



2019 RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

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. It includes comparative findings from urban Minnesotans and identifies trends within significant, complex subject areas including the economy, education, employment and quality of life. Results are also analyzed as they relate to nine separate but inter-related dimensions of a community's health: life-long learning, inclusion, recreational and artistic opportunities, environmental stewardship, infrastructure and services, safety and security, community leadership, economic opportunity, spirituality and wellness.

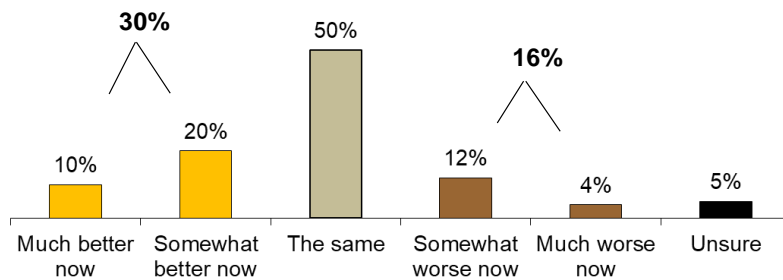
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IS ...

One of the Nine Dimensions of a Healthy Community, economic opportunity is defined as: conditions where all people can earn an income that allows them to live with dignity. The economy of the community is sustainable and not dependent on exploiting human beings or depleting the natural environment..

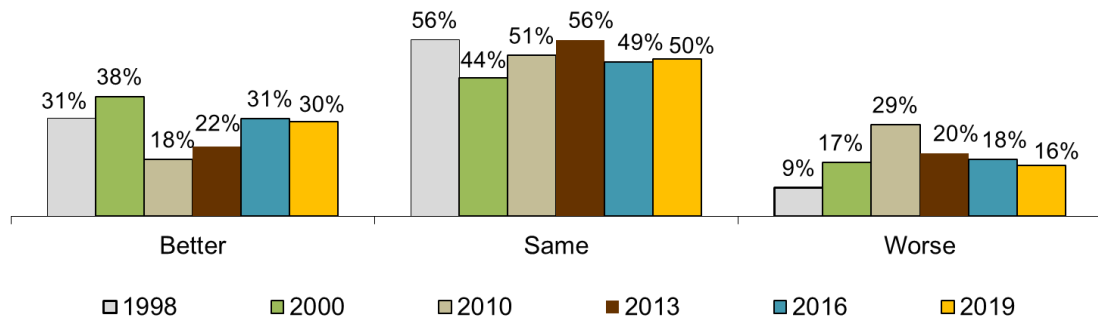
Condition of Economy

Survey participants were asked to gauge the condition of their community's economy now compared to a year ago. Thirty percent of rural respondents believed it had improved, half (50%) indicated it stayed the same, and 16 percent felt that their local economy regressed over the last year.

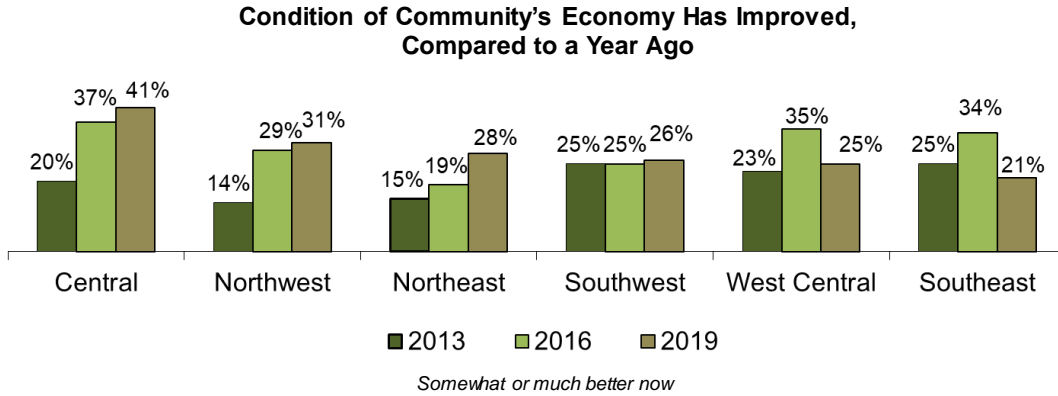
Rural Minnesotans:
Condition of Local Economy Compared to One Year Ago



Rural Minnesotans:
Condition of Local Economy Compared to One Year Ago

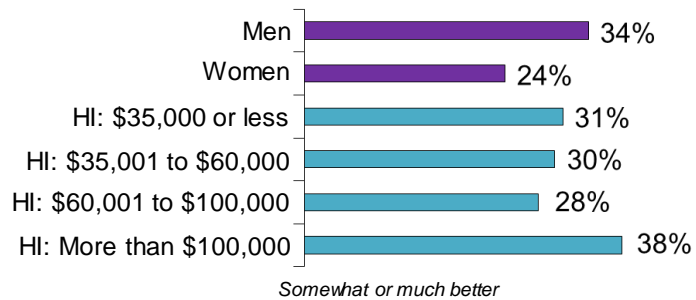


Those residing in the Southeast region were the most doubtful about improvement in the economy (-13% compared to 2016). West Central residents also were less agreeable (-10% compared to 2016). Central and Northwest region respondents were the most likely to have said they have seen an improvement in their local economy over the past 12 months.

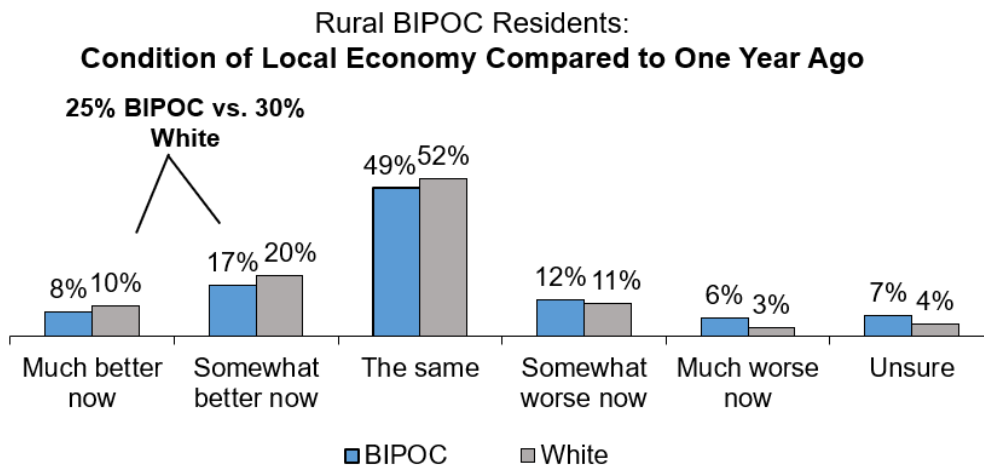


Women and those with household incomes of less than \$100,000 voiced the least confidence in the condition of their economy.

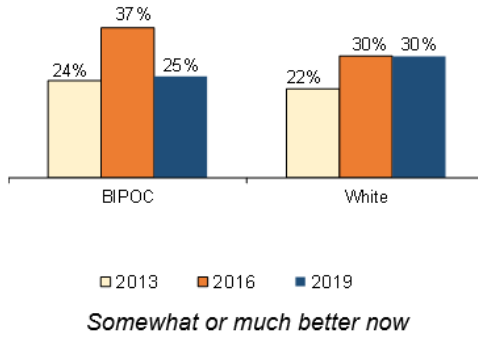
Rural Minnesotans:
Condition of Local Economy Has Improved Over Past Year



One in four (25%) Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community respondents believed that the economy has improved over the past 12 months. About half (49%) felt it stayed the same. Eighteen percent indicated that their local economy had receded over the last year. While that number remained steady for rural Whites since 2016 study findings, this represented a 12 percentage point regression for cultural community groups.



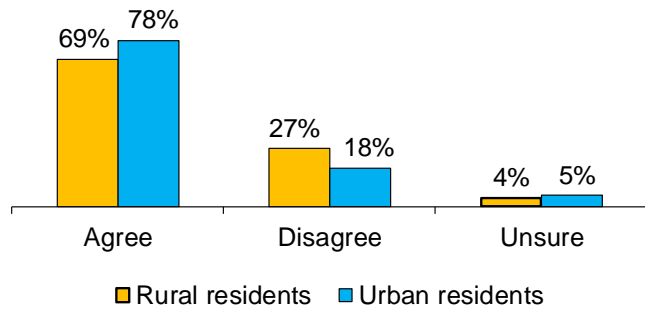
Believe Local Economy is Better Compared to One Year Ago



Jobs Continue to be a Concern

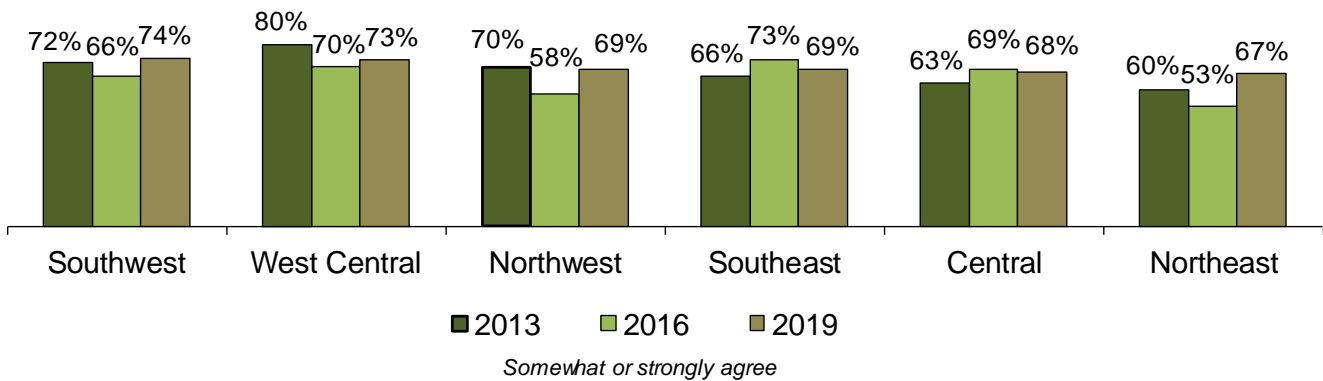
About seven in 10 (69%) rural Minnesotans – and 78 percent of urban area residents – believed that their community maintains and grows existing job opportunities. Twenty-seven percent of rural respondents – and 18 percent of those in urban cities – disagreed.

Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities

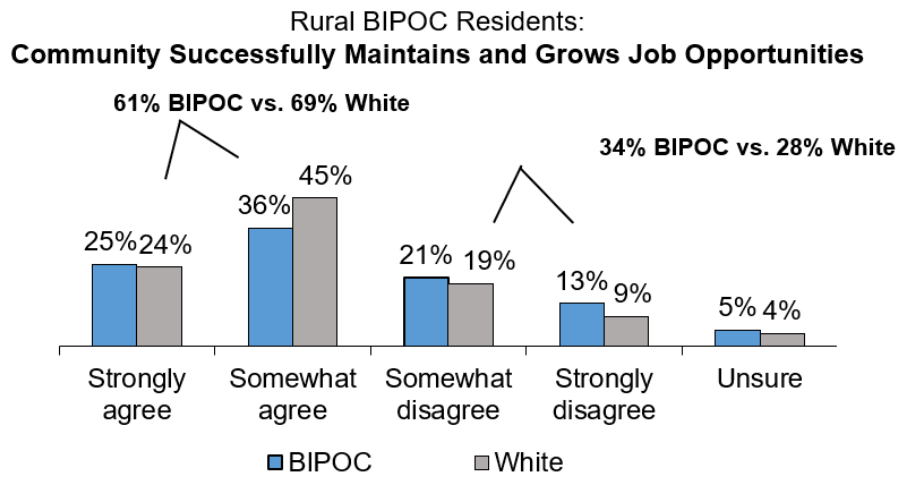


Residents in the Northeast region were the least likely to feel that their community successfully maintains and grows existing jobs, though they experienced the most significant upswing in sentiment (+14%) compared to Rural Pulse 2016 findings.

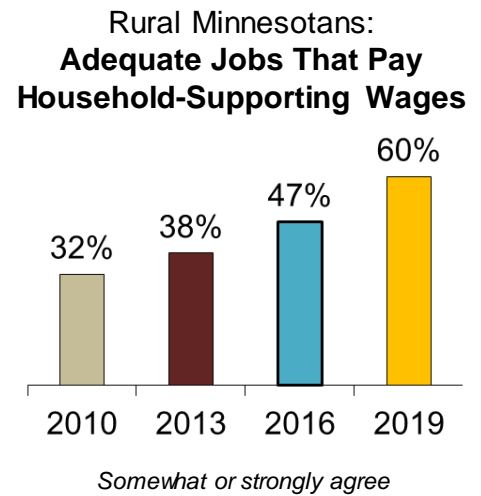
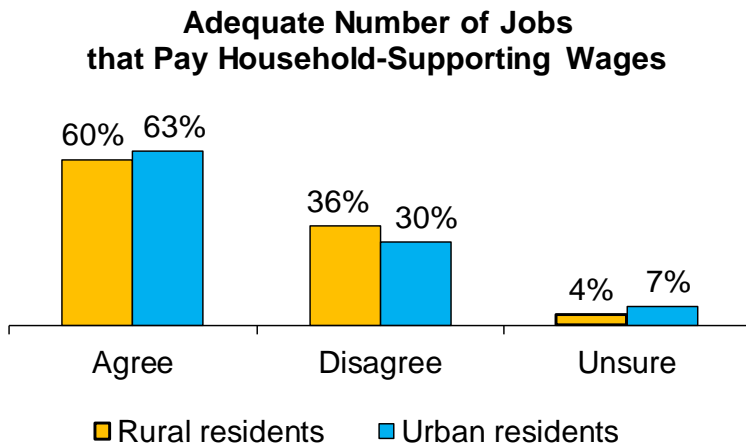
Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities



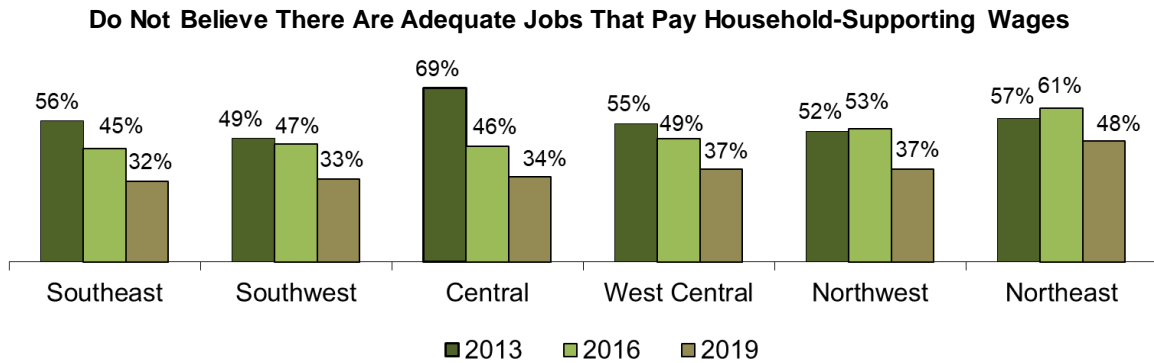
About six in 10 (61%) rural BIPOC residents believed that their community maintains and grows existing job opportunities, an increase of seven percentage points since 2016 study findings. A third (34%) disagreed.



The belief that there are sufficient living-wage jobs increased 13 percentage points from Rural Pulse 2016, showing a significant sustained upswing since 2010 survey findings. There was still disagreement by some, however. Thirty-six percent of rural Minnesotans – and 30 percent of urban residents – felt that there are inadequate household-supporting job opportunities in their community.

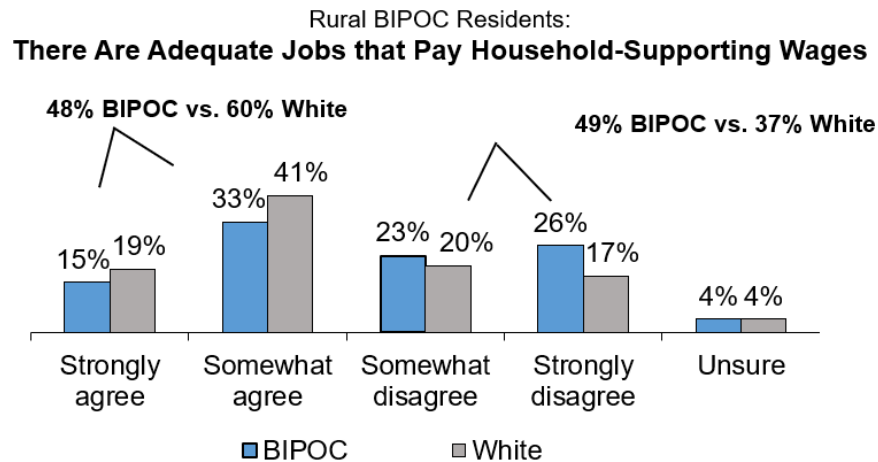


Those in Northeast Minnesota were the most likely to have disagreed that there are enough living-wage jobs (48%), although that was a 13 percentage point upturn from 2016. Those in Southern and Central Minnesota were the most likely to have believed living-wage jobs are available, with Central region residents perceiving the most improvement since 2013.

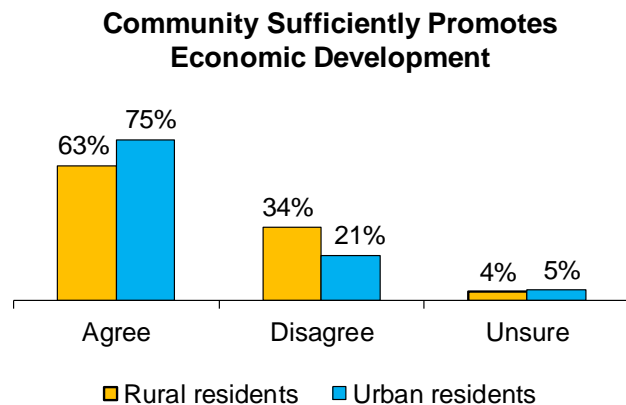


Somewhat or strongly disagree that there are adequate jobs that pay household-supporting wages

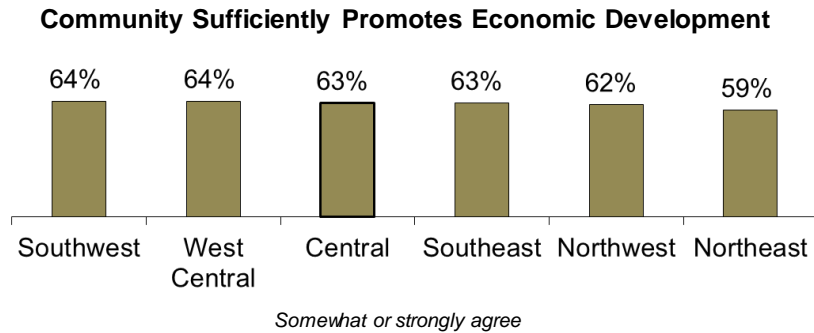
While the belief that there are sufficient living-wage jobs increased for rural Whites, the number slightly decreased from 2016 study findings for BIPOC respondents. About 48 percent felt that there are jobs that pay a living wage available within their local communities, while another half (49%) cited household-supporting job opportunities are deficient.



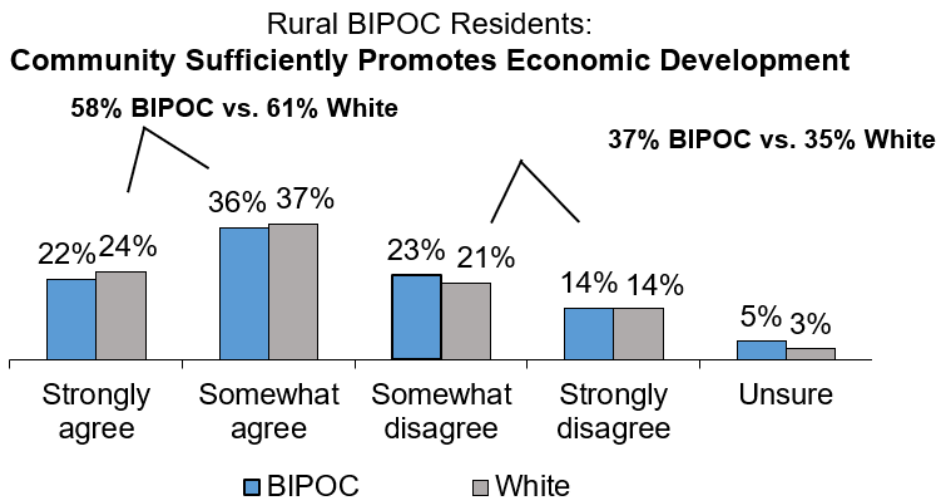
A third (34%) of rural Minnesotans – and 21 percent of urban area residents – believed that their community does not do enough to advocate for economic growth and development. Sixty-three percent of rural respondents – and three-quarters of urban Minnesotans – felt positively toward their community’s ability to promote new industry and economic progress, however.



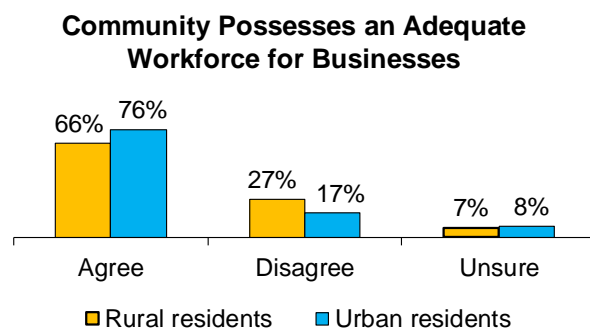
Those in the Southwest and West Central regions were the most inclined to believe that their community adequately promotes economic development, with the Northeast having displayed the most disagreement.



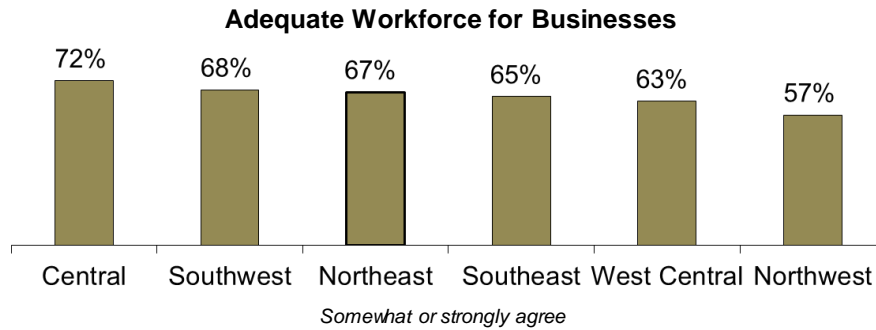
Thirty-seven percent of rural BIPOC respondents believed that their community does not do enough to support economic growth through entrepreneurship and attracting new businesses, which showed even less confidence than 2016 survey findings (-10%). Fifty-eight percent felt positive about their community's economic development efforts.



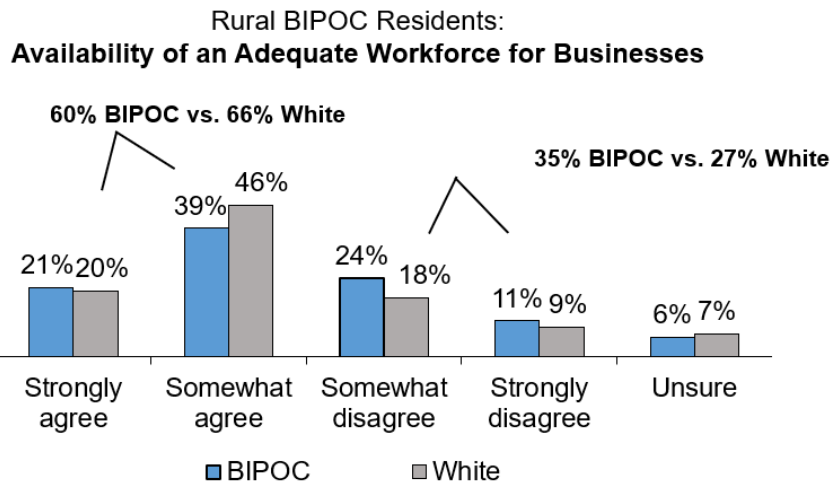
When asked how they feel their community does with providing an adequate workforce, 27 percent of rural Minnesotans – and 17 percent of urban area residents – believed that their community does not possess enough available workforce to meet the needs of local businesses. Two-thirds (66%) of rural respondents – and three-quarters (76%) of urban Minnesotans – felt their communities possess a sufficient labor pool.



Those in the Central, Southwest and Northeast regions were the most likely to give good grades to their community regarding the availability of an adequate workforce, with the Northwest showing the most disagreement.



About a third (35%) of BIPOC community members believed that there are not enough workers to assist the needs of local businesses. Six in 10 felt their communities have a sufficient labor pool.



Personal demographics play a role in how the job and economic climate are perceived. Women in rural areas were the least confident regarding economic growth. Sentiment also varied by age, income and business ownership.

Rural Minnesotans:
**Do Not Believe Community Provides Sufficient
 Job Opportunities and Economic Development**

	Men	Women
Adequate job opportunities that pay household-supporting wages	29%	43%
Economic development	29%	38%
Maintaining and growing existing local job opportunities	24%	30%
Adequate workforce for businesses	14%	28%

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Adequate job opportunities that pay household-supporting wages	30%	35%	39%	37%	35%
Maintaining and growing existing local job opportunities	25%	31%	33%	26%	21%
Economic development	20%	40%	38%	36%	30%
Adequate workforce for businesses	20%	29%	34%	30%	20%

Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Adequate workforce for businesses	21%	27%	31%	35%

	Business Owners	Non-Business Owners
Adequate job opportunities that pay household-supporting wages	29%	38%
Adequate workforce for businesses	33%	26%

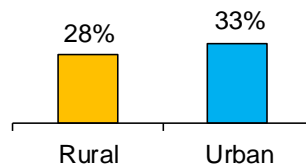
Somewhat or strongly do not agree

■ Highest disagreement

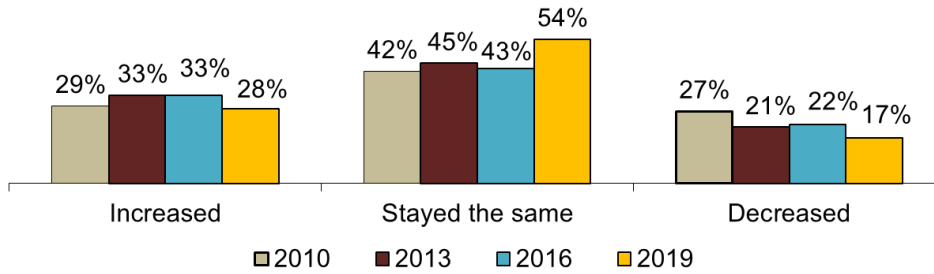
Impact of the Economy

About a third of Minnesotans (28% rural, 33% urban) noted that their household income has increased over the past year. Some rural households saw a decrease in wages in the past year (17%). More than half (54%) said their household income did not change within the past 12 months.

Household Income Increased Over Past Year

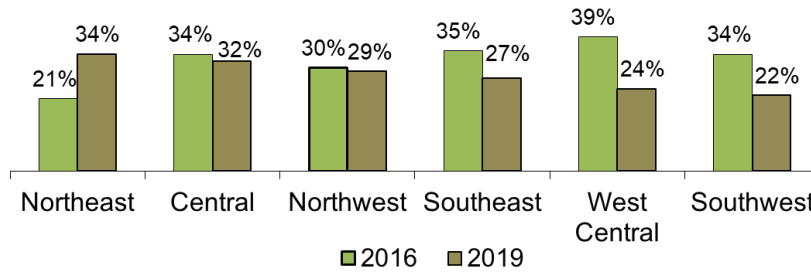


Rural Minnesotans:
In the Past Year, Has Your Household Income Increased, Decreased or Stayed the Same?



Southwest and West Central residents were the least likely to have said that their household income went up.

Household Income Has Increased Over Past Year



Women were slightly more likely than men to say their household income has increased (32% vs. 26%).

Rural Minnesotans ages 35 to 49 and those with higher incomes were also most likely to have had paycheck gains, while those with the lowest incomes (\$35,000 or less) said they were impacted negatively in the financial realm.

Rural Minnesotans:
In the Past Year, Has Your Household Income Increased, Decreased or Stayed the Same?

Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Increased	32%	37%	42%	28%	13%
Stayed the same	59%	44%	46%	49%	67%
Decreased	9%	18%	11%	21%	18%

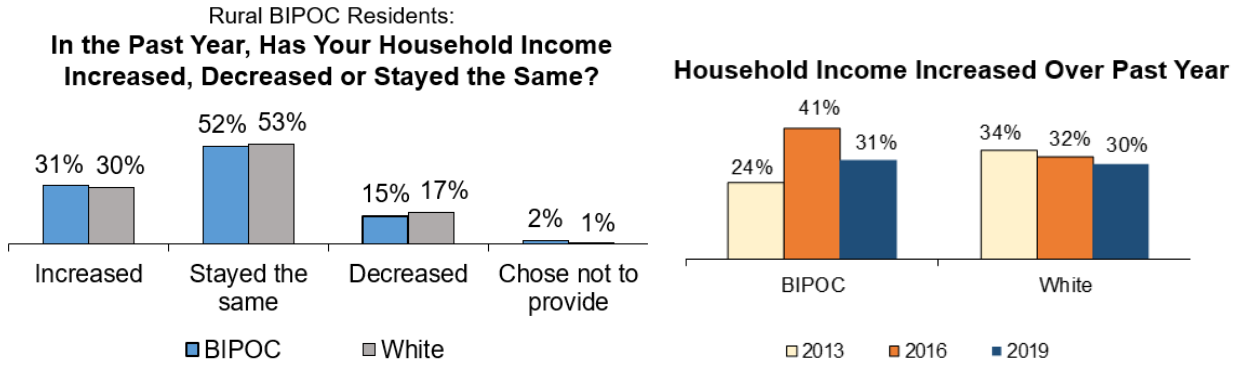
Income				
	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Increased	13%	21%	35%	56%
Stayed the same	61%	57%	56%	33%
Decreased	25%	22%	9%	11%

Further, business owners were slightly more likely than those who don't own a business to have said their income went down (22% vs. 16%).

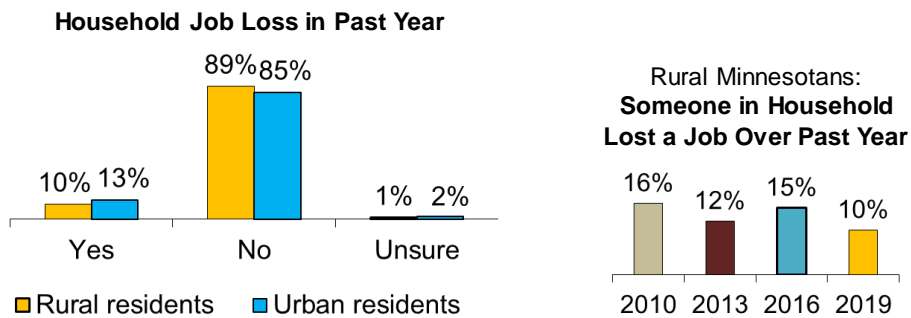
	Business owner	Non-Business Owner
Increased	32%	28%
Stayed the same	44%	56%
Decreased	22%	16%

■ Highest agreement

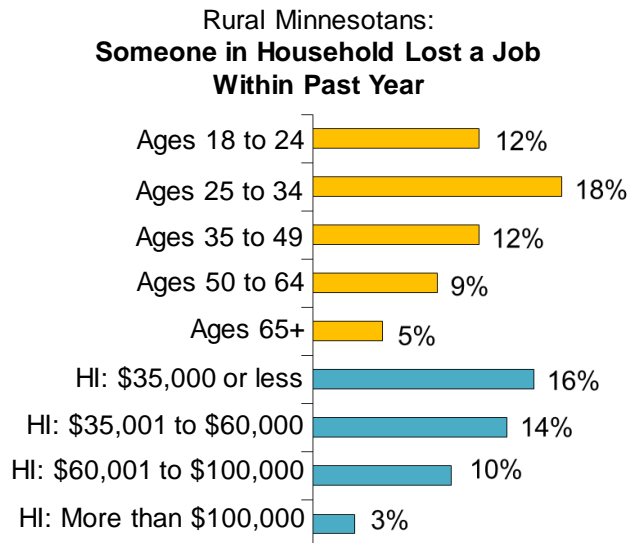
Three in 10 (31%) BIPOC residents noted that their household income increased over the past year – a decline from 2016 study findings (-10%). Some experienced a decrease in wages (15%), and about half (52%) said their household income did not change within the past 12 months.



One in 10 rural residents – five percentage points fewer than 2016 study findings – said that someone in their household lost their job. Job loss impacted 13 percent of urban Minnesotans.



Rural residents most likely to have experienced a job loss were between the ages of 25 and 34, and those with lower household incomes.

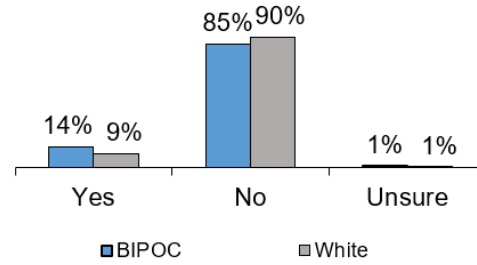


Job loss impacted 14 percent of BIPOC residents within the last 12 months. That was a six percentage point improvement over 2016 survey findings.

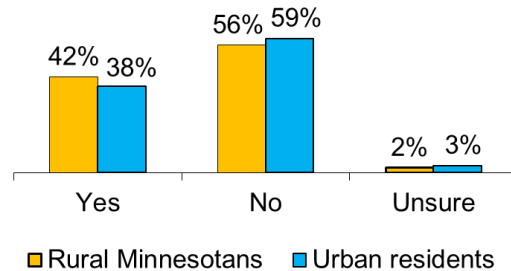
A new question within Rural Pulse this year asked Minnesotans if they had ever experienced poverty. Forty-two percent of rural residents – and 38 percent of those in urban areas – said that they have. More than half said that they have not (56% rural, 59% urban). A few were unsure. [Note: Definition of poverty was left to personal interpretation.]

Regionally, those in Central Minnesota were the most likely to have said that they have experienced poverty. Residents in the Northwest and Southwest sectors of the state were the least likely to have said such was true.

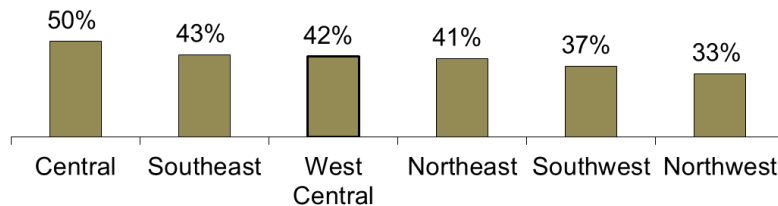
Rural BIPOC Residents:
Household Job Loss in Past Year



Ever Experienced Poverty

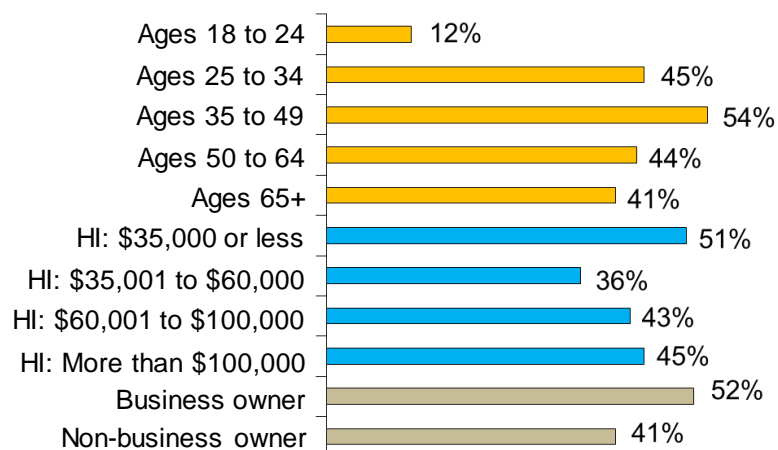


Ever Experienced Poverty



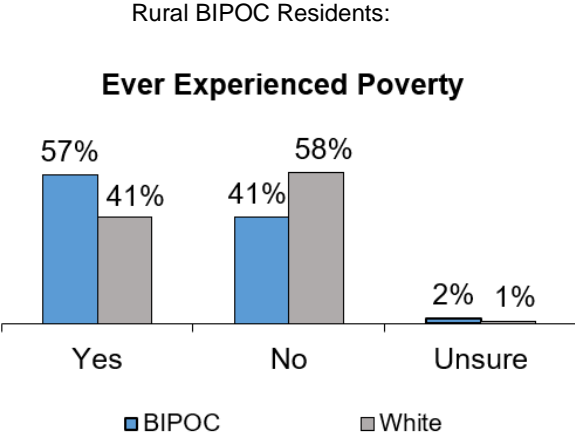
There was wide variation to this question when it came to personal demographics. The youngest residents in rural Minnesota (ages 18-24) were by far the least likely age group to have said that they have experienced poverty. Those with the lowest incomes (\$35,000 or less) cited having lived in hardship at some point in their life.

Rural Minnesotans:
Have Experienced Poverty



Rural Minnesotans who do not own a business were more likely than entrepreneurs to have reported experiencing poverty in their lifetime.

Nearly six in 10 (57%) rural BIPOC respondents – 16 percent higher than their White counterparts – said that they have been in poverty at some point in their life; 41 percent said that they have not.



About Rural Pulse

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