



United Community Assessment of Needs

Key findings from the health and human services strengths and gaps assessment in Kandiyohi County

The United Community Assessment of Needs Partnership (UCAN) conducted this assessment to help Kandiyohi County prioritize health and human service needs and eliminate gaps in service. It was coordinated by the United Way of Kandiyohi County and analyzed by Wilder Research. Kandiyohi County residents, service providers, businesses, community leaders, and area associations participated in the study.

Information presented in this summary is a synthesis of secondary data and original data obtained for this project. More detail is provided in the full study report, which can be found at www.unitedwaykc.org.

Critical needs and key issues

The study identified three critical areas. These areas were rated as important by all groups of study participants:

- Racial and ethnic disparities in access to community resources and overall quality of life
- Safety net services (health care, child care, affordable housing, etc.) for people in poverty
- Providing living wage jobs with benefits

In addition, several other key issues were identified. These areas are not listed in any order of importance, but rather illustrate additional challenges facing the community:

- Lack of English language skills
- Funding for public schools
- Lack of affordable housing
- Access to quality health care for all residents
- Public transportation

Community strengths

Kandiyohi County has several community strengths that were identified by many groups in the study:

- A high level of community involvement and participation, including voting and volunteering
- Service providers and funders who work together to identify and resolve issues for the whole community
- Long-term residents who are committed to improving quality of life in the community
- New community members who bring cultural diversity and strengthen the workforce

CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT

Introduction.....	2
Methodology.....	2
Study participants.....	3
Strengths and limitations of the study design.....	3
Characteristics of Kandiyohi County residents.....	4
Community life and volunteerism.....	5
Employment and economic development.....	6
Income and finances.....	7
Education.....	8
Housing.....	9
Health.....	10
Recreation and youth development activities.....	11
Child care.....	12
Care for elderly and disabled community members.....	13
Support for immigrants and refugees.....	14
Alcohol and drug abuse.....	15
Public safety, crime, and abuse.....	16
Discrimination.....	17
Transportation.....	18
Environment and pollution.....	19
Sources.....	20

Introduction

In January 2006, the United Way of Kandiyohi County convened a community forum to talk about the strengths and gaps in the health and human services in Kandiyohi County. This forum was held to help elected officials and service providers prioritize funding for various human services agencies and programs. The United Way of Kandiyohi County invited representatives from sectors of the community – including business, nonprofit, education, faith, and government – to participate. They also invited culturally diverse community members. The United Community Assessment of Needs (UCAN) Partnership was formed.

Based on guidance from the United Way of America and the COMPASS II program, the UCAN Partnership planned a comprehensive community health and human services gaps and strengths assessment. The ultimate goals are to:

- **Improve the community’s understanding of needs**
- **Provide a standard set of community data**
- **Coordinate efforts to make best use of limited resources**
- **Foster cooperation and collaboration**
- **Emphasize measurable results**
- **Establish community priorities**
- **Develop strategies around priorities**
- **Address critical needs**

Four committees (Steering Committee, Communications Committee, Inventory Committee, and Data Collection Committee) met over the last 18 months to design and implement the study and to analyze the survey data. Wilder Research assisted with collecting and analyzing data for this study. Wilder Research is a large nonprofit health and human services research organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals, families, and communities through high quality research and program evaluation. Wilder Research was started in 1917 when a staff member of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation (the parent organization) conducted a housing study in the City of Saint Paul, which resulted in the first housing codes in the city. Since then, Wilder Research has provided thousands of hours of consultation and direct research services to nonprofit and government agencies around Minnesota and other parts of the country. More information about Wilder Research can be found at www.wilderresearch.org.

Methodology

The UCAN Partnership used a variety of data collection activities to examine a wide variety of community issues, including:

- Employment and economic development
- Income and finances
- Education
- Housing
- Health
- Recreation and youth development
- Child care
- Care for elderly and disabled residents
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Public safety, crime, and abuse
- Transportation
- Environment and pollution
- Diversity and discrimination
- Community life and volunteering

The study was designed to identify each area as a strength and/or as a gap in the community. It includes official data related to the issue (see a list of sources on p. 20) as well as survey participants’ situations, experiences, and opinions.

Study participants

Several different data collection activities were used to get a complete picture of the strengths and gaps in Kandiyohi County's health and human services. These methods were carefully selected to provide an accurate representation of the community while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

1. **Household survey:** 424 households that were randomly selected from all households in Kandiyohi County completed a survey (mailed or phone). Participants ranged in age, gender, income level, employment status, type of family, and other characteristics. The data from this survey represents the population of Kandiyohi County within a +/-4.8 percent margin of error. In addition, 82 Latino community members and 15 Somali community members completed the survey (translated into Spanish and Somali), and provide a picture of how the experiences and needs of immigrant and refugee community members differ from the rest of the community.
2. **Community leader luncheon:** 118 community leaders identified by the UCAN Partnership and United Way participated in a luncheon and completed a survey that asked their opinions on the strengths and gaps in health and human services in the community, and then asked them to rate the quality of existing services. Wilder Research facilitated the lunch using Audience Polling Technology to obtain real-time, interactive feedback on the same topics that were covered in the survey.
3. **Service provider survey:** 34 local service providers completed a web-based survey that asked about existing services and activities and additional areas in which they would be interested in working.
4. **Business and service club survey:** 33 Kandiyohi County businesses and 20 area service clubs or organizations completed surveys (web-based for businesses and mailed to service clubs) related to their current health and human service activities, as well as philanthropic and volunteering activities. In addition, participants were asked to indicate other areas in which they would be interested in working.

Strengths and limitations of the study design

This type of study provides a comprehensive picture of the existing services in the community as well as an assessment of gaps in service. It combines several ways of obtaining and analyzing information, including interviews from people with many different perspectives, instead of relying on one group or type of community member (e.g., community leaders) to speak for the entire community. It also used a scientific survey sampling design to ensure that results from the household survey can be generalized to the entire population of Kandiyohi County, providing a high degree of confidence that the study provides a true picture of the community. However, caution must be used in interpreting some of these findings. Although the representative household survey was completed using scientific random sampling, and the Latino sample was drawn from the overall population by selecting listed phone numbers assigned to individuals with Latino surnames, the Somali community members who participated in the study were not randomly chosen from the population, so the results from their surveys cannot be interpreted as representative of all Somali community members. The results from the Latino and Somali surveys should be used as a general reference that illustrates some areas where immigrant and refugee community members have different experiences or unique challenges. Also, the community leaders, service providers, businesses, and service clubs that participated were not chosen randomly so the results from these surveys cannot be interpreted as being representative of all community leaders, service providers, businesses, and service clubs in the community. However, the results from these surveys do contribute to the value of the study because it illustrates areas of strength in the community and areas where additional services (or additional funding for existing services) are needed.

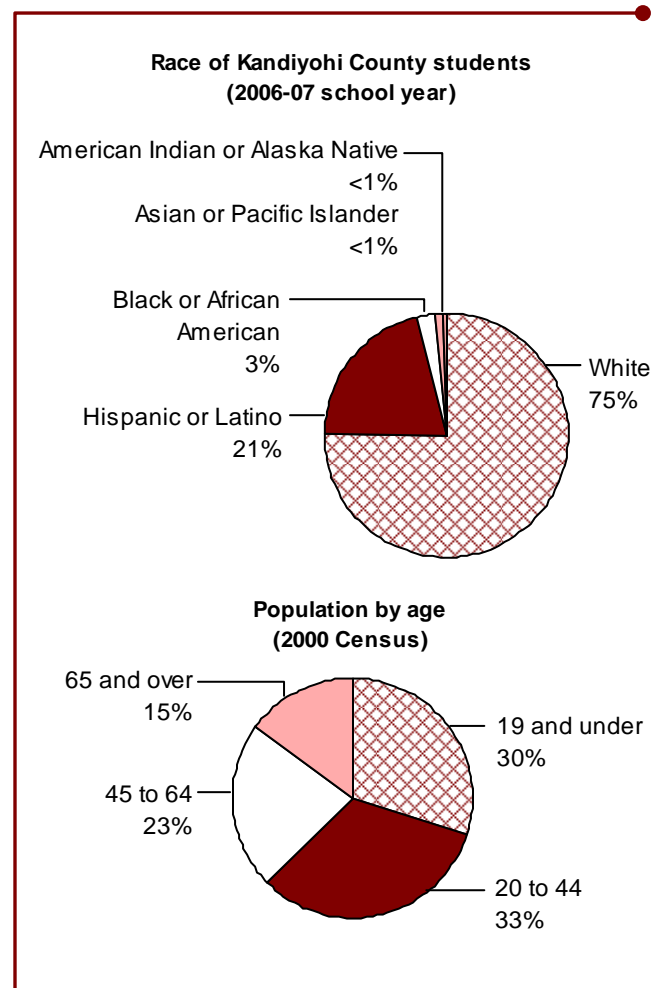
Characteristics of Kandiyohi County residents

Before examining a community's strengths and needs, it is important to understand who lives in the community and the prevalence of certain groups within the population that may need special services or resources and/or who may offer certain assets to the community (for example, senior citizens, families with children, people whose first language is not English, etc.) Most of this information is from the 2000 Census, so caution should be used with this data because it may be out-dated and/or under-represent certain immigrant groups due to measurement error.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- In 2000 (the most recent Census data available), there were 41,203 residents living in 15,936 households. One-quarter of households have only one resident. About a third of households have children and a quarter have senior citizens.
- 82% of residents have lived in Kandiyohi County for over five years.
- Well over half (59%) of adults are married and relatively few are separated (1%), divorced (8%), or widowed (7%). One fourth (25%) have never been married.
- 12% of adults are veterans.
- The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 94% of Kandiyohi County residents are white, which includes a majority of Latinos¹, who make up 8% of the population. Black or African American, Asian, and American Indian or Alaska Natives each are reported to make up less than 1% of the population. (In Minnesota, most Latinos are also counted as white.) However, data from Kandiyohi County schools paints a picture that is much more diverse (see chart).
- The median age is 36.9 years and the population is aging, with over a third (38%) in their mid-40s or older.
- For a different study that examined the situation of low-income residents in the region, see:

http://192.168.18.3/Products/Reports/2006/HeartlandCommunityAction_12-06.pdf



¹ The U.S. Census Bureau and many other organizations track race and ethnicity separately, so Latinos can be of any race.

Community life and volunteerism

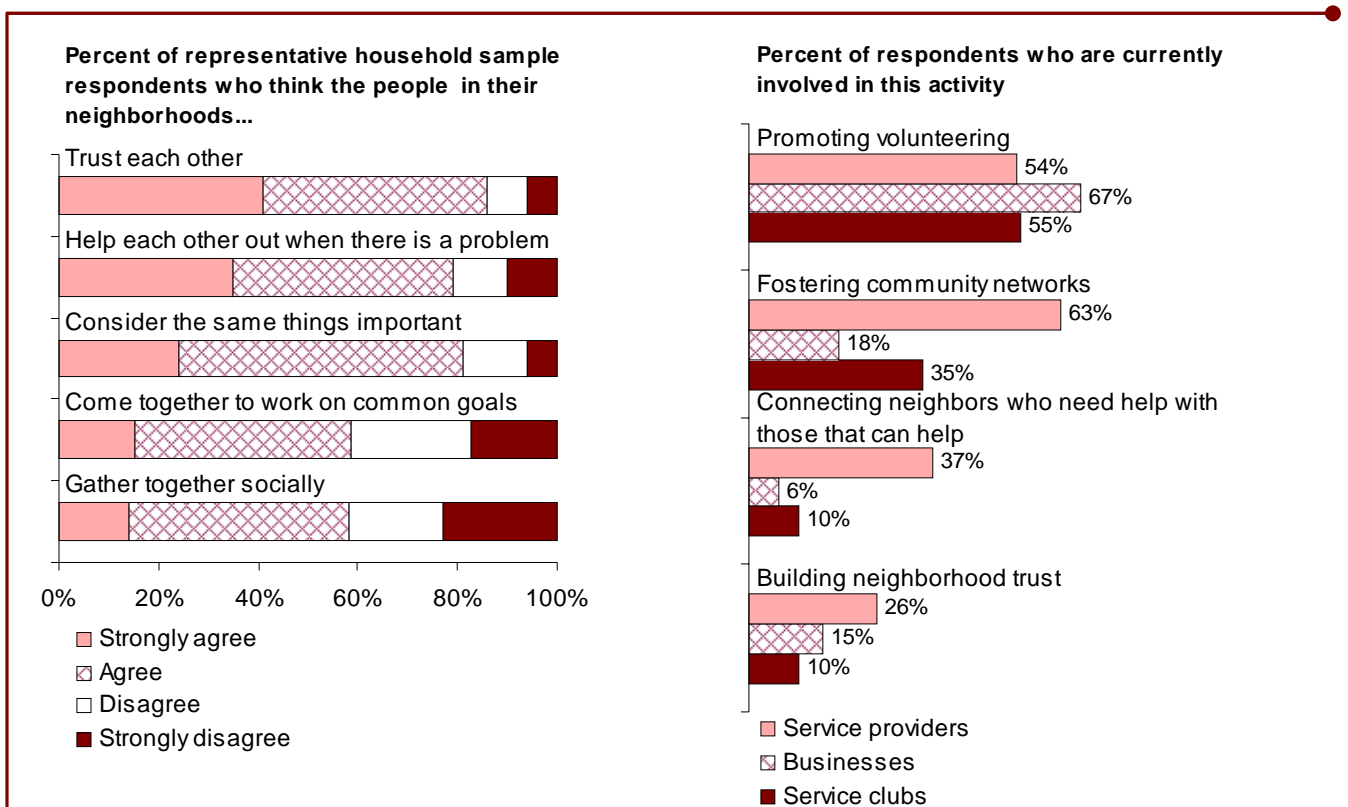
Community life and volunteering are key indicators of the overall quality of life in a community. Communities with diverse resident involvement are more responsive, flexible, and safer. Volunteers contribute to an increased capacity to provide critical services to community members in need. Volunteering also creates opportunities for community members, especially those who are not in the workforce, to contribute to productive activities and the overall well-being of the community. Civic engagement is one of the biggest strengths in Kandiyohi County. Further, the fact that so many community members are retired or nearing retirement age opens up a whole new pool of volunteers for community programs and initiatives.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- Most (90%) of the respondents from representative households reported voting in the most recent election, which is one indicator of civic engagement.
- Half (47%) of the representative respondents reported volunteering during the past month.
- A third of Latino and Somali respondents feel that they have “no opportunity” to influence what happens in their community (vs. only 14% of the representative sample).
- Many businesses and service providers, and some service clubs, are focusing on activities related to community involvement.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Involving diverse community members (racial and ethnic diversity, age and gender diversity, religious diversity, diversity of family type and sexual orientation, and representation of all sectors, including for-profit and nonprofit, health care, education, service providers, industry, and government representatives) in decision-making and planning for community activities and events. One way to do this is to get the participation and buy-in of key individuals from the group targeted for more involvement. In the Somali community, this is often a religious leader or imam, and in the Latino community it could be a religious leader and/or entrepreneur.

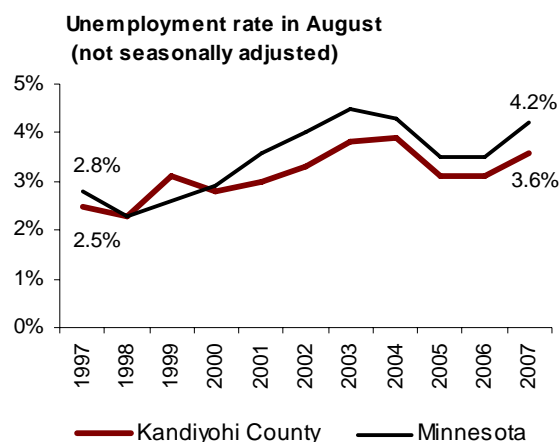


Employment and economic development

Employment and economic development are important issues because many rural communities struggle to find the right balance of having enough jobs with living wages and benefits for all its workers and being able to recruit and retain enough skilled workers to fill those positions. The availability of skilled workers also creates opportunities or barriers for employers to move to and/or stay in the community.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- Kandiyohi County's unemployment rate is consistently lower than the state average by about a half of a percentage point, and has fluctuated with the state average over time.



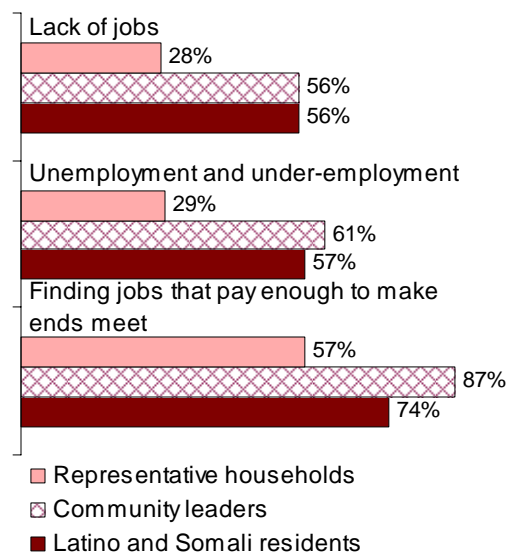
- A fourth (25%) of Kandiyohi County residents who are employed work in education, health, and social services. Manufacturing (15%), retail (13%), construction (7%), and agriculture (6%) are also industries that employ many residents.
- 10% of employed residents are self-employed.
- Two-thirds (67%) of the household survey respondents are working full-time or part-time. One-third (31%) are not employed and not looking for work (retired, etc.) Only 3% reported being currently unemployed.
- Low-income and non-white participants were more likely to indicate that finding jobs that pay enough to make ends meet is a problem for their household.
- Just over half (54%) of participating service providers reported that their organization helps to prepare people for jobs and 37% said they are working on increasing availability of and access to jobs.

- Three-fourths (73%) of participating businesses are working on promoting economic development, whereas only 36% are helping to prepare people for jobs and 30% are working on increasing availability of and access to jobs.
- Very few (4 or less) of the participating service clubs are working in the area of employment and economic development.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Since the community is aging and many residents have retired or are close to retirement age, it is important to consider how skilled workers will be replaced and what types of training are needed in order to ensure sustainable economic growth in Kandiyohi County.
- Build on the strong volunteer base and commitment to improving quality of life among retired residents to create opportunities for experienced, skilled workers to mentor younger workers and those who have just moved to the community.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major problem"



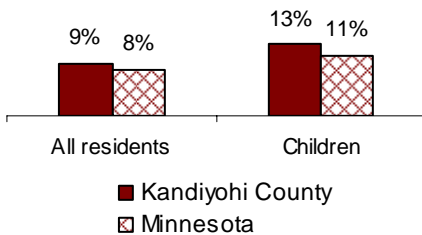
Income and finances

Income and finances indicate the ability of residents to pay for their basic needs such as housing, food, healthcare, and transportation as well as their ability to afford other things that contribute to a good quality of life, such as recreation and activities. Poverty is associated with increased instability and community problems such as crime, mental and physical health problems, alcohol and drug abuse, and family violence.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- In 2004, the median household income in Kandiyohi County was \$43,233, which is less than the state median of \$51,202.

Percent living in poverty² (2005)



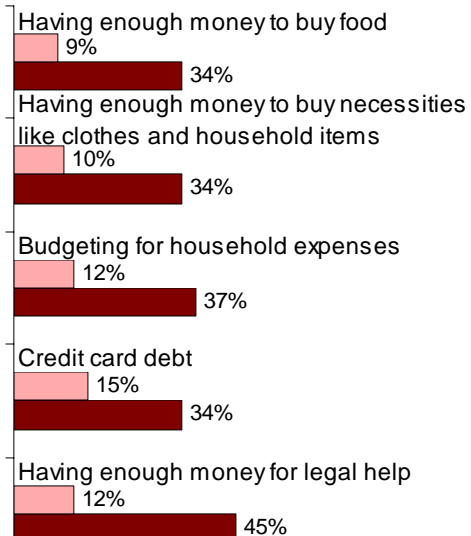
- 14% of representative household survey respondents have annual household incomes of less than \$20,000, whereas 15% have incomes of more than \$100,000. When compared with data from the 2000 Census, this indicates that higher income residents are slightly over-represented in the household survey.
- Less than 10% of respondents from all groups reported using public assistance programs like the Minnesota Family Investment Plan (MFIP) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- 2,816 households claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in 2005, with a total value of nearly \$4.4 million.
- About three-fourths (73%) of participating businesses and one-fourth (29%) of participating service providers are currently working on promoting economic development, which may result in creating and/or retaining employers that pay living wages with benefits.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

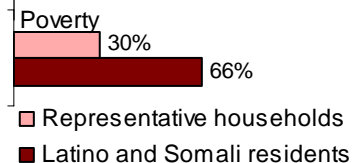
- Providing incentives (like grant points, tax credits, or contracts) to employers and other organizations to pay living wages.
- Making sure that *all* residents can get information and assistance to sign up for programs for which they are eligible. One program that is especially important and is often overlooked is the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).³

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major" problem

Household concerns



Neighborhood concerns



² The poverty line is determined by the federal government annually based on the USDA's basic food budget (depending on family size) and multiplied by three. In 2006, the federal poverty line for a family of four with two adults was \$20,444. It is widely accepted that the federal poverty line is too low to be a realistic estimate of the actual money needed for a household to meet its basic needs. According to the JOBS NOW Coalition, the average annual cost of meeting basic needs for a family of four with two workers in Minnesota is about \$51,000. To cover these costs each worker must earn at least \$12.24 per hour.

³ EITC is a refundable tax credit that reduces or eliminates the taxes that low-income working people pay and also provides wage subsidy for low-income workers.

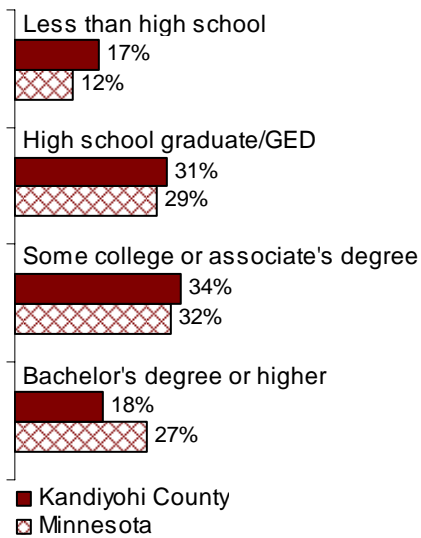
Education

Education is an important community indicator for both current strengths and needs and also areas where there may be future gaps, for example, in the area of workforce development and training. Educational concerns can range from funding for public schools to bullying in schools to availability of adult education or English as a Second Language classes.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- Around 10,000 children are enrolled in Kandiyohi County schools (preK-12).

Educational attainment of adults age 25+



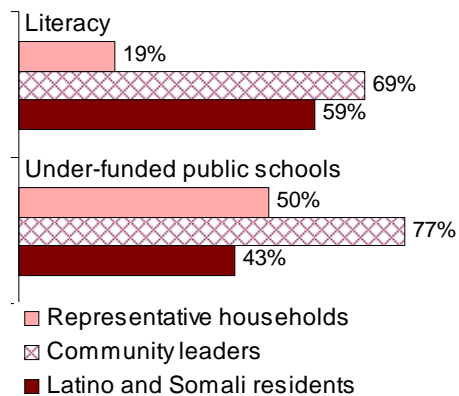
- There are currently 28 different languages spoken in Kandiyohi County area schools and 9% of all students are classified as Limited English Proficiency.
- 12% of students in K-12 schools have special education status.
- 41% of students qualify for free or reduced price school lunch because their families have low income.
- 87% of representative households reported that lack of education to increase job-related skills is “not a problem” for their household compared with only 38% of Latino and Somali respondents.

- Only 2% of representative household survey respondents compared with 37% of Latino and Somali respondents said that the ability to read well enough to meet their daily needs is a “moderate” or “major” problem.
- 63% of participating service providers, 27% of participating businesses, and 15% of participating service clubs reported being involved with activities to promote education.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Finding ways of matching volunteers with opportunities to make a difference in the public schools. Many participants in this study reported schools as one place where they were most likely to volunteer.
- Expanding literacy and English language classes for targeted communities. These programs or classes should focus on functional English for employment rather than more general conversational English.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major problem"



Child care

Child care that is high quality, affordable, and accessible to the families that need it is an important aspect of quality of life. First, quality child care allows parents to work and contribute to the community's economy. Second, child care with early learning components can greatly increase the chances that children start school with the skills they need to be successful. Further, early childhood education has the potential to reduce disadvantages for children from different racial/ethnic backgrounds, family types, and family income levels.



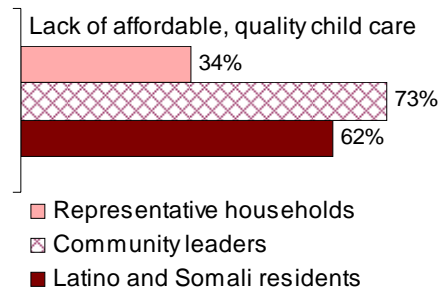
Currently in Kandiyo County:

- Nearly three-fourths (71%) of residents with children under age 6 have both parents in the labor force.
- The average annual (2006) cost of full-time child care for one preschooler is \$5,925 for center-based care and \$5,125 for family-based care.
- Lack of available quality⁴ child care during second and third shifts (night time care) is a problem for a slightly larger proportion of respondents than finding quality child care during the daytime.
- Finding child care is more of a challenge for Latino and Somali respondents compared with representative household survey respondents.
- None of the participating businesses reported providing on-site child care services to employees and only 6% reported reimbursing employees for child care expenses.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Increasing the availability of affordable child care while promoting economic development and employment in the community by providing training and funding opportunities for people, especially those from racial/ethnic minority communities, to start child care businesses.
- Providing accessible information to young families about the importance of early childhood education for the long-term development and success of their children.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major problem"



⁴ Quality is defined by the participants.

Housing

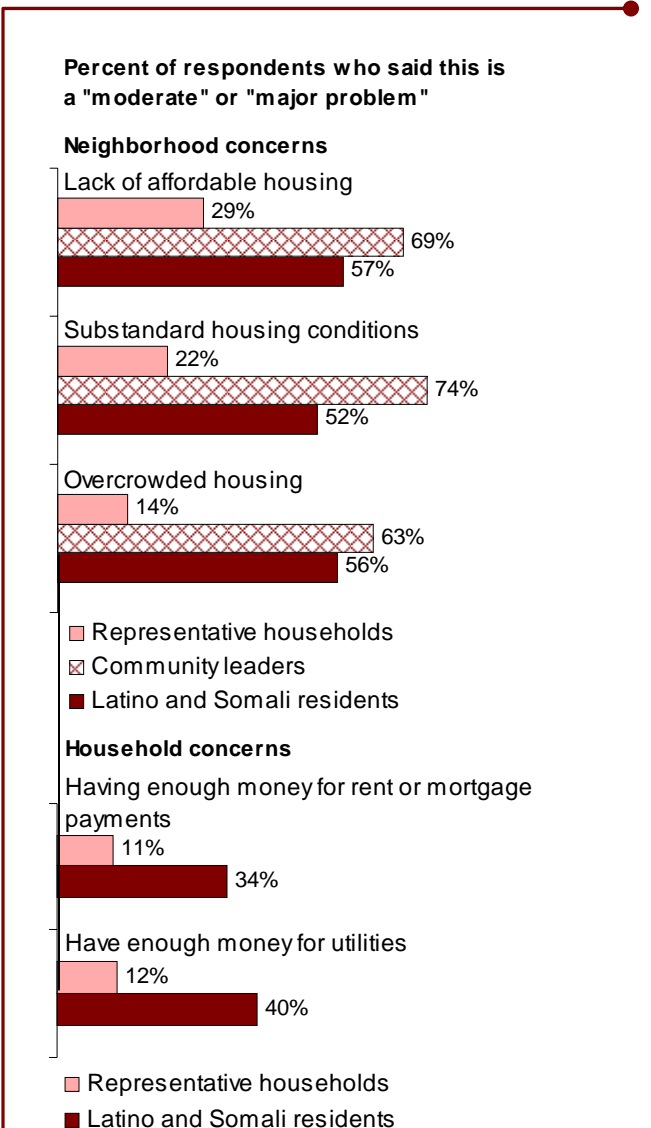
Housing is a critical aspect of a community's overall ability to ensure an adequate standard of living for all residents, because housing costs have risen more sharply than wages and because lack of stability in housing can lead to a whole range of problems such as employment instability, poor educational attainment, and mental and physical health problems.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- There are over 18,000 housing units in Kandiyohi County, of which approximately 13,500 are single family homes (owner-occupied and rental).
- Less than 1% of the housing units in the county lack plumbing facilities, 1.6% have no telephone service, and 1.1% have more than 1.51 occupants per room (an indicator of overcrowding).
- Most representative respondents (70%) have between two and four people living in their homes and 20% live alone. By contrast, 39% of Latino and Somali respondents have more than five people living in their homes.
- Substandard housing conditions, overcrowded housing, living in housing that needs major repairs, and having health concerns related to housing (lead, mold, asbestos, etc.) are significantly more common among minority residents (3-7% of representative respondents vs. 16-25% of Latino and Somali respondents).
- Housing affordability is a concern for many residents, especially minorities. The 2000 Census reports that 15.5% of all Kandiyohi County home owners pay 30% or more of their income on mortgage payments and 33.3% of renters pay 30% or more of their income for rent.
- 17% of participating service providers, 24% of participating businesses, and 5% of participating service clubs reported working on activities related to increasing affordable housing and home ownership.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Providing more volunteer opportunities and developing, targeting, or increasing accessibility of programs to help people with home maintenance, chores, winterization, and utility costs.
- Providing opportunities and incentives for housing developers to increase the number of affordable housing units in the community.



Health

Health and health care are important topics to address in a comprehensive community needs assessment because good health and accessible, affordable health care allows community members to participate in family life, work, and community activities. Similar to the rest of the state and country, health care and insurance is an area of major concern in Kandiyohi County.

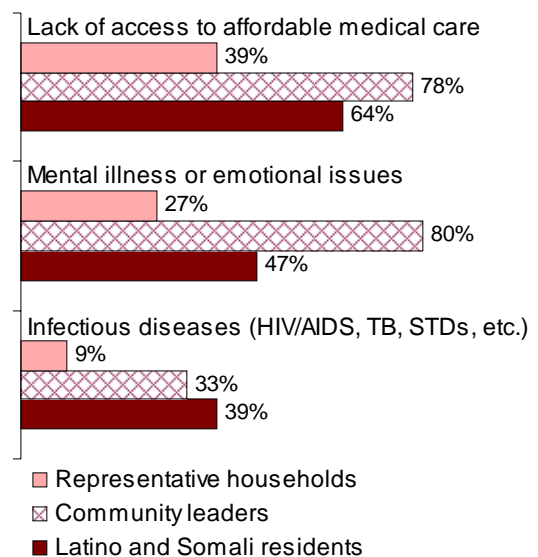
Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- In 2005, the birth rate was 13.9 per 1,000 in the population overall, and the teen birth rate was 43.0 per 1,000 15-19 year old females. (This compares to an overall birth rate of 13.8 and a teen birth rate of 26.5 for Minnesota.)
- Teen pregnancy is a “major” concern for half (47%) of Latino respondents.
- Over a third (35.9%) of births in 2005 were to unmarried women (vs. 29.5% in Minnesota).
- Health insurance is a “moderate” or “major” problem for one-fourth (22%) of representative household survey respondents and half (45%) of Latino and Somali respondents.
- Dental insurance is a problem for an even larger proportion of respondents (30% of representative household survey respondents and 48% of Latino and Somali respondents).
- Self-reported depression, other mental health problems, and anxiety and stress affect up to a third of all households and nearly half of Latino and Somali households.
- In 2005, 407 adults per every 10,000 adults received Mental Health Services (compared to 276 per 10,000 statewide). For children, these numbers were 554 in Kandiyohi County vs. 334 statewide.
- Nearly half (49% of boys and 44% of girls) of 12th graders reported tobacco use in the last year on the 2004 Minnesota Student Survey, with nearly a quarter reporting daily use.
- 66% of participating service providers, 67% of participating businesses, and 50% of participating service clubs reported being involved in activities related to promoting good health.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Providing more outreach and public awareness campaigns around health and mental health issues.
- Because of the traumas associated with poverty and because many of the community’s low-income residents are also dealing with adjusting to a new culture and/or post-traumatic stress disorder and other health and mental health issues, all service providers should be prepared to recognize and offer help to residents in need of services to address these problems.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major problem"



Recreation and youth development activities

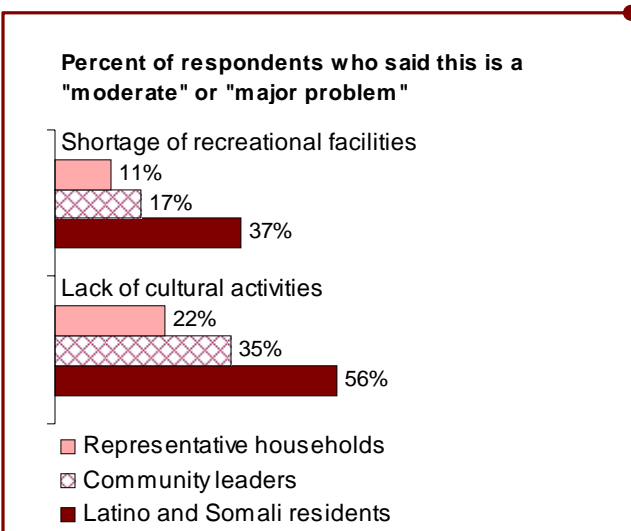
Recreation and youth development activities can impact the overall quality of life in a community. The availability, accessibility, quality, and variety of these amenities can attract new residents to the area as well as retain young families who want to participate in productive and educational activities with their children. Recreation is also a factor in promoting tourism and economic development. Further, recreational activities offer an important venue for addressing other community issues like diversity and cultural differences.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- Information from the Minnesota Department of Revenue indicates that recreation spending in Kandiyohi County is about average for the state. In 2004, there was \$56.7 million in gross sales in the leisure and hospitality industries in the county, which is 3% of all sales. This compares to the region (southern) and the state as a whole, both at 4%.
- Being able to afford recreational activities and entertainment is a problem for about a third of the representative household survey respondents and about half of the Latino and Somali respondents.
- Not surprisingly, many of the service clubs and organizations that participated in the survey work in areas such as promoting youth development (60%), promoting arts and culture (45%), and increasing the availability of recreation opportunities (25%).
- In addition, 61% of participating businesses are promoting youth development and 48% are promoting the arts and culture.
- About one-fourth of participating service providers are working in the areas of recreation and youth development.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Using more outreach and targeting of specific activities to ensure that all community members have access and find the available opportunities appealing.
- Work with new immigrant and refugee residents to develop community-wide activities that highlight the unique traditions and strengths of these cultural groups.



Time spent per week during the school year (2004)	6 th graders			12 graders		
	0 hours	1-5 hours	6+ hours	0 hours	1-5 hours	6+ hours
Homework or study	6%	80%	15%	17%	71%	12%
Activities, clubs, or organizations outside of school	54%	38%	8%	56%	36%	8%
Playing sports on a school team	57%	32%	12%	57%	13%	29%
Reading for pleasure	30%	59%	11%	50%	43%	6%
Watching TV or videos	5%	62%	32%	5%	63%	31%
Playing on the computer or video games	16%	59%	24%	33%	48%	19%
Volunteer work	72%	26%	2%	71%	28%	2%
Work for pay	46%	45%	10%	21%	16%	63%
Hanging out	7%	56%	37%	4%	36%	61%

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Care for elderly and disabled community members

Care for elderly and disabled community members is a key component of quality of life, especially in an aging community. Quality care allows spouses and other caregivers to work and/or participate in community life. Further, quality programs for seniors and disabled individuals allow these community members to be involved and have experiences that are beneficial and rewarding to them as well as to others.

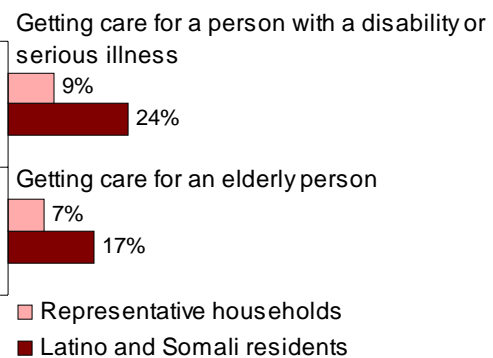
Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- 13% of residents have a disability.
- Two-thirds (68%) of disabled adults age 21 to 64 are employed. This compares to 65% for Minnesota overall.
- There are over 6,100 senior citizens (age 65+). Nearly 5,700 of these residents live in households and over 500 live in group quarters (nursing homes, etc.)
- The population age 65+ has increased moderately since 1990 and is projected to continue to increase over the next decade.
- The Minnesota Department of Health reports the elderly dependency ratio as 23.2 per 100 people age 15 to 64 (as compared to 17.8 per 100 people age 15 to 64 statewide). This is an indicator of how well a community will be able to pay for elder care costs through payroll taxes.
- Lack of quality care for elderly and disabled community members is a problem for a relatively small proportion of study participants (compared to other reported needs).
- Finding quality care is more of a challenge for Latino and Somali respondents compared with representative household survey respondents.
- It is likely that the need for elder care will increase with the growth in the senior population. In addition, the need for care of elders and disabled community members is probably under-reported, because caregivers often try to handle this responsibility alone.
- As a part of its *Transform 2010* project, the Minnesota Department of Human Services estimates that almost a third of Minnesotans born between 1936 and 1964 are at very high risk of having inadequate retirement income and unable to afford health and long-term care costs.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Learning about the range of services available for elderly and disabled residents and helping these providers make their services more accessible to all community members, including finding ways of helping low-income community members cover the cost of these services.
- Increasing public awareness of issues related to care of elderly and disabled people and informing the public of services that are available to help with these issues.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major problem"



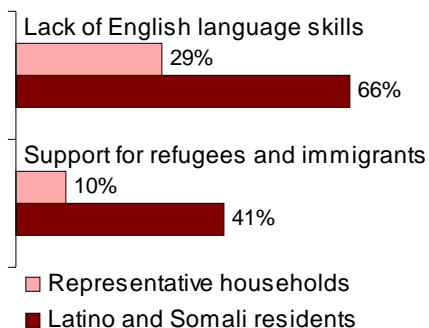
Support for immigrants and refugees

Supporting immigrants and refugees is important to quality of life, especially in communities like Kandiyohi County that have experienced dramatic increases in the numbers of non-American-born residents. Support for these populations can range from welcome events and materials (translated into the appropriate language), to providing language-accessible information and services, to outreach to these communities on topics of particular interest, to making accommodation in housing and employment to meet the needs and cultural traditions of these groups.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- According to the U.S. Census (2000), 96% of Kandiyohi County residents were born in the U.S and about half of those who are foreign-born moved to the U.S. in the past 10 years⁵.
- Three-quarters (73%) of foreign born residents are from Latin America, 9% are from Africa, and 6% are from Asia. This data, from the 2000 Census, may be outdated due to a recent growth in the Somali population in the county. Also, this data source may under-represent certain minority communities because of undocumented migrant workers and other immigration-related issues.
- At home, 10% of the population speaks a language other than English. Lack of language accessibility contributes to challenges faced by immigrant and refugee families in accessing the services and resources they need.
- Most (85%) of the community leaders who participated in this study feel that lack of English language skills is a “moderate” or “major” problem in the community.

Percent of respondents who said this is a “moderate” or “major problem”



Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Building on the strengths of immigrant groups. The increase in the number of immigrant and refugee families, most who have children, will help to replace the workforce when baby boomers retire.
- Working with employers and service providers to ensure that immigrant and refugee workers in Kandiyohi County get the training and on-the-job experience they need to fill higher positions as they open up.
- Providing good jobs and health insurance to help new community members have a higher quality of life and become self-sufficient.
- Pooling resources of many small service providers, businesses, or other organizations to obtain translations and bilingual staffing, as well as to obtain more community input for programs to ensure cultural competence for all community members.
- Developing a Welcome Center to welcome new residents to the community (both American-born and immigrants). This approach helps to induct new residents into community life right from the start and also can help to provide a gauge of how well the community is doing to meet the needs of its newest members.

⁵ These Census estimates are an underestimate of the true population of non-American born minorities for two reasons. First, the Census methodology is known to underestimate immigrant groups, especially those immigrant groups who may include some legal and some illegal migrant workers. Second, these data are from 2000, and much in-migration as been observed anecdotally since that time.

Alcohol and drug abuse

Alcohol and drug abuse are community problems that negatively impact the entire community through increased crime and violence, loss of income and decreased ability to participate in the local economy, and family instability. Recently, the problem of methamphetamines has received a lot of attention in rural Minnesota because it is so common and because of the extremely destructive nature of addiction to this drug.

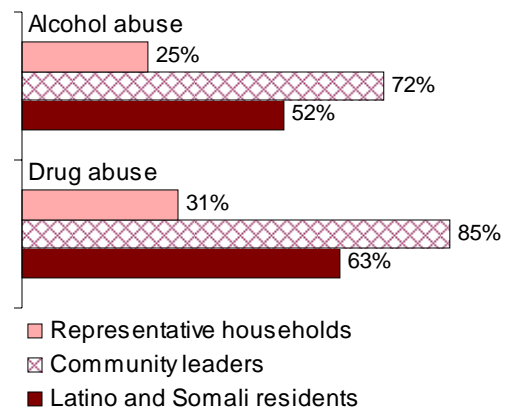
Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- The Minnesota Department of Health reported a total of 11 alcohol-related fatalities in Kandiyohi County from 2003 to 2005. In addition, there were 728 alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes and 343 injuries during the same time period, with a total cost of \$834,500.
- The DWI rate per 10,000 from 2001 to 2005 was 67.9, which is slightly higher than the statewide rate of 67.1.
- 74% of 12th grade boys and 80% of 12th grade girls report receiving most of their information about alcohol and other drugs from their friends or peers.
- While many respondents reported problems with alcohol and drug abuse *in their community* (see chart), a smaller percentage reported problems in their own homes. This may be related to social stigma that exists around this topic.
- Only 4% of respondents from the representative sample said adult alcohol abuse or youth alcohol abuse is a “moderate” or “major” problem for their households, compared with a quarter of Latino and Somali respondents.
- Only 4% of respondents from the representative sample said that adult drug abuse is a problem and only 6% said youth drug abuse is a problem, whereas 27% of Latino and Somali respondents said adult drug abuse is a problem and 30% said youth drug abuse is a problem.
- 21% of 12th grade boys and 17% of 12th grade girls reported using marijuana in the past year.
- 5% of 12th grade boys and 12% of 12th grade girls reported using methamphetamine in the past year.

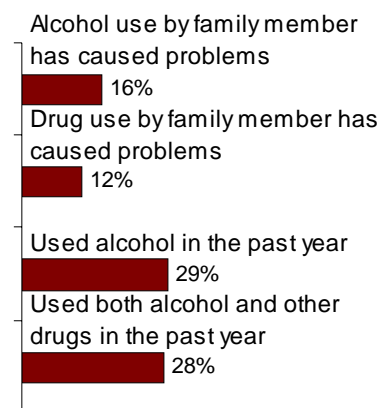
Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Increasing public awareness about the problems associated with methamphetamine and other drugs and alcohol by partnering with regional organizations already working on this issue.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major problem"



Percent of 12th graders (2004 Minnesota Student Survey Data)



Public safety, crime, and abuse

Crime and family abuse are community problems that negatively impact the entire community through loss of income and decreased ability to participate in the local economy and increased family instability. Further, community members' perceptions of public safety can impact their willingness to stay in the community as well as the community's ability to attract new residents and businesses.

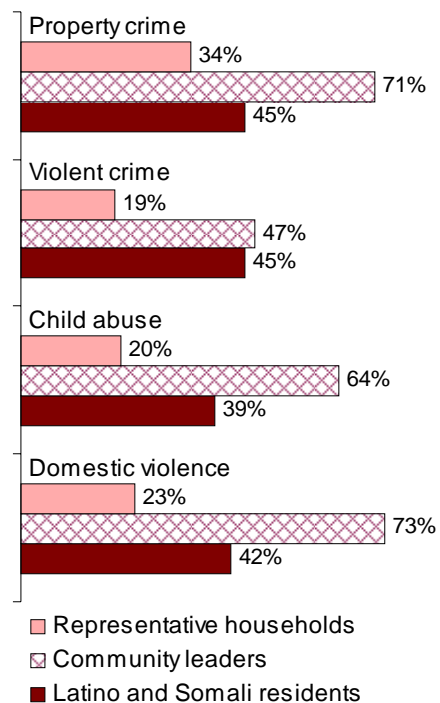
Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- The FBI reported a total of 1,213 crimes in 2000 (the most recent data available), most of which were larceny/theft (59%) or burglary (25%). Violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery, assault) accounted for 8% of all crimes.
- In 2006, Kandiyohi County Family Services opened 109 child protection/child welfare cases and placed 173 children out of their homes due to abuse, neglect, their own behavior or mental health problems, or their parent's inability to care for them.
- Overall, 511 individuals received domestic violence assistance from United Way-funded programs in Kandiyohi County in the past year.
- Residents are more likely to be concerned with property crime, both in their neighborhoods and for their own households, than they are about violent crime.
- Latino and Somali community members are more likely than respondents from the representative sample to be concerned about all types of crime and violence in the community.
- One quarter of participating service providers are currently working on increasing neighborhood safety.
- One quarter of participating businesses and only one participating service club is currently working on increasing neighborhood safety.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Building on the strong base of volunteers and the high level of involvement in the community to initiate and/or increase the use of neighborhood watch programs and other community-based crime prevention strategies.
- Increasing the proportion and diversity of youth who participate in after-school and summer activities, because these activities reduce the likelihood that youth will become involved in illicit behaviors.
- Ensuring that the availability of reporting and advocacy mechanisms is high enough that community members who become victims of crime will have access to needed resources.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major" problem



Discrimination

Discrimination is a community problem that negatively impacts the entire community and limits the ability of diverse community members to participate in community life. Many communities in greater Minnesota, including Kandiyohi County, have experienced a recent influx of immigrants and refugees as well as increasing populations of American-born minorities. These changes are never easy for a community; however, it is important to recognize and address issues that can impact the ability of new community members to have a high quality of life as well as to understand and respond to the concerns of longer-term residents. Racial and ethnic conflict and discrimination against Latino and Somali community members are some of the biggest challenges facing Kandiyohi County.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

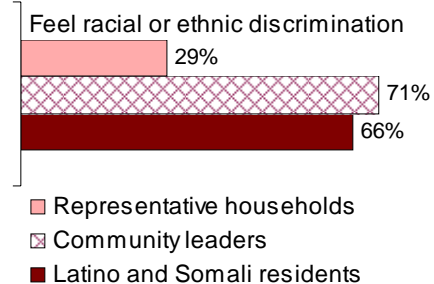
- Two-thirds of Latino and Somali participants said that being a victim of discrimination has been a problem *for their household*, which is similar to the proportion who reported discrimination as a problem in their community (see chart).
- Overall, many of the businesses (39%), service providers (37%), and service clubs (25%) that participated in the study said they are currently working on activities that foster racial harmony.



Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Working with employers and service providers to ensure that the new immigrant and refugee communities living and working in Kandiyohi County have opportunities to get needed resources in an accessible and culturally-appropriate format.
- Implementing a community-wide effort to welcome and learn about the cultures of *all* of its community members through a welcome center and/or multicultural shopping and entertainment opportunities.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major problem"



Transportation

Transportation is a concern in many communities. In rural communities, the ability to buy and maintain a vehicle, including the cost of insurance and gasoline, is a basic necessity without which many everyday responsibilities like going to work, running errands, taking children to activities, volunteering, and voting become impossible. Getting around is an even bigger challenge for people who cannot drive, like some elderly individuals and disabled community members, and those who are new to the country and have not yet gotten their driver's license.

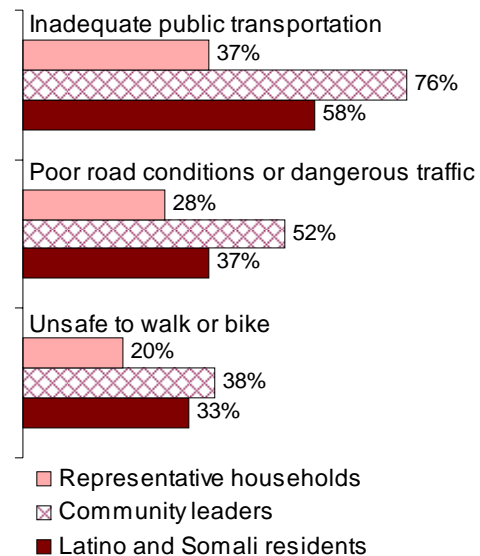
Currently in Kandiyohi County:

- Kandiyohi County is in the Minnesota Department of Transportation's District 8⁶, which has 1,429 miles of highways, 354 bridges, and 12 transit systems. Over 500 Adopt-A-Highway groups keep these roads clean.
- In addition, District 8 has 17 airports and 472 miles of rail.
- The 2000 Census reports that most (79%) Kandiyohi County residents who are employed drive alone to work, whereas only 1% use public transportation and 14% carpool or walk to work.
- Respondents from the representative household sample were unlikely to report having problems with having enough money for a vehicle (13%) or finding transportation to work (6%). Latino and Somali respondents were more likely to report these problems (36% and 22%, respectively).
- A small proportion of respondents reported having problems with finding transportation for elderly or disabled family members or for children to get to their activities. Again, these problems are more common among Latino and Somali community members.
- One quarter of participating service providers and one quarter of participating businesses are currently working on improving access to transportation.
- None of the participating service clubs are working on this transportation issue.

Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- Providing public transportation services within the city or town that would cover a majority of residents without access to a vehicle.
- Providing volunteer-staffed transportation for certain types of activities, such as youth programs and medical appointments and errands for seniors and disabled community members. Often, community- and faith-based organizations facilitate volunteer transportation programs.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major problem"



⁶ District 8 includes Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, and Yellow Medicine Counties.

Environment and pollution

The environment and pollution are indicators of the long-term sustainability and vitality of a community. Communities that disregard environmental concerns to save money now pay the price with the health and well-being of future generations. Protecting the environment and reducing pollution is especially important for communities that rely on farming as a primary source of income and communities that have significant tourism, because poor environmental quality can negatively impact both of these industries.

Currently in Kandiyohi County:

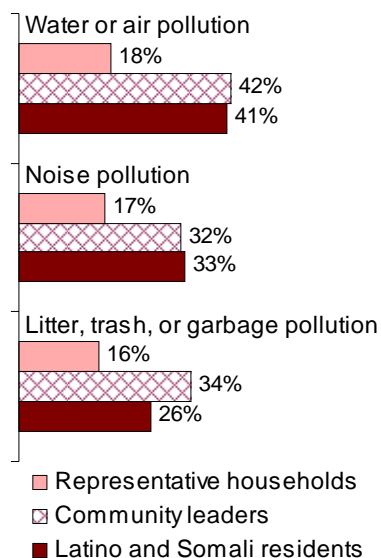
- Respondents were less likely to report water or air pollution as a problem in their own homes as they were to report it as a problem in their neighborhoods (18% vs. 6%, respectively, of the representative sample).
- Service providers, businesses, and service clubs were not asked about issues related to the environment or pollution. However, 27% of participating businesses reported being involved in activities to beautify community spaces and 24% reported being involved in designing a plan for community renewal. Some service clubs (25%) also reported working on community beautification. Service providers were less likely to report involvement in these areas.



Other communities have addressed these issues by:

- There is likely a lack of public awareness of the ramifications of pollution for the long-term health and sustainability of a community. Efforts should be made to develop a comprehensive community-wide plan to ensure the protection of natural resources and sustainable development for the health of the next generations and to increase community awareness of the importance of these issues.
- Funders can help to protect the environment in Kandiyohi County by insisting that all funding recipients use environmentally-friendly processes and recycling whenever possible.

Percent of respondents who said this is a "moderate" or "major problem"



This report was prepared for the United Community Assessment of Needs (UCAN) Partnership and the United Way of Kandiyohi County. Thanks to the UCAN committee members and staff from United Way and other participating organizations who contributed to this report.

For more information about the UCAN Partnership, please contact Stacey Roberts at United Way of Kandiyohi County, 320-235-1050 or stacey@unitedwaykc.org.

For more information about this report, please contact Nicole MartinRogers at Wilder Research, 651-280-2682 or nam1@wilder.org.

Author: Nicole MartinRogers
JANUARY 2008

Sources (retrieved September 2007)

- Children's Defense Fund Minnesota. "Minnesota Kids Count 2007," www.cdf-mn.org.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crimes Reported in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota," Crime 2000, <http://www.fedstats.gov/mapstats/crime/county/27067.html>.
- JOBS NOW Coalition, "The Cost of Living in Minnesota in 2007," www.jobsnowcoalition.org.
- Kandiyohi County Family Services, "Caring for Our Community," 2006 Annual Report.
- Minnesota Department of Education, "Race of student, languages, free and reduced price lunch, LEP, and special ed," http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/Data_Downloads/student/enrollment/district/index.
- Minnesota Department of Education, "2004 Minnesota Student Survey," <http://education.state.mn.us>.
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, "Local Unemployment Statistics Tool," <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/laus/>.
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, "Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey," <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/publications/jobvacancies/>.
- Minnesota Department of Health, "Vital Statistics Summary," Center for Health Statistics, <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/trends/index.html>.
- Minnesota Department of Health, "County Health Tables," <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/countytables/>.
- Minnesota Department of Health, "Refugee Health Statistics," <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/refugee/stats/>.
- Minnesota Department of Human Services, "Summary, A Blueprint for 2010: Preparing Minnesota for the Age Wave," Transform 2010, <http://dhs.state.mn.us/2010>.
- Minnesota Department of Human Services Mental Health Divisions, "Mental Health Management Report: Service Utilization Tables For Adults During Calendar Year 2005," <http://dhs.state.mn.us/>.
- Minnesota Department of Human Services Mental Health Divisions, "Mental Health Management Report: Service Utilization Tables For Children During Calendar Year 2005," http://dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/Economic_support/documents/pub/DHS_id_004113.hcsp.
- Minnesota Department of Human Services Children and Family Services Administration, "Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) County Specific Report, June 2007," <http://dhs.state.mn.us/>.
- Minnesota Department of Revenue, "2003 Annual Minnesota Sales Tax Statistics for the Leisure and Hospitality Industry," http://www.taxes.state.mn.us/taxes/legal_policy/research-reports/content/sales_use_reports.shtml.
- Minnesota Department of Transportation, "About District 8," <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d8/about.html>.
- Minnesota State Demographic Center, "Elderly Minnesotans: A 2000 Census Portrait," Population Notes, February 2004, OSD-04-110.
- U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, "Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: Kandiyohi County, Minnesota," Census 2000 Summary File 1, <http://factfinder.census.gov>.
- U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, "Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: Kandiyohi County, Minnesota," Census 2000 Summary File 3, <http://factfinder.census.gov>.
- U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, "Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, 2004," <http://factfinder.census.gov>.
- United Way of Kandiyohi County, "How United Funds Are Working in Our Community," www.unitedwaykc.org.

On January 17, 2006 United Way of Kandiyohi County hosted a meeting to launch a comprehensive Health and Human Services needs assessment for Kandiyohi County. United Way formed a partnership, United Community Assessment of Needs (UCAN) to help implement the study. There were many people who contributed financially to this project. Below are our financial partners who helped move this project forward. We are very thankful for the investments committed to ensure that we have a credible document that would benefit leaders in our county to address the community's most pressing needs.

Financial Partners

Kandiyohi County Commissioners
City of Willmar
Willmar Public Schools
Otto Bremer Foundation
United Way of Kandiyohi County
Willmar Community Foundation
Rice Health Foundation
Affiliated Community Medical Foundation
City of Spicer
Willmar Rotary
Woodland Centers
West Central Industries
Heartland Community Action
Willmar Lakes Rotary
City of New London
City of Atwater
Kandiyohi Electric Cooperative
Sertoma
Wells Fargo Bank
Heritage Bank
City of Sunburg
Shelter House

In-Kind Contributions

United Way of Kandiyohi County
Jennie O Turkey Store
Willmar Marketing Coalition
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
Community Volunteers