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Consulting

# **Social Capital Survey Central Minnesota**

*Final Report*

Prepared by:  
UpFront Consulting  
June 17, 2004



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## KEY POINTS

The Central Minnesota Community Foundation commissioned a telephone survey of residents of Central Minnesota. The survey asked about the connections individuals have with others in the community referred to as “social capital.” Here are key findings:

- Central Minnesotans are generally quite well off in terms of social capital. This is based on comparisons with similar surveys conducted nationally and in two Midwestern cities.
- Attitudes contributing to social capital that are particularly strong in Central Minnesota include trusting others and interest in the political process.
- Behaviors that build social capital and are more common in this area include working on community projects, donating blood, attending club and organization meetings, and volunteering.
- Residents between the age of and generally have the most social capital. Those and younger, as well as those and over, tend to have less social capital than those of middle age.
- Social capital is tied to socio economic status. Higher household incomes, home ownership, and especially higher education are all closely related to social capital.
- Men and women tend to have similar amounts of social capital. However, those who are married generally have more social capital than those who are not. Having children is also related to higher social capital.
- People who leave the community on weekends to summer cabins or who winter elsewhere show similar amounts of social capital to permanent residents. Commuting or more miles to work does not appear to decrease social capital.
- The three strongest demographic “predictors” of social capital are education, income and marital status.
- Top behavioral predictors of social capital include donations to religious and charitable organizations and holding office in a club or association.
- Another predictor of social capital is attitude including how well individuals say they trust people of other races.

This final report describes findings from the Social Capital telephone survey conducted in Central Minnesota in March, 2004.

“Social Capital” is a method of measuring the value of connections that individuals have to other individuals and to their communities. This survey looks at a variety of indicators found, in national research, to be good measures of social capital.

The survey is a short form of a survey conducted in 100 communities and regions in the summer of 2003. A national survey, with a sample chosen to be representative of the entire US, was conducted at the same time.

The Central Minnesota research includes 100 surveys. This is the same number of surveys as most of the community and regional surveys, so the data is roughly comparable to each. Note, however, that those surveys were conducted in the summer of 2003, before the events of September 11, 2001. People who study social capital generally believe the impact of 9/11 increased social capital in the US.

In this report we compare the frequencies obtained in the Central Minnesota survey with those:

- From the national sample of 100 surveys
- A large midwestern community of 100 surveys. This survey area has a population of approximately 100,000. It is identified in the report as Community A.
- A smaller midwestern community of 100 surveys. This survey area has a population of about 50,000. It is Community B in this report.

The population of the Central Minnesota survey area falls between the two. The area surveyed includes ZIP codes in four school districts: St. Cloud Area, Sauk Rapids Rice, Sartell St. Stephen, and ROCORI.

The Central Minnesota survey had a lower cooperation rate, but a higher response rate than the national survey. The Central Minnesota data has a margin or error of  $\pm 3\%$  at the 95% confidence interval.

The researchers standardized the Central Minnesota dataset to match the national dataset. Overall, the researchers believe the surveys are very comparable.

Further information or analysis is available from the researchers.

# TRUST

## Overall trust of people

The chart below shows responses to the question “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?” The two response choices were “People can be trusted” and “You can't be too careful” only the former is shown in the chart. In addition, a “Depends” answer was allowed but only if it was volunteered.

In Central Minnesota, nearly seven in ten respondents believe you can trust people. Three in ten believe “You can't be too careful.”

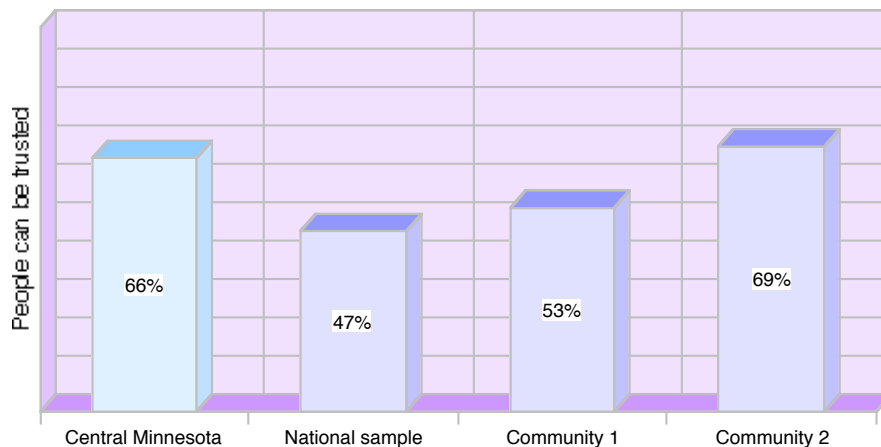
## Trust of neighbors, police, shops

The next set of three questions asked community residents how much they trust their neighbors, police in their community, and people who work in the stores where they shop. In all three areas, Central Minnesotans are more trusting than their peers in the national survey.

The charts showing this data are on page six.

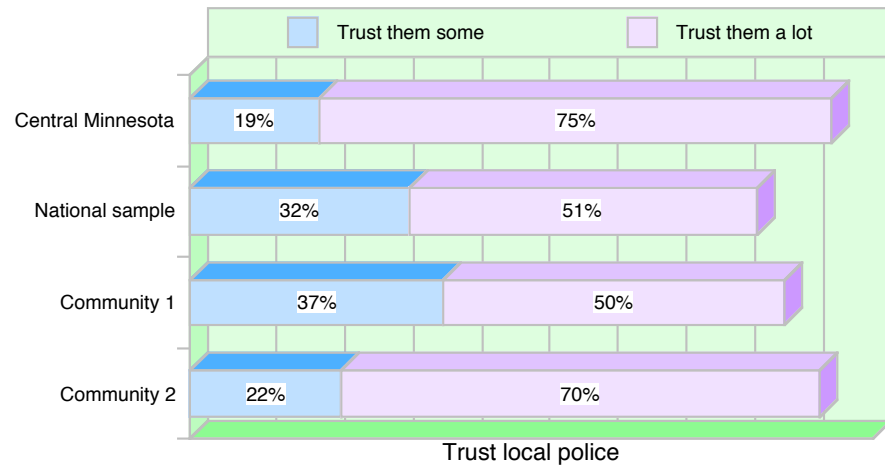
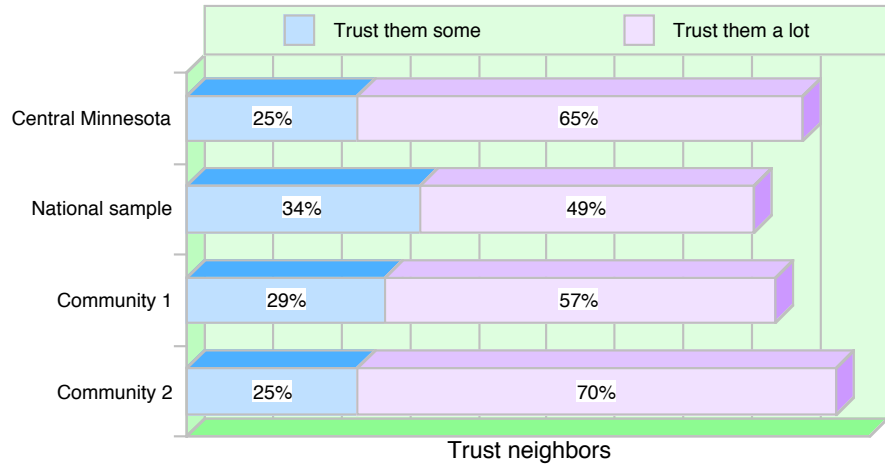
## Trust of racial groups

A similar set of three questions asked respondents how well they trust three different racial groups. The charts on page seven show the responses. Central Minnesota again ranks higher than the national survey on trust, showing similar results to the smaller Midwestern community. That community and Central Minnesota are more racially homogeneous than the other two survey areas; see the demographics section at the end of this report for more information.

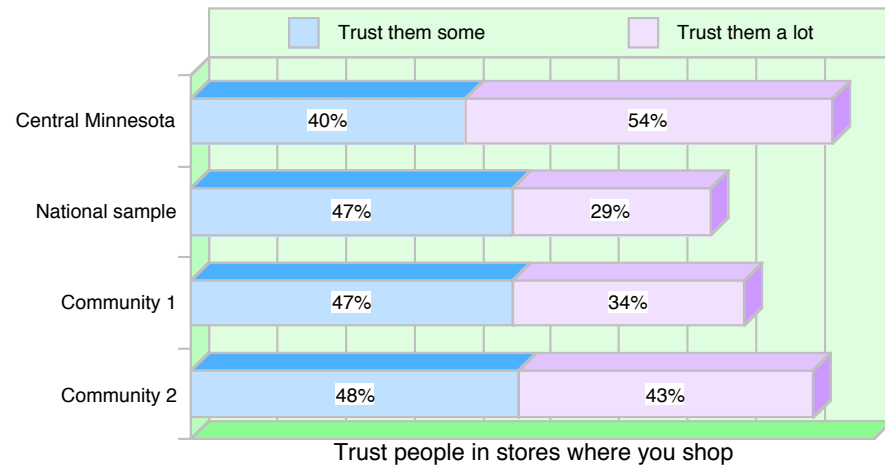


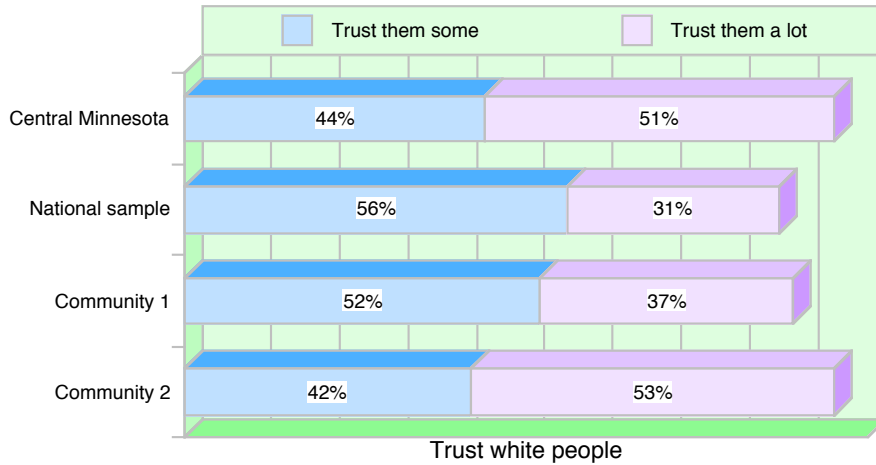
Central Minnesota ranks well above the national sample and the larger Midwestern community but is just slightly behind the smaller Midwestern community. A response of “Depends” was allowed, but only if volunteered by the respondent. Only 4% of Central Minnesota residents gave that response.

The wording of these three questions followed an identical pattern: "Next, we'd like to know how much you trust different groups of people. First, think about (GROUP). Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?"

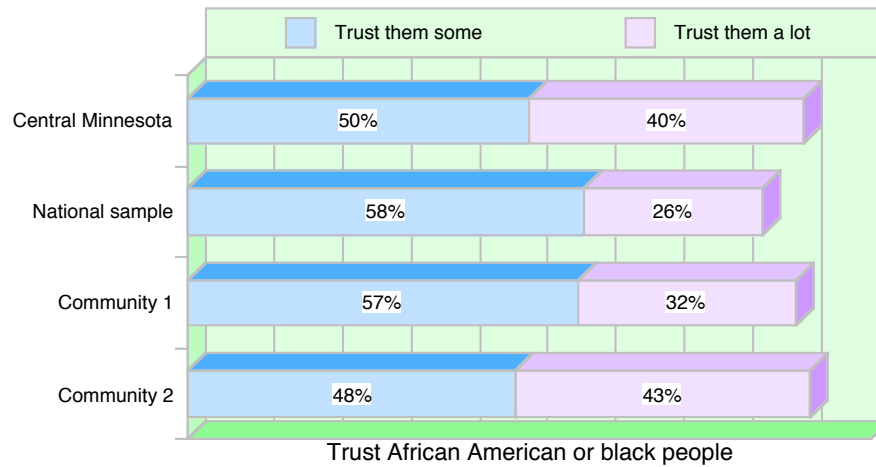


Note the higher percent of "Trust them some" and the lower percent of "Trust them a lot" responses for this question compared to the two above.

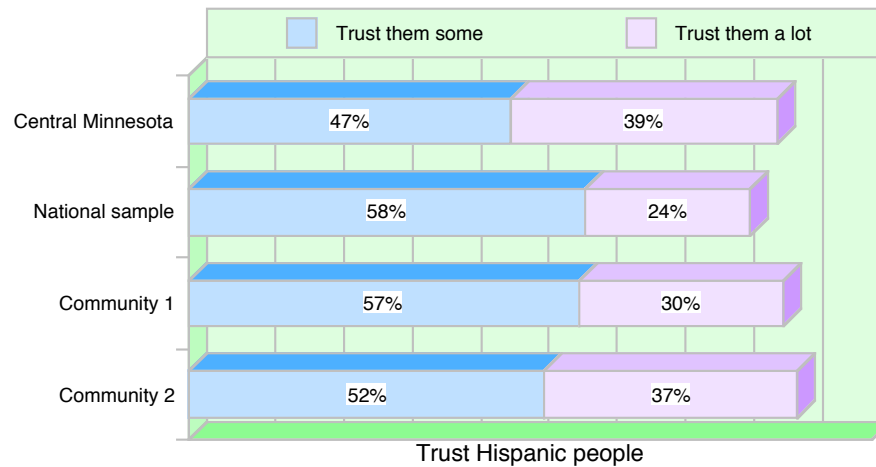




These three questions used the same pattern as the previous three questions. Interviewers reported a few respondents who were upset by these questions, believing them to be “racist.”

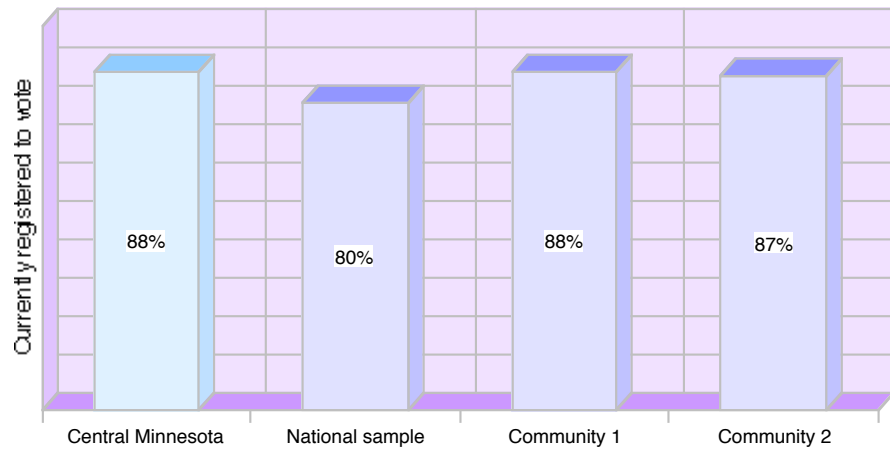


Throughout most of the survey, Central Minnesota shows a similar pattern to Community 2, a smaller Midwestern city. This is also true for these three questions. Of the four groups, community 2 and Central Minnesota are the least diverse; fewer than 5% of respondents are non-Caucasian.



### Voter registration

The chart below shows that voter registration in Central Minnesota is high, according to survey respondents. Only about one in ten are not registered to vote. Both other Midwestern communities also show registration higher than the national average.



These figures may not correlate closely with figures from voter registration rolls. Not only do some tend to over-report to voting questions, others are unaware of voter registration procedures and assume they are registered. The comparison to other areas may also be skewed by different voter registration methods.

### Interest in politics

The chart at the top of the facing page shows that about seven in ten respondents confess an interest in politics.

### Trust in government

The bottom two charts on the facing page show that trust in government is not particularly high. Fewer than four in ten trust the national government most of the time and just more than five in ten trust the local government most of the time.

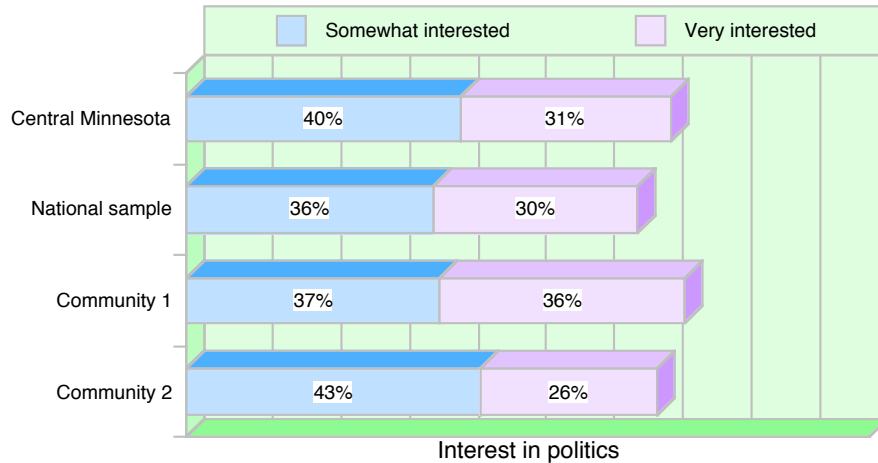
### Political leaning

The interviewers asked participants to describe their political ideology. The chart below shows that more described themselves as conservatives than as liberals:

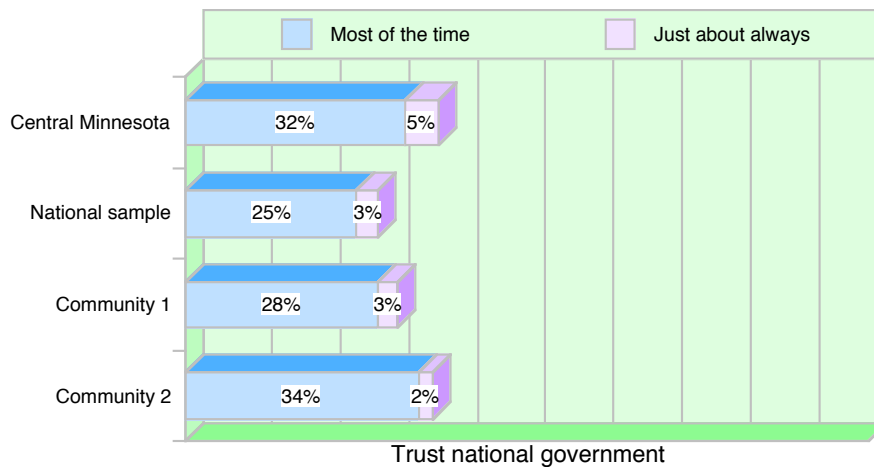
	Cent MN	National	Comm 1	Comm 2
Very conservative	12%	15%	13%	14%
Moderately conservative	36%	35%	28%	39%
Middle-of-the-road	28%	26%	31%	28%
Moderately liberal	19%	16%	23%	15%
Very liberal	6%	8%	5%	3%
Something else	0%	1%	1%	1%

Overall, Central Minnesota is very similar to all three of the other groups. Note in particular that the percent who say they are "Middle-of-the-road" is very similar for all four.

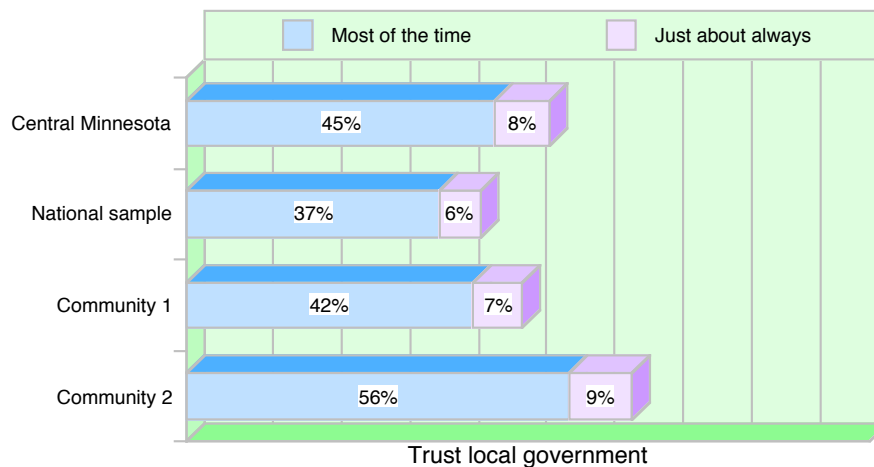




The four response choices for this question ranged from “Very interested” to “Not at all interested.”



The five response choices for this question and the question below ranged from “Just about all the time” to “Hardly ever.” In Central Minnesota 13% say they hardly ever trust national government compared to 7% who say they hardly ever trust local government.



Note that trust of local government is highest in Community 2, an area with a much smaller population compared to Community 1 or to Central Minnesota.



## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

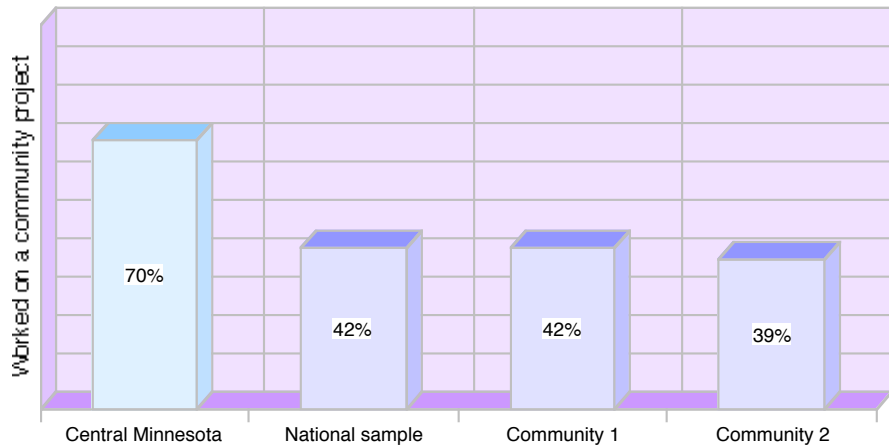
### Comparison of community activities

The charts on these two pages compare a list of community activities.

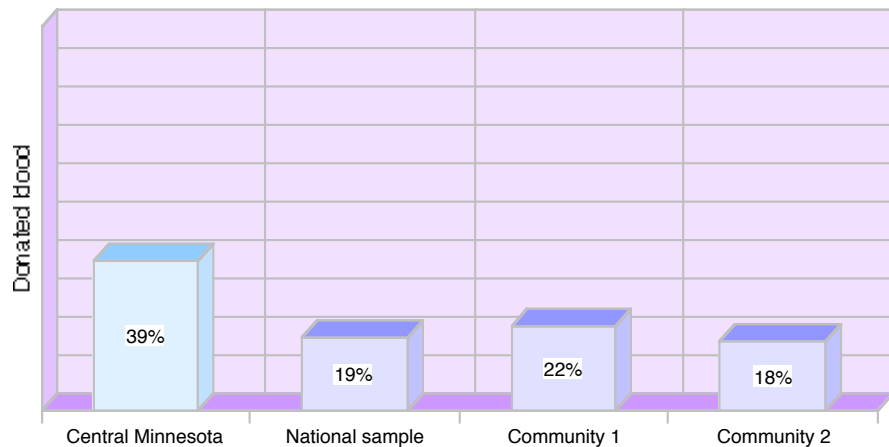
These questions asked how many times individuals did each of these activities. The charts below simply show the percent who did or did not do these things. The mean, or average, number of times respondents report completing these activities are shown in the side notes next to each item.

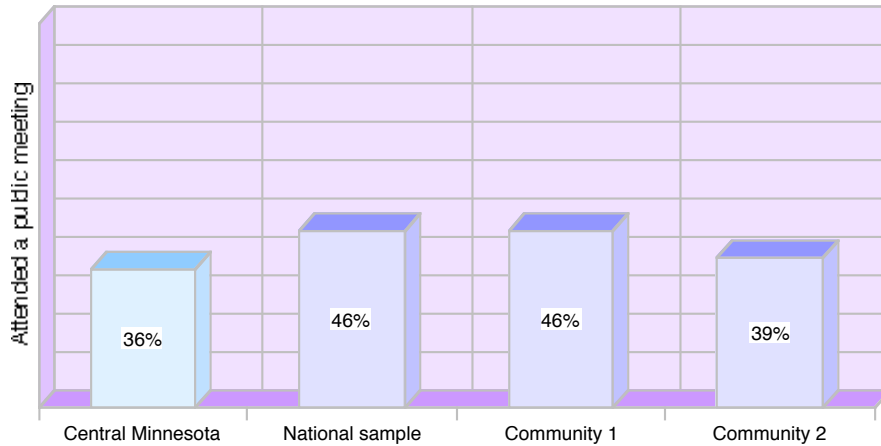
In general Central Minnesota is equal to or above the national survey averages for each item. The only exception is “Attending public meetings.”

The text of this question was: “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) worked on a community project?” The mean (average) response was 4.33 times. Note that St. Cloud is considerably higher than all other groups. The question wording was identical in all cases.

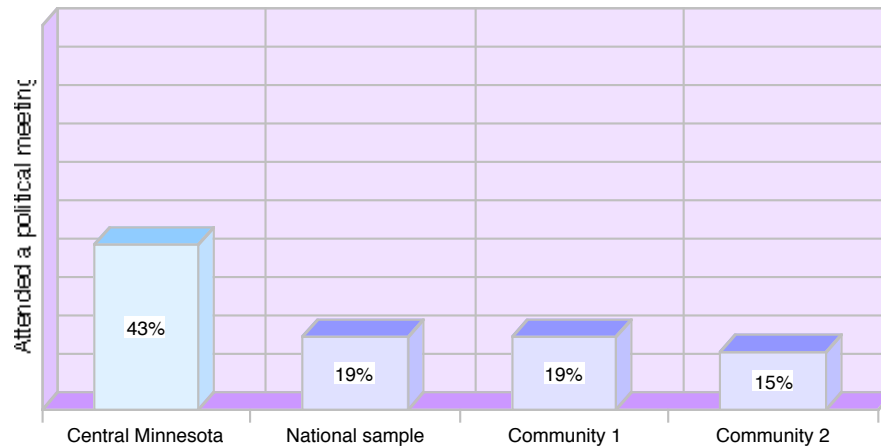


This question was worded “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) donated blood?” The mean (average) response was .80. Note that the other three groups were surveyed in the summer and fall of 2000, before September 11, 2001. Since that time blood drive activity has increased which may partially explain the higher response in the St. Cloud area.

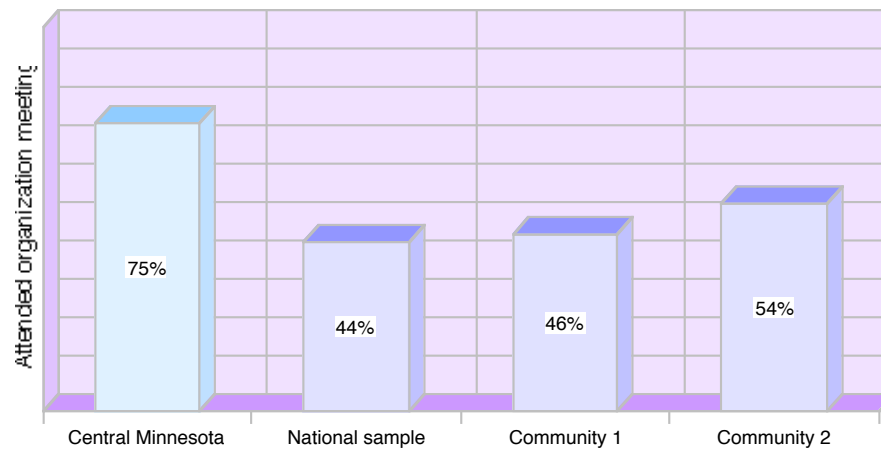




This question was worded, “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) attended any public meeting in which there was discussion of town or school affairs?” The mean response in Central Minnesota was 2.45. This is one of very few indicators where Central Minnesota responses fell below the national survey.



This question asked, “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) attended a political meeting or rally?” More than twice as many respondents in Central Minnesota have done this. Note that the survey was conducted in late March, shortly after the precinct caucuses. Respondents in states without such a system may have less opportunities to attend political meetings. The mean response to this question for Central Minnesota was 1.05.



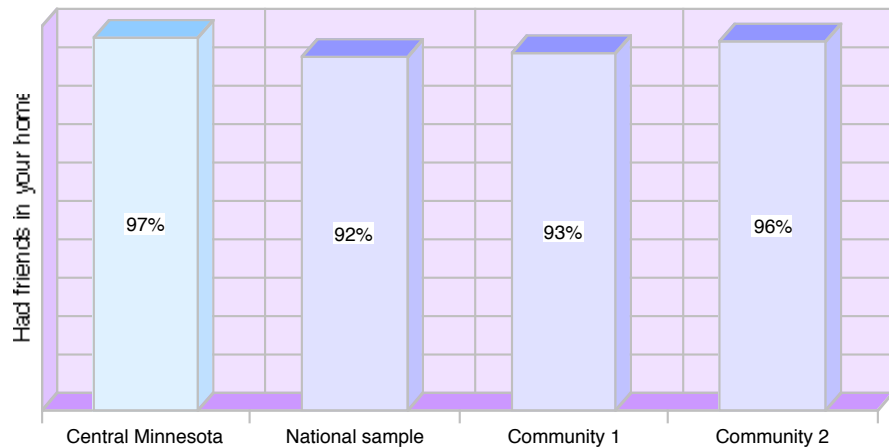
The wording of this question was: “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) attended any club or organizational meeting (not including meetings for work)?” The mean response was 6.37. Central Minnesotans appear to be less likely to attend public meetings but more likely to attend organization or club meetings.

### Comparison of social activities

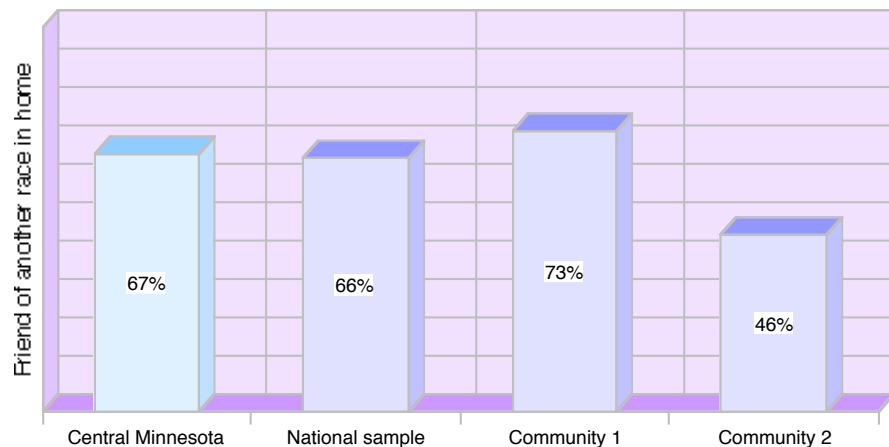
These charts show the number of times people socialize with neighbors, with people of another race, with people outside their own neighborhood, and with people they consider influential.

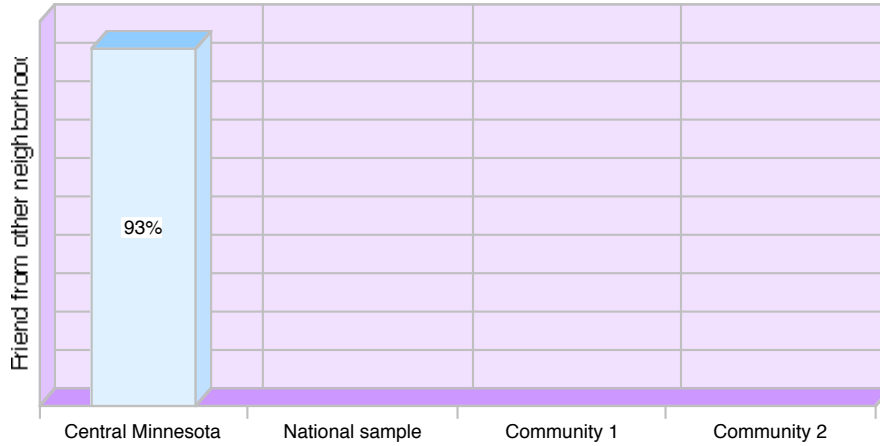
All questions asked for the number of times respondents had done these things in the past months. The charts show the percent who have done each item one or more times; the side notes show the mean, or average, number of times for Central Minnesota.

The wording of this question was “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) had friends over to your home?” The mean (average) response for Central Minnesota was 21.03.

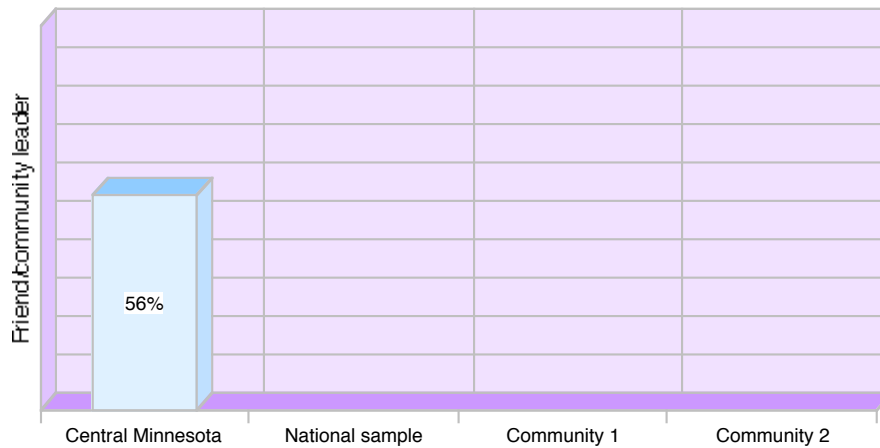


This question asked “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) been in the home of a friend of a different race or had them in your home?” The mean response was 6.91. This is one question where Central Minnesota is considerably above the smaller Midwestern community identified as Community 2., although neither is very diverse. The larger Midwestern community (Community 1) is much more diverse (13% non-Caucasian).





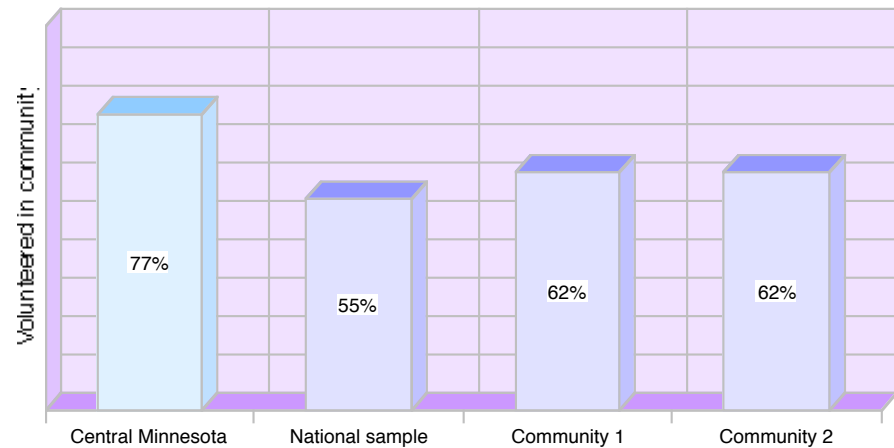
This question asked: “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) been in the home of someone of a different neighborhood or had them in your home?” The mean response was 14.02. The national survey used a slightly different question, so the two are not comparable.



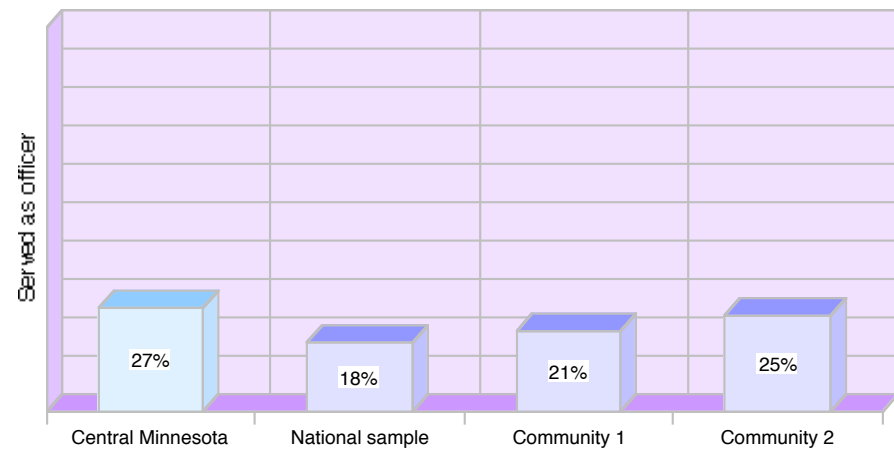
The wording for this question was: “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) been in the home of someone you consider to be a community leader or had one in your home?” The mean response was 2.88. Again, this question cannot be compared.

These two questions asked about volunteering in the community including the number of times doing so and about serving as an officer of a club or organization.

The wording for this question was “(How many times in the past twelve months have you) volunteered?” The mean (average) response was 9.74. Central Minnesotans volunteer in greater numbers than their peers in the other two Midwestern communities.

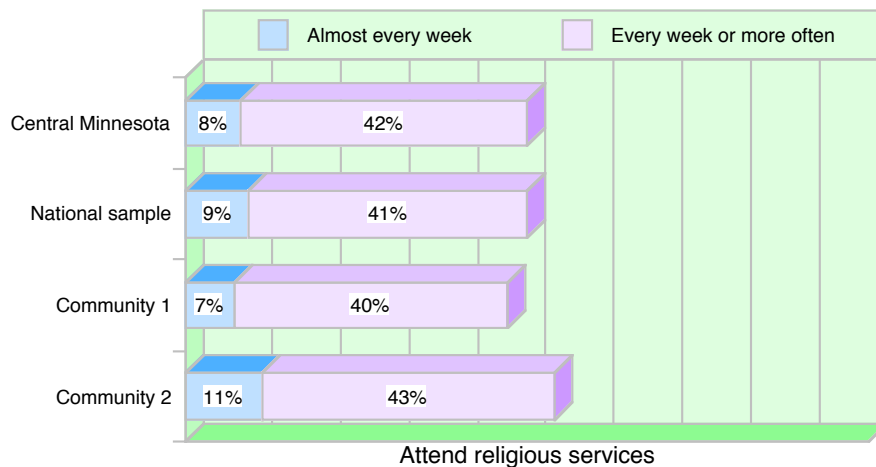


This question did not ask for a number, but simply “In the past twelve months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization?” Shown are the “Yes” responses.

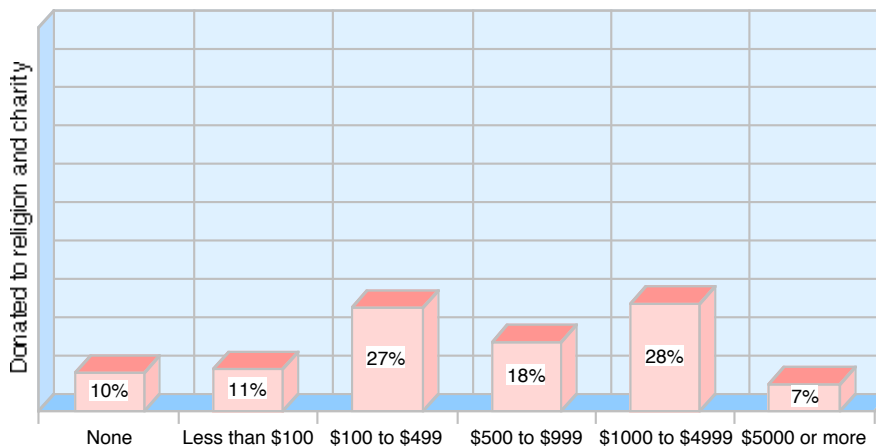


## RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE ACTIVITY

Two questions asked about this activity. The first gave a number of choices for how often the respondent attended religious services. The second gave a number of categories to describe how much the individual donated



The wording for this question was “Not including weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?” Interviewers probed with choices ranging from “Every week” to “Never.” In Central Minnesota, nearly two in ten (18%) attend religious services less often than a few times per year. While St. Cloud mirrors the national survey in regular church-goers, the percent who seldom or never attend religious services is higher here than nationally, or in the other two Midwestern cities.

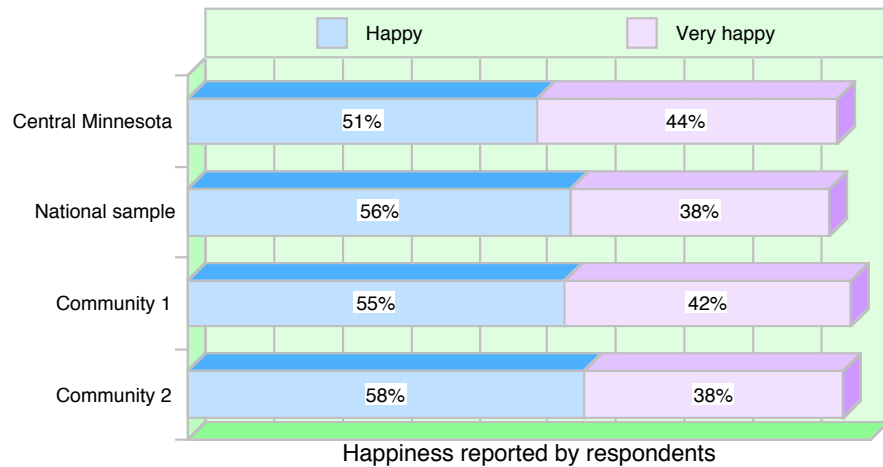


More than three in ten have given \$1,000 or more in the past 12 months to religious and charitable organizations. The amount donated is not comparable to the other surveys. Those surveys separated religious donations from charitable donations, and the answers were categorical rather than absolute. Note the “double-hump” distribution, likely an artifact of the scale used. If absolute values had been asked for and plotted, no doubt the distribution would have been more normal.

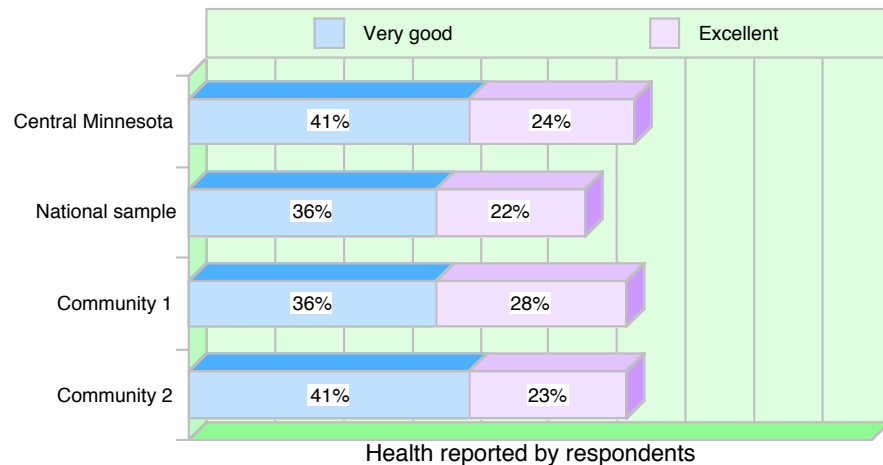
## HAPPINESS AND HEALTH

These two questions asked respondents to rate their happiness and health.

This question had four response choices ranging from “Very happy” to “Not happy at all.” In Central Minnesota, only about one in one hundred (1.4%) reported themselves to be very unhappy. Generally, the responses are very similar between all three communities and the national survey.



This question had five response choices, ranging from “Excellent” to “Poor.” In Central Minnesota, about one in 50 (2.4%) report their health to be poor. All three Midwestern surveys report better health than the national survey.



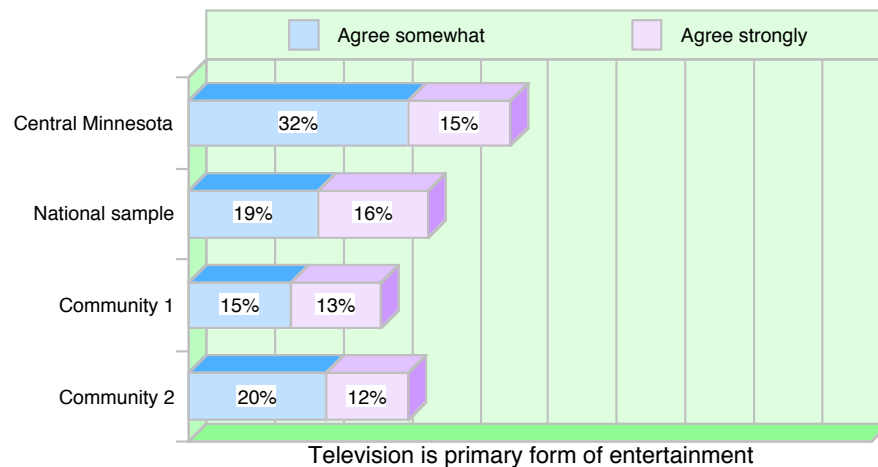


## ENTERTAINMENT

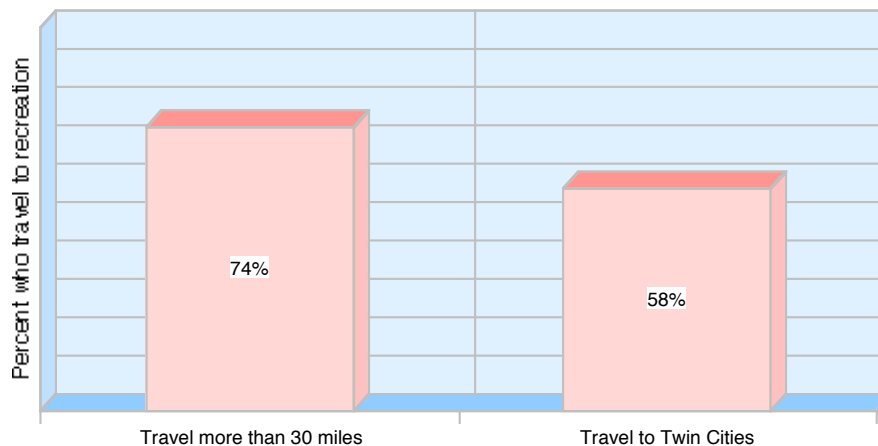
Three questions asked about entertainment, including television viewing and traveling for entertainment.

Central Minnesota residents appear to watch more television than their counterparts in other parts of the country, but this may be influenced by the time of the year in which the survey was conducted.

More than seven in ten area residents report traveling more than miles for recreation or other activities in the past month. Nearly six in ten traveled to the Twin Cities for recreation during that time.



Although Central Minnesota appears higher, note that the survey took place in March. For the other three surveys, the bulk of the interviewing occurred in the summer, which may influence these findings.



These two questions asked, “In a typical month, on how many days do you travel (more than 30 miles from the local area/to the Twin Cities) for recreation or other activities?” These are local questions not asked in other surveys. Shown in the charts are the percent of all respondents who traveled one or more times.

Note that the interviews took place in mid-March when school sporting events and tournaments are common. The mean responses were 3.80 (traveling more than 30 miles) and 1.53 (Twin Cities).

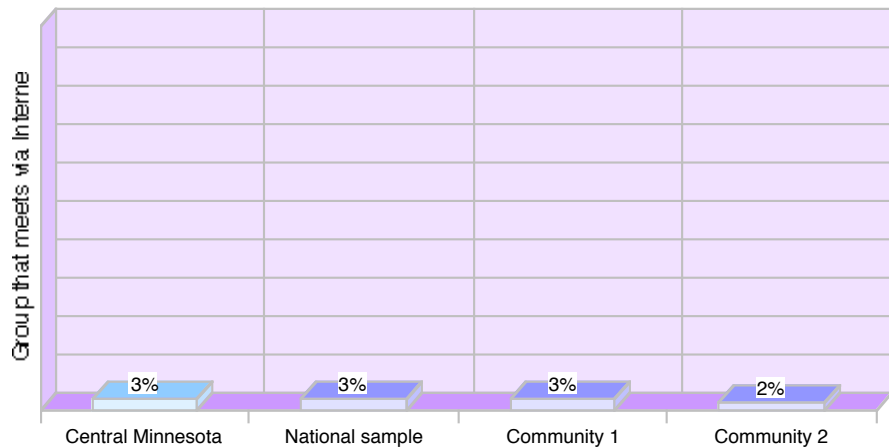


## INTERNET AND ON-LINE ACTIVITY

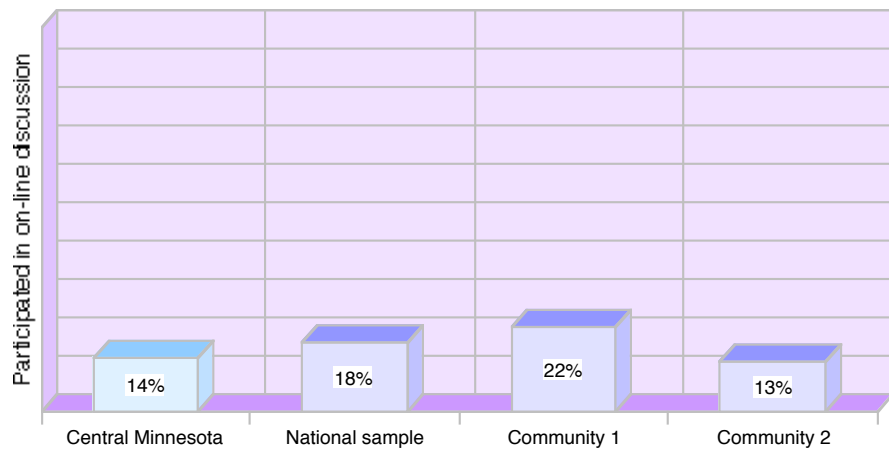
These two questions asked about connections people make via the Internet.

Very few local residents participate in a group that meets via the Internet. However, more than one in ten have joined an on line discussion over the past months.

This question was worded “Are you involved in any group that meets over the Internet?” As shown, it is not common in Central Minnesota or in any of the other surveys.



This question asked, “How many times in the past 12 months have you participated in an on-line discussion over the Internet?” The mean (average) response for Central Minnesota was 2.14, compared to 3.70 for the national survey. The other three surveys were completed nearly four years earlier than the Central Minnesota survey.

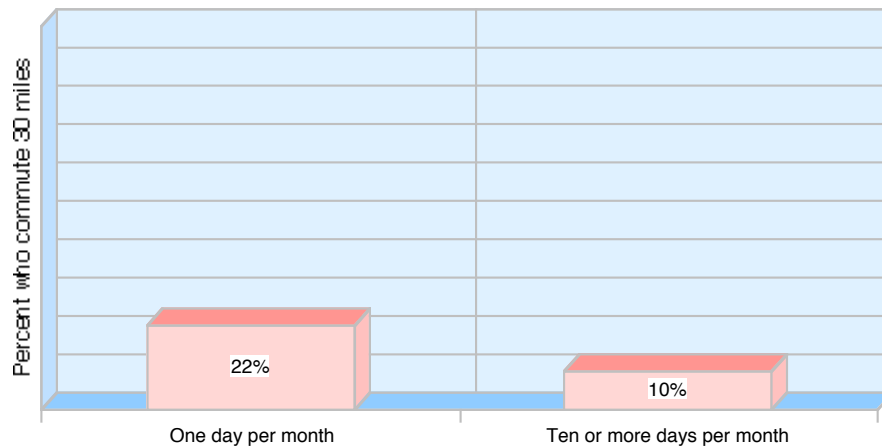


## COMMUTING

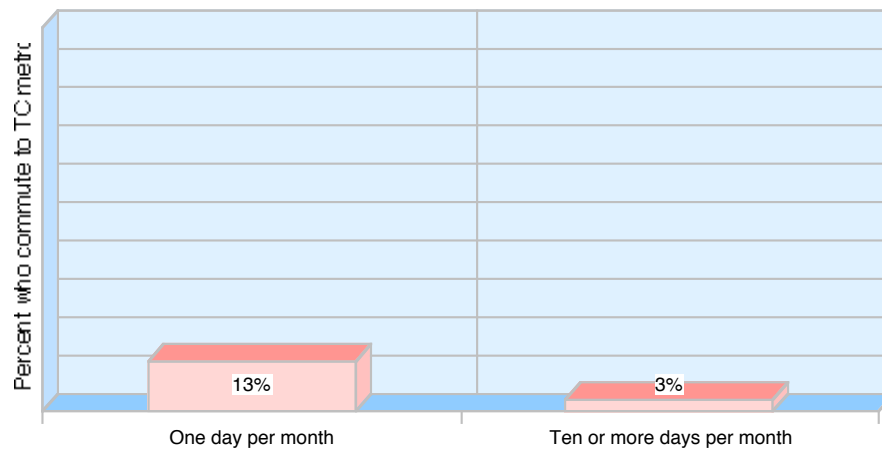
Two questions asked only in Central Minnesota inquired about commuting.

The first asked respondents for the number of days they travel more than 30 miles to work. More than two in ten do so at least one day per month. The number who do so ten days or more per month slips to one in ten.

Similarly, more than one in ten travel to the Twin Cities to work at least one day per month. However, fewer than one in twenty travel to the Twin Cities ten or more days per month.



This question asked, “In a typical month, on how many days do you travel more than 30 miles away from your residence to work?” Note that the majority who travel do so fewer than ten days per month. This no doubt includes those who travel as part of sales, customer service, construction and similar jobs but are based in Central Minnesota.



This question was a follow-up to the previous question; only those who provided a number to the question above answered this question. It was worded, “On how many of those days do you travel to the Twin Cities metro area to work?”

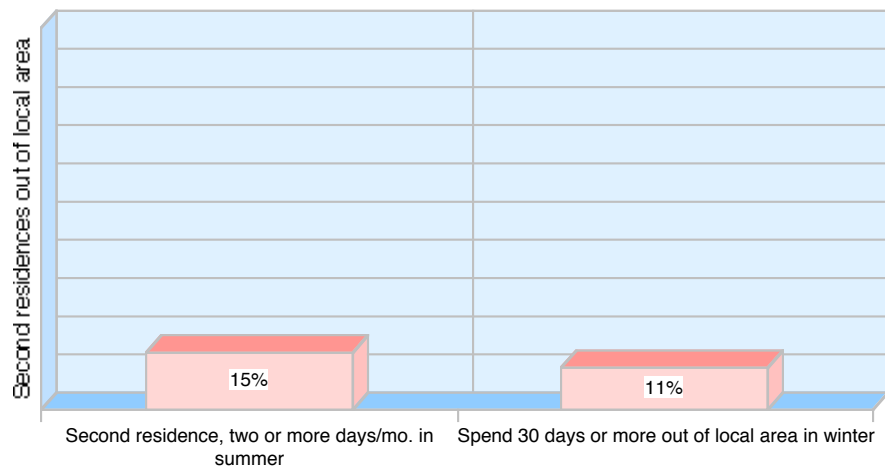


## SUMMER, WINTER, AND LONG-TERM RESIDENCE

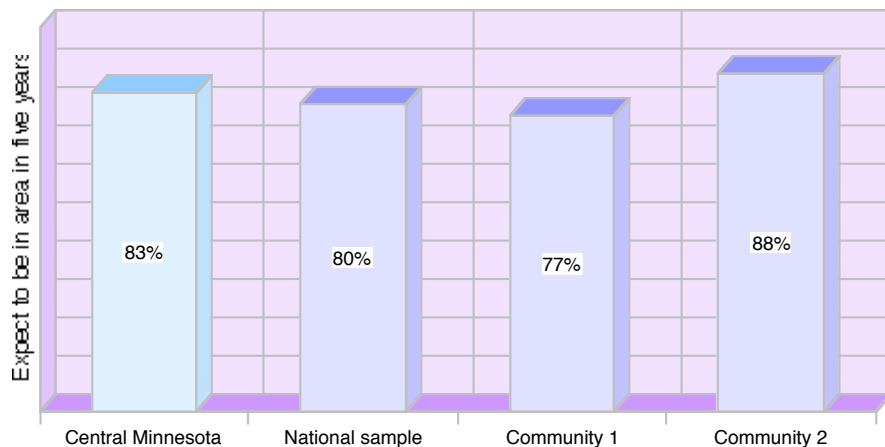
Two questions asked only in the Central Minnesota survey asked respondents about their use of summer week end residences and about leaving the area in the winter. More than two in ten have a “summer cabin” that takes them out of the area at least one weekend per month in summer. About one in ten are “snowbirds,” spending days or more outside the local area in winter.

All surveys included a question about future residence. In Central Minnesota more than eight in ten expect to be living in this area five years from now.

The wording for these questions was “Do you have a second residence where you usually spend more than two days per month in June, July and August?” and “Do you usually spend 30 days or more out of the local area in the winter?”



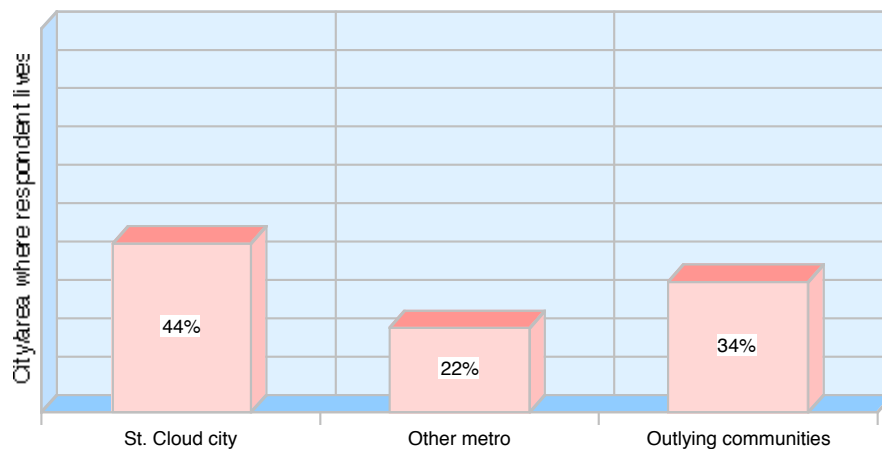
This question asked “Do you expect to be living in your community five years from now?” Note that the smallest community has the highest percent who expect to be around in five years; the largest community has the smallest percent. Central Minnesota appears to be slightly more static than the national survey.



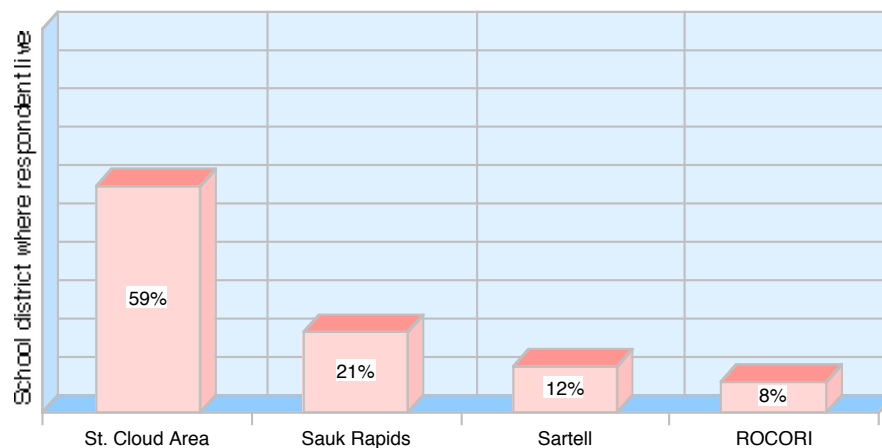
## RESIDENCE LOCATION

The Central Minnesota survey asked for the respondent's ZIP code to determine where they lived. The survey sample included all communities in four school districts—St. Cloud Area Schools, Sauk Rapids Rice, Sartell St. Stephen, and ROCORI.

More than four in ten survey respondents live in the city of St. Cloud. Nearly six in ten are in the St. Cloud Area School District boundaries.



The "Other metro" category in the chart includes Sauk Rapids, Sartell and Waite Park. All other communities are included in the "Outlying communities" category.



St. Cloud Area Schools includes Waite Park, St. Joseph, Clear Lake, Clearwater, St. Augusta, and Luxemburg. Sauk Rapids includes Rice, Sartell includes St. Stephen, ROCORI includes Cold Spring, Richmond, and Rockville. The sample was a random digit dial sample, which generates numbers at random. There is not an exact fit between telephone prefix areas and ZIP codes. As well as can be determined, all but two of the 501 respondents lived within one of these four school districts.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Tables

The tables below report the response to the survey's demographic questions. Central Minnesota closely matches the demographics of the national survey except for race the national sample is more diverse , age the national sample is younger , education the national sample has more who have no education beyond high school , and home ownership fewer in the national sample own their own homes .

### Gender

The Central Minnesota survey used the "most recent birthday" method of selection within households. This may explain the slightly higher percentage of male respondents.

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
Male .....				
Female .....				

### Age

Although Central Minnesota is slightly older than the national sample, it is very similar to both of the other Midwestern communities.

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
to .....				
to .....				
to .....				
or older .....				

### Education

The Midwestern cities all have a higher percentage of educated residents than the national sample. Note the high percentage of college degrees or above in the larger Midwestern community.

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
High school or less ...				
Some college/ tech school .....				
College degree or above .....				

### Race

Central Minnesota is very similar to the smaller Midwestern city in terms of Caucasian residents.

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
African American ....				
American Indian .....				
Asian/Pacific Islander .				
Caucasian .....				
Other .....				

## Employment status

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
Working .....				
Retired .....				
All others .....				

## Income

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
Less than K .....				
to K .....				
K to K .....				
More than K .....				
Other .....				

The national and other Midwestern surveys were completed in 2000, compared to 2004 for the Central Minnesota survey. While the inflation rate has been low during this period, note that the tables are not corrected for inflation.

## Years of residence

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
Five years or less .....				
Six to twenty .....				
More than twenty .....				

Central Minnesota has fewer long-term residents than either of the other two Midwestern cities, but is very close to the national survey responses.

## Marital status

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
Married .....				
Not married .....				

## Number of children

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
None .....				
One .....				
Two .....				
Three or more .....				

## House ownership

	Central MN	National	Comm.	Comm.
Own .....				
Rent .....				

Home ownership is higher in Central Minnesota. Again, note that the other three surveys were completed nearly four years ago.



## SOCIAL CAPITAL SCALE

The researchers created a scale to better understand the relationships between demographic groups in the survey. The scale takes individual answers to a number of questions about community connections and adds them together. Respondents with more community connections score higher on this social capital scale up to a maximum of .

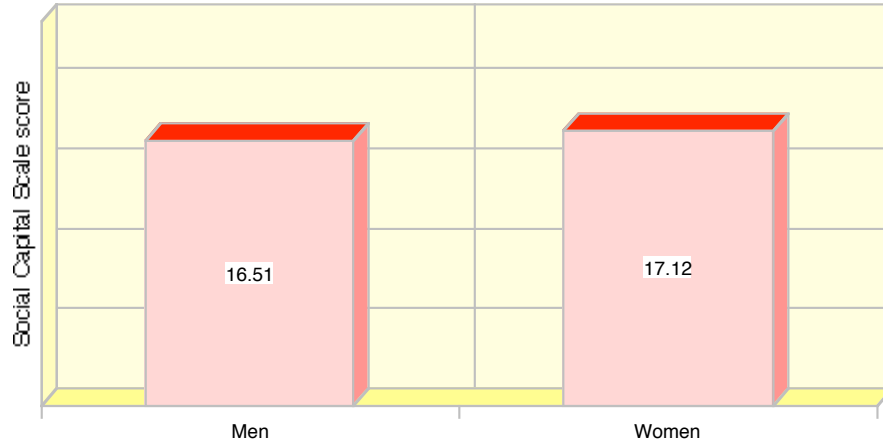
The charts on the next four pages show where different demographic groups fall on the scale. The table below shows the questions that make up the scale and what response level is positive for each item.

### *Items used for Social Capital Scale*

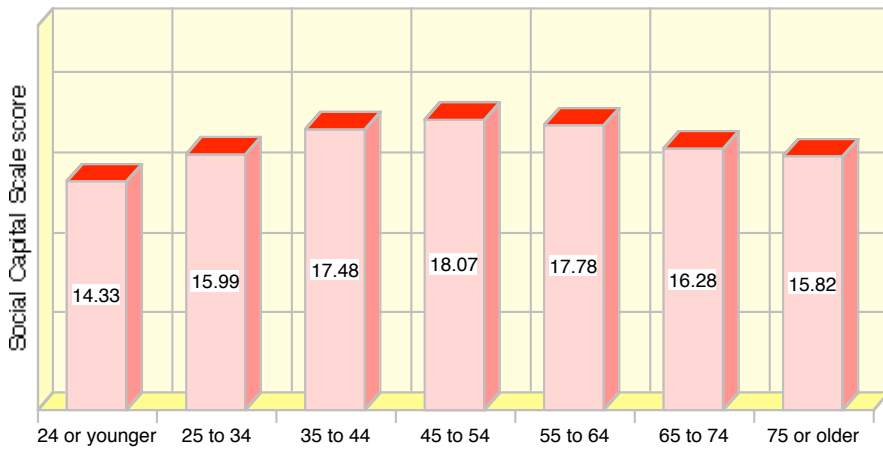
<i>Item</i>	<i>Response considered positive</i>
1. Overall trust of people . . . . .	People can be trusted
2. Trust neighbors . . . . .	Trust a lot, some
3. Trust local police . . . . .	Trust a lot, some
4. Trust shop people in local stores . . . . .	Trust a lot, some
5. Trust white people . . . . .	Trust a lot, some
6. Trust black people . . . . .	Trust a lot, some
7. Trust Hispanic people . . . . .	Trust a lot, some
8. Interested in politics . . . . .	Very or somewhat
9. Registered to vote . . . . .	Yes
10. Trust national government . . . . .	Always, most, or some of the time
11. Trust local government . . . . .	Always, most, or some of the time
12.† Worked on a community project . . . . .	One or more times
13.† Donated blood . . . . .	One or more times
14.† Attended public meetings . . . . .	One or more times
15.† Attended political meetings . . . . .	One or more times
16.† Attended club meetings . . . . .	Three or more times
17.†* Had friends in home . . . . .	Six or more times
18.†* Had friends of another race in home . . . . .	One or more times
19.†* Had friends from another neighborhood in home . . . . .	Three or more times
20.†* Had a community leader in home . . . . .	One or more times
21.† Volunteered . . . . .	Three or more times
22.† Served as officer or on committee . . . . .	Yes
23. Attended religious services regularly . . . . .	Every week, almost every week, once or twice a month)
24.† Donations to all causes . . . . .	\$500 or more

† Items 12 through 22, and 24 specified "within the last 12 months."  
\* Items 17 through 20 "been in the home of" counted as positive as well as "had them in your home."

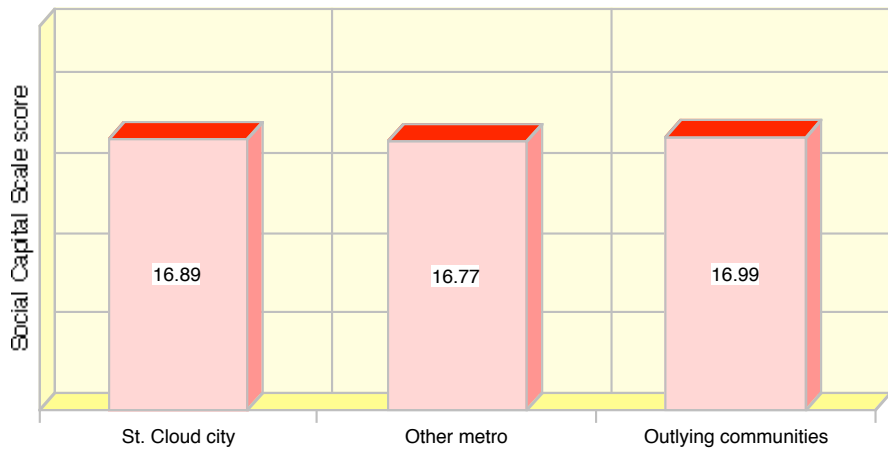




Overall, women score slightly higher on the Social Capital scale than do men. The difference is small and is not statistically significant (the statistical test shows that the difference may have occurred as a result of random variation, rather than show a real difference).



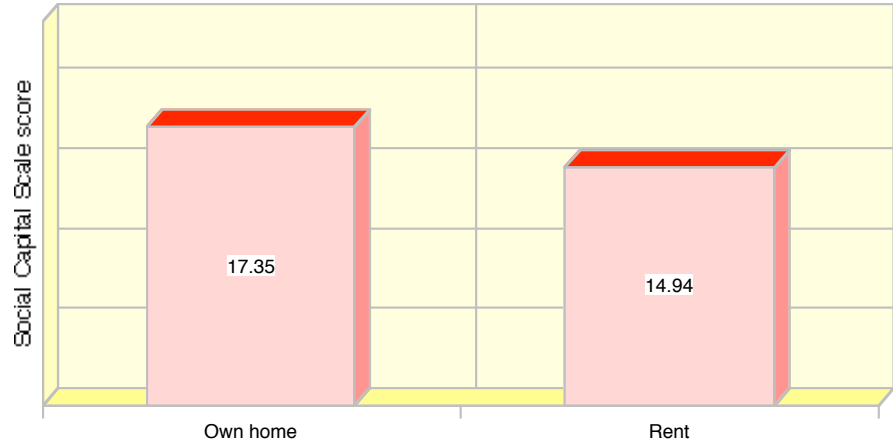
The differences between age groups are striking. Social capital in this community peaks at age 45 to 54, then declines. The group with the least amount of social capital are those 24 and younger.



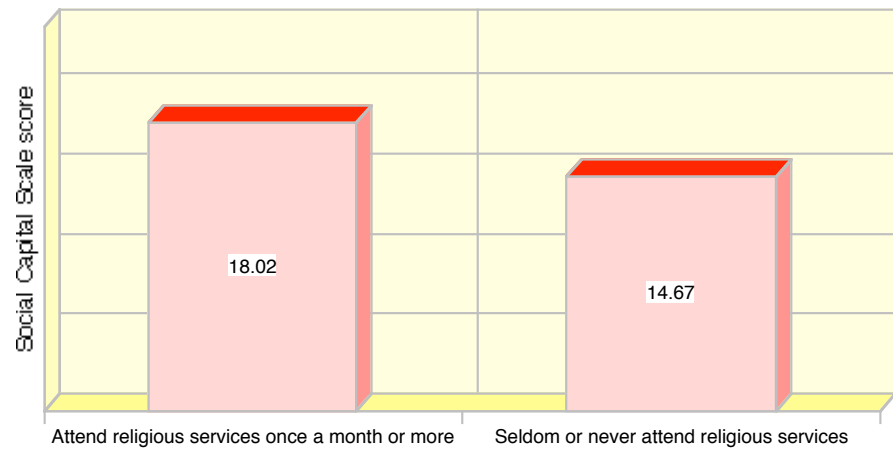
Where one lives in this area makes little difference in social capital. There are a few subtle differences in response to individual items but in general the local area is very homogeneous.



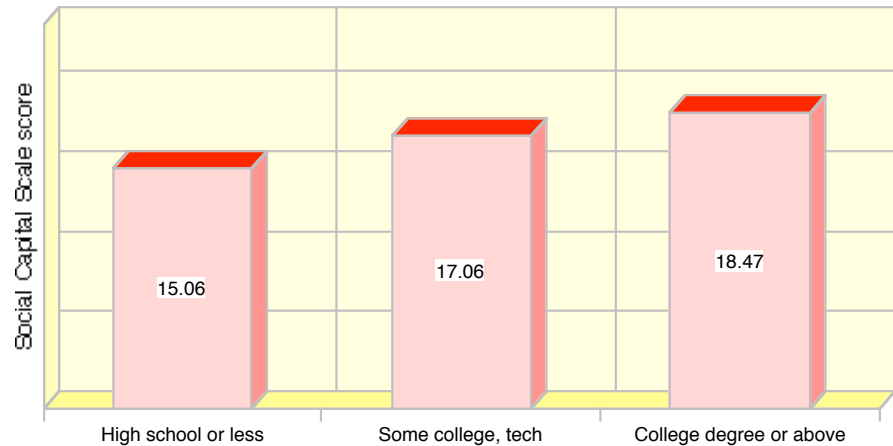
Those who own their own home score significantly higher on the social capital scale.

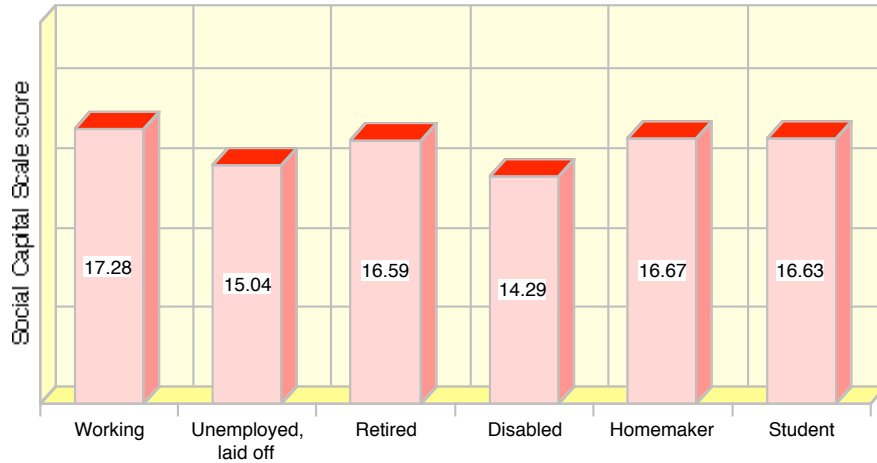


Regular attendance (defined as once a month or more often) at religious services is closely related to an individual's social capital.

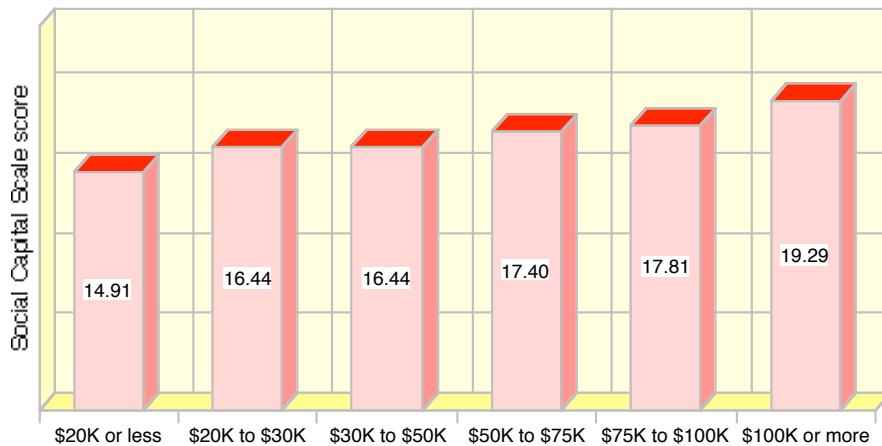


Social capital is closely correlated with level of education.

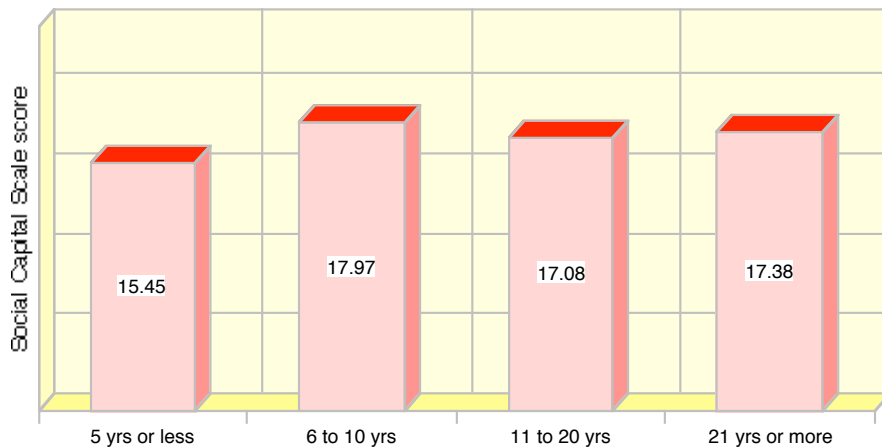




Being employed may be a small factor in social capital. Those who are currently employed score slightly higher on the scale than all others, but the difference doesn't meet the test of statistical significance. (One other category was given as a response choice: "permanently disabled." There were only seven individuals in that group, too small for reliable data).

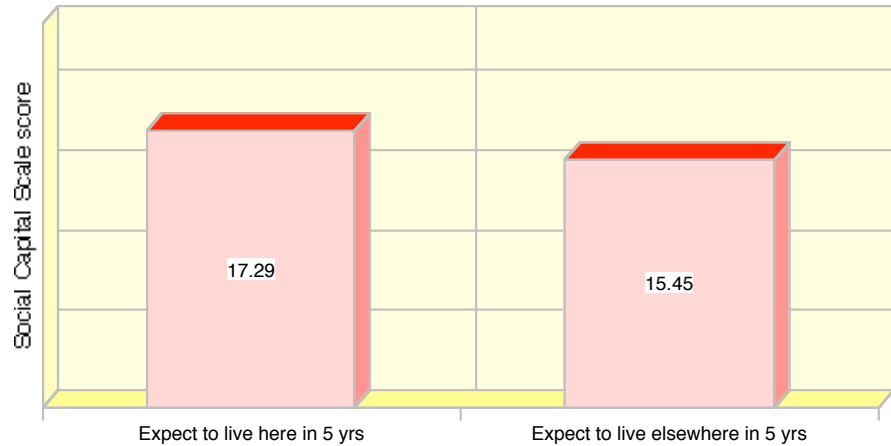


Those with higher income are significantly more likely to have more social capital. Note that earlier items that are closely tied to socio-economic status, such as home ownership and higher education, are also correlated with increased social capital.

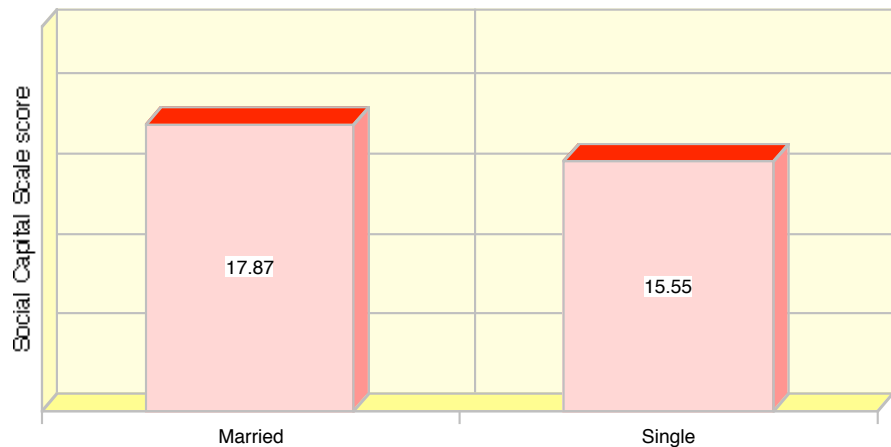


Those who have been in the community five years or less have fewer connections than those who have been here longer. The differences between the other three groups are not statistically significant.

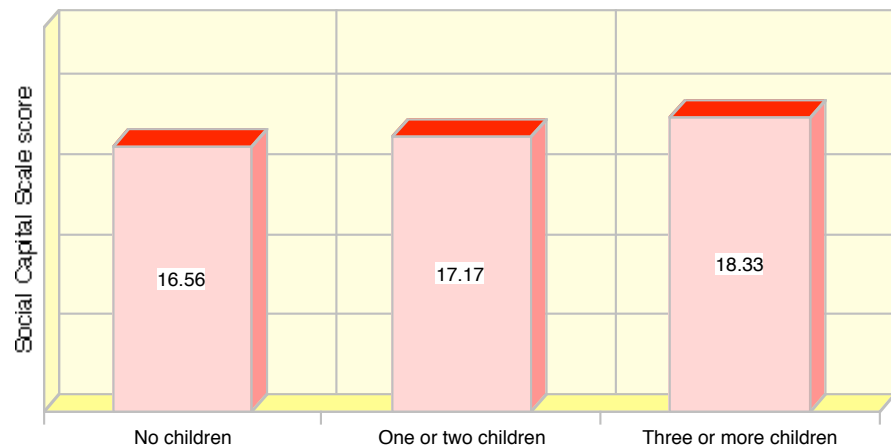
Those who expect to live elsewhere in five years have fewer connections in this community than those who plan to be here long-term.



Those who are married score higher on the scale than those who are not. The question separated those who are not married into separated, divorced, widowed, and never married. Those who have been married but are not now (separated, divorced or widowed) scored about the same on the social capital scale as those who have never been married. Both were significantly below those who are currently married.



Having children increases the likelihood of a higher score on the social capital scale. The difference between those who have no children and those who have three or more children is statistically significant. The effect is independent of marriage; married respondents with no children have significantly less social capital than married couples with three or more children.



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## DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

There are many differences between demographic groups in the survey. For example, men answered questions somewhat differently than did women. Some differences, however, are not very useful; others fail to meet standard statistical tests of significance that is, how likely it is that the differences are due to random variation rather than a reflection of a true difference .

The differences described below may be helpful to the community for planning.

### Gender differences

In general, men and women responded very similarly to most questions. The few differences that may be useful include:

- Women are more likely than men to have attended a public meeting about community or school affairs. Women are also more likely to have attended a club or association meeting.
- Women are more likely than men to say they have had a friend of another race in their home.
- Women are more likely to have volunteered in the community.
- Men are a little more likely to say that television is their primary form of entertainment.

### Age differences

The results vary significantly by age. Social capital appears to peak in middle age, then declines at retirement age.

- Those and younger are less likely to be trusting, less politically engaged, and have fewer connections through organizations. They are a little more likely to socialize with friends and with people of other races.
- Those and older are somewhat less trusting of others. They are more likely to be politically engaged and to trust government.

### Location of residence differences

There are few differences between St. Cloud, the rest of the metro area Sartell, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park , and outlying areas such as Cold Spring, St. Joseph, etc. :

- Residents of St. Cloud are a little less likely to trust their neighbors than residents in the other two areas.
- Residents in outlying communities are less likely to have had a person of another race in their home.

### **Home ownership versus renting**

This is an important indicator of social capital. For example, here are characteristics of those who rent:

- They are less likely to trust people overall. They are less likely to trust their neighbors, trust the police, or trust white people.
- They are less engaged politically and less likely to know community leaders.
- They are more likely to have someone of another race in their home.

### **Attending religious services**

This is another important variable in social capital. Those who attend religious services once a month or more often are: more trusting, more politically engaged, more likely to volunteer, more likely to belong to organizations, and so on. The only place they fall behind other respondents is in having a person of another race in their home, but the small difference is not statistically significant.

Unlike the other demographic items in this section, attending religious services is one of the items used to compute the overall social capital scale. Because of that, you would expect that those who attend would score slightly higher than those who don't

### **Education**

As education level grows, so does social capital. The higher the education, the more likely the person is to trust others, to be politically engaged, to have more social contacts, to know community leaders, to have had a person of another race in the home, and to have volunteered in the community.

### **Household income**

Some of the above items, including home ownership and education, are highly correlated with income. Many of the characteristics are shared across these three variables:

- Those with higher incomes are more likely to trust neighbors, police and people of all races. They may be less likely to trust people in the stores where they shop, but the small difference is not statistically significant.

- Those with higher incomes are more likely to be politically engaged, to attend public meetings, and to have people in their homes more often.
- Those with higher incomes are more likely to volunteer and to be members or officers of clubs and associations.

### **Other items that may be tied to social capital**

Some items had too few responses to make informed judgments. One of these was race. The total number of non Caucasian survey respondents was only out of , not large enough to draw reasonable conclusions, especially about specific racial or cultural groups within that small sample.

Other small groups include:

- People who are not citizens; this group was comprised of only five individuals.
- Only individuals are part of an on line community; only have participated in a on line discussion or more times in the past months. Both these groups are too small to make good judgments.

People who have health problems, and people who are unhappy both fall behind in social capital, according to the scale and a statistical test. Both groups, however, are small enough that little can be learned from individual items within the report.

### **Items that don't seem to be tied to social capital**

The survey tested many demographic items to determine characteristics of people likely to have or lack social capital. Some of these characteristics appear to be unrelated to social capital.

Two of these are having a summer cabin or being gone from the area for a month or more in the winter snowbirds . In fact, both of these groups show slightly higher social capital than their more sedentary peers, although the difference fails the test of statistical significance. According to the survey, therefore, “cabining” or “snowbirding” can't be used as predictors of social capital.

Commuting also falls into the group of items that doesn't directly affect social capital. Survey respondents who travel more than miles to work or more days per month have social capital similar to



those who do not. The community connections commuters lose by working outside the community they apparently make up somewhere else.

Many other factors are at work here. For example, those who commute fall primarily in the age groups with the highest social capital. Further, those with jobs also tend to have slightly more social capital than those who are unemployed or retired. However, even looking only at employed persons, those who commute and those who don't have about the same levels of social capital.

One explanation, of course, is that the survey is limited. It doesn't measure all the connections that make up social capital; instead it attempts to measure those that the researchers in the national study found most important. There are certainly connections that some groups are missing that do not show up in the survey.



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## PREDICTORS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

### Best demographic predictors of social capital

Based on the correlation between items, it appears that the top demographic predictors of social capital are education level, household income, and marital status. Individuals with one or more of these traits—some higher education, an above average household income, married—are likely to have more community connectedness than others.

Note that this does not imply causality, only that they are related. In fact, the cause and effect could work in either direction. For example, possessing social capital may enhance the individual's ability to earn a high income, to marry or to complete a higher education. On the other hand, individuals with money, with education, or with a spouse are likely in a better position to “gather” social capital than those who are struggling to better their socio economic status or find a suitable partner.

### Best behavioral predictors of social capital

This analysis of the behavioral questions in the survey attempts to predict which behaviors are most closely related to social capital. There were two kinds of behavioral questions in the survey—some asked for responses from a specific category; others asked respondents to provide an actual number of times they had completed an activity.

Among the categorical questions, four items stand out as most closely predictive of social capital. They are: the amount the individual donates to both religious and charitable causes, whether the individual is an officer of a club or association, whether the individual trusts African American people, and whether the individual trusts Hispanics. Again, causality is not implied; only relatedness.

Among items with numbers of occurrences, the three with the closest association with social capital are: attending a club or organizational meeting, having someone of another race in your home or visiting them in their home, and working on a community project.

These items should be considered when setting priorities in a plan to increase social capital in the community.

This ordering was determined using correlation analysis to find how closely related each item was to the overall social capital scale. The items are rank-ordered (education, income, marriage), but all three are fairly close together.

Correlation analysis was again used to determine this list. The items are rank ordered. Note that donations are closely related to income, one of the top demographic predictors. However, even when controlling for the effect of income, donations still remain as one of the top four predictors.

Regression analysis using the social capital scale provided this list. Note that none of the ten items tested showed a strong relationship with the scale, but these three fit the model best.