



Hmong, Karen, Latino, Liberian, and Somali Communities in the Twin Cities: Populations at a Glance

Minnesota is home to more than 400,000 immigrants and refugees. The majority live in the Twin Cities. *Speaking for Ourselves: A Study with Immigrant and Refugee Communities in the Twin Cities* looks at the experiences of Hmong, Karen, Latino, Liberian, and Somali immigrants and refugees living in Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

With the guidance of our [advisory group](#), we interviewed 459 immigrants and adult children of immigrants about their lives – their families, education, jobs, health, and engagement in their communities to learn: What are the biggest needs of immigrant and refugee communities in the Twin Cities? What are the issues that are of greatest concerns? What assets are available to address them?

This report provides an overview of each population's demographics and family characteristics. Other *Speaking for Ourselves* summary reports focus on civic participation and social engagement; education; employment; health, mental health, and health care access; personal money management; transportation, housing, and safety perceptions; and the immigrant experience in the Twin Cities.

We have been working on this study since 2012. During that time, many different rounds of U.S. Census Bureau data have been made available. Throughout the course of this study, we retrieved the data for different purposes and at different points in time; therefore, the reader may note some differences in time periods and other aspects of the Census data reported in the maps, tables, and text of this report.

For more information and other reports from *Speaking for Ourselves*, go to wilderresearch.org. For more interesting facts and statistics about immigrants and refugees as well as other demographic groups and topics, check out the Minnesota Compass website www.mncompass.org.



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The Hmong community in Minnesota

Characteristics of Hmong Speaking for Ourselves participants

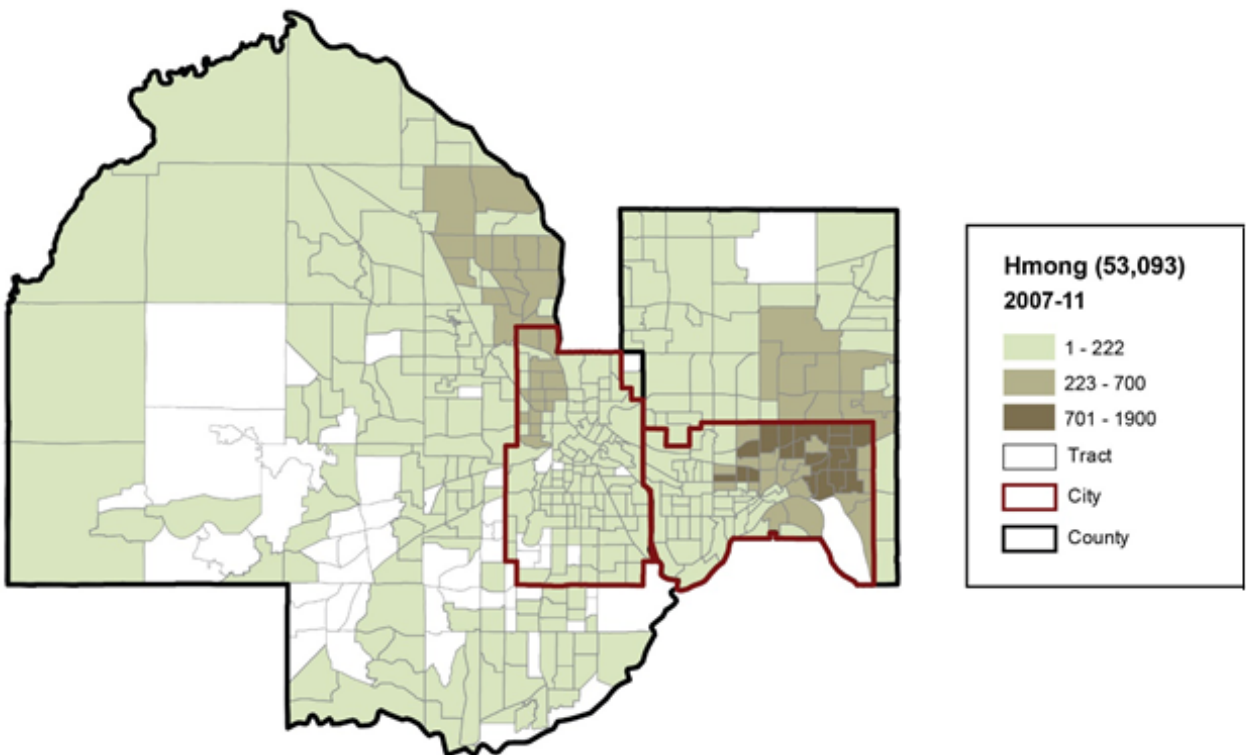
Of the 459 *Speaking for Ourselves* participants, 105 identified as Hmong. These participants mostly lived in Hennepin (40%) and Ramsey (51%) counties, but a small number (9%) were from other counties. Over half (58%) of Hmong participants said they have been in the United States for at least 25 years. Both males and females were well represented with 39 percent male and 61 percent female participants. Two-fifths (42%) of Hmong participants were over the age of 50. Over half (58%) of Hmong participants are married/living with a partner. The majority (70%) of Hmong participants had a household size of 5 or more people.

Challenges related to language vary between immigrant communities. Most (95%) Hmong participants identified Hmong as the primary language spoken at home. When asked how well they speak and understand English, 21 percent said “very well,” 29 percent said “somewhat well,” 39 percent said “only a little bit,” and 11 percent said “not at all.” Similar responses were given for reading and writing in English. Low self-reported English proficiency may be attributed to the fact that nearly 9 out of 10 (87%) Hmong participants were born outside the United States. While 84 percent of Hmong participants said that they have taken English classes in the past, only 6 percent said they are currently taking English classes. Most Hmong participants (89%) speak and understand Hmong very well, while about half (52%) read and write Hmong very well. When asked how important it is for Hmong children who are growing up in this country to speak and understand the Hmong language, nearly all (95%) said “very important.”

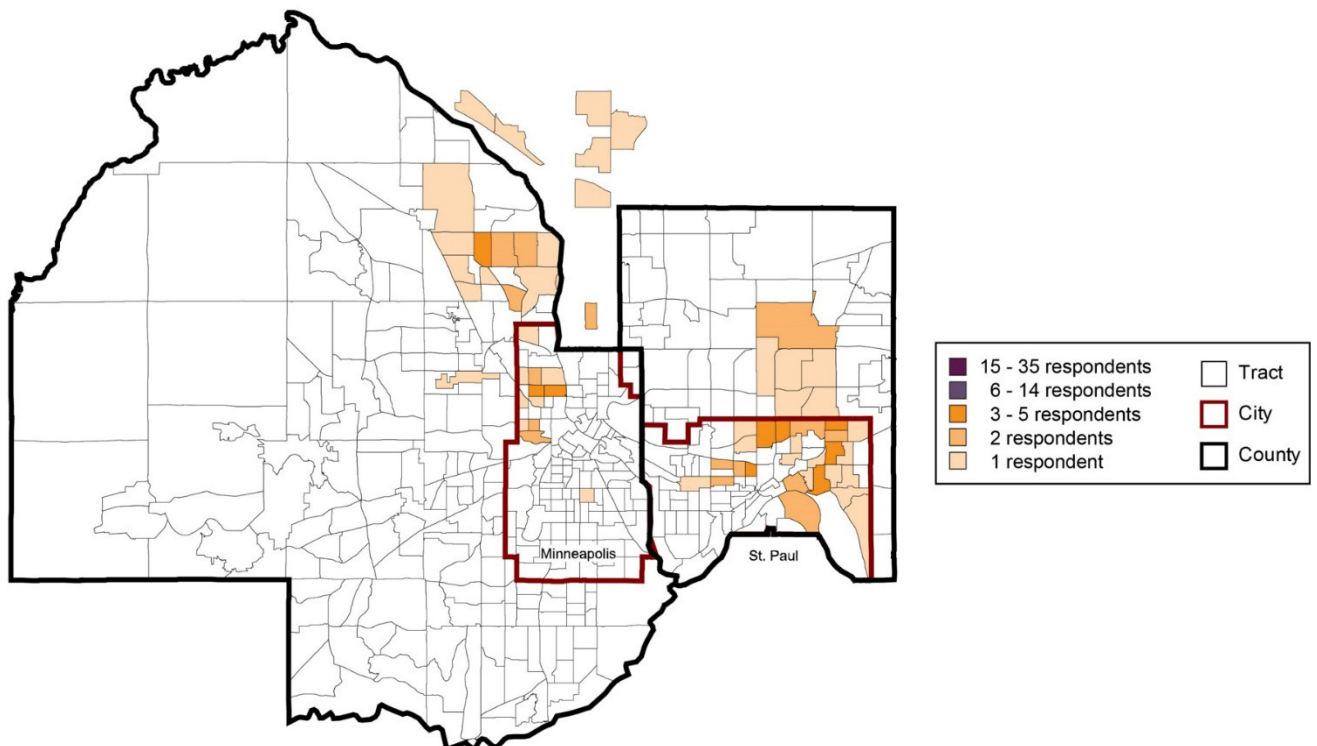
Location in the Twin Cities

The map (Figure 1) shows the geographic location and concentration of the Hmong population in the Twin Cities from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS). Most (98%) of the foreign born Hmong population in Minnesota is settled in the Twin Cities, highly concentrated in the neighborhoods of Frogtown and the East Side of Saint Paul, North Minneapolis, and Brooklyn Park. The map (Figure 2) shows the geographic location and concentration of the 105 Hmong *Speaking for Ourselves* study participants.

1. Hmong population in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



2. Hmong *Speaking for Ourselves* participant locations in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



Background information about the Hmong population in Minnesota

The Hmong are an ethnic minority who came from Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, beginning around the time of the Vietnam War in the 1970s. U.S. Census data shows that Minnesota's Hmong population grew by 46 percent from 45,443 in 2000 to 66,181 in 2010. The Twin Cities metropolitan area has over 64,000 Hmong residents making it home to the largest Hmong population in the country. The majority (53%) of foreign born Hmong immigrants have been in the United States over 20 years. Although many Hmong families are located in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, demographic trend data indicate a steady migration out from the urban core into suburban cities as well as smaller towns and rural areas in Greater Minnesota. See Figure 3 for information regarding the foreign-born Hmong population in Minnesota.

3. Hmong (foreign-born) population in Minnesota

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Population			Place of residence		
Foreign-born population	23,661	-	Twin Cities 7-county region	22,778	96%
Native born children (age 0-17)	22,227	-	Greater MN	883	4%
By age			Workforce participation ² (N=20,551)		
0-17 years	1,970	8%	Adults working	12,516	61%
18-64 years	20,188	85%	Educational attainment ³ (N=19,315)		
65+ years	1,503	6%	Not a high school graduate	7,919	41%
By gender			High school graduate	3,284	17%
Female	12,399	52%	Some college or associate degree	4,442	23%
Male	11,262	48%	Bachelor's degree	2,704	14%
Length of time in the U.S.			Advanced degree	966	5%
0-5 years	899	4%	Head of household ⁴		
6-10 years	4,401	19%	Total Hmong households in MN	9,176	
11-15 years	686	3%	Median household income (2012 dollars)	\$49,475	-
16-20 years	4,164	18%	Owners	4,395	48%
21+ years	13,510	57%	Renters	4,781	52%
Poverty ¹ (N=23,485)					
Below poverty	6,740	29%			

Sources: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, and Decennial Census, accessed by Minnesota Compass

¹ Foreign born population for whom poverty status is determined

² Foreign born population (age 16-64)

³ Foreign born population (age 25+)

⁴ Total households with a Hmong foreign born householder

The Karen community in Minnesota

Characteristics of Karen Speaking for Ourselves participants

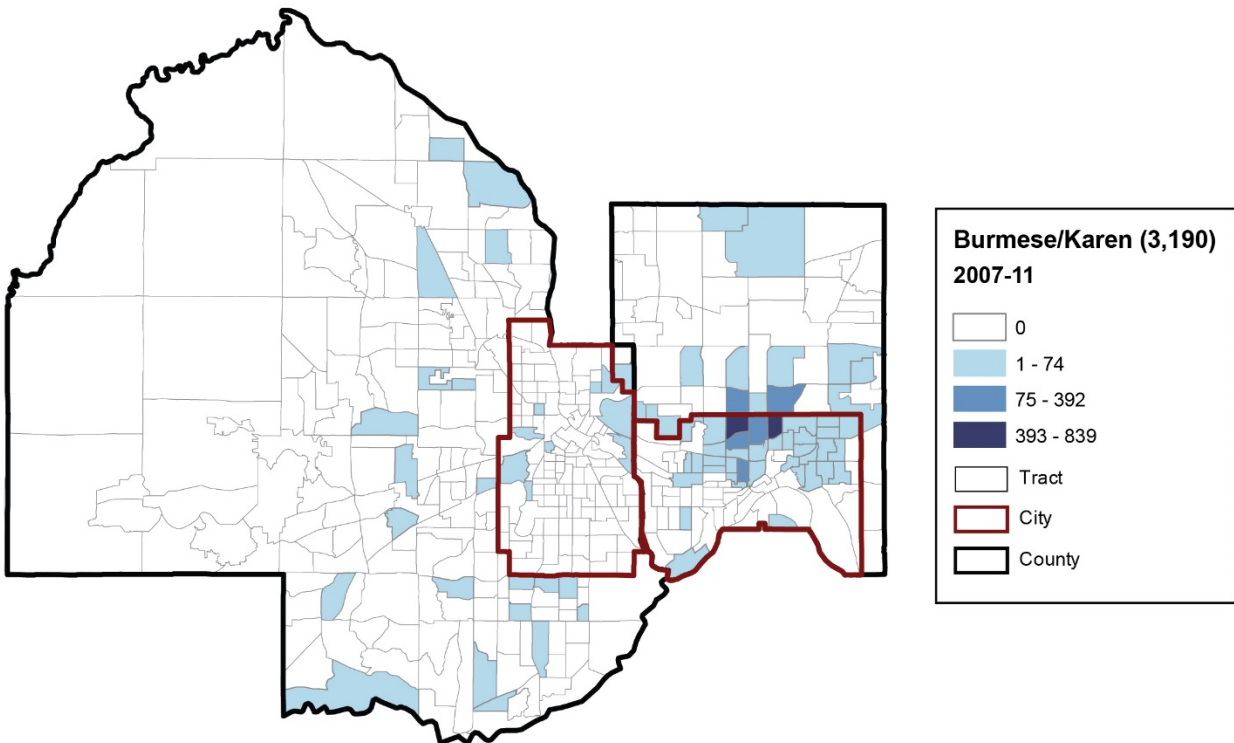
Of the 459 *Speaking for Ourselves* participants, 101 identified as Karen. All were residents of Ramsey County, mostly in the North End neighborhood of Saint Paul. More than three-quarters (77%) of Karen respondents were women. Twenty-four percent were between the ages of 18 and 29, 68 percent were between 30 and 49 years old, and 8 percent were 50 or older. Two-thirds (68%) of the Karen participants have lived in Minnesota for three years or less, and the remaining one-third (32%) have lived in Minnesota for 4 to 9 years. None of the Karen people we interviewed for *Speaking for Ourselves* had lived in Minnesota for 10 years or more. Nearly all of Karen participants said they live in a single family household with their partner (91%) and/or live with children under 18 years old (93%). Three-quarters (74%) live in a household with 5 or more people.

Challenges related to language vary between immigrant communities. All Karen participants said they speak the Karen language and, additionally, 8 in 10 reported they read the Karen language “very well.” Responses to questions about English skills indicated language barriers are a significant issue for the Karen community. Only two respondents (2%) said they speak and understand English “very well;” four out of five (80%) reported they speak English “only a little bit” or “not at all.” Most (82%) Karen respondents with children (N=77) reported them to be in English Language Learning (ELL) programs at school, which makes the Karen *Speaking for Ourselves* participants most likely of all cultural communities included in the study to have children who are in ELL programs. Over one-third (36%) of participants said they themselves are currently taking classes to improve their English language skills; the majority (85%) of Karen participants have taken an English class at some point.

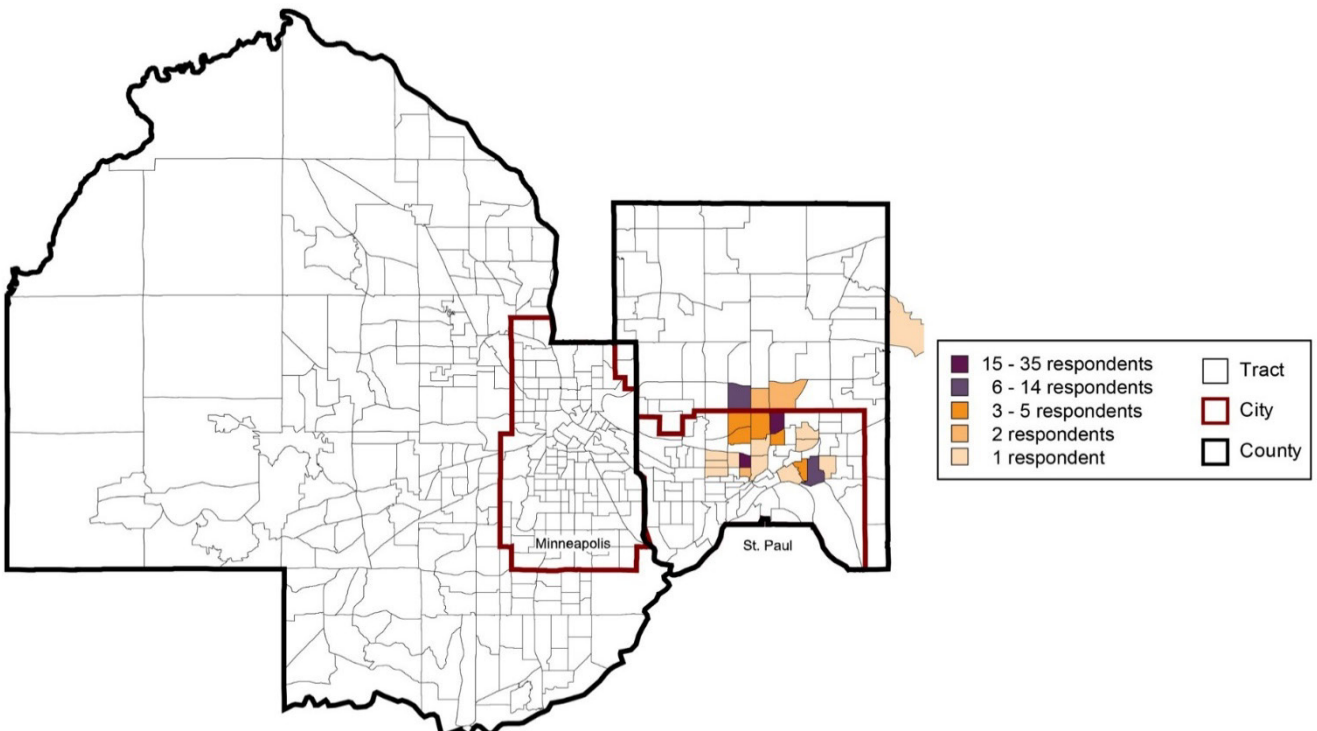
Location in the Twin Cities

The map (Figure 4) shows the geographic location and concentration of the Burmese population in the Twin Cities from the 2007-2011 ACS 5-year rolling estimate. (The U.S. Census Bureau does not track Karen ethnicity, but most of the people with Burmese ancestry in the Twin Cities are of Karen or Karenni ethnicity.) Most (96%) of the people in Minnesota who have Burmese ancestry have settled in the Twin Cities. They are densely populated in the neighborhoods of North End, with some spread into Payne-Phalen and Frogtown in Saint Paul as well as Maplewood, an inner-ring suburb in Ramsey County. The map (Figure 5) shows the households of 101 Karen *Speaking for Ourselves* study participants.

4. Burmese population in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



5. Karen *Speaking for Ourselves* participant locations in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



Background information about the Karen population in Minnesota

The Karen are an immigrant and refugee community that originate from South and Southeast Burma (Myanmar). They account for 7 percent of Burma's total population, roughly 5 million people. Karen refugees recently settled in Minnesota following the violence of the Burmese Civil War. Some stayed in refugee camps in Thailand before seeking asylum in the United States. Over 4,000 foreign-born Burmese immigrants have settled in the Twin Cities 7-county region, and 85 percent have arrived within the last 10 years (www.mncompass.org). See Figure 6.

6. Burmese (foreign-born) population in Minnesota

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Population			Place of residence		
Foreign-born population - Burma	3,206	-	Twin Cities 7-county region	3,077	96%
Native born children (age 0-17)	962	-	Greater MN	129	4%
By age			Workforce participation ² (N=2,921)		
0-17 years	353	11%	Adults working	1,629	56%
18-64 years	2,809	88%	Educational attainment ³ (N=2,279)		
65+ years	44	1%	Not a high school graduate	1,792	79%
By gender			High school graduate	223	10%
Female	1,475	46%	Some college or associate degree	51	2%
Male	1,731	54%	Bachelor's degree	56	2%
Length of time in the U.S.			Advanced degree	157	7%
0-5 years	2,724	85%	Head of household ⁴		
6-10 years	128	4%	Total Burmese households in MN	1,177	
11-15 years	158	5%	Median household income (2012 dollars)	\$24,497	-
16-20 years	146	5%	Owners	71	6%
21+ years	50	2%	Renters	1,106	94%
Poverty ¹ (N=3,164)					
Below poverty	1,604	50%			

Sources: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, and Decennial Census, accessed by Minnesota Compass

¹ Foreign born population for whom poverty status is determined

² Foreign born population (age 16-64)

³ Foreign born population (age 25+)

⁴ Total households with a Burmese foreign born householder

The Latino community in Minnesota

Characteristics of Latino Speaking for Ourselves participants

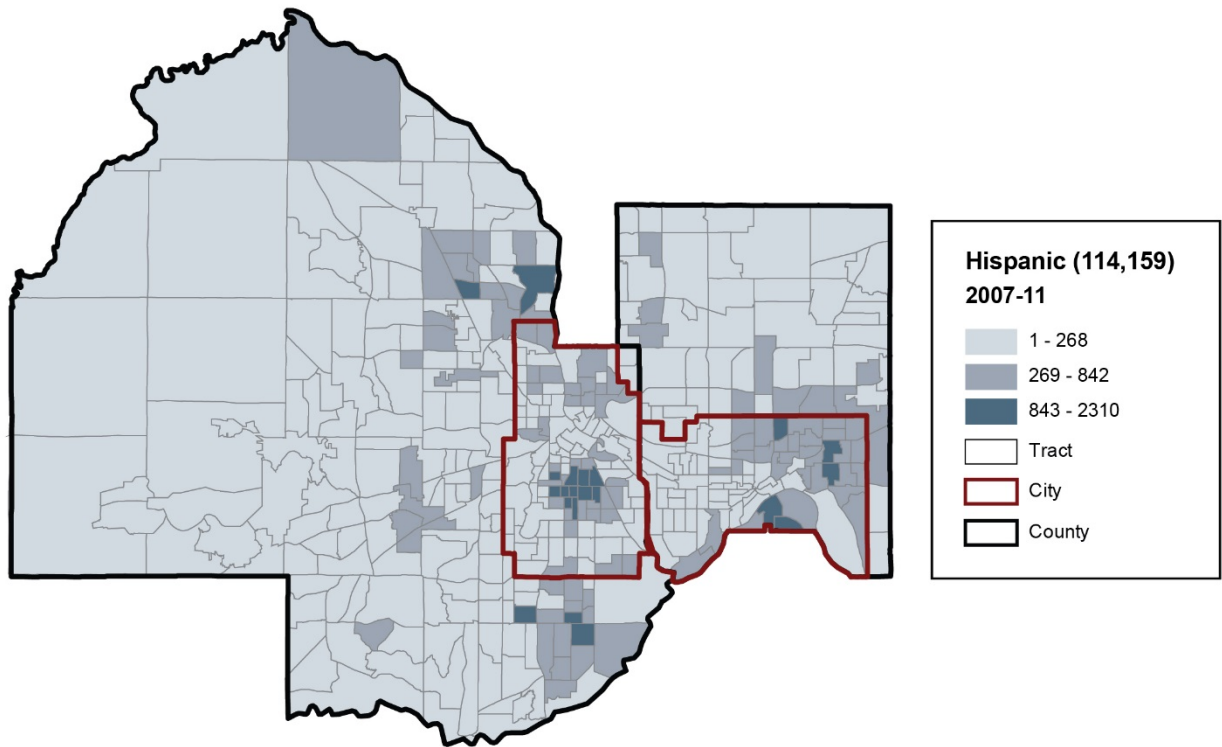
A total of 101 people who identify as Latino who are living in Hennepin (58%), Ramsey (40%), and other counties (2%) participated in *Speaking for Ourselves*. The majority of respondents were adults born outside the U.S (first generation), but a handful of respondents (n=8) were born in the U.S. (second generation). Over half (52%) of Latino participants born outside the U.S. have been in the United States for at least 15 years. There were substantially more female participants (81%) than male participants (19%). Most Latino participants (66%) were age 30-49. Latino respondents reported living in households of differing sizes. Some respondents (16%) live in one or two person households, almost half (47%) live in a three to four person household, and more than one-third (35%) live in households with five or more people.

Challenges related to language vary between immigrant communities. Responses to questions about English skills indicate language barriers could be a problem for some Latino participants. Under half (44%) said they speak and understand English “very well” or “somewhat well,” whereas almost half (49%) reported they speak and understand “only a little bit” of English, and a few participants (6%) reported that they speak and understand English “not at all.” While almost half (49%) of Latino respondents reported speaking some English in their home, the majority (87%) said Spanish is the primary language used. Less than half (44%) of Latino households with children in school (N=65) reported that their children are in English Language Learning (ELL) programs.

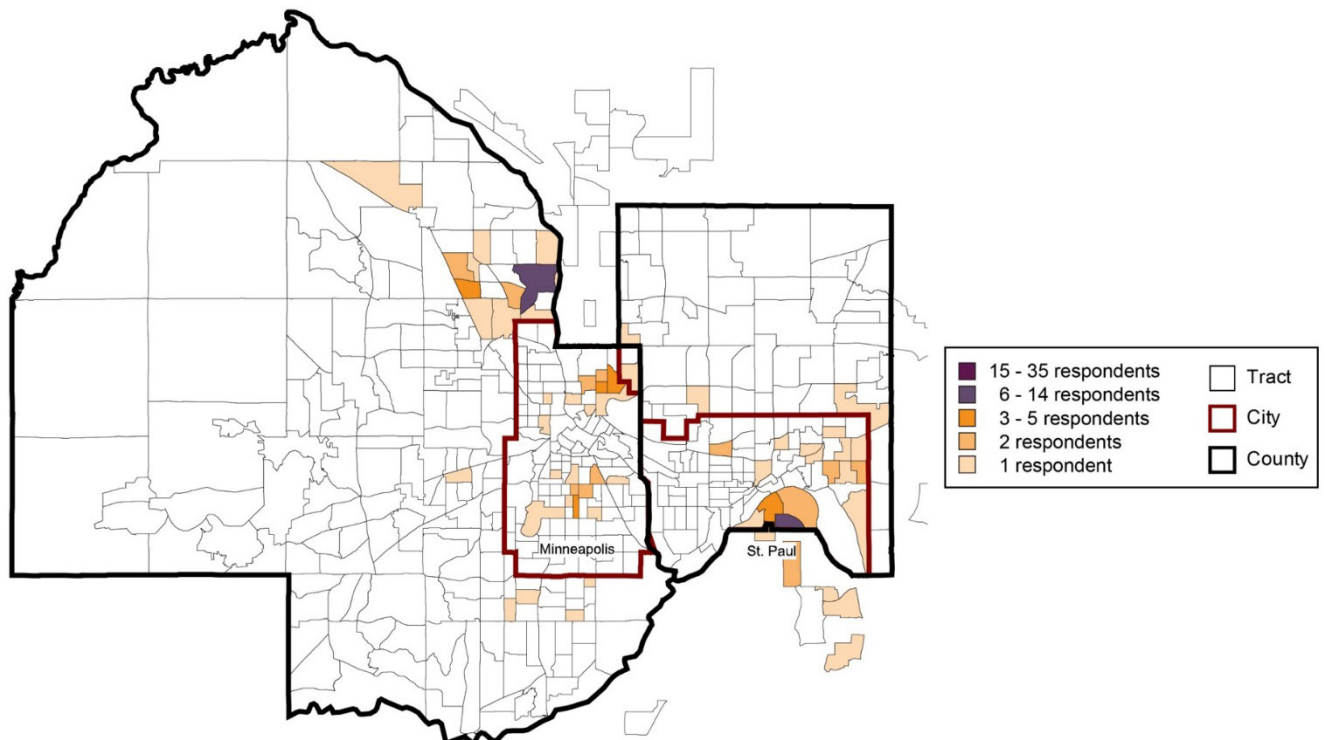
Location in the Twin Cities

The map (Figure 7) shows the geographic location and concentration of the Latino population in the Twin Cities from the 2007-2011 ACS 5-year rolling estimates. Two-thirds (67%) of the Latino population in Minnesota is in the Twin Cities, highly concentrated in and around the Phillips neighborhoods in South Minneapolis. There are also some relatively dense pockets of the Latino population in West Saint Paul, in parts of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center, and in a few areas along Highway-494, between Richfield and Bloomington. The map (Figure 8) shows the geographic location and concentration of the 101 Latino *Speaking for Ourselves* study participants.

7. Latino population in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



8. Latino *Speaking for Ourselves* participant locations in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



Background information about the Latino population in Minnesota

The Latino population comprises the largest foreign-born population in Minnesota. Members of the Latino community account for 5 percent of the state's population and 7 percent of the population in the Twin Cities. The vast majority of these immigrants originate from Mexico, with many others emigrating from El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, and many other Central and South American countries. See Figure 9.

9. Latino (foreign-born) population in Minnesota

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Population			Place of residence		
Foreign-born population – Latino	103,007	-	Twin Cities 7-county region	66,869	65%
Native born children (age 0-17)	50,662	-	Greater MN	26,138	35%
By age			Workforce participation ² (N=59,582)		
0-17 years	11,653	11%	Adults working	64,866	72%
18-64 years	88,866	86%	Educational attainment ³ (N=79,509)		
65+ years	2,488	2%	Not a high school graduate	38,897	49%
By gender			High school graduate	21,772	27%
Female	48,416	47%	Some college or associate degree	9,379	12%
Male	54,591	53%	Bachelor's degree	5,829	7%
Length of time in the U.S.			Advanced degree	3,632	5%
0-5 years	17,056	17%	Head of household ⁴		
6-10 years	28,291	27%	Total Latino households in MN	47,893	-
11-15 years	24,724	24%	Median household income (2012 dollars)	\$42,032	-
16-20 years	13,210	13%	Owners	20,364	43%
21+ years	19,726	19%	Renters	27,529	57%
Poverty ¹ (N=101,147)					
Below poverty	24,690	24%			

Sources: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, and Decennial Census, accessed by Minnesota Compass

¹ Foreign born population for whom poverty status is determined

² Foreign born population (age 16-64)

³ Foreign born population (age 25+)

⁴ Total households with a Latino foreign born householder

The Liberian community in Minnesota

Characteristics of Liberian Speaking for Ourselves participants

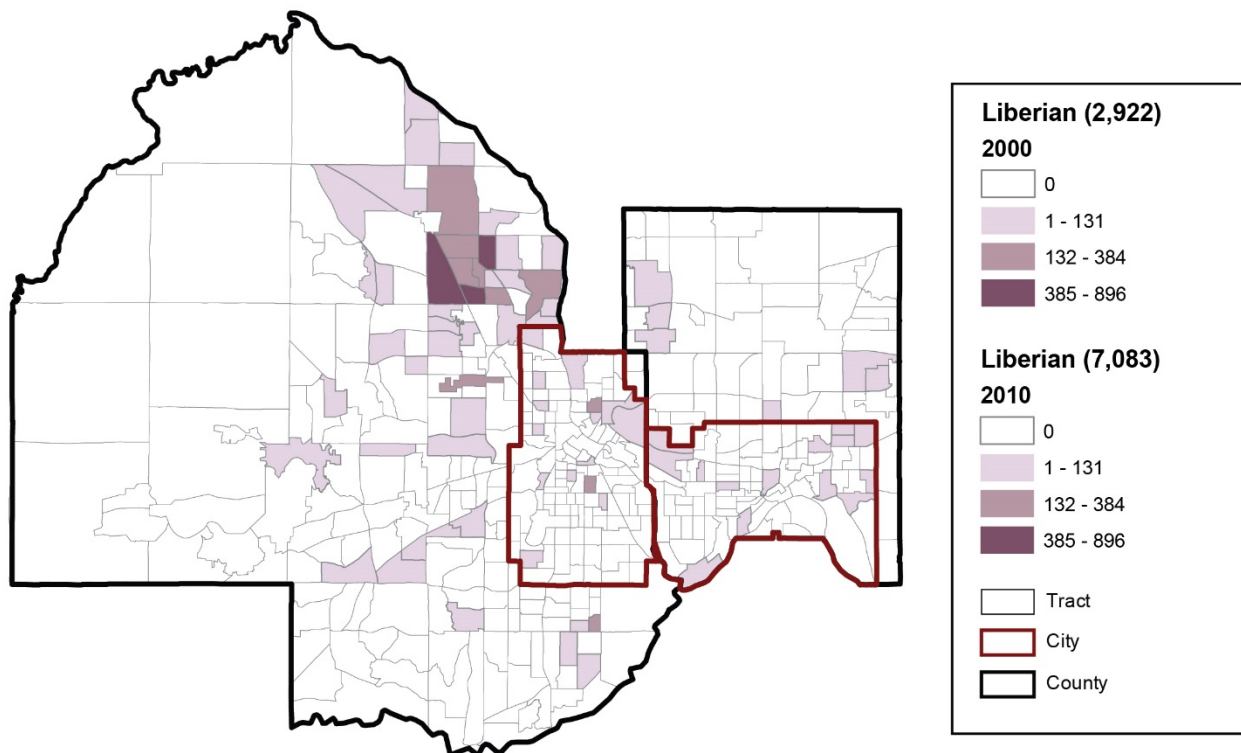
A total of 60 Liberians living in Hennepin (85%), Ramsey (10%), and other counties (5%) participated in *Speaking for Ourselves*. Nearly all (98%) Liberian participants were born outside of the United States, and all arrived in the United States within the past 25 years. Both males and females were well represented with 58 percent male and 42 percent female participants. Nearly half of Liberian participants (48%) were age 30-49, and 37 percent were age 18-29. Over half of Liberian participants (53%) have never been or are no longer married, and half (89%) live with at least one child under the age of 18. Despite being more likely than other cultural communities to be living with extended family, friends, or other non-relatives, Liberian participants indicated a smaller household size than other cultural communities (72% with a household size under 5).

Ninety-five percent of Liberian participants said English is the primary language spoken at home. Although English is the official language of Liberia, more than 30 Liberian dialects are spoken; therefore, the percentages given here should be interpreted with caution, as it is possible that some respondents may have identified English when a Liberian dialect of English is their primary language. Twenty-two percent of Liberian respondents indicated that a language they speak at home falls into the “Other” category -- Liberian dialects would fall within this category. When asked how important it is for Liberian children who are growing up in this country to speak and understand a Liberian language, 75 percent said it is “very important.” While 57 percent of Liberian participants said they speak and understand a spoken Liberian language “very well,” 30 percent said they can read and write in a Liberian language “very well.”

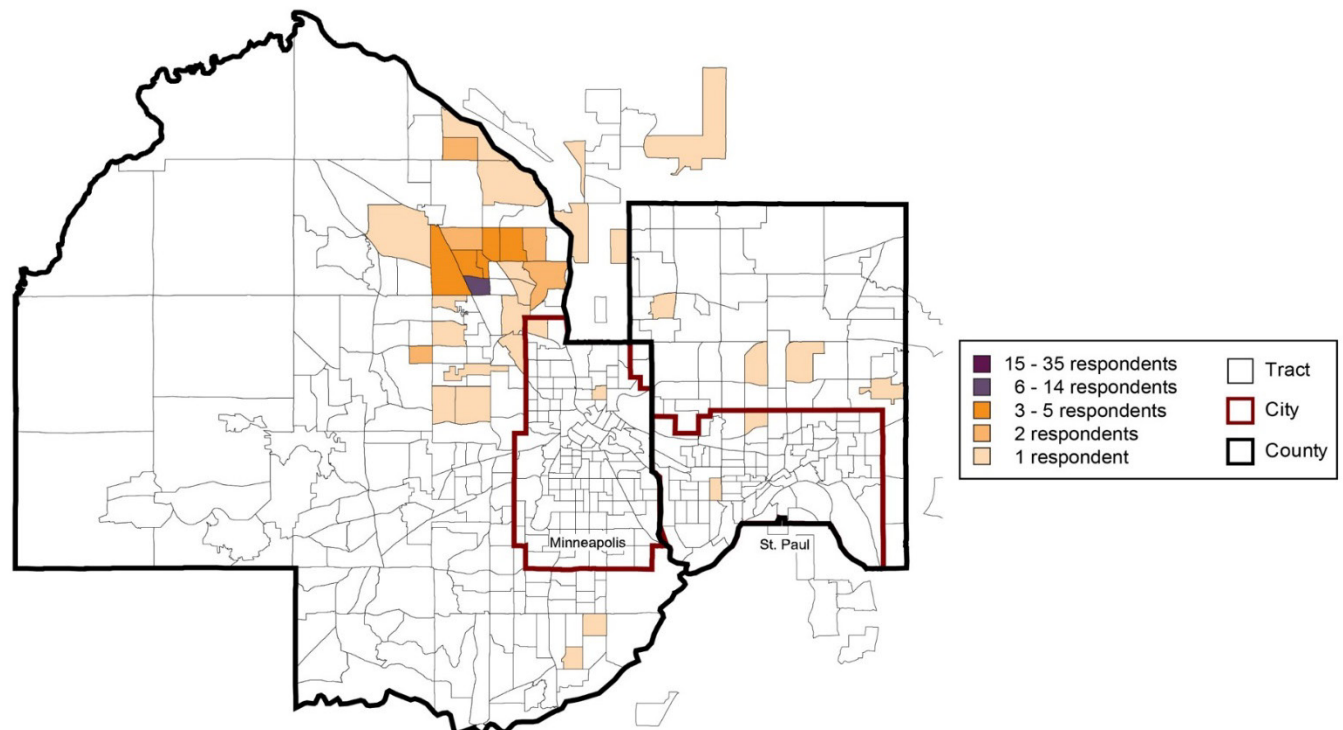
Location in the Twin Cities

The map (Figure 10) shows the geographic location and concentration of the Liberian community in the Twin Cities from the 2010 U.S. Census. Most (96%) of the Liberian population in Minnesota is settled in the Twin Cities, highly concentrated in the suburban cities of Brooklyn Park, Robbinsdale, Richfield, and the Logan Park neighborhood in Northeast Minneapolis. The map (Figure 11) shows the geographic location and concentration of the 60 Liberian *Speaking for Ourselves* study participants.

10. Liberian population in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



11. Liberian Speaking for Ourselves participant locations in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



Background information about the Liberian population in Minnesota

Liberians first started coming to the United States in large numbers after the First Liberian Civil War in the 1980s. A second wave immigrated to the United States after the Second Liberian Civil War in the early 2000s. It is estimated that Minnesota is home to 17 percent of the total population of 73,000 Liberians living in the United States. Over 16,000 foreign-born Liberian immigrants have settled in the Twin Cities 7-county region, and 80 percent have arrived within the last 15 years.

12. Liberian (foreign-born) population in Minnesota

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Population			Place of residence		
Foreign-born population	12,317	-	Twin Cities 7-county region	11,592	94%
Native born children (age 0-17)	4,139	-	Greater MN	N/A	N/A
By age			Workforce participation ² (N=10,785)		
0-17 years	1,255	10%	Adults working	7,636	71%
18-64 years	10,509	85%	Educational attainment ³ (N=8,657)		
65+ years	553	%	Not a high school graduate	779	9%
By gender			High school graduate	1,670	19%
Female	5,894	48%	Some college or associate degree	3,861	45%
Male	6,180	50%	Bachelor's degree	1,679	19%
Length of time in the U.S.			Advanced degree	693	8%
0-5 years	2,414	20%	Head of household ⁴		
6-10 years	3,424	28%	Total Liberian households in MN	5,230	
11-15 years	3,486	28%	Median household income (2012 dollars)	\$42,240	-
16-20 years	1,232	10%	Owners	1,412	27%
21+ years	1,749	14%	Renters	3,818	73%
Poverty ¹ (N=12,095)					
Below poverty	2,476	20%			

Sources: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, and Decennial Census, accessed by Minnesota Compass

¹ Foreign born population for whom poverty status is determined

² Foreign born population (age 16-64)

³ Foreign born population (age 25+)

⁴ Total households with a Liberian foreign born householder

The Somali community in Minnesota

Characteristics of Somali Speaking for Ourselves participants

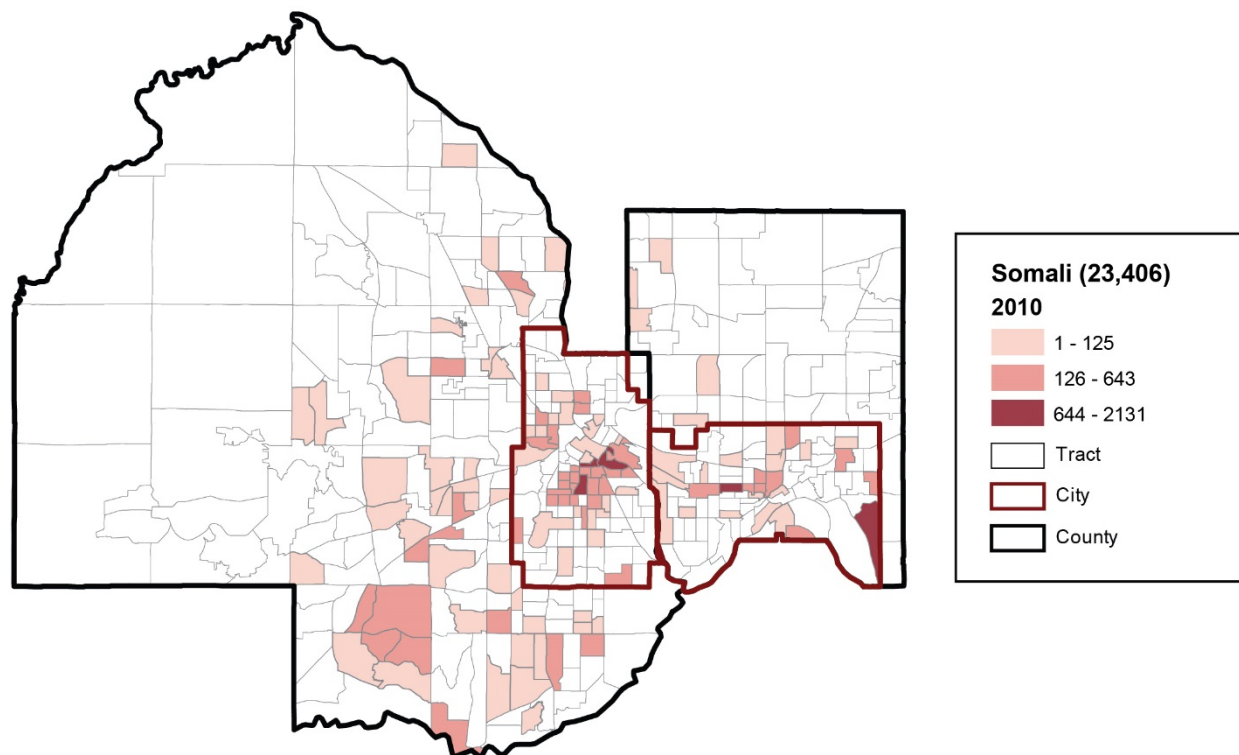
A total of 69 Somali living in Hennepin (57%), Ramsey (35%), and other counties (9%) participated in *Speaking for Ourselves*. All Somali participants were born outside of the United States and most arrived in the United States within the past 15 years. Both males and females were well represented with 45 percent male and 55 percent female participants. Most Somali participants (65%) were age 30-49. Most Somali participants reported being married (70%) and live with 3-4 children under age 18 (84%). None of the Somali participants indicated living with extended family; however, according to participant responses, nearly 1 in 4 participants live in a large household of 7+ people.

Challenges related to language vary for immigrant groups. Although 39 percent of Somali participants said they speak English at home, 96 percent indicated that Somali is the primary language used. Most participants said they speak, read, and write English somewhat well. While nearly 1 in 5 Somali participants are currently taking classes to improve their English skills, 96 percent have taken classes to improve their English skills in the past. The majority (96%) of Somali participants said they speak and understand spoken Somali very well and 88 percent read and write in Somali very well. Twenty-three percent of Somali participants have children enrolled in an ELL (English Language Learner) program at school.

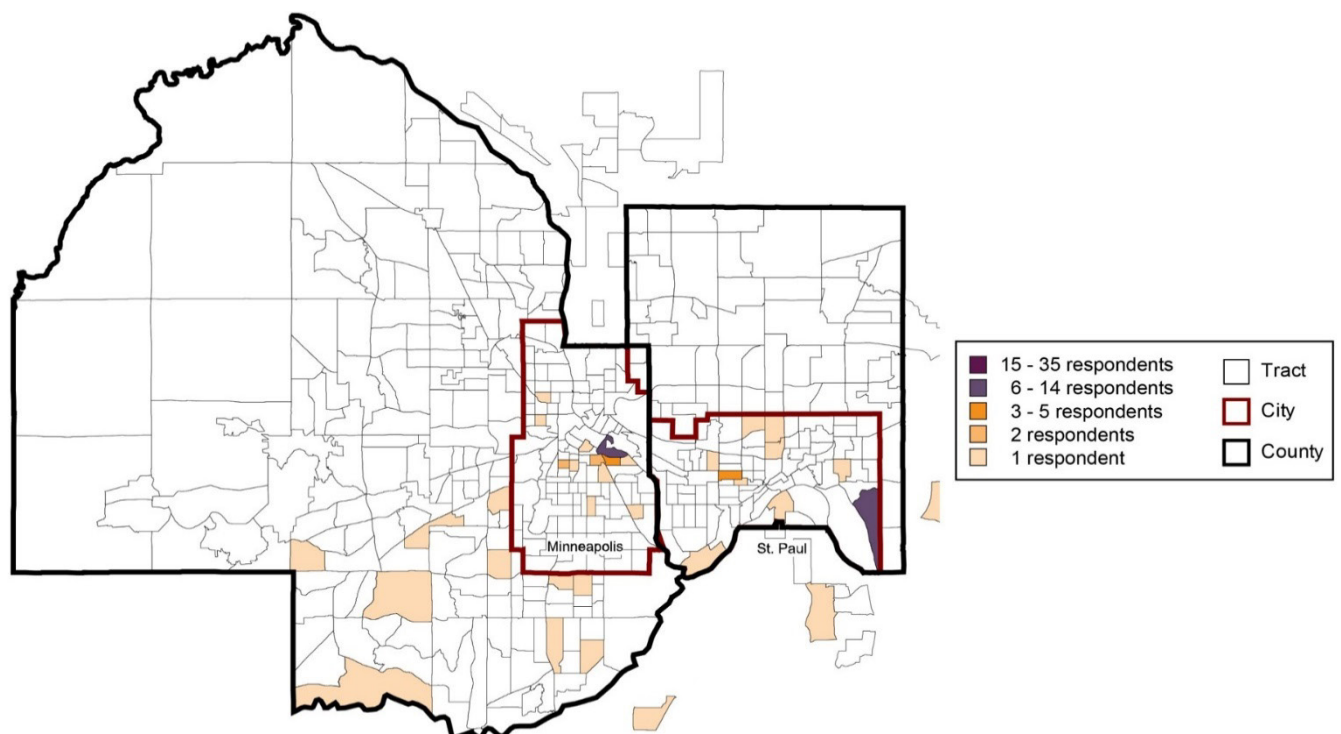
Location in the Twin Cities

The map (Figure 13) shows the geographic location and concentration of the Somali community in the Twin Cities from the 2010 U.S. Census. Most (86%) of the Somali population in Minnesota is settled in the Twin Cities, highly concentrated in the Cedar/Riverside, Elliot Park, and Phillips West neighborhoods of Minneapolis and the Summit-University and Battle Creek-Highwood neighborhoods of Saint Paul. The map (Figure 14) shows the geographic location and concentration of the 69 Somali *Speaking for Ourselves* study participants.

13. Somali population in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



14. Somali Speaking for Ourselves participant locations in Hennepin and Ramsey counties



Background information about the Somali population in Minnesota

Somali people started coming in large numbers to the United States as refugees in the 1990s due to civil war in Somalia. Starting in 1992, the U.S. began issuing refugee visas to thousands of Somalis. Many settled in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, making Minnesota home to nearly one-third of U.S. Somalis, which is the largest Somali population living in the United States. It is estimated that up to 40,000 Somalis reside in Minnesota, including those born in Somalia and their descendants. The Somali population in Minnesota is highly concentrated in the Cedar/Riverside, Elliot Park, and Phillips West neighborhoods of Minneapolis and the Summit-University and Battle Creek-Highwood neighborhoods of Saint Paul.

15. Somali (foreign-born) population in Minnesota

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Population			Place of residence		
Foreign-born population	22,697	-	Twin Cities 7-county region	18,691	82%
Native born children (age 0-17)	17,392	-	Greater MN	4,006	18%
By age			Workforce participation ² (N=19,768)		
0-17 years	1,021	4%	Adults working	11,979	61%
18-64 years	19,644	87%	Educational attainment ³ (N=18,013)		
65+ years	2,032	9%	Not a high school graduate	6,791	38%
By gender			High school graduate	4,936	27%
Female	13,002	57%	Some college or associate's degree	4,737	26%
Male	9,218	41%	Bachelor's degree	1,333	7%
Length of time in the U.S.			Advanced degree	234	1%
0-5 years	4,766	21%	Head of household ⁴		
6-10 years	5,720	25%	Total Somali households in MN	12,315	
11-15 years	7,240	32%	Median household income (2012 dollars)	-	\$18,242
16-20 years	4,131	18%	Owners	1,059	9%
21+ years	817	4%	Renters	11,207	91%
Poverty ¹ (N=22,401)					
Below poverty	12,321	55%			

Sources: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, and Decennial Census, accessed by Minnesota Compass

¹ Foreign born population for whom poverty status is determined

² Foreign born population (age 16-64)

³ Foreign born population (age 25+)

⁴ Total households with a Somali foreign born householder



Study methods

A community advisory board made up of individuals who are members of and/or work with one or more of the participating communities provided guidance throughout this study. Wilder Research designed the survey instrument, developed and implemented the data collection approach, and conducted the analysis and reporting after gathering input from the advisory board and directly from the community.

An innovative data collection approach called Respondent Driven Sampling was used to identify and recruit eligible community members to participate in the study. This approach involves randomly selecting a handful of “seed” respondents within each community and asking those respondents to refer up to three additional people from their community. Those respondents are then asked to refer other respondents, ultimately creating respondent referral “chains” that in some cases carried out as far as 11 “waves” (Figure 16).

Adults who were born outside of the U.S., or had a parent who was born outside of the U.S., who were from one of the cultural communities included in the study, and who live in Hennepin or Ramsey counties were eligible to participate. Respondents who were referred to the study could **not** be a biological family member or live at the same address as the person who made the referral.

Speaking for Ourselves **Buy-A-Question Partners**

The following partner organizations contributed to this study by funding one or more study questions and by committing to using the results to improve service access or delivery:

- Hennepin County Public Health
- Metropolitan Library Service Agency
- Minnesota Children’s Museum
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Minnesota Humanities Center
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- Science Museum of Minnesota
- Family and Community Knowledge Systems Project, Wilder Research, and Training and Development, Inc., with funding from the Kellogg Foundation

16. Respondent Driven Sampling: Number of seeds, referrals, and waves in the referral chains

Total number of:	All respondents ^a	Hmong	Karen	Latino	Liberian	Somali
Seeds	52	11	7	11	3	9
Referrals	407	94	94	90	57	60
Maximum number of waves	--	11	7	8	9	6
Total number of respondents	459	105	101	101	60	69

^a In addition to the five main cultural communities listed in the table, the “all respondents” group also includes 6 Lao, 7 Oromo, and 10 Vietnamese respondents. We did not obtain enough completed surveys from members of these cultural communities to be able to report data for these communities separately.

Wilder Research hired bilingual staff from participating communities to help with data collection; interviews were conducted in the respondents’ preferred languages, either over the phone or in-person. Respondents received \$20 for completing the survey and \$5 for each referral they made, up to three.

By using Respondent Driven Sampling, we were able to survey a group of study participants who are more representative of these cultural communities in the Twin Cities than if we had used convenience sampling methods (i.e., survey people who are all affiliated with one program, religious organization, housing site, neighborhood group, etc.) However, study participants are **not** statistically representative of their broader cultural communities because scientific random sampling was not used, and the full Respondent Driven Sampling method for weighting and analyzing data was not appropriate given these data.

Therefore, the data presented here should be interpreted with caution; we do not claim that the results exactly mirror the overall experiences of the broader community. Rather, we suggest that in many cases the data produced by this study are better than any other existing source of data about these immigrant and refugee communities in the Twin Cities. The key findings included in this report have been endorsed strongly enough by a wide enough range of study participants and community stakeholders to be considered valid and actionable for all practical purposes.

Differences among groups may be attributable to actual differences in their experiences, but may also be due to differences in survey responding patterns (e.g., some groups are more likely to give moderate responses, other groups are more likely to give extreme responses, regardless of the type of question). Therefore, as noted previously, comparison across communities should be done with caution and only with consideration of the unique contextual factors that influence these and any research findings.

See the detailed study methodology report and data book for more information about the study methods and limitations ([*Speaking for Ourselves: A Study with Immigrant and Refugee Communities in the Twin Cities Data Book*](#)).



Study participants

Most participants were born outside of the U.S. They are split nearly evenly between Hennepin and Ramsey counties, although some specific cultural communities are concentrated in one county or the other. Two-thirds of respondents are female; they are split fairly evenly across the age spectrum from younger adults to older adults. Although participants fall into all education levels, most have a high school diploma or less. Similarly, although all income ranges are reflected, over half have household incomes below \$30,000 annually (Figure 17).

17. Demographic characteristics of study participants

	All respondents (N=459)	Hmong (N=105)	Karen (N=101)	Latino (N=101)	Liberian (N=60)	Somali (N=69)
County of residence						
Hennepin	47%	40%	0%	58%	85%	57%
Ramsey	49%	51%	100%	40%	10%	35%
Other	4%	9%	0%	2%	5%	9%
Generational status						
1 st generation – born outside the U.S.	95%	87%	100%	92%	98%	100%
2 nd generation – born in U.S.	5%	13%	0%	8%	2%	0%
Gender						
Female	65%	61%	77%	81%	42%	55%
Male	35%	39%	23%	19%	58%	45%
Age						
18-29	25%	26%	24%	20%	37%	18%
30-49	54%	32%	68%	66%	48%	65%
50+ years	21%	42%	8%	14%	15%	18%
Education						
No formal education	17%	46%	21%	1%	0%	10%
Elementary/some high school (no diploma)	27%	21%	57%	30%	0%	33%
High school diploma or GED	27%	1%	20%	43%	17%	39%
Some college/Associate degree	21%	0%	2%	19%	62%	15%
Bachelor's degree or higher	9%	10%	0%	7%	22%	3%
Household income						
Under \$10,000	17%	10%	26%	7%	7%	33%
\$10,000 to under \$20,000	16%	5%	24%	22%	12%	17%
\$20,000 to under \$30,000	22%	8%	31%	28%	24%	22%
\$30,000 to under \$50,000	23%	20%	12%	31%	34%	26%
\$50,000 or more	9%	21%	1%	7%	9%	1%
Don't know or refused	13%	37%	6%	4%	15%	0%



***Speaking for Ourselves* Advisory Board**

Sunny Chanthanouvong, Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota

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Kim Dettmer, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

Hsajune Dyan, Saint Paul Public Schools

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For more information

For more information about this report or the *Speaking for Ourselves* study, contact Nicole MartinRogers at Wilder Research, 651-280-2682.

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