

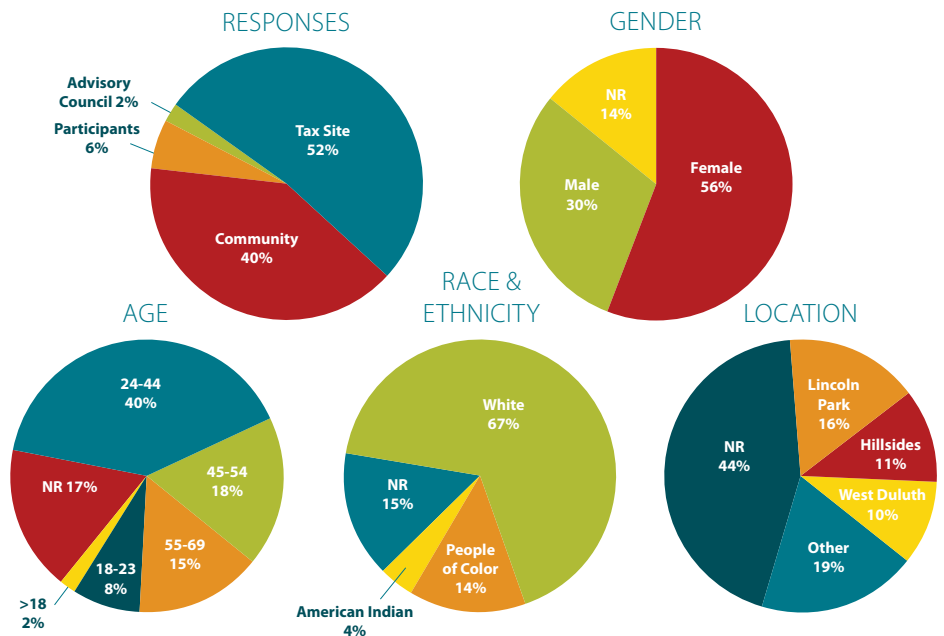


# 2017 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

## SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

777  
Respondents

*A comprehensive report that analyzes data from a wide variety of sources regarding the major issue areas, can be found at: [www.communityactionduluth.org](http://www.communityactionduluth.org).*



## PROCESS + PLANS

In 2016–2017, Community Action Duluth completed a comprehensive community assessment of the most pressing concerns affecting our neighbors experiencing poverty. The assessment is part of a federal mandate, intended for Community Action Agencies around the nation, to assess and subsequently respond to the unique needs of the area they serve.

The survey used in the assessment process included 13 major issues of concern. CAD collected 777 surveys from program participants, tax site customers and the community at-large. Additional data from numerous sources is included in the full report version of the community assessment. This information solely reflects the data gathered from the survey.

The results highlight the need for our community to provide livable wage jobs, which affects nearly every aspect of well-being. It is also strikingly clear, that our community needs to support and expand efforts to embrace diversity—through public policy and education, in institutions and employment, as well as through cultural and social efforts.

CAD intends to shape the future priorities, strategic plans and partnerships on the results of the assessment which can be found at: [www.communityactionduluth.org](http://www.communityactionduluth.org).



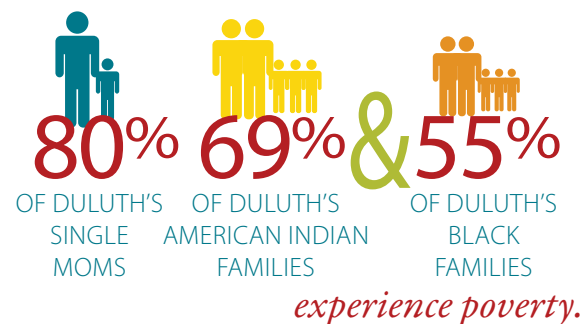
## POVERTY RATES IN DULUTH

*in the past two decades ...*

While the percentage of the American Indian population in Duluth has slightly decreased in the last 20 years, their poverty rate has increased by 20%. The black population has nearly doubled, and poverty rates increased by 15% in the same timeframe.

**20%** of Duluthians experience poverty

40% live at or below 200% of poverty, which in 2016 for a family of 3 is less than \$40,180.



# MAJOR ISSUE AREAS

The percentages listed on the following three pages refer to the percent of respondents that indicated the issue area as a problem for them or their families.

## 66% LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

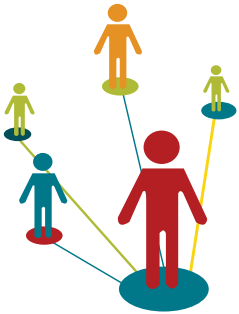
*\*Participants were asked if they had access to leadership development opportunities.*

### MAJOR THEME:

I don't have access to leadership development opportunities, but want to engage.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Identify partners, formalize training for people to be on boards and commissions, and match participants with mentors and a board placement once complete.



## 42% MONEY + JOBS

### *Who's unemployed in Duluth?*

28%  
OF DULUTH'S  
BLACK  
FAMILIES

20%  
OF DULUTH'S  
AMERICAN  
INDIAN FAMILIES

19%  
OF DULUTH'S  
MULTI-ETHNIC  
FAMILIES

6%  
OF DULUTH'S  
WHITE  
FAMILIES

### STATISTICS:

Data demonstrates a 200%+ gap in income between racially diverse households and white households.

### MAJOR THEME:

Lack of livable wage jobs/a living wage.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Career pathways programs, coupled with incentivized savings and credit building programs.

## 41% FOOD ACCESS

### *Food insecurity rates*

### STATISTICS:

Food insecurity rates are higher in St. Louis County, than the state of MN.

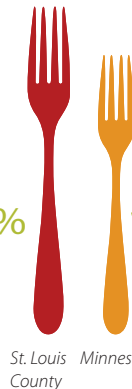
### MAJOR THEME:

Inability to afford healthy food.  
Transportation access to healthy food.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Expand access for EBT food support match programs.  
Establish neighborhood grocery stores.  
Offer Ruby's Pantry in Lincoln Park.

12% 10%



St. Louis County Minnesota

## 26% TRANSPORTATION

### STATISTICS:

Transportation costs, across Duluth, are unaffordable for renters. The largest determining factor in your car insurance rates is your zip code. Driver's licenses are often a requirement on applications, even if not a requirement for the job.

### MAJOR THEME:

Inability to afford a vehicle.  
Lack of driver's license.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Address gaps in car repair funds.  
Public transit for third shift workers.  
Supportive programming for adults to get driver's licenses & training.  
Increase economic security with employment & financial coaching.  
Eliminate driver's license requirements on job applications, when possible.

30%

of Duluth households do not have access to a vehicle.



## 25% TECHNOLOGY

### STATISTICS:

The use of smartphones has drastically decreased the technological divide, but families with low incomes face significant barriers due to lack of computer access.

### MAJOR THEME:

Inability to get ahead in work and school due to lack of computer access.\*

*\*Without a computer/home internet access, folks face significant barriers completing applications, academic assignments, learning necessary computer skills, printing, etc.*

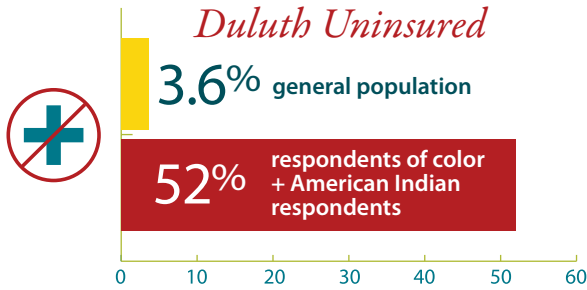
### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Expand digital literacy courses.  
Integrate technological experiences for youth.  
Create drop-in/study center in Lincoln Park to provide technology access.



85% of respondents of color, American Indian respondents and Lincoln Park residents do not have access to a computer.

# 24% HEALTH



## STATISTICS:

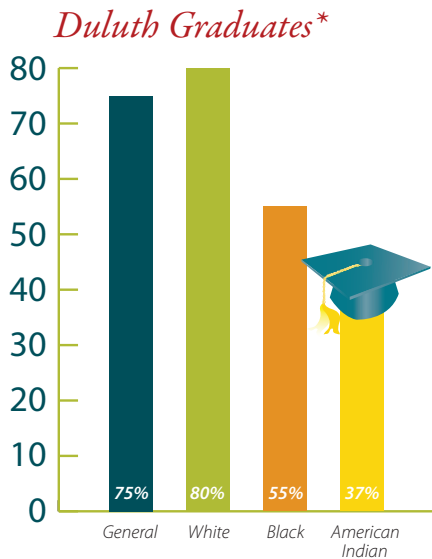
30%+ of health-related expenses for adults of color and American Indian adults can be attributed to health inequity. The social determinants of health are not only the largest contributing factor to an individual's health, comprising 60%, but the only factor that can be changed through coordinated partnerships between healthcare + social services.

## MAJOR THEME:

Stress and the inability to afford insurance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

Support the Community Health Worker movement  
Find innovative ways to ensure families with low incomes, families of color and American Indian families receive quality health care.  
Prioritize outreach efforts for MNSure to communities of color and American Indian communities.  
Prioritize efforts to ensure dental care, as it's currently the largest service gap.



## STATISTICS:

On average, the cost of college, increases 6x faster than inflation.

## MAJOR THEME:

Inability to afford tuition and pass admissions tests.  
Inability to balance work, family and school.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

Partner with ISD 709 to assist non-graduating students, especially students of color and American Indian students, with education/employment/financial coaches, particularly with CAD's GED programming and college/career-track programming.  
Find innovative ways to provide social support for families seeking higher education.  
Provide specialized training programs to assist with passing admission tests.

*\*A report released in 2016 by ISD 709, indicates that on average, an additional 4% of students graduate after 5-6 years. It is unclear what percentage of those graduating, are students of color or American Indian students.*

# 24% HIGHER EDUCATION

# 20% HOUSING



## STATISTICS:

No market rate rental is affordable for a full-time, minimum wage worker—not even a studio apartment. 37% of Duluth's households are cost-burdened (50% of Lincoln Park and Central Hillside).

## MAJOR THEME:

The cost of rent is too high, especially compared to income.  
Lack of access to housing, especially affordable housing.  
Large housing barriers for nearly 100% of respondents of color and American Indian respondents.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

Provide a housing advocate at Community Action, with a focus on navigating systems and ensuring equity.  
Support and expand homeownership programs for community members of color and American Indian community members.



**450** families are currently homeless in Duluth.

*What do you need to be successful? "A meaningful job, with a living wage."*

*It's a never-ending cycle of trying to get off of assistance, but never earning enough.*

# 18% PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

FAMILIES RECEIVING  
CASH ASSISTANCE  
HAVE NOT SEEN AN  
INCREASE IN BENEFIT  
SINCE THE 1980'S.

#### MAJOR THEME:

Families do not make enough to get by, but make too much for assistance.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue advocacy work for increases in MFIP amount.  
Create a gap fund for families transitioning off of public assistance.

# 10% CHILDREN, YOUTH + CHILDCARE



*Extracurricular activities are unaffordable and inaccessible.*

#### STATISTICS:

Out of home placement rates in St. Louis County are nearly 2.5x more than for the state of MN, with a striking difference for children of color and American Indian children.  
50% of respondents of color and American Indian respondents fear their children are subject to discrimination + racism in school.

#### MAJOR THEME:

Cost of activities has a disparate impact on children of color and American Indian children.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Additional advocacy for cultural understanding and inclusion.  
Support for existing approaches and a coordinated community response to the extraordinary out-of-home placement crisis in Duluth.  
Increase accessible, positive activities for youth; expand 2-generational approaches.

# 9% RACISM + DISCRIMINATION

#### STATISTICS:

20% of Duluth lives in poverty.  
69% of American Indian families.  
55% of black families.

#### MAJOR THEME:

Families of color and American Indian families face significant barriers to success in Duluth.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recruit, train and retain racially diverse workforces, especially in social services.  
Share best-practices community-wide.



**52%** of respondents  
indicated discrimination  
with systems as a major  
barrier

*The root cause of nearly every issue presented, can be solved through a livable wage + cultural inclusion.*

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Special thanks to the community members, participants and customers who took the time to complete the community assessment survey, responding honestly, openly and with care. Everything we do, is intended for you, and you are our greatest guides through this work. Thank you for your support and participation.

To our community partners who shared the assessment with those you serve and community members most impacted; and to those whose data and research provided parallel correlations and support for our assessment. Thank you for your work.

To the National Association for State Community Services Programs, for providing technical and training assistance.

**Sources Cited:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2017; Bridge to Health Survey, 2015; Center for Disease Prevention, 2016; City of Duluth, Housing Indicators Report, 2015; City of Duluth, Imagine Duluth 2035 Plan; Community Action Duluth, Community Assessment Executive Summary, 2013; Community Action Duluth, Strategic Plan 2015–2018; Community Action Duluth, Website; Consumer Reports, 2016; Department of Employment and Economic Development, 2014–2016; Department of Health and Human Services, ASPE Research Brief, 2017; Decennial Census, American Community Survey - 5 Year Estimates, 2015; Duluth Budgeteer, A License Out of Poverty, Representative Jen Schultz, 2016; Duluth News Tribune, High School Graduation Rates, 2017; Economic Policy Institute, 2015; Feeding America, 2014; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2017; Minnesota Department of Education, 2017; Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services, 2014; Minnesota Homeless Coalition, 2017; Office of Disease Prevention, 2016; Saint Louis County Child Care Assistance Staff, 2017; Saint Louis County Coordinated Housing, Kate Bradley, 2017; Saint Louis County Health and Human Services Demand Phase I Report, 2016; Saint Louis County Initial Intervention Unit, David Vukelich, 2016; Science Daily; The University of Miami, 2016; United States Census Data 2010 (American Community Survey, Compass, 2015); United States Department of Agriculture, Healthy Food Access Report, 2010