Welcoming Communities Assessment: Sleepy Eye, Minnesota

In partnership with:

R9 **REGION NINE** DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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GREATER MANKATO DIVERSITY COUNCIL

Welcoming Communities Assessment – Sleepy Eye, 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. Sleepy Eye residents completed 79 assessments. Some participants may have completed assessments for more than one sector.

The table below provides an overview of Sleepy Eye'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 school system appears to be on the leading edge of inclusion efforts in Sleepy Eye, but has made less progress in sharing power or by promoting inclusion through policies and practices.

Additionally, the table provides insight into which sectors of the community are leading or lagging in particular dimensions of inclusion. While all sectors of the community are at least slightly aware of the importance of inclusion, fewer of the 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
School system	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.7
Health care system	2.8	2.7	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.5
Law enforcement	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.5
Non-profit organizations	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.2	2.5	1.9
Religious organizations	2.6	2.7	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.2
Business or Chamber	2.1	2.6	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.1
Local government	2.1	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.3

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)

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 79 completed for Sleepy Eye (some participants may have completed assessments for more than one sector). Table 1 shows the number of completed assessments by both community and sector.

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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 Sleepy Eye, 14 percent of the responses were from people who identified as Hispanic or Latino, and the 2017 American Community Survey estimated that 12% of the Sleepy Eye population was Hispanic or Latino. In terms of length of residence, respondents tended to be long-term residents. The average length of residence for Sleepy Eye respondents was 27 years.

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 parentheses 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	- 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	- 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	- LGBT people have not been able to find a church home. - Catholic churches tend to be more inclusive.
Law enforcement	- 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. - 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	• 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 Sleepy Eye. The strongest awareness of inclusion efforts was in the school system, with average responses of 3, a moderate level of awareness. There was a slightly lower level of awareness reported for health care, law enforcement, non-profit organizations, and religious organizations. Business and local government were reported to have the lowest levels of awareness of the importance of inclusion.

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 comments made by individual survey respondents from Sleepy Eye about awareness in each sector of the community.

Table 4. Survey comments about awareness

Health care	- Diversity in staffing would be great to see (besides whites). - The hospital has information in several languages and offers interpretation. This makes me think that, at least they know they need to do something. - We don't specifically reach out for feedback from Hispanic community.
Law enforcement	- I didn't know that Sleepy Eye PD went to the migrant school - had interpreters, things like that. - More direct training could be utilized by LE. - Our officers are very viable and approachable in our town. They are aware of the different cultures and do a good job navigating them.
School system	- At public school they do a wonderful job in teaching our children how to work together as one no matter what the race is. - If there is any program there is no diffusion. - No questions only proven facts, it's a very difficult situation for our children at the public school, they are not allowed to speak their first language (Spanish) at all in the building, it was prohibited by the high school principal, buy the way he himself is very racist against the Hispanic community. - Sleepy Eye is very inclusive of race, gender, and children with disabilities. - There are some kids who come to this town and don't know English and rely on other students to translate, but what's sad is when the principal gives out detention if anyone speaks Spanish!
Religious organization	All churches need to work together as people of faith to see to the needs of others. That is the work God gave us to do. We are to care for one another the best we can.
Business	- Advertise events/training and partner with other business for training. - Based on current state. - Currently "no" to third question but it is desired. - There is a lot of room for this as an area of growth for our business community. - There should be. How can businesses partner to work toward inclusion in the community? Being an "inclusive" welcoming business should be an economic benefit to the business. - We found it difficult to identify things that our business community is currently doing to include minority cultures and races... need improvement.
Non-profit organizations	Great ideas/topics at top of page, especially need for taking the time to honestly assess. It may be good to seek outside

	evaluation to help be intentional.
	• I feel it would be great and have more ways for people to learn from others.
	• I wasn't informed about any of these meetings — very disappointed in the EDA for not telling the non-profit organization Director about this meeting. The Director of the non-profit organization should be the first to know so they can tell their board members about this meeting, not the other way around. This is a BAD way of the EDA to handle things!
	• Inclusion needs to be practiced more, seems like non-profits are driven more towards one class/group of the community.
Local government	• Local government needs some education about their role. Especially at the county.
	• Money aspects: housing, child care.
	• Works in the schools but needs to go beyond school walls. Not sure how to get it to government.

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	• 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	• Constantly working on engagement, but financial challenges, etc.
	• Better at being reactive, not proactive.
Business community	• Sharing information on community issues.

	• Have businesses partner to work on better inclusion.
Religious organizations	• 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	• 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	• 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 Sleepy Eye. The strongest reported engagement with diverse groups was in the school system, with fairly consistent levels of engagement in all of the other sectors except local government.

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
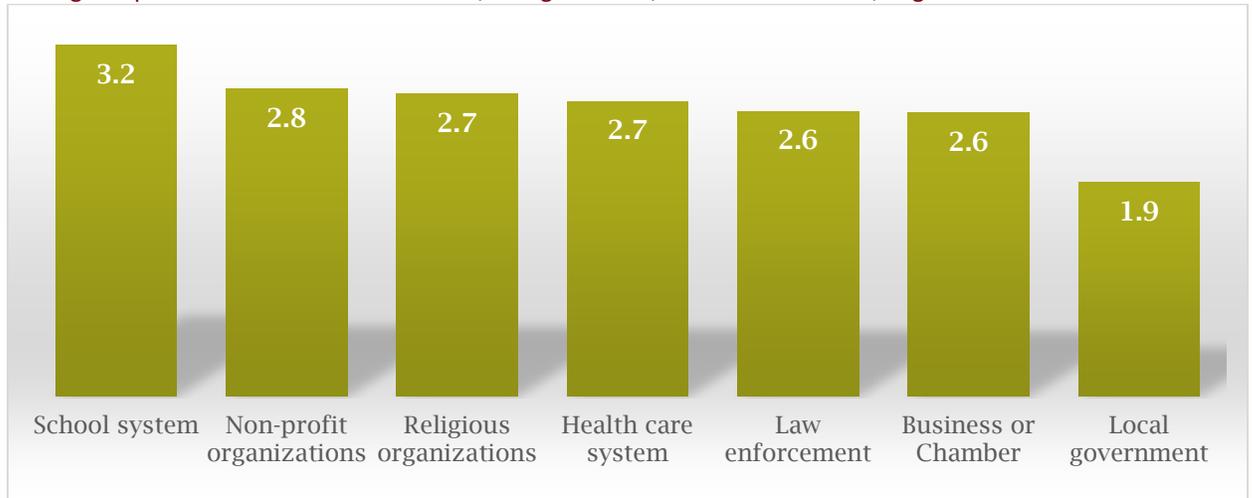

Table 6 lists the comments made by individual survey respondents about engagement in each sector of the community.

Table 6. Survey comments about engagement

Law enforcement	• Coffee with a cop, great way to engage with community. How big of a responsibility should be put on law enforcement to engage in the community outside of work? • Law enforcement attempts to engage all members of our community at events. Law Enforcement could work on finding more events to be at.
Religious organizations	• We have started Spanish to English classes, but the need is great and we need more opportunities to work together.
Business	• Most of the inclusion for events is done through the school. Not much else from other businesses. • Burners: how do we as business community advertise and make awareness of events? • Transportation can be a barrier — but technology can help such as Uber — might take longer to take root in smaller communities.
Non-profit organizations	• Feel we have grown this way with Hispanic culture, but not so much with other groups. • You are not asking full questions - Explain yourselves what are you talking about and wanting to know. • Communication, open to change break away from some services to everyone. Don't really know much about all organizations available in the community. • Focus on services that are actually desired — not what leaders perceive to be needed.
School system	• I'm disgusted by this school • All groups of students participate in athletics, arts, and other

	activities especially with the help of United Way! • Messages that get sent out from the school should also be translated in Spanish.
Local government	• Not very intentional. • Need for improvement! • Time and resources are limiting the ability to reach out. Maybe idea of combining resources.

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	• 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). • 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	• Greater Minnesota forgotten, metro-centric. • Need to broaden scope and outreach.
Business community	• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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?

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 Sleepy Eye. Non-profit organizations and the school system were perceived to have the most resources to address inclusion. In 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
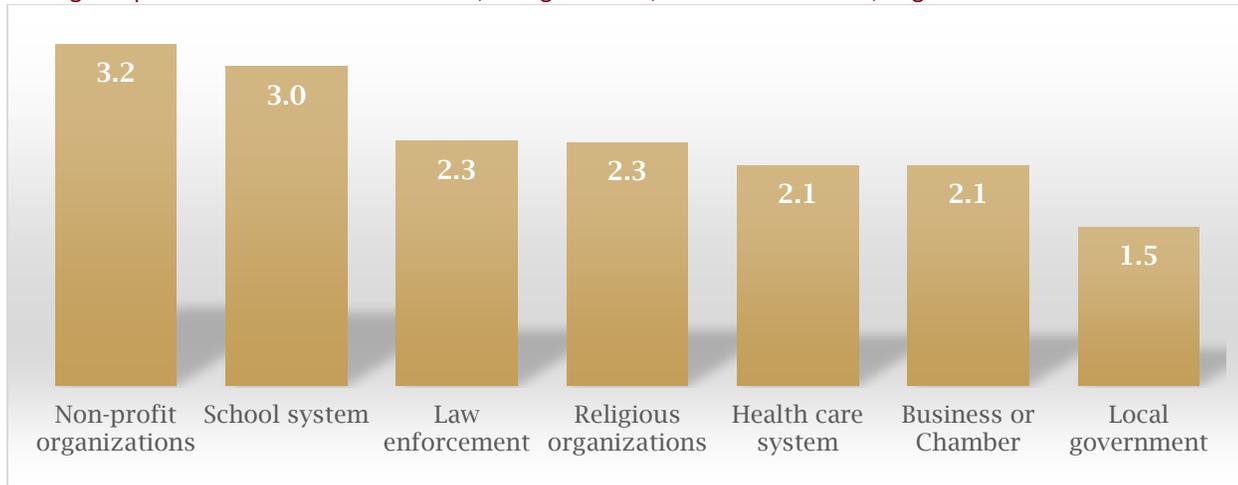

Table 8 lists the comments made by individual survey respondents from Sleepy Eye about resources in each sector of the community. There were no comments about resources in the health care system or law enforcement.

Table 8. Survey comments about resources

School system	• Sleepy Eye more so than the others.
Religious organization	• 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	• Education on language barriers and importance in locate industry. • Options for learning second languages. • Community resources for interpreters.
Non-profit organizations	• 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 organizations. • 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	• Really, it's up to local individuals I don't see this as a priority for local government 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	• 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	• Major lack of diversity in leadership, on boards, etc.
Religious organizations	• 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	• 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 Sleepy Eye. Non-profit organizations and the schools were perceived to have the most leadership energy to address inclusion. 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
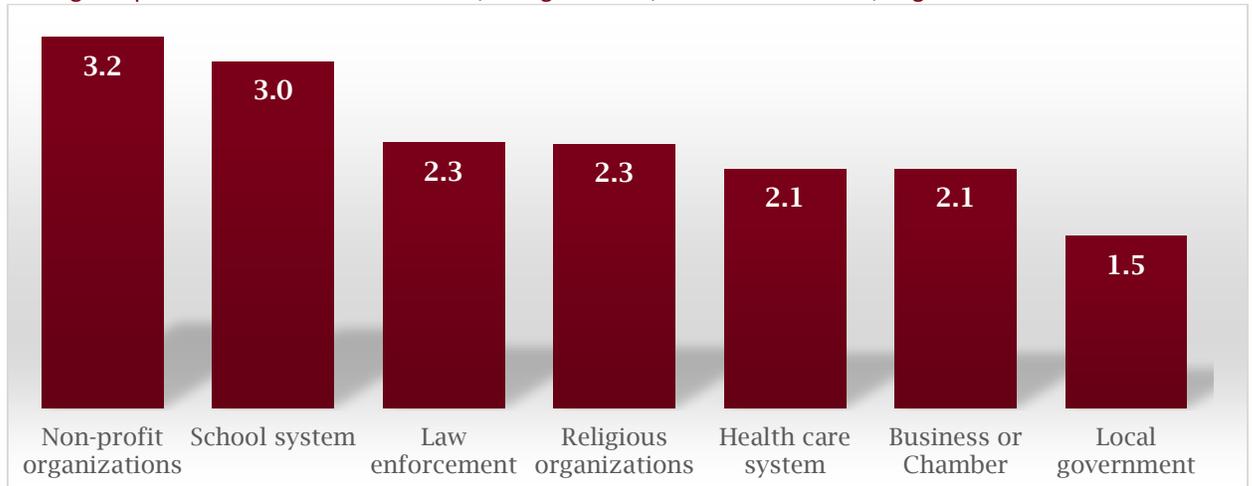

Table 10 lists the comments made by individual survey respondents from Sleepy Eye about leadership energy in each sector of the community.

Table 10. Survey comments about leadership energy

School system	• If there is any effort, it is not visible from my perspective as an elementary school parent. • Staff that is hired represents the community. Family liaison and diverse staff.
Law enforcement	• How can we get more diverse leaders in law enforcement? It's a statewide shortage, how can we incentivize police programs for all groups? • We would love diversity in our department. We just don't get any applicants like that. • MN is expensive to become a police officer. Poor minorities probably can't afford it.
Business	• More involvement with providing leadership opportunities. • I think for some businesses it may be easier than for others due to size and skill set/education required. • Can those individual businesses that include diverse employment, share their knowledge and experience with other businesses.
Non-profit organizations	• Making use of training and awareness exposure. Leaders are responsible to promote inclusion and teach it. They need to know this is their responsibility. Training program for mentoring leaders? • I feel we all want and understand how important it is its just implementing it. There is always room to grow.

	• Include diverse members on board.
Religious organizations	• We have a very inclusive congregation which is a start. We need to lead by example.
Local government	• Our community is so Caucasian dominant they focus on pleasing the majority. • No one expands on who "it" is.

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	• 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	• Always the same folks at the table — how do we broaden the net? • Need for more focused outreach.
Religious organizations	• 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	• 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. - 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.

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 Sleepy Eye. The school system, non-profit organizations, and religious organizations were reported to have slight to moderate 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

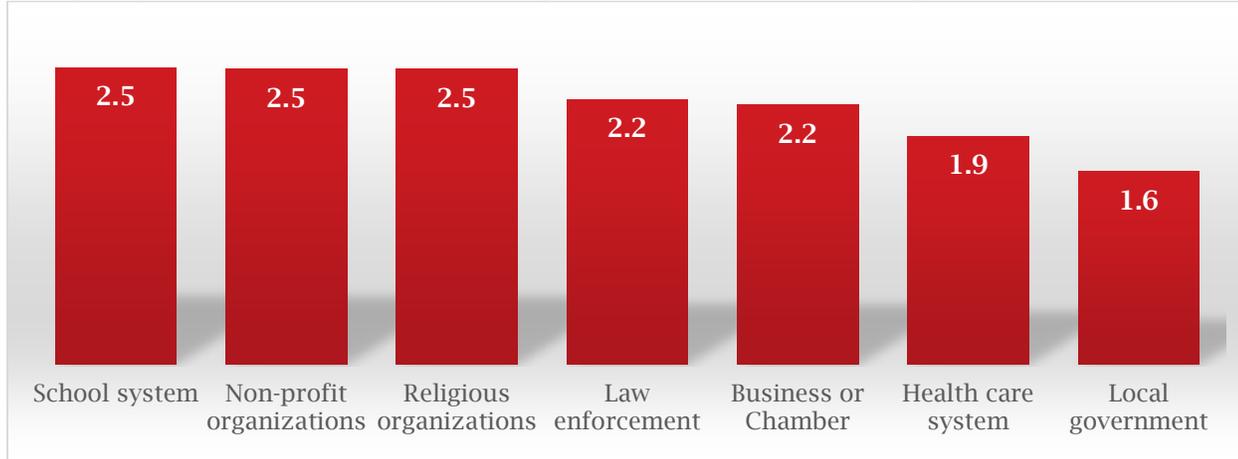|	Value
School system	2.5
Non-profit organizations	2.5
Religious organizations	2.5
Law enforcement	2.2
Business or Chamber	2.2
Health care system	1.9
Local government	1.6

Table 12 lists the comments made by individual survey respondents from Sleepy Eye 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	• Encourage people to attend city council meetings. • All are welcome to meetings, looking to start a community outreach. • Our chief has an open door policy as do all of our city officials.
School system	• Since it is a respectful school and leadership I cannot perceive any effort in this matter. • All are invited to the table and we hope they are feeling part of it and come.
Health care system	• May need to consider more personal asks for diverse populations. Invite different people (not the same people) to "the table."
Religious organization	• We do try to be inclusive in the area however we can.
Business	• Opportunities not well enough advertised. • The discussion question was a bit difficult to understand which made group discussion difficult. • Businesses that employ immigrants or people of color offer the same opportunities for advancement and leadership to them. • I believe a small number of business do a great job in creating opportunities for minority groups to excel, these

	ideas and policies need to be shared with other businesses.
Non-profit organizations	• Definitely room to improve. • Have meetings/gatherings with other non-profits in the community. Being part of a non-profit organization and not familiar with other organizations in the community is an issue.
Local government	• The broader community is mainly Caucasian so they feel they represent the majority.

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	• 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	• Workforce shortage limiting inclusion efforts.
Business community	• Need for the sharing of policies between businesses involving diversity and inclusion. • Have policy options for floating holidays and leaves of absence.
Religious organizations	• 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	• 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	• 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 Sleepy Eye. The school system and law enforcement were reported to have a slight to 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

	School system	Law enforcement	Religious organizations	Business or Chamber	Non-profit organizations	Health care system	Local government
Value	2.7	2.5	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.5	1.3

Table 14 lists the comments made by individual survey respondents from Sleepy Eye about sharing power in each sector of the community.

Table 14. Survey comments about policies and practices

Business	• We need to include [all] ages. • I don't think you can give an answer for the "business community" each business has own policies and practices. • Offer lesser known (still popular in other culture) holidays (tine-off) - offer extended leave access. Floating holidays?
Law enforcement	• ICE, documented/undocumented.
Religious organizations	• Our church has tried include women and men as leaders and pastors.
School system	• Again do not know… and I try to be informed about school activities. • Policies/practices in Sleepy Eye are helping with inclusion efforts. • We don't call them students of color we call them students — they are included in everything
Non-profit organizations	• Are term limits the right way to force inclusion? What about those who are passionate and talented, forced to leave their role? Shouldn't it be a matter of team evaluation and recommendation? • I don't feel it's on purpose and just how they have always done it. • Reach out to diverse members of community being age, ethnic background. Again diversity.

Local government	• Public health does some equity work.
	• More work is needed.
	• We think pragmatically when making policies.

DISCUSSION

Table 15 provides an overview of Sleepy Eye's progress across sectors and dimensions of inclusion based on the 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 red cells indicate no to slight progress.

It is useful to read the table both across and down. Reading across, the table shows the progress made in each dimension of inclusion for a specific sector of the community. The school system appears to be on the leading edge of inclusion efforts but has made less progress in sharing power or policies and practices. Non-profit organizations were reported to have strong resources and leadership energy. Local government was reported to be making slight progress on awareness, but no to slight progress on the other dimensions.

Reading down the table provides insight into which sectors of the community are leading or lagging in particular dimensions of inclusion. All sectors of the community are at least slightly aware of the importance of inclusion, with the school system having the most awareness. 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
School system	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.7
Health care system	2.8	2.7	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.5
Law enforcement	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.5
Non-profit organizations	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.2	2.5	1.9
Religious organizations	2.6	2.7	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.2
Business or Chamber	2.1	2.6	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.1
Local government	2.1	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.3

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)

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 Sleepy Eye.

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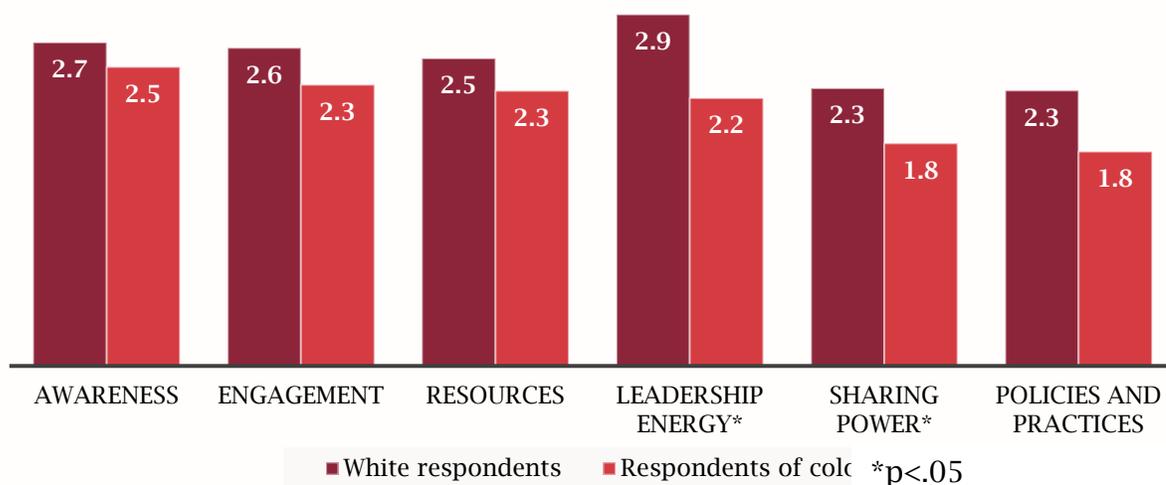
This assessment is intended to encourage discussion about strategies for moving forward with inclusion efforts in Sleepy Eye. Below are a few discussion questions to think about to guide the conversation.

- What surprises you in this report, and why?
- What's missing in this assessment of inclusion in Sleepy Eye?
- What are you noticing with regard to your strengths as a community?
- What areas need improvement?
- Where do you think you 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 <u>exclusively</u> 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.