



Swift County: *Community Responses & Recommendations*

Compiled by the Center for Small Towns in
collaboration with the Swift County
Government's Diversity & Integration Task Force

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An Introduction to the Work

Research students Marcy Prince and Jayce Koester were hired through the Center for Small Towns at the University of Minnesota, Morris. Together with a task force assembled by Jacquie Larson they set out to help the Swift County government improve and update the strategic plan. By spending time learning about best practices, talking to community members, traveling throughout the county, and working with the Center for Small Towns team they created a list of observations, themes, and recommendations. Marcy and Jayce tried to maintain a continued focus on both welcomingness and inclusivity of communities (particularly to newcomers) as well as the resources and services Swift County can and does provide.

What follows in this report is an overview of the research as well as specific recommendations for the county government to take as the strategic plan is designed and implemented. There are recommendations for both shorter and long term work along with a detailed conversation about some of the trends and themes that came up throughout the research team's time in Swift County.

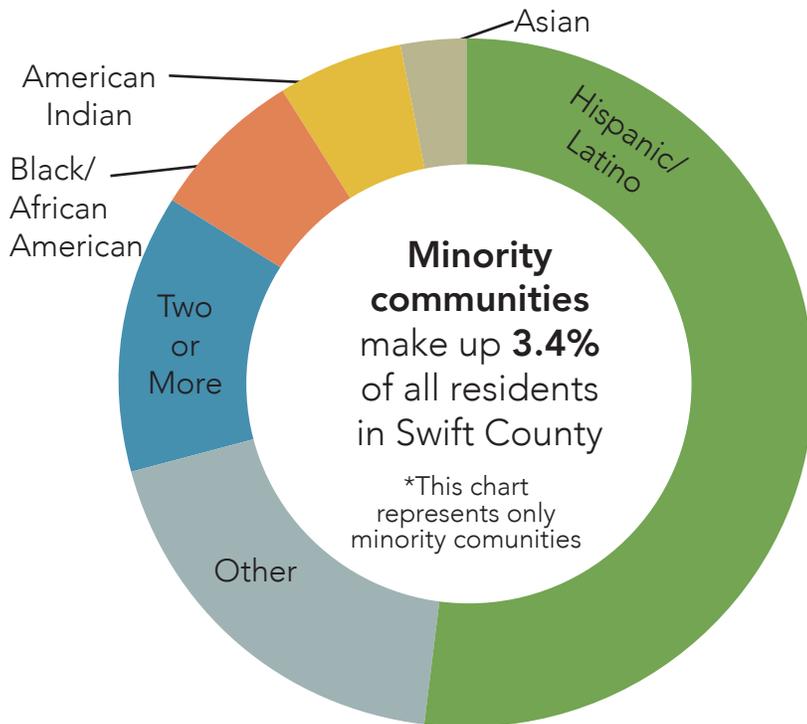
It is noted that this work is not complete, and that these recommendations come from a little under three months in the researching, reading, and writing. Included is a list of recommendations for future student work, and those projects can be important supplements and a continuation of the work started by the research team this summer.

UMM professor Dr. Cristina Ortiz worked closely with the research team to provide skills, research tools, structure, and attended meetings with the group. Without her help and expertise the research could not have taken place, and certainly not at the same quality.



Swift County Demographics

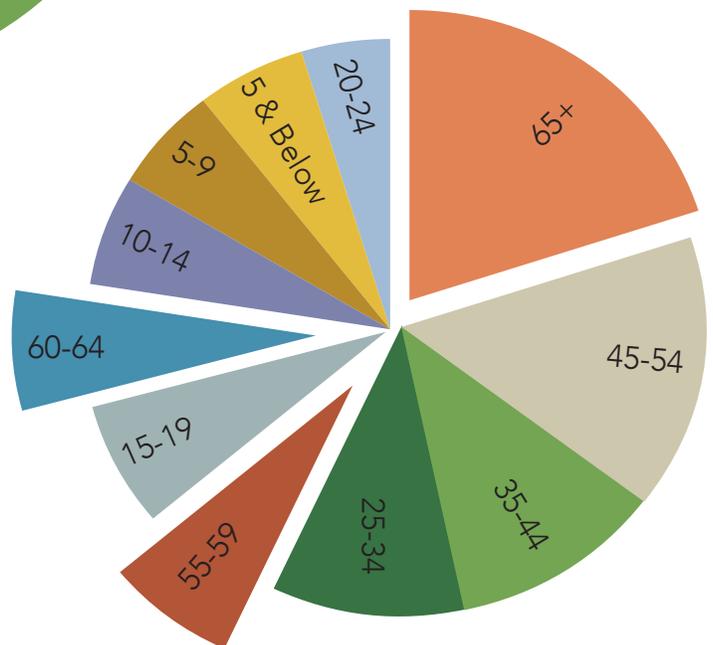
These demographic measurements cover the entirety of Swift County and were gathered by the US Census Bureau in 2010. While population is still shifting and the data is likely different now than it was then, this provides a solid foundation to understanding the makeup of Swift County.



The **racial composition** of communities, especially communities with rapidly changing populations, is important. In Swift County there is a significant Latino and Hispanic population, as well as a very significant community of people identifying outside of the provided choices. Due to immigration patterns and the changing face of rural Minnesota, it's becoming more and more important to pay attention to minority populations.

*The total population of Swift County is 9,505

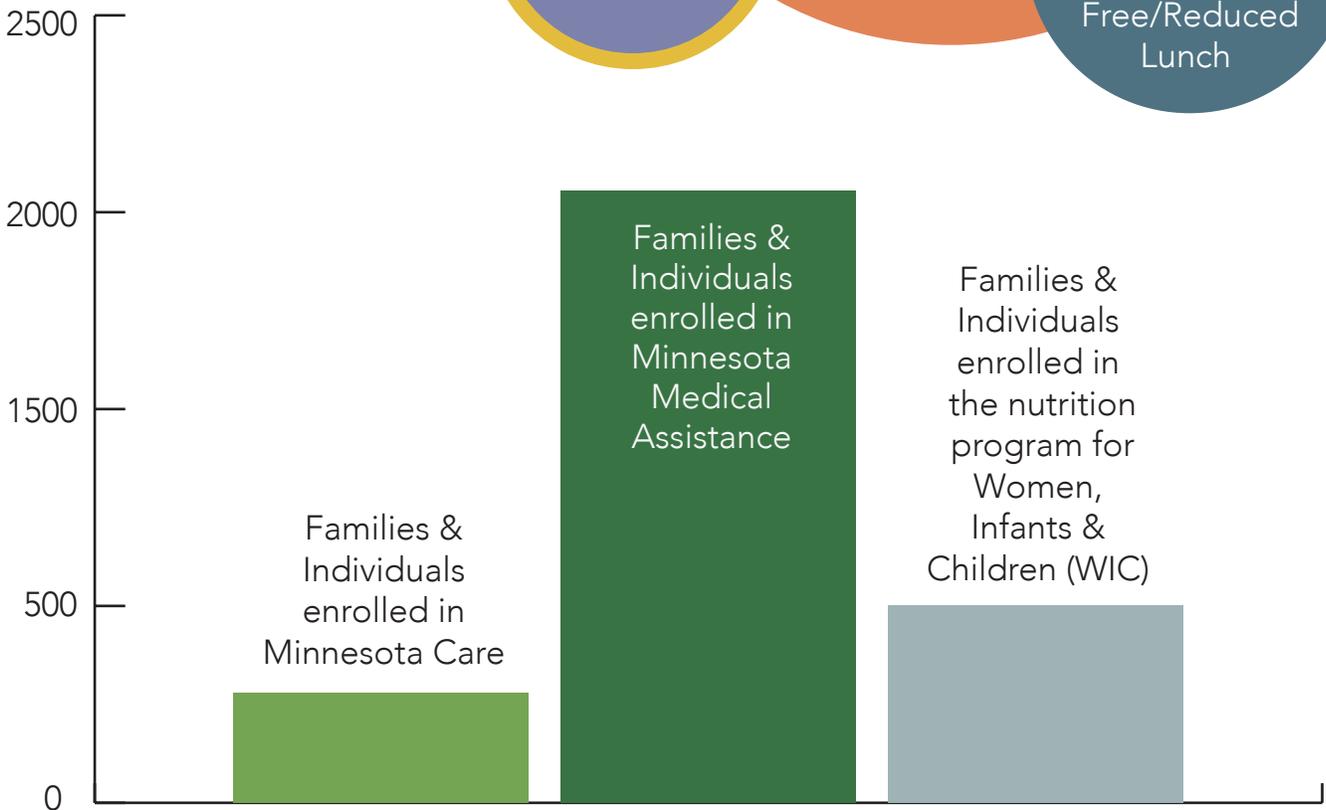
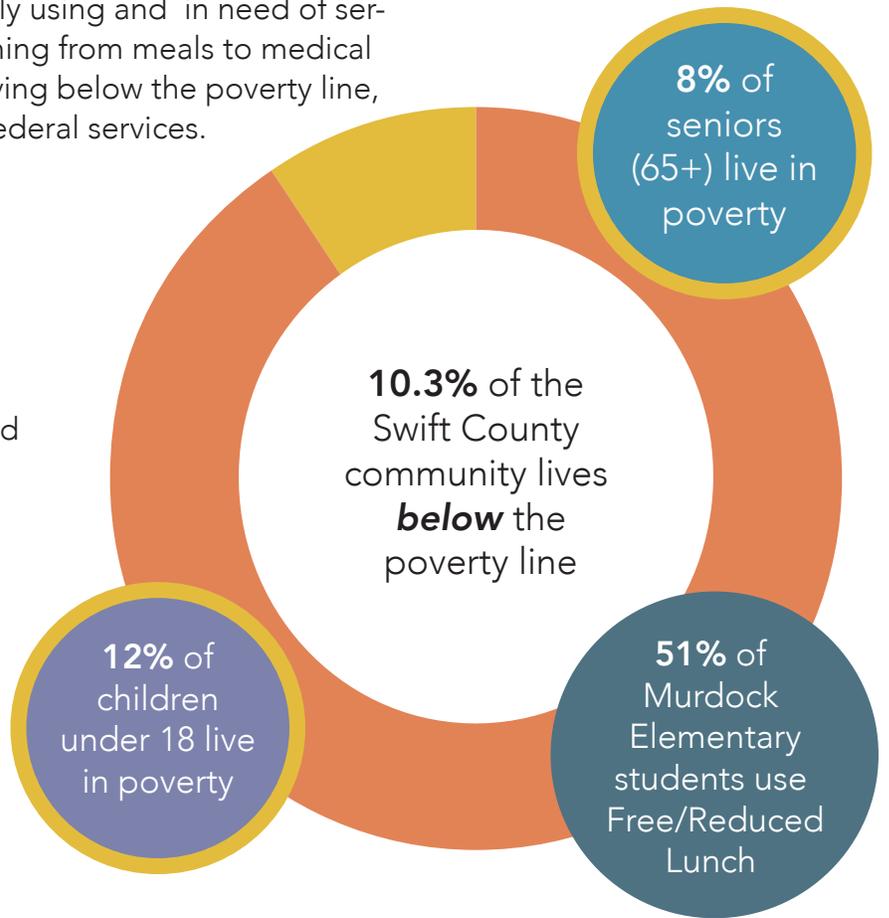
The **age breakdown** of Swift County is also in flux, with a large aging community. Residents in the area aged 55 and above make up 33.6% of the population, meaning communities need to be accessible and easy to navigate. Accommodating a large aging population includes adequate medical services to assisted living opportunities and recreational activities.



Throughout this booklet there will be statistics exploring the demographics of Swift County as a whole, as well as individual communities throughout the county. Some data will be more up to date, and some less so. Ultimately this booklet walks you through trends and areas of interest in your community so you can work together to gather new data and explore the trends that are already clear.

Residents in Swift County are actively using and in need of service programs assisting with everything from meals to medical assistance. 10.3% of the county is living below the poverty line, with even more utilizing state and federal services.

Minnesota Care and Minnesota Medical Assistance are both programs through the Minnesota Department of human services that provide medical assistance for low income, elderly, and differently abled people throughout the state. In the coming years, there will also be information related to enrollment in the Affordable Care Act, which will also be valuable information in understanding the service needs in Swift County.

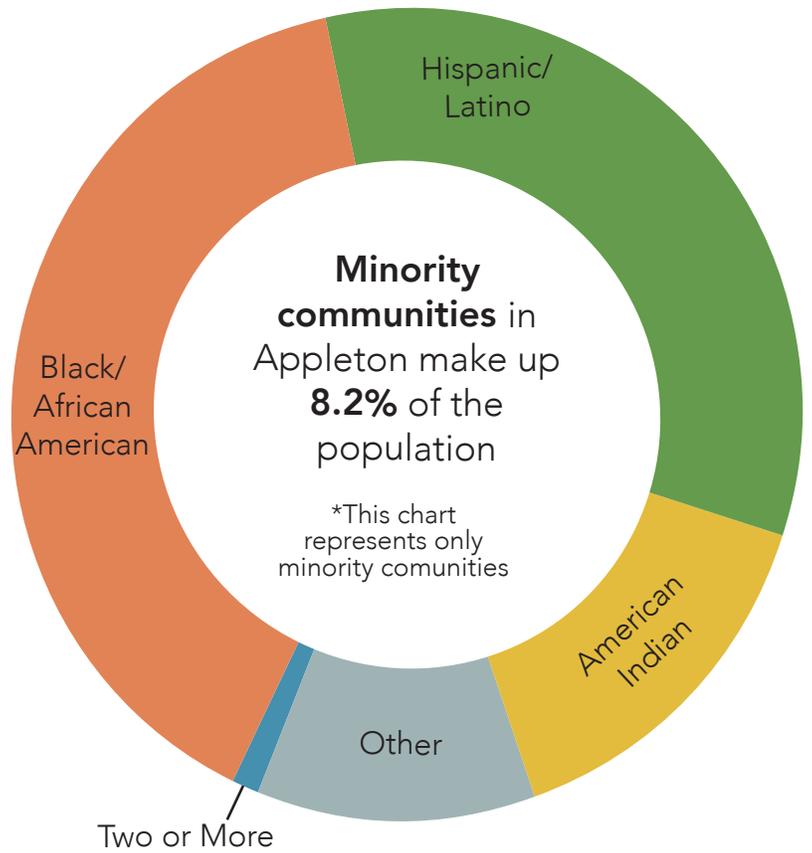


The above chart depicts the population of Swift County utilizing Minnesota Care, Minnesota Medical Assistance, and the WIC program. These numbers include families enrolled, individuals without children, and the elderly population of Swift County.

Appleton Demographics

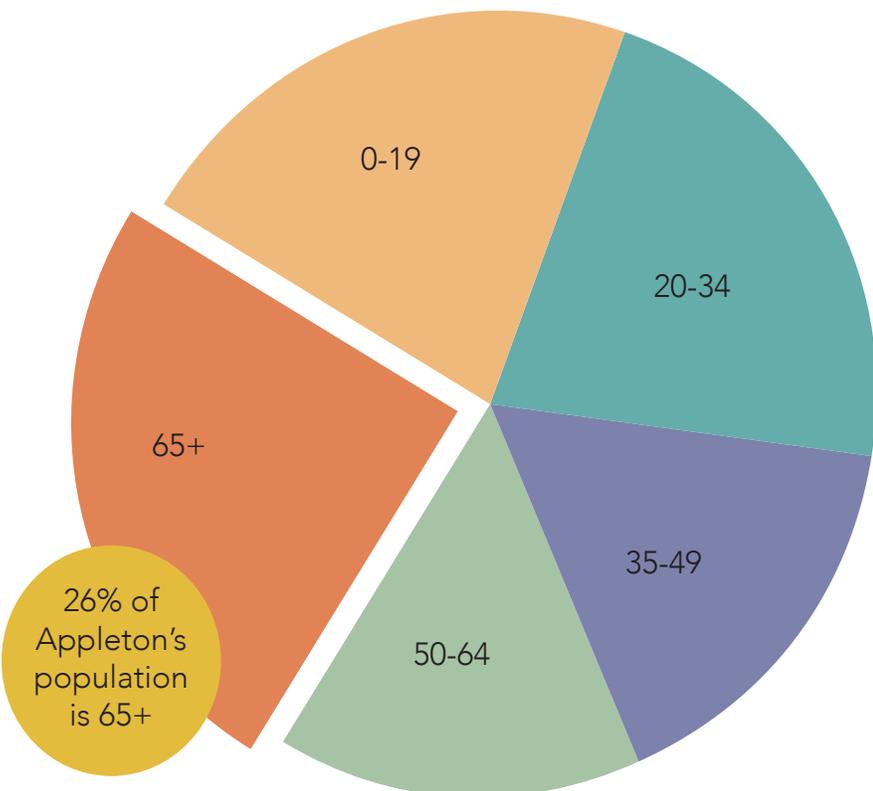
Out of **847** housing units, Appleton has **196** vacant units

There are **441** owner occupied units v. **209** renter occupied



89.4% of Appleton residents have graduated high school

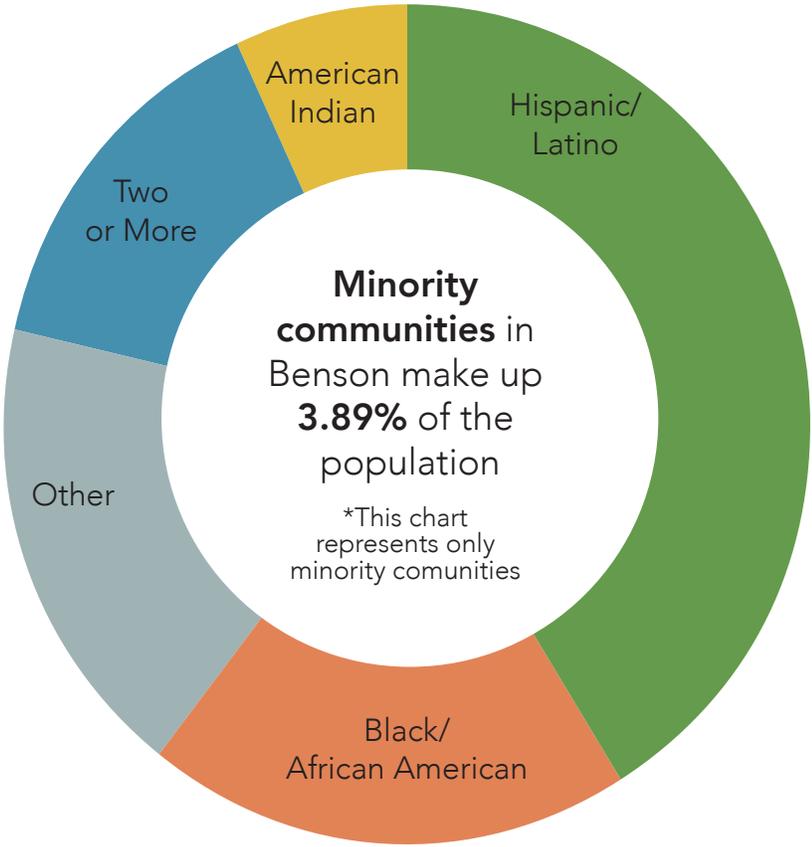
35.4% of Appleton achieved a higher education degree



26% of Appleton's population is 65+

* The total population of Appleton is (as of 2014) 1337

Benson Demographics

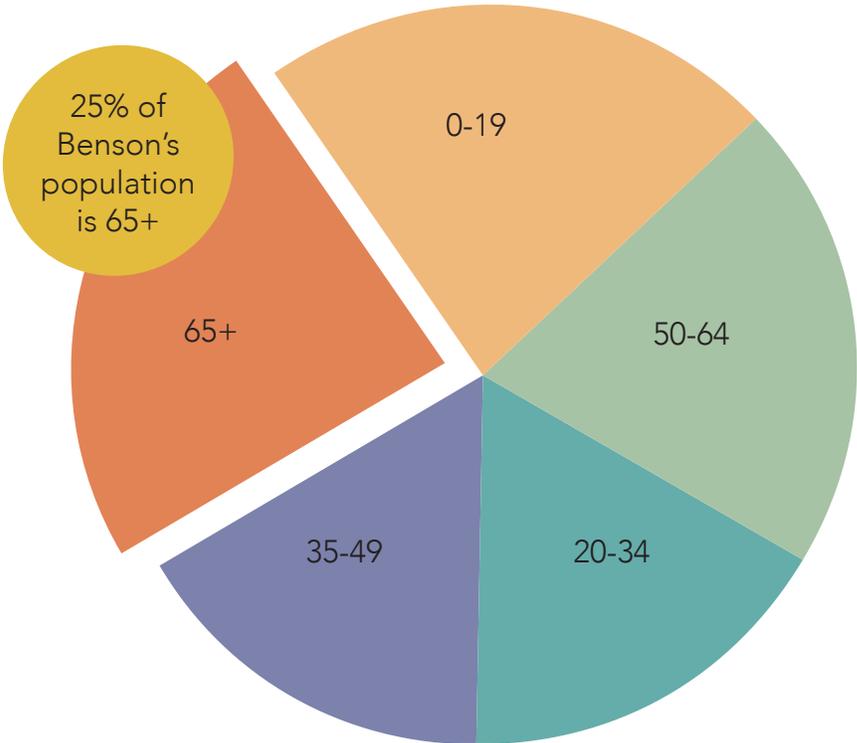


Out of **1,602** housing units, Benson has **177** vacant units

There are **964** owner occupied units v. **461** renter occupied

86.7% of Benson residents have graduated high school

41.4% of Benson has achieved a higher education degree

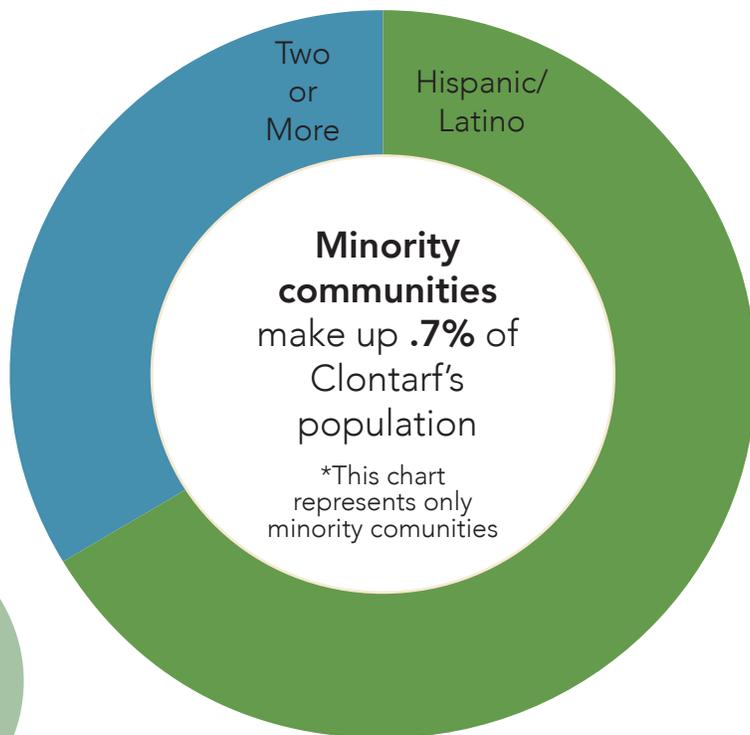


*The total population of Benson (as of 2014) is 3,111

Clontarf Demographics

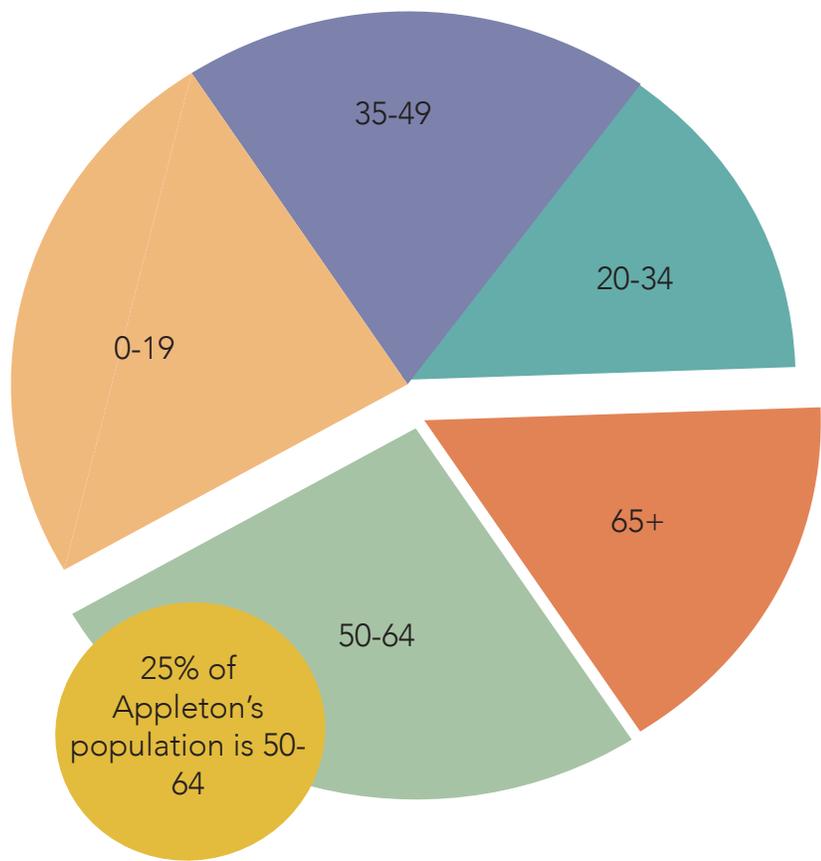
Out of **69** housing units, Clontarf has **4** vacant units

There are **58** owner occupied units v. **7** renter occupied



92.5% of Clontarf residents have graduated high school

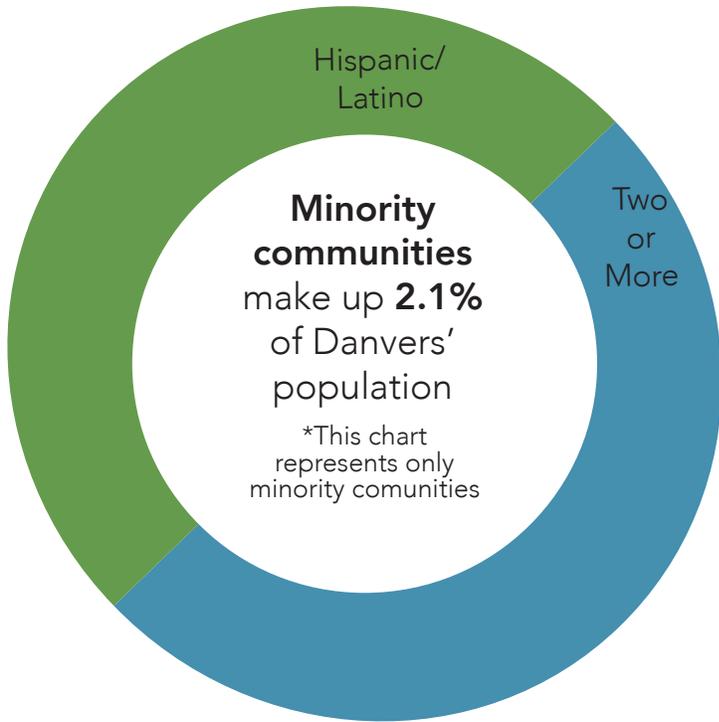
32% of Clontarf achieved a higher education degree



25% of Appleton's population is 50-64

* The total population of Clontarf (as of 2014) is 164

Danvers Demographics

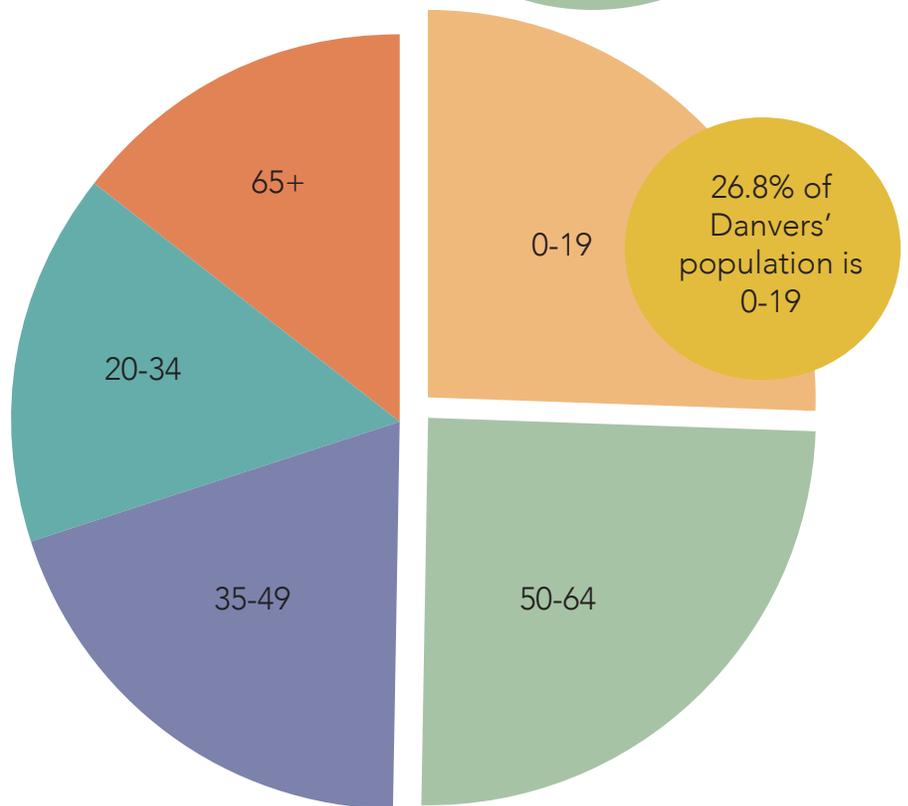


Out of **45** housing units, Danvers has **4** vacant units

There are **36** owner occupied units v. **4** renter occupied

93.8% of Danvers residents have graduated high school

33.4% of Danvers achieved a higher education degree

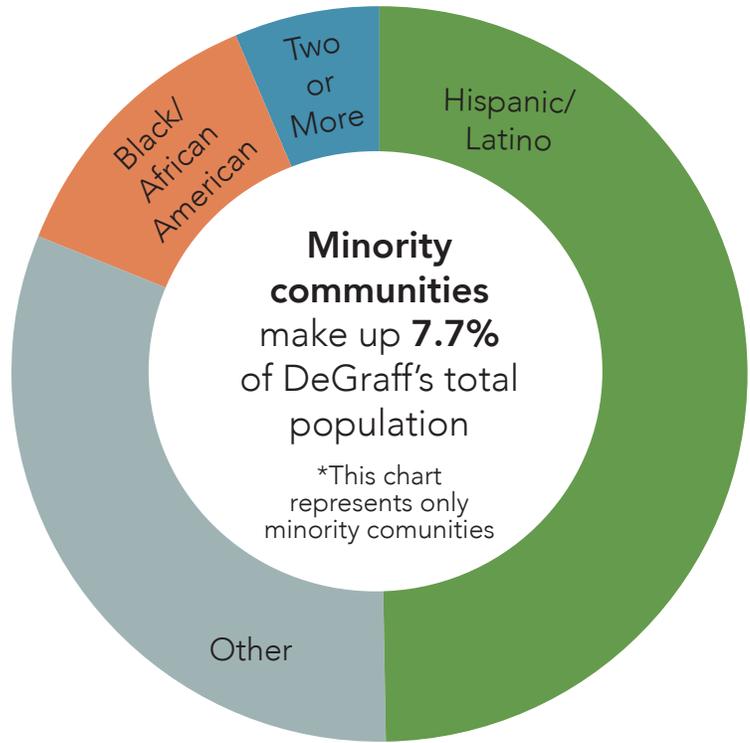


* The total population of Danvers (as of 2014) is 97

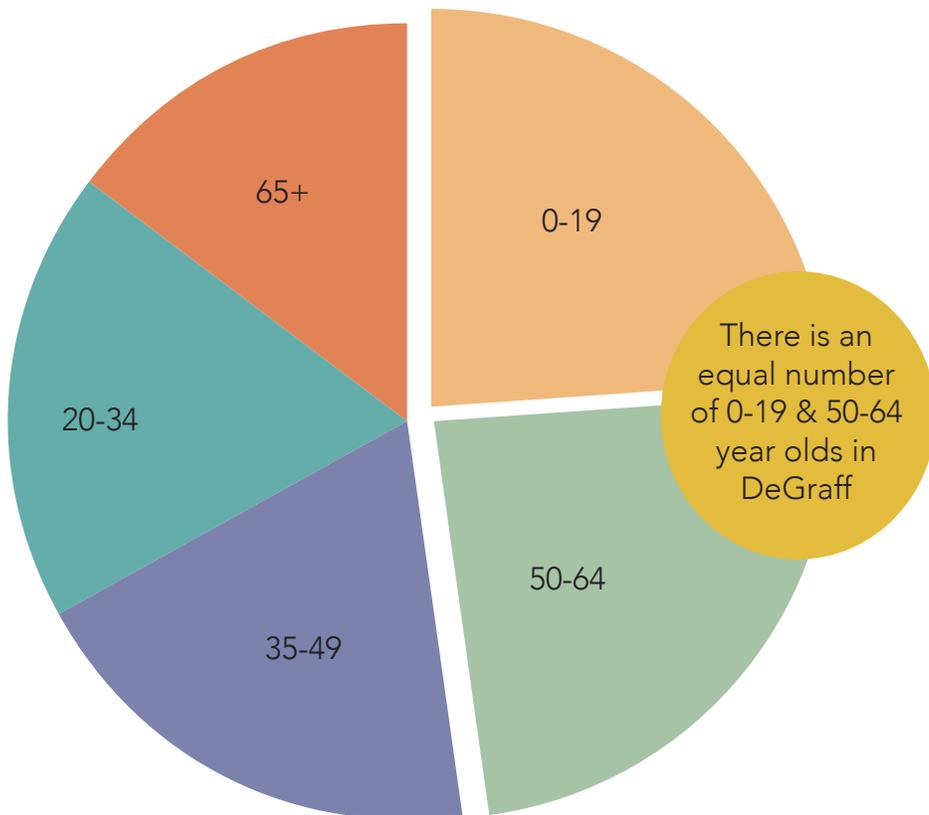
DeGraff Demographics

Out of **67** housing units, DeGraff has **18** vacant units

There are **41** owner occupied units v. **7** renter occupied



92.3% of DeGraff residents have graduated high school



42.3% of DeGraff achieved a higher education degree

* The total population of DeGraff is (as of 2014) 105

Holloway Demographics

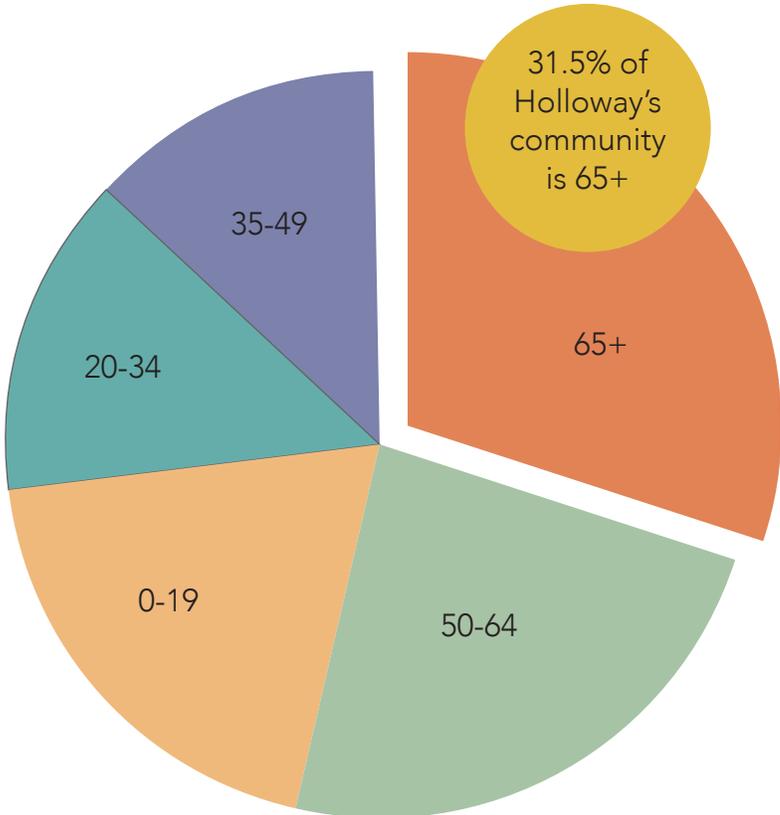


Out of **57** housing units, Holloway has **6** vacant units

There are **34** owner occupied units v. **17** renter occupied

88.3% of Holloway residents have graduated high school

31.4% of Holloway achieved a higher education degree

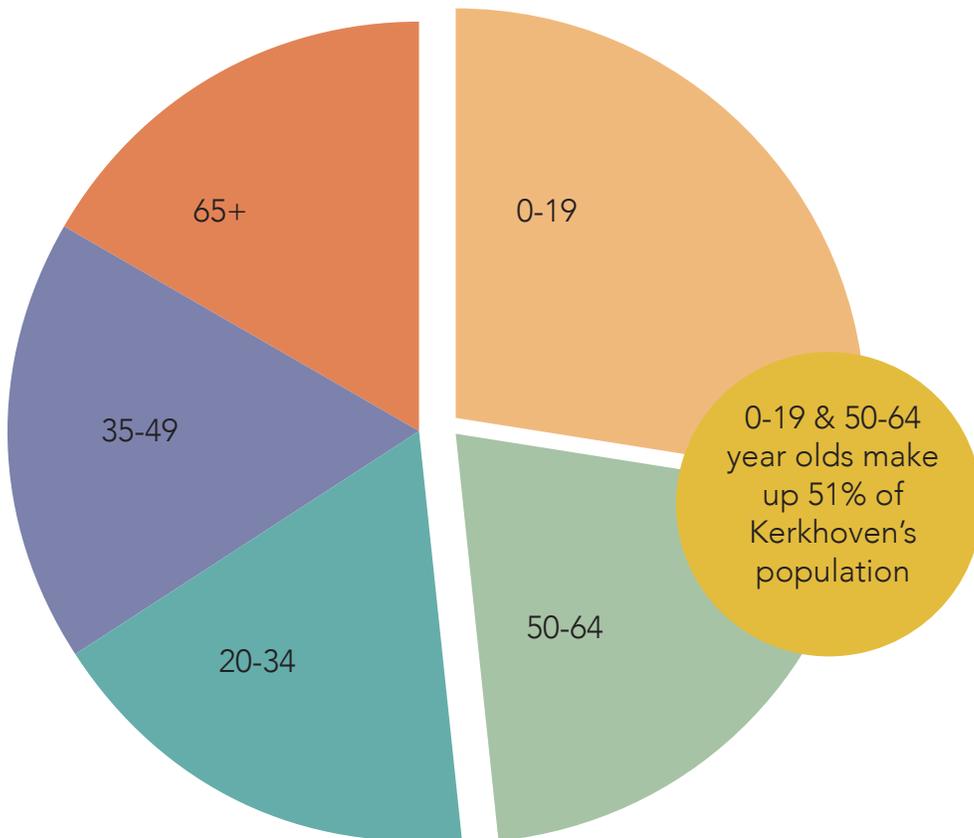
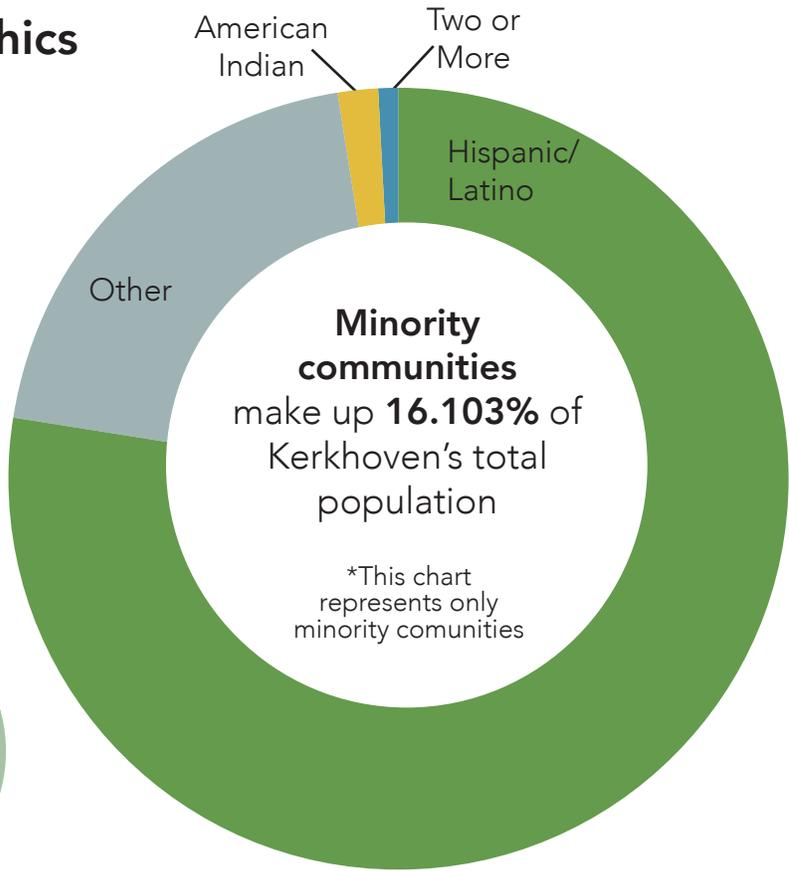


*The total population of Holloway (as of 2014) is 93

Kerkhoven Demographics

Out of **352** housing units, Kerkhoven has **25** vacant units

There are **240** owner occupied units v. **87** renter occupied

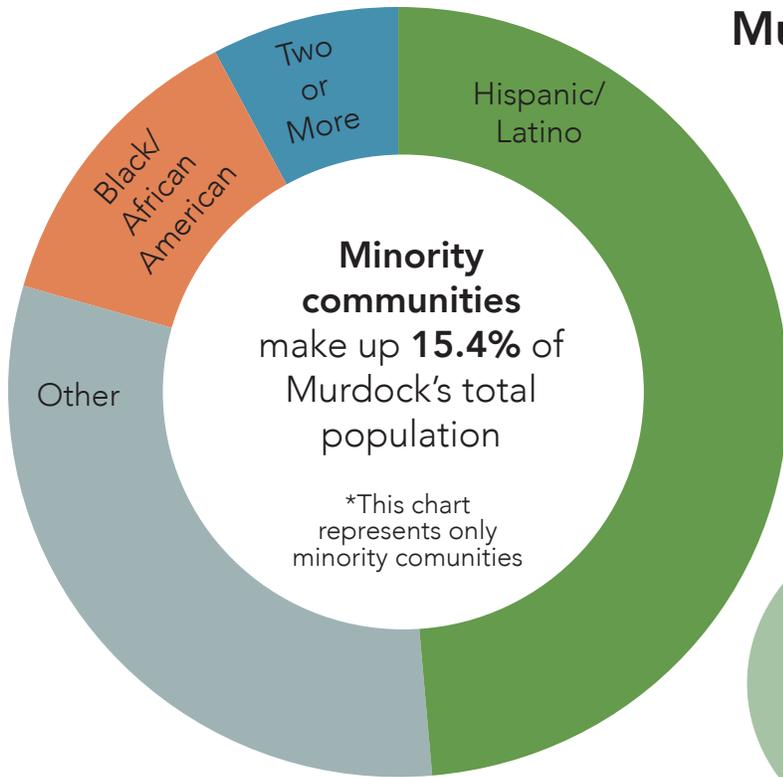


91.9% of Kerkhoven residents have graduated high school

29.9% of Kerkhoven achieved a higher education degree

*The population of Kerkhoven (as of 2014) is 745

Murdock Demographics

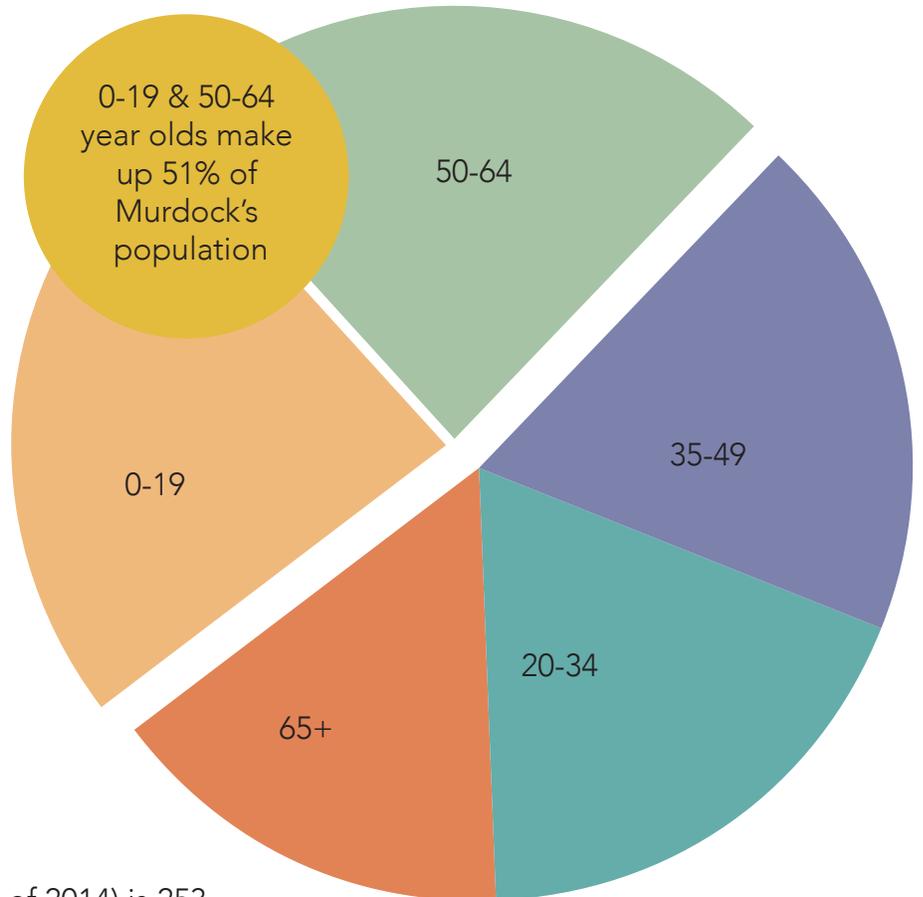


Out of **131** housing units, Murdock has **23** vacant units

There are **91** owner occupied units v. **16** renter occupied

92.8% of Murdock residents have graduated high school

43.2% of Murdock achieved a higher education degree



* The population of Murdock (as of 2014) is 253

Methodology

The team began researching best practices for diversity and integration programs in other communities, as well as best practices for maintaining and creating a sustainable small towns community. Our recommended reading list can be found in the appendices of this report. After gaining background knowledge, the team felt more equipped to do accurate and community-oriented research.

Marcy and Jayce then took a full day and travelled around the Swift County area visiting:

- Appleton
- Benson
- Clontarf
- Danvers
- DeGraff
- Holloway
- Kerkhoven
- Milan
- Murdock
- Swift Falls



St. Bridgett's Catholic Church in DeGraff

Over the next month the research team travelled between community spots in Benson, Clontarf, DeGraff, Holloway, Murdock, Kerkhoven, and Swift Falls. Visiting church groups in the St. Isadore farmer community, cafes, and post offices were key to having meaningful conversations about their community. While the team was originally using a survey (the template is attached in the appendices), it became clear that community members were more responsive to casual conversations that met them where they are.

Over the course of the summer the research the team spoke to around 60 individual community members in the Swift County area. The majority of conversations were with individuals between the ages of 20 - 65, white, and from the townships surrounding Benson. Many of these people spent a significant portion of their lives in Swift County, although not always consecutively. While the research team was able to learn a lot and gather a significant portion of relevant data and information, it is important to remember that the team did not speak to a representative sample of people in the area.

Responses: Themes & Trends

Community members often expressed consistently similar thoughts and themes in conversations. Almost everyone we spoke to said they love living in Swift County, and many of them moved back after or before having kids. The safety of a small community keeps them here, with the sense of support and small town atmosphere making them love the place where they live. While there are many things that keep community members where they are and imbue them with a sense of place and community, there were common recommendations and criticism.

One of the first issues to come up, especially amongst elderly members of the community, is access to health and medical care. While many travel to Benson, others journey to Willmar, Morris, and Alexandria. The lack of medical professionals available for appointments in Benson was a factor that causes people to look elsewhere for healthcare, along with the availability of speciality services. The key problem was not the actual health professionals though, and instead the availability of transportation to see medical professionals. Many elderly community members expressed that while they don't have reliable access to transportation, they do need frequent visits to health care. Many carpool with friends or family members, but that is not always reliable.

Access to transportation amongst elderly community members is a consistent need - especially to get healthcare and daily essentials like groceries.

Leaving the community for key services was a trend throughout the populations spoken to. Young people cited leaving the county for entertainment and restaurants, and many older people expressed similar experiences. The loss of individual community restaurants and grocery stores impacted people's ability to stay in the area and meet their basic needs. While many expressed the desire to stay within the county they simply didn't feel it was economical and feasible.

Overall, when it comes to staying in the community for living necessities there was a whistfulness to responses. For young people they wish they could, and for older community members they remember the days when they could stay in the area. There was no desire, on the other hand, for a big box store (like Walmart) to move into Swift County.

Responses: Themes & Trends

When asked what entertainment could be provided that would keep them in the community, youth listed different community gathering opportunities. Easy and cheap suggestions included a drive in movie screen or weekend movies in the park. Almost every person we talked to mentioned wanting drive in movies.

Barn dances and other gatherings geared towards farm kids were also identified as factors that might keep them in the community for entertainment. While some participated in town gatherings like Relay for Life and Kerkhoven days, many commented that living on farms often kept them away from those events. A lack of advertising on community radio (which was the easiest service for them to connect with) or that they simply could not take the time to come were also brought up.

Concerns around issues of a welcoming and inclusive environment and arose in many conversations, especially with younger community members.

When asked about events and access to events, the topic of newcomers came up. Participants noted that the community was not welcoming to newcomers. Young people specifically stated that barriers forming with people concerned about advertisements in languages other than English, and the influx of newcomers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. To face and confront these possible barriers will be crucial to opening better communication and focusing on community diversity and integration.

Part of addressing issues identified by Swift County residents is improving community trust of and communication with the Swift County government. In many conversations the research team participated in not only did people not feel like they knew about, or had access to, county services, but they also didn't express trust towards the county. A need for better relationship building between the county and small communities was constantly expressed throughout the research team's experience.

To improve services and inclusivity, increase communication between the county and small communities.

Recommendations

Public Transportation

Rural communities are often geographically spread out and rely on personal transportation to access needs and services. When asked what kinds of transit systems would make sense to best fit and fill their needs, people referenced the Morris Transit system (located in Morris and an individual call based service) and the Rainbow Rider that travels between and around Alexandria. Residents also mentioned ventures in other communities that provided a pay per service ride to get groceries, shop for basic necessities, and get to social engagements.

Creating a service to ensure that elderly members of the community have access to basic transportation, especially in rural areas and townships, may be an important step to take in the next few years.

In the short term the research team recommends advertising current hospital transportation services that already exist, with a focus on elderly and low income populations.

Whenever those services came up in discussion amongst community

members there were always people who didn't know they existed. While most people expressed a need for them, there was a significant gap between what they knew about and what they needed. In addition, helping communities create and utilize a phone tree and/or volunteer service is a possible and goal.



Alexandria's Rainbow Rider

In the medium term, the team recommends providing incentives to help a community group or outside company start a for-profit or nonprofit endeavor. It would make sense to survey specific community needs surrounding public transportation and gather community support for an initiative. This ties in with new immigrant and low income populations who may not have access to a car or other transportation.

Finally, in long-term solutions, an ultimate end goal would be for the government to host/subsidize a program that provides travel for both personal and medical needs to people and populations who need to utilize the services. This may or may not be feasible, and certainly a long term option with a focus on the future.

Diversity & Integration

Swift County's diverse population is one of its greatest assets, with a rich cultural background of all different origins and identities. To best meet the needs of the whole county community, the research team has some recommendations.

The team repeatedly heard that it can be hard to integrate new communities, especially with a language barrier. By creating activities, events, and media that is accessible to people with limited or developing English language skills, the team hopes to help bridge that gap. This can include advertising in accessible ways (for example on the radio) in languages other than English, as well as English. Making sure that advertising is reaching areas more likely to house recent immigrants, and that advertising is accessible to all needs is important.

In the short term, the government can create and propagate advertisements and resources in languages other than English. Making sure these are located in areas that are frequented by newcomers, and not just in locations that cater to long-term residents, will be crucial in engaging different audiences. In addition, searching for ways to provide educational materials to white residents in the new area will be crucial to making sure all of these suggestions are effective.

In the medium term, creating and funding youth programs aimed at newcomers that engage with the whole family is a great way to bring recent immigrants into the community fold. This could mean ESL (English as a Second Language) programs through the KMS school district, movies and book clubs in languages other than English, and other events aimed at audiences for whom English is not a first language. This, coupled with community conversations, and a funded group of community newcomers to host and plan community events and programs can make all the difference.

Finally, an ultimate and long term goal for the county should be to host a grant or internally funded part- or full-time position dedicated to doing newcomer outreach and coordination. This person would help coordinate programming and focus groups, reach out to new populations, and make sure that Swift County was accurately providing for the needs of newcomers. It has also been recommended to provide faith opportunities that specifically cater to the needs of communities where English is not a primary language. Whether that is faith communities specifically reaching out to newcomers, or the community and/or county facilitating the resources to create new spaces (Gozdziak, Martin 265).

"Creating spaces that are open and actively engage with newcomers while not being segregated from the community is crucial to the government's desire to focus on newcomer and immigrant populations."

Community Spaces

The research team spent a lot of time talking about, and in, much loved community spaces. We heard about their history, context, and people's deep love for them. These spaces are facing everything from low sales to communities struggling with economic development and retention, it has become a struggle for many of these places to stay open. This is a difficult problem to face, but the team was stuck by a story heard at Holloway's "Good ol' Days"

cafe. A staff person commented that it is because of outside patronage that the cafe has stayed open for so long, and is financially stable. Creating incentives and opportunities for people from throughout the county to patronize different community venues may be a crucial strategy for maintaining community centers throughout the county.



The Clontarf Cafe, bar, and liquor store

A short term and easy step is to create a column or radio segment advertising and focusing on different communities venues and their strengths. Encouraging community media sources to take an interest in other communities strengths and gathering places could be a useful tool. More time and effort intensive might be coupling peoples' desire for live music and dances with these small restaurants, cafes, and bars. Bringing music to the area and encouraging people to visit local eateries for a drink or a meal is easy to do, and works well when advertised effectively.

A community space that people frequently mentioned is the drive-in movie theater that closed down. If Swift County was able to facilitate a pop-up drive-in movie, or movies in the park around the county, people indicated they would travel to different communities to attend. Swift County would need to rent, borrow, or purchase the supplies, and rights to the films, but cosponsoring with different businesses and organizations may make the job easier to accomplish.

When it comes to preserving these spaces, the county needs to also think long term. All of these options require relationship building with businesses around Swift County. After initial contact, which is a preliminary step, continued discussion and surveying of needs should be maintained. This could be done by the county on an individual basis, but it may be more efficient to host a regular business owners meeting. This not only allows the county to check in, but allows owners to connect with one another. The continuation of this kind of association, eventually without Swift County's involvement, is an important long-term goal.

County & Community Communication

By opening further and deeper communication between local and county government and leadership the research team believes Swift County can continue being even more inclusive and efficient.

The research team often discovered resistance to the idea of the county government playing a role in community activities. Community members often expressed that they sought out religious and community leaders during times of needs or crisis. By convening a dialogue of religious and community professionals throughout the County, the government can transmit information about resources and services to smaller communities. If you can get leaders in the same room together, you can hear about and engage with their views of community needs.

Our first short term recommendation is to encourage the county to reach out to spiritual leaders in the area, as well as owners of restaurants, city councils, and other identified leaders. A simple and easy first step, not requiring any kind of convening, is to deliver informational packets to community leaders. Ideally these would include information to access emergency services, information about MNSure and available navigators, and any other available programs through the state or county.

The next, slightly longer term, step is to create a survey tool to understand government service use across the county. By understanding what people are using, and what services are underused, the county will be able to better address community needs. These assessment tools should address not only what services are frequently used and which are not, but also why they are or are not used.

A longer term solution is to create dialogue about community needs is through consistent community leadership meetings. These are opportunities for community members to share their town's needs and for the Swift County government to make connections and build trust. This is a long-term goal, but extremely beneficial in terms of county-wide feedback. Community meetings could be integrated into a Swift County long-term plan for citizen-government communication and engagement. This is important for fostering and maintaining trust between the government and the people of Swift County.

“By convening a dialogue of religious and community professionals throughout the County, the government can transmit information about resources and services to smaller communities.”

Future Student Projects

While pretty much all of these recommendations have some room for future student work, there are projects that could be taken on with a CST and Swift County partnership to specifically further this work. There are a multitude of ways students could continue to be involved with Swift County, and these are just a few suggestions for the future. Looking for outside grant money and continuing to work with the University may be potential ways to expand and enrich programming.

Hiring a student (preferably a student fluent in both English and Spanish) to help coordinate youth and new family programming for recent immigrants. Engaging a UMM faculty member may also be helpful in bridging communications with staff, students, community members, and the school. They might also be able to help establish an ESL (English as Second Language) plan.

A student would be well positioned to put in the time required to create a comprehensive packet detailing services available through local and state sources for a variety of situations. Then, after identifying community leaders throughout the community, they could convene a semi-regular conversation to distribute the information and address community issues that arise.

A student grant writer may be a key and valuable investment. Hiring a student to help write grants geared at new jobs like a newcomer outreach coordinator, business incubator programs, community relationship building, and other community opportunities can help stabilize and cement these new projects and plans.

Hiring a student to help coordinate community events at local restaurants, bars, and cafes could be extremely useful. A student could dedicate time to working with different venues and community members to coordinate events for the larger community.

A student could easily research and help lay out a clear plan for bringing or implementing transportation throughout the Swift County area.

There's also a wealth of university professors at UMM that would be able to work with both the Center for Small Towns and Swift County to conduct research and data analysis. Professor Nina Ortiz worked with the research team, and those research opportunities would be available to benefit both the county and the University.

PhotoVoice Plan

Introduction

Photovoice is a method that allows participants to communicate ideas and themes from their life to other people through photographs and short written reflections. It allows the community members and researchers to understand the experiences and needs of individuals, in addition to the community as a whole. This kind of engagement often allows communities to more easily reflect on, and make changes.

Engaging Young Adolescents in Social Action Through Photovoice: The Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!) Project is a great example of community engagement coming from a Photovoice Project. A group of fifth grade participants in the YES! project used Photovoice to express concern about a shack on school grounds that was broken and covered in graffiti. As a result, the shack was re-painted and fixed up (Wilson, Dasho et al. 2007). Without Photovoice the school would not have been able to identify or fix the problem.

While there are many ways to implement Photovoice, a plan developed by the Shasta Healthy Eating, Active Communities Project provides a good outline for planning, implementing, and next steps. The Shasta project served as a template for our recommendations to the county.

Planning

The Diversity and Integration Taskforce has already thought through some elements of the project, so their ideas are included, as well as next steps. Listed below are the task force identified:

- Fall : This is something my family/friends and I like to do in Swift County
- Later : This is something great about Swift County
- Fair time: This is something we lack in Swift County
- Fair time: This is my favorite thing about fair time in Swift County

Photovoice works best when prompts are designed with a project goal in mind. Here, Swift County is sharing and cultivating positive attitudes about Swift County as well as feedback about improvements at the end of the project.

Preparatory Materials

After creating prompts it is important to consider the necessary materials. The first question to consider is if Swift County will provide cameras to rent? This would require the purchase of 5-20 cameras available to people who wish to rent them. By setting up camera rentals, the project would be accessible to people who do not own or have access to a camera.

There are many camera options that would be cost effective to buy and rent to participants. The Swift County Picture Project is currently set up so the county would not print the photographs, but county printing services make the project accessible to all residents, especially those who do not own or know how to operate a printer.

- o Sony – DSC – W800 20.1-Megapixel Digital Camera – Black1

- o Price: \$89.99 (per camera)

- o One year warranty

- o No internal memory

- o Kodak – PIXPRO 16.2 Megapixel Compact Camera – Black2

- o Price: \$70.69 (per camera)

- o One year warranty

- o Internal memory

- o Kodak – FZ41 16.2 Megapixel Digital Camera3

- o Price: \$69.99

- o One year warranty

- o 8MB internal memory

**all prices are subject to change*



Lastly, the county needs to consider how the pictures will be displayed. The entry sheet currently calls for images 8x10 inches. These could be scanned in to create digital displays, or put into frames as they are. Basic 8x10 frames are available for \$2 each at Walmart (in packs of 6).

Advertising & Accessibility

When trying to reach and include people from all over the county, accessibility is key. Camera rentals are an example that was discussed already. Camera rentals (or another way to supply a photo capable device) are crucial to make sure that everyone in the county can participate. A photovoice project that is not inclusive defeats the purpose of getting diverse feedback on living in the area. Photovoice yields the best results when it contains input from as many people as possible. This includes people living outside Benson, residents outside of town, newcomers, and people of color. Listed below are recommendations to make the program as accessible, and ultimately, as successful as possible.

1. Another element that makes this project accessible is the option to draw a picture in place of a photograph. Supplies for this are not necessary to provide. This not only creates a second option for people who may not have access to a camera, but will make responding to prompts, especially the final prompt (“This is something that Swift County lacks”) easier.

2. For the same reasons that it is important to make the Swift County Picture Project accessible, it is important to create intentional advertising and recruitment strategies. By making deliberate choices about recruitment materials, Swift County can encourage participation by people from underrepresented populations. Making advertising visible in places where target populations will see it, and making it accessible to those who may speak limited or no English, is an important step.

3. Based on the research done this summer, the post office, schools, and possibly churches are some key locations for advertising. The post office is the best place to access a broader population of people., but this is not a complete list, and other locations should be sought out as addition.

4. In terms of accessibility, the posters, radio ads, and any other materials should be made in more than one language, specifically Spanish, Somali, and Chuukese, as well as any other language spoken in Swift County. Getting these materials translated is an opportunity to make connections and find out the best ways to advertise to communities that are being targeted with the non-English signs.

Forms

Three forms were identified as necessary to carry out this picture project. Examples of all of these forms are included in the index of this report in English.

1. *Camera Rental Form*
2. *Entry Form*
3. *Consent Form*

Like the advertisements, these should be translated into appropriate languages to make sure the entire project is accessible.

Camera Rental Form:

This form was created with the intention that each rental camera would have a letter and/or number written on it, and any other accessories it comes with. If this does not end up being the system used to check out the cameras, make sure to change the form. It may be useful to develop a check-in/check-out form kept in the office that houses the rental cameras. This could just be a legal pad with a place to sign and date when you take and return the camera. There are 3 checkout slips per page in order to save paper.

Entry Form:

Dimensions and word counts for the entries should be altered depending on the format and length desired by Swift County. This was created so that one could be used throughout the project, instead of having a different form for each prompt. If Swift County wishes to break it up, the prompt options could just be removed, and the current prompt can just be displayed in the description on the top half of the form.

Consent Form:

This could be a disclaimer sheet attached to the entry form, but the signature portion would need to be removed. If academic research is being done with the photographs, this may need to be edited to fit IRB requirements.

Displaying the Pictures

The Diversity and Integration Taskforce suggested ideas about where to display the photos and pictures. Among the suggestions were events like the county fair, a future LED billboard, and other community spaces and events. Other places that may reach many people are libraries, schools, and community gathering spaces like churches, restaurants, cafes, or community centers.

When Photovoice is implemented for academic research, every participant explains their photo or picture to a small group. The large scale Swift County is using makes small group sharing less plausible. With this in mind, displaying the pictures with their descriptions becomes especially important. If displayed in ways that give enough context to the pictures and descriptions, the photos may spark the types of conversations that would not have taken place otherwise. This is why displaying these photos and pictures with their descriptions in places like libraries, schools, and restaurants enrich the results of the project. Depending on how many entries are received, Swift County may need to choose which photographs and drawings to display. These should be carefully chosen not just to be beautiful to look at, but to provoke conversations and represent diverse population of the country.

“If displayed in ways that give enough context to the pictures and descriptions, the photos may spark the types of conversation that would not have taken place otherwise.”

It may be useful to have a place where people can write down thoughts or submit ideas. Hosting community meetings in places where photos/pictures are displayed can provide space for people to share their thoughts with the Swift County Government. This connects the community feedback with the government directly. Building a meaningful connection between residents and the county government will provide constructive feedback and foster a meaningful relationship.

Finally, it is important to be mindful of implementing recommendations. When residents can see beneficial change as a direct result from their feedback, this will build longstanding trust and communication.

Next Steps: What to Do When It Is Done

In Photovoice projects aimed to cultivate individual and community empowerment, small groups use photography to brainstorm and create potential community improvement projects.

Swift County could truly utilize this feedback by creating a taskforce to take up projects suggested through the Swift County Picture Project. It is important that if there are suggestions made using these pictures, that they are acknowledged and considered. Being able to take action and attribute it directly to feedback from the Picture Project can create an occasion for community celebration and excitement.

If the project goes well it has the potential to be done every year, with a prompt or two every year. By having a creative and engaging way for people to give the government input, it may open an avenue for better communication.

All of the data for the demographic portion of this booklet was collected from:

- www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/27/27151.html
- www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/countyttables/profiles2014/ademog13.pdf
- www.health.state.mn.us/wic/localagency/reports/pptndemo/aoic/2014bychb.pdf
- www.minnesota-demographics.com/swift-county-demographics
- www.swiftcountyrda.com/swift/live-and-work-here/community-profile/

Sources relevant specifically to what's listed in the report - more sources can be found in the reading list section of the appendix.

- Beyond the Gateway: Immigrants in a Changing America, Edited by Elz. Gozdzia and Susan F. Martin
- www.bestbuy.com/site/sony-dsc-w800-20-1-megapixel-digital-camera-black/4349004.p?9d=1219097781350&skuld=4349004
- www.bestbuy.com/site/kodak-pixpro-16-2-megapixel-compact-camera-black/1311924764.p?id=mp1311924764&skuld=1311924764
- www.bestbuy.com/site/kodak-fz41-16-2-megapixel-digital-camera/1715202.p?id=1219061399680&skuld=1715202

All of the data collected for this is also available to the general public. The categories and measurement scales were created by the US government, and not the Center for Small Towns research team. The term "minority" was employed to denote communities less populous than the largest community present. In all areas of Swift County with census information the majority of individuals indicated their only racial or ethnic identity was "white", but there are large and prevalent communities that indicated other ethnic and racial identities. It's important to focus on their experiences as a community, and not just on the narrative that's dominated the area in the past.

Interviewer
Date
Place
Participant ID #:

Swift County Demographic Information

- 1. What is your gender?**

- 2. What is your race?**

- 3. What is your date of birth?**

- 4. What town/community do you live in?**

- 5. How long have you lived in Swift County?**

- 6. Where else have you lived besides Swift County?**

How long did you live there and when?

- 7. What is your occupation?**

- 8. Where do you work?**

- 9. What is the highest level of education you have received? (Select one)**
 9th – 12th grade, no diploma High school diploma Some college, no degree
 Associates degree Bachelors degree Graduate/professional degree

- 10. What is your religious affiliation if any?**

Do you worship in Swift County? If so, where?

Interviewer:

Date:

Place:

Participant ID #:

- 8. How often do you have conversations or social interactions with newcomers or people outside of your normal social group? Do you seek out new friendships, especially with people new to the community?**

- 9. Do new members of the community typically get invited to community events or social spaces? Do you often see them at these events or spaces?**

- 10. Are you involved in any other community groups, clubs, or organizations?**
 - a. Do you hold any leadership roles in those organizations?**

- 11. Is there anything you'd like to change about the community? This can include events, community atmosphere, gathering spaces, or anything else?**

- 12. What services do you feel like Swift County should provide to residents? Does Swift County provide those services? Are there services that you would like have or could be more accessible?**

Swift County Picture Project Entry Form

Swift County is accepting entries to its current picture project, which aims to gather images from people around the county that respond to the prompt:

- Summer: This is my favorite thing about fair time in Swift County
- September: This is something my family/friends and I like to do in Swift County
- Spring: This is something really great about Swift County or this is something we lack in Swift County

The project asks participants not only to submit a photograph or drawing, but to write a small explanation of why they chose the image that they did. This will not only help the County to understand your response to the prompt, but the others who look at it, if it is chosen to be displayed around the county.

To submit your photographs and/or drawings to the Swift County picture project, simply fill out this form and attach it to:

- 1-3 photographs and/or drawings that are either 5x7in or 8x10in
- 3-10 sentences per photograph in 12pt font, single spaced

Artist Information

Name: _____ Date: _____

Age: _____ Phone Number: () - _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

Hometown: _____

I am responding to the prompt (check all that apply):

___ This is my favorite thing about fair time in Swift County.

___ This is something my family/friends and I like to do in Swift County

___ This is something really great about Swift County

___ This is something we lack in Swift County

If submitting for more than one of these prompts, make sure to clearly label which image and written piece corresponds with which prompt.

Camera Rental Form

Before taking a camera, please fill out this form in its entirety as well as sign out the camera in the checkout binder. It will help us keep track of the cameras; that way, everyone who wants to borrow a camera can do it. Thanks!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Age: _____ Phone Number: () - _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

Camera Label: _____ Out Date: ___/___/___ In Date: ___/___/___

Camera Rental Form

Before taking a camera, please fill out this form in its entirety as well as sign out the camera in the checkout binder. It will help us keep track of the cameras; that way, everyone who wants to borrow a camera can do it. Thanks!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Age: _____ Phone Number: () - _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

Camera Label: _____ Out Date: ___/___/___ In Date: ___/___/___

Camera Rental Form

Before taking a camera, please fill out this form in its entirety as well as sign out the camera in the checkout binder. It will help us keep track of the cameras; that way, everyone who wants to borrow a camera can do it. Thanks!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Age: _____ Phone Number: () - _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

Camera Label: _____ Out Date: ___/___/___ In Date: ___/___/___

CONSENT FORM
Swift County Picture Project

The Swift County Government is looking for participants in a picture project that will center on life in the county. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have!

Background Information:

The Swift County Picture project aims to get people from all across the county to respond to prompts with photos and/or hand drawn pictures and short written descriptions. The prompts will center on life in Swift County. Some pictures will be chosen to be displayed around the county. Swift County Government will also use the responses to gain feedback that will help improve their work for the people of Swift County.

Procedures:

Every few months a prompt and due date will be issued for the county for response. Simply take a photo or draw a picture as an answer to that prompt and write 3-10 sentences describing why you chose that image. Submit your entry by mail or in person to the Swift County Court House (301 14th Street North, Benson, MN 56215).

Voluntary Nature of the Project:

Participation in this project is voluntary. If you respond to one prompt, it does not mean you must respond to all of them. Whether or not you participate in this project, your current or future relations with Swift County will not be affected.

Contacts and Questions:

Figure this out.

I have read and understood this document and consent to participating in the Swift County Picture Project.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reading List

- Gozdzia, Elzbieta; Martin, Susan. *Beyond the Gateway: Immigrants in a Changing America*. Lexington Books, 2005.
- Brettell, Caroline; Hardwick, Susan; Singer, Audrey. *Twenty-First Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America*. The Brookings Institution, 2008.
- Butler Flora, Cornelia; Flora, Jan. *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change Third Edition*. Westview Press, 2008.
- Brown, David; Schafft, Kai. *Rural People & Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation*. Polity Press, 2011.
- *PhotoVoice: Community Assessment Through Pictures, Facilitator Training*. A South Shasta Healthy Eating, Active Communities Project.
- Guerrero, Alba Lucy; Tinkler, Tessa. *Refugee and Displaced Youth Negotiating Imagined and Lived Identities in a Photography-Based Educational Project in the United States and Colombia*. University of California.
- Carovano, Kathryn; Wen, Zhan Wen; Yi, Wu Kun; Wang, Caroline. *Photovoice as a Participatory Health Promotion Strategy*. Oxford Press, 1998.
- Wilson, Nance; Dasho, Stefan; Martin, Anna; Wallerstein, Nina; Want, Caroline; Minkler, Meredith. *Engaging Young Adolescents in Social Action Through PHotovoice: The Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!) Project*. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 2007.
- Vaughn, Lisa; Rojas-Guyler, Liliana; Howell, Britteny. *"Picturing" Health: A Photovoice Pilot of Latina Girls' Perceptions of Health*. *Fam Community Health*, 2008.