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The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation Releases
Third East Metro Pulse Survey Results

Responses From More Than 3,100 Residents Encompassing 20,000 Data Points Now Available in an Interactive Format and Comprehensive Data Book

ST. PAUL, MINN. -- June 21, 2022 -- The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation (the Foundation) has released the third volume of its East Metro Pulse, a tool the Foundation uses to assess the experiences, opinions and needs of East Metro residents in areas such as community connectedness, economic opportunity, education, health, housing and transportation.

The findings of this third edition of the survey, commissioned by the Foundation and conducted by Wilder Research in the summer of 2021, are now available at the Foundation’s website. Survey results are available in an interactive format that allow users to view, filter and download results sorted by age, education level, language, race and ethnicity, gender, household income and housing status and as a comprehensive data book compiling all responses. Additionally, the Foundation produced five special topic reports from the data, highlighting results related to COVID-19, Employment, Education, Fair Treatment and Critical Issues.

“The data compiled via the East Metro Pulse shed light on the issues, concerns, needs, strengths and lived experiences of East Metro residents while also highlighting how connected to and engaged with their communities these residents feel,” said Nadege Souvenir, the Foundation's chief operating officer. “We use these results in our own work and make them widely available because we believe they provide insightful information for use by other funders, nonprofits, government agencies, service providers and community groups.”

Nicole MartinRogers, research scientist at Wilder Research and lead researcher on the survey, said Wilder Research’s partnership for the East Metro Pulse reflects its focus on using data to improve the welfare of people in the greater Saint Paul metropolitan area and beyond. “To inform our efforts to create positive change, we must first listen and engage respectfully, honoring the diverse perspectives and cultures found in the East Metro, which is what we do through the East Metro Pulse,” said MartinRogers.

Measuring the Pandemic’s Impact

The most recent East Metro Pulse asked residents about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their lives. For the East Metro area overall, 38 percent of residents said their lives changed in a somewhat or significantly negative way, 35 percent said their lives stayed about the same and 27 percent said their lives changed in a somewhat or significantly positive way.

However, negative effects were more profoundly felt by renters as compared to homeowners (51 percent vs. 34 percent). In addition, negative effects were more acutely experienced in households with incomes of less than $40,000 annually.

When asked to identify the main negative impact of COVID-19 on their lives, East Metro Pulse respondents overwhelmingly singled out “connections to others in the community” (60 percent compared to 17 percent identifying education access and quality, 8 percent identifying housing access and affordability and 8 percent identifying transportation access and quality). The loss of connection to others in the community was experienced most strongly by the youngest and oldest survey respondents (66 percent among those 18 to 34 and 68 percent among those 65 or older).
Less Enthusiasm for the East Metro as A Place to Live

In the most recent East Metro Pulse, a lower percentage of residents rated the quality of life in their communities as “excellent” compared with the 2018 survey. Similarly, lower percentages rated their communities as “excellent” places to live and to raise children compared with the 2018 survey. This was true for the East Metro area overall and for all the subregions comprising it (Dakota County, Ramsey County, Washington County, the City of Saint Paul and Suburban Ramsey County).

The region’s rating for community connectedness also eroded some from 2018 levels. Compared with the 2018 East Metro Pulse, a lower percentage of residents in the region overall and in all of the subregions said they thought of the East Metro as “a place where you belong or just a place to live,” perhaps reflecting in part the pandemic’s isolating effects.

“The latest East Metro Pulse is rich with data that is revealing about how East Metro residents are feeling about their lives and their neighborhoods, the good and the not so good,” said Souvenir. “The survey’s findings offer powerful reminders that we cannot be complacent about the work we still need to do collectively and collaboratively to help our communities thrive.”

To interact with the East Metro Pulse data or view the complete data book and survey visuals, visit eastmetropulse.org.

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About the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation believes in the best of Minnesota and the power of its communities. With roots in Saint Paul and partners across the state, it is Minnesota’s largest community foundation and the partner of choice for thousands of donors, nonprofits and community organizations. The Foundation aspires to create an equitable, just and vibrant Minnesota where all communities and people thrive by inspiring generosity, advocating for equity, and investing in community-led solutions. Visit: spmcf.org

About Wilder Research
Wilder Research, an independent research unit of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, is a nationally respected nonprofit research and evaluation group. We work with nonprofits, community leaders, government agencies, foundations and policymakers throughout Minnesota and the country to gather and interpret facts and trends, help them uncover and understand issues affecting their communities and how best to address them, and inform action that improves lives and communities. Visit www.wilderresearch.org

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