



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

COMMUNITY VITALITY

Welcoming Communities Assessment: New Ulm, Minnesota



In partnership with:



Welcoming Communities Assessment: New Ulm, Minnesota

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2019, participants from New Ulm, Sleepy Eye, and Springfield, Minnesota participated in the Welcoming Communities Assessment to document community strengths and weaknesses related to diversity and inclusion efforts. We defined inclusion as efforts to unite people and remove barriers to equal opportunity and responsibility in community and life. While our focus for this project was on inclusion based on race or immigrant status, we did not exclusively focus on race, because race intersects with other ways of excluding based on gender, disability status, income/class, religion, or sexual preference/identity. Each assessment examined six aspects of inclusion in seven sectors of community life. New Ulm residents completed 65 assessments. Some participants may have completed assessments for more than one sector.

The table below provides an overview of New Ulm’s progress across sectors and dimensions of inclusion based on numeric responses from the assessment survey. The following report also includes responses from focus group discussions and open-ended questions included in the assessment survey. Green cells in the table indicate dimensions in which the sector is making moderate progress on inclusion. Light green and yellow cells indicate slight to moderate progress, and the red cells indicate no to slight progress.

The table shows the progress made in each dimension of inclusion for a specific sector of the community. For example, the health care system appears to be on the leading edge of inclusion efforts in New Ulm.

Additionally, the table provides insight into which sectors of the community are leading or lagging in particular dimensions of inclusion. While most sectors of the community are at least slightly aware of the importance of inclusion, fewer sectors have changed policies and practices to promote inclusion in a systematic manner.

Inclusion progress for each sector and dimension

	Awareness	Engagement	Resources	Leadership energy	Sharing power	Policies and practices
Health care system	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1
Law enforcement	3.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0
School system	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.1
Religious organizations	2.5	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.4
Business or Chamber	2.3	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.1	1.8
Non-profit organizations	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.1	1.8	2.0
Local government	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5

Legend:

Moderate progress (3.0 or higher)	Slight to moderate progress (2.5 to 2.9)	Slight progress (2.0 to 2.4)	No to slight progress (1.9 or lower)
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BACKGROUND

The Welcoming Communities Project is a diversity and inclusion initiative led by the Region Nine Development Commission, the Greater Mankato Diversity Council, and the Extension Center for Community Vitality, with funding from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation. The Project grew out of an earlier initiative known as the Rural Equity Learning Community, in which five southern Minnesota communities participated in a regional cohort program to share, examine and explore inclusive best practices through education and relationship-building. The intent of the initiative was to facilitate capacity for local community action. Stakeholders convened to explore a shared interest in cultivating a more welcoming and inclusive community. Participants included: school district leaders, teachers and school board members, elected officials, city leaders and council members, business owners, public health and clinic staff, immigrant and refugee leaders, service providers, library services, parents, chamber representatives, faith community leaders, retired community members, and others.

In spring 2019, several participants from the Rural Equity Learning Community conducted further work with the Extension Center for Community Vitality to develop a user-friendly ‘community readiness assessment’ geared toward rural and small communities to prioritize the dimensions of readiness most crucial for rural equity and inclusion efforts. Community readiness is defined as the degree to which a community is ready to take action on an issue. An important goal of the readiness assessment was user-friendliness. A desire existed among the workgroup to create a process that would quickly and efficiently provide constructive information about inclusion while being respectful of community members’ busy lives.

We defined inclusion as efforts to unite people and remove barriers to equal opportunity and responsibility in community and life. While our focus for this project was on inclusion based on race or immigrant status, we did not exclusively focus on race, because race intersects with other ways of excluding based on gender, disability status, income/class, religion, or sexual preference/identity.

After a review of several examples of community readiness assessments, the workgroup created one assessment that focused on six dimensions of inclusion:

1. Awareness of the importance of inclusion
2. Engagement of diverse groups in community activities
3. Resources to address inclusion
4. Leadership energy to promote inclusion
5. Sharing power in planning and decision-making
6. Policies and practices that promote inclusion



An innovative aspect of the assessment is its focus on the following seven sectors of community life:

1. The school system
2. The health care system
3. Law enforcement
4. Non-profit organizations
5. Business community
6. Local government
7. Religious organizations

A deeper understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion in each of these sectors provides actionable information regarding which dimensions and sectors are leading — or lagging — in their adaptation to change. Lessons learned in one sector can be applied to other sectors, but only if there is knowledge and intention to do so.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The community readiness assessment, renamed the welcoming communities assessment, was conducted as a focus group discussion process. During a two-hour session, held on November 5, 2019 in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, participants from three communities — New Ulm, Sleepy Eye, and Springfield — were provided with an overview of the evening and then split into seven discussion groups based on the seven sectors of the community.

Each group then went through the assessment process, which took about an hour. It included open-ended discussion questions, as well as survey questions that participants were asked to complete in a booklet format. The booklets were customized for each of the seven sectors. While participants in each focus group represented each of the three communities, the survey booklet captured information only about the individual respondent's community.

Sixty-five participants from the three communities completed the assessment on November 5. Between November 5 - January 10, other community members were invited to complete the assessments online. In total, 223 assessments were completed, with 66 completed for New Ulm (some participants may have completed assessments for more than one sector). Table 1 shows the number of completed assessments by both community and sector.



Table 1. Completed assessments by community and sector

Sector	All communities			
	New Ulm	Sleepy Eye	Springfield	
School system	82	21	34	27
Health care	29	6	7	16
Law enforcement	24	5	11	8
Local government	20	9	5	6
Non-profit organizations	22	10	6	6
Religious organizations	23	10	5	8
Business community	23	5	11	7
Total	223	66	79	78

Table 2 displays the demographic breakdown of those who completed assessment surveys. Individuals may have completed surveys for more than one sector. Each community's response had a much higher proportion of women than men. The racial/ethnic backgrounds of survey respondents were mostly in line with the overall proportions of each racial/ethnic group in each community. In New Ulm, however, none of the respondents were Hispanic or Latino, and Hispanics comprise 4 percent of the city population. In terms of length of residence, respondents tended to be long-term residents. The average length of residence was more than twenty years, with New Ulm having the lowest average length of residence among the three communities.

Table 2. Demographics of assessment participants

	New Ulm	Sleepy Eye	Springfield
Gender			
Male	30%	28%	25%
Female	69%	70%	74%
Race/ethnicity (people could mark all that apply, percents in parenthesis are population comparisons from the 2017 American Community Survey)			
American Indian	0% (<1%)	0% (<1%)	5% (1%)
Asian American	2% (1%)	2% (<1%)	0% (1%)
Black or African American	6% (<1%)	0% (<1%)	0% (<1%)
Hispanic or Latino	0% (4%)	14% (12%)	2% (3%)
White	93% (96%)	84% (91%)	98% (96%)
Average length of residence (years)	20	27	31



RESULTS

The findings below are organized according to the six dimensions of inclusion, with comparisons among the seven sectors of the community for each dimension. Each of the dimensions of inclusion was measured with three questions using a scale of 1=not at all, 2=to a slight extent, 3=to a moderate extent, and 4=to a great extent. Both the focus group discussions and survey included an option for people to describe their community's progress regarding each dimension. Some of these open-ended comments are included next to each dimension.

Awareness

The group discussion question about awareness asked about the ways each sector has shown awareness of the importance of inclusion, and looking forward, what more each sector can do to increase its awareness of inclusion.

In response to this question, focus group participants shared the following thoughts:

Table 3. Focus group comments about awareness of inclusion

School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need more teacher training about inclusion, including training for working with children with disabilities.• To promote awareness, people need to experience what it is like being excluded.• Have more everyday conversations about inclusion, and engage young people.• Add a student commissioner on New Ulm Human Rights Commission.• Get high schoolers engaged with the EDA — Northfield has high school students on all types of community boards.• Have to get inclusion efforts outside the walls of the school.
Health care system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rules and regulations re: inclusion, but are they effective?• Need to diversify workforce.• Public health has a strong focus on racial equity, but when government leads things it doesn't always go well — government can convene but not necessarily lead.
Religious organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGBT people have not been able to find a church home.• Catholic churches tend to be more inclusive.
Law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law enforcement needs to communicate to new residents about when it's appropriate to argue being pulled over.• Law enforcement officers encounter people in less than ideal situations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee with Cops program in New Ulm is a good model. If a person calls and requests it, a police officer will bring coffee to their location and visit with them.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to diversify workforce in local government • The New Ulm Human Rights Commission was mentioned several times as a reliable and helpful partner in expanding engagement with new groups and people in New Ulm • Job retention — work with business owners • More everyday conversations about inclusion, and need to engage young people • Add student commissioner on New Ulm Human Rights Commission • Get high schoolers engaged with the EDA — Northfield has high school students on all types of community boards • Have to get inclusion efforts outside the walls of the school

The assessment survey had three statements to measure awareness:

- [Sector] is aware of the need for inclusion efforts.
- [Sector] provides opportunities for training about new cultures.
- There are opportunities in [sector] for long-term and new residents to come together and learn from each other.

Participants responded to each statement using a scale of 1=not at all, 2=to a slight extent, 3=to a moderate extent, and 4=to a great extent.

Figure 1 displays the results for each sector in New Ulm. The strongest awareness of inclusion efforts was in health care and law enforcement, with average responses of 3, a moderate level of awareness. There was less awareness reported for business, non-profit organizations, and local government.



Figure 1. Awareness of the importance of inclusion

Average responses on a scale of 1=not at all, 2=slight extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=great extent

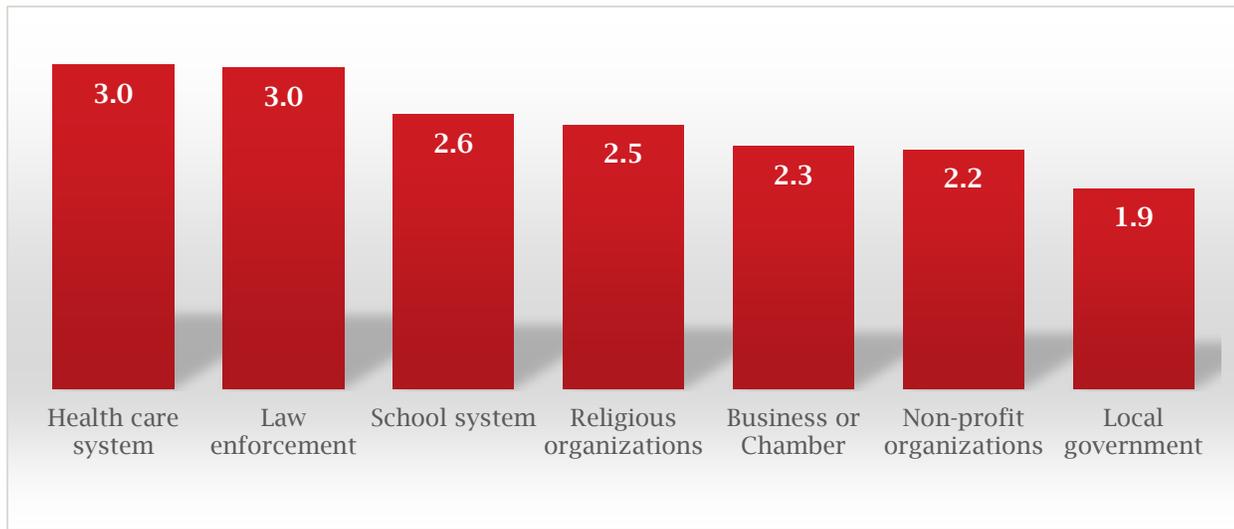


Table 4 below lists the comments made by individual survey respondents from New Ulm about awareness in each sector of the community. There were no comments about awareness in the health care sector.

Table 4. Survey comments about awareness

Law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In New Ulm, the law enforcement are friendly so it makes people [feel] safe and encourages them to come closer to them for help. • New Ulm could use more training opportunities regarding diversity and cultures. • Even though there isn't much ethnic diversity in New Ulm, they have done a great job at addressing other issues like mental health.
School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness by administration is increasing.
Religious organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different church groups differ on this point. Some [are] more aware, others don't care much. • More of individual people responding not a "program" • The religious community is the place where I see the most opportunity in New Ulm to do work around racial justice. It's just a matter of getting people to talk to one another and to collaborate. • The religious organizations in my community may reflect different "purposes" - some may be there to serve a certain segment and are less likely to look for ways to serve others



	with "programs" their purpose is to serve their congregation on spiritual issues - this isn't a criticism.
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business is aware of problems approaching as white/middle class person instead of looking at it in their shoes. • I think there is [an] opportunity to do much better.
Non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to be very intentional about recruiting board members. • Actively develop/solicit grant applications that will serve a diverse population. • Non-profits/orgs need to offer networking events in a mingling/high table layout. Tables - people gravitate toward tables and people they know (chamber event). • Need to advertise online/social media on how to join their orgs. Difficult for people to find info when they're new to a community. • There are a lot of organizations where people can interact however all the participants are homogeneous. • We need to break down some of the boundaries to get inclusion. I think we talk about it, but we are less active at doing it and creating it.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being inclusive is necessary for economic growth. But who leads this effort? Is that the local gov't role? • Needs to be a topic frequently brought up. Sometimes it is hard to think differently when always doing the same thing. • New Ulm human rights commission yard signs. • Other than the HRC signs, New Ulm local government hasn't really addressed this issue. • There is very little awareness of culture in New Ulm unless it involves German culture or drinking beer. Any effort to bring any sort of awareness or education into the community is met with resistance.

Engagement

The group discussion question on engagement asked about the ways each sector most successfully engages diverse groups in community activities, how each sector addresses barriers to participation in activities (barriers such as language, child care, transportation, meeting times), and looking forward, what each sector can do to promote participation.

In response to this question, focus group participants shared the following thoughts:



Table 5. Focus group comments about engagement

School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use United Way funds to pay activities fees. • Developed Booster Club. • Get information at orientation. • Early Childhood provides programs little or no fee, provides daycare. • Liaison in Sleepy Eye is helpful. • More people need to walk alongside to mentor folks through the process. • Staff need to be educated on what other services and resources are available. • Paid position as school/community liaison.
Health care system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly working on engagement, but financial challenges, etc. • Better at being reactive, not proactive.
Business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing information on community issues. • Have businesses partner to work on better inclusion.
Religious organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MLC college trying hard -- MOU with inner city schools for services and cross-cultural learning community. MLK day for that purpose, workshops, sessions. • Trouble with retention because of a lack of amenities for people of color. • People are afraid to start a business. • Comfrey home schooled families in town. Grocery store has Hispanic section. • Deliver meals through church, Spanish to English classes and lunch to practice English.
Law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee with Cops is a program that's been going on in New Ulm. If a person calls and requests it, a police officer will bring coffee to their location and visit with them. Sleepy Eye was interested in doing something similar.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards and commissions need to reach out to find people from different populations. • Advertise more and better. • When doing surveys, go out to low income parts of town, offer meals at convenings, be more intentional. • Tendency to things the way they've always been done. It takes less effort. • How are we identifying leadership ability? We need diverse representation on boards.



The assessment survey had three statements to measure engagement:

- Community members, including immigrants and people of color, participate in broader [sector] activities.
- [Sector] leaders actively seek information about the needs of immigrants or people of color in the community.
- [Sector] uses a wide range of methods to inform everyone about activities.

Participants responded to each statement using a scale of 1=not at all, 2=to a slight extent, 3=to a moderate extent, and 4=to a great extent.

Figure 2 displays the results for each sector in New Ulm. Overall, perceptions of engagement were weaker than perceptions of awareness. The strongest reported engagement with diverse groups in New Ulm was in health care, followed by the business community and schools. Responses for the four other sectors averaged around 2, a slight extent.

Figure 2. Engagement of diverse groups

Average responses on a scale of 1=not at all, 2=slight extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=great extent



Table 6 below lists the comments made by individual survey respondents about engagement in each sector of the community. There were no comments about awareness in the health care system or the school system.

Table 6. Survey comments about engagement

Law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to be visible and "engage." Example: city festival presence etc. However, this doesn't mean connecting with diverse populations.
Religious organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again - mostly one on one opportunities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some religious organizations do. Some probably not so much.
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Ulm Community Calendar. • Not sure I see enough adjusting to community preference. Do things on business time.
Non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get community (audience) input and feedback. Be open to doing things differently. • New Ulm advertises everything the same way on Facebook or in the journal. Facebook is okay if you know to be a member of that page. Otherwise if you have not liked the page, you will not know they are having an event. Therefore, it is hard to get new people. • Asking what people really want and need. Change to give the services people really want and need. • Sometimes funding can play a role translation service cost money.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretty standard. Same as it was for years. Except the technology has made it easier. • New Ulm human rights commission participating in parades, Brown City Fair, National night out. • New Ulm could utilize the community access channel to engage the wider community. The mayor could appoint diverse groups to boards and commissions.

Resources

The group discussion question about resources asked about the resources (time, money) in each sector to address inclusion, and looking forward, what each sector can do to access resources.

In response to this question, focus group participants shared the following thoughts:

Table 7. Focus group comments about resources

School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backpack program. • Kit for couch surfers/homeless kids. • School store with clothing. • District in Sleepy Eye doesn't chart for milk. • Liaison at Sleepy Eye. • Crisis nursery in New Ulm. • Free pre-school program for qualified (scholarships).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied for grants — received \$ for inclusion work (FFA in Sleepy Eye). • Homeless program in New Ulm. • Need to keep applying for grants.
Health care system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Minnesota forgotten, metro-centric. • Need to broaden scope and outreach.
Business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the business community cooperate for ESL. • Inclusion should include multiple languages from businesses. • Barrier for disabled people in downtown businesses. • Availability of transportation for low-income people is lacking. • Need to include child care at events and businesses. • Need for financial education in Spanish. • Make awareness of language translator availability.
Non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Way funds used to help youth, ECFE fees little to no cost. • Paid liaison staff person in Sleepy Eye. • Food bags on Fridays. • Clothing boutique — clothes, personal care products. • Free milk program. • Preschool scholarships. • Sought grants for money for birthday party packs.
Religious organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Ulm has more information resources. • Schools have more resources because they have a strong incentive to do this work. Churches don't have the same incentive. • Programs for ethnic meals. • Thrivent 250 team cards are a resource. • Immersion trips to learn to know/respect other cultures.
Law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It wasn't a surprise to anyone that the law enforcement in both communities was composed of white males. The law enforcement representatives see that issue and would like to have more diversity on their police force. However, they suggested that two issues were barriers to this: 1.) the private cost of law enforcement training and licensing, 2.) the more general labor shortages in rural Minnesota. One comment was: "we would like to hire someone other than a white male, but that's who has applied for our openings."



Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have limited people to get their regular work done — outreach is above and beyond our regular work and it takes extra time. • We need to leverage community spaces more. • Human Rights Commission (New Ulm) budget is increasing each year. • Be intentional about recognizing groups — assign liaisons — make it part of people’s job description. • Have a “teach to fish” mentality rather than just addressing the situation of the moment. • Do we really know what populations of color we have?
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The assessment had three statements to measure resources:

- [Sector] accesses resources from inside as well as outside the community to support inclusion efforts.
- There are strategic or action plans in place to address inclusion in [sector].
- The [sector] budget commits financial resources to the values of inclusion.

Participants responded to each statement using a scale of 1=not at all, 2=to a slight extent, 3=to a moderate extent, and 4=to a great extent.

Figure 3 displays the results for each sector in New Ulm. The health care sector was perceived to have the most resources to address inclusion, followed by the schools. For the remaining sectors, there was a perception that resources were relatively scarce for addressing inclusion.

Figure 3. Resources to address inclusion

Average responses on a scale of 1=not at all, 2=slight extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=great extent



Table 8 lists the comments made by individual survey respondents about resources in each sector of the community to address inclusion. There were no comments about resources in the health care system or law enforcement.

Table 8. Survey comments about resources

School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleepy eye more so than the others.
Religious organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All these questions are difficult in my impression of the religious organization I am primarily with in New Ulm. We attend church in North Mankato where there is a purposeful try to [reach] Somali families in our immediate area that is seeing some results in my opinion.
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education on language barriers and importance in locate industry. • Options for learning 2nd languages. • Community resources for interpreters.
Non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop better ability to advocate for change, in a positive and professional manner. • New Ulm toward us addressing inclusion issues in the community otherwise not aware of any other non-profit orgs. • I don't know what current non-profits are doing to allocate resources to minorities. In New Ulm, I do not think there is a specific effort to include people of color in the general everyday non-profits around. • This is always pushed to the bottom of the budget for most non-profits, as money and other resources are tight.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Really, it's up to local individuals. I don't see this as a priority for local gov't in my community. • Increasing budget to spend on resources. Taking the time to include everyone. • New Ulm could apply for grants to help get the resources needed to fund this effort.

Leadership energy

The group discussion question for leadership energy asked about leadership in each sector, the role of leadership in promoting inclusion, and looking forward, what each sector can do to strengthen inclusive leadership.

In response to this question, focus group participants shared the following thoughts:



Table 9. Focus group comments about leadership energy

School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Ulm staff very involved with the conversation on race (Bukata). • Complete the World’s Best Workforce. • If you can hire diverse individuals for staff positions. • Provide leadership to community about the value of diversity and inclusion. • Not a lot of tools, resources, energy coming from community for inclusion. • Without conflicts in school, the issues of diversity and inclusion doesn’t come up.
Health care system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major lack of diversity in leadership, on boards, etc.
Religious organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to bring in new ideas. • One member said clergy don’t talk about it, but individuals want inclusion. • Sudanese sign in their language and help write songs in their melodies. • Church sister went to Kenya where they swapped houses
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New energy is needed — many leaders are comfortable with their work and they might not have confidence to move outside their comfort zone • Many older people want the community of the 1950s back and can’t cope with change. This isn’t really true about our community leaders though. • Hard to get people to understand the difference between equality and equity. • Really need change beyond individuals, need a change in guiding organizational culture

The assessment had three statements to measure leadership energy:

- [Sector] leaders understand the importance of inclusion in [sector].
- [Sector] leaders are willing to look outside of [sector] for new ideas and ways to promote inclusion and equity.
- [Sector] leaders encourage the development and support of future leaders of color.

Participants responded to each statement using a scale of 1=not at all, 2=to a slight extent, 3=to a moderate extent, and 4=to a great extent.



Figure 4 displays the results for each sector in New Ulm. The health care sector was perceived to have the most leadership energy to address inclusion, followed by the schools. For the remaining sectors, there was a perception that leadership energy to promote inclusion was relatively weak.

Figure 4. Leadership energy to promote inclusion

Average responses on a scale of 1=not at all, 2=slight extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=great extent

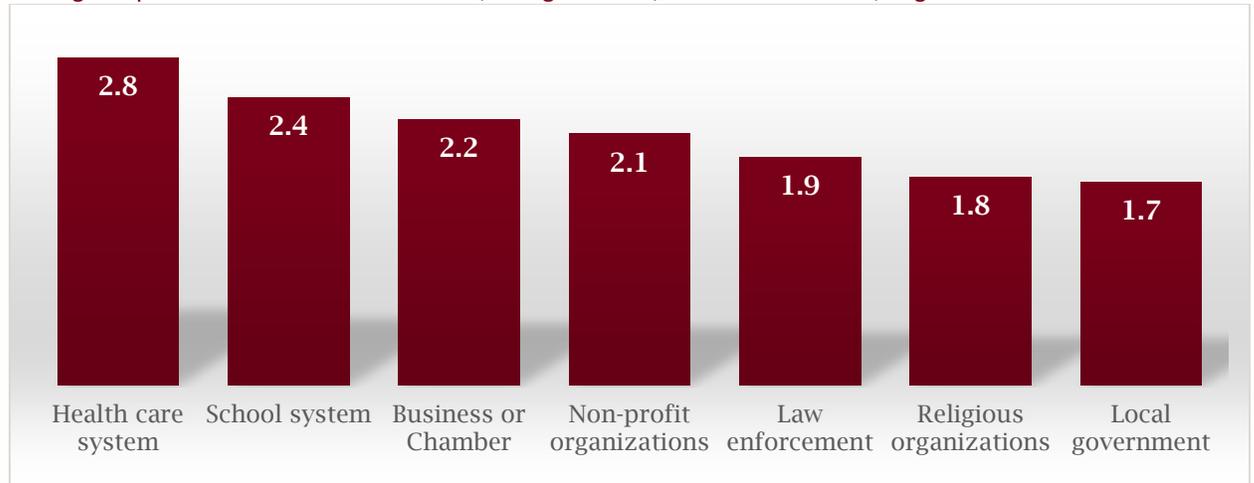


Table 10 lists comments made by individual survey respondents about leadership energy in each sector of the community. There were no comments about resources in the health care system, school system, or religious organizations.

Table 10. Survey comments about leadership energy

Law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people may like to go into law enforcement school but lack the finance. • Not enough diversity in law enforcement. This is connected to labor shortage.
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would say struggling to draw in interest.
Non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to develop more leaders/potential leaders. This is not a quick fix, it requires time to gain experience. Strive to get diverse group entered into leadership development programs. • As people of color should be asked intentionally to be in leadership. • Equal is not always equitable. • Bridging Brown county offers leadership training and now chosen to include cultural training.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again, this isn't valued or a value so it's hard to lead a change that isn't seen with benefit.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Ulm could look into providing training for city leadership to educate on this topic.
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Sharing power

The group discussion question for sharing power asked about efforts to include all residents in planning and decision making in each sector, and what each sector can do to ensure that all residents are included in planning and decision making.

In response to this question, focus group participants shared the following thoughts:

Table 11. Focus group comments about sharing power

School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents allowed to be involved with various committees • Trust with school liaison • School Board Advisory committee • Strategic planning effort • New Ulm struggles with getting any diversity involved. Lacks diversity period. • Lots of surveys asking parents for feedback. • School board representative person of color • In New Ulm, provide staff member who could make the connections with people of color. • Potentially ask for ethnic/race classification on surveys to know if we are getting input.
Health care system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always the same folks at the table — how do we broaden the net? • Need for more focused outreach.
Religious organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include many houses of faith into activities. • The churches need to personally invite. They need to listen instead of talking. • People are afraid of losing control. The congregation is feeling the call, provides for needs and are welcoming but not necessarily the clergy.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For public hearings, getting word out is huge. • Getting real input means slowing things down, but it is better to slow things down. • Many people don't communicate or engage — a silent majority — and you can't assume you know what they are thinking. • People don't want to talk or speak up, but they might respond to text messages or email.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media is important, but not everybody gets the newspaper, so other outlets are important. • Nixle — text messaging service is great, but have to be careful about overuse.
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The assessment had three statements to measure sharing power:

- [Sector] has authentic relationships with organizations representing people of color to provide input into programs and advocacy.
- The leadership of [sector] reflects the demographics of the broader community.
- [Sector] actively creates opportunities for immigrants or people of color to become decision makers.

Participants were asked to respond to each statement using a scale of 1=not at all, 2=to a slight extent, 3=to a moderate extent, and 4=to a great extent.

Figure 5 displays the results for each sector in New Ulm. The health care sector was perceived to have the most capacity to share power. For the remaining sectors, there was a perception that sharing power in planning and decision making was relatively weak.

Figure 5. Sharing power in planning and decision making

Average responses on a scale of 1=not at all, 2=slight extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=great extent



Table 12 lists the comments made by individual survey respondents about sharing power in each sector of the community. There were no comments about resources in the health care system or school system.

Table 12. Survey comments about sharing power

Law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are trying to share power. Sometimes difficult to find populations.
Religious organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the decision making groups are as diverse as possible. May need to aggressively recruit in order to get this. • I don't think people are being intentional about inclusion because I don't think they see the need. People need to feel that their ideas matter. If no one considers their ideas then they won't give it. • Users need to be included in all the levels of decision making. • Woman? • We need to collect more data and train people how to effectively collect data.
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never realized how much was happening until my current job informed me. • We could do better by inviting requests for business desired or that they travel to find. What takes people out of community?
Non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the decision making groups are as diverse as possible. May need to aggressively recruit in order to get this. • Users need to be included in all the levels of decision making. • Woman? • We need to collect more data and train people how to effectively collect data.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This hasn't really hit the community yet, as far as local government, but it's coming. • Efforts are made: stakeholder, meetings, public hearings, community surveys but people so often don't put together how. Can this be improved?

Policies and practices

The group discussion question about policies and practices asked about policies or practices in each sector that help or hinder inclusion efforts, and what each sector can do to make policies and practices more inclusive.

In response to this question, focus group participants shared the following thoughts:



Table 13. Focus group comments about policies and practices

School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy comes from MN Department of Education and state school board. • New Ulm has three different school systems, one public and two private.
Health care system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce shortage limiting inclusion efforts.
Business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for the sharing of policies between businesses involving diversity and inclusion. • Have policy options for floating holidays and leaves of absence.
Religious organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has gotten better because now women are more involved. • Policies hinder inclusion • Dream: churches work with EDA to bring in potential hires and have them live in their homes. • Don't want inclusion to be a means of compromise.
Law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the discussion involved answering questions for the new resident about when it's appropriate to argue being pulled over. • Another topic was that law enforcement doesn't get to choose which calls to answer. Meaning law enforcement officers encounter people in less than ideal situations frequently. • Coffee with Cops is a program that's been going on in New Ulm. If a person calls and requests it, a police officer will bring coffee to their location and visit with them. Sleepy Eye was interested in doing something similar.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we work equity into street cart policy. • Hoops of business licensure — bureaucracy is hard for everyone, but especially hard for people who weren't born and raised here. • Oktoberfest — it was opened up to Food Trucks — had more options than the German plate! • Concern that inclusion/equity work would be perceived as partisan. National politics and divides have crept in to local politics. • There is a huge need for bilingual people in local government — we've learned that many immigrants did not have a GED or diploma which prevented them from applying to government jobs where this was a requirement. Some counties are removing this requirement for health workers.



The assessment had three statements to measure policies and practices:

- [Sector] uses an equity lens or inclusion-related questions when developing policies and practices.
- [Sector] has benchmarks around leadership development and retention of people of color.
- [Sector] regularly assesses the impact of its policies or practices on immigrants or people of color.

Participants responded to each statement using a scale of 1=not at all, 2=to a slight extent, 3=to a moderate extent, and 4=to a great extent.

Figure 6 displays the results for each sector in New Ulm. The health care sector was perceived to have a moderate level of policies and practices to promote inclusion. For the remaining sectors, there was a perception that policies and practices were not addressing inclusion as strongly.

Figure 6. Policies and practices to promote inclusion

Average responses on a scale of 1=not at all, 2=slight extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=great extent



Table 14 lists the comments made by individual survey respondents from New Ulm about policies and practices to promote inclusion in each sector of the community. There were comments only about non-profit organizations and local government.

Table 14. Survey comments about policies and practices

Non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policies that force development of inclusive environment. Term limits, etc. • They can ask more people of color to be a part of making the policies or ask them what they think of the policies. • If we do not change and open up to recruit more diverse people - we will not grow. • Term limits, change the policies.
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Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government policies should be equal to all. Are inclusive languages/verbage needed — or are the policies just need to be simplified.
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DISCUSSION

Table 15 provides an overview of New Ulm’s progress across sectors and dimensions of inclusion based on numeric responses from the assessment survey. Green cells indicate dimensions in which the sector is making moderate progress on inclusion. Light green and yellow cells indicate slight to moderate progress and the red cells indicate no to slight progress.

It is useful to read the table both across and down the rows. Reading across, the table shows the progress made in each dimension of inclusion for a specific sector of the community. The health care system appears to be on the leading edge of inclusion efforts in New Ulm. Law enforcement was perceived to be moderately aware of the importance of inclusion, but weaker on all the other dimensions. This pattern was similar for religious organizations. Local government was reported as making no to slight progress across all the dimensions of inclusion.

Reading down the table provides insight into which sectors of the community are leading or lagging in particular dimensions of inclusion. Several sectors of the community were reported to have at least slight awareness of the importance of inclusion, with the school system having the most. In terms of engagement, all sectors of the community were reported to be fairly engaged with diverse groups, with the exception of local government.

Table 15. Inclusion progress for each sector and dimension

	Awareness	Engagement	Resources	Leadership energy	Sharing power	Policies and practices
Health care system	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1
Law enforcement	3.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0
School system	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.1
Religious organizations	2.5	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.4
Business or Chamber	2.3	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.1	1.8
Non-profit organizations	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.1	1.8	2.0
Local government	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5

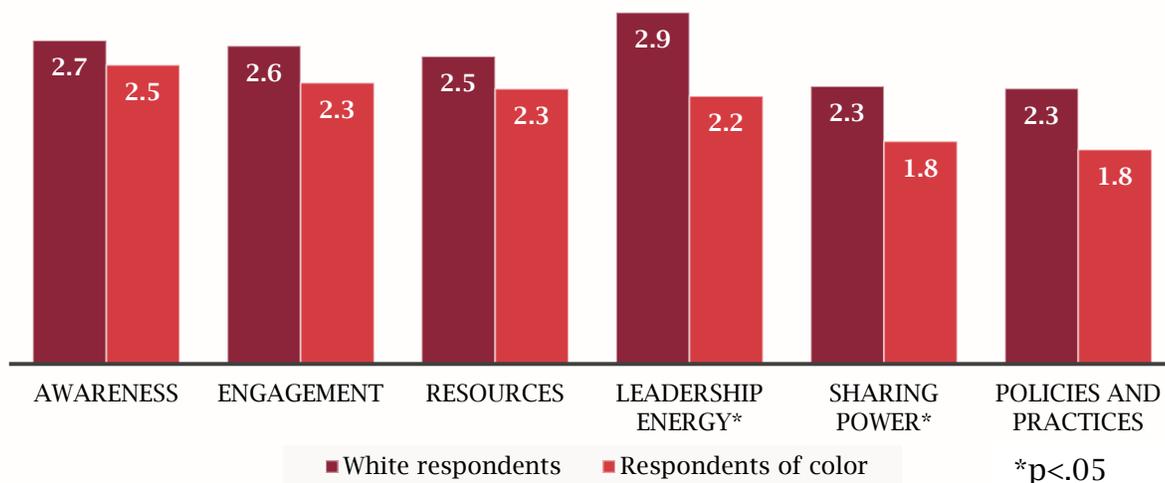
Legend:

Moderate progress (3.0 or higher)	Slight to moderate progress (2.5 to 2.9)	Slight progress (2.0 to 2.4)	No to slight progress (1.9 or lower)
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It is also important to note if there were differences in responses based on the respondents' race or ethnicity. Across all three communities and sectors, 178 respondents reported their race or ethnicity. One hundred sixty responses were from white people and 18 were from people of color. Figure 7 compares the average responses of whites and people of color regarding the six dimensions of inclusion. While averages were higher for whites than those of color, this difference only reached statistical significance for leadership energy and sharing power. This is likely because of the relatively small number of responses from people of color. Given this assumption, it is worth noting that perceptions of inclusion among people of color were not as positive as those of white respondents when considering the overall findings from New Ulm.

Figure 7. Comparison of responses from white respondents and respondents of color
 Average responses on a scale of 1=not at all, 2=slight extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=great extent



This assessment is intended to encourage discussion about strategies for moving forward with inclusion efforts in New Ulm. Below are a few discussion questions to think about to guide the conversation.

- What surprises you in this report, and why?
- What's missing in this assessment of inclusion in New Ulm?
- What are you noticing with regard to your strengths as a community?
- What areas need improvement?
- Where do you think New Ulm can make the biggest impact in inclusion efforts?

WORKING DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Below are our working definitions of terms shared during the Welcoming Communities Assessment.

Inclusion. Creating spaces to grow as individuals, sectors, and community through sharing, learning, collaboration and action to unite people and remove barriers to equal opportunity and responsibility in community and life. While our focus for this project is on inclusion based on race or immigrant status, we are not exclusively focusing on race, because we know that race intersects with other ways of excluding based on gender, disability status, income/class, religion, or sexual preference/identity.

Equality. Treating everyone the same. Seems like a great idea, but it only works if everyone started out at the same place.

Equity. Ensuring that everyone has what they need to be successful -- that there are policies, practices, and procedures in place to promote equitable outcomes.

Racism. We aren't just talking about individual acts of bigotry, we are talking about policies and practices that allow inequity. Sometimes we aren't aware that policies or practices can promote inequity.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Please send a message to Scott Chazdon, evaluation and research specialist, at schazdon@umn.edu.



