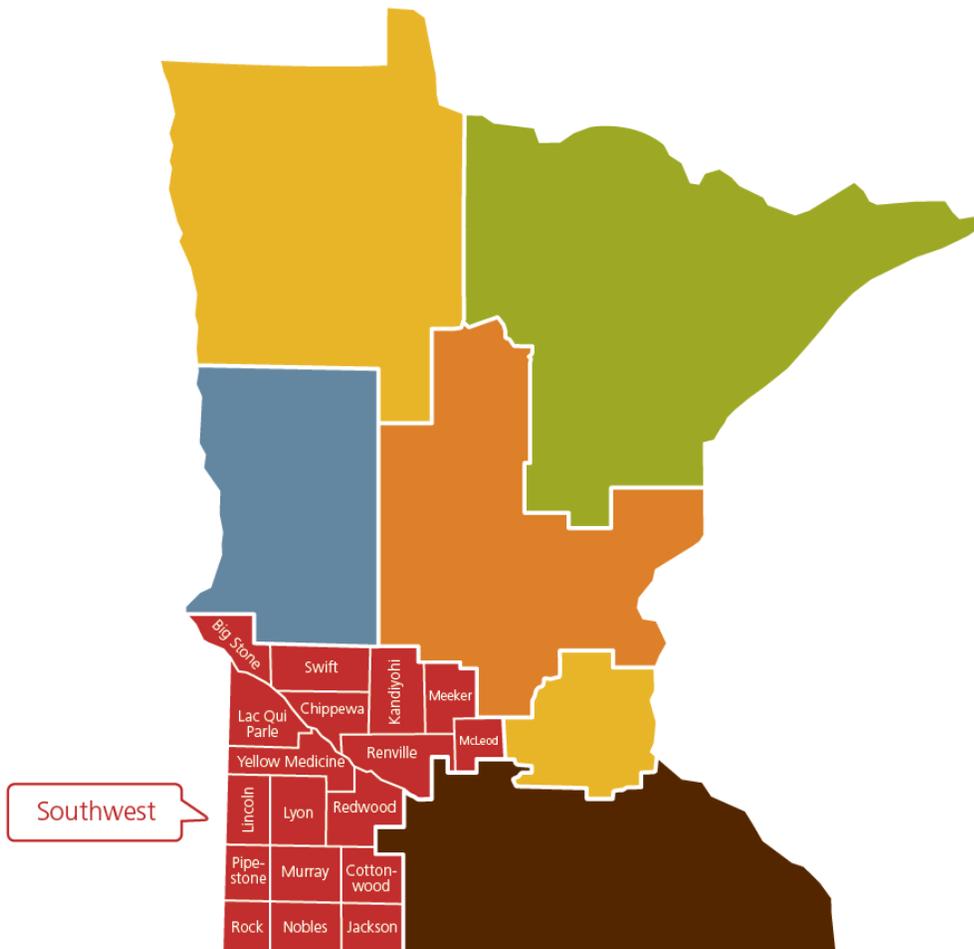




## RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA

*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.*

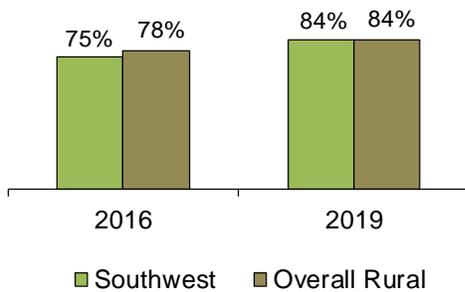
*In completing this comprehensive research study, 1,068 telephone interviews were conducted with rural Minnesotans. The full report can be found at [www.RuralPulse.org](http://www.RuralPulse.org). To provide a localized perspective, study findings for Southwest Minnesota are included in the following 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 +/- 8.3 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.*



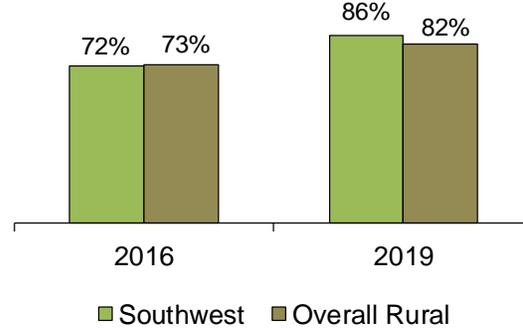
## Collaboration and Contribution

More than four in five residents in Southwest Minnesota felt that they can make a positive impact on their local community and feel residents work together effectively.

**Able to Make a Positive Community Impact**  
*Somewhat or strongly agree*



**Residents are Able to Work Together Effectively**  
*Somewhat or strongly agree*

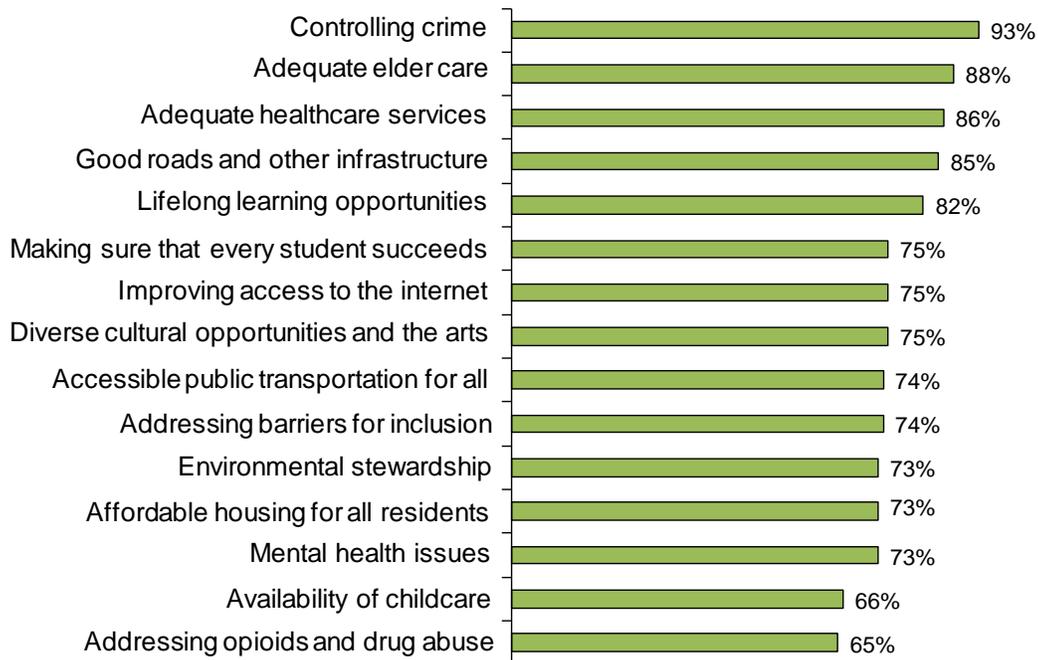


## Community Performance

Southwest residents were most likely to agree that their community performed well in crime control, caring for the elderly, healthcare, infrastructure and lifelong learning opportunities. They appointed the lowest community ratings to availability of childcare and addressing opioids and drug abuse.

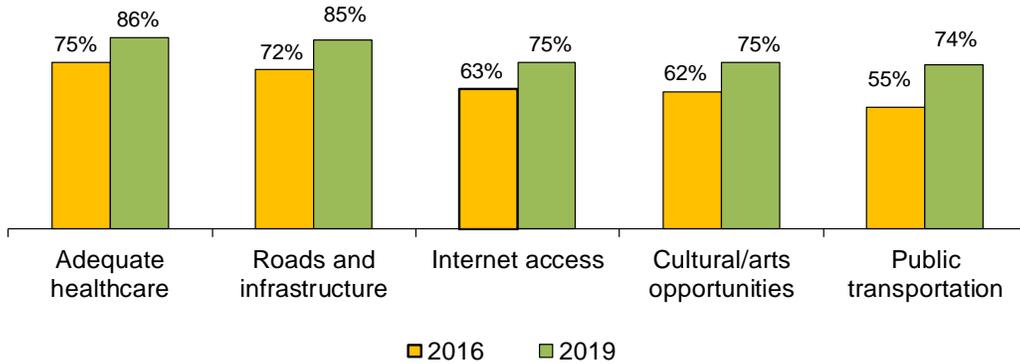
### Agree Community is Performing Well

*Somewhat or strongly agree*



Southwest residents' perceptions of community performance have improved since 2016 Rural Pulse study findings in the areas of healthcare, infrastructure; internet access; cultural/arts opportunities; and providing public transportation for all, including the disabled.

**Agree Community is Performing Well**  
*Somewhat or strongly agree*



When comparing issue significance and satisfaction, Southwest Minnesotans felt their communities were underperforming in the areas of addressing drug abuse and economic development.

**Issue Importance vs. Community Performance**  
*(Below expectations)*

	Importance Mean	Performance Mean
Addressing opioids and drug abuse	3.4	3.0
Economic development	3.3	2.9

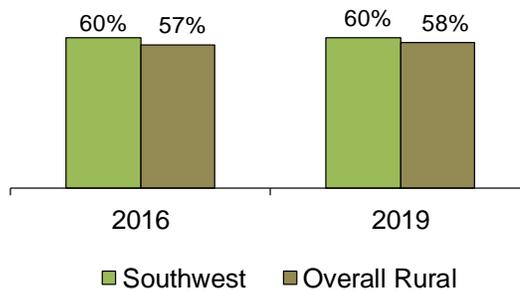
4 = High, 1 = Low

- Significantly Below Expectations
- Below Expectations

**Rural Voice**

Sixty percent of residents in Southwest Minnesota believed the needs of rural communities are important to policymakers, the same as in 2016. A significant percentage, however, do not agree that rural voice is being heard.

**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 Southwest region were said to be healthcare, jobs, economic development, affordable housing, drug abuse, mental health, barriers due to race and the availability of childcare.

### Most Critical Issues

#### Southwest

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

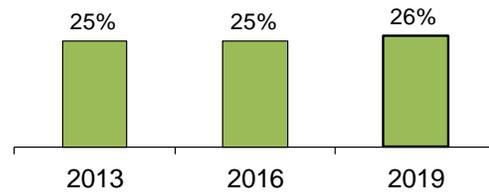
#### Overall Rural

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

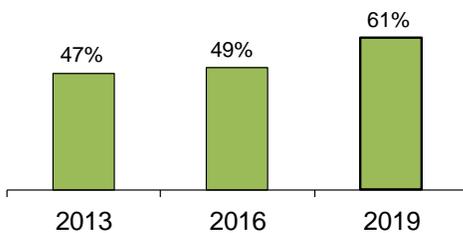
## Economic Concerns Linger, But Show Improvement

Rural Minnesotans continue to experience a rebound in the economy, with confidence increasing that there are sufficient living-wage jobs and that regional communities maintain/grow job opportunities. About a quarter in this region felt the local economy has improved within the past year. There was improvement in the belief that economic development is being promoted well. Sixty-eight percent felt there is an adequate workforce available for local businesses.

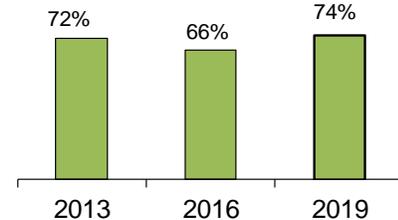
### Condition of Community's Economy Has Improved, Compared to a Year Ago *Somewhat or much better now*



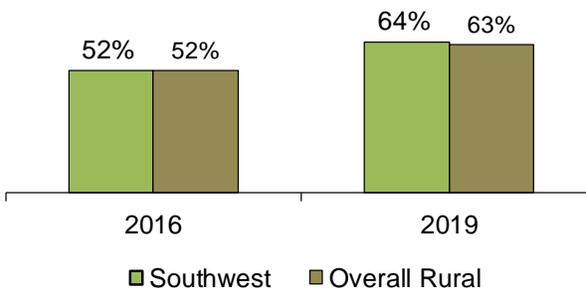
### Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages *Somewhat or strongly agree*



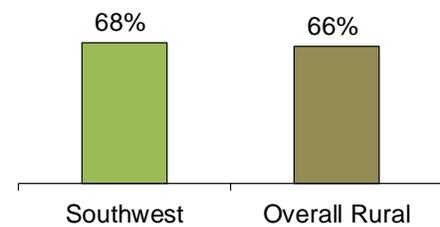
### Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities *Somewhat or strongly agree*



### Community Sufficiently Promotes Economic Development *Somewhat or strongly agree*

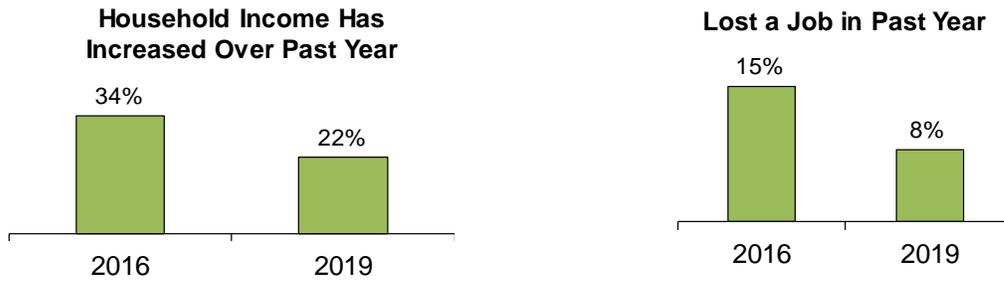


### Adequate Workforce for Businesses *Somewhat or strongly agree*



## Impact of the Economy

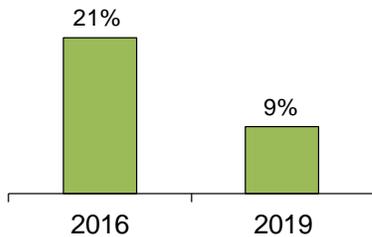
Twenty-two percent said their household income has increased over the past year. Job losses declined since 2016 study findings.



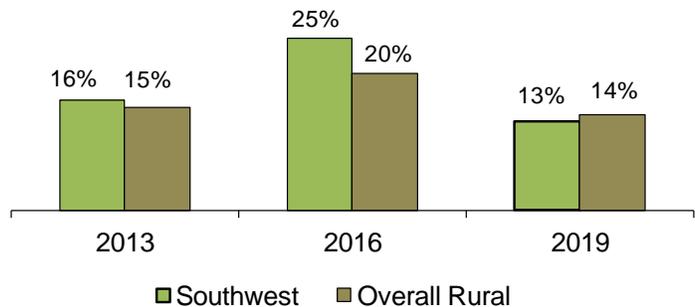
## Migration

Nine percent said that they do not expect to live in their same community five years from now; 13 percent have considered moving to a metropolitan area – a decrease from 2016 study findings. By far, job opportunities were the reason for considering migration, among those who have considered moving.

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



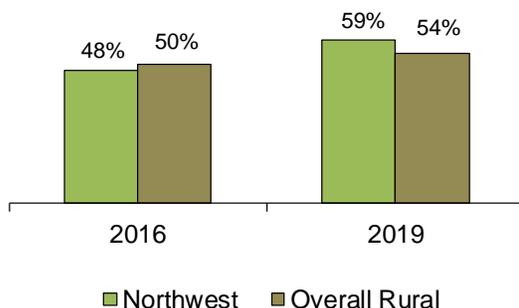
Considered Moving to Metro Area Within Past Two Years



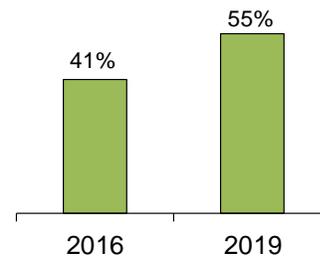
## Leadership

Fifty-nine percent believed leadership positions in their community are filled with a diversity of participants. More than half say they have served in a leadership capacity. Nearly four in 10 who have not, say that they would definitely consider serving in leadership if asked.

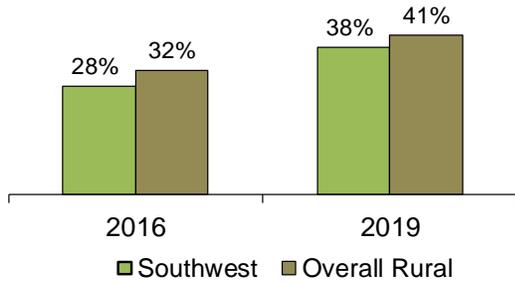
People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within Community  
*Somewhat or strongly agree*



Have Served in a Leadership Role



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

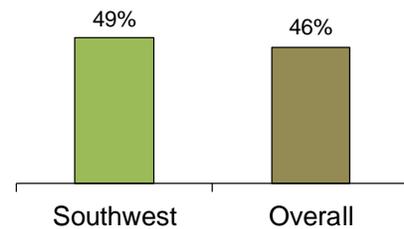


**Inclusion**

Half of residents in Southwest Minnesota said that they have at least some close friends of a different race or culture than themselves.

Southwest 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, transgender individuals, gays and lesbians, Latinos and Hispanics, African Americans, recent immigrants and those with different religious beliefs.

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



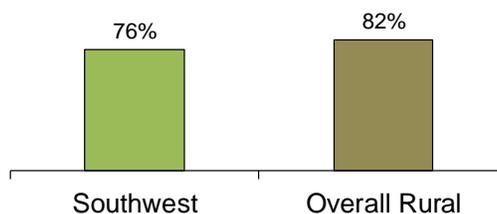
**Groups Most Believed to Experience Bias, Discrimination or Harassment Within Their Community**

*Multiple Responses Allowed*

1. Those with drug or mental health issues
2. Transgender people
3. Gays and lesbians
4. (tie) Latinos/Hispanics, African Americans, Recent immigrants
5. Religious beliefs

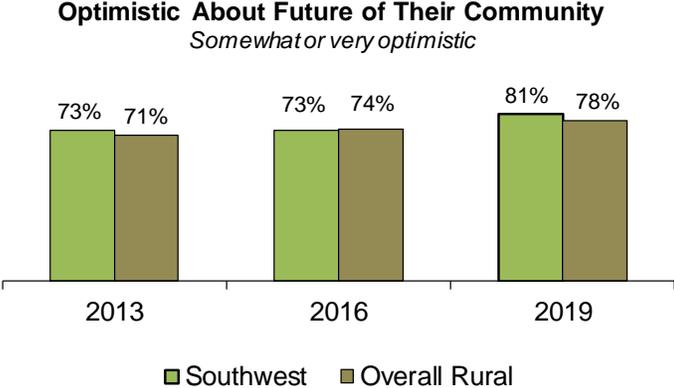
Three-quarters of Southwest Minnesotans believed people in their community are able to stand up to hatred and discrimination.

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



**Optimism Exists**

Overall, four in five Southwest region residents are optimistic about their community's future.



For more information on Rural Pulse™ and to review the comprehensive, statewide report, visit [www.RuralPulse.org](http://www.RuralPulse.org). For more on Blandin Foundation visit [www.BlandinFoundation.org](http://www.BlandinFoundation.org).