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The New Minnesotans: Profile of West Central Minnesota

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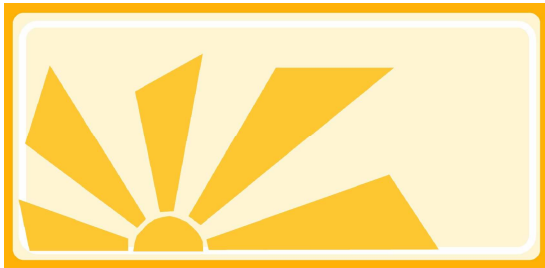
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MORRIS

Center for Small Towns



*“BELIEVING IN A BRIGHT, PROSPEROUS
FUTURE FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES.”*

The New Minnesotans: Profile of West Central Minnesota

REGIONAL
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIPS

Communities and their University building Minnesota's future

Prepared for the West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership

January 23, 2006

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Section 1: Introduction

The Center for Small Towns (CST) at the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) together with the University of Minnesota West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (WCRDSP) began working on a “New Minnesotans Project” in 2005 with the intention of identifying underrepresented racial and ethnic groups who are new residents of West Central Minnesota. The goal was to find ways to support the needs of these groups and to encourage their abilities. To accomplish this goal, an inventory of people who have moved to the region, organizations that are working with these new populations and a review of rural-specific research were compiled. This profile provides a guidebook for identifying and locating these new populations.

The profile area is defined by 12 counties in West Central Minnesota; Big Stone, Chippewa, Douglas, Grant, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Pope, Renville, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, and Yellow Medicine. The West Central region borders the Dakotas and is part of the upper Minnesota River Basin water shed. Some of the Regional counties include parts of the Red River Prairie and Hardwood Hills. Agriculture production and manufacturing is the primary economic base; with an emerging tourism industry. Most of the communities in the region are less than 5,000 in population with the exception of Alexandria, Montevideo, Morris (home of the University of Minnesota-Morris campus and the West Central Research and Outreach Center) and Willmar.

One UMM student, Kate Raymond, and one UMM faculty member, Dr. Stacey Parker Aronson, Associate Professor of Spanish, together with CST staff member Ben Winchester made up the “research team” to complete this project. This profile will be utilized by the WCRSDP board to provide the data and knowledge required for an understanding of the issue.

The West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (<http://www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu/westcentral>) is one of five University of Minnesota Regional partnerships that are legislatively funded initiatives led by citizen leaders. The partnership is committed to leverage U of M resources to sustain West Central Minnesota’s natural resource base economy and empower citizen participation and leadership. Since it’s inception in 1999, the partnership has funded/partnered on 20+ applied research and education projects.

The Center for Small Towns is a community outreach program housed at the University of Minnesota, Morris and serves as a point-of-entry to the resources of the University of Minnesota. Small towns, local units of government, K-12 schools, non-profit organizations, and other University units are able to utilize the Center's resources as they work on rural issues or make contributions to rural society. Their Mission is to focus the University's attention and marshal its resources toward assisting Minnesota's small towns by creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students.

Section 2: Methods

The data was collected through a multiple method approach. To accomplish this, the research team has identified three primary sources; the 2000 U.S. Census, articles and websites, and interviews completed in person, by phone or by email. A snowball technique was used whereby individuals are contacted and asked to provide reference for others that may be able to provide additional information. Cities, counties, and townships were the local units of government that were contacted, along with some chamber groups. For individuals that were referred by more than three people, a telephone interview was conducted.

To begin an inventory there is a need to arrive at some standard definitions that will be used through this report. To begin, in west central Minnesota there are two status's that will be of interest – legal immigrant and a refugee.

Legal immigrant – an alien admitted to the U.S. as a lawful permanent resident (from Yearbook of Immigration Statistics).

Refugee – any person outside his/her country of nationality who is unable to return to that country because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution (from Yearbook of Immigration Statistics).

The following is a list of definitions of race categories used by the 2000 Census:

“White” refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicated their race or races as “White” or wrote in entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish.

“Black or African American” refers to people having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicated their race or races as “Black, African Am., or Negro,” or wrote in entries such as African American, Afro American, Nigerian, or Haitian.

“American Indian and Alaska Native” refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment. It includes people who indicated their race or races by marking this category or writing in their principal or enrolled tribe, such as Rosebud Sioux, Chippewa, or Navajo.

“Asian” refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. It includes people who indicated their race or races as “Asian Indian,” “Chinese,” “Filipino,” “Korean,” “Japanese,” “Vietnamese,” or “Other Asian,” or wrote in entries such as Burmese, Hmong, Pakistani, or Thai.

“Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. It includes people who indicated their race or races as “Native Hawaiian,” “Guamanian or Chamorro,” “Samoaan,” or “Other Pacific Islander,” or wrote in entries such as Tahitian, Mariana Islander, or Chuukese.

“Some other race” was included in Census 2000 for respondents who were unable to identify with the five Office of Management and Budget race categories. Respondents who provided write-in entries such as Moroccan, South African, Belizean, or a Hispanic origin (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban) are included in the Some other race category.

NOTE: The federal government considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. For Census 2000, the questions on race and Hispanic origin were asked of every individual living in the United States. Nearly half (48 percent) of Hispanics reported only White, while approximately 42 percent reported only Some other race, when responding to the question on race. The overwhelming majority (97 percent) of the 15.4 million people who reported Some other race alone were Latino, while the remaining 3 percent were not Hispanic.

Section 3: Inventory

This section is broken into three subsections which make up a bulk of the informational profile. First, a review of immigration data sources is conducted and selected statistics are provided. A number of sources are utilized for this data section including the U.S. Census, the Minnesota Department of Education, and selected research reports that have been completed on rural immigration statistics. The second subsection provides summarized results of telephone, email, and mail interviews. The third subsection is a review.

3.i.a U.S. Census Statistics

The United States Census Bureau is one source of data on the subject of immigrant populations. To begin, a review of the countries of origin is presented:

Country of Origin	2000	1990	Growth
Mexico	45,557	3,833	41,724
Laos	26,281	15,153	11,128
Vietnam	13,406	6,776	6,630
Korea	13,312	3,926	9,386
USSR	11,826	4,393	7,433
Canada	10,399	10,407	-8
Thailand	10,229	3,666	6,563
India	8,968	2,787	6,181
China/Hong Kong/Taiwan	8,487	4,571	3,916
Philippines	8,156	3,410	4,746
Somalia	7,995	-	7,995
Germany	5,675	8,175	-2400
Nigeria	5,523	784	4,742
United Kingdom	4,530	4,730	-200
Ethiopia	4,435	1,082	3,353
Total foreign born population	264,030	115,097	145,933

**Table 1: Top 15 Countries of Birth for Immigrants, Minnesota
Source: U.S. Census**

The explosion of the populations arriving in Minnesota from Mexico has impacted both metropolitan and rural communities.

West Central Minnesota

Total Population: 172,898

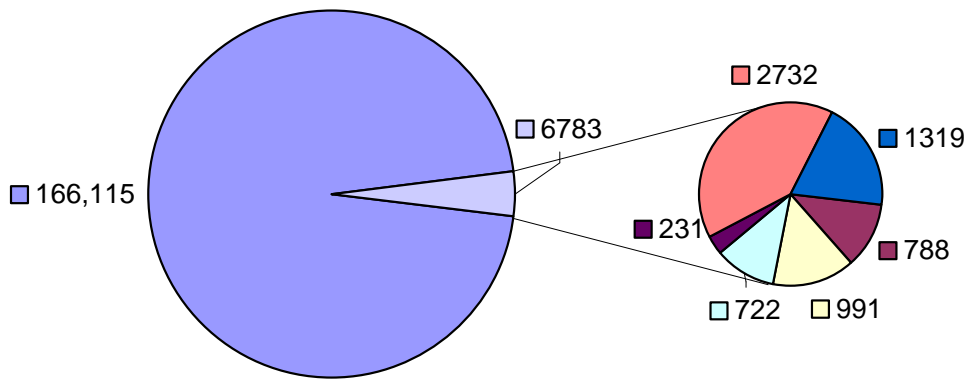


Figure 1: Racial populations in west central Minnesota

<i>County</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black or African American</i>	<i>American Indian and Alaska Native</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>2+ Races</i>	<i>Hispanic or Latino</i>
Big Stone	5,820	5,729	10	30	24	0	7	20	20
Chippewa	13,088	12,666	23	131	39	3	123	103	251
Douglas	32,821	32,326	60	78	132	9	58	158	193
Grant	6,289	6,181	13	17	12	0	16	47	33
Kandiyohi	41,203	38,576	209	138	158	27	1,719	376	3,295
Lac qui Parle	8,067	7,974	13	18	26	0	5	31	21
Pope	11,236	11,107	23	20	9	1	20	56	57
Renville	17,154	16,419	10	87	35	3	475	125	876
Stevens	10,053	9,664	92	70	86	2	38	101	90
Swift	11,956	10,840	322	60	171	182	167	214	320
Traverse	4,134	3,986	1	116	11	3	2	15	50
Yellow Medicine	11,080	10,647	12	226	19	1	102	73	195
West Central Minnesota Total	172,901	166,115	788	991	722	231	2,732	1,319	5,401

Table 2: Racial populations by county in west central Minnesota

3.i.b Minnesota Department of Education Statistics

The Minnesota Department of Education is a data resource that can measure the total population based on the number of children registered in the school district. Also included in the dataset is a variable that measures “Home Primary Language” of the child. The following tables contain data from the 2004-2005 school year.

School	Language	Non-English	County
CLINTON-GRACEVILLE-BEARDSLEY	GERMAN	33 of 436	BIG STONE
M.A.C.C.R.A.Y.	SPANISH	12 of 799	CHIPPEWA
MONTEVIDEO	SPANISH	66 of 1395	CHIPPEWA
WILLMAR	SOMALI	39 of 3,242	KANDIYOHI
WILLMAR	SPANISH	899 of 3,242	KANDIYOHI
LAC QUI PARLE VALLEY	SPANISH	30 of 985	LAC QUI PARLE
BIRD ISLAND-OLIVIA-LAKE LILLIAN	SPANISH	124 of 797	RENVILLE
BUFFALO LAKE-HECTOR	SPANISH	65 of 511	RENVILLE
RENVILLE COUNTY WEST	SPANISH	113 of 599	RENVILLE
KERKHOVEN-MURDOCK-SUNBURG	SPANISH	33 of 549	SWIFT
YELLOW MEDICINE EAST	SPANISH	71 of 994	YELLOW MEDICINE

Table 3: Largest numbers of non-English home primary language students by school

Language	Non-English
ARABIC	2
BULGARIAN	1
CAMBODIAN	2
CEBUANO	1
CHINESE	2
CUTCHI	1
ENGLISH	3242
ENGLISH, CREOLIZED	1
FINNISH	1
GERMAN	2
HEBREW	1
HINDI	5
KOREAN	1
RUSSIAN	1
SIGN LANGUAGE	1
SOMALI	39
SPANISH	899
SWEDISH	1
UKRANIAN	1

Table 4: Non-English home primary languages, Willmar, Kandiyohi County

Language	Non-English
ARABIC	3
BULGARIAN	2
CHINESE	1
DANISH	1
ENGLISH	985
GERMAN	4
HAWAIIAN	7
ITALIAN	1
SPANISH	30

Table 5: Non-English home primary languages, Lac qui Parle Valley School, Kandiyohi County

In the Willmar school district alone there are 19 different languages represented; this variety indicates a very diverse environment. To a lesser extent, this situation is also true for the schools in Alexandria, Montevideo, Morris, and Yellow Medicine.

3.i.c Other Sources

In 2001, the Center for Rural Policy and Development completed a report, *The Vitality of Latino Communities in Rural Minnesota*, which provided data on Latino populations in selected study communities.

Community	Total Population	Latino Population	Percent Latino
Albert Lea	18,356	1,740	9.5
Long Prairie	3,040	285	9.4
Owatonna	22,434	967	4.3
Pelican Rapids	2,374	465	19.6
St. James	4,695	1,116	23.8
Willmar	18,351	2,911	15.9
Worthington	11,283	2,175	19.3

Table 6: Latino populations in selected Minnesota communities

3.ii Interview Results

The interview script provides a template for the email, telephone, and face-to-face data collection needs.

Email and telephone contacts were made with 94 people during the project. Twelve responses were received. The large number of non-responses was a concern and therefore follow-up telephone contacts were made with a sample of

the non-respondents to inquire as to why they didn't respond. Overwhelmingly, there was an indication that people who didn't respond felt they lacked sufficient knowledge to substantively complete the interview. Interestingly, many named specific people whom they personally contact when searching for information regarding new residents. In most cases, these named people had already responded to the survey. This demonstrates that information and knowledge of these new populations is not widely or generally known but highly concentrated within a small number of people in the region. The narrative that follows includes responses from the small pool of respondents.

The greatest numbers of new people moving into the community were identified as people of Hispanic origin, mostly people from Mexico but also people from Central and South America, and African Americans, more recently East African people from Somalia. Hard numbers were difficult to attain but roughly 2,000 East Africans and around 4,000 people of Hispanic origin were reported as having moved into the region. It was mentioned that these numbers are complicated to calculate due to people not reporting their status.

Around the Willmar area, large numbers of these new residents were said to be living largely in two trailer courts (one on the North, the other on the East side) in the city, but fairly well dispersed and integrated throughout the community. Sometimes several families are living in one apartment or trailer home but it was noted that some have also bought their own homes since Spanish speaking loan lenders and real estate agents have become available. Around the Morris area, new comers were reported to be integrated throughout the community with some living outside city limits in "dormitory type" housing located on farm properties.

In Willmar, many New Minnesotans are employed at the Jenni-O turkey factory where starting wages are around \$8.00 per hour. Many have families living in other parts of the country or in their home country to whom they send money, in some cases up to 70% of their earned income. In Morris, it was reported that these new comers work very hard to get into an 18 month training program where they not only work but they express a strong desire to learn both the skills taught and the English language.

The reasons for their migration to the United States, more specifically to this region, are varied based on their country of origin. For instance, people of Hispanic origin are largely searching to work, acquire improved wages and living conditions and overall a better life than they had before but people from Somalia have migrated largely for safety reasons due to the civil unrest and insecurity in their native country of Somalia. Based on one respondent's conversations with Mexican Migrant Workers many come to work on the dairy farms because of family/friend/acquaintance referrals. It was noted that family seems to be very important in Mexican culture.

It was reported that many of these new comers have valid immigration papers such as temporary visas, trainee visas, or green cards but these numbers are tricky to measure due to the number of people who don't report their status.

Many services are being provided for these new residents such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in schools, Adult Basic Education classes, translation and interpretation services especially for schools and hospitals, and classes offered by community education. In Willmar, the West Central Integration Collaborative (WCIC) provides many services focused on promoting the development of multiculturalism and cultural sensitivity. It is centers also on the promotion of cultural integration in the education, health and business systems, for the betterment of the community. In Morris, some classes are offered by Community Education and the Morris Literacy Project was restarted in fall 2004. (<http://www.geocities.com/goodnewsmorris/literacyproject.html>) It was also indicated that all of these new residents know at least some English when they come and supposedly don't need outside education services.

Services such as educational, general outreach, and a general feeling of welcome from the community were all noted as being very beneficial to these new residents. It was also mentioned that these new populations would benefit from taking established programs to the next level, continuing to move forward with new projects and an overall consensus about not settling for what we have as "good enough" but embracing the idea that improvement is always needed. Although translation services are necessary, it was pointed out that outreach and informational meetings have proved to be very helpful to these new residents. Banking may be an area where new residents need services as sometimes workers have difficulty opening new accounts. It was also stated (in more than one instance) that community wide education is needed for BOTH existing members and new residents. It was desired that people understood that the low unemployment rate is a reason why these businesses are hiring international workers and since there are not enough people looking for jobs, new businesses are prevented from moving into the area. A clarification was also preferred to show why these new residents are needed in the community and how they help the economy but it was reported that many new residents do not notice any negative relations with the community. Many providers of these services (such as WCIC in Willmar) want to be supportive of all incoming people and not focus solely on one group.

3.iii Resource Organizations

During the course of the project, two organizations were identified by a large number of those whom with we were in contact; the West Central Integration Collaborative (WCIC) and the Christian Community Outreach Center (CCOC).

West Central Integration Collaborative (WCIC)

One of the primary organizations that assists new Minnesotans in the region is the West Central Integration Collaborative. Charly Leuze is the Cultural Liaison to the city of Willmar and the Executive Director of the WCIC. Charly has been with the WCIC since its inception four years ago. "The WCIC is a multicultural, multidisciplinary Collaborative that works within the sphere of education, health, and business. It focuses on promoting the development of multicultural and culturally sensitive school and community projects. It is centers also on the promotion of cultural integration in the education, health and business systems, for the betterment of the community. The collaborative serves the communities of Willmar; Atwater, Cosmos, Grove City; New London - Spicer and Maynard, Clara City and Raymond." (<http://www.wciconline.com>) The WCIC's programs focus primarily on promoting cultural awareness, competence, sensitivity, appreciation and integration within the school system but they also work with the business community and the community as a whole to advance the same ideals.

The WCIC is promoting joint activities with New London and Spicer. It is sometimes a challenge to get these other communities to realize the benefit of these programs because they do not yet have a significant minority population. The WCIC hopes to help these communities avoid the problems that Willmar had to face by allowing these communities to benefit from the first hand experience of Willmar. The WCIC wants to help prepare these communities so they will be ready when their populations do change.

One of the most visible programs of the WCIC is the Celebration of Cultures which is held every other year and is similar to the Festival of Nations. It allows everyone to see the different cultures that reside within Willmar. Almost all of the participants are from the Willmar area. Very few of the performers are exchange students or from out of town. Willmar has a group of traditional Hispanic dancers that are now being booked for events all over the area.

Willmar recently received the All American City Award and the West Central Integration Collaborative was one of the three programs the city chose to demonstrate the progress it has made. The other programs were the Ridgewater Health Care Simulation Center and the Child Guide Program.

Christian Community Outreach Center (CCOC)

Carlotta Eischens is the Director of the Christian Community Outreach Center in Olivia MN. In 1999 Carlotta was working with a service camp. She met Mr. Brown and they discussed the possibility of him donating a building to house a non-profit center for youth in the area. After receiving the building and approval to start a non-profit organization, renovations began on the building which was in horrible condition. CCOC received a three year grant from The Southwest MN Foundation. They currently have a partnership with the Master's Coffee Shop.

During the school year CCOC offers after school enrichment programs from 3:00 to 6:00pm. They provide tutoring, homework assistance, snacks and an evening meal to the kids as well as a safe place to hang out. All services are provided free of charge. On any given day there are 50-80 kids using the Center. During the summer the Center is open from 2:00 to 4:00pm. Tuesdays and Thursdays, the Center sponsors evening trips into the “bad” neighborhoods and plays baseball, soccer, or basketball with the kids. The Center tries to teach the kids Christian values as well as responsibility and accountability for their own actions. The Center encourages serving the community and organizes projects such as painting buildings, yard work, leaf/snow removal and other services that benefit the community.

During the summer the Center holds a Bible camp which costs \$15.00 per student. The Center offers scholarships for those who cannot afford this. It is a five day camp and the center provides transportation each day. At the end of the camp the Center provided free transportation to a farewell dinner to all the families of the students who attended the camp. This service is also free of charge. Approximately 140 students attended the Bible Camp this year.

Currently the Center has one paid staff member, Carlotta Eischens. The rest of the workers are volunteers. Carlotta and John Eischens run the adjoining Master’s Coffee Shop and the buildings share facilities. The Center has met some resistance from the community and city government. None of the eleven area churches have been willing to help fund the center.

Section 4: Findings

The Vitality of Latino Communities in Rural Minnesota report identified Education, Language, Cultural Tensions/Law Enforcement, and Latino Leadership as the top issues that are needed at both the community and policy level. The WCIC has addressed these issues and more in their Desegregation Plan for 2006-2009 which means that there is at least one organization in the region that is focused on the primary need areas regarding new residents.

--*do both undocumented and documented immigrants have to report their status or are the documented ones reported to the statistics?

--*

Opportunities

There are opportunities present with regard to new residents in this region. As mentioned earlier, the WCIC has created many programs that have been, are, and will continue to be integral with respect to promoting cultural integration, awareness, sensitivity and appreciation within the spheres of education, health and the business community in this region. The WCIC is not solely focused on

the City of Willmar. The organization realizes the value of using Willmar as a learning tool for the surrounding communities and therefore there are opportunities for these areas to begin to understand, prepare, and plan for a change in the diversity of their populations. The Celebration of Cultures Day is an event open to the public which will represent the many cultures of this region through demonstration, crafts, food and musical entertainment. This is one of the many opportunities for existing community members to enhance awareness of the rich cultures that exist in the region.

Challenges

As with the many opportunities, there are also challenges present throughout this process of integration and understanding.

One of the primary challenges surrounding new residents of this region is obtaining reliable information about the nature, number, location and needs of these new residents. Often times the existing data is incomplete because many people are not documented and therefore do not report their status. Obtaining complete and accurate information is one of the first steps in identifying the real needs of new residents in this region.

As mentioned earlier, it is often difficult to encourage communities without a significant minority population to proactively prepare, plan and seek guidance to help with the inevitable change in their population demographic. These communities haven't yet experienced the challenges associated with the increasing diversity of population and therefore find it difficult to plan for problems not yet faced. The WCIC has realized the validity of this logic and has thus started programs for these communities to proactively seek advice and planning strategies.

It is imperative to remember that if a community is going to gain in population, the demographic of the community is going to change. This presents another challenge of educating existing community members in cultural sensitivity and the benefits new people provide to a community as a whole.

A change in the racial/ethnic composition of a community has many benefits ranging from local economic growth to cultural richness. Different cultures add diversity in experience, thinking, and problem solving. More people working in the region adds value to the region's economy and opportunity for entrepreneurs to start new businesses such as ethnic grocery stores or small shops that can be seen on Main Streets of many towns in this area. A diverse community is attractive to new comers and tourists because they offer a variety of music, foods, languages, clothes, perspectives and ideas. More families in the region add millions of dollars in state revenue for the region's schools often times averting school consolidations and closures due to reduced enrollment (*Immigration Minnesota: Challenges and Opportunities* p.8). New residents have challenged the school systems to reevaluate curricula and rethink the function of

schools to efficiently benefit students equally. Also, by increasing minority populations, people are given the opportunity to modify or change long accepted ways of thinking and behaving that may be unfair or discriminatory.

Section 5: Next Steps

Two primary conclusions drawn from the interviews indicate that communities need to be 1) more proactive with regard to planning and anticipating diverse population growth, more willing to seek examples and advice from communities who have already experienced it and 2) willing to provide education to existing community members detailing the benefits these new populations offer to the community. Therefore, a logical next step would be to follow up on a conversation with the West Central Integration Collaborative (WCIC) to assist with the identification of programs that may be replicable for more communities in this region. WCIC has released their 2006-2009 Desegregation Plan which is helpful because it is a document that includes a comprehensive examination and analysis regarding the needs of new residents in this area.

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Appendix A: Resource Inventories

This is a separate publication and available upon request.

Appendix B: The New Minnesotans Project Interview Form

My name is XXXX and I work for the Center for Small Towns at the University of Minnesota, Morris. We have started a project to identify the new ethnic groups in West Central Minnesota. Our goal is to find ways to support the needs of these groups. We are currently completing an inventory of people who have moved to our region and what type of services they need to help them feel like they have a home here. Please answer the following questions *to the best of your ability*. Feel free to add any information that you feel is important or interesting. This information will be kept **completely confidential** and only aggregate responses will be reported.

1. How many culturally diverse people have moved into the community? Where are they from, and what ethnicity and/or culture do they represent?
2. How long have they lived in the community? Do they live in a particular section of town (or in the country) or are they fairly well dispersed throughout the community?
3. In what type of housing do they live? Approximately how many people reside in each household and/or family structure (single, married, extended family)?
4. What types of jobs do they hold? Do they remit/send any money to family members outside of the region? If so, how much?
5. What is the reason for their migration to the United States/Minnesota? (Are they refugees, migrant workers, immigrants, students, etc.?)
6. What is their legal status? (temporary visa, citizen, permanent resident, illegal, nonimmigrant visa, etc.)
7. As far as you know, what services (such as Adult Basic Education ABE, English as a Second Language ESL classes, translators, etc.) are provided for these new residents?
8. Do you know which services these people would benefit from? (For example, translation services, educational opportunities, transportation options, specialized food options, etc.)
9. Do you have any other information that may be helpful to us?

10. Do you know of anyone who may have more information about your community or a different community? If so, please provide contact information so we may get in touch with them.

Thank you for your time and assistance. Please return this via email, fax, or mail within the next week. If you have any questions or comments feel free to contact Kate Raymond at the Center for Small Towns. My office hours are Monday – Friday, 8:00am-12:30pm. Email: raym0073@morris.umn.edu
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