

Executive summary

Advancing social equity and reducing disparities in the Greater St. Cloud, Minnesota, region requires a common understanding among organizations, community leaders, and residents of the disparities that exist. Equipped with credible data, communities are better equipped to identify and evaluate strategies, policies, and programs to address disparities.

- This dashboard brings together data on disparities and inequities that exist in the Greater St. Cloud region. Minnesota Compass, a project of Wilder Research, developed this dashboard report with support from the Morgan Family Foundation.
- To develop this dashboard, Minnesota Compass staff conducted listening sessions with St. Cloud area residents in fall 2020 to learn about the information and data residents wanted to see in the dashboard, including ideas for solutions in the Greater St. Cloud area. Following the listening sessions, an advisory committee guided Minnesota Compass staff on the development of the dashboard, including its structure, content, and framework. By and large, data were assembled from existing data sources, supplemented with individual stories from discussion groups and interviews with diverse communities.
- Notable findings are outlined in the summary on the next page. The findings highlight the ways that the fastest growing segments of Greater St. Cloud's population – Black and African American residents and foreign-born residents – also face some of the worst quality of life outcomes in the region.

Notable findings

Greater St. Cloud's population is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse.

- ✓ Greater St. Cloud's total population has grown by 7% since 2010, while its population of color has nearly doubled.
- ✓ Today, about one in four residents of Greater St. Cloud identify as a person of color, Hispanic, or Latino.
- ✓ Some of Greater St. Cloud's communities of color have more than doubled in the last ten years, including its Black and African American community and its population of two or more races

In Greater St. Cloud, as in other communities throughout the state, the burden of poverty is disproportionately shouldered by residents of color and foreign-born residents.

- ✓ Greater St. Cloud's poverty rate is similar to the statewide rate: 11% and 10%, respectively.
- ✓ At 72%, Somali residents shoulder one of the highest poverty rates of any demographic group in the Greater St. Cloud area.
- ✓ Residents of color have poverty rates that are two to five times higher than the regional rate. The difference is pronounced for American Indian and Black communities, in particular, with poverty rates of 61% and 47%, respectively.
- ✓ The poverty rate among Greater St. Cloud's foreign-born residents is 38%, more than three times higher than the regional rate and more than four times higher than the rate among native-born residents.

Greater St. Cloud is home to lagging educational outcomes compared to the state, and notable disparities for Black, foreign-born, and lower-income residents.

- ✓ 75% of Greater St. Cloud area students graduate from high school in four years, well below Minnesota's overall graduation rate of 84%.
- ✓ About half of Black students and students of two or more races graduate from high school in four years.
- ✓ Just over half – 59% – of students who receive free and reduced lunch graduate in four years.
- ✓ 31% of Greater St. Cloud residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, 5 percentage points lower than the statewide rate at 36%.
- ✓ Levels of educational attainment are much lower among Black and African American residents (14% with a bachelor's degree or higher) and foreign-born residents (18%).

Although the Greater St. Cloud area has higher-than-average levels of employment, there are notable employment disparities for many communities of color, foreign-born residents, and numerous cultural communities.

- ✓ Eighty-one percent of Greater St. Cloud residents are working, higher than the statewide estimate of 79%.
 - ✓ Levels of employment are lower than the statewide estimate among:
 - American Indian and Alaska Native residents
 - Black or African American residents
 - Hispanic or Latino residents
 - American Indian, African American, Mexican, and Somali cultural community members
 - Foreign-born residents
 - Residents with at least one disability
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The number of lower-income residents in the Greater St. Cloud area living in cost-burdened households is severe.

- ✓ Cost-burdened households are those that pay too much – more than a third of their income – for housing.
 - ✓ Two-thirds of White low-income residents and three-quarters of low-income residents of color are housing cost-burdened.
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Homeownership disparities in the Greater St. Cloud area are also stark.

- ✓ Greater St. Cloud residents of color are far less likely than White residents to own homes. While three-quarters of White residents own homes, just over one-quarter of residents of color own homes.
 - ✓ Just 11% of Black residents own homes in the Greater St. Cloud area compared with 25% of Black residents in Minnesota overall.
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