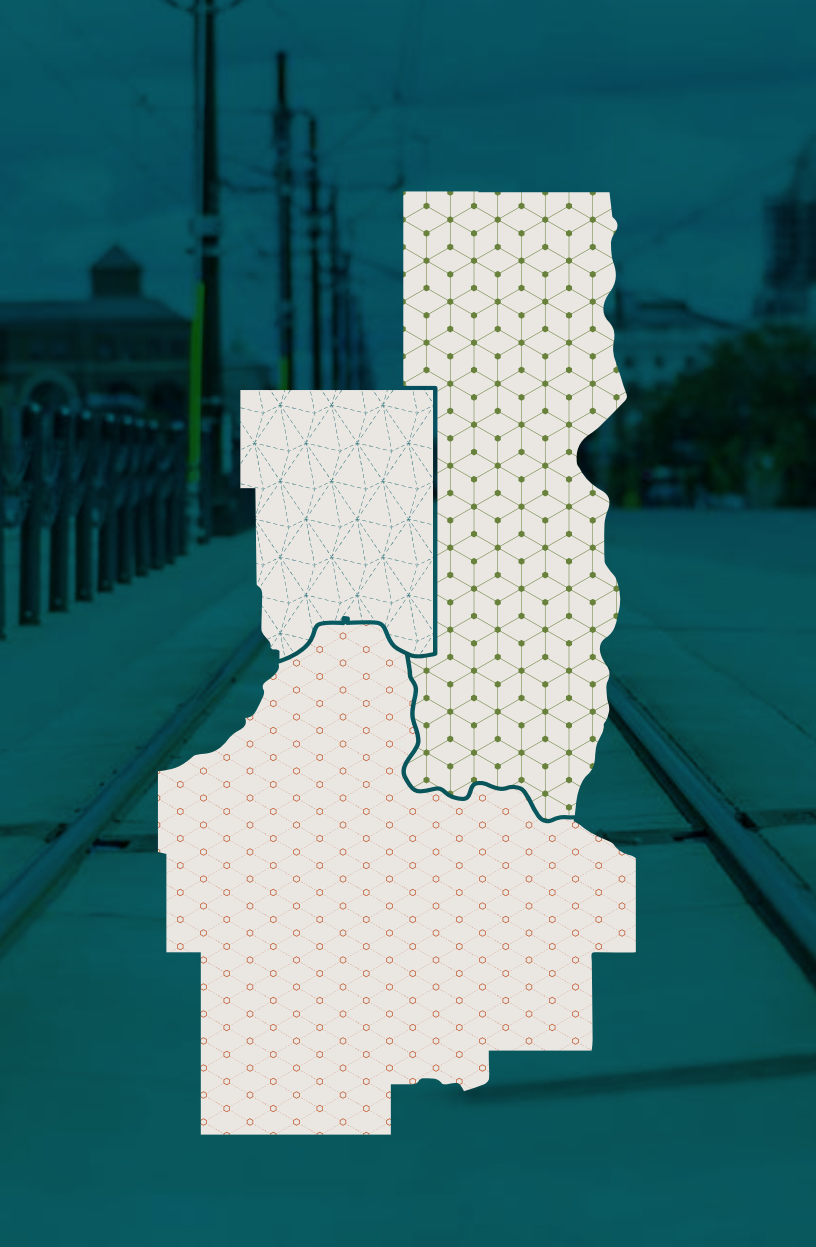


# EAST METRO PULSE

*Volume 2*





# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*“Not everything that is faced can be changed.  
But nothing can be changed until it is faced.”*

—James Baldwin



**B**aldwin was right. Without a deep and thorough understanding of existing challenges, the paths to solutions are often less clear.

At the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundations, we don't believe in visiting solutions upon community. We believe the community is in the best possible position to articulate challenges and identify and champion actionable solutions.

At the Foundations, we partner to help create a stronger, more equitable community. Over the years, we have found that the best way to assess what the community requires is quite simple: Ask. To be most effective in our role as partner, it is critical that we regularly listen to the community articulate its priorities.

That's why we created East Metro Pulse. Every two years, we survey residents of Dakota, Ramsey and Washington Counties about their level of connection to and engagement with their community. The collected data helps us identify and more deeply understand the issues affecting the community. We then compile and release the data in the East Metro Pulse report.

By gathering and sharing these voices, the Foundations and agents and agencies of change on the ground building community have access to a level of nuance that goes to the heart of our community's feelings about their quality of life. East Metro Pulse allows us to move beyond community challenges toward solutions.

East Metro Pulse helps us understand the warp and weft of the community fabric we are trying to weave. It is not just a tool for the Foundations; it is a tool for the community that is available to everyone. I urge you to take a moment to review this important, community-sourced information to see how it can help you in your own work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric J. Jolly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Eric J. Jolly, Ph.D.**  
President & CEO  
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundations

## About East Metro Pulse, Volume 2



The East Metro is rich with accessible and credible sources of information, trends and progress measurements that provide insight into our community. This information is used as background learnings, persuasive tools and

confirmatory support. While the value and importance of this shared information cannot be oversold, it can sometimes lack the color and nuance that anecdotes and lived experience bring to a story.

East Metro Pulse helps us shape the narrative of the East Metro. The story begins with our survey of Dakota, Ramsey and Washington County residents and culminates with a report that weaves together the insights gained from the community with highlights of our initiatives, partnerships and grants.

East Metro Pulse allows us to add the *feelings* to the *facts* to tell a more fulsome tale of the vitality of our community. In 20 pages, however, we can only share so much. This report scratches the surface of the data available from the survey. For more—much more—please explore the associated data book, which is available at [eastmetropulse.org](http://eastmetropulse.org).

East Metro Pulse is not just a tool for the Foundations. We encourage the community to use East Metro Pulse—the survey, the report and the data book—to support policy work, projects and programs, initiatives and other research projects benefiting the East Metro.



**Nadege Souvenir**

Associate Vice President of Community Impact  
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundations

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# ABOUT THE FOUNDATIONS

**T**he Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundations believe in the best of Minnesota and the power of its communities. With roots in Saint Paul and partners across the state, we are Minnesota's largest community foundation and the partner of choice for thousands of donors, professional advisors, nonprofits and community organizations. We inspire generosity to make Minnesota better for all who call it home.

We support more than 2,000 charitable organizations and donor funds and manage \$1.5 billion in assets, including F. R. Bigelow Foundation and Mardag Foundation. In keeping with our mission to share knowledge and resources to benefit the communities we serve, we work consistently to further our three strategic goals: advancing equity, strengthening communities and broadening philanthropic expression.



## ➤ Advancing Equity ➤

*We believe there is no hierarchy in human value.  
Our vision is a state where  
all communities and people can thrive.*

Since 1991, we have granted out more than \$5.8 million through our community-led grantmaking, **Diversity Endowment Funds** (DEF). These funds are driven by racial and cultural communities in the East Metro for the benefit of these same communities. Volunteer committees recommend grants for projects and programs, making these funds highly reflective and responsive to community-identified needs and solutions.

In 2016, we committed \$3 million over three years to the **Council of Black Male Success** (the Council), which is comprised of organizations serving and primarily led by African Americans. It was created to advance the well-being of African-American youth and young men in Saint Paul. Through the partnership of organizations, the Council addressed education and economic racial disparities for the youth and young men it served.

Since its inception in 2013, we have been members of the **Racial Equity Funders Collaborative** (REFC), a group of arts funders in the Twin Cities advancing racial and cultural equity in philanthropy. Informed by artists and arts and culture organizations, REFC is working to establish justice within the procedures, process and distribution of resources.



## ➤ Strengthening Communities ➤

*We believe strong communities are built through knowledge and empowerment. Collaboration is the heart of community.*

Sometimes as little as \$50 can mean the difference between stability and crisis for individuals and families in the East Metro. An unexpected expense—like a medical bill or car repair—can be devastating for a household. That’s where the **Community Sharing Fund** (CSF) comes in. CSF responds by providing grants of \$50 to \$500 in cases where a small, timely grant may prevent greater financial hardship. Because we underwrite the cost of all staff time for CSF, 100% of every dollar raised goes directly to individuals in need.

In 2018, we entered into a partnership with **Catchafire**, a virtual, skills-based volunteering platform, to further our goal of building nonprofit capacity across the state. Catchafire provides organizations with expert support in areas such as web development, marketing and communications, operations, and strategy. We offered 300 nonprofits across Minnesota free access to Catchafire for one year.

Today’s most pressing issues require collaborative and innovative approaches. To that end, we offer **a variety of grant programs** to meet the needs of the diverse community of nonprofits that serve the East Metro. In 2018, through foundation-led grantmaking, our expert community impact staff directed more than \$6.8 million into our community.

## ➤➤➤ **Broadening Philanthropic Expression** ➤➤➤

*We believe generosity inspires good. Our donors are passionate, and we are honored to share our knowledge and expertise to help them fulfill their philanthropic goals.*

Our donors are making an incredible impact in communities throughout Minnesota with their generosity through donor advised grantmaking. Each and every one of those grants is processed by our **dedicated grants administration team**. In 2017, our grants administration team processed nearly 5,600 donor advised grants, which resulted in more than \$55 million being granted to communities.

In late 2015, we created the **Giving+Together** program to invite deeper donor engagement in our community impact work. Through donor-engagement events and periodic updates, we share information with donors on critical issues affecting our community, offer perspectives from community leaders and staff, and create opportunities for connections among donors and the nonprofit organizations doing important work in community.

We support local, volunteer-led foundations through the **Community Affiliates** program. Every year, these affiliate foundations grant thousands of dollars into local communities. Community members drive the grantmaking process of each affiliate, and community fundraising and outreach efforts help build permanent funds to invest in their region for years to come.









## »»» What does it mean to belong?

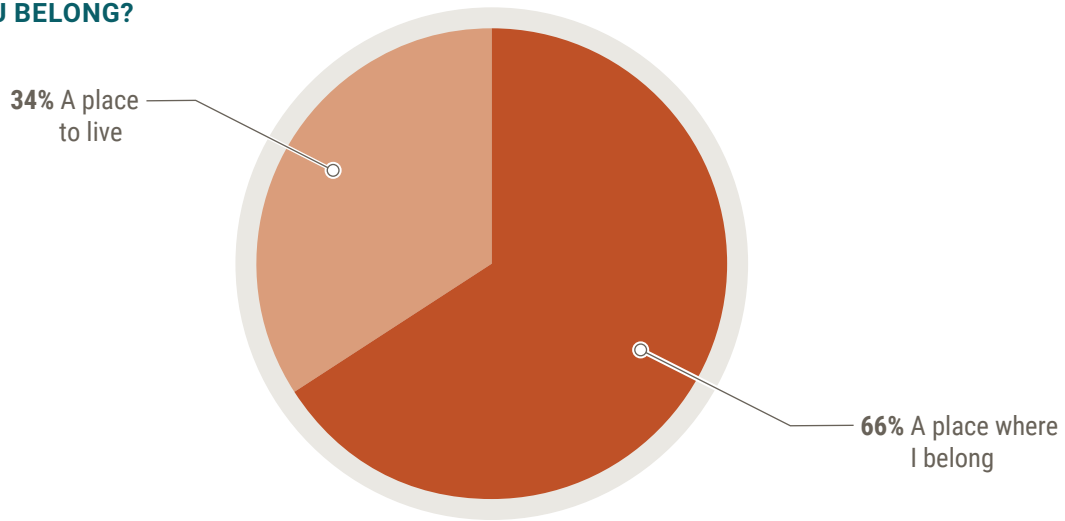
Communities are stronger when all residents feel connected and engaged. A connected community is one in which residents feel they can—and want to—live, learn, work and play.




Closeness to family and friends, their faith communities, and housing options are some of the reason respondents chose to live in the East Metro. Two-thirds of East Metro respondents think of the East Metro as a place where they belong, not just live.

Though this collective sense of belonging can be a point of pride, a deeper look reveals that not everyone feels as connected. While, overall, East Metro respondents report their quality of life as excellent or good, respondents of color were more likely to rate quality of life and related issues as fair or poor.

### DO YOU FEEL YOU BELONG?



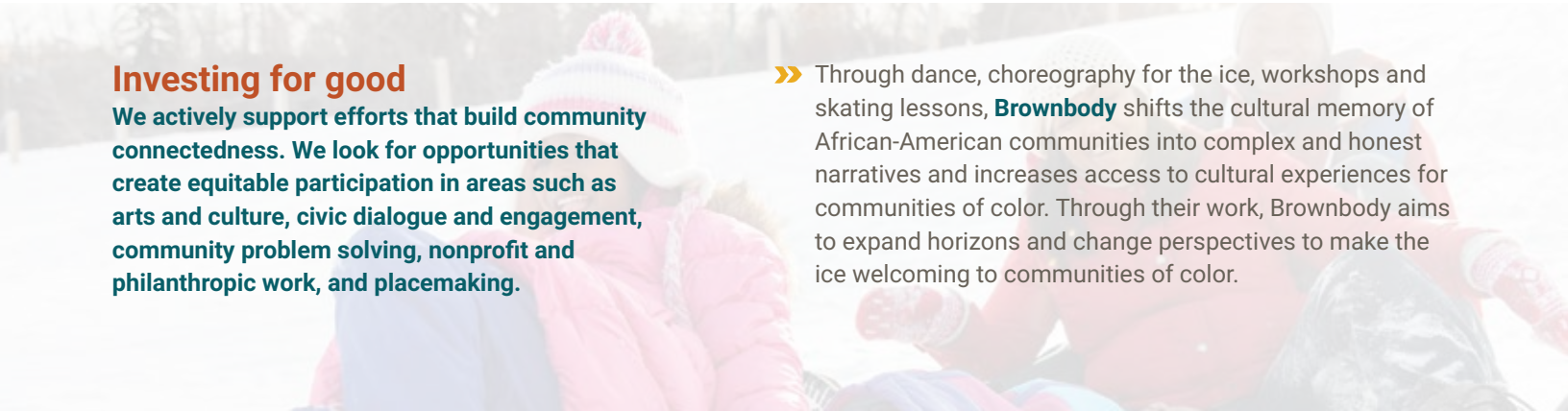
Q4: "Do you think of the East Metro as a place where you belong or just a place to live?"

 For more, see questions 1–5 in the data book.

### Investing for good

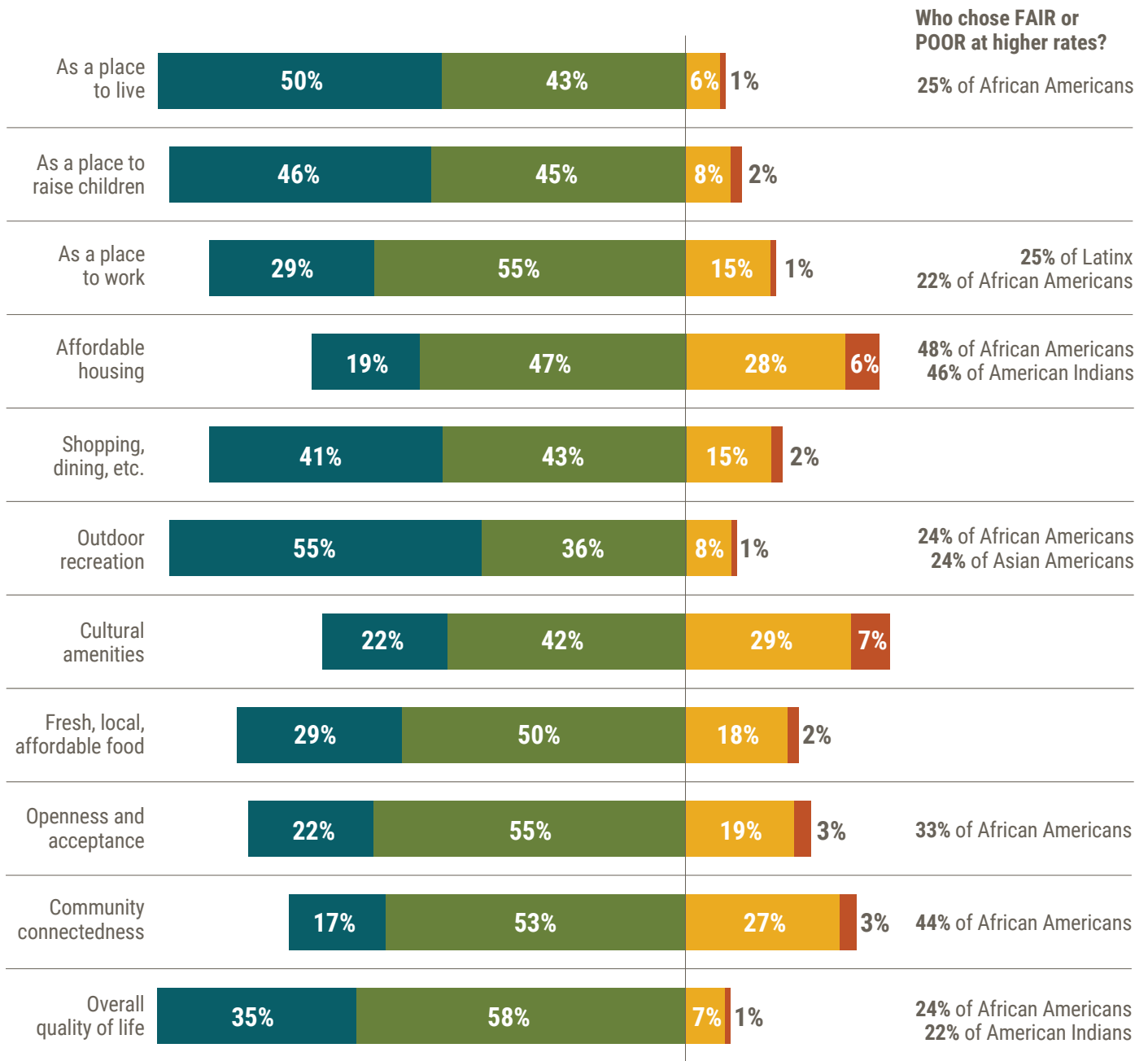
We actively support efforts that build community connectedness. We look for opportunities that create equitable participation in areas such as arts and culture, civic dialogue and engagement, community problem solving, nonprofit and philanthropic work, and placemaking.

»»» Through dance, choreography for the ice, workshops and skating lessons, **Brownbody** shifts the cultural memory of African-American communities into complex and honest narratives and increases access to cultural experiences for communities of color. Through their work, Brownbody aims to expand horizons and change perspectives to make the ice welcoming to communities of color.





**A LOOK AT QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE EAST METRO**



**KEY**  
 ■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Q3: "How would you rate the East Metro on the following things?"

» **Hmong American Farmers Association's** (HAFA) work is rooted in an economic development model that is designed to build intergenerational and community wealth in the Hmong farming community. Through collective farm business development, education and advocacy, HAFA is building paths to wealth creation—not just income generation—toward a sustainable and fair food economy for all.

» **Twin Cities Theaters of Color Coalition** (TCTOCC) aims to broaden cultural perspectives in the local theater scene as the changing Twin Cities population signals a need for theaters to better connect with communities of color. TCTOCC is comprised of five culturally specific theater companies: New Native Theatre, Pangea World Theater, Penumbra Theatre Company, Teatro del Pueblo and Theater Mu.

## »» How is your story told?

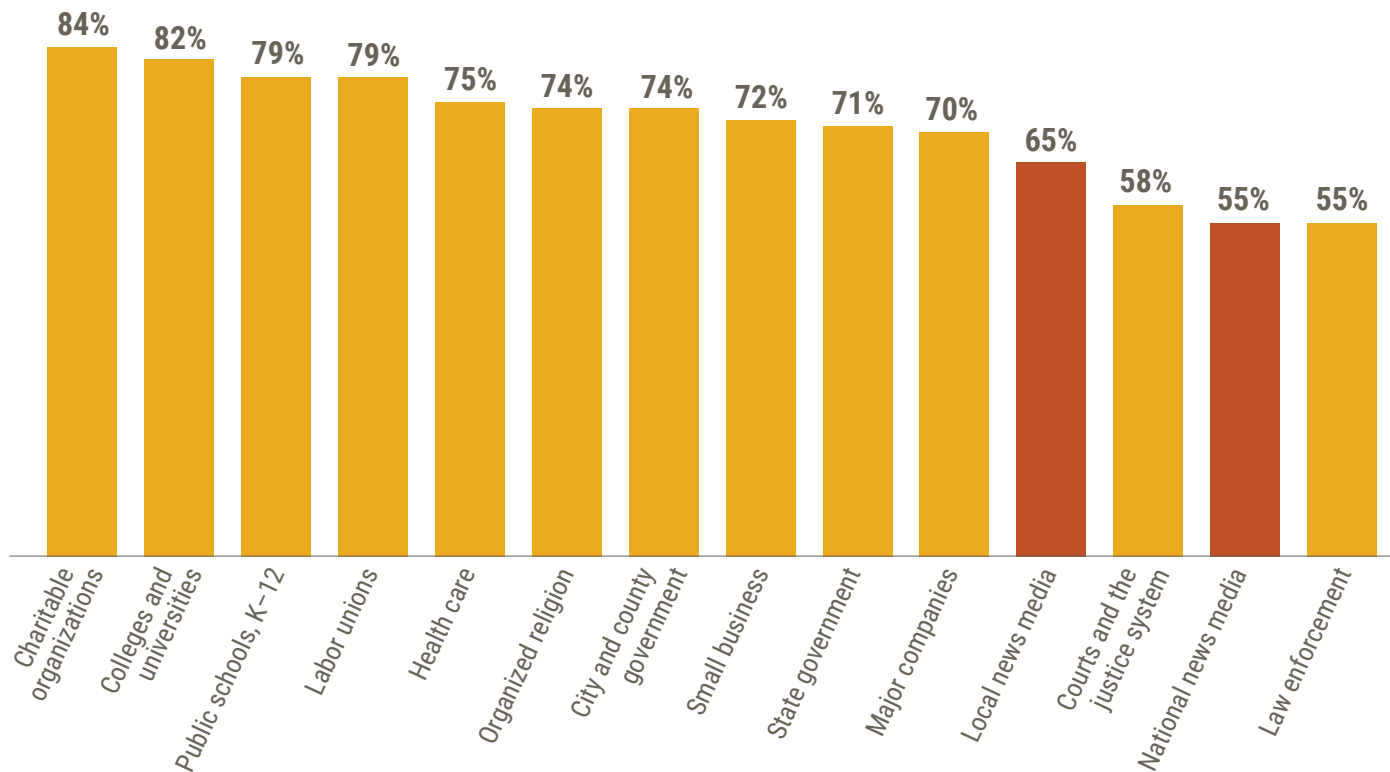
Narratives are the stories that shape how we perceive the world. Narratives are everywhere—media, politics, literature, education, government and art. Our current racial narratives fail to accurately reflect and represent all of our stories.



# NARRATIVE CHANGE

When asked whether different types of organizations and institutions treat people of all races fairly, news media—both local and national—ranked low in comparison to others.

### HOW DO NEWS MEDIA RANK IN TREATING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES AND ETHNICITIES FAIRLY?



*“Strongly agree” and “Agree” responses to Q30: “How much do you agree or disagree that the following types of institutions treat people of all races and ethnicities fairly?”*

### PREFERRED LOCAL NEWS MEDIA SOURCES



**TV** Kare 11  
WCCO  
Fox 9



**RADIO** MPR  
WCCO  
KFAN



**ONLINE/PRINT** Star Tribune  
Pioneer Press  
Community/neighborhood newspaper

Q31: *“Please list up to three local news sources you prefer for news and information.”*



## Investing for good

We know racial narrative change is a critical component of creating racial equity. Through our work in narrative change, we challenge the stories and systems that perpetuate incorrect and incomplete versions of racial history and racial identity.

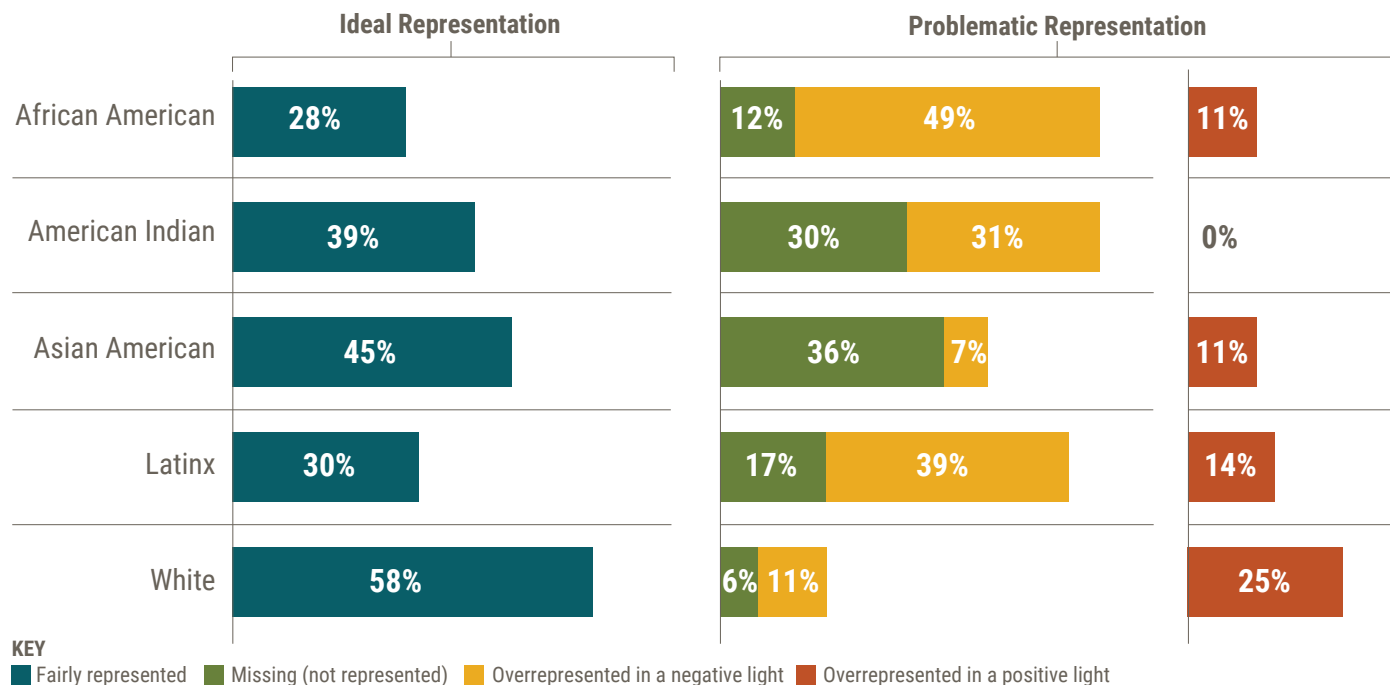
In a continuation of our antiracism work, in 2017 we received a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) work in the areas of racial healing and relationship building, narrative change, law, separation, and economy. The **Saint Paul TRHT** chose to focus on narrative change and racial healing and supported these two projects:

» **Truth and Transformation: Changing Racial Narratives in Media** is a partnership that aims to change problematic racial narratives by helping news professionals uncover their own biases and assumptions, and amplify community solutions to narrative change. Minnesota Public Radio, KMOJ/98.8 Radio, the Minnesota Humanities Center, Hamline University, Pillsbury United Communities and ThreeSixty Journalism have partnered to create a two-day statewide news media training in March 2019.

» **The New Narrative Project** is a campaign designed by and for African-American males ages 11 to 32 in Saint Paul and the surrounding metro area. The project focuses on history through the lens of Gordon Parks, racial healing and affirmation, and the creation of new narratives about black males. This project is a partnership between High School for Recording Arts, Individuals with Dreams, Irreducible Grace Foundation, SoulTouch Productions, Youth Lens 360 and is managed by Creative Catalysts.

Respondents were asked how they feel different groups of people are represented in the local news media. Are they *overrepresented in a positive light, fairly represented, overrepresented in a negative light* or *missing (not represented)*? We looked at how each racial/ethnic group saw themselves in local news media, and the differences are pronounced.

### HOW GROUPS SEE (OR DON'T SEE) THEMSELVES REPRESENTED IN LOCAL NEWS MEDIA



From responses to Q32: "How do you feel the following groups are represented in local news media?"



For more, see questions 30–33 in the data book.

## »»» Do we all have the same opportunities?

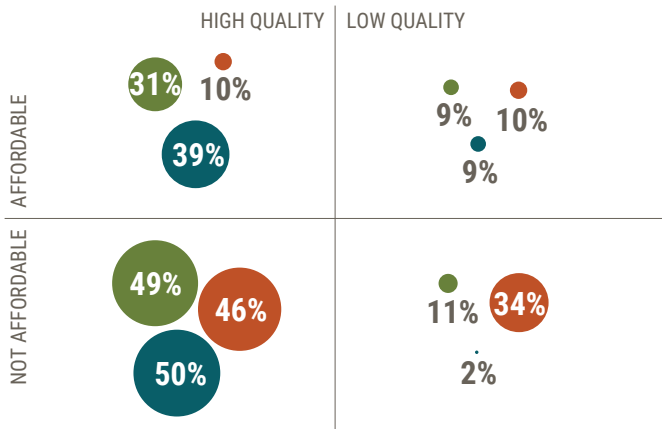
Education is vital to a community’s future economic success. Access to affordable, high-quality education from birth through adulthood is an aspiration for any community.



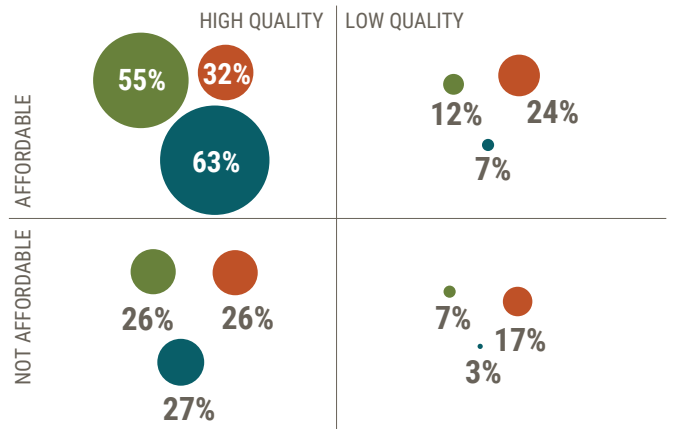
Respondents were asked about their household’s access to a range of educational opportunities. Though resources are available, affordability plays a significant role in access. For example, almost half of East Metro respondents (49%) who need access to child care said high-quality child care is available, but it is not affordable. Only a third (31%) of respondents said child care is high quality and affordable.

### IS IT AVAILABLE AND CAN I AFFORD IT?

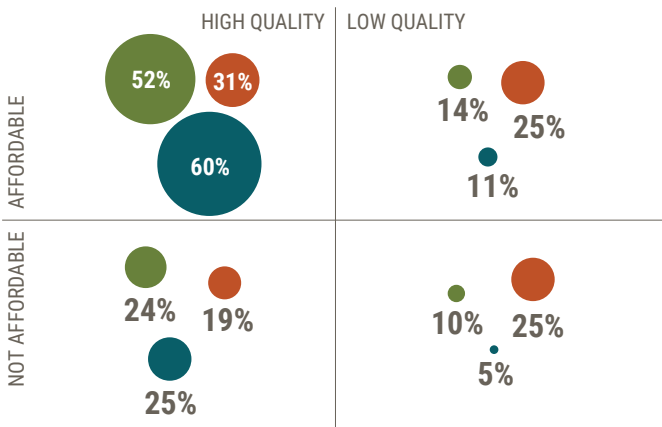
#### CHILD CARE



#### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL



#### OUT-OF-SCHOOLTIME ACTIVITIES



#### CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION/JOB TRAINING



**KEY**  
■ East Metro total ■ Homeowner ■ Renter

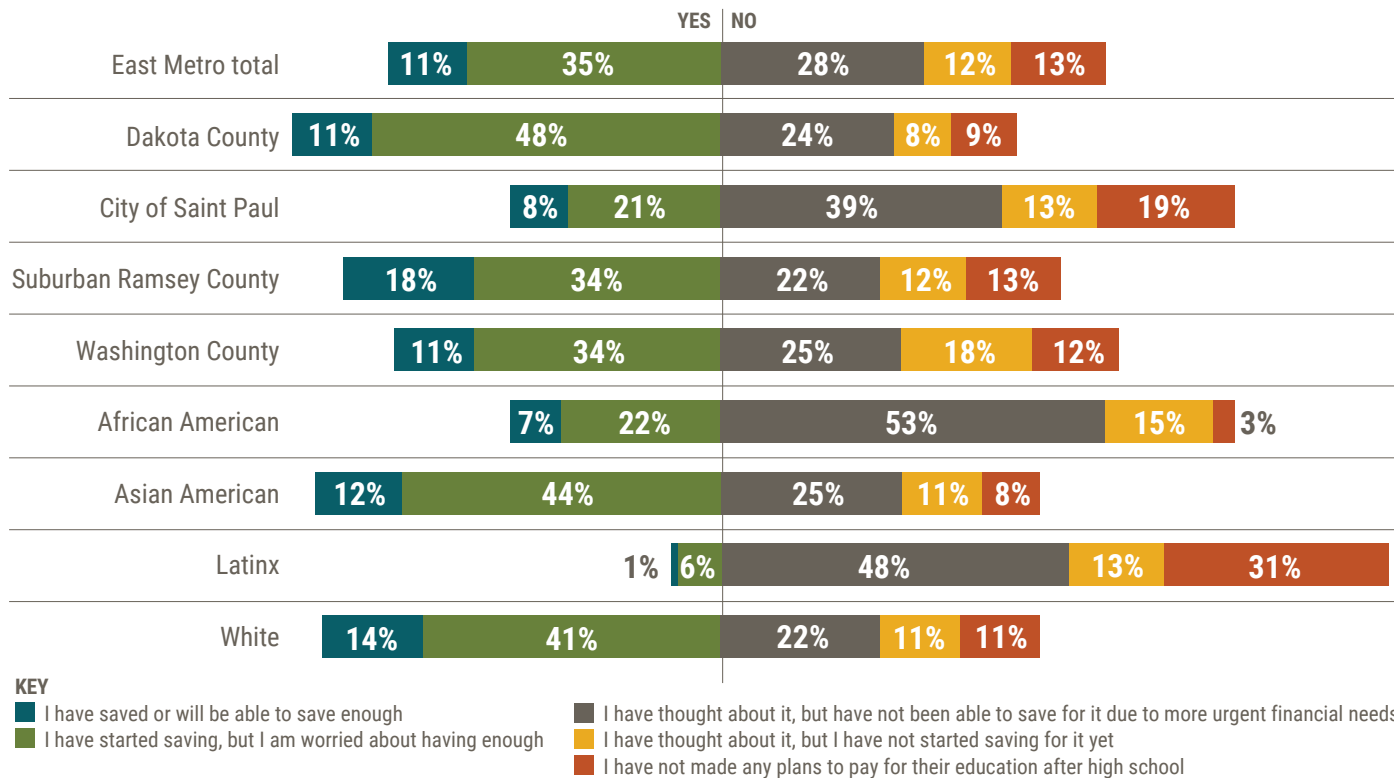
Responses from Q8: “Which of the following types of child care and education opportunities are available to your household?”



Postsecondary education is increasingly required for career advancement. As the costs of postsecondary education rise, the importance of college savings grows.

Overall, only about one out of 10 respondents (11%) feel they have saved enough or will be able to save enough to pay for college education for their children. Of the respondents who have not saved anything, those with lower household incomes (less than \$20,000) are more likely to have not made plans and African-American and Latinx respondents are more likely to report that urgent financial needs impede their ability to save.

**HAVE YOU STARTED SAVING FOR COLLEGE?**



Q11: "What description best matches your college savings situation for the children who live in your household?"

 For more, see questions 8–11 and 41 in the data book.

**Investing for good**

**We seek ways to ensure access to high-quality educational opportunities for everyone, from cradle to career—especially through support for organizations that understand the distinct racial and cultural communities they serve.**

» Ann Mulholland, vice president of Community Impact at the Foundations, co-chairs Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter’s **College Savings Account (CSA) Task Force**. This task force leads community engagement and program design, and will recommend how to fund and implement a CSA program in the City of Saint Paul.

» We have been part of **Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN)**, a transformative education collaborative that brings together families, schools and the community to put children on the pathway to college and career. SPPN reaches more than 2,200 children annually, has housed 94 highly mobile and homeless families, and reaches hundreds of children in culturally based summer programming.

» **MinneMinds** is a coalition of organizations and thought leaders from across the state who share a common commitment to supporting children in need from prenatal to age 5. Over the past five years, MinneMinds has influenced or been the catalyst to securing \$140 million for early-learning scholarships. In 2017, the coalition advocated for \$33 million for home visiting.

## »»» Are we thriving?

Stable housing and access to transportation are a necessity for a thriving community. When residents are cost-burdened by their housing or limited by their transportation options, our region's prosperity suffers.



Though a majority (70%) of respondents are homeowners, the rate of homeownership varies across groups and geographies in the East Metro. Homeowners' most commonly reported housing concerns included property taxes, general upkeep and maintenance, and housing repairs; renters' top three considerations were paying rent, safety concerns, and not enough housing options. While 47 percent of East Metro respondents had no housing-related concerns in 2016, that number dropped to 27 percent in 2018.

### HOUSING CONCERNS

#### LOCATION

	#1 Concern	#2 Concern	#3 Concern
East Metro total	27%	26%	21%
Dakota County	35%	23%	22%
City of Saint Paul	25%	20%	20%
Suburban Ramsey County	32%	22%	20%
Washington County	33%	27%	21%

#### RACE AND ETHNICITY

	#1 Concern	#2 Concern	#3 Concern
African American	23%	23%	20%
American Indian	28%	27%	26%
Asian American	24%	21%	21%
Latinx	20%	20%	19%
White	29%	29%	21%

#### KEY

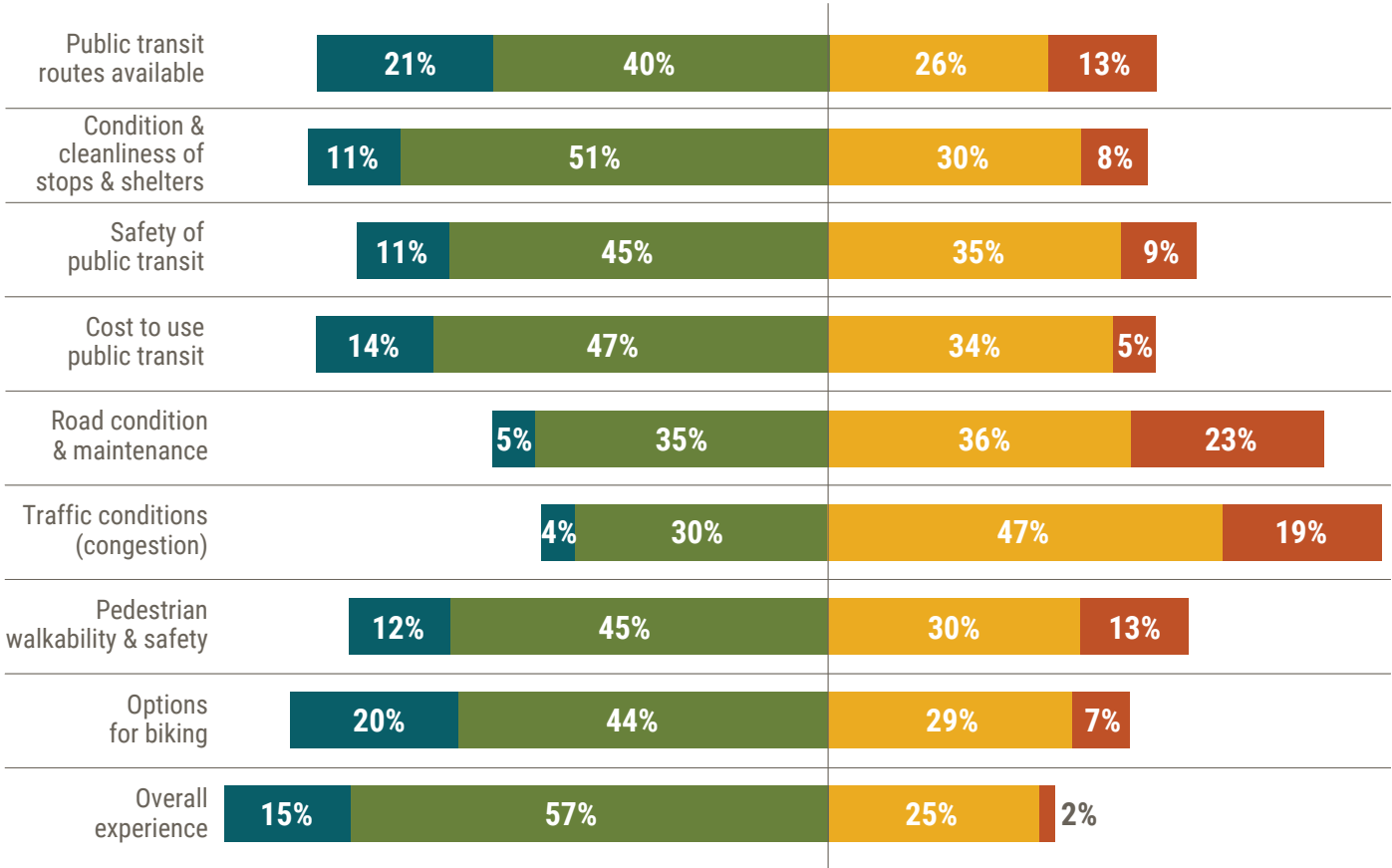
- I did not have any housing-related concerns over the past year
- General upkeep and maintenance
- Not enough space for everyone who lives here
- Paying for utilities
- Property taxes
- Safety concerns in my neighborhood
- Paying for rent or mortgage payments
- Not enough housing options/no vacancies

Q7: "What were your biggest housing-related concerns over the past year?"

For more, see questions 6-7 and 12-14 in the data book.

Survey results from 2016 to 2018 showed very little change in perceptions of transportation. The few exceptions were the ratings of condition and cleanliness of public transit stops, cost of public transit, and road condition and maintenance, which were less positive in 2018 than 2016.

**GETTING AROUND THE EAST METRO**



**KEY**  
 ■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Q13: "Please rate these aspects of transportation in the East Metro."

**Investing for good**

We have been partnering with donors, nonprofits, public entities and community members on housing initiatives for decades. We not only commit to preserving and increasing affordable, quality housing, but we support efforts to end homelessness. We also recognize that equitable transportation options and benefits are a necessity for a successful community.

» We partnered with F. R. Bigelow Foundation to loan \$1 million each to **CommonBond Communities** and **Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity** to ensure all East Metro residents are on equal footing in their search for a place to call home. These funds are being used to purchase existing, unsubsidized, affordable rental properties and market them to the nearly 65,000 Minnesota households who don't qualify for rental assistance, but are being priced out of the market due to rising rents.

» Since 2016, we have partnered on several initiatives to address homelessness, investing more than \$1.2 million in efforts such as **Redirecting Users of Shelter to Housing (RUSH)**, **Outside-IN** and the **Winter Safe Space emergency shelter** in Saint Paul.

» We support **DARTS LOOP**, a circulator bus, that addresses the transportation needs of low-income seniors and disabled adults. DARTS LOOP connects riders to banks, shopping, food shelves, restaurants, libraries, local parks and medical facilities.



## »»» Are we healthy?

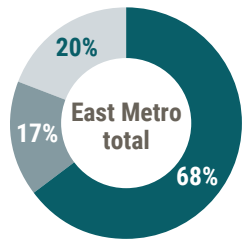
Our neighbors' physical, mental and spiritual well-being impacts our daily interactions and can either strengthen or weaken the fabric of a community. We seek to advance health equity by increasing quality, affordable health services, particularly for individuals who are low-income, uninsured and underinsured.



While nearly all respondents (97%) have health insurance, nearly one-third (31%) still reported being worried about not knowing what their insurance will pay for, and one-third (31%) reported being worried about being able to pay their premiums.

### TYPE OF INSURANCE

#### LOCATION

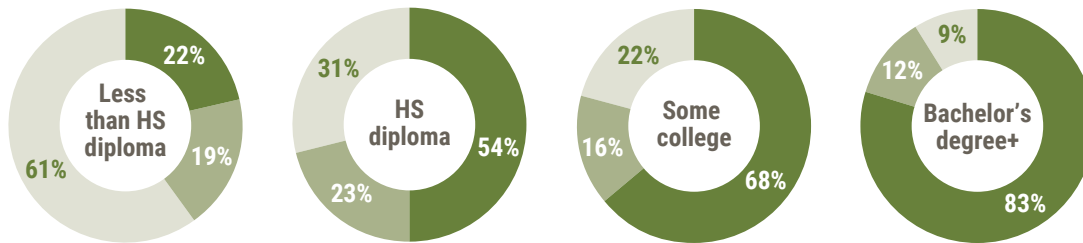


Q16: "What kind of health insurance do you have?"

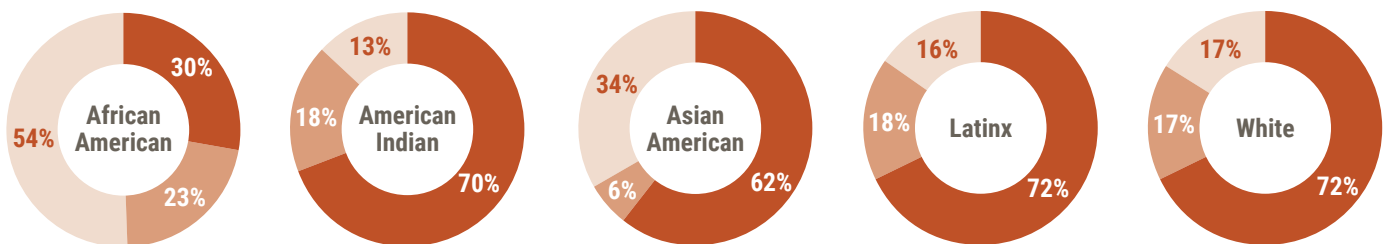
KEY

- Employer-provided plan (through my employer or the employer of someone I live with)
- A plan I purchased on my own or through MNSure, including Medicare supplements
- A public insurance program such as Medical Assistance, Medicare or Indian Health Services

#### EDUCATION LEVEL



#### RACE/ETHNICITY



Because health care delays are associated with longer hospital stays and potentially poorer health outcomes, access to and the affordability of health care is important. Overall, about one in five respondents (19%) reported that they waited longer than they wanted to or did not seek care at all for a physical health problem in the past year because they could not afford it. Respondents with lower household incomes more commonly reported this, as did renters.

## Investing for good

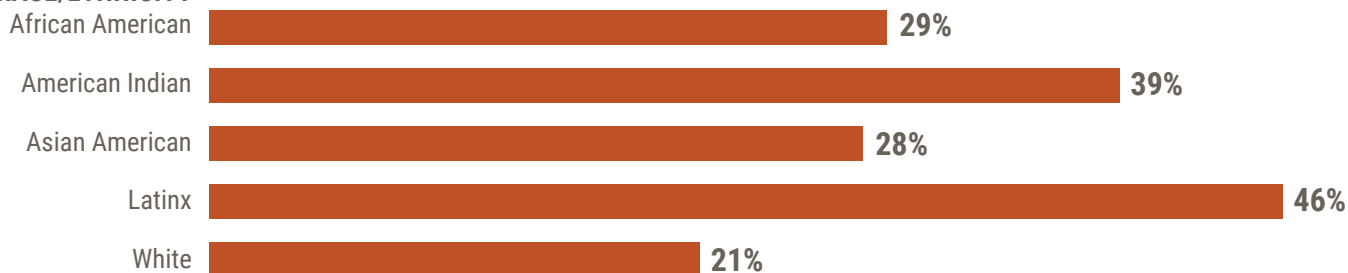
We support direct services that address chemical, mental, oral and physical health—including investments in community-based clinics with culturally specific models.

- » We support **Mission Outpost Dental Clinic** housed at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. The clinic provides dental services and education to uninsured and underinsured residents in Dakota County and the surrounding area, including those who face barriers to care, are experiencing financial struggles, and have dental pain or decay that prevents them from their daily functions.
- » **Children’s Dental Services** provides oral health outreach, education, and preventive and restorative treatment to low-income children and pregnant women at its clinic in Minneapolis and through portable dental care at dozens of locations where dental resources fail to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse population. All children, from birth through age 26, are served, regardless of income.
- » **RECLAIM** serves youth between 13 and 25 who are marginalized due to their gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. The organization offers therapy for youth and families, provides training for practitioners and engages in community partnerships that create social change at the intersection of gender and racial justice.

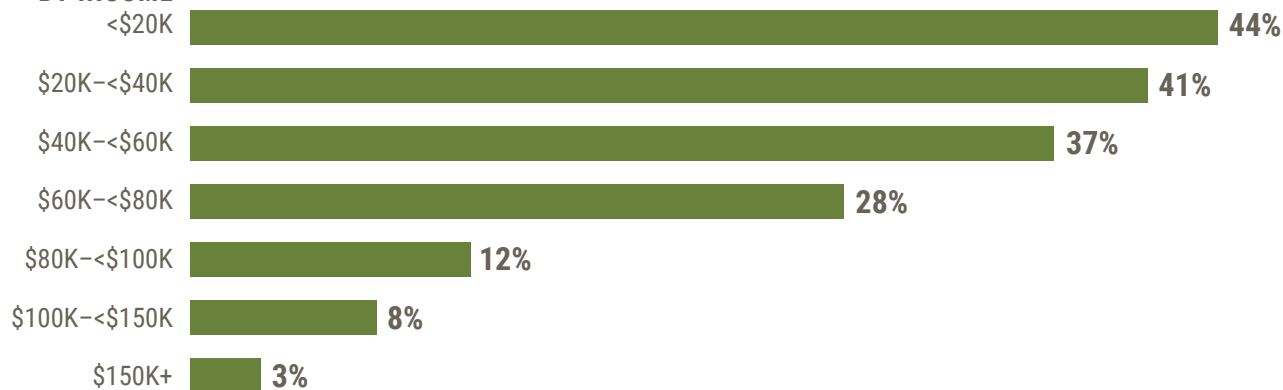
### PUTTING OFF THE DENTIST DUE TO COST

East Metro total 23%

#### BY RACE/ETHNICITY



#### BY INCOME



Respondents answering yes to Q24: “Was there any time during the past 12 months when you waited longer than you wanted to or didn’t seek dental care for problems with your teeth or gums because you could not afford it?”



For more, see questions 15–24 in the data book.

## »» Is our economy working for all?

When economic opportunity and security are available for all families and individuals, the East Metro thrives. Community development, more effective workforce education and training, and creating good jobs and pathways are vital to a shared prosperity.



# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & SECURITY

A lower proportion of respondents were fairly worried about getting a job or finding a new one in 2018 than in 2016. Needing more education or skills, no good jobs available, and transportation are the most commonly reported barriers to getting a job or finding a better job.

Respondents with a household income of less than \$40,000 more commonly noted transportation issues as a barrier to employment. African-American respondents more frequently reported needing more or better skills, while white respondents more frequently reported that there are no good jobs available.

### BARRIERS TO A NEW OR BETTER JOB

LOCATION	BARRIERS			INCOME	BARRIERS		
	#1 Barrier	#2 Barrier	#3 Barrier		#1 Barrier	#2 Barrier	#3 Barrier
East Metro total	44%	38%	21%	<\$20K	39%	32% <small>TIE</small>	28%
Dakota County	47%	46%	19%	\$20K-<\$40K	59%	56%	35%
City of Saint Paul	47%	28%	/  24% <small>TIE</small>	\$40K-<\$60K	50%	40%	26%
Suburban Ramsey County	40%	31%	26%	\$60K-<\$80K	57%	47%	15%
Washington County	49%	41%	21%	\$80K-<\$100K	40%	34%	/  18% <small>TIE</small>

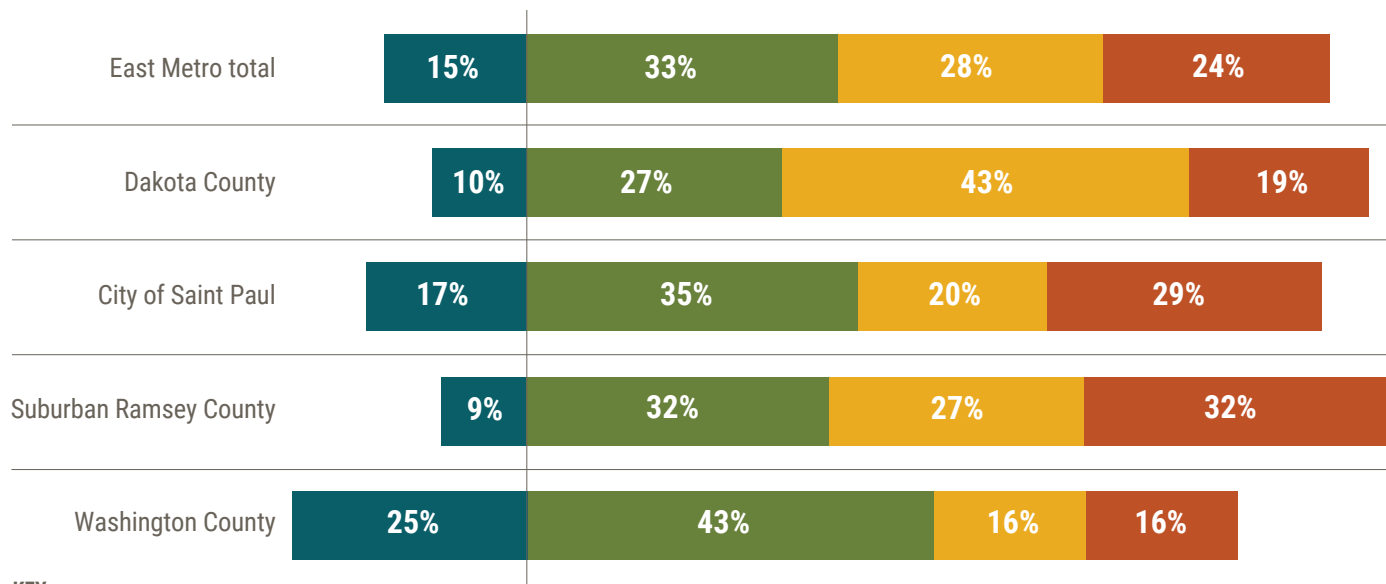
- KEY**
- Need more/better education or skills
  - Physical or mental health problems
  - Discrimination by employers
  - No good jobs available
  - Child care
  - Other
  - Transportation
  - Lack of resources to look for a job

Q27: "What are the top three barriers you face getting a job or finding a better job?" Data for household incomes above \$100,000 is available in the data book.



Respondents who said they have barriers to finding a job or a better job were also asked how worried they are about finding a job. Over half of survey respondents reported being either “very worried” or “fairly worried.” Those with lower incomes reported being more worried than respondents in higher income brackets. Homeowners and those who only speak English at home were less likely to report being worried about finding employment.

**WORRY ABOUT BETTER JOBS**



**KEY**  
 ■ Not worried at all ■ Slightly worried ■ Fairly worried ■ Very worried

Q28: “How worried are you about getting or finding a better job?”

 For more, see questions 25–29 and 42 in the data book.

**Investing for good**

We partner to create a more economically secure and prosperous East Metro by growing the skills of a more diverse workforce, supporting the creation and development of small and minority-owned businesses, and providing training opportunities for new Americans.

- » We are home to **Minneapolis Saint Paul Regional Workforce Innovation Network** (MSPWin), a philanthropic collaborative aimed at strengthening the workforce system in the seven-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul region. As part of MSPWin, we secured \$14 million in government funding to support career pathways.
- » The refugee and immigrant community is an important part of our East Metro community. **Hmong American Partnership** (HAP) focuses on empowering the refugee and immigrant community by moving them out of poverty and toward social and financial prosperity. HAP is growing to become a workforce development center that offers quality education, career training and employment placement services to their community.
- » We helped launch the **Center for Economic Inclusion**, the nation’s first organization dedicated exclusively to advancing inclusive growth to achieve regional prosperity. Inclusive growth is a proven driver of vitality and prosperity for all—individuals, businesses and the region.

## ➤ Methods ➤

The Foundations commissioned Wilder Research to conduct the survey for East Metro Pulse, Volume 2. Wilder invited a representative sample of 8,000 East Metro households to complete the survey through a series of mailings, and 1,950 responded, for a response rate of 24 percent. In addition to English, the survey was available in Hmong, Somali and Spanish.

Caution should be used when interpreting the findings of this study. Differences across demographic groups are reported when groups' responses differ by 10 percentage points or more. This is a sort of "practical significance" that allows us to point to differences in how different groups experience life in the East Metro. Wilder did not, however, conduct tests of statistical significance, which would allow us to state with a greater degree of confidence that these differences across groups are not due to chance.

Additionally, the demographic characteristics highlighted in this report are reported using simple, one-group cross tabulations. We know from experience that the effects of multiple subgroups—e.g., race/ethnicity, income and education—are intersectional and cannot be fully understood using these simple cross tabulations.

For more information about the study methods, please see Wilder's data book and methodology report at [eastmetropulse.org](http://eastmetropulse.org).



To learn more about the demographics of Dakota, Ramsey and Washington Counties, visit Minnesota Compass at [mncompass.org](http://mncompass.org).

# ➤ Acknowledgements ➤

## East Metro Pulse Project Team

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