

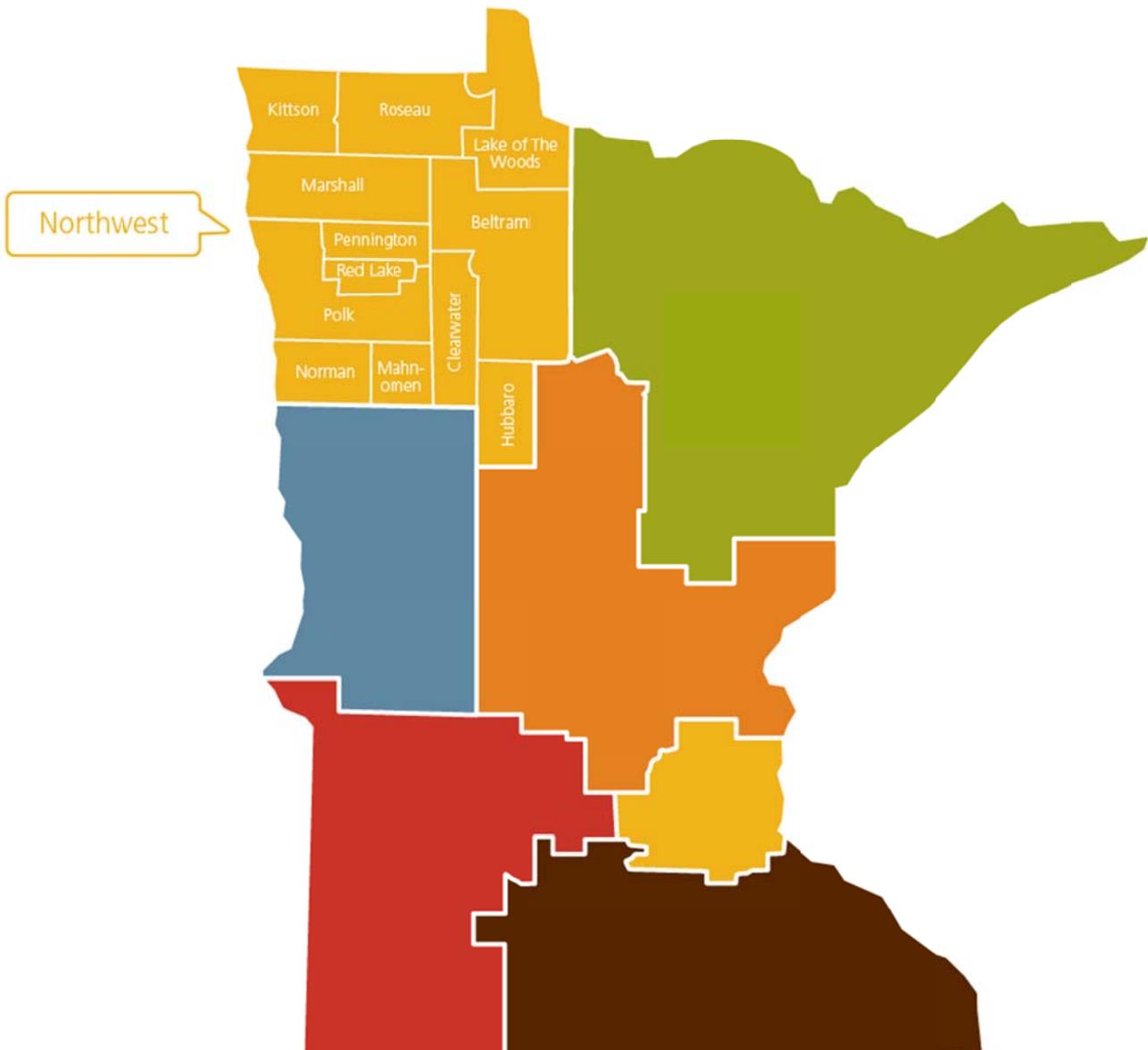


RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: NORTHWEST MINNESOTA

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.

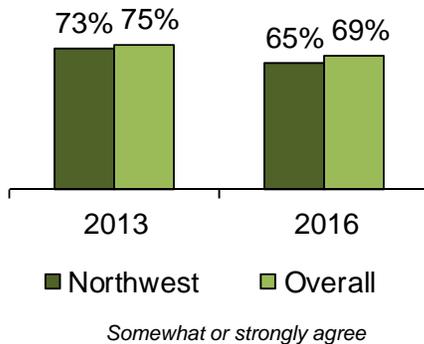
To provide a localized perspective, study findings for Northwest Minnesota are included in the following pages and contrasted with overall rural Minnesota responses.



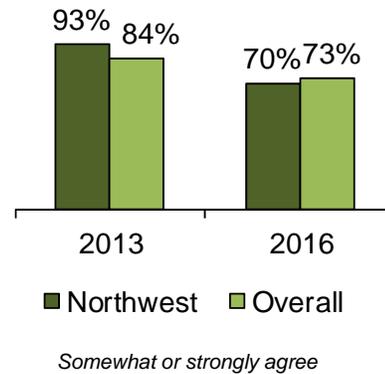
While many residents in rural Minnesota feel positive about their community, that sentiment has declined compared to 2013.

Two-thirds of Northwest Minnesota feel their community is vibrant; however, there was a significant decline in the belief that regional communities are resilient and able to recover from difficult situations compared to 2013 findings. The Northwest also had the largest decline in belief that they are able to contribute to their community's future, though many still feel they can make a positive impact.

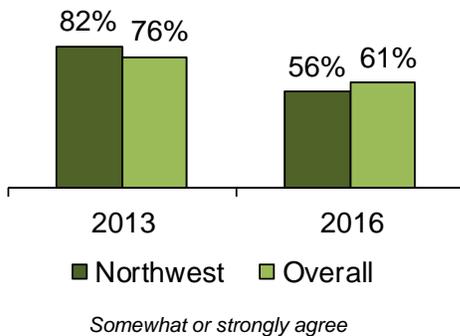
Community is a Vibrant Place to Live and Work



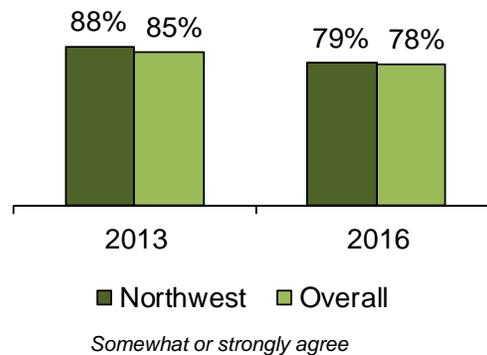
Community is Strong, Resilient and Able to Recover from Difficult Situations



Feel Ownership of Community and Ability to Contribute to Its Future

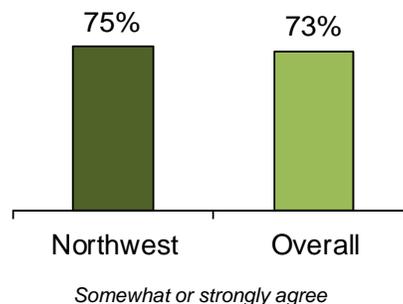


Able to Make a Positive Community Impact



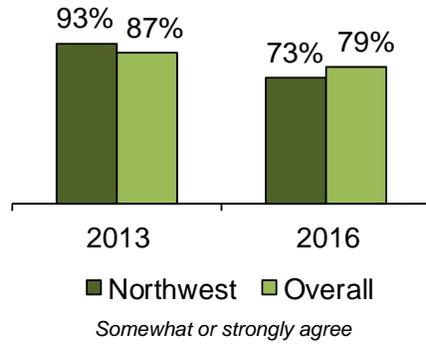
Three in four feel their community works together cohesively.

Community Works Together Effectively to Address Local Issues

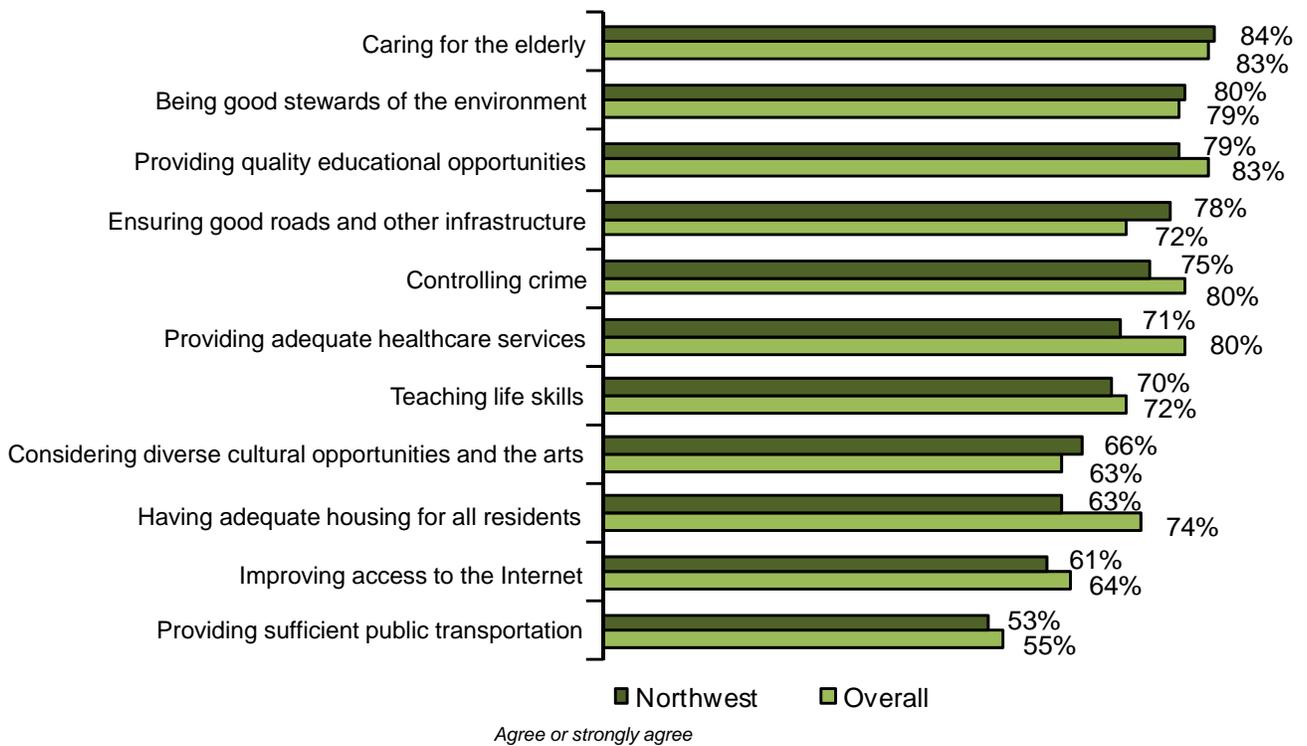


The Northwest region is the least likely to believe that access to basic community services is equal for all residents, showing an eight-point decline from 2013. The service areas of greatest concern are housing, improving internet and public transportation.

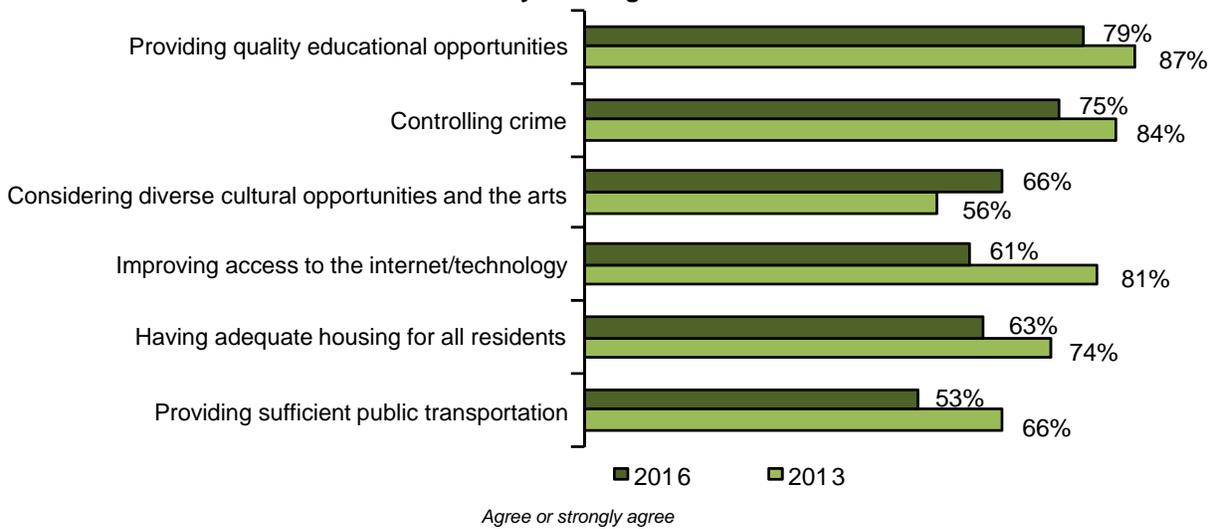
Equal Access to Essential and Basic Services



Community is Doing a Good Job

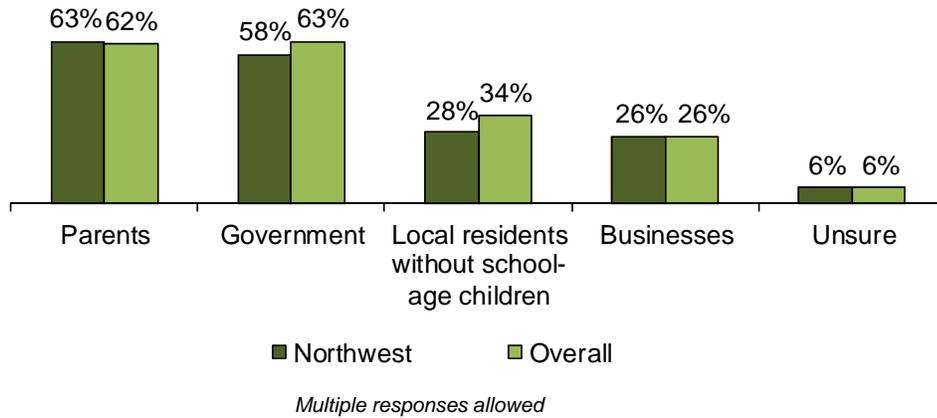


**Northwest Region:
Community is Doing a Good Job**

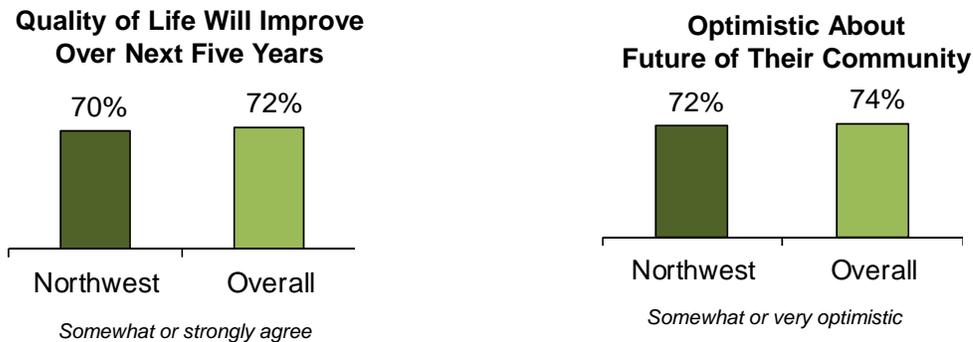


Most feel parents are responsible for educational opportunities, though many believe the government should hold obligation for such.

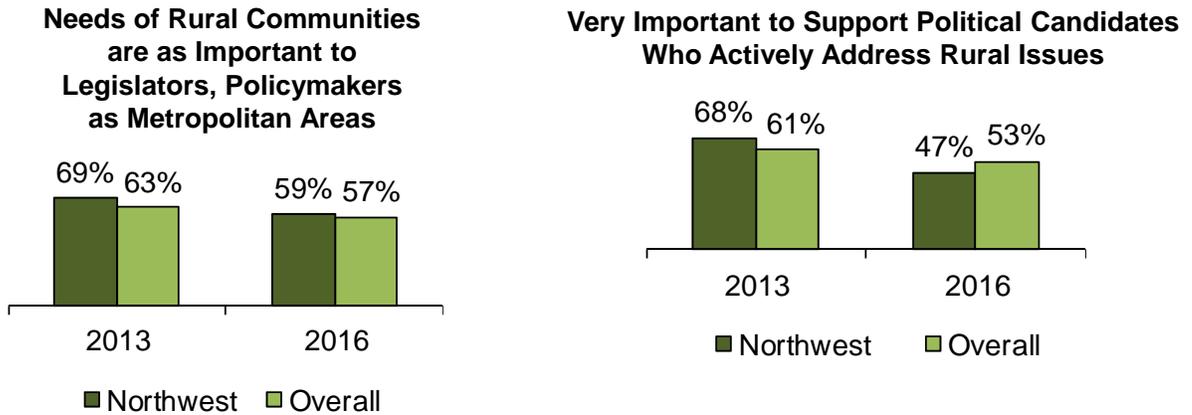
Who Is Responsible for Ensuring Adequate, Quality Educational Opportunities



Seven in 10 feel quality of life will improve and are optimistic about their community's future.

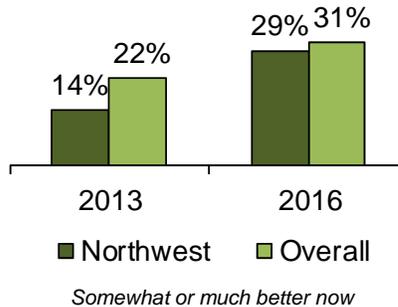


Three in five residents in Northwest Minnesota believe the needs of rural communities are important to lawmakers, a 10-point decline from 2013 findings. It is the least likely region to feel supporting political candidates who address rural issues is of high importance.



Three in 10 feel the local economy has improved within the past year, more than double the results of 2013 findings.

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 Northwest region are said to be crime, growing local job opportunities, attracting new business and educational opportunities.

Most Critical to Your Community

Northwest

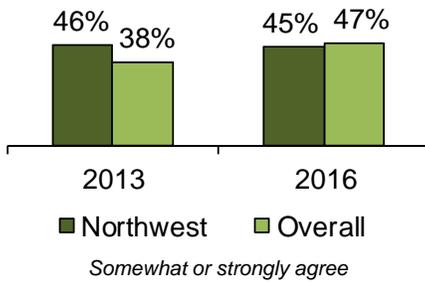
1. Crime
2. Growing local job opportunities
3. New business
4. Education

Overall

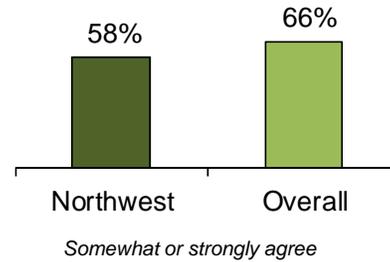
1. Growing local job opportunities
2. New business
3. Crime
4. Education

There is concern that there are insufficient living-wage jobs (53%) and that regional communities do not maintain/grow job opportunities (40%). There is also concern that there are not enough new businesses being started locally (51%).

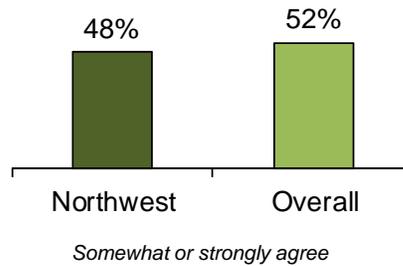
Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages



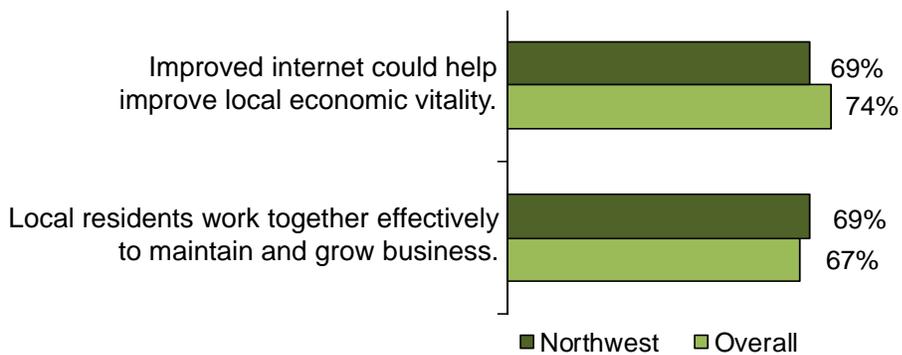
Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities



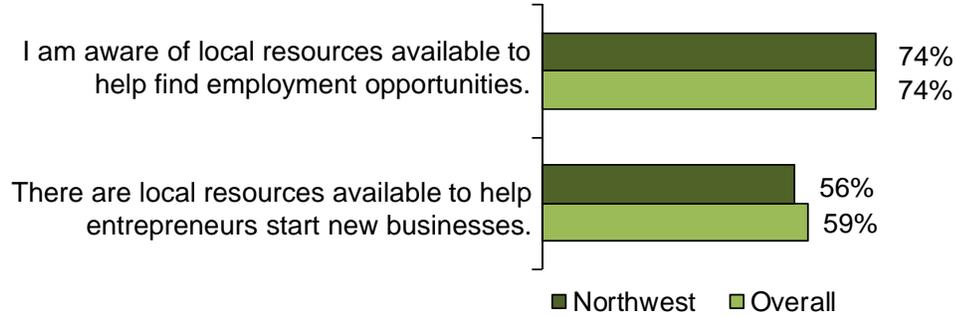
Community Sufficiently Attracts New Businesses



Seven in 10 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.

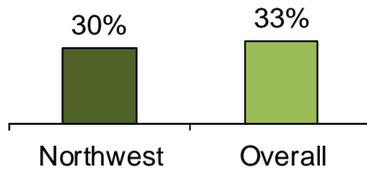


Awareness of Job Growth Resources

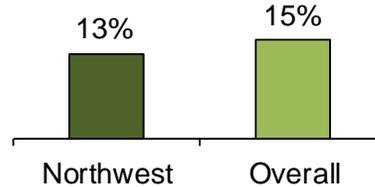


Three in 10 say their household income has increased over past year; however, more than one in 10 have experienced a job loss within their household.

Household Income Has Increased Over Past Year

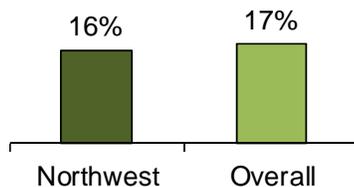


Someone in Household Lost a Job Over Past Year

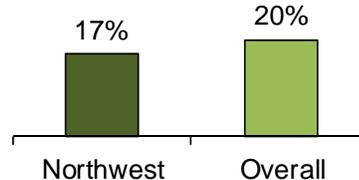


Sixteen percent do not expect to live in their same community five years from now, and 17 percent have considered moving to a larger city. Many say quality of life is the motivating factor for considering migration, followed by job opportunities.

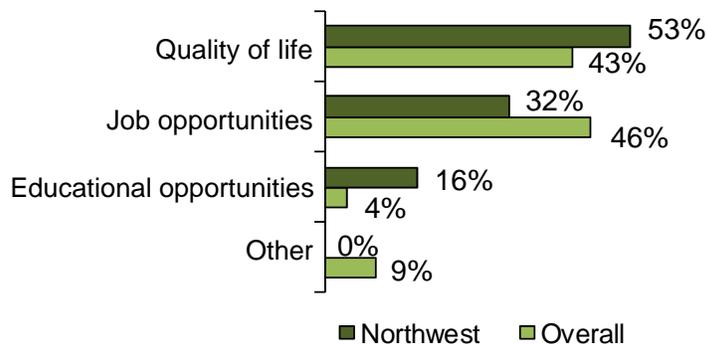
Do Not Expect to Live in Their Community Five Years From Now



Considered Moving to a Metro Area Within Past Two Years

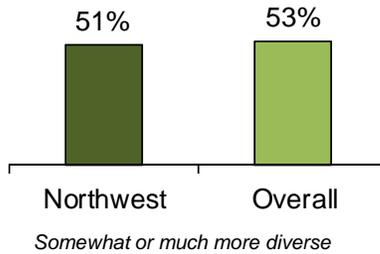


Main Reason for Considering a Move

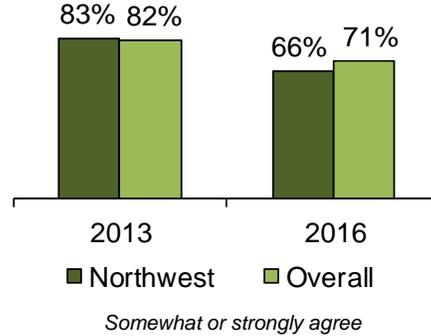


While half of regional residents feel the population has become more diverse in recent years, the Northwest is the least likely to believe their community is welcoming – a significant 17-point decrease from 2013 findings. Two-thirds feel there is acceptance of differences within their community, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.

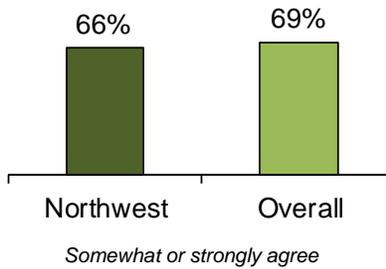
Population Has Become More Diverse Over Past Five Years



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

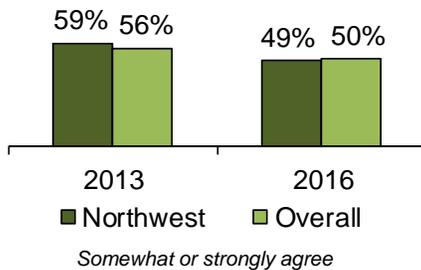


Community Accepts and Embraces Differences
(e.g., Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Nationality)

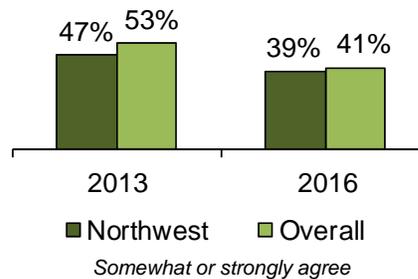


There is a perception that community leadership is not inclusive. Two in five say they have served in a leadership capacity, a decrease from 2013 findings; however, many who have not say that they would definitely consider serving in leadership if asked.

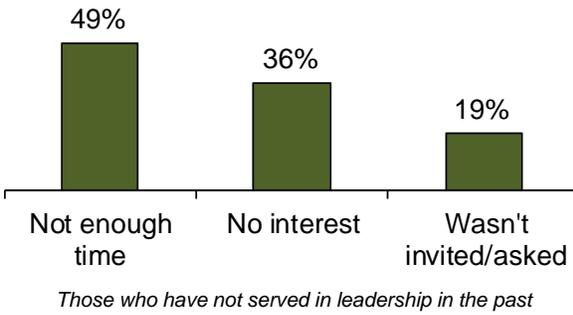
People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within the Community



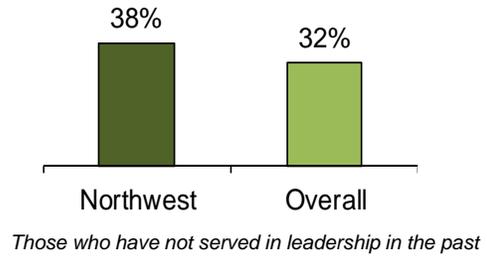
Served In a Community Leadership Role



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. Additional questions on the community enrichment efforts of the Blandin Foundation can be directed to www.BlandinFoundation.org or 877-882-2257.