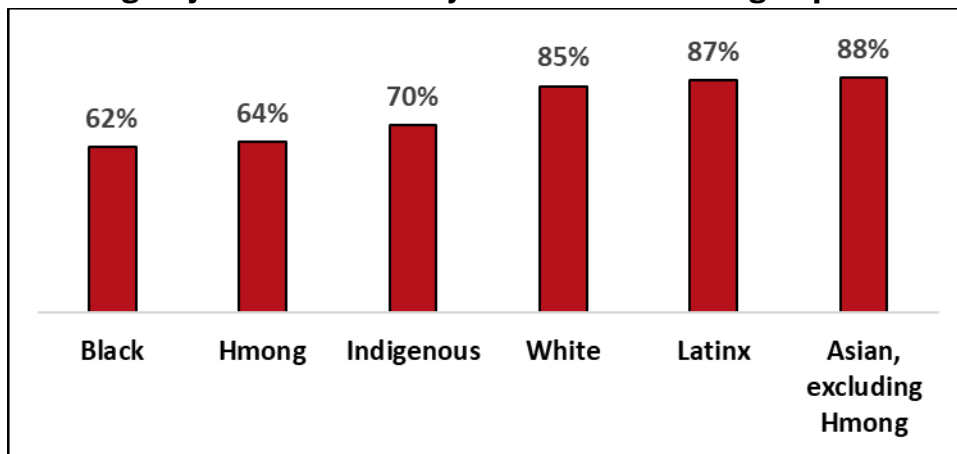


# Minnesota's Diverse Communities Survey: What positive things are happening within the state's diverse communities? And what needs to change in the state?

November 23, 2021

**84% of Minnesota adults rate the state's quality of life as excellent or good, including majorities of all surveyed racial and ethnic groups**



Question: "How would you rate the overall quality of life in Minnesota?"

Source: APM Research Lab's Minnesota's Diverse Communities Survey, April 26-June 14, 2021. N = 1,532 Minnesotans age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is  $\pm 4.8$  percentage points.

# Key findings

## Quality of life in Minnesota

- Eighty-four percent of all Minnesotans rate the quality of life in the state positively (either excellent or good), including 85% of White Minnesotans and 76% of BIPOC Minnesotans.
- Non-Hmong Asian (88%) and Latinx (87%) Minnesotans join White Minnesotans as the groups with the highest ratings of the quality of life in the state.
- Over one in 10 Indigenous Minnesotans (11%) rate quality of life in Minnesota as poor, the highest proportion among all racial and ethnic groups surveyed.
- Eighty-nine percent of Democrats, 93% of political independents and 75% of Republicans rate the quality of life in Minnesota positively.

## One thing Minnesotans would like to see change to improve the state

- Improving racial and social justice is the most common theme to emerge from responses to the open-ended question: “If there is one thing you would like to see changed in Minnesota to improve our state, what would that be?”
- The most common themes that emerged from the responses of BIPOC Minnesotans: racial and social justice (16%), police reform (14%), and addressing crime and public safety (14%).
- One in five Black Minnesotans identify police reform as the one change they would most like to see to improve the state, the highest rate of all racial and ethnic groups surveyed.
- White Minnesotans have even less consensus than BIPOC Minnesotans. Eleven percent mentioned the need to improve racial or social justice, 9% favored tax reform and 8% want state politics to be less partisan.
- Republicans also favor tax reform (15%) and decreasing partisanship (15%) at rates significantly higher than Democrats (4% and 3%, respectively).
- Democrats prioritize addressing the states racial and social justice issues (19%) and police reform (11%) at rates significantly higher than Republicans (2% for each).
- A large proportion of answers did not easily fall into the common categories and had to be coded as “other.” This is the case, especially, for one-quarter of Indigenous Minnesotans and one in five, each, Latinx and White Minnesotans.

## The single most positive thing happening in Minnesota's diverse communities or the state

- Answers varied considerably by racial and ethnic group, but COVID-19 vaccination was the single most common theme to emerge from responses to the open-ended question: “What is the single most positive thing happening in Minnesota’s [respondent’s racial or ethnic group] community right now?”
- Twelve percent of Black Minnesotans and 7% of White Minnesotans said that police reform and the conviction of Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd are the most positive thing currently happening in their community or the state. They were the only two racial and ethnic groups to provide this answer.
- Eleven percent of BIPOC Minnesotans provided answers that emphasized an increased sense of unity and involvement in their communities as the most positive thing happening currently, compared to only 2% of White Minnesotans who gave a similar answer. Hmong Minnesotans (14%) were particularly likely to give this type of answer.
- Seven percent of BIPOC Minnesotans noted that cultural celebrations and increased cultural awareness were the most positive things happening in their communities, including 16% of Indigenous Minnesotans and 14% of Hmong Minnesotans. Less than 0.5% of White Minnesotans, by comparison, answered similarly.
- Black (12%) and non-Hmong Asian (13%) Minnesotans were more likely to identify a growing awareness of racism and subsequent anti-racism efforts as the most positive thing happening in their communities.
- White Minnesotans identified the COVID-19 vaccination campaign (14%) and easing of pandemic restrictions (13%) as the two things that they felt most positive about in the state. Only 1% of BIPOC Minnesotans felt the same.
  - When looking at the same results by political affiliation, there is a clear partisan split. Sixteen percent of Democrats in Minnesota cited COVID-19 vaccinations as the most positive occurrence in the state, compared to 8% of Republicans, and one in five Republicans cited the easing of pandemic restrictions as the most positive thing compared to only 6% of Democrats.
- Forty percent of BIPOC Minnesotans answered either that nothing positive was happening in their community, said they didn’t know of anything positive to report or refused to answer the question. This compares to 21% of White Minnesotans.
- Ten percent of BIPOC Minnesotans and 8% of White Minnesotans gave an answer that was coded as “other.”

# Introduction

“What is the single most positive thing happening in your community right now?” This question is one of two open-ended questions that we asked as part of our Minnesota’s Diverse Communities Survey and it emerged early in the process of designing our survey instrument. As part of this project, Ka Vang (Director of Community Impact and Engagement, MPR) and her team held listening sessions with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) Minnesotans throughout Greater Minnesota. One of the most consistent pieces of feedback they received was: BIPOC Minnesotans want the media to feature them in stories about positive things happening within their community and not just feature them when there is a negative story to tell.

The Minnesota’s Diverse Communities Survey also asked Minnesotans their opinion on the overall quality of life in the state and what one thing they would like to see change to improve the state. After looking at the results, what becomes clear is that no community is a monolith. Patterns certainly emerge—COVID-19 and racial justice issues are particularly prominent—but what concerns Minnesotans and what they take pride in and feel hopeful about differs considerably between communities as well as within them.

This report is one in a series detailing results of the Minnesota’s Diverse Communities Survey. At the core of this survey is our effort to provide as scientifically representative as possible a picture of the opinions and experiences of as many of Minnesota’s racial and ethnic groups as possible. In so doing, the survey aims to elevate the collective voices of communities that are typically underrepresented, sometimes stereotyped, and often not well understood by those who do not share their backgrounds.

SSRS of Glen Mills Pennsylvania conducted the survey April 26-June 14, 2021 using an innovative methodology that relied on targeted mailings to encourage high priority populations to complete a web-based version of the questionnaire, as well as telephone interviews.<sup>1</sup>

This report focuses on the following survey questions related to the quality of life in Minnesota:

1. How would you rate the overall quality of life in Minnesota?
  - Excellent
  - Good
  - Fair
  - Poor

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed methodology, including the transparency disclosure requirements of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, please see <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/mdc-survey>.

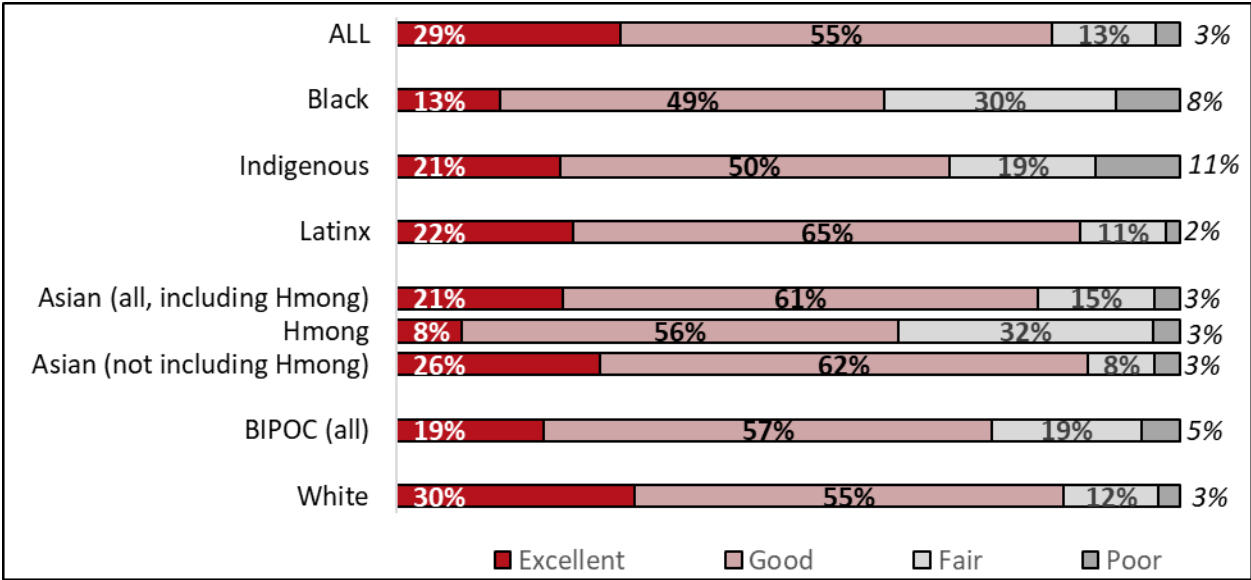
2. If there is one thing you would like to see changed in Minnesota to improve our state, what would that be?
  - Open-ended responses recorded verbatim, and coded for purposes of analysis
3. What is the single most positive thing happening in Minnesota's [racial or ethnic group]\* community right now?
  - Open-ended responses recorded verbatim, and coded for purposes of analysis

\* Note that each survey respondent was asked specifically about the racial or ethnic group that they had identified with in one of the survey's initial questions, except for respondents who identified as White. For example, a respondent who had identified themselves as Asian would have been asked, "What is the single most positive thing happening in Minnesota's Asian community right now." However, respondents who identified as White would have been asked, "What is the single most positive thing happening in Minnesota right now?"

# Minnesotans’ assessment of the quality of life in the state

A strong majority of all Minnesotans (84%) rate the quality of life in the state either excellent or good, including 85% of White Minnesotans and 76% of BIPOC Minnesotans. While there is variation, this majority persists across all racial and ethnic groups surveyed.

**Graph 1:**  
**How Minnesotans rate the overall quality of life in the state by race and ethnicity**



Question: “How would you rate the overall quality of life in Minnesota?” Source: APM Research Lab’s Minnesota’s Diverse Communities Survey, April 26-June 14, 2021. N = 1,532 Minnesotans age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ±4.8 percentage points.

Eighty-eight percent of non-Hmong Asian Minnesotans and 87% of Latinx Minnesotans rate the quality of life in the state as either excellent or good. These percentages are roughly equivalent to that of White Minnesotans who rate the state positively (statistically the percentages are tied since they fall within the margin of error).

Although Indigenous (70%), Hmong (64%) and Black (62%) Minnesotans positively rate the quality of life in the state at lower proportions than non-Hmong Asian, Latinx and White Minnesotans, a still solid majority of each group rates the quality of life in Minnesota either excellent or good.

White (30%) and non-Hmong Asian Minnesotans (26%) are more inclined to rate quality of life in Minnesota excellent.

Nearly one-third each of Hmong (32%) and Black (30%) Minnesotans rate the quality of life in the state fair. One-in-10 Indigenous Minnesotans (11%) rate quality of life in the state poor, the highest proportion of all groups surveyed. Black Minnesotans (8%) are the only group that comes close to the proportion of Indigenous Minnesotans who give a poor rating.

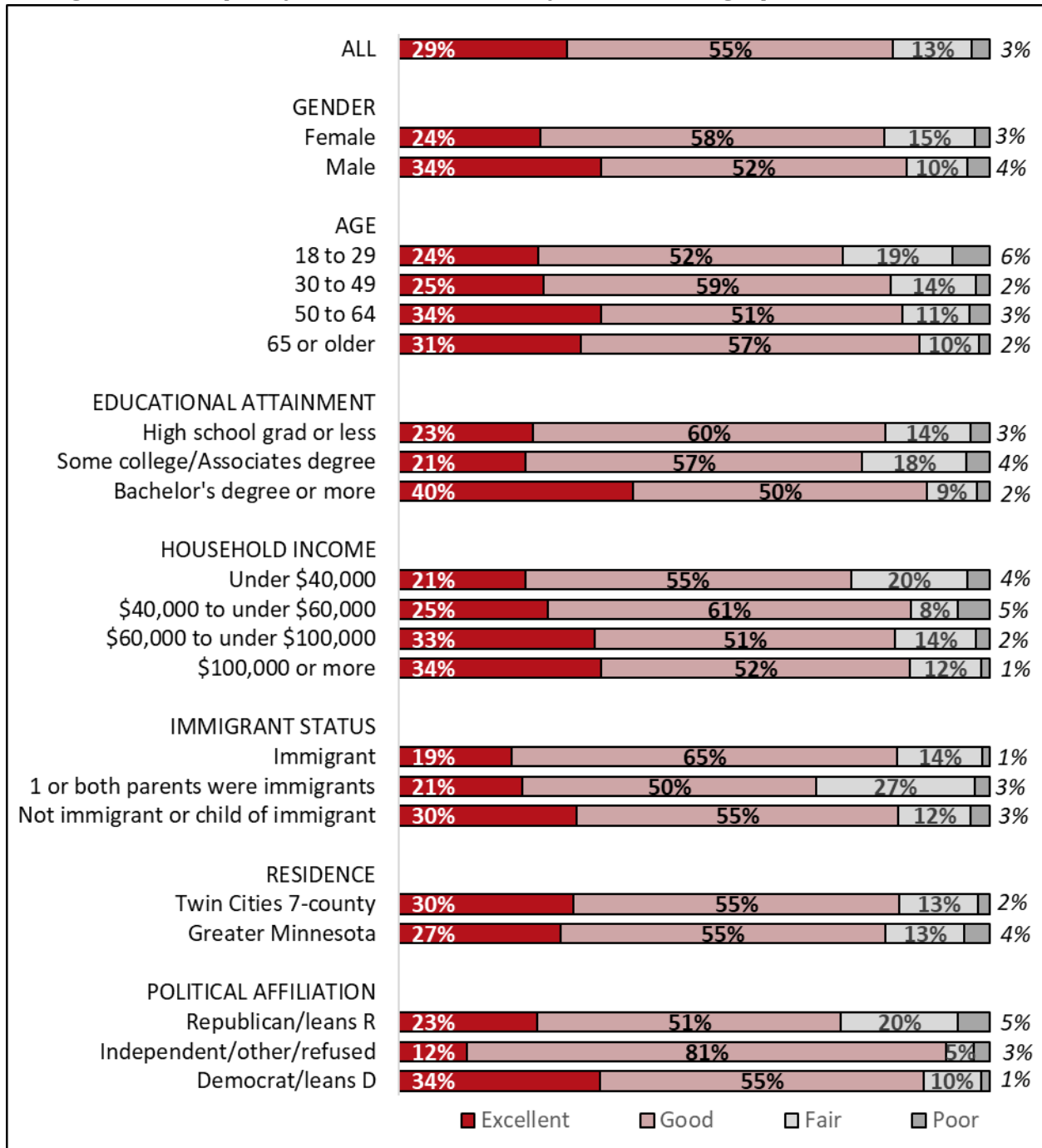
Intriguingly, men (34%) rate quality of life in the state excellent at a somewhat higher rate than women (24%). More specifically, there is a large discrepancy of 13 percentage points between Black men (2%) and Black women (15%) who give a poor rating.

There is no discernible difference between residents who live in the Twin Cities and those who live in Greater Minnesota when it comes to their quality-of-life rating; strong majorities of both Twin Cities residents (85%) and Greater Minnesota residents (82%) rate the quality of life in the state positively. However, there is a difference along political lines.

Significantly higher proportions of Democrats (89%) and political independents (93%) rate the quality of life in Minnesota positively than the three-quarters of Republicans who did the same. One-third of Democrats (34%) rate the quality of life in the state excellent, compared to 23% of Republicans and 12% of political independents.

## Graph 2:

### Ratings of overall quality of life in Minnesota by various demographic characteristics



Question: "How would you rate the overall quality of life in Minnesota?"

Source: APM Research Lab's Minnesota's Diverse Communities Survey, April 26-June 14, 2021. N = 1,532 Minnesotans age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is  $\pm 4.8$  percentage points.



# What Minnesotans would like to see changed to improve the state

We asked Minnesotans to indicate what one thing they would most like to see changed to improve the state. The results reveal that no group, especially BIPOC Minnesotans, is a monolith when it comes to their priorities for the state and their communities.

The most common themes to emerge from responses to the open-ended question concern racial and social justice (11%); reducing taxes and tax reform (8%); addressing political partisanship or political imbalance perceived by the respondent (7%); community relations and divisiveness (7%); and police reform, including defunding the police (7%).

Among BIPOC Minnesotans, there is some convergence of opinion around issues of racial and social justice (16%), police reform (14%) and addressing community violence (14%). But rates of response vary among racial and ethnic groups under the BIPOC umbrella. One in five Black Minnesotans prioritize police reform, but this rate is nearly double the next highest rate, 12% of non-Hmong Asian Minnesotans, and four times the lowest rate, 5% of Hmong Minnesotans.

White Minnesotans are even less unified around a single priority. The highest rates of response among White Minnesotans—11% mentioned racial or social justice, 9% are in favor of tax reform and 8% in favor of decreasing partisanship.

Among some groups, the highest proportion of their answers falls in the catchall “other” category. One-quarter of Indigenous Minnesotans and 1 in 5 Latinx Minnesotans and White Minnesotans gave a variety of answers that were lumped together as “other.” Themes that emerged from those answers were marijuana legalization, better healthcare access and environmental protection; none of these themes were mentioned by more than 1% or they would have been coded as a separate category.

When analyzing the results by other demographics, the same idea holds true: there is not much consensus within and among different demographic groupings. The opinions of Republicans in Minnesota coalesce around several issues somewhat more than is the case with other groups: 15% of Republicans want tax reform; another 15% want decreasing partisanship; 10% want political and election reform; and 9% want more safety and less crime. Half of Republicans in Minnesota prioritize these four topics.

Only two major issues are supported by 10% or more of Democrats in Minnesota. Nineteen percent of Democrats want to see a move towards increased racial equity and social justice, and 11% of Democrats in Minnesota want to see some type of police reform.

We go into this data in further detail below, first analyzing it by race and ethnicity and then by other demographic categories. Finally, we look at the types of answers commonly given that fall under the category of “other.”

**Table 1: Most commonly mentioned top priorities for improving Minnesota**

|                                | Racial & social justice | Tax reform | Partisan-ship | Community relations | Police reform | Gov't & election reform | Income, poverty & jobs | Crime & public safety | Education reform & funding | Roads & transit | Housing & homelessness |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| <b>All Minnesotans</b>         | 11%                     | 8%         | 7%            | 7%                  | 7%            | 6%                      | 6%                     | 5%                    | 5%                         | 4%              | 2%                     |
| <b>RACE &amp; ETHNICITY</b>    |                         |            |               |                     |               |                         |                        |                       |                            |                 |                        |
| <b>Black</b>                   | 18%                     | 1%         | 0%            | 4%                  | 21%           | 2%                      | 4%                     | 16%                   | 3%                         | 2%              | 7%                     |
| <b>Indigenous</b>              | 16%                     | 3%         | 2%            | 2%                  | 8%            | 3%                      | 9%                     | 6%                    | 5%                         | 3%              | 3%                     |
| <b>Latinx</b>                  | 10%                     | 4%         | 0%            | 4%                  | 11%           | 2%                      | 5%                     | 10%                   | 7%                         | 5%              | 5%                     |
| <b>Hmong</b>                   | 16%                     | 0%         | 0%            | 5%                  | 5%            | 1%                      | 5%                     | 14%                   | 5%                         | 10%             | 6%                     |
| <b>Asian (excluding Hmong)</b> | 17%                     | 4%         | 2%            | 2%                  | 12%           | 3%                      | 4%                     | 16%                   | 1%                         | 6%              | 2%                     |
| <b>BIPOC (all)</b>             | 16%                     | 3%         | 1%            | 4%                  | 14%           | 2%                      | 5%                     | 14%                   | 4%                         | 5%              | 5%                     |
| <b>White</b>                   | 11%                     | 9%         | 8%            | 7%                  | 5%            | 7%                      | 7%                     | 4%                    | 5%                         | 4%              | 2%                     |
| <b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>  |                         |            |               |                     |               |                         |                        |                       |                            |                 |                        |
| <b>HS or less</b>              | 5%                      | 10%        | 6%            | 3%                  | 5%            | 9%                      | 10%                    | 9%                    | 3%                         | 3%              | 1%                     |
| <b>Some college</b>            | 11%                     | 6%         | 11%           | 10%                 | 5%            | 5%                      | 6%                     | 4%                    | 4%                         | 5%              | 3%                     |
| <b>Bachelor's +</b>            | 17%                     | 9%         | 5%            | 7%                  | 9%            | 6%                      | 3%                     | 4%                    | 7%                         | 4%              | 3%                     |
| <b>RESIDENCE</b>               |                         |            |               |                     |               |                         |                        |                       |                            |                 |                        |
| <b>Twin Cities</b>             | 16%                     | 6%         | 5%            | 7%                  | 10%           | 4%                      | 4%                     | 7%                    | 6%                         | 4%              | 2%                     |
| <b>Greater MN</b>              | 6%                      | 11%        | 10%           | 7%                  | 3%            | 10%                     | 9%                     | 4%                    | 4%                         | 3%              | 2%                     |
| <b>POLITICAL AFFILIATION</b>   |                         |            |               |                     |               |                         |                        |                       |                            |                 |                        |
| <b>Republican</b>              | 2%                      | 15%        | 15%           | 7%                  | 2%            | 10%                     | 8%                     | 9%                    | 2%                         | 1%              | 1%                     |
| <b>Independent</b>             | 6%                      | 5%         | 1%            | 9%                  | 1%            | 8%                      | 7%                     | 3%                    | 2%                         | 1%              | 3%                     |
| <b>Democrat</b>                | 19%                     | 4%         | 3%            | 6%                  | 11%           | 4%                      | 5%                     | 3%                    | 7%                         | 6%              | 3%                     |

Question: "If there is one thing you would like to see changed in Minnesota to improve our state, what would that be?" Written responses were coded for purposes of analysis. Not shown: 19% of responses that were coded as "other" and 12% responding don't know or choosing not to answer. Themes mentioned by 10% or more for each group are shaded (other themes may be statistically tied with these due to margin of error). Source: APM Research Lab's Minnesota's Diverse Communities Survey, April 26-June 14, 2021. N = 1,532 Minnesotans age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ±4.8 percentage points.

## Results by race and ethnicity

Answers vary considerably within and across racial and ethnic groups. However, somewhat equivalent proportions of Minnesotans across racial and ethnic lines want to see an end to racism, racial equity and social justice. Sixteen percent of BIPOC Minnesotans and one in 10 White Minnesotans prioritize the state making progress on racial and social justice issues. Black (18%) and non-Hmong Asian (17%) Minnesotans had the highest proportion of respondents that desired progress on tackling racism and racial disparities in the state, which is significantly higher than White (11%) and Latinx (10%) respondents.

### Examples – Racial justice

- *“The education gap for people of color is inexcusable and needs to be eliminated.”*  
– 36-year-old Black woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Disparities in health, race, income, quality of life overall.”*  
– 45-year-old Black woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Eliminate the value gap. Currently only people ‘from here,’ Minnesota, who are White and Midwestern are valued. Only Lutherans and Catholics are of any significance. And, to top it off, men are much more important than women. This value gap leaves the rest of us in limbo.”*  
– 65-year-old Indigenous woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“Racism via red lining, policing, policy, and the educational gap between white and non-white students.”* – 31-year-old White woman from the Twin Cities
- *“I truly believe that understanding racial equity and LGBTQ equity needs to be brought out and spoken about more so that the state can have an understanding of these rights.”*  
– 20-year-old Asian man from the Twin Cities
- *“More economic opportunity for all with especial regard for equity in terms of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and coming to terms with a long-entrenched history of white privilege.”* – 61-year-old Asian man from the Twin Cities
- *“More rural diversity.”* – 55-year-old White woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“For people of all color to be able to live in a place where we do not have to fear for our lives. Equality for everyone. Fair education and work.”*  
– 25-year-old Hmong woman from the Twin Cities

A significant segment of Black Minnesotans, 21%, said they wanted to see police reform in Minnesota, including changing, defunding or abolishing the police force. This is the highest degree of consensus around a single issue given by any racial or ethnic group in the survey.

#### Examples – Police reform

- *“Police Reform. The police should reflect the communities they serve.”*  
– 53-year-old Black (Somali) woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Policing. I am more fearful of the police than I am of crime. I support abolishment, but at the very least, there needs to be extreme reform.”*  
– 34-year-old Indigenous woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Abolish minor traffic stops that result in killing.”*  
– 43-year-old Black man from the Twin Cities
- *“Replace the entire police force, dismantle current system.”*  
– 39-year-old White woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Police Reform through defunding and reallocating police funds into new or existing departments that are more educated, suited, and able to provide help to people in a variety of situations. Regardless of your opinion on the current police system, it's too much to ask that one department with limited training be a catch-all for any crime or domestic dispute.”*  
– 20-year-old Black person from the Twin Cities
- *“Training of police officers to serve BIPOC communities and those suffering from mental health well and equitably.”* – 37-year-old Asian woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Fair policing and justice when the police commit crimes.”*  
– 37-year-old Black man from the Twin Cities

BIPOC Minnesotans (14%) are much more likely to answer that they want to see a reduction in crime and violence than White Minnesotans (4%). Black (16%), non-Hmong Asian (16%) and Hmong (14%) Minnesotans, in particular, highlighted a desire for increased safety as the one change they would most like to see in the state.

Issues pertaining to homelessness and affordable housing were only slightly more

#### Examples – Safety

- *“Safety. Now we have robbery, community divided and police are not community. I think they want what is happening now. I don't feel safe.”*  
– 41-year-old Black man from the Twin Cities
- *“Safer communities, less crimes, cleaner neighborhoods, new homes, less ghetto areas.”*  
– 36-year-old Hmong woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Stop the crime and political fires in Minneapolis. It is spilling into the other communities of all races.”*  
– 51-year-old White man from the Twin Cities
- *“Security: Since the death of George Floyd the safety of Minneapolis has worsened. People are carjacking and shooting on a day-to-day basis. I don't know where the future of Minneapolis is heading. So doubtful.”*  
– 24-year-old Black (Somali) man from the Twin Cities

likely to be mentioned by BIPOC Minnesotans than White Minnesotans (5% to 2%). Seven percent of Black Minnesotans emphasized a need to address issues of homelessness and housing along with 6% of Hmong Minnesotans.

#### Examples – Homelessness & housing

- *“Housing. There’s a huge number of homelessness among the younger people like college students.”*  
– 18-year-old Black (Somali) woman from the Twin Cities
- *“More housing for homeless people and more help for their mental health.”*  
– 60-year-old White man from Greater Minnesota
- *“Less parking lots in the cities. Taller and more multifamily building and more green spaces.”*  
– 29-year-old Asian man from the Twin Cities

White Minnesotans are much more likely than BIPOC Minnesotans to mention lower taxes and tax reform or decreasing partisanship as the things they would most like to see change to improve the state. Nearly one in 10 White Minnesotans (9%) said that tax reform was the biggest change they would like to see compared to just

3% of BIPOC Minnesotans. Eight percent of White Minnesotans indicate that they want state politics to be less partisan, but only 1% of BIPOC Minnesotans mention this as their primary concern. Likewise, 7% of White Minnesotans mention political reform of some kind—election reform, judicial reform, an end to gerrymandering congressional districts—while only 2% of BIPOC Minnesotans supply a similar answer.

Hmong Minnesotans are more likely to give answers addressing infrastructure, the state of roads and mass transit. One in 10 Hmong Minnesotans gave an infrastructure-related answer compared to 4% of White Minnesotans, as well as 3% of Indigenous and 2% of Black Minnesotans.

#### Examples – Infrastructure

- *“Transportation in the Twin Cities. Never ending road construction. We need mass transit to handle our growing population.”* – 43-year-old Hmong man from the Twin Cities
- *“A much better public transportation system of trains and trolleys in all neighborhoods to allow for access to different parts of the city for entertainment, education, and work for people of all races and income levels.”* – 36-year-old Latino man from the Twin Cities
- *“Better roads in the cities, easier access to healthcare for people who do not have a connection to resources, and more resources at popularly visited places.”*  
– 52-year-old Hmong woman from the Twin Cities

## Results by political leaning, educational attainment and location

Although roughly equivalent proportions of all racial and ethnic groups indicated that an end to racial disparities and progress toward social justice is the biggest change they would like to see, there are differences based on political leaning and level of educational attainment. Nineteen percent of Democrats in Minnesota provided such an answer, compared with only 2% of Republicans. Additionally, Minnesotans with some college (11%) or a college degree or higher (17%) are much more likely than those with a high school degree or less (5%) to prioritize more racial equity and social justice as the most important change for the state.

Alongside the higher proportion of Black Minnesotans, 1 in 10 residents of the Twin Cities desire some type of police reform compared 3% of those in Greater Minnesota. Likewise, Democrats in Minnesota (11%) answered this way at a significantly higher rate than the state's Republicans (2%). However, Republicans (9%) are more inclined to emphasize crime reduction than Democrats (3%).

One in 10 residents of Greater Minnesota (9%) said that income inequality is what they would most like to see change in the state, while only 4% of those living in the Twin Cities answered the same. Minnesotans with a high school degree or less (10%) also focused on income-related changes, compared to just 3% of Minnesotans with a college degree or more.

Republicans (15%) are significantly more likely to suggest tax reform than are Democrats (4%). Similarly, 15% of Republicans compared with only 3% of Democrats highlight partisanship as the thing that most needs to change in Minnesota.

One in 10 residents of Greater Minnesota prioritize political and election reform; a rate significantly higher than Minnesotans in the Twin Cities (4%). Nearly 1 in 10 residents of Greater Minnesota (9%) also suggest income inequality and unemployment as the thing they would most like to see change in the state, compared to 4% of Twin Cities residents. Note, however, that some of these responses refer to public benefits reform, which is a slightly different emphasis than income inequality.

Although the proportions fall below 10%, Democrats in Minnesota prioritize education reform or funding (7%) and transportation infrastructure (6%) at rates significantly higher than Minnesota Republicans (2% and 1% respectively).

Finally, one interesting note, nearly one-third of political independents (30%) refused to answer this question, which is a rate far higher than either Democrats (10%) or Republicans (6%).

## Types of answers coded as “other”

As mentioned above, a notably high proportion of respondents supplied an answer that had to be categorized as “other.” Roughly one in five White Minnesotans (19%) and 16% of BIPOC Minnesotans, including one in five Latinx Minnesotans (20%) and roughly one in four Indigenous Minnesotans (27%) gave an answer that fell into the “other” category.

None of the answers in the “other” category were given with enough frequency to perform meaningful comparisons. Patterns do emerge within the “other” answers that are important to highlight, nonetheless, even if unquantifiable in a statistically significant way.

The answers to the question of what one thing would you like to see change in Minnesota to improve the state and that fell into the “other” category could mostly be grouped around several common themes: marijuana legalization; healthcare, including mental health; the environment; identity politics; supporting the police; family support, including family leave; and culture and attractions.

In terms of rough numbers, marijuana legalization, healthcare access and the environment were the three most common answers given within the “other” category.

### Examples – Other (Marijuana, Healthcare and Environment)

- *“Recreational marijuana. I feel we are missing out on a lot of tax income, and it is no worse than alcohol or tobacco.”*  
– 39-year-old, White man from Greater Minnesota
- *“Decriminalize marijuana and release nonviolent offenders.”*  
– 30-year-old, Latina woman from the Twin Cities
- *“More mental health services.”*  
– 41-year-old, White man from Greater Minnesota
- *“More equitable healthcare for Black and brown people in the state.”*  
– 33-year-old, Black woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Improve mental health access, so people who need help can get it without having armed police be the only public intervention available when someone is in a mental health crisis.”* – 56-year-old, White man from the Twin Cities
- *“Stop the mining especially the nickel mining...our water is too important.”*  
– 96-year-old, White woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“More significant steps statewide to improve our country's response to climate change - e.g. revoking permits to the line 3 pipeline, update our electrical infrastructure and transition to green energy faster, provide tax cuts for electric vehicles.”* – 29-year-old, Asian man from the Twin Cities

Just over one-quarter of Indigenous Minnesotans supplied an answer that had to be coded as “other.” This is the largest proportion of “other” answers among all racial and ethnic groups surveyed. While Indigenous respondents provided a wide array of answers that fall within this category, the same themes identified within the “other” category for all Minnesotans predominate among Indigenous Minnesotans too: marijuana legalization, healthcare and the environment.

In terms of healthcare, Indigenous Minnesotans identify drug and alcohol treatment, and mental healthcare as particular priorities. Smaller portions of Indigenous Minnesotans mention honoring treaties and issues that fall within a broader understanding sustainability.

Examples – “Other” responses from Indigenous Minnesotans

- *“Legalize recreational Marijuana.”*  
– 29-year-old Indigenous woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“More help for drug treatment faculty and detox centers. More help for mental health services.”* – 32-year-old Indigenous woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“No line 3, find other options. Protect our water ways for the wild rice. If there is a spill, there goes our wild rice. The natives rely on the wild rice.”*  
– 66-year-old Indigenous man from Greater Minnesota
- *“Honor Treaties!”* – 54-year-old Indigenous person from Greater Minnesota
- *“Broadband services in the rural communities.”*  
– 59-year-old Indigenous man from Greater Minnesota
- *“Collective movement to a sustainable, equitable economy.”*  
– 48-year-old Indigenous woman from Greater Minnesota



# Positive things happening in Minnesota's diverse communities

We asked Minnesotans to identify the single most positive thing happening in their community in Minnesota right now. They gave a wide range of answers to this question and, even more so than with the previous open-ended question, there was not much consensus within and among racial and ethnic groups on what that single thing is. Nonetheless, intriguing patterns did emerge in the data.

BIPOC Minnesotans, in general, emphasized different things as positive occurrences than White Minnesotans did. This may have been influenced by a slight difference in how the question was framed depending on the racial or ethnic identity of the respondent. While BIPOC Minnesotans were asked about the most positive thing happening in their communities (e.g., “What is the single most positive thing happening in Minnesota’s Asian community right now?”), the question was reframed slightly for White Minnesotans, who were asked their opinion of the most positive thing happening in the state.

White Minnesotans were more inclined to identify issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic as the most important thing currently happening in the state: 14% felt COVID-19 vaccinations and the decreasing death and case rates was the most positive thing happening in the state, and another 13% felt that the easing of pandemic restrictions was the most positive thing currently happening. There was, however, a substantial partisan split between these two answers. Overall, Democrats (16%) were more inclined than Republicans (8%) to feel positive about the vaccinations, and Republicans (20%) were more inclined than Democrats (6%) to feel positive about easing of restrictions.

BIPOC Minnesotans, in general, named community involvement (11%), the growing awareness of racism and engaging in anti-racism efforts (9%), and cultural celebrations and awareness (7%) as the most positive things happening in their communities. However, 40% of BIPOC Minnesotans answered either that there was nothing positive currently happening in their communities, that they did not know how to answer, or simply refused answer; twice the rate as among Whites.

**Table 2: Most mentioned “positive things” happening in Minnesota’s diverse communities**

|                                     | Nothing/<br>don't know/<br>refused | Covid<br>vaccinations                 | Easing<br>COVID-19<br>restrictions | Activities<br>outside the<br>home            | Spring<br>weather   | Police reform<br>& Chauvin<br>conviction | Anti-racism<br>& social<br>justice |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>All Minnesotans</b>              | 24%                                | 12%                                   | 11%                                | 8%   | 7%                  | 6%                                       | 6%                                 |
| <b>Black</b>                        | 27%                                | 2%                                    | 1%                                 | 4%   | 0%                  | 12%                                      | 12%                                |
| <b>Indigenous</b>                   | 37%                                | 6%                                    | 1%                                 | 1%   | 0%                  | 0%                                       | 6%                                 |
| <b>Latinx</b>                       | 55%                                | 0%                                    | 0%                                 | 2%   | 0%                  | 0%                                       | 4%                                 |
| <b>Hmong</b>                        | 35%                                | 1%                                    | 0%                                 | 3%   | 0%                  | 0%                                       | 6%                                 |
| <b>Asian (excluding-<br/>Hmong)</b> | 44%                                | 2%                                    | 1%                                 | 1%   | 1%                  | 0%                                       | 13%                                |
| <b>BIPOC</b>                        | 40%                                | 1%                                    | 1%                                 | 3%   | 0%                  | 4%                                       | 9%                                 |
| <b>White</b>                        | 21%                                | 14%                                   | 13%                                | 9%   | 9%                  | 7%                                       | 5%                                 |
|                                     | Businesses<br>re-openings          | Healthcare<br>& COVID-19<br>responses | Community<br>involvement           | Improving job<br>market &<br>economic status | Civic<br>engagement | Cultural<br>events &<br>awareness        | Other                              |
| <b>All Minnesotans</b>              | 4%                                 | 3%                                    | 3%                                 | 3%   | 2%                  | 1%                                       | 8%                                 |
| <b>Black</b>                        | 7%                                 | 1%                                    | 12%                                | 4%   | 5%                  | 3%                                       | 9%                                 |
| <b>Indigenous</b>                   | 2%                                 | 6%                                    | 5%                                 | 6%   | 2%                  | 16%                                      | 11%                                |
| <b>Latinx</b>                       | 5%                                 | 2%                                    | 9%                                 | 3%   | 1%                  | 10%                                      | 8%                                 |
| <b>Hmong</b>                        | 4%                                 | 3%                                    | 14%                                | 4%   | 6%                  | 14%                                      | 9%                                 |
| <b>Asian (excluding-<br/>Hmong)</b> | 6%                                 | 1%                                    | 10%                                | 4%   | <1%                 | 5%                                       | 13%                                |
| <b>BIPOC</b>                        | 6%                                 | 2%                                    | 11%                                | 4%   | 3%                  | 7%                                       | 10%                                |
| <b>White</b>                        | 3%                                 | 4%                                    | 2%                                 | 2%   | 2%                  | <1%                                      | 8%                                 |

Question: “What is the single most positive thing happening in Minnesota’s [respondent’s racial or ethnic group]\* community right now?” (Note: White respondents were asked, “What is the single most positive thing happening in Minnesota right now?” Written responses were coded for purposes of analysis. Themes mentioned by 10% or more for each group are shaded (other themes may be statistically tied with these due to margin of error).

Source: APM Research Lab’s Minnesota’s Diverse Communities Survey, April 26-June 14, 2021. N = 1,532 Minnesotans age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ±4.8 percentage points.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most positive thing currently happening in a particular racial or ethnic community varies considerably depending on who is answering. For example, twelve percent of Black Minnesotans state that police reform, including the murder conviction of Derek Chauvin, is the most positive thing happening in their community. The same proportion of Black Minnesotans name the growing awareness of racism and a rise in efforts to combat it as the most positive thing, and they are joined by 13% of non-Hmong Asians. Hmong Minnesotans (14%) feel more positive than others about the level of community involvement in the Hmong community. And 16% of Indigenous Minnesotans and 14% of Hmong Minnesotans feel more positive than others about cultural celebrations and cultural awareness.

Substantial proportions from the different racial and ethnic communities surveyed gave answers that were coded into a catchall “other” category since they did not reach a threshold of 1% of all responses: 10% of answers from BIPOC Minnesotans and 8% of answers from White Minnesotans. The most prominent themes that emerged from these answers pertained to community support and community resources; and growing awareness, representation and advocacy for their community.

## Results by race and ethnicity

BIPOC Minnesotans tended to name different things from White Minnesotans as positive occurrences in their communities. In spite of the general difference in answers from BIPOC Minnesotans and White Minnesotans, there are two points of overlap; the first between Black and White Minnesotans and the second between Indigenous and White Minnesotans.

Twelve percent of Black Minnesotans and 7% of White Minnesotans answered that police reform and the conviction of Derek Chauvin in the murder of George Floyd are the most positive thing happening right now in their community or the state.<sup>2</sup> Notably, no members of any other racial or ethnic group provided responses that would fall in this category.

### Examples – Police reform

- *“Prosecution of police who unjustly kill civilians and shedding credible light on the police brutality that has been rampant, especially against the black community, for generations.”*  
– 37-year-old Black man from the Twin Cities
- *“We are going to be a nexus for change for police reform.”*  
– 57-year-old White woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“The accountability we saw happen with Derek Chauvin’s case, gave our community hope that maybe, just maybe, things are finally changing.”*  
– 29-year-old Black woman from the Twin Cities

<sup>2</sup> Chauvin’s conviction occurred on April 20, 2021, just 6 days prior to the start of the data collection period for this survey (April 26-June 14).

Somewhat similarly, 14% of White Minnesotans and 6% of Indigenous Minnesotans claim that the most positive thing currently happening is the COVID-19 vaccination campaign and subsequent decline in deaths and cases. White Minnesotans, however, are alone in identifying the easing of COVID-19 restrictions as the most positive thing happening in the state; 13% of White Minnesotans gave this answer compared to only 1% of BIPOC Minnesotans.

#### Examples—COVID-19 vaccinations

- *“Our rate of covid 19 vaccination is pretty good.”*  
– 32-year-old White woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Work being done to help combat COVID in our communities.”*  
– 55-year-old Indigenous woman from the Twin Cities
- *“A high percentage of Minnesotans are getting the vaccine for COVID.”*  
– 68-year-old White woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“Assisted with mass Covid vaccination to surrounding communities regardless of race or enrollment!”* – 48-year-old Indigenous man from Greater Minnesota

Two points of relative convergence among BIPOC Minnesotans stand out: community involvement and cultural celebrations or cultural awareness.

Eleven percent of BIPOC Minnesotans say that the most positive thing happening in their communities is an increased sense of unity and involvement, compared to only 2% of White Minnesotans. Hmong Minnesotans (14%), in particular, were more likely to give this answer than either Indigenous Minnesotans (5%) or White Minnesotans.

#### Examples—Cultural celebrations and awareness

- *“Increasing the exposure to our culture and ethnicity through art exhibits and presentations that explains who the Hmong people are and our importance in American history.”*  
– 27-year-old Hmong man from the Twin Cities
- *“The powwows are back on!”*  
– 47-year-old Indigenous woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“Allowing us to celebrate our culture – Hmong New Year.”*  
– 32-year-old Hmong man from the Twin Cities
- *“Dakota and Ojibwe language revitalization at the early childhood level.”*  
– 61-year-old Indigenous woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“Survival and more awareness of the Missing Murdered Indigenous Women Movement.”*  
– 62-year-old, Indigenous man from the Twin Cities
- *“Including Native American lifestyle, history and culture [as] part of the school curriculum so that all may learn and know who we are.”*  
– 62-year-old Indigenous woman from Greater Minnesota

Seven percent of BIPOC Minnesotans provided an answer that falls into a category of cultural celebrations or increased cultural awareness compared to less than half a percent of White Minnesotans. Even so, there is considerable variation among BIPOC respondents. Indigenous Minnesotans (16%)<sup>3</sup> and Hmong Minnesotans (14%) have the highest rates of answers that fell into this category, followed by Latinx Minnesotans (10%) and, lastly, non-Hmong Asian (5%) and Black (3%) Minnesotans.

More than one in 10 Black (12%) and non-Hmong Asian (13%) Minnesotans note that increasing awareness of racism and anti-racism efforts are the most positive things happening in their

communities. Awareness of racism was only mentioned by one in 20 Latinx (4%) and White (5%) Minnesotans.

Seven percent of Black Minnesotans say the most positive thing happening in their community is the opening or reopening of business and community support

Examples—Racism awareness

- *“Some non-African American people have started to realize the inequities built into the fabric of our democracy. These people are now starting to speak up about it.”*  
– 54-year-old Black man from the Twin Cities
- *“Increasing awareness of the fact that anti-Asian violence is an integral part of the American fabric.”*  
– 34-year-old Asian man from the Twin Cities
- *“More attention on racial and social injustices which is slowly leading to mindset shifts from the workplace to personal.”*  
– 39-year-old Black woman from the Twin Cities

of those businesses. This is a rate significantly higher than the 3% of White Minnesotans who answered similarly.

Indigenous Minnesotans (6%) note that increasing employment and educational opportunities is the most positive thing happening to members of their community. By comparison, only 2% of White Minnesotans suggested this was the most positive thing happening in the state.

Hmong Minnesotans (6%), in particular, emphasize civic engagement as the most positive occurrence in their community at a rate significantly higher than Latinx (1%), non-Hmong Asian (<1%) and White Minnesotans (2%). Five percent of Black Minnesotans also identify civic

engagement as the best thing happening in their community. While this proportion is not big enough to be confidently identified as a statistically significant difference, this changes slightly when looking at the breakdown of this answer by gender. A significantly larger

Example—Civic engagement

*“There are many Hmong people who have entered into powers of position, such as City Councilmember Dai Thao, State Senator Fong Her, St. Paul Ramsey County Judge Pao Yang, etc., who is helping give Hmong people a voice.”*  
– 45-year-old Hmong woman from the Twin Cities

<sup>3</sup> Note that this category includes language study and revitalization, and awareness of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

proportion of Black men (9%) than Black women (1%) provide this answer, and the proportion of Black men is also significantly larger than that of Latinx men (1%) and White men (1%).

Nine percent of White Minnesotans noted that nicer, particularly warmer, weather was the single best thing happening in the state at the time the survey was administered. White men (10%) gave this answer at a rate twice that of White women (5%).

Unfortunately, 40% of BIPOC Minnesotans responded either that there was nothing positive happening in their community, that they didn't know what to answer or refused to answer the question. Twenty-one percent of White Minnesotans felt the same. Latinx (55%), Indigenous (37%) and Hmong (35%) Minnesotans were most likely to avoid a positive response to the question.

### **Types of answers coded as “other”**

A substantial proportion of respondents from each racial and ethnic group supplied an answer that had to be categorized as “other,” although to a slightly lesser extent than with the “other” answers to the question of what Minnesotans would most like to see change. Ten percent of BIPOC Minnesotans and 8% of White Minnesotans fell into this category. While the proportions of those who gave this type of answer ranged from 8% to 13%, there was not enough of a difference between racial and ethnic groups to say that any group had a higher response rate than another.

Unlike the “other” answers for the open-ended question on the one thing that Minnesotans would most like to see change to improve the state there were not several categories around which most of the answers coalesced. The answers were fairly diffuse over a wide range of topics including: community issues, representation and advocacy, Covid-19, the economy, education, family values, infrastructure, assimilation, opportunity, safety, reparative work and politics. Below is a representative selection of answers coded as other:

### Examples – “Other”

- *“The Hmong American community is thriving, they are learning that education and hard work is one of the best things you can do for your self and the community. There are more and more educated and successful Hmong Americans nowadays more than ever. They are politicians, doctors, pharmacists, nurses, pastors, business men/women, entrepreneurs, etc.”*  
– 46-year-old, Hmong woman from the Twin Cities
- *“More services designed for American Indian families, with American Indian staff.”*  
– 70-year-old, Indigenous woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Increasing vocal conservative voices to support our values and safety.”*  
– 34-year-old, White woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“I see a little more representation of Asian Americans in the media right now. I also believe that some of the younger generation are more willing to be seen and heard as representing the community.”* – 56-year-old, Asian woman from the Twin Cities
- *“A diversified economy allowing for better economic shape than most other states.”*  
– 64-year-old White man from Greater Minnesota
- *“Educating elders about Covid.”*  
– 30-year-old Hmong woman from the Twin Cities
- *“Strong family values and preserving our cultural identity.”* – 37-year-old Hmong woman
- *“I appreciate the attention to infrastructure, which affects all aspects of living here.”*  
– 54-year-old White man from the Twin Cities
- *“Taking part in the American Dream. Education for young people. Working in different professions. Running different businesses.”*  
– 66-year-old Black (Somali) man from the Twin Cities
- *“Buying back our land.”* – 60-year-old Indigenous woman from Greater Minnesota
- *“The fed-up citizens concerned with the ongoing violence taking a stand brings some hope.”*  
– 42-year-old Black male from the Twin Cities
- *“The state’s recognition of tribal sovereignty and self-determination.”*  
– 36-year-old Indigenous woman from the Twin Cities

# Acknowledgments

This report was authored by Benjamin Clary and Craig Helmstetter of the APM Research Lab. The survey questions were designed by the APM Research Lab with input from several partners, and refined by SSRS staff, including Robyn Rappaport, Rob Manley, Sarah Glancey, and Christian Kline. Survey topics were informed by a set of community listening sessions conducted under the leadership of Minnesota Public Radio’s Director of Community Impact and Engagement, Ka Vang.

We are especially thankful to the members of the listening sessions who helped us pretest an early version of the survey, and for the 1,532 Minnesotans who participated in the survey. Thanks also to project funders: Minnesota Legacy Act, Bush Foundation, and the Saint Paul Foundation.

## About the survey

SSRS of Glen Mills, Pennsylvania conducted the Minnesota Diverse Communities Survey, with data-collection occurring from April 26 to June 14, 2021 among a sample of N=1,532 Minnesota adults. The overall design effect for the study was 3.68, with a margin of error of +/- 4.8 percentage points.

| Group                | Completes (unweighted) | DEFF        | Margin of error                |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Black                | 278                    | 1.92        | ± 8.1 percentage points        |
| Indigenous           | 170                    | 1.75        | ± 9.9 percentage points        |
| Latinx               | 185                    | 1.63        | ± 9.2 percentage points        |
| Hmong                | 252                    | 1.68        | ± 8 percentage points          |
| Asian (except Hmong) | 145                    | 1.92        | ± 11.3 percentage points       |
| White                | 502                    | 1.66        | ± 5.6 percentage points        |
| <b>Overall</b>       | <b>1,532</b>           | <b>3.68</b> | <b>± 4.8 percentage points</b> |

In the analysis the responses are weighted to more accurately reflect Minnesota’s population. For additional details about the sample and survey methodology, as well as transparency disclosures relevant to the American Association of Public Opinion, the Roper Center and CNN, please see: <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/mdc-survey>.

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