



EAST  
METRO  
PULSE

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KEY FINDINGS  
FROM THE 2016  
EAST METRO PULSE  
SURVEY

## ABOUT THE SAINT PAUL FOUNDATION

The Saint Paul Foundation is a community foundation with more than 75 years of history in investing in improved quality of life in the East Metro. Started in 1940, the Foundation is Minnesota's largest community foundation. Our vision is a state where all people and communities can thrive. Our mission is strengthening the East Metro as an integral part of a thriving region. For more information, visit [saintpaulfoundation.org](http://saintpaulfoundation.org).

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# Table of Contents

- 4 | **Introduction**
- 6 | **Characteristics of East Metro Residents and Survey Respondents**
  - Race and Ethnicity
  - Immigration Status and Home Language
  - Age and Gender
  - Income
- 8 | **Community Connectedness**
  - Knowing Their Neighbors
  - Perceptions of Neighborhood Schools
  - Helping Out in the Neighborhood and Volunteering in the Community
- 12 | **Human Services and Family Support**
  - Commonly Identified Human Services Providers
  - Participation with Community Organizations
- 14 | **Housing and Transportation**
  - Current Housing Status and Needs
  - Homelessness
  - Housing Affordability
  - Availability of Affordable Housing
  - Getting Around the East Metro
  - Perceptions of Transportation
- 18 | **Health**
  - Overall Health of Population and Social Determinants of Health
  - Access and Types of Health Care Used
  - Physical, Mental and Spiritual Health
- 21 | **Education**
  - Educational Attainment
  - Types of Schools and Cultural Approach
  - Out-of-School-Time Programming Availability
  - Saving for Postsecondary Education
- 24 | **Economic Opportunity and Security**
  - Economic Concerns
  - Out-of-Pocket Medical Expenses
  - Employment
- 29 | **Methods and Data Sources**
  - Survey Instrument
  - Residents Who Were Surveyed
  - Survey Administration
  - U.S. Census Bureau and Other Secondary Data
  - Data Analysis and Reporting
- 32 | **Endnotes**
- 33 | **Acknowledgments**

## Table of Figures

- 6 | **Fig. 1:** Race/ethnicity of East Metro Residents in 2014
- 7 | **Fig. 2:** Median household income of East Metro residents, 2010–2014
- 9 | **Fig. 3:** Thinking about the K-12 school that is closest to your home, how would you describe this school's involvement in your community?
- 10 | **Fig. 4:** How often do you help out in your neighborhood?
- 11 | **Fig. 5:** How often do you volunteer at nonprofits, schools or other community-based organizations in the East Metro?
- 13 | **Fig. 6:** How often do you participate in programs or activities with nonprofits, schools, or other community-based organizations in the East Metro?
- 15 | **Fig. 7:** What was your biggest housing-related concern over the past year?
- 19 | **Fig. 8:** What kind of health insurance do you have?
- 22 | **Fig. 9:** What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- 23 | **Fig. 10:** What are your plans to pay for your child(ren)'s education after high school?
- 24 | **Fig. 11:** Residents in poverty
- 25 | **Fig. 12:** Overall, how worried are you about your economic security?
- 26 | **Fig. 13:** Adults working in the East Metro
- 27 | **Fig. 14:** Right now, is there anything that is making it hard for you to get a job or find a better job?

## Introduction



**Connectedness.** Some of our most renowned and oft-quoted theologians, environmentalists, philosophers and mathematicians have attempted both to define and extol the importance of connectedness as necessary to a thriving community. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. summarized it this way: “It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly.”

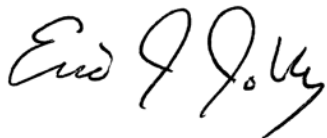
As I pored through the thousands of data points summarized in the following pages, I returned frequently to Dr. King’s notion of an “inescapable network of mutuality.” Despite our myriad differences, we are inescapably linked to this place, this geography that is the East Metro. It is an important way we define ourselves. It is how we anchor ourselves and define community.

Our connectedness to place creates touch points and networks that support, strengthen and unite us across lines of division. We are anchored and supported by our neighborhood traditions and festivals, schools and recreation centers, jobs and places of worship. Some in our community enjoy deeply rooted connections that span generations. They know whom to reach out to for help and where to turn when times get tough.

They also know which neighbors are in need or what organizations could use extra volunteers. But, as these data reflect, that is not the case for all. Many in our community find themselves disconnected, being left out of systems or experiencing inequities their neighbors do not experience. While they can piece together support, something is amiss in their community ecosystem.

Data can reveal many things about a place. But the way a community functions is more nuanced than numerical. To sustain a healthy community, we must look beyond the numbers; we must holistically examine the layered concept of connectedness. We hope this report is a resource for agents and agencies of change in our community. We hope it provides insights into what our community needs most, creates opportunities for reflection and generates questions. That is what The Saint Paul Foundation will do. We will look for ways for communities to inform and form the work we do to strengthen the connectedness of the entire East Metro.

In closing, I encourage you to use the East Metro Pulse report not just to inform your own work but to guide you in the creation of new networks that will benefit our community. As the environmentalist and writer John Muir wisely observed, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." In short, connectedness.

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 and CEO

The Saint Paul and Minnesota Community Foundations

# Characteristics of East Metro Residents and Survey Respondents

A little over one million (1,194,467) people are residents of the East Metro region.<sup>1</sup> Within the region, Washington County has the smallest population, with 249,283 residents. Dakota County is home to 412,529 residents. Ramsey County has 532,655 residents, which includes 291,728 people who live in Saint Paul.<sup>2</sup> The population of the East Metro has increased steadily over the past two decades, growing from 906,888 residents in 1990 to 1,068,069 residents in 2000 and to 1,145,328 in 2010. To compare the population of the East Metro to the state of Minnesota, or other geographic areas within the state, please visit Minnesota Compass at [mncompass.org](http://mncompass.org).

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

The population of the East Metro is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. The white population is the only racial/ethnic group that did not grow in the East Metro between 2000 and 2014.<sup>3</sup>

Saint Paul has the largest percentage of people of color at 45%, followed by Ramsey County (36%), Dakota County (20%) and Washington County (16%). The percentage of people of color in the East Metro has almost doubled since 2000. Between 2000 and 2014, Asian American and African American populations have almost doubled in the East Metro as a whole. Latino/a and American Indian populations also continue to grow. In Dakota County, African American and Latino/a populations have nearly tripled since 2000.<sup>4</sup>

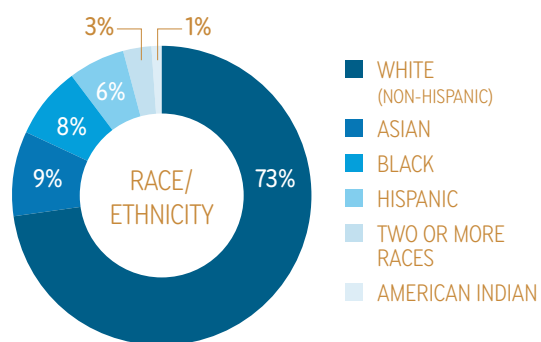
Among survey respondents, 32% of respondents from Saint Paul and 24% of respondents from Ramsey County identified their race/ethnicity as non-white. In Dakota and Washington Counties the percentage of respondents of color was lower (12% and 10%, respectively).

## IMMIGRATION STATUS AND HOME LANGUAGE

The percentage of foreign-born residents in the East Metro region has also steadily increased since 1990, going from 4% in 1990 to 11% in 2014. Saint Paul (19%) and Ramsey County (15%) have the largest proportion of foreign-born residents in the East Metro.<sup>5</sup>

The majority of survey respondents said they speak English at home (92%), though this was somewhat lower among respondents from Saint Paul (82%).

Fig. 1: RACE/ETHNICITY OF EAST METRO RESIDENTS IN 2014



SOURCE: Population Estimates 2014.



Asian American respondents were most likely to say they spoke a language other than English at home (62%) – including Chinese, Vietnamese, Bengali and Khmer, among others. In Saint Paul, Hmong was the primary language spoken at home for 8% of respondents, but that language was not represented at all in Dakota or Washington Counties. A majority of the Hmong respondents (70%) said that Hmong is the primary language spoken at home. Most of the Somali respondents (94%) said Somali is the primary language they speak at home, and 27% of Latino/a respondents said Spanish is the primary language at home.

### AGE AND GENDER

Since 2000, the population of older adults (age 65 and older) saw the largest increase among all age groups in the East Metro, while the population of children under 17 declined slightly. Washington County and Dakota County have seen the largest increases in the older adult population, which has doubled in these areas since 2000. Currently, 19% of all East Metro residents are 60 and older.<sup>6</sup>

The gender of survey respondents is relatively evenly split (52% female and

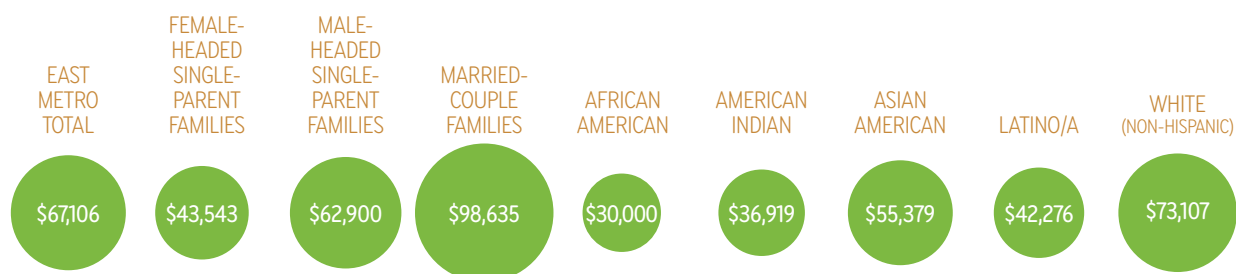
48% male). This is very similar to the overall East Metro population, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates.

### INCOME

Median income varies significantly by race and family structure in the East Metro. Washington and Dakota Counties have the highest median incomes at approximately \$88,000 and \$77,000, respectively, followed by Ramsey County at \$57,384 and Saint Paul at \$50,267.<sup>7</sup>

Eleven percent of survey respondents had annual household incomes of less than \$20,000 a year. Respondents from Ramsey County and Saint Paul were more likely than their peers from Dakota and Washington Counties to have a household income of less than \$20,000 a year (16% and 20%, respectively). The same was true for respondents with lower educational attainment levels (63% of those with less than a high school diploma and 30% of those with a high school diploma or GED), those with a primary household language other than English (26%) and respondents of color (48% of African American respondents, 19% of Latino/a respondents and 17% of Asian American respondents).

Fig. 2: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF EAST METRO RESIDENTS, 2010-2014



SOURCE: ACS 2010-2014.<sup>8</sup>



# COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

Communities are stronger when we all feel connected and engaged. How many of us know our neighbors? Do we engage with community organizations? Do our neighborhood schools have a positive impact in our communities? A sense of community is vital for a strong East Metro. How strong are our connections?

## KNOWING THEIR NEIGHBORS

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Seventy-five percent of survey respondents said they know three or more of their neighbors. A small percentage (8%) said they did not know anyone in their neighborhood. Of this 8%, the following groups of respondents were somewhat more likely to not know anyone in their neighborhood:

- Those from Saint Paul
- Younger adults aged 18 to 34
- Those who have less than a high school education
- Those with a household income less than \$40,000 a year
- People of color and those who do not speak English at home

Older respondents were more likely to know their neighbors: 80% of respondents aged 45 to 54 and 88% of respondents aged 65 and older know three or more of their neighbors, compared with 58% of respondents aged 18 to 34.

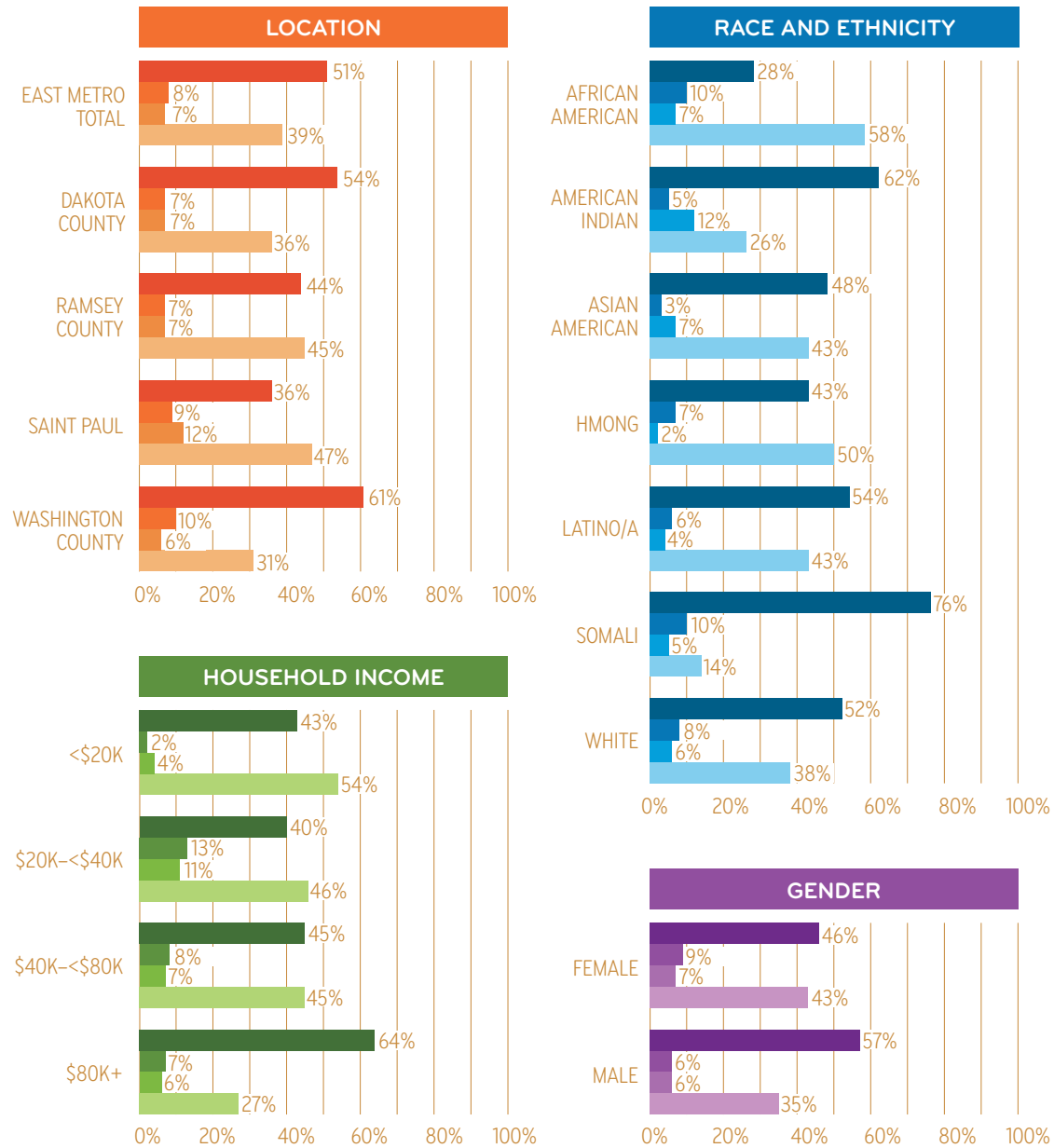
## PERCEPTIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

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When asked about the impact the school closest to their home has on their neighborhood, about half (51%) of East Metro respondents said the school has a positive impact. However, 39% said they do not know what kind of impact the schools in their neighborhood have. Notably, African American respondents were only half as likely as respondents from other race/ethnic groups to say the school closest to their home has a positive impact in their community.

Not surprisingly, respondents who have children in their household (40% of all respondents) were more likely to say the school in their neighborhood has a positive impact (62%, compared with 44%). Respondents who do not have children in their household were more likely to say they are not aware of the impact the schools in their neighborhood have on their community (46%, compared with 28%).

Fig. 3: THINKING ABOUT THE K-12 SCHOOL THAT IS CLOSEST TO YOUR HOME, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THIS SCHOOL'S INVOLVEMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY?<sup>9</sup>

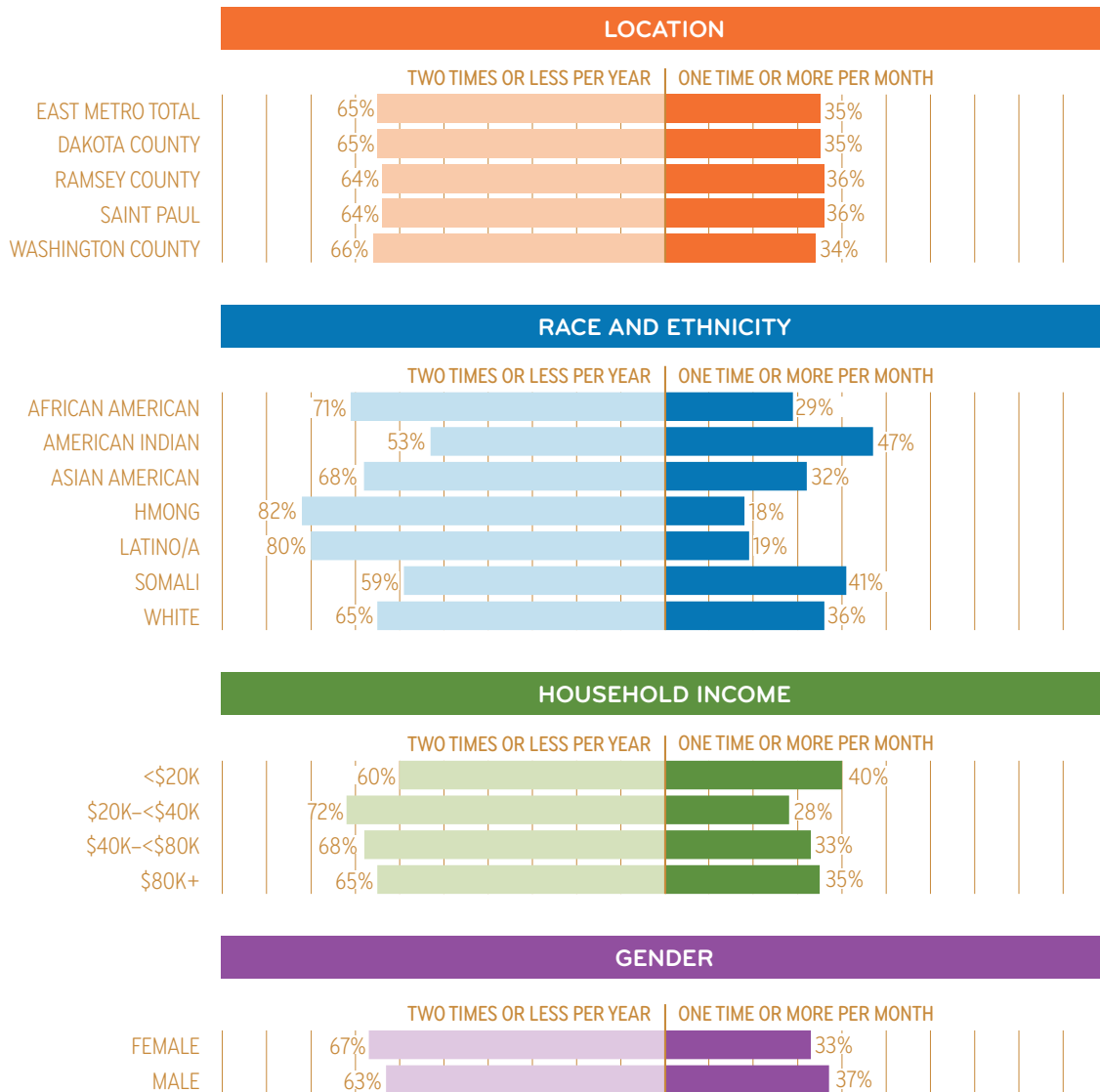


SOURCE: East Metro Pulse resident survey, 2016.

NOTES: American Indian, Hmong and Somali respondents were sampled using convenience methods rather than a statistical random sampling, so these results are not statistically representative of the broader cultural community. Caution should be used when comparing or interpreting these results throughout this report.

Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Fig. 4: HOW OFTEN DO YOU HELP OUT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?<sup>10</sup>

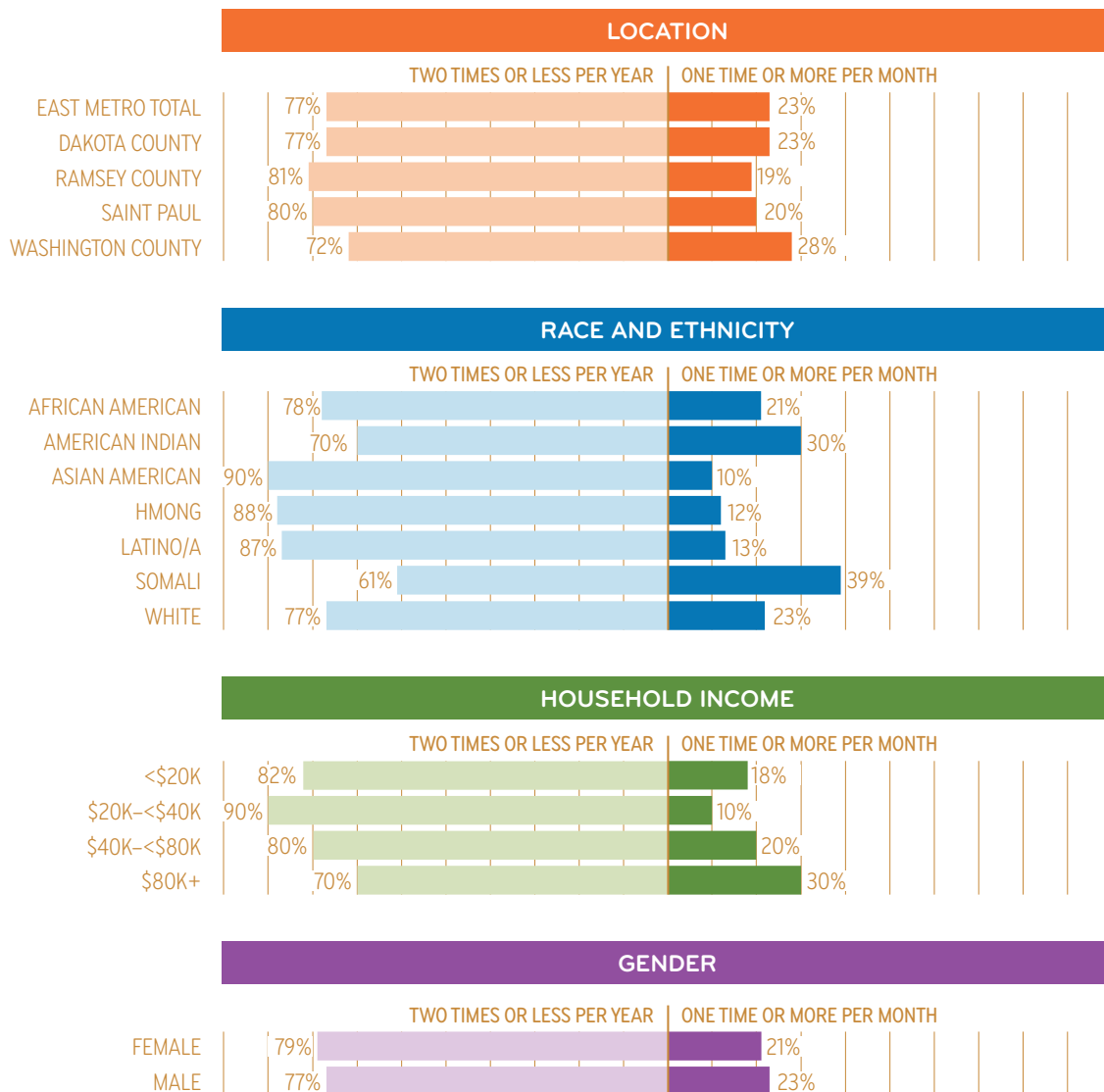


SOURCE: East Metro Pulse resident survey, 2016.

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Fig. 5: HOW OFTEN DO YOU VOLUNTEER AT NONPROFITS, SCHOOLS OR OTHER COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN THE EAST METRO?



SOURCE: East Metro Pulse resident survey, 2016.

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## HELPING OUT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND VOLUNTEERING IN THE COMMUNITY

While observed differences in volunteering and helping-out activities could be due to actual differences in behaviors, they could also be due to varying interpretations of the questions,

cultural differences in how they help others in their community, or differences in people's ability to help due to their own life circumstances. Some cultural groups may be less familiar with the concept of volunteering formally through a nonprofit and may be disinclined to name informally helping out as "volunteering."





# HUMAN SERVICES AND FAMILY SUPPORT

A strong system of community organizations can support at-risk individuals and families by helping them meet their basic needs and by building on their strengths. How are we supporting the nonprofits and other organizations that support our neighbors? Do we have adequate access to services? Do our community members have different needs? A complex ecosystem of support is needed to sustain a community. Do we have the resources we need?

## COMMONLY IDENTIFIED HUMAN SERVICES PROVIDERS

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In 2015, Wilder Research completed a community assessment for the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties (CAPRW).<sup>11</sup> For the assessment, Wilder Research identified 123 organizations that provide services to low-income residents of Ramsey and Washington Counties. Among the organizations identified, the most common services provided were housing (36%), employment (22%), youth programs (17%), education (16%) and food (16%). Fewer than five organizations provided services related to transportation, child care, emergency assistance, support services and financial services. CAPRW survey participants, low-income residents of Ramsey and Washington Counties who were somehow connected to CAPRW, were asked about other community organizations that they or others in their household are currently involved in or receiving services from. The most frequently reported community

organizations were Ramsey County (83%), Washington County (14%), Salvation Army (7%) and Keystone Community Services (7%).

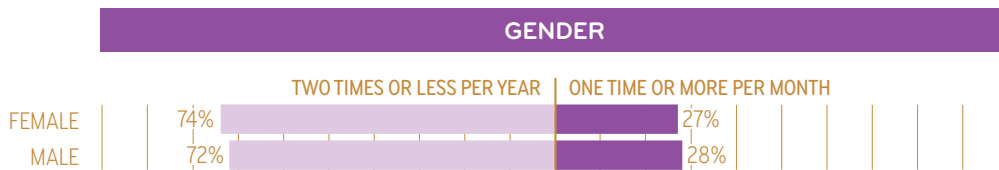
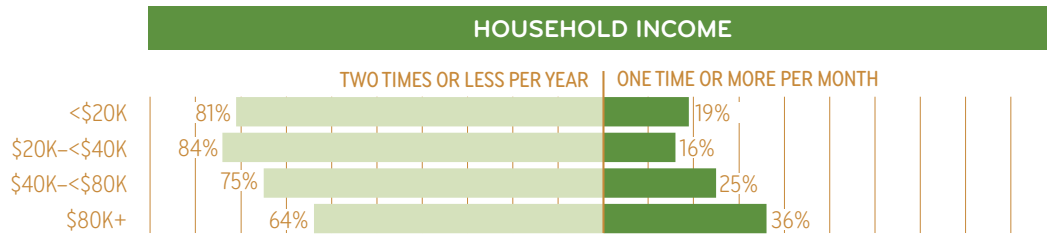
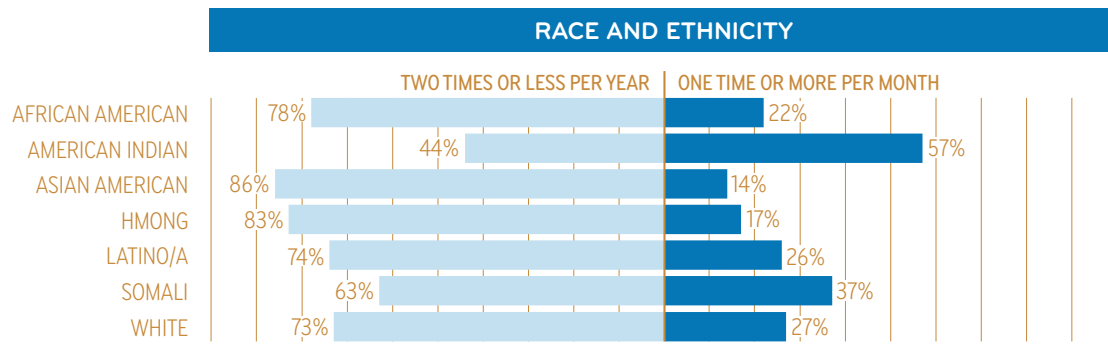
## PARTICIPATION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

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When asked how often they participate in programs or activities with nonprofits, schools or other community-based organizations in the East Metro, 27% of respondents reported that they do this once or twice a month or more often, including the 14% of respondents who said they participate with community organizations once a week or more often.

Many reasons could explain participation rates among certain groups, such as free time or money to be able to participate in activities and programs, access to organizations that offer these programs, availability of programs that meet their needs and preferences, or whether or not programs have staff who look like the participants and speak their language.

Fig. 6: HOW OFTEN DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES WITH NONPROFITS, SCHOOLS, OR OTHER COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN THE EAST METRO?



SOURCE: East Metro Pulse resident survey, 2016.

NOTES: American Indian, Hmong and Somali respondents were sampled using convenience methods rather than a statistical random sampling, so these results are not statistically representative of the broader cultural community. Caution should be used when comparing or interpreting these results throughout this report.

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# HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

Stable housing and access to transportation are a necessity for a thriving community. What are homeowners in the East Metro most concerned about? What is the quality of our transportation systems? Can we all afford the housing available in our neighborhood? Are our neighbors thriving?



## CURRENT HOUSING STATUS AND NEEDS

Length of time at current address is one indicator of housing stability at an individual and family level, and neighborhood stability at a community level. Respondents were asked a series of questions about housing – including how long they have lived at their current housing and in the East Metro overall, their housing-related needs and their plans to continue living in the East Metro.

Respondents from Saint Paul (58%) and Ramsey County (53%) were more likely than respondents from Washington (42%) or Dakota (41%) Counties to have been at their current address for five years or less. Younger respondents (aged 18 to 34) were also more likely to have lived at their current address for five years or less; not surprisingly, with each increase in age range, the likelihood of a respondent living at the same address for a longer period increases.

Respondents with household incomes less than \$20,000 were more likely to have

lived at their current address for five years or less (64%), while respondents who have household incomes of \$100,000 or more were more likely to have lived at their current address for 16 years or longer (34%).

Respondents were asked how long they have lived in the East Metro altogether. Somali respondents were more likely to have lived in the East Metro for less time (63% have lived in the East Metro for 10 years or less), while Hmong respondents were more likely to have lived in the East Metro for longer periods of time (72% have lived in the East Metro for 11 or more years). American Indian respondents were most likely to have lived in the East Metro for 26 or more years (46%).

Respondents were asked how long they plan to stay in their current neighborhood. Those whose primary language was not English were much more likely to want to move as soon as possible (21%, compared with 4% of respondents who speak English at home); this was also true of Asian American respondents (19%,

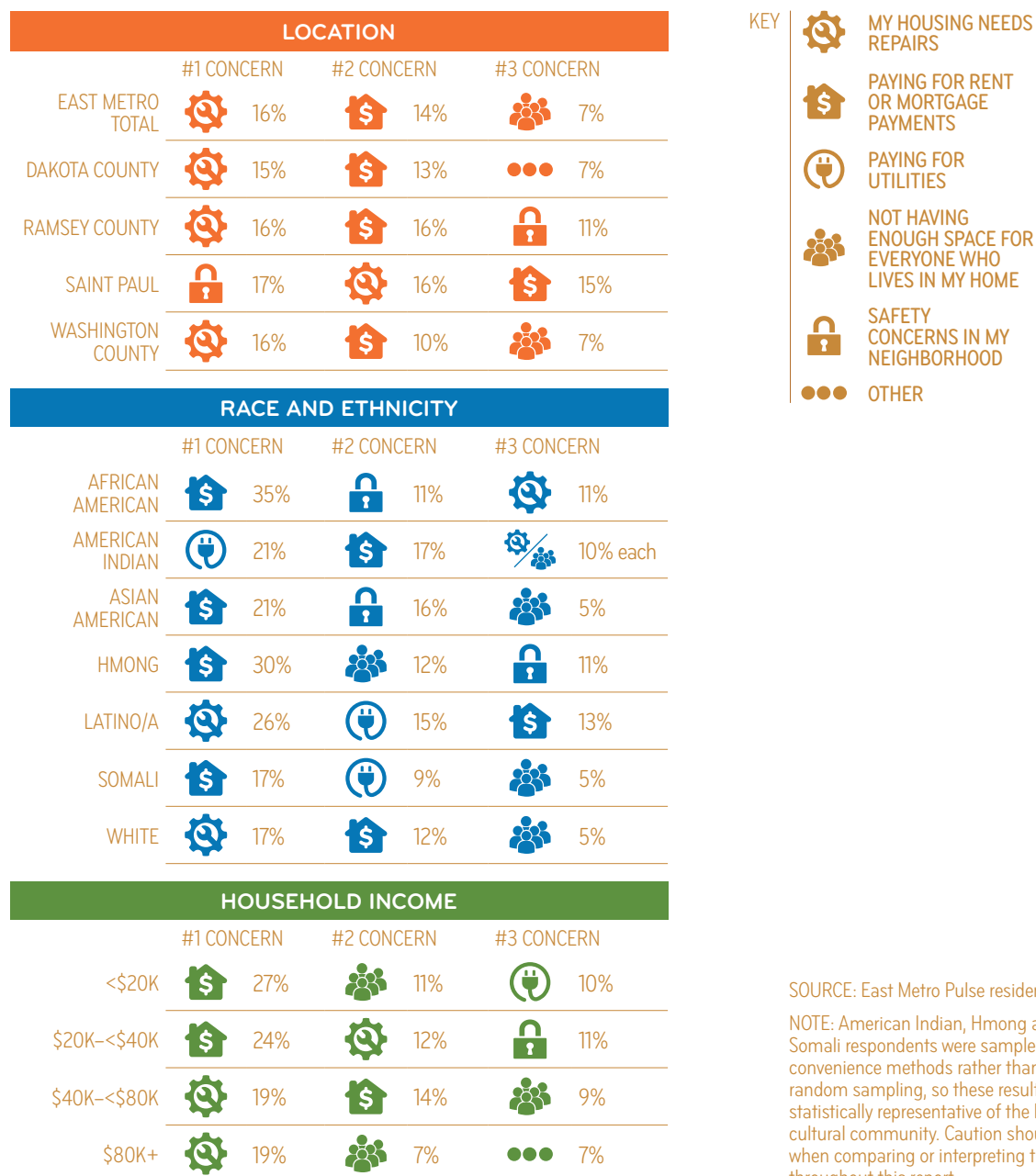


compared with 4% to 5% of respondents from other race/ethnic groups). Conversely, respondents aged 65 or older were more likely to say they planned to stay in their neighborhood long-term; less than 1% said they plan to move as soon as possible.

Respondents were asked if they have any housing-related concerns, and if so, what

their biggest concern was. Nearly half (47%) of survey respondents did not have any concerns. Groups that were most likely to report not having any concerns were respondents aged 65 or older (70%) and respondents with household incomes of \$150,000 or more (71%).

Fig. 7: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST HOUSING-RELATED CONCERN OVER THE PAST YEAR?<sup>12</sup>



SOURCE: East Metro Pulse resident survey, 2016.

NOTE: American Indian, Hmong and Somali respondents were sampled using convenience methods rather than a statistical random sampling, so these results are not statistically representative of the broader cultural community. Caution should be used when comparing or interpreting these results throughout this report.

## HOMELESSNESS

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Although people who are experiencing homelessness are not included in this survey because the sample population was drawn from residential addresses, we know that homelessness is a serious problem, particularly in some parts of the East Metro. Homelessness persists across the East Metro, but is most prevalent in Ramsey County, with a homelessness rate of 33.2 per 10,000 in 2015.<sup>13</sup> The East Metro has an overall homelessness rate of 18.1 per 10,000, with both Dakota and Washington Counties at much lower rates: 7.1 and 3.7 per 10,000, respectively.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

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The majority of East Metro respondents stated that their rent or mortgage was affordable given their current household income (86%). Respondents from Washington County were more likely to say that their rent or mortgage was affordable (91%) and respondents from Saint Paul were the least likely (80%).

Twenty-eight percent of all East Metro residents pay 30% or more of their income for their monthly housing costs; this 2015 figure is an increase from 23% in 2000. Across the East Metro, the burden of housing costs impacts low-income residents disproportionately: 86% of residents whose household income is less than \$20,000 per year pay 30% or more of their income on housing costs, compared with 25% of residents whose household incomes are between \$50,000 and \$74,999 and just 6% of households with incomes greater than \$75,000.<sup>14</sup> Households that pay more than 30% of their income for their housing are at a higher risk of eviction and foreclosure

and generally have higher mobility (which affects school and employment); also, these residents may not be able to afford other basic necessities (e.g., they may have to choose between housing and food or health care). Further, racial and ethnic disparities exist among residents in terms of affordable housing. About half of all American Indian, Latino/a and African American residents (46%, 53% and 44%, respectively) pay more than 30% of their monthly income on housing, compared with 28% of white residents.<sup>15</sup>

In response to a question about housing affordability, Asian American and white respondents were more likely to say that their housing is affordable than Latino/a and African American respondents.

While about 90% of Asian American and white respondents say their housing is affordable, just 74% of Latino/a and 56% of African American respondents say their housing is affordable. Seventy-three percent of American Indian respondents, 65% of Hmong respondents and 61% of Somali respondents said their housing is affordable.

## AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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About half (48%) of respondents from Saint Paul reported looking for housing in the East Metro in the past two years, which is more common than among respondents from Dakota (35%), Ramsey (40%) and Washington (30%) Counties. Of the respondents who had recently looked for housing, 47% agreed that there is enough affordable housing in the East Metro. Respondents with household incomes under \$40,000 were most likely to strongly disagree that there is enough affordable housing in the East Metro (26%).

## GETTING AROUND THE EAST METRO

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There are close to 60,000 jobs reachable in the East Metro area within 30 minutes by public transit or walking; Ramsey County has the largest number of jobs reachable within 30 minutes by public transit or walking.<sup>16</sup>

The majority of respondents said that their primary mode of transportation was a car (92%). Using a car was most common in Washington County (100%) and less common in Saint Paul (77%). African American respondents (20%) and those with household incomes less than \$20,000 (29%) were most likely to use public transit as their primary mode of transportation, compared with East Metro respondents overall (6%).

## PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSPORTATION

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Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about their experiences getting around the East Metro. Most survey respondents said that their overall experience getting around the East Metro was good (58%) or excellent (12%), instead of fair (28%) or poor (3%). Some respondents indicated that questions about particular modes of transportation did not apply to them, because they do not use that form of transit.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents who use public transit rated the safety of public

transit as excellent or good; males were much more likely than females to respond this way (72% compared with 59%). Respondents whose household incomes are less than \$40,000 (45%), those who speak a language other than English at home (67%) and Asian American respondents (64%) were more likely to rate the safety of public transportation as fair or poor when compared with East Metro respondents overall (33%).

Respondents from Dakota County were more likely to rate road condition and maintenance as being excellent (10%), whereas respondents from Saint Paul and Ramsey County were least likely to give this rating (3% and 2%); the latter were also more likely to rate the condition as poor. Respondents from Washington County were more likely than other respondents to rate both pedestrian walkability and options for biking as excellent (19% and 27%), whereas respondents from Saint Paul were least likely to give this rating (7% and 12%).

The transportation issues that were most frequently rated as poor were availability of public transit routes and traffic conditions; both were rated poor by 19% of respondents. Respondents from Saint Paul were more likely to rate public transit routes available as excellent (27%) or good (44%), whereas respondents from Washington County were much more likely to rate them as poor (34%).

# HEALTH

Our neighbors' physical, mental and spiritual well-being impacts our daily interactions and can either strengthen or weaken the fabric of a community. Can social factors predict how healthy we are? How are our neighbors accessing health care? Do we have access to the type of care we need? Are we healthy?



## OVERALL HEALTH OF POPULATION AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

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Most East Metro residents rate their overall health as excellent, very good or good.<sup>17</sup> The ratings did not vary much across the East Metro, ranging from 88% of Saint Paul residents to 95% of Washington County residents, who gave self-reported health ratings of good to excellent.

Distinctive differences can be found across the East Metro with regard to the social and economic factors that are strong predictors of health outcomes.<sup>18</sup> Ramsey County fares worse in terms of children in poverty (24%, compared with 10% in Dakota County and 7% in Washington County) and rate of high school graduation (76%, compared with 84% in Dakota County and 88% in Washington County). Ramsey County also has a much higher violent crime rate than either Washington or Dakota Counties. Ramsey County has a crime rate of 461 violent crimes per 100,000 population, whereas Washington

County has a rate of 74 and Dakota County has a rate of 120.

Ultimately, Ramsey County ranks much lower than Washington and Dakota Counties in overall health of residents. These rankings are composed of several measures, such as length and quality of life, health behaviors, access to clinical care, social and economic factors (including employment and education level), and physical environment. Washington and Dakota Counties are ranked second and 11th, respectively, in the state. Ramsey County is ranked 66th in the state (out of 87 counties total).

## ACCESS AND TYPES OF HEALTH CARE USED

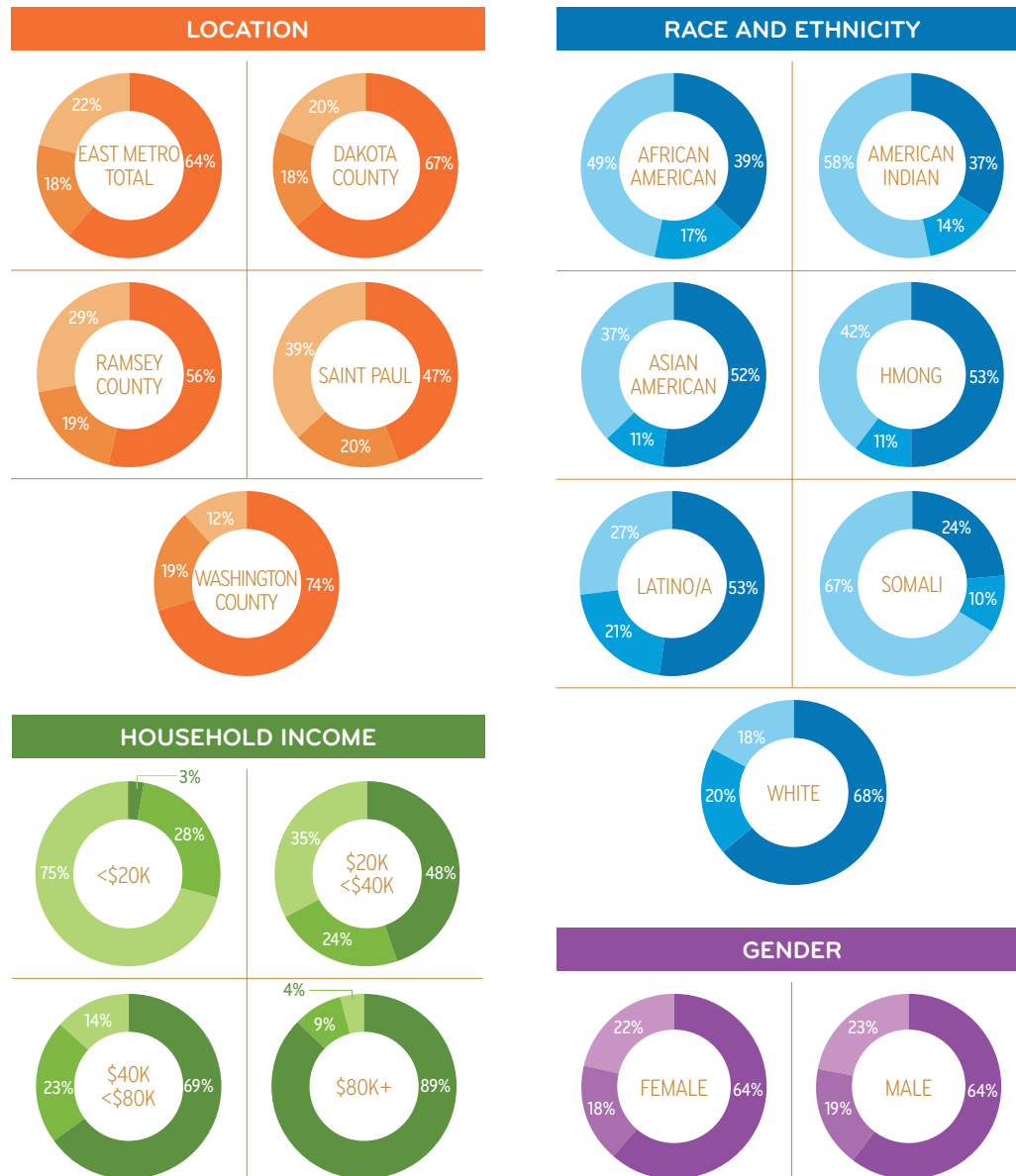
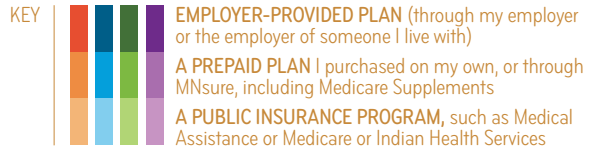
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The majority of survey respondents indicated that they have health care coverage (96%). There were no significant differences between counties or genders in terms of health insurance coverage rate. Nearly all respondents aged 65 or older (99%) have health care coverage,

while a slightly lower proportion of younger respondents aged 18 to 34 (93%) reported coverage. Population-level data from the

Census Bureau and this survey data show similar uninsured rates for residents of the East Metro.

Fig. 8: WHAT KIND OF HEALTH INSURANCE DO YOU HAVE?



SOURCE: East Metro Pulse resident survey, 2016.

NOTES: American Indian, Hmong and Somali respondents were sampled using convenience methods rather than a statistical random sampling, so these results are not statistically representative of the broader cultural community. Caution should be used when comparing or interpreting these results throughout this report.

Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

## PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH

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Respondents were asked about many different ways they stay physically, mentally or spiritually healthy. They were provided a list of resources and asked to identify how often they or anyone in their household used those resources. Overall, most respondents (97%) reported that they had visited a doctor's office or clinic in the past year. However, respondents with less than a high school diploma or GED were more likely to visit their doctor more frequently, with 58% reporting having visited once or twice a month or more often – compared with 30% of respondents who have a bachelor's degree or higher who visited their doctor that often. Respondents with less than a high school diploma or GED were also more likely to have visited an emergency room during the past year (51%, compared with 29% of respondents who have a bachelor's degree or higher).

Just over one-third (36%) of survey respondents said they visited a place of worship once a month or more often over the past year. Respondents from Ramsey County were less likely to report having

used a place of worship (29%) than respondents from Washington and Dakota Counties (45% and 40%, respectively). Older respondents were much more likely to have visited a place of worship once a week or more (39%, compared with 16% of respondents aged 18 to 34). There were also differences by race/ethnicity, with just 19% of Asian American respondents and 18% of Hmong respondents reporting they visited a place of worship at least once a month over the past year, compared with 30% of American Indian respondents, 37% of white respondents, 43% of African American respondents, 44% of Latino/a respondents and 82% of Somali respondents. Notably, 46% of respondents did not visit a place of worship at all during the last year, including 44% of African American respondents.

Respondents with less than a high school diploma and those with household incomes below \$20,000 were much more likely to have used a support group once or twice during the past year (25% and 27%, respectively, compared with 13% of East Metro respondents overall).



# EDUCATION

We should work toward access to high-quality educational opportunities for all. What are the different ways education impacts a community? Do our schools reflect the cultural values of our students? How worried are parents about their child's college prospects? Education is vital to a community's future economic success. Are we getting a passing grade?

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

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Forty percent of East Metro residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is an increase from 34% in 2000.<sup>19</sup> For 22% of East Metro residents, a high school diploma or GED is their highest level of educational attainment. Another 31% completed some college or have an associate degree. Seven percent of East Metro residents have not completed high school and do not have a GED.

East Metro residents who are white are more likely to have a bachelor's degree than residents of color (43% compared with 27%, respectively).<sup>20</sup> Saint Paul has even more substantial racial disparities related to adult educational attainment: 50% of white Saint Paul residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 17% of residents of color.<sup>21</sup>

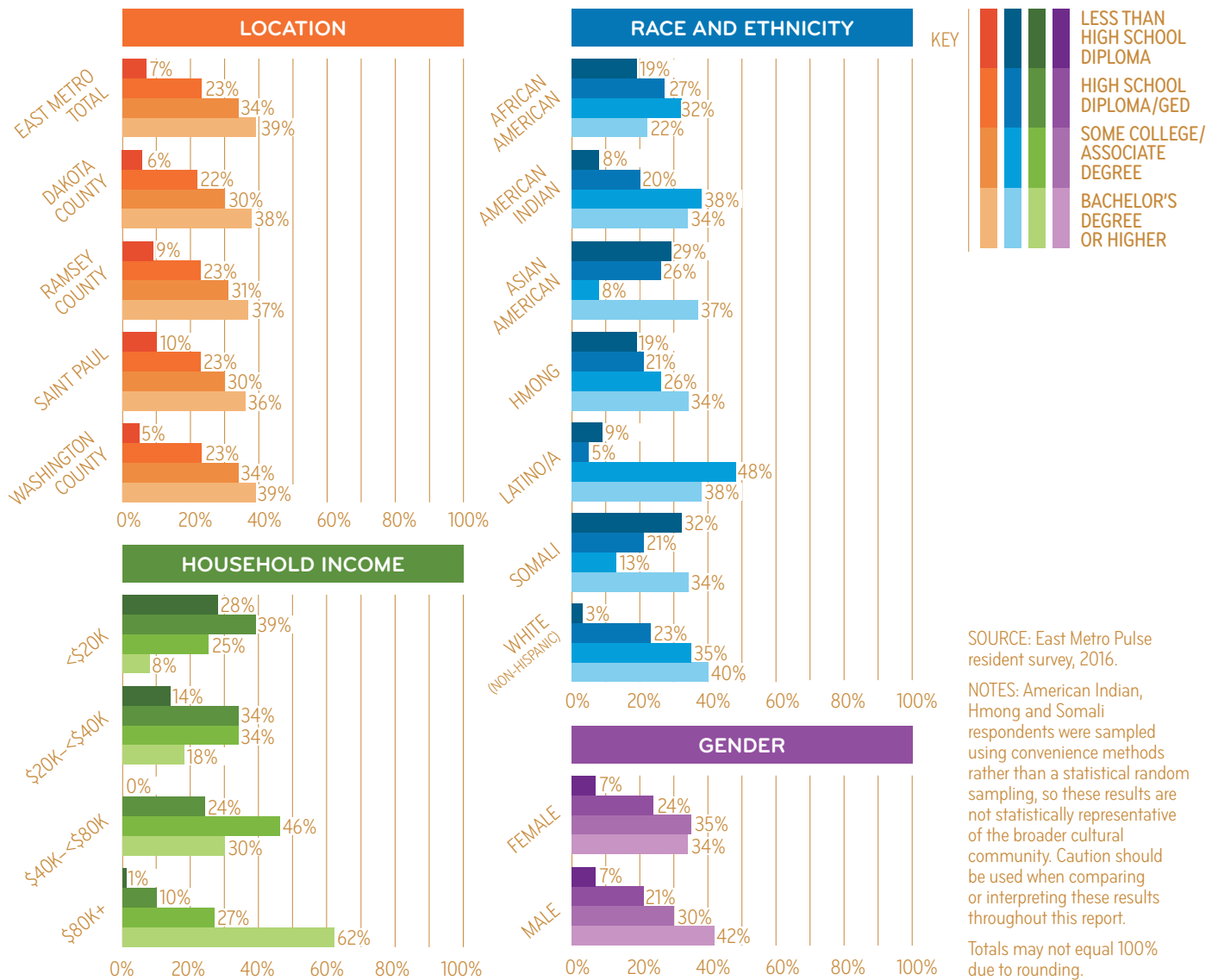
## TYPES OF SCHOOLS AND CULTURAL APPROACH

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Respondents with a bachelor's degree or higher were more likely to enroll the children in their household in private school (17%, compared with 0% of parents who had a high school diploma or GED). Respondents with household incomes less than \$20,000 per year were more likely to enroll the children in their household in charter schools (23%, compared with 9% of all respondents).

Respondents with a household income of less than \$40,000 a year were less likely to report that the approaches used by their child's teachers support their family's cultural values when compared with respondents from higher income groups (73%, compared with 94%). American Indian respondents reported that their family's cultural values were supported by their child's teachers less frequently than white respondents (74%, compared with 93%).

Fig. 9: WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION YOU HAVE COMPLETED?



### OUT-OF-SCHOOL-TIME PROGRAMMING AVAILABILITY

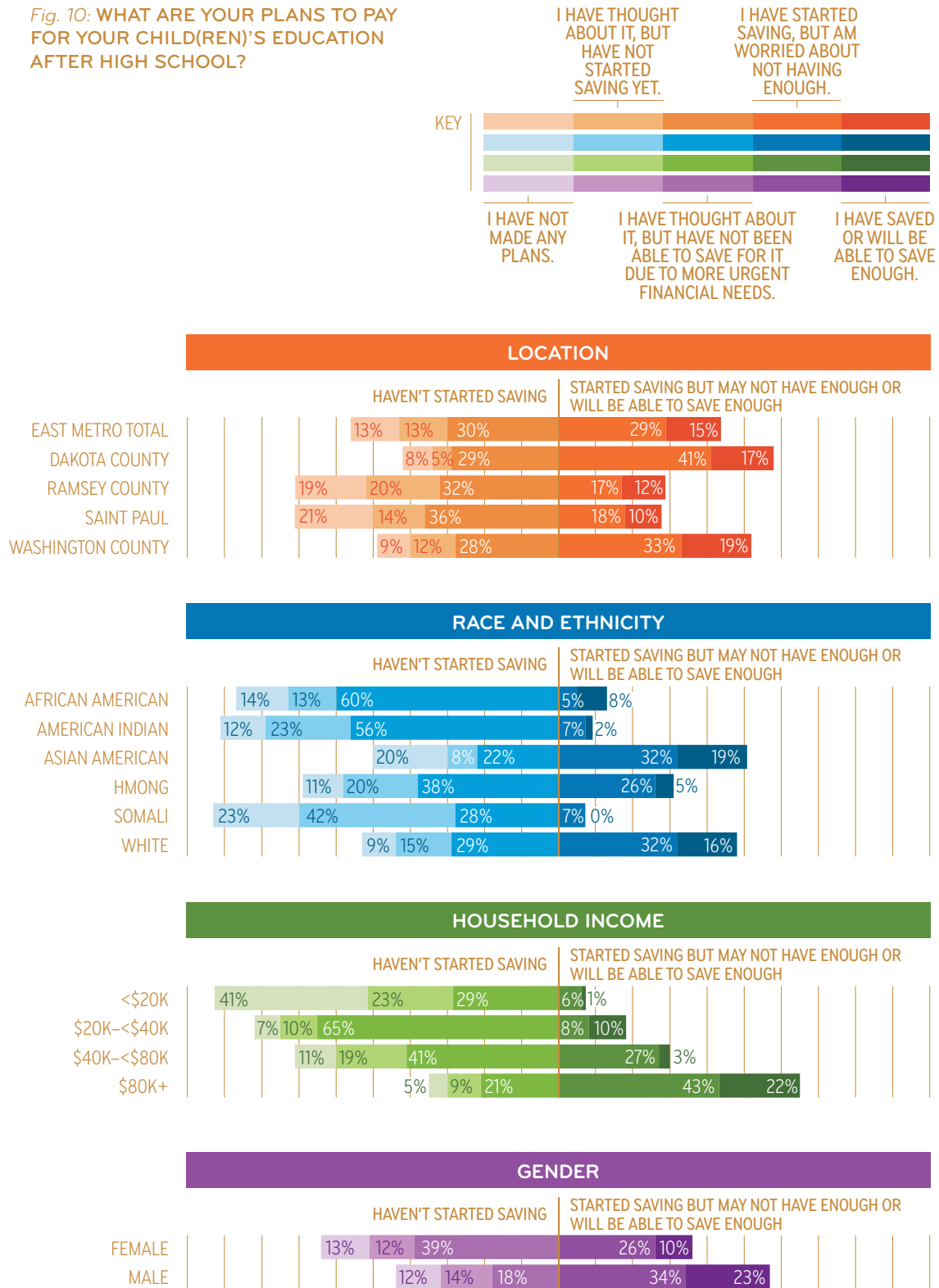
The majority of respondents (79%) said that it was easy to find something for their children to do when they are not in school. The percentage was slightly higher in Washington County (86%), compared with respondents from Dakota and Ramsey Counties (76% in each county).

### SAVING FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Most survey respondents (85%) have either not yet started saving for their child's college education, or they feel they will not be able to save enough to pay for college by the time their child is ready to go.



Fig. 10: WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS TO PAY FOR YOUR CHILD(REN)'S EDUCATION AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?



SOURCE: East Metro Pulse resident survey, 2016.

NOTES: American Indian, Hmong and Somali respondents were sampled using convenience methods rather than a statistical random sampling, so these results are not statistically representative of the broader cultural community. Caution should be used when comparing or interpreting these results throughout this report. Data for Latino/a respondents were suppressed due to a low number of respondents.

Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND SECURITY

When economic opportunity and security are available for all families and individuals, the East Metro thrives. Do all communities face the same challenges in finding stable employment? Do some of our neighbors worry about their financial security more than others? A strong community has equitable pathways to prosperity for all. Is our economy working for all of us?

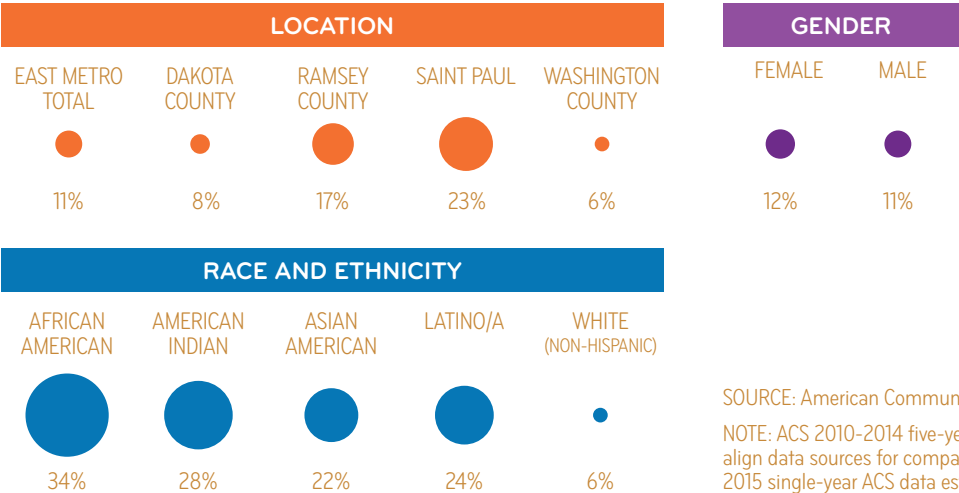
## ECONOMIC CONCERNS

Ten percent of East Metro adult residents live in poverty.<sup>22</sup> Between 2000 and 2015, poverty rates increased by 34% in the East Metro. Currently, Washington and Dakota Counties have the lowest poverty rates (5% and 7%, respectively), whereas Ramsey County and Saint Paul have poverty rates

higher than the East Metro as a whole at 15% and 21%, respectively.<sup>23</sup>

Poverty rates in the East Metro reveal racial disparities. The poverty rate among people of color living in the East Metro is 23%, compared with 6% among white residents. Similarly, 33% of Saint Paul residents of color live in poverty, compared with 10%

Fig. 11: RESIDENTS IN POVERTY



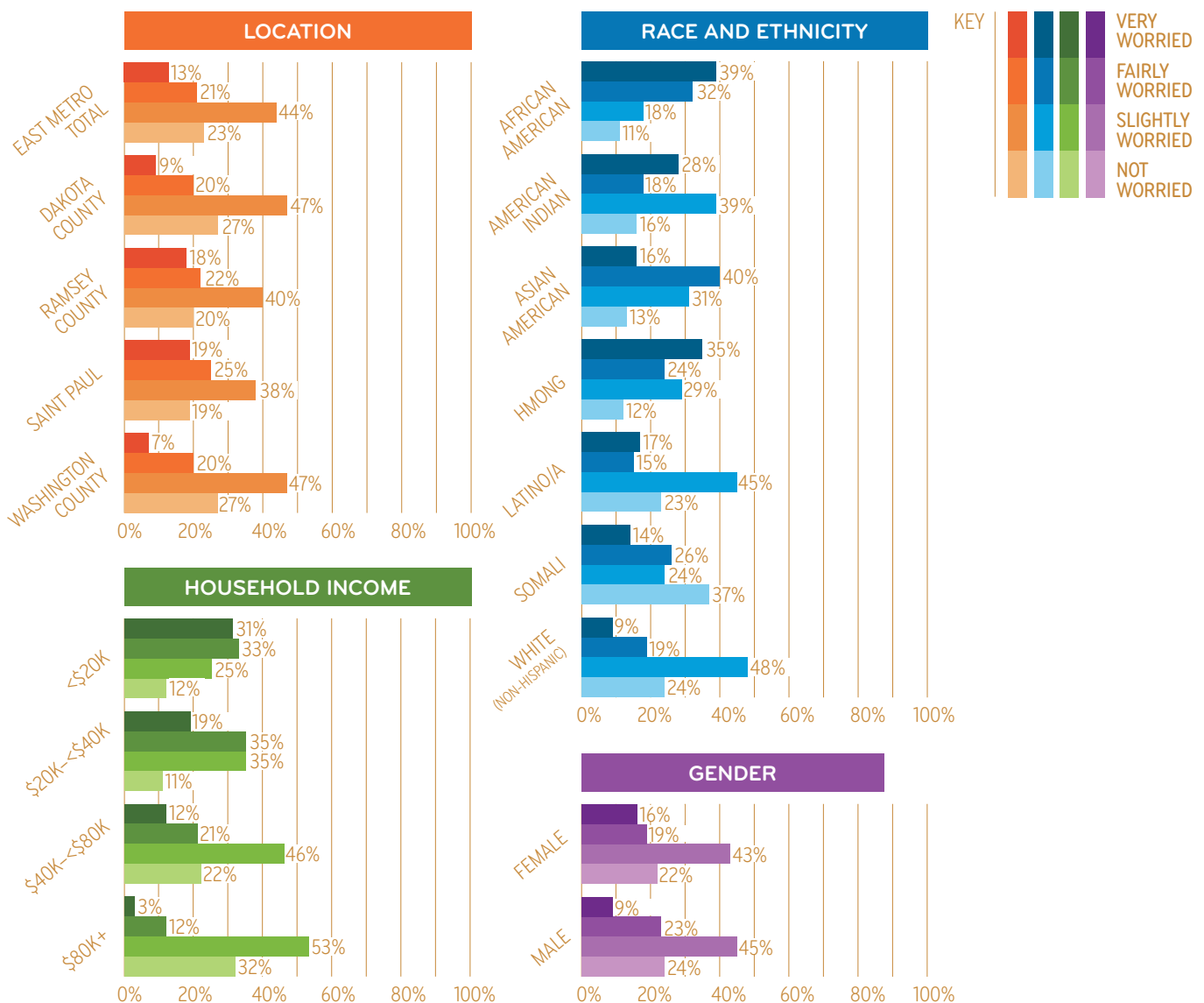
SOURCE: American Community Survey estimates, 2010-2014.  
 NOTE: ACS 2010-2014 five-year data estimates are used to align data sources for comparison and may differ slightly from 2015 single-year ACS data estimates detailed in this report.

of white residents.<sup>24</sup> African American residents have the highest poverty rate of all race/ethnic groups in the East Metro, with 34% living in poverty.<sup>25</sup>

Respondents from Ramsey County (22%), including those who are from Saint Paul (22%), were more likely than respondents

from Dakota County (15%) and Washington County (13%) to be very or fairly worried about having enough money to put food on the table. Respondents with less than a high school diploma (61%), those who are earning less than \$40,000 per year (42%) and those with a home language other

Fig. 12: OVERALL, HOW WORRIED ARE YOU ABOUT YOUR ECONOMIC SECURITY?



SOURCE: East Metro Pulse resident survey, 2016.

NOTES: American Indian, Hmong and Somali respondents were sampled using convenience methods rather than a statistical random sampling, so these results are not statistically representative of the broader cultural community. Caution should be used when comparing or interpreting these results throughout this report.

Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

than English (35%) were more likely to be very or fairly worried about this. African American (47%) and Asian American (31%) respondents were also more likely to be worried than white (13%) and Latino/a respondents (17%).

## OUT-OF-POCKET MEDICAL EXPENSES

Respondents were also asked to what degree they were worried about an illness or injury in their immediate family that creates major out-of-pocket medical expenses. Respondents who were more likely to be worried about this included:

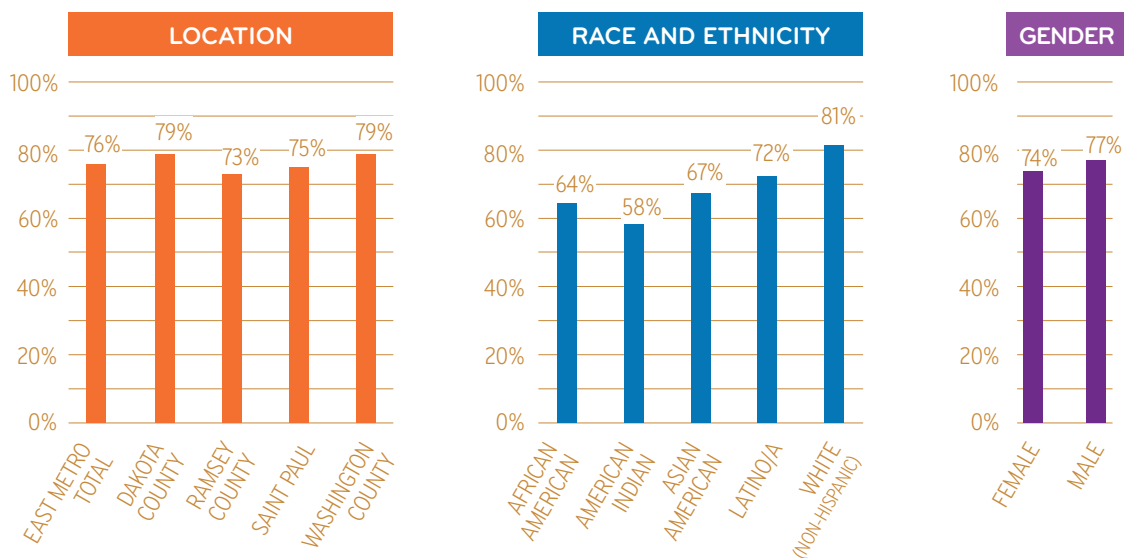
- People of color (62%, compared with 30% of white respondents)
- Those with lower household incomes (44% of respondents with household incomes less than \$40,000, compared with 19% of those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more)

- Respondents with lower education levels (55% of respondents with less than a high school diploma, compared with 26% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher)
- Those who do not speak English as their home language (78%, compared with 32% of those who speak English at home)

## EMPLOYMENT

A majority, 78%, of East Metro residents aged 16 to 64 are working.<sup>26</sup> Racial and ethnic disparities among the proportion of adults working exist across the East Metro, with the largest disparities in Ramsey County and Saint Paul. Overall, 81% of white residents and 70% of residents of color are working. The proportion of people of color who are working has increased by 9 percentage points since 1990. The proportion of adults (of all races) working has

Fig. 13: ADULTS WORKING IN THE EAST METRO



SOURCE: American Community Survey estimates, 2010–2014.<sup>26</sup>

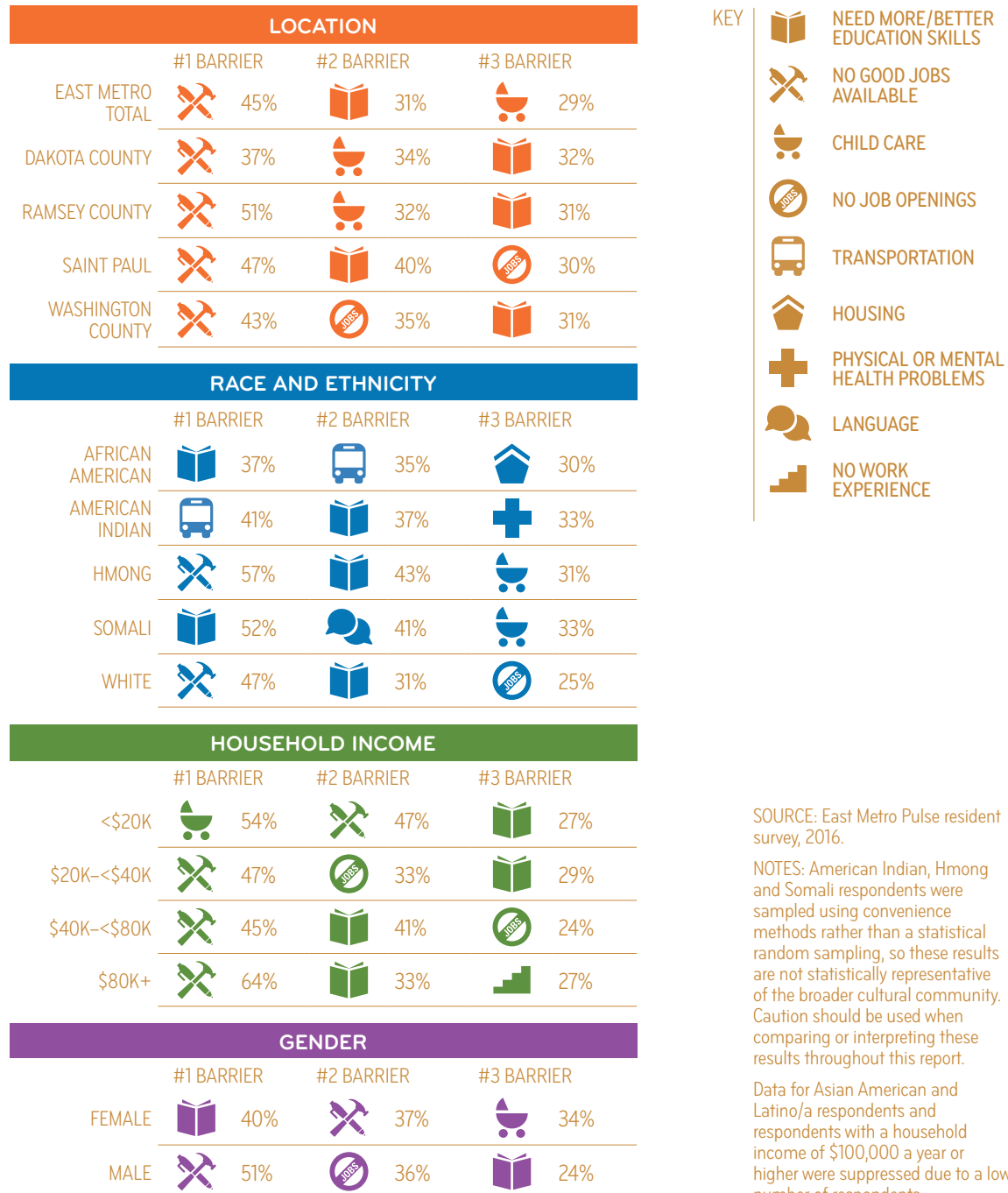
NOTE: ACS 2010–2014 five-year data estimates are used to align data sources for comparison and may differ slightly from 2015 single-year ACS data estimates detailed in this report.

returned to pre-recession levels after dipping from 2009 to 2012.<sup>27</sup>

Seven out of 10 survey respondents are employed. The employment rate of

respondents increases with increasing educational attainment. While 31% of residents with less than a high school diploma are employed, 61% of those with a high school diploma are employed,

Fig. 14: RIGHT NOW, IS THERE ANYTHING THAT IS MAKING IT HARD FOR YOU TO GET A JOB OR FIND A BETTER JOB?<sup>28</sup>



SOURCE: East Metro Pulse resident survey, 2016.

NOTES: American Indian, Hmong and Somali respondents were sampled using convenience methods rather than a statistical random sampling, so these results are not statistically representative of the broader cultural community. Caution should be used when comparing or interpreting these results throughout this report.

Data for Asian American and Latino/a respondents and respondents with a household income of \$100,000 a year or higher were suppressed due to a low number of respondents.

70% of those with some college or an associate degree are employed, and 83% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher are employed.

Respondents who are not employed were asked the primary reason for not being employed. Overall, being retired was the most common reason cited at 57%. Respondents from Saint Paul most frequently indicated that they are unemployed because they are disabled (34%). Disability as a reason for not being employed was also more commonly mentioned by respondents with household incomes less than \$20,000 (35%) and African American respondents (46%), as well as American Indian (42%) and Hmong (30%) respondents.

Twenty percent of employed respondents say they do not earn enough at their job to cover their living expenses. Of that 20%, the following groups were more likely to say they do not earn enough at their job to cover their living expenses:

- Ramsey County residents (26%)
- Saint Paul residents (27%)
- Females (31%)
- African Americans (66%)
- Those with a high school diploma (35%)
- Younger adults aged 18 to 34 (28%)
- Older adults aged 65 and older (41%)

Respondents from Saint Paul (66%) and respondents aged 65 and older (50%) were less likely to have access to retirement benefits from their employer, when compared with all respondents (78%).

Fifteen percent of all respondents were very or fairly worried that they would lose their job. The respondents particularly likely to be worried about losing their job include Ramsey County residents, those with a high school diploma or GED, those whose home language was not English and those with a household income of less than \$40,000 a year.

# Methods and Data Sources

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Wilder Research worked with The Saint Paul Foundation to develop a survey instrument and study design for East Metro Pulse that answered research questions for the population overall and particular subgroups of interest.

Wilder Research tested the survey with a convenience sample of 18 residents of the East Metro using cognitive interviewing methods. Based on the results of these cognitive interviews, possible changes to the survey and materials were identified. The Foundation then reviewed and approved these changes before approving the final survey. You can find the full survey in the appendix to the data book, which is available at [eastmetropulse.org](http://eastmetropulse.org). The survey was translated into Hmong, Somali and Spanish.

## RESIDENTS WHO WERE SURVEYED

Wilder Research purchased an address-based sample that included a list of 7,000 randomly sampled residential addresses from Dakota, Ramsey and Washington

Counties, and the City of Saint Paul, as follows:

- Dakota County: n = 2,000
- Washington County: n = 2,000
- Saint Paul: n = 2,000
- Ramsey County, excluding Saint Paul: n = 1,000

The target number of completed surveys for each sampling area was met. We received at least 400 completed surveys for Dakota County, Washington County and Saint Paul, and 200 from the rest of Ramsey County. These quotas were determined by Wilder Research in order to produce statistically representative data about each of the four subgeographies of interest.

In addition, Wilder Research used convenience sampling and respondent referrals to find and survey more residents from three cultural communities that are of specific interest to the Foundation. Using a combination of the population-based sample shown above and additional outreach methods, Wilder Research was able to survey 92 American Indian, 136 Hmong and 98 Somali respondents.

SAMPLING AREA	NUMBER OF ADDRESSES SAMPLED	NUMBER OF COMPLETED SURVEYS	MARGIN OF ERROR (ADJUSTED FOR WEIGHTING)
DAKOTA COUNTY	2,000	404	7.2%
RAMSEY COUNTY <sup>29</sup>	3,000	664	6.9%
SAINT PAUL	2,000	432	8.1%
WASHINGTON COUNTY	2,000	480	6.5%
<b>EAST METRO TOTAL</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>1,548</b>	<b>4.0%</b>



## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

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This survey was administered using a multimode approach, including mailing an initial survey packet with an invitation letter to all sampled addresses, a unique ID number to access the online survey, a paper copy of the survey and a postage-paid return envelope. This initial mailing was followed by a reminder postcard mailed to all sampled households one week later. After another two weeks, all sampled addresses that had not yet completed the survey were sent another packet. These materials directed respondents to the URL for the online survey in case they preferred online to paper or wanted to access the Hmong, Somali or Spanish versions of the survey. The survey materials included information about how respondents could contact Wilder Research to speak to a trained staff member who could answer questions, complete the survey over the phone or assist with survey administration (including language-specific phone lines for Hmong, Somali and Spanish).

After the final mailing, Wilder Research completed additional phone and door-to-door outreach with selected respondents – based on geographic areas that had a lower than average response rate and based on the suspected cultural community of the sampled household (based on surname) – to increase participation within underrepresented groups.

To complete the convenience sampling and respondent referral methods described above for oversampling American Indian, Hmong and Somali respondents, all initial respondents from the population-based sample were asked to refer up to three people they knew who were Hmong, Somali or American Indian; these referrals had to live in the East Metro but not at the same

address as the initial respondent. Wilder Research then followed up with these referred individuals to let them know that they had been referred, told them about the survey, invited them to participate and provided options for completing the survey.

Wilder Research staff and independent contractors also went to various public locations throughout the East Metro (school open houses, libraries, community centers, churches and mosques, etc.) and invited people to participate in the survey based on cultural group eligibility (our staff were matched to the respondents in terms of race and language).

To thank respondents for their time and information, each respondent received a \$10 gift card.

## U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND OTHER SECONDARY DATA

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The Foundation staff worked with Minnesota Compass staff to identify data indicators available through secondary sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, that provide demographic, economic and social characteristics about the East Metro region.<sup>30</sup> Minnesota Compass staff compiled secondary data sources specific to the East Metro region – see [mncompass.org](http://mncompass.org). All data were gathered directly from the data source cited in the technical notes and analyzed by Minnesota Compass staff. Secondary data sources detailed in the report are the most recent data available at the time of writing. The majority of secondary demographic data used in this report come from the U.S. Census Bureau, and include Population Estimates, the American Community Survey, Decennial Census and the Small Area Health Insurance Estimates. Unless



otherwise noted, the margins of error for all secondary data range between +/- 0.2% to 4.0%, depending on the indicator and population.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

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Wilder Research checked all completed surveys and cleaned and weighted the survey data based on age, gender and number of adults in the household to ensure that it would be statistically representative of the population. Open-ended survey responses were also coded and analyzed.

After the data were cleaned, coded and weighted, Wilder Research produced a data book that included a detailed methodology report and data tables for every question

in the survey, with results broken out by the four geographic areas of interest, as well as the cultural communities that were sampled using convenience methods rather than statistical random sampling and other demographic subgroups. Wilder Research then worked with the Foundation to conduct additional data analyses (such as cross-tabs) to better understand differences in responses across subgroups of respondents, to ensure that the research questions were answered and to confirm that group differences were adequately understood. When reporting the data, differences across geographic areas were reported when they met or exceeded five percentage points; differences across all other groups were reported when they met or exceeded 10 percentage points.

## Endnotes

1. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates 2014, available on [census.gov](http://census.gov).
2. Population Estimates 2014 and American Community Survey (ACS) 2010–2014, available on [census.gov](http://census.gov). ACS data are used to estimate the population of Saint Paul because Population Estimates are not available by race/ethnicity at the city level. For this report, 2014 Population Estimates and 2010–2014 ACS five-year data were used to estimate total population since 2011–2015 ACS five-year data estimates were not available at the time of writing.
3. In this report, and for data pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau, when we refer to “white” survey respondents, we are referring to those who indicated they are “white, non-Hispanic.”
4. Decennial Census 2000 (available on [census.gov](http://census.gov)), Population Estimates 2014 and ACS 2010–2014.
5. Decennial Census 2000 and ACS 2015.
6. Decennial Census 2000 and Population Estimates 2014.
7. ACS 2015.
8. ACS 2010–2014 five-year data estimates are used to align data sources for comparison and may differ slightly from ACS 2015 single-year estimates detailed in this report.
9. Some respondents gave multiple answers, e.g., they indicated the school has both a positive and negative impact in their community, so totals do not equal 100%.
10. The survey question provided the following examples: helping your neighbors with their yard work, bringing in their mail while they are out of town, running errands for a neighbor or taking care of a neighbor’s child for a few hours.
11. Wilder Research, “Community Needs Assessment: Ramsey & Washington Counties,” October 2015, <http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Publications/Studies/CommunityNeedsAssessmentforRamseyandWashingtonCounties>.
12. Respondents were asked to select their top housing concern from a list, which included the option “I did not have any housing-related concerns.” Forty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they did not have any housing-related concerns. The most frequent responses aside from this option are shown in the chart by group.
13. Wilder Research, Minnesota Homeless Study (2015), [mnhomeless.org](http://mnhomeless.org).
14. ACS 2010–2014. ACS 2011–2015 five-year data estimates for cost-burden households by income were not available at the time of writing.
15. ACS 2010–2014. ACS 2011–2015 ACS five-year data estimates for cost-burden households by race/ethnicity were not available at the time of writing. Note: The margin of error for the American Indian population is 11.4%; that is much higher than other demographic groups surveyed, which fall into our standard margin of error window.
16. University of Minnesota Accessibility Observatory, “Access Across America,” available at [ao.umn.edu/research/america](http://ao.umn.edu/research/america).
17. Metro SHAPE 2014 survey, available at [http://www.mphan.org/MetroSHAPE/reports/Metro\\_DataBook\\_2014\\_Final\\_20160830.pdf](http://www.mphan.org/MetroSHAPE/reports/Metro_DataBook_2014_Final_20160830.pdf).
18. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, County Health Rankings, available at [countyhealthrankings.org](http://countyhealthrankings.org).
19. Decennial Census and ACS 2010–2014.
20. ACS 2010–2014.
21. ACS 2010–2014.
22. ACS 2015.
23. ACS 2015.
24. ACS 2010–2014. ACS 2011–2015 five-year poverty estimates were not available by race/ethnicity at the time of writing.
25. ACS 2015.
26. ACS 2011–2015 five-year data estimates for the proportion of adults working by family type were not available at the time of writing. The margin of error for the American Indian population for proportion of adults working is 7.9%, which is much higher than for other racial/ethnic groups.
27. Decennial Census 1990 and 2000, and ACS 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.
28. Percentages were calculated based on the total number of respondents who indicated that something is making it hard for them to get a job or find a better job.
29. Data for Ramsey County includes the Saint Paul sample plus an additional sample that included the remainder of Ramsey County outside of Saint Paul. The data were weighted to be statistically representative of Ramsey County overall.
30. The race and ethnicity categories used in this report are the standard categories used by the U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey. Throughout this report, the most detailed data available are presented. However, there are limitations in the degree to which race and ethnicity data can be disaggregated while still providing reliable estimates at a more local (county or city) level where relatively few people of the same racial or ethnic community live.

# Acknowledgments

## EAST METRO PULSE PROJECT TEAM

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The Saint Paul Foundation

Nicole MartinRogers, Wilder Research  
Ellen Wolter, Wilder Research  
Beth Desnick, Thebe & Co

## WILDER RESEARCH

The Foundation partnered with Wilder Research to design and conduct the resident survey and assist in analyzing and interpreting the results. Wilder Research also compiled population-level data about the East Metro through Wilder Research's Minnesota Compass team. Finally, Wilder Research co-developed this report. The following Wilder Research staff and independent contractors were involved in this project:

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## GRAPHIC DESIGN

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**T H E   S A I N T   P A U L   F O U N D A T I O N**

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