MINNESOTA GO

Planning Minnesota's
Transportation Future

DEMOGRAPHIC TREND ANALYSIS

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

Minnesota's demographic picture is changing as the state grows and becomes more diverse. Understanding these demographic growth patterns and changing trends will help transportation agencies plan future investments that will allow Minnesota to meet its transportation needs and support the people of Minnesota. The state's population over the last decade has grown from 5.3 million in 2010 to 5.6 million in 2019, in line with the national average of 7%. The seven-county metro area is home to more than half of the state's population, with 3.1 million people compared to 2.5 million people in the Greater Minnesota region. Over the next 20 years, up to 75% of the state's growth is projected to happen within the seven-county metro area.

As Minnesota grows, the state is becoming more diverse. Communities of Color have grown by 32% compared to 1% for the White, non-Hispanic population from 2010 to 2019. This trend is most profoundly seen in children and youth as Communities of Color now make up 32% of the population under 18 years of age. As the youth demographic ages into adulthood, Communities of Color will contribute a growing influence on the overall demographic picture for Minnesota. Immigration to Minnesota is one contributing factor to Minnesota's increasing diversity with 8.7% of the state's population being foreign-born. The share of foreign-born residents coming from Asia, Africa and Central and South America stands at 65% as of 2018.

Demographic changes are also shifting household patterns including languages spoken, travel behavior and educational attainment. Spanish is the most spoken language after English, followed by Somali and Hmong. Statewide, interpretations and translations of engagement materials into these three languages would reach the most people who have limited English proficiency. However, translation is available through MnDOT for any language upon request. Immigrant communities also have differing travel patterns, including driving fewer miles each year and taking more carpool, transit, bicycle and walking trips compared with communities born in the United States. Understanding these differing travel patterns across communities can help to deliver transportation projects and services that better meet the needs of diverse, local communities

Educational attainment in Minnesota is above the national average, with 37% of Minnesotans attaining a college degree compared to 33% for the national average. College graduates are more concentrated within the seven-county metro area, with 45% of people in the region attaining a college degree compared to only 28% in Greater Minnesota. This will make the seven-county metro area increasingly competitive and a hub for the knowledge economy as creative and knowledge-based activities continue to become a more important component the nation's economic activity.

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

Minnesota is home to a growing and changing population. In the next 20 years, the state's population is projected to grow in number and in diversity. It is important to keep these demographic changes in mind as transportation agencies engage and serve the public. This paper analyzes Minnesota's demographic trends not covered in other trend papers: country of origin, languages spoken, household composition and educational attainment.

Minnesota's population has grown by 7% since 2010, which is similar to the growth rate for the nation as a whole. There are three parts to population change: births, deaths and migration. From 2010 to 2019, Minnesota has had more births than deaths (637,000 and 387,000). Over the same period, the state lost over 26,000 people in net

migration to other places in the United States. International immigration increased the state's population by 114,000.[1] Without international immigrants, Minnesota would have lost residents to other states and grown slower than the rest of the nation.

The seven-county metro area and Greater Minnesota are experiencing different demographic trends. The seven-county metro area is home to approximately 3.1 million people, more than half of the state's population, and is projected to gain another 500,000 to 600,000 people by 2040.[2] Greater Minnesota holds around 2.5 million people and is projected to gain between 20,000 and 200,000 people over the same period.[3][4] Much of the growth in the Greater Minnesota region is concentrated in small and medium urban areas within an hour drive to the seven-county metro area, including Olmstead County.

Transportation planning affects different populations in different ways. A person's transportation mode varies depending on what is available to them and is often linked to demographic factors such as income, ethnicity or disability. Planners must recognize these nuances in the population's needs to tailor transportation resources accordingly.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MINNESOTA'S POPULATION

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Minnesota's population is gradually increasing and becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. A large majority of residents identify as White, non-Hispanic, 4.4 million or approximately 79% in 2019. A growing number of residents identify as Black, Hispanic or Latinx, Asian (including Asian Indian), multiracial, or American Indian. Figure 1 shows the growth in racial and ethnic diversity of the state over time. Communities of Color have grown by 32% in the decade to 2019 compared with 1% growth in the White, non-Hispanic population over the same period.[5]

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[1] U.S. Census Bureau; State Population by Characteristics: 2010-2019; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).
[2] "Long-Range Forecasts," Long-Range Forecasts - Metropolitan Council, accessed February 19, 2021, https://metrocouncil.org/Data-and-Maps/Research-and-Data/Thrive-2040-Forecasts.aspx.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Minnesota State Demographic Center Projections, accessed February 19, 2021, https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/population-data/our-projections/.
[5] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP05; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed May 24, 2021).

Table 1: Minnesota population growth by racial and ethnic groups, 2012-2019[6]

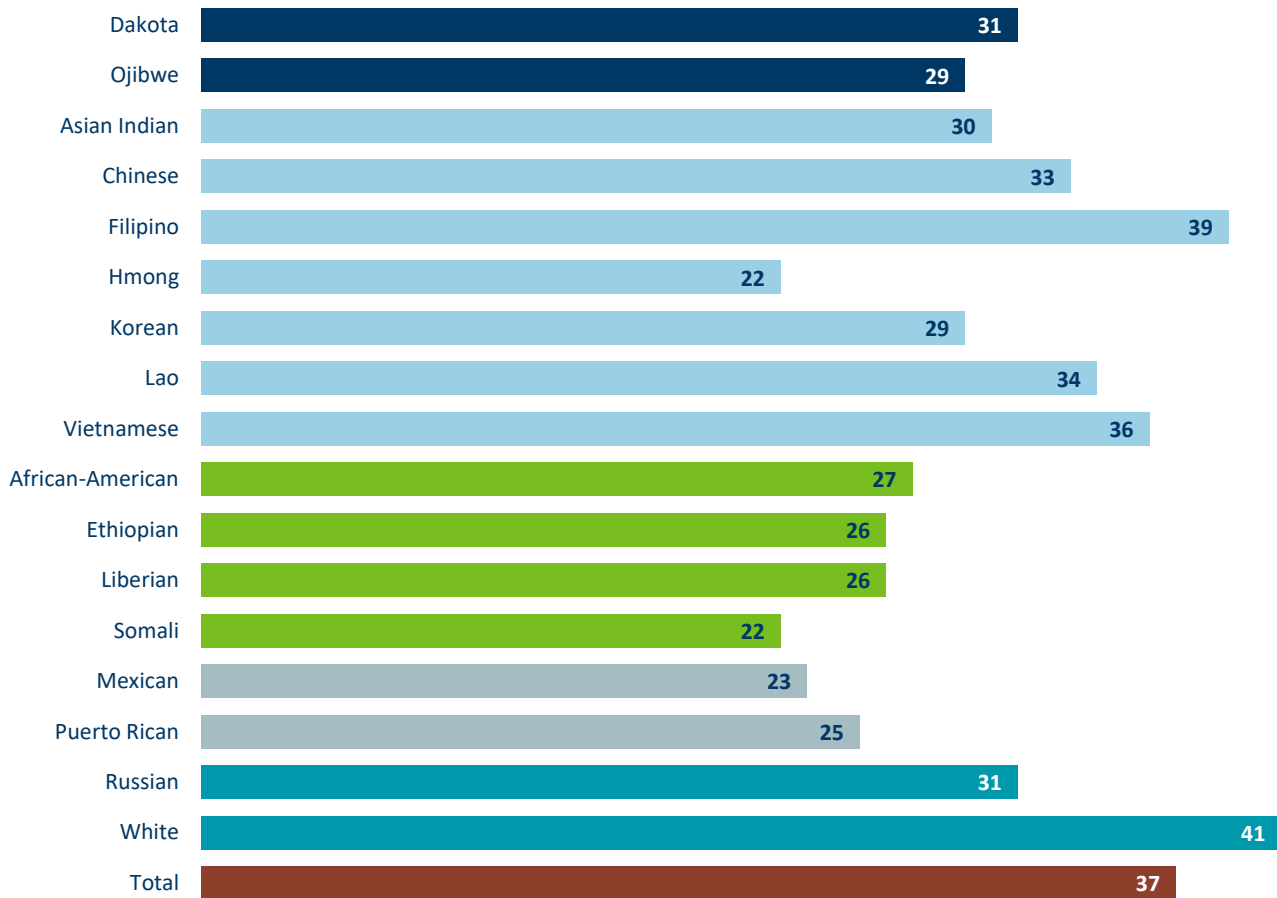| Race/Ethnicity	2010	2019	Change	Percent
American Indian	52,207	52,405	198	0.4%
Multiple or Other	94,051	143,089	49,038	52.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	205,063	268,388	63,325	30.9%
Hispanic or Latino	233,716	299,556	65,840	28.2%
Black	253,293	349,808	96,515	38.1%
White, not Hispanic or Latino*	4,396,841	4,442,126	45,285	1.0%

Minnesota's racial and ethnic groups have different age distributions.[7] The median age among Minnesota's Non-White cultural communities is displayed in Figure 2. Cultural communities, as defined by the Minnesota State Demographer, offer a more refined breakdown of the ethnic communities in Minnesota compared to the Census defined racial and ethnic communities. Minnesotans age 65 and older are overwhelming White, non-Hispanic, making up 93% of the age group as of 2019. Those identifying as White, non-Hispanic are also the oldest group on average, with a median age of 41. Ethnic groups such as Hmong and Somali skew much younger with a median age of 22. The youth demographic under 18 is becoming much more diverse. While White, non-Hispanics still make up the majority at 68%, Communities of Color make up an increasing portion at 32% of those under the age of 18.[8] As members of different racial and ethnic groups grow older, Minnesota's population age 65 and older will become more diverse. To serve today's diverse youth and tomorrow's diverse older adults, MnDOT and others will have to engage with a wider variety of cultural values and spoken languages.

[6] Ibid.

[7] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B01001; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed May 24, 2021).

[8] Ibid.

Figure 1: Median age among Minnesota's cultural groups, 2018

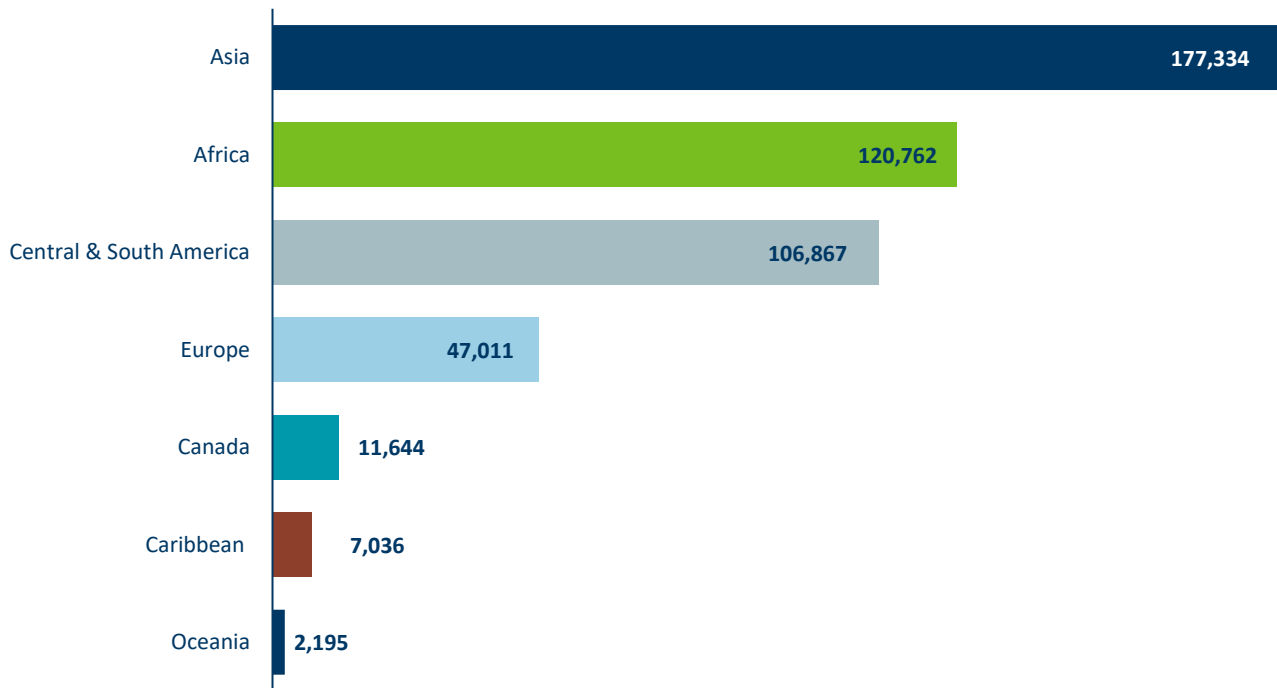| Cultural group	Median age
Dakota	31
Ojibwe	29
Asian Indian	30
Chinese	33
Filipino	39
Hmong	22
Korean	29
Lao	34
Vietnamese	36
African-American	27
Ethiopian	26
Liberian	26
Somali	22
Mexican	23
Puerto Rican	25
Russian	31
White	41
Total	37

IMMIGRATION

ORIGINS

Minnesota has a long history of immigration, though patterns have shifted over time. In 1920, the Minnesota State Demographic Center reported that nearly 20% of Minnesotans, or around 475,000 people, were foreign-born.[8] Today, there are about the same number of foreign-born Minnesota residents, slightly more than 485,000, but the overall proportion relative to the state population is much less, at only at 8.7%.[9] The origins of foreign-born Minnesotans have also shifted. Early immigrants to the state came primarily from Northern Europe, but during the later decades of the 20th Century the country of origin has become more diverse including many refugees from conflict areas in Southeast Asia. Currently, 37% of Minnesota's foreign-born residents come from Asia, the most common continent of origin for foreign-born residents.[10] Figure 3 shows the place of birth for Minnesota's foreign-born population.

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[8] "The Economic Status of Minnesotans 2018," n.d., pp. 10.
[9] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B05006; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).
[10] Ibid.

Figure 2: Population of foreign-born Minnesota residents by place of birth, 2019[11]

Place of birth	Population
Asia	177,334
Africa	120,762
Central & South America	106,867
Europe	47,011
Canada	11,644
Caribbean	7,036
Oceania	2,195

Africa is the second-most common continent of origin, with almost 132,000 Minnesota residents from the continent. About two-thirds of residents in this group were born in East Africa, which includes large numbers from Somalia and Ethiopia.[12] These numbers reflect a notable refugee population who have and continue to come to Minnesota due to persistent conflicts in the region. For immigrants born in the western hemisphere more than 82,000 come from Central America, including 60,000 born in Mexico, 22,000 from South America, 10,000 from Canada and 6,000 from the Caribbean. Oceania is the smallest regional sources of foreign-born residents at just 1,700.

A majority, 52%, of Minnesota's foreign-born population are naturalized U.S. citizens.[13] Additionally, many Minnesotans came to the state from elsewhere in the United States. Roughly 1.35 million Minnesotans, or 23% of the population, were born in another US state or Puerto Rico.[14]

The remainder of Minnesotans, about 3.8 million residents, were born in Minnesota.[15] The proportion of residents born in Minnesota and still residing in the state is 9 percentage points higher than the national average. Correspondingly, the proportion of residents who were born in different states or abroad is lower in Minnesota than in the United States as a whole.

[11] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B05006; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).
[12] Ibid.
[13] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B05002; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).
[14] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B06001, B05001; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).
[15] Ibid.

Across the country the U.S. Census Bureau projects that the percentage of the United States' population that is foreign-born will continue to rise through 2060.[16] Observing changes in Minnesota's foreign-born population will help transportation agencies continue to plan, deliver and operate a transportation system that serves all residents, including newly-arriving populations.

TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

In Minnesota, workers born in the United States are more likely to drive alone to work than workers born elsewhere. Foreign-born workers are almost twice as likely to carpool or use transit to travel to work compared to US born workers; almost 20% compared to 11%.[17] Policies that prioritize the mobility of single-occupant vehicles over the mobility of carpoolers and transit users will favor US-born workers over the recent immigrants. Figure 3 shows the commute mode to work for US born and foreign-born residents in Minnesota.

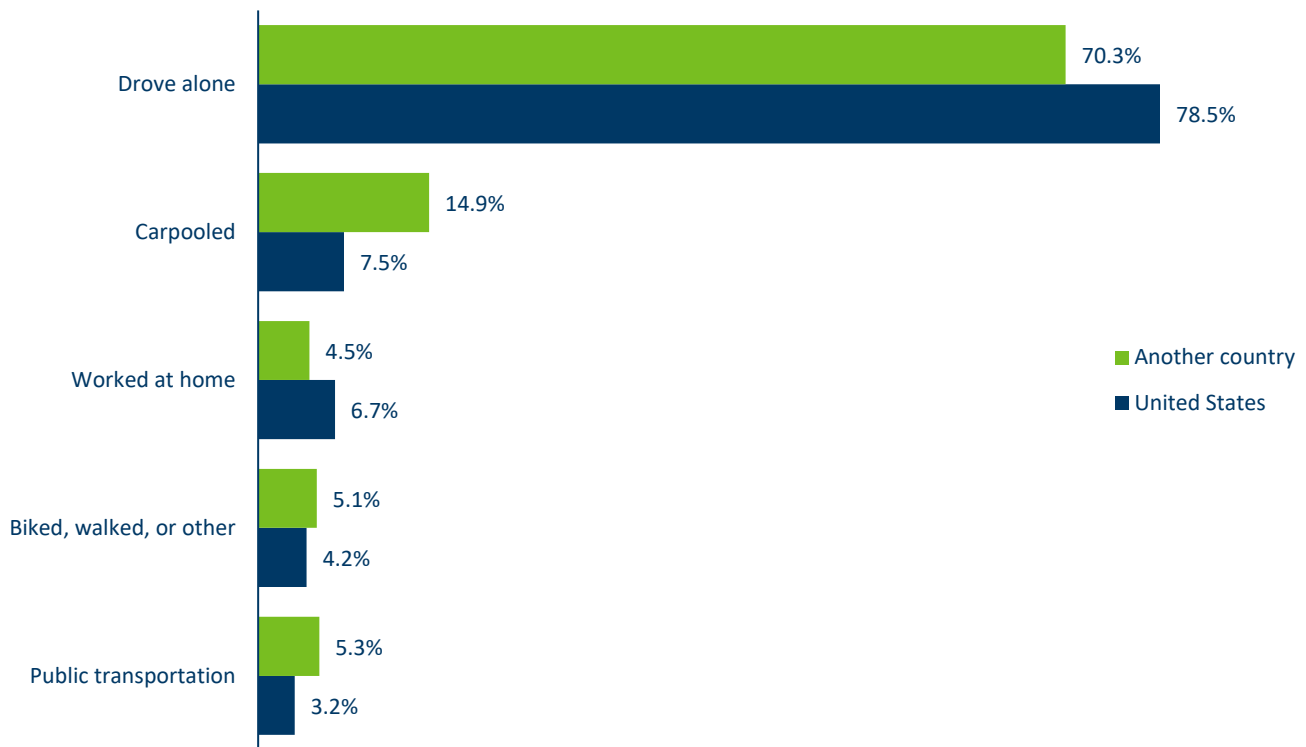Figure 3: Primary means of commuting for Minnesota workers by place of birth, 2019[18]

Figure 5 shows the total number of miles driven per year by Minnesotans born in the U.S. and those born outside the country. Foreign-born Minnesotans are almost twice as likely to drive less than 5,000 miles per year as Minnesotans born in the United States. A total of 24% of US-born Minnesotans drive less than 5,000 miles per year, compared to 44% of foreign-born Minnesotans.

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[16] Vespa, Jonathan, Lauren Medina, and David M. Armstrong, "Demographic Turning Points for the United States: Population Projections for 2020 to 2060," Current Population Reports, P25-1144, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2020.
[17] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B05006; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).
[18] Ibid.

Figure 4: Annual miles driven by Minnesotans by place of birth, 2017[19]

Native-born   Foreign-born
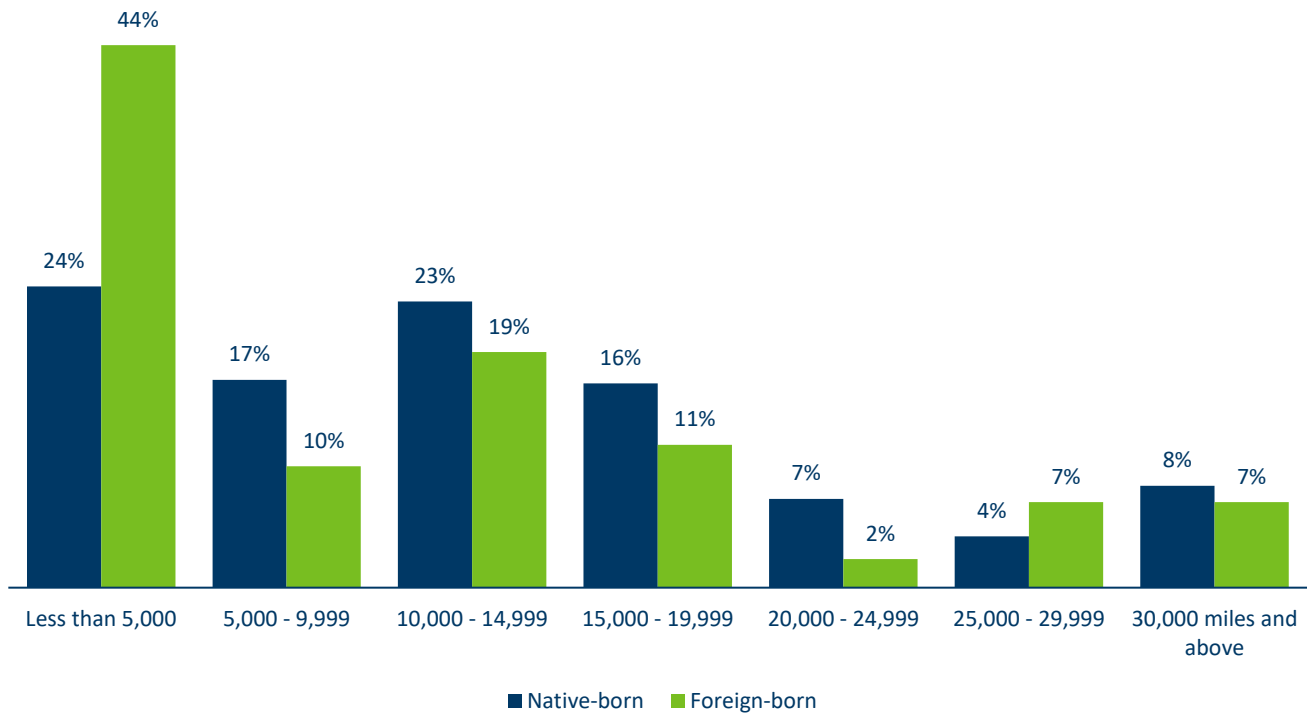
LANGUAGES

Immigrants from across the world continue to be drawn to Minnesota. As a result of the inflow of diverse of migrant populations to Minnesota, the languages spoken by the state's population is becoming more diverse as well. The primary language in Minnesota remains English by a large margin; 88% of Minnesotans speak English at home.[19]

However, English is only one of 110 languages spoken in Minnesota.[20] Figure 6 summarizes the number of people who speak a language other than English at home, comparing the seven-county metro area to Greater Minnesota. Spanish is the second most spoken language in Minnesota and is the most widely distributed language other than English across the state. However, speakers of Spanish are still most concentrated in the seven-county metro area, with 127,000 Spanish speakers compared to approximately 70,000 in Greater Minnesota. Somali, Oromo and Hmong are among the next most-spoken languages, with more than 60,000 speakers each. Other significant language communities include Vietnamese, German, Chinese, Russian, Arabic and French, each of which comprise more than 15,000 speakers at home. Except for German, all the languages are more likely to be spoken in the seven-county metro area than in Greater Minnesota.

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[19] Federal Highway Administration, National Household Travel Survey 2017.

[19] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, S1601; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).

[20] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

Figure 5: Number of people speaking a language other than English at home in Minnesota by geography, 2018[21].

Spanish 197,398
Oromo or Somali 64,958
Hmong 63,775
Vietnamese 22,739
German 19,129
Chinese 19,023
Russian 16,067
Arabic 15,445
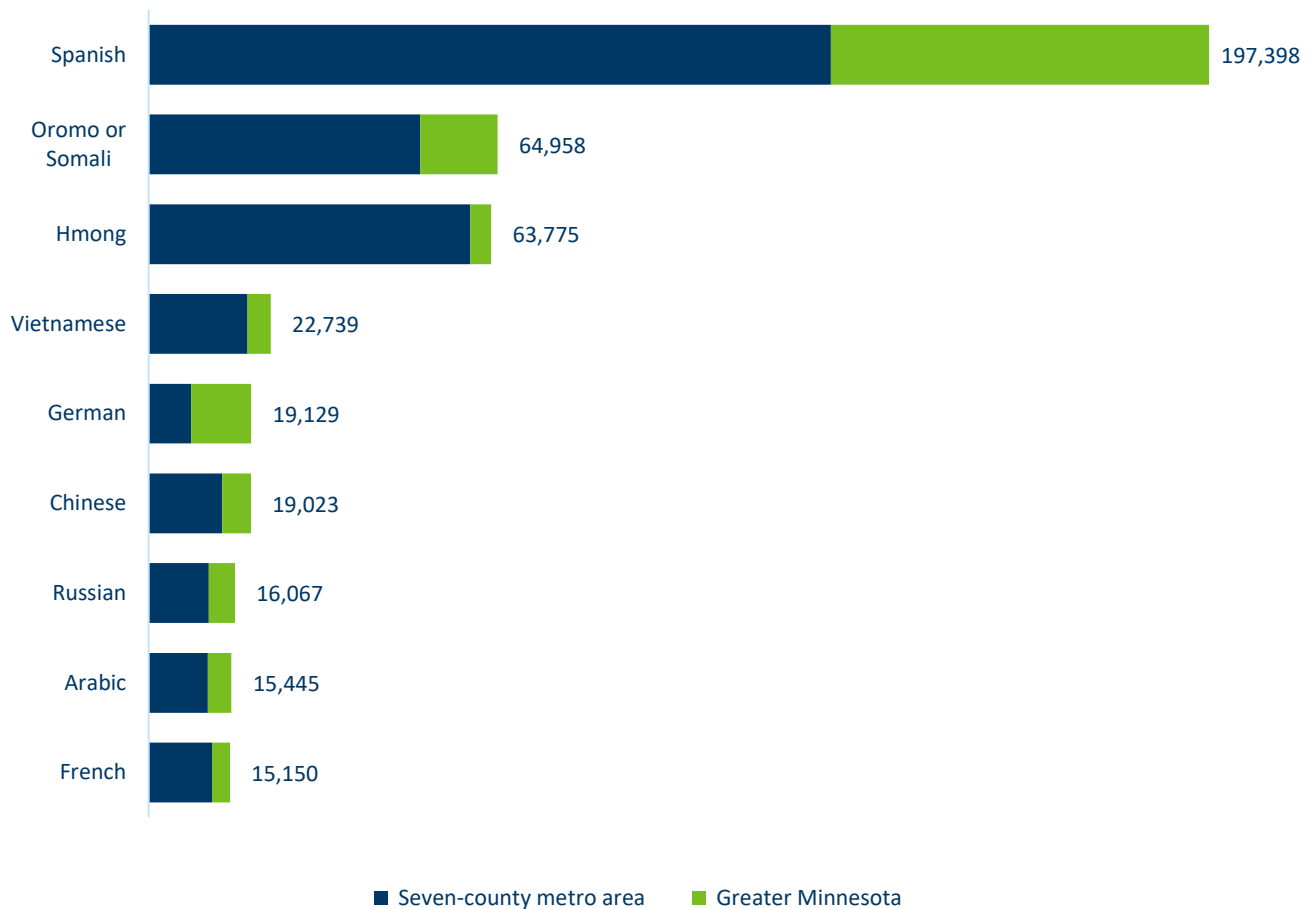French 15,150

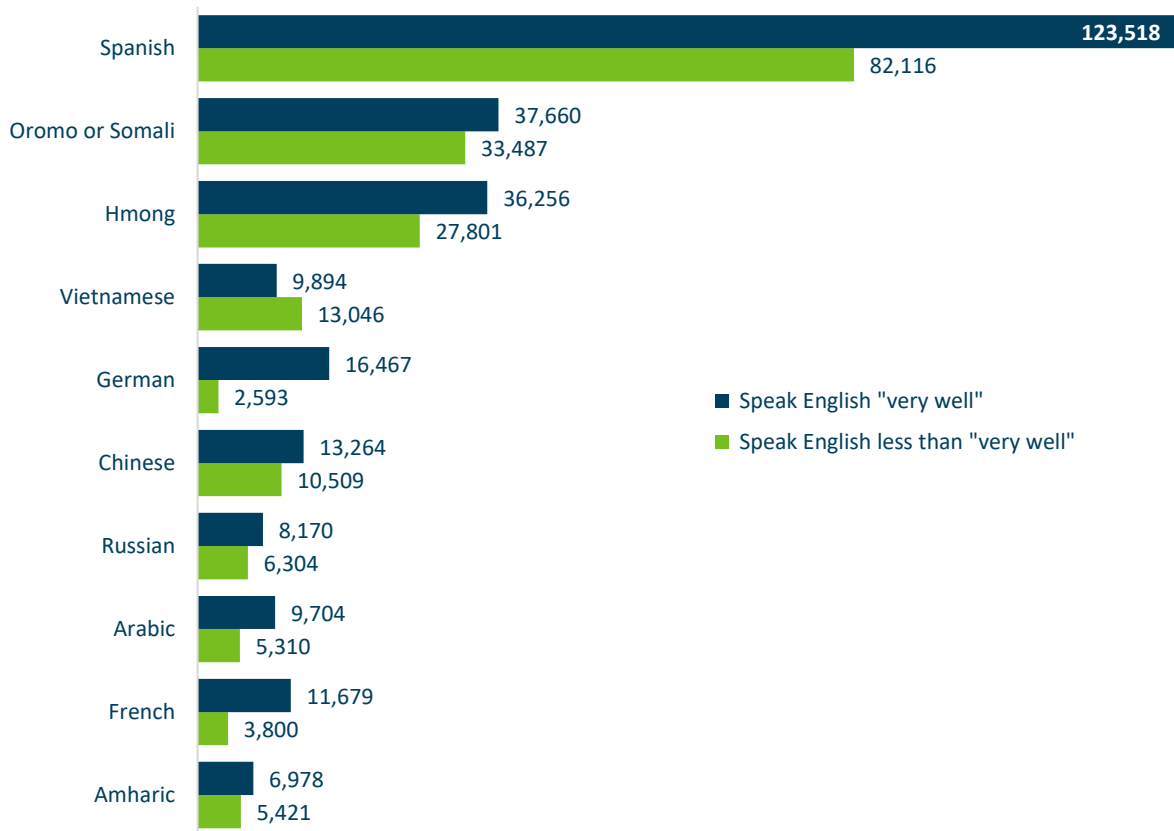■ Seven-county metro area ■ Greater Minnesota

Figure 7 shows Minnesotans' ability to speak English by the primary language spoken at home. While there are almost 240,000 people in Minnesota who have difficulty speaking English, most people who speak another language at home are fluent in English as well. Speakers of Spanish in the home consist of the most speakers with limited English proficiency, with more than 83,000 speaking English less than very well. Overall, 58% of Spanish speakers are fluent in English and the total number of speakers with limited English proficiency is primarily due to the large number of Spanish speakers present in the state. Oromo or Somali, Hmong and Vietnamese are next, each with more than 10,000 speakers with limited English proficiency. Chinese, Russian, Amharic, Arabic, French and German all have between 2,000 and 10,000 speakers speaking English less than very well. Vietnamese and Chinese speakers are the only two group that have a higher proportion of people with limited English proficiency at 54% and 51% respectively. Statewide, interpretations and translations into Spanish, Oromo, Somali and Hmong would reach the most people who have limited English proficiency. Localized projects could benefit from examining the local distribution of languages spoken to understand if interpretation and translations into specific language could benefit engagement efforts.

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[21] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2018 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates, B16001; generated by MnDOT using data.census.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).

Figure 6: Ability to speak English by the primary language spoken at home, 2019[22]

Language	Speak English "very well"	Speak English less than "very well"
Spanish	123,518	82,116
Oromo or Somali	37,660	33,487
Hmong	36,256	27,801
Vietnamese	9,894	13,046
German	16,467	2,593
Chinese	13,264	10,509
Russian	8,170	6,304
Arabic	9,704	5,310
French	11,679	3,800
Amharic	6,978	5,421

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Minnesota's average household size has decreased since the middle of the 20th Century. In 1970, the average Minnesota household was home to 3.28 people. By 2000, the average had fallen to 2.52 and as of the 2019 American Community Survey, the average was 2.5.[23] As households in Minnesota become smaller on average, more housing units could be needed to accommodate the expected growth in population. Of course, household composition varies between different racial and ethnic groups.

Immigrants and Communities of Color are more likely to live in multigenerational households than other groups are. Table 8 shows that two thirds of White, non-Hispanic householders in Minnesota live in a household where only one generation is present, a little less than one third are in a household with parents and children present. Only 1.4% of White, non-Hispanic households have three or more generations, where children, parents, and grandparents live together. For Black, Asian, Hispanic or Latinx, and immigrant groups, households are more likely than not to include children or grandparents. Hispanic or Latino households are the most likely to live with two generations, at 52%. Asian households are the most likely to live with three or more generations, just over 10%.

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[22] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, B16001; generated by MnDOT using census.data.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).

[23] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, S1101; generated by MnDOT using census.data.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).

Figure 7: Generational composition of Minnesota households by group, 2018[24]
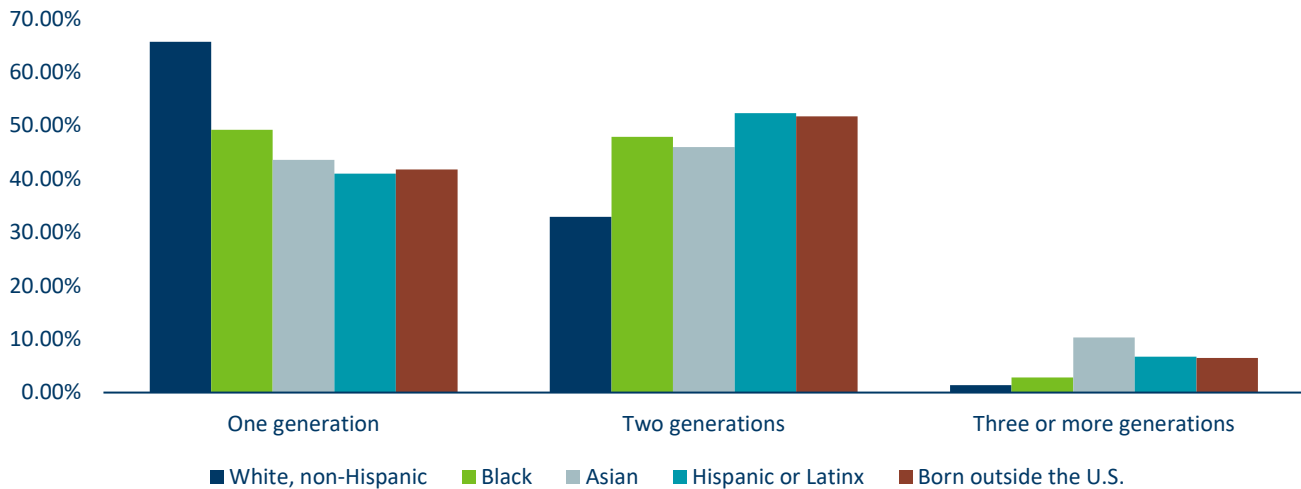
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Minnesota has a higher level of educational attainment than the nation as a whole, and in recent years, Minnesotans are increasingly earning higher education degrees. Figure 9 shows that between 2012 and 2018, the share of Minnesotans 25 years or older with a high school degree or less as fallen from 34% to 31%, and the share with a bachelor's degree or higher has risen from 33% to 37%. Across the United States, only 33% of adults have a bachelor's degree or higher. The share of adults in Minnesota who have attended some college, but do not have a bachelor's degree, has fallen from 31% in 2012 to 29% in 2018.

Figure 10 shows the difference of educational attainment between Greater Minnesota and the seven-county metro area. While residents of the seven-county metro area have higher levels of educational attainment than residents of Greater Minnesota, there is a statewide trend toward more people graduating from college. In Greater Minnesota, the percentage of adults with bachelor's degrees or higher rose from 25% in 2012 to 28% in 2018. Whereas the population with a high school diploma or less fell from 39% to 36%, and the share with some college education (but not a degree) stayed flat at 36%.

Trends in educational attainment have a few implications for transportation in Minnesota. First, school and educational opportunities of all types are important destinations for Minnesotans across the state. Second, the state is moving toward a knowledge economy that could have an impact on commute patterns, freight movement and work-from-home opportunities. Third, MnDOT has an opportunity to facilitate distance learning by expanding the broadband internet network along state highway corridors, in partnership with other organizations and agencies.

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[24] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

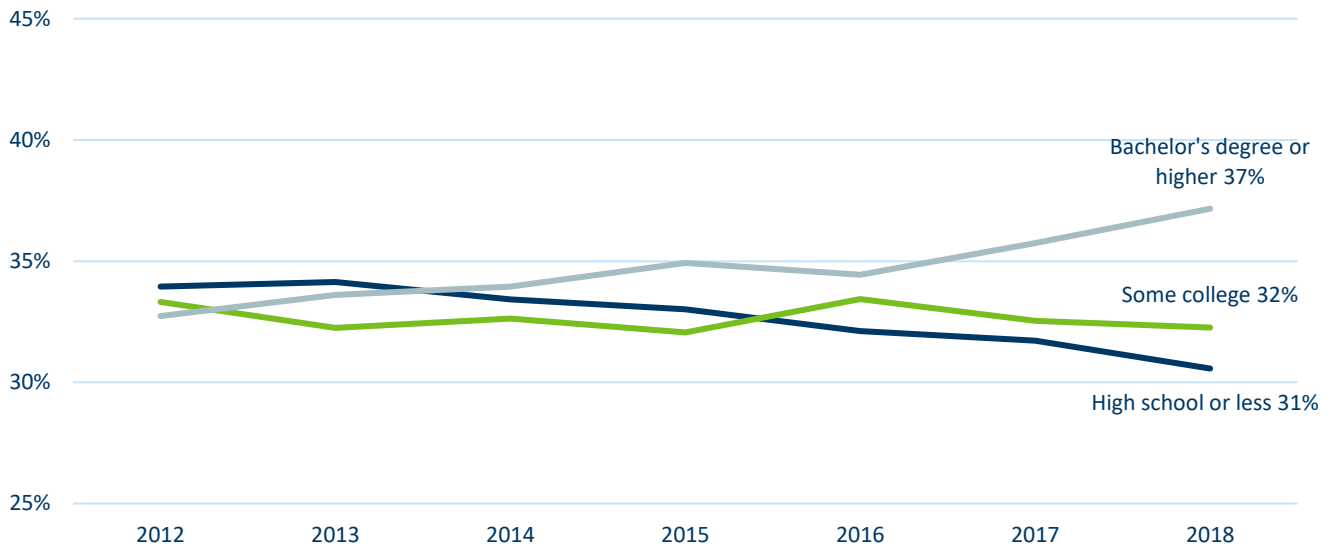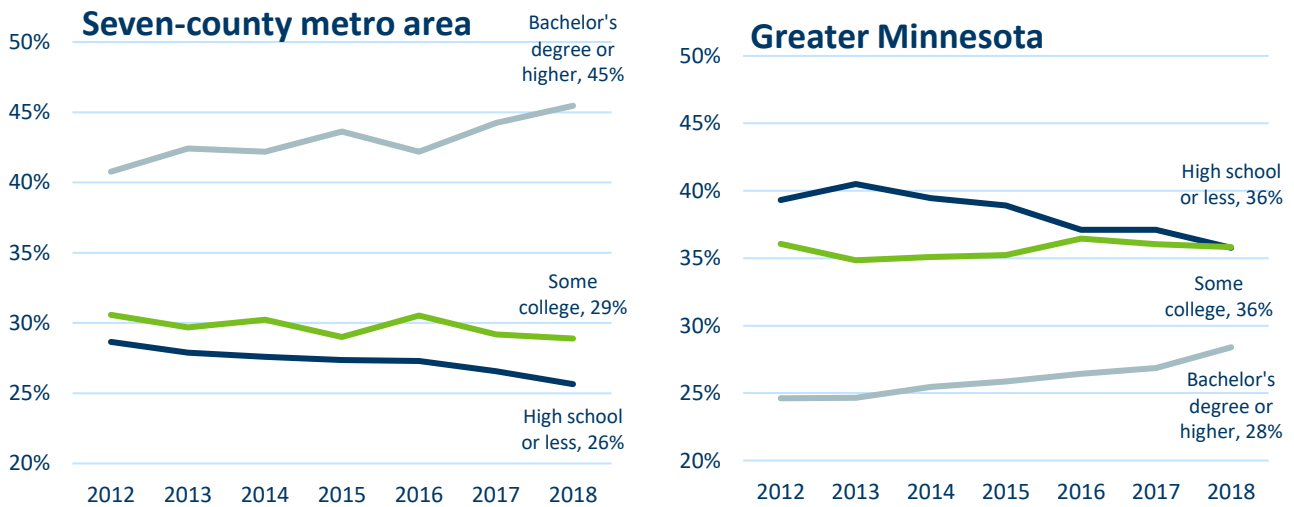Figure 8: Minnesotans by level of educational attainment, 2012-2018[25]

Figure 9: Highest level of educational attainment for Minnesotans 25 years and older by geography, 2012-2018[26]

[25] U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2018 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates, S1501; generated by MnDOT using census.data.gov (accessed February 19, 2021).
[26] Ibid.

RELATED TRENDS

- Aging Population
- Disabilities
- Health and Transportation
- Race and Transportation
- Urban and Rural Population Trends

Minnesota's vision for transportation is known as Minnesota GO. The aim is that the multimodal transportation system maximizes the health of people, the environment and out economy. A transportation vision for generations, Minnesota GO guides a comprehensive planning effort for all people using the transportation system and for all modes of travel. Learn more at MinnesotaGO.org.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Summary of revisions
November 2015	Original paper.
February 2020	Updated to reflect new data.
June 2021	Updated to reflect new data.