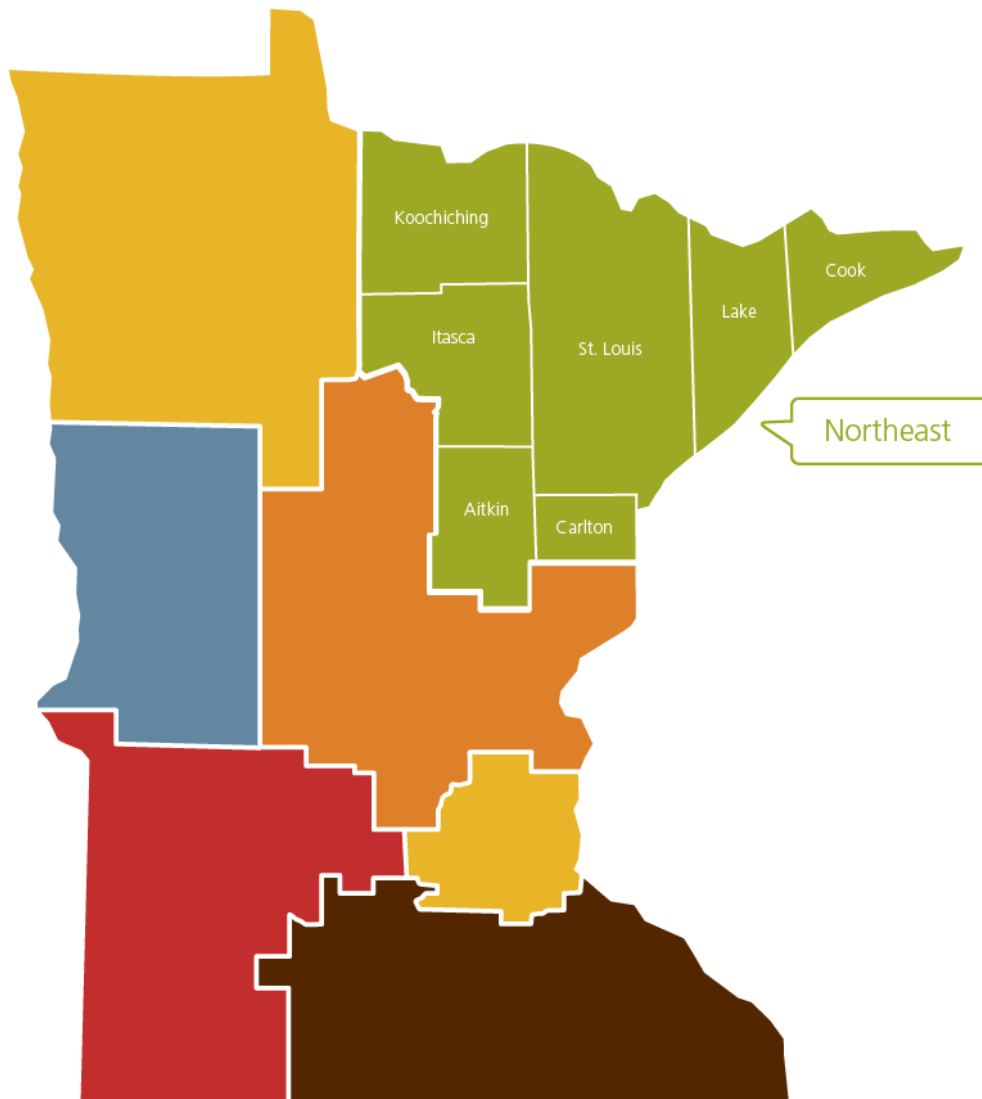




RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: NORTHEAST MINNESOTA

Rural Pulse™ is a research study commissioned by the Grand Rapids-based Blandin Foundation to gain a real-time snapshot of the concerns, perceptions and priorities of rural Minnesota residents. This initiative was last conducted in 2016 and has served to identify trends within significant, complex subject areas including the economy, education, employment and quality of life.

*In completing this comprehensive research study, 1,068 telephone interviews were conducted with rural Minnesotans. The full report can be found at www.RuralPulse.org. To provide a localized perspective, study findings for Northeast Minnesota are included in the following pages and contrasted with overall rural Minnesota responses. Intended to serve as a regional snapshot against full study observations, data reflects a statistical reliability of +/- 7.8 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Also, please note that results within regional reports **do not** include communities of 35,000+; these cities are grouped within metro Minnesota findings – see full report for more information.*

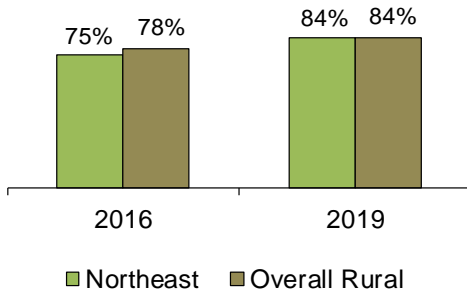


Collaboration and Contribution

More than four in five residents in Northeast Minnesota feel that they can make a positive impact within their local community, and believe their community works together effectively.

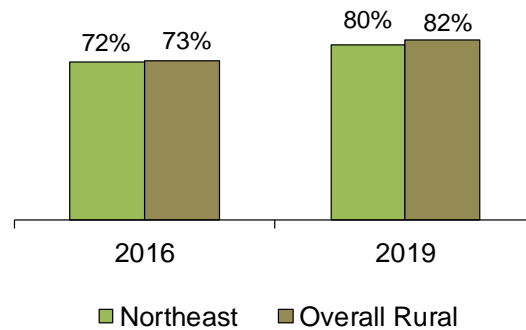
Able to Make a Positive Community Impact

Somewhat or strongly agree



Residents are Able to Work Together Effectively

Somewhat or strongly agree

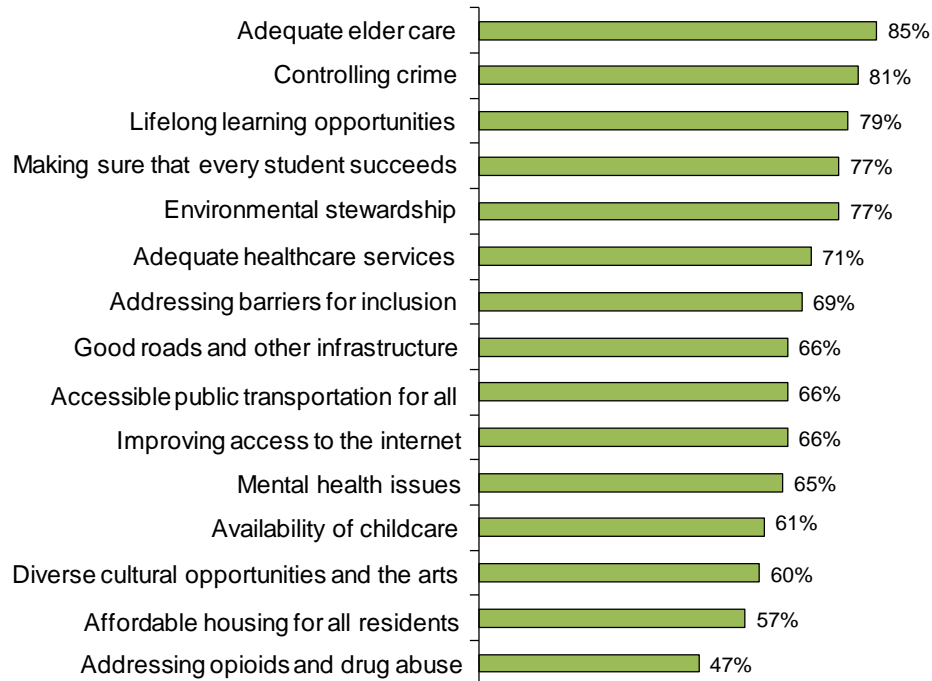


Community Performance

Northeast residents were most likely to agree that their community performed well in caring for the elderly, crime control, offering lifelong learning opportunities, making sure that every student succeeds and environmental stewardship. They were less likely to agree that their local area did well at providing childcare availability, cultural/arts opportunities, affordable housing, and addressing opioids and drug abuse.

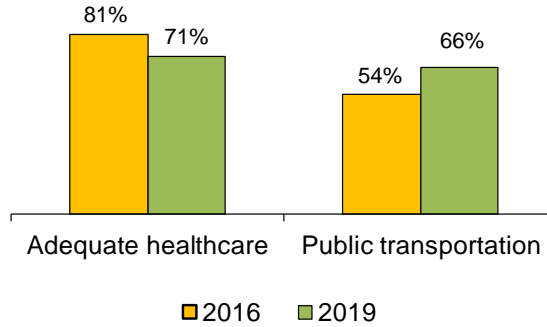
Agree Community is Performing Well

Somewhat or strongly agree



Northeast residents felt their community has improved since 2016 in providing accessible public transportation for all, including the disabled. An area that decreased in satisfaction since the 2016 study was offering adequate healthcare services.

Agree Community is Performing Well
Somewhat or strongly agree



When comparing issue significance and satisfaction, Northeast Minnesotans felt their communities are underperforming in several key areas, most specifically, providing adequate healthcare, addressing opioids and drug abuse, economic development, mental health issues, and job opportunities.

Issue Importance vs. Community Performance

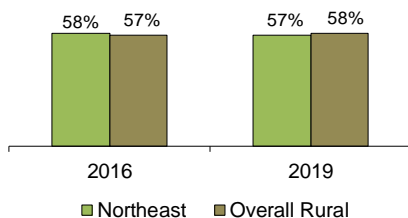
| | Importance Mean | Performance Mean |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Adequate healthcare services | 3.6 | 3.0 |
| Addressing opioids and drug abuse | 3.5 | 2.5 |
| Economic development | 3.4 | 2.6 |
| Mental health issues | 3.4 | 2.8 |
| Job opportunities | 3.4 | 2.8 |
| Affordable housing for all | 3.2 | 2.7 |
| Good roads and infrastructure | 3.3 | 2.8 |
| Availability of childcare | 3.2 | 2.8 |

■ Significantly Below Expectations
■ Below Expectations
4 = High, 1 = Low

Rural Voice

Fifty-seven percent of residents in Northeast Minnesota believed the needs of rural communities are important to policymakers. A significant percentage did not agree rural voice is being heard, however.

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



Critical Issues

The most critical issues to address in the Northeast region were said to be jobs, healthcare, opioids and drug abuse, mental health, economic development, affordable housing and availability of childcare.

Most Critical Issues

Northeast

1. Jobs
2. (tie) Healthcare, Opioids and drug abuse
3. Mental health
4. Economic development
5. (tie) Affordable housing, Availability of childcare

Overall Rural

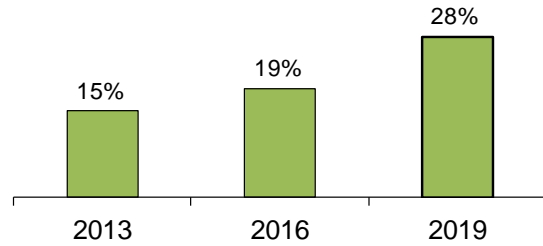
1. Jobs
2. Healthcare
3. Opioids and drug abuse
4. Economic development
5. Mental health issues

Economic Concerns Linger, But Show Improvement

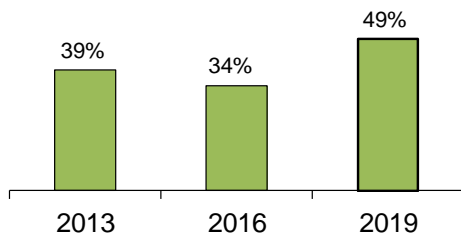
Twenty-eight percent of residents felt the local economy has improved within the past year, reflecting a continued increase since 2013.

While rural Minnesotans continue to experience a rebound in the economy, there was only 49 percent who felt there are sufficient living-wage jobs. Sixty-seven percent believed Northeast region communities maintain/grow job opportunities.

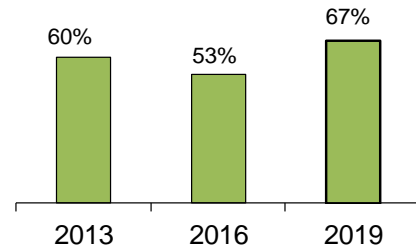
Condition of Community's Economy Has Improved, Compared to a Year Ago *Somewhat or much better now*



Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages *Somewhat or strongly agree*

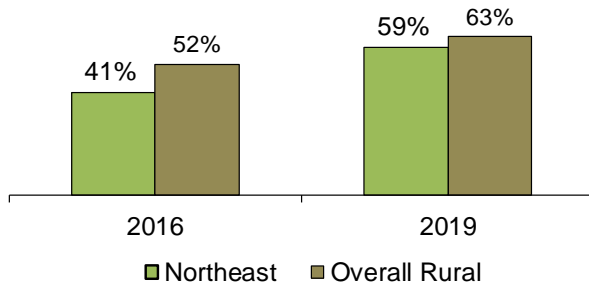


Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities *Somewhat or strongly agree*

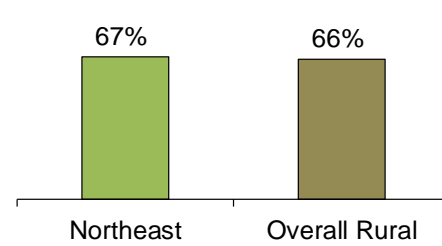


Fifty-nine percent felt that economic development is being promoted well, up from just 41 percent in 2016. Sixty-seven percent felt there is an adequate workforce available for local businesses.

Community Sufficiently Promotes Economic Development
Somewhat or strongly agree



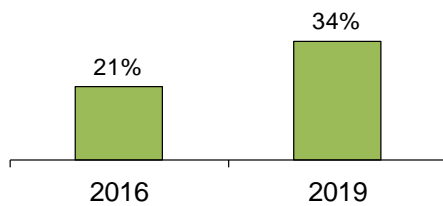
Adequate Workforce for Businesses
Somewhat or strongly agree



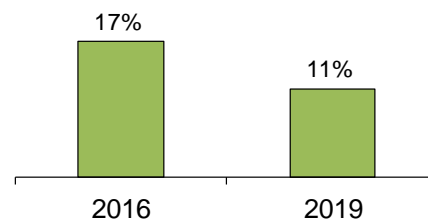
Impact of the Economy

A third said their household income had increased over the past year. Job losses have declined since 2016 study findings.

Household Income Has Increased Over Past Year



Lost a Job in Past Year



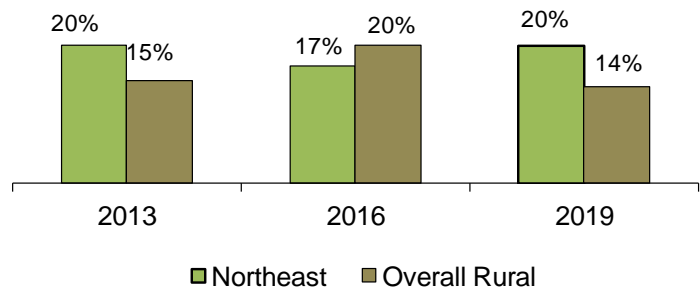
Migration

One in five said that they do not expect to live in their same community five years from now. Twenty percent have considered moving to a metropolitan area – a slight increase from 2016 study findings. Many say the search for job opportunities is the motivating factor for considering relocation.

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



Considered Moving to Metro Area Within Past Two Years

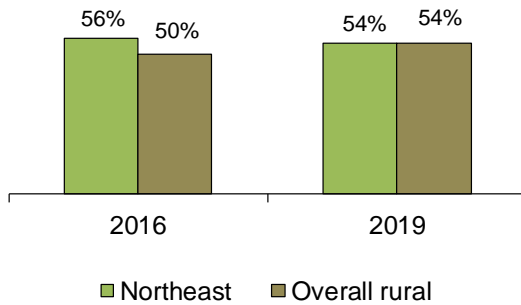


Leadership Composition

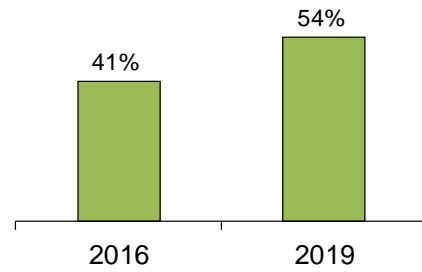
Just over half of Northeast residents said they have served in a leadership capacity, an increase from 2016 study findings. Of those who have not, more than a third say that they would definitely consider serving in leadership if asked – also an increase in interest from 2016 findings for Northeast respondents.

Just over half believed that people from diverse backgrounds fill local leadership roles.

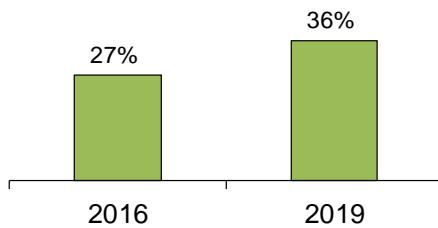
People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within Community
Somewhat or strongly agree



Have Served in a Leadership Role



Would Definitely Consider Serving If Asked
(Of those who have not served in leadership)

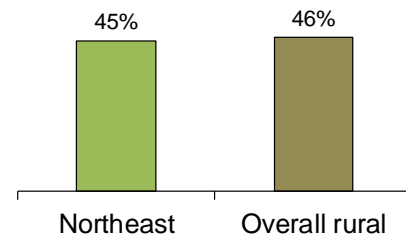


Diversity and Inclusion

Slightly less than half of residents in Northeast Minnesota said that they have at least some close friends of a different race or culture.

Northeast residents were most likely to feel the groups that experience bias, discrimination or harassment within their community include those with drug or mental health issues, Native Americans, gays and lesbians, transgender individuals, and the homeless population.

Have At Least Some Close Friends of Different Race or Culture
Some, most or all

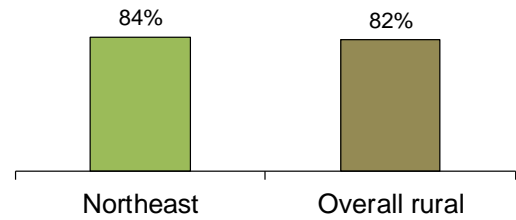


Groups Most Believed to Experience Bias, Discrimination or Harassment Within Their Community
Multiple Responses Allowed

1. Those with drug or mental health issues
2. Native Americans / American Indians
3. Gays and lesbians
4. Transgender people
5. Homeless

More than four in five residents of Northeast Minnesota believed people in their community are able to stand up to hatred and discrimination.

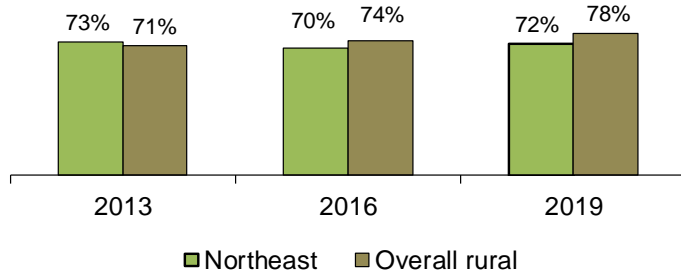
Believe People in Community are Able to Stand Up to Hatred and Discrimination



Optimism Exists

Overall, seven in 10 Northeast region residents are optimistic about their community's future.

Optimistic About Future of Their Community
Somewhat or very optimistic



For more information on Rural Pulse™ and to review the comprehensive, statewide report, visit www.RuralPulse.org. For more on Blandin Foundation visit www.BlandinFoundation.org.