

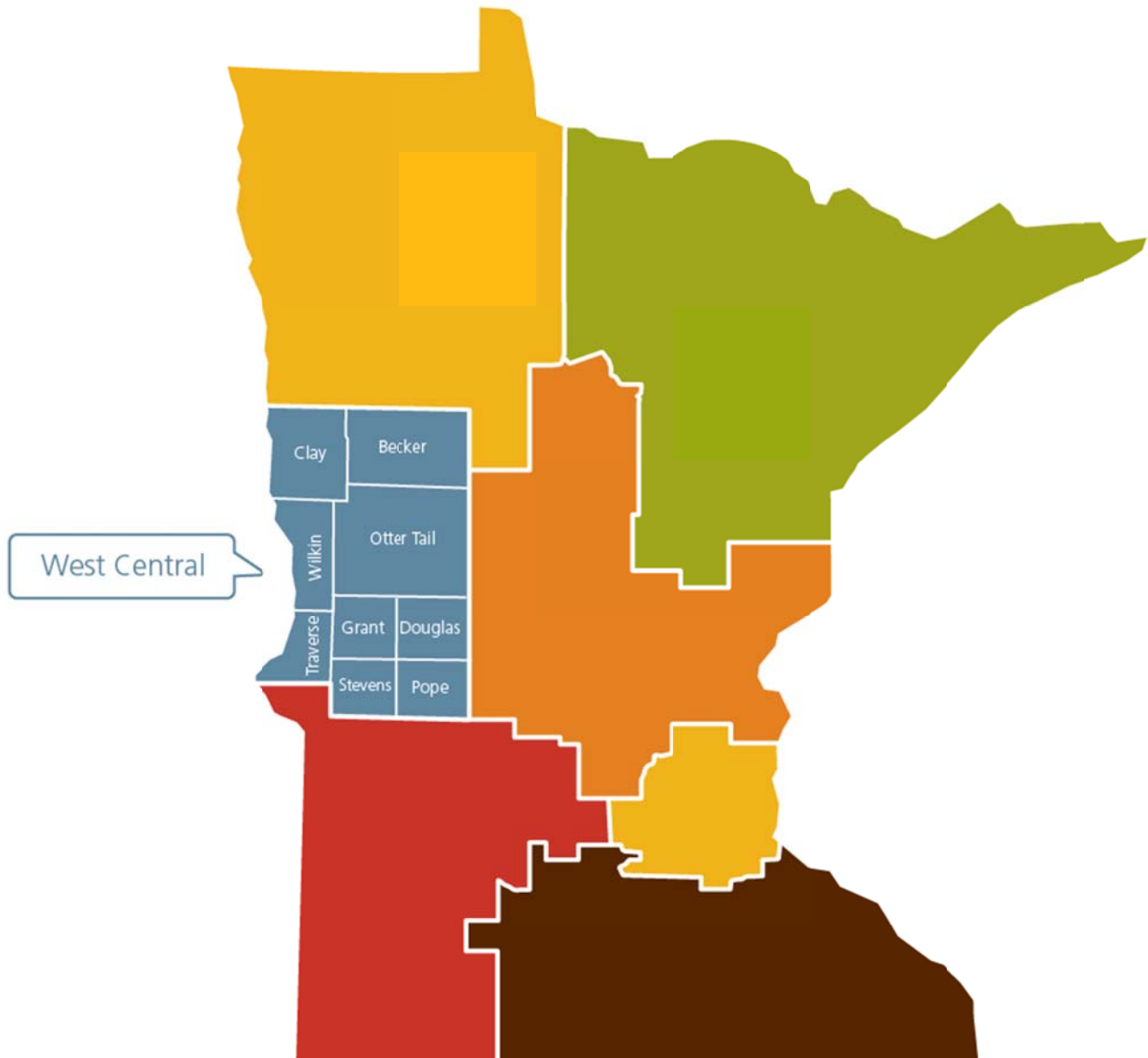


## RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA

*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 2013 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, 1,144 telephone interviews were conducted with rural Minnesotans. The full report can be found at [www.RuralPulse.org](http://www.RuralPulse.org).*

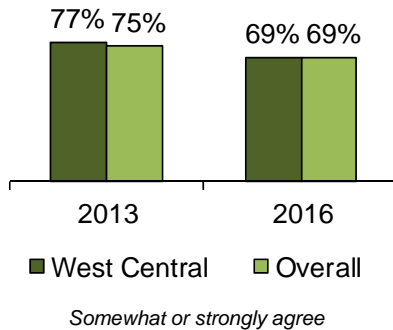
*To provide a localized perspective, study findings for West Central Minnesota are included in the following pages and contrasted with overall rural Minnesota responses.*



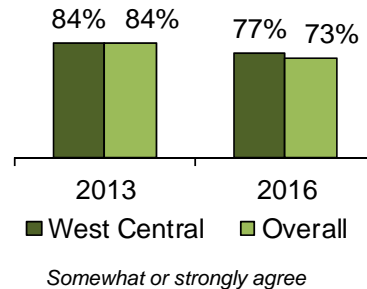
While many residents in rural Minnesota feel positive about their community, that sentiment has declined compared to 2013.

Seven in 10 West Central residents feel their community is vibrant, and even more believe it is resilient and able to recover from difficult situations. The West Central experienced a significant 24 percent decline from 2013 in belief that they are able to contribute to their community's future, although many still feel they can make a positive impact.

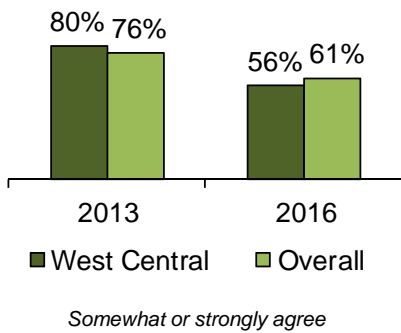
**Community is a Vibrant Place to Live and Work**



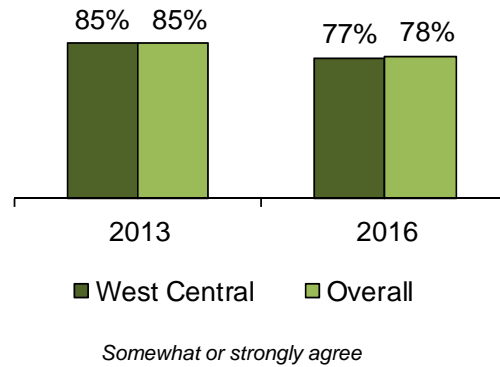
**Community is Strong, Resilient and Able to Recover from Difficult Situations**



**Feel Ownership of Community and Ability to Contribute to Its Future**

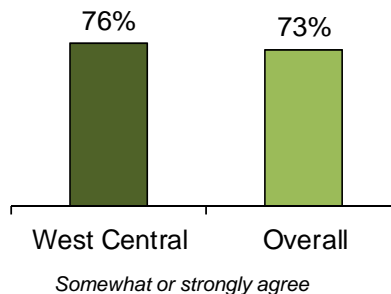


**Able to Make a Positive Community Impact**



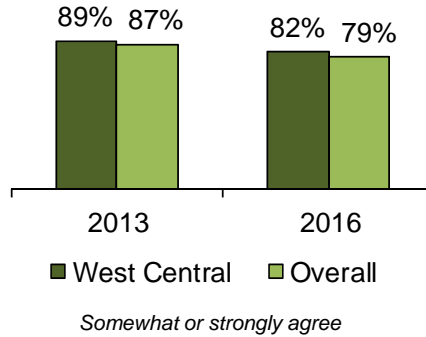
Three in four feel their community works together cohesively.

**Community Works Together Effectively to Address Local Issues**

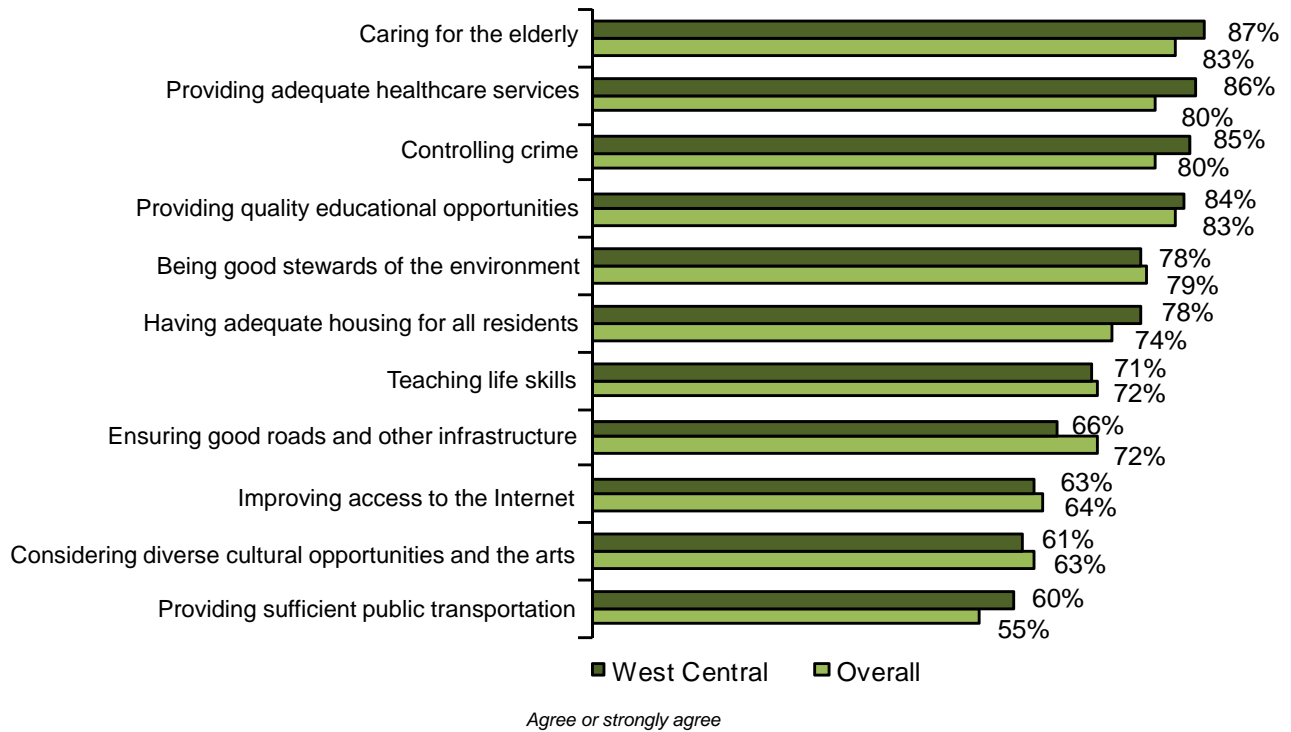


More than four in five people in the West Central region feel that access to basic community services is equal for all residents – a slight decline from 2013. The service areas of greatest concern are improving internet, diverse cultural and arts, and public transportation.

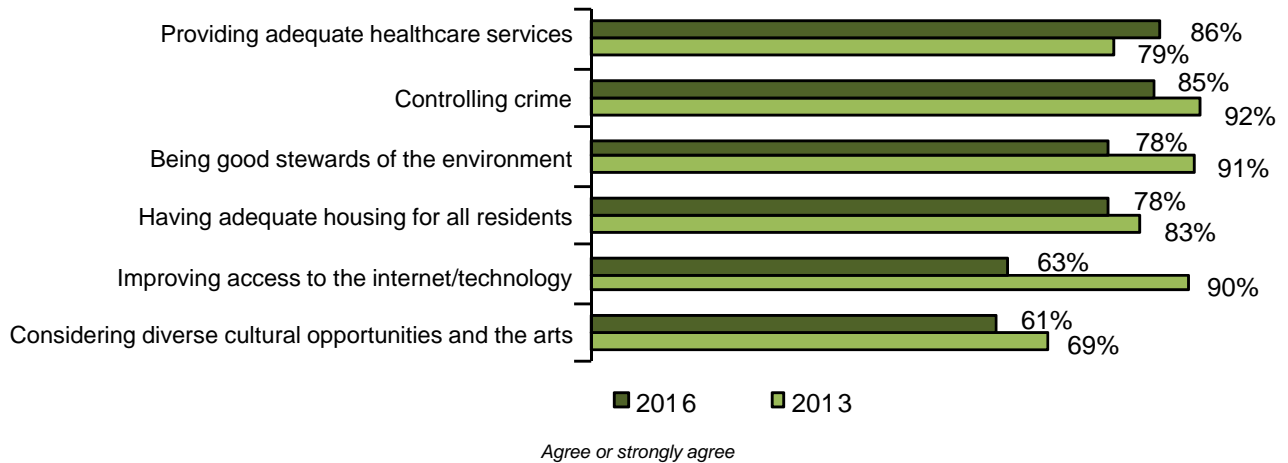
### Equal Access to Essential and Basic Services



### Community is Doing a Good Job

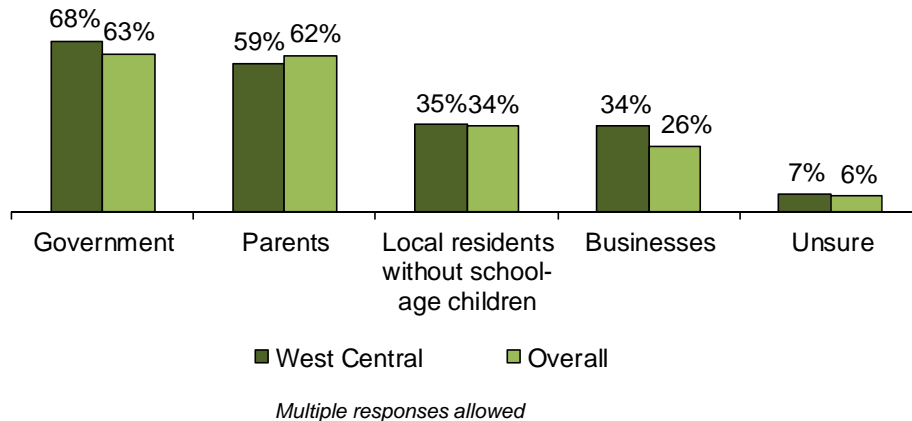


**West Central Region:  
Community is Doing a Good Job**



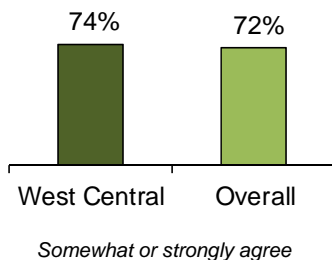
Most people in the West Central region feel the government is responsible for educational opportunities, though many believe parents hold obligation for such.

**Who Is Responsible for Ensuring Adequate, Quality Educational Opportunities**

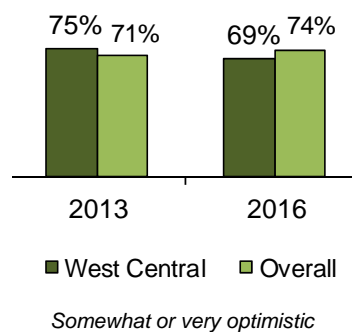


Three in four feel quality of life will improve within the next five years, although the West Central has the lowest optimism about their community's future compared to the other regions.

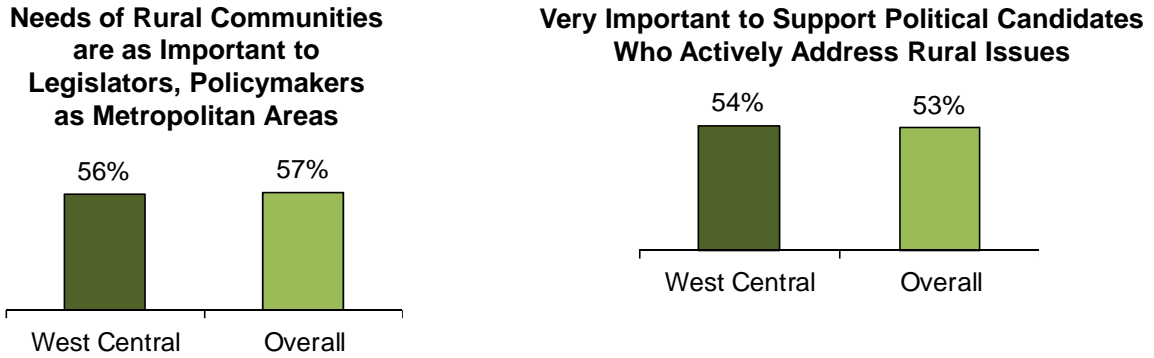
**Quality of Life Will Improve Over Next Five Years**



**Optimistic About Future of Their Community**

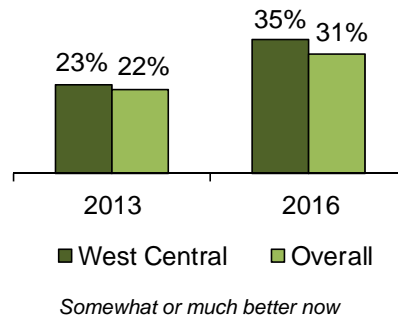


Many in the West Central region have concern that the needs of rural communities are not important to lawmakers. More than half feel supporting political candidates who address rural issues is of high importance.



More than a third feel the local economy has improved within the past year, an increase from 2013.

**Condition of Community's Economy Has Improved, Compared to a Year Ago**



While there is some sentiment that the condition of the economy has improved in Northwest Minnesota, concerns about jobs still top the priority list. The most critical issues to address in the West Central region are said to be growing local job opportunities, attracting new business, healthcare and crime.

**Most Critical to Your Community**

**West Central**

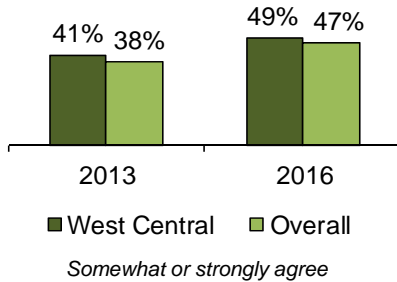
1. Growing local job opportunities
2. New business  
Healthcare
3. Crime

**Overall**

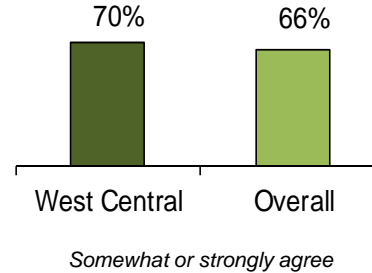
1. Growing local job opportunities
2. New business
3. Crime
4. Education

Many have concern that there are insufficient living-wage jobs (48%), that regional communities do not maintain/grow job opportunities (27%) and that there are not enough new businesses being started locally (39%).

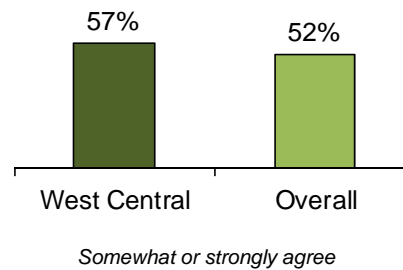
**Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages**



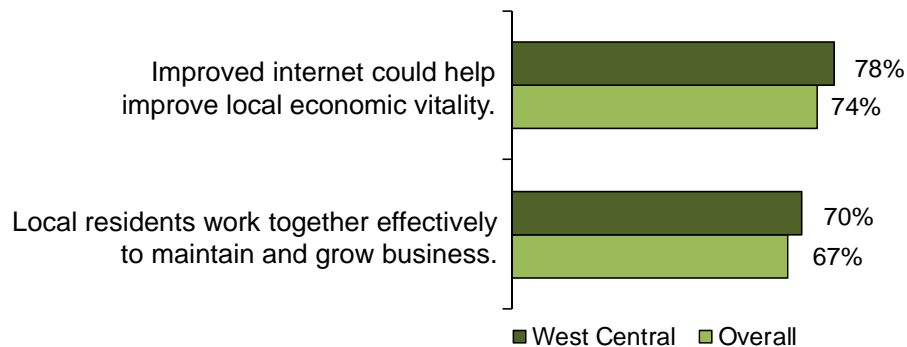
**Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities**



**Community Sufficiently Attracts New Businesses**



Most believe improved internet could assist local economy. While many are aware of local resources to help find employment, there is belief that resources to help start new businesses are lacking.

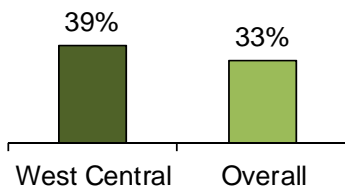


### Awareness of Job Growth Resources

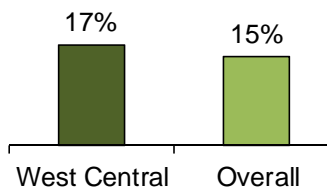


West Central residents are the most likely to say their household income has increased over past year; however, 17 percent say they have experienced a job loss within their household.

### Household Income Has Increased Over Past Year

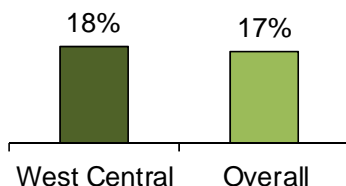


### Someone in Household Lost a Job Over Past Year

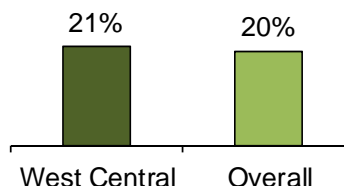


Eighteen percent do not expect to live in their same community five years from now, and 21 percent have considered moving to a larger city. Many say quality of life is the motivating factor for considering migration, followed by job opportunities. Other reasons listed include being closer to family, among others.

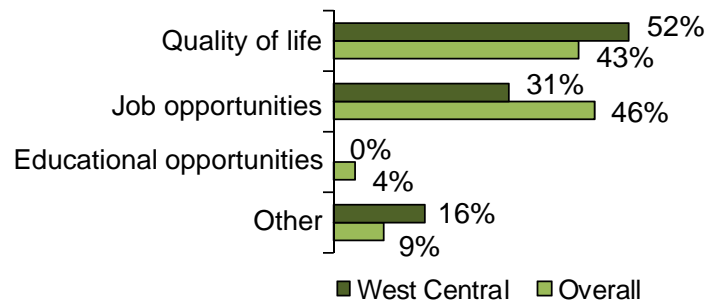
### Do Not Expect to Live in Their Community Five Years From Now



### Considered Moving to a Metro Area Within Past Two Years

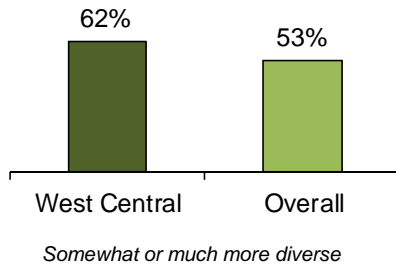


### Main Reason for Considering a Move

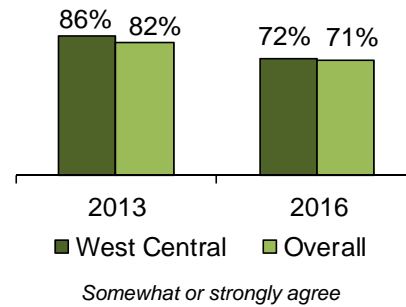


More than six in 10 feel the population in the West Central region has become more diverse in recent years; however, many do not believe their community is welcoming – showing a significant decrease from 2013 findings. Seven in 10 feel there is acceptance of differences within their community, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.

### Population Has Become More Diverse Over Past Five Years

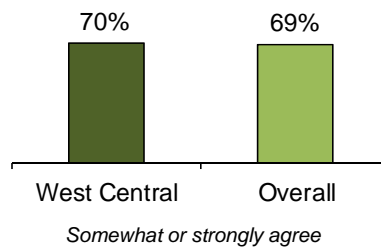


### Community is a Welcoming Place for People of All Backgrounds and Perspectives



### Community Accepts and Embraces Differences

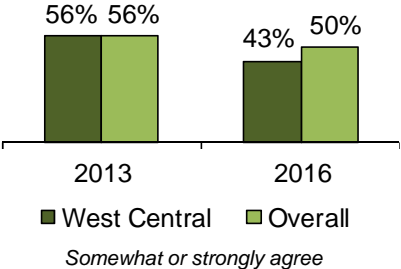
(e.g., Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Nationality)



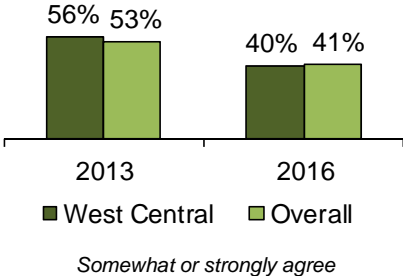


There is an even higher perception that community leadership is not inclusive compared to 2013 findings. Two in five say they have served in a leadership capacity – a decrease from 2013 findings. West Central residents are the least likely to say that they would definitely consider serving in leadership if asked.

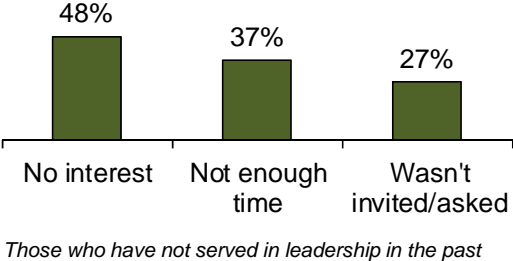
**People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within the Community**



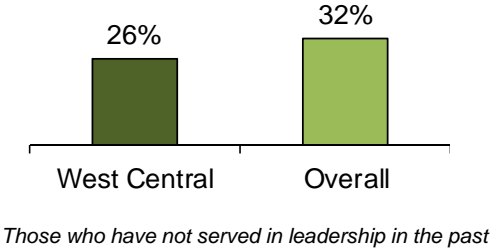
**Served In a Community Leadership Role**



**Why Haven't Served In a Leadership Role**



**Would Definitely Consider Serving If Asked**



For more information on Rural Pulse™ and to review the comprehensive, statewide report, visit [www.RuralPulse.org](http://www.RuralPulse.org). Additional questions on the community enrichment efforts of the Blandin Foundation can be directed to [www.BlandinFoundation.org](http://www.BlandinFoundation.org) or 877-882-2257.