

The 2006 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey

Young Adults and Social Capital in Duluth and Superior

Key Findings:

Young adults in the Duluth Superior Area are heavily involved in community work – they vote and volunteer at high levels – yet they still feel disconnected from the rest of the community. They have levels of social trust dramatically less than the community average, they see their neighbors substantially less, and they have less faith than older residents that they can make a difference.

Despite the feeling of being disconnected, young adults still volunteer for community projects and participate in a

variety of activities that benefit not just themselves, but also others in the community. One small example is that young adults in Duluth and Superior work with senior organizations in numbers greater than the national average.

Young adults are also the community leaders in reaching across class lines to socialize with and accept people who are different than themselves.

**A Report for the Duluth Superior Area
Community Foundation
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Duluth-Superior and Social Capital

Duluth and Superior are known for their high levels of some kinds of social capital. For example, residents in this region vote at greater numbers than other places and are involved in politics and sports in great numbers. People in Duluth and Superior visit with their neighbors in very high numbers.

But there are challenges. When we hang out, we hang out with people like ourselves. The area lacks “bridging social capital,” in which people with different interests and backgrounds work together.

The 2006 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey

The 2006 Social Capital Community Survey surveyed 7,250 respondents to measure the degree of connectedness, interaction, and trust among people in Duluth and Superior, and in 21 other communities nationally. The 2006 survey builds on the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, developed by Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. The scope of the study allows comparisons with a general national sample.

An international polling firm (TNS Intersearch) conducted a random telephone survey of 500 households in Duluth and Superior. The survey averaged about 25 minutes. The survey, in essence, provides data on how residents view this community as a place to live.

Drew Digby of the University of Minnesota Duluth is the lead academic partner for the Community Foundation. In addition, the Community Foundation convened a Task Force of community advisors which reviewed the Duluth/Superior data prior to its public release. In addition, more than 15 academics, from the University of Minnesota Duluth, University of Wisconsin-Superior, and the College of St. Scholastica, are still in the process of reviewing the data in a variety of detailed ways.

Technical Details

- The basic margin of error (with a 95% confidence level) for the survey is +/-4.4 percent when the entire sample is used.
- All of the data used in this report uses a weighting system that matched the data from the survey to data from the 2000 Census. Using the data from the 2000 Census may underestimate groups that were undercounted in that census.

This Report

This study of Social Capital and Young Adults in Duluth Superior was a collaboration of Harvard University, the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation and Drew Digby, an instructor of journalism and public policy at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Robert D. Putnam and Tom Sander of the Kennedy School of Government developed the Survey Instrument and oversaw the survey work. The Community Foundation oversaw local efforts in Duluth Superior to conduct the survey and paid for the local survey. Digby reviewed the survey results and wrote this report.

This report is the first of several planned reports looking at individual issues in Social Capital in the Duluth Superior area. Each report will be made available on the Community Foundation’s website:

www.dsacommunityfoundation.com

(Report data is included below)

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Politics and Young Adults

Q. 23. Did you vote in the presidential election in 2004?

Voted in 2004	Duluth Superior	National
Overall	90%	70%
18-34 years old	78%	
35-49 years old	96%	
50-64 years old	93%	
65+ years old	95%	

Nationwide, young adult voter turnout in 2004 was just 51.6% for voters aged 18-29, according to CIRCLE, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. An additional state-by-state study done by CIRCLE found that Youth voter turnout was highest in Minnesota, but that study looked just at voters 18-24.

Question 16. Overall, how much impact do you think people like you can have in making your community a better place to live?

	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
A big impact	22%	36%	34%
A moderate impact	42%	41%	45%
A small impact	27%	17%	17%
No impact at all	9%	6%	4%

The number of young adults in Duluth-Superior who said they felt they could have a big impact was exactly half the rate of 50-64 year olds who said they could have a big impact. Other older age groups were almost as high as the 50-64 year olds.

Question 38A. Do you agree with the statement: "The people running my community don't really care much what happens to me."

	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
Agree Strongly	20%	12%	12%
Agree Somewhat	10%	18%	19%
Disagree Somewhat	45%	36%	36%
Disagree Strongly	26%	31%	30%

In the "agree strongly category, only 13% of 35-49 year olds felt that way, and just 6 percent of those over 50 felt that way.

Age is a significant predictor of newspaper reading.

Age	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Average number of days did you read a daily newspaper?	2.95	3.43	4.13	5.62

Volunteering and Community Action

Q. 58. How many times in the past 12 months have you volunteered?

	Duluth Superior	National
0	28%	41%
1-4	21%	20%
5-11	19%	16%
12-23	8%	9%
24+	23%	14%
Average	13.77	9.69

Volunteering by age (Average number of times volunteered in the last 12 months)

Age Group	Duluth-Superior
18-34	15.61
35-49	12.73
50-64	10.76
65+	16.68

Q 26C. Have you worked on a community project in the last 12 months?

	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
Yes	36%	40%	34%
No	64%	60%	66%

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Socializing

Q. 56f. How many times in the last 12 months have you had friends over to your home?

	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
0-3	8	12%	21%
4-9	12	15%	19%
10-19	6	22%	21%
20-39	21	21%	19%
40+	53	30%	20%
Average	37.06	25.32	19.29

Q. 56i. How many times in the past 12 months have you hung out with friends at a park, shopping mall, or other public place?

	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
0	4	15%	24%
1-6	19	19%	25%
7-23	26	33%	27%
24+	51	32%	23%
Average	28.67	20.11	15.11

Young adults are far more likely to answer this question with higher numbers. The Duluth young adult average is 28.67 compared to the 50-64 group's average of 13.80. Our 65+ group's average is 16.37.

Q. 56d. How many times in the last 12 months have you visited relatives in person or had them visit you?

	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
0-3	19	10	15
4-11	28	22	25
12-25	18	26	23
26-51	17	22	16
52+	19	19	21
Average	22.84	26.83	25.33

Q. 56c. How many times in the past 12 months have you played cards or board games with others?

	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
0	7	20	33
1-5	24	24	23
6-17	26	23	22
18+	44	33	23
Average	21.09	16.8	12.2

56G. In the last 12 months, how many times have you been in the home of a friend of a different race or had them in your home?

	Duluth Superior	Duluth Superior White respondents	National
Not at all	35%	36%	32%
1-3	22%	23%	20%
4-11	21%	21%	23%
12+	22%	21%	24%
Average	9.37	8.61	10.09

Age has a significant impact on this question.

Been in the home of a person of a different race or had them in your home 0 times in the last 12 months	Duluth Superior
18-34	22%
35-49	27%
50-64	43%
65+	58%

Neighborhood Involvement

Q. 51. About how often do you talk to or visit with your immediate neighbors (the 10 or 20 households that live closest to you)?

Age	Once a month or less often
18-34	43%
35-49	34%
50-64	24%
65+	12%

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Social Trust

Q6. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

People can be Trusted	Duluth Superior	National
Whole sample	58%	43%
18-34	41%	
35-49	65%	
50-64	60%	
65+	69%	

Q7a. People in your neighborhood?

Neighborhood	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
Trust a lot	53%	62%	45%
Trust them some	29%	26%	34%
Trust them only a little or not at all	19%	12%	19%

Q7b. People you work with?

People you work with	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
Trust a lot	58%	55%	40%
Trust them some	27%	23%	26%
Little or not at all	12%	6%	14%

Q7d. People who work in the stores where you shop?

People who work in the stores where you shop	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
Trust a lot	36%	41%	29%
Trust them some	38%	46%	48%
Little or not at all	26%	12%	21%

Group Involvement

Q. 33. Have you been involved in the past 12 months with this kind of group?

Percent answering yes	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
a. religion	11%	14%	17%
b. adult sports	45%	32%	21%
c. youth	40%	29%	24%
d. parents' organization	18%	20%	21%
e. veterans	2%	9%	10%
f. neighborhood	11%	19%	20%
g. senior group	18%	21%	15%
h. charity or social welfare	29%	37%	34%
i. labor union	23%	26%	10%
j. profession, trade, farm, business	9%	23%	22%
k. service clubs or fraternal	13%	17%	14%
l. ethnic, nationality, or civil rights	4%	5%	6%
m. other public interest	9%	11%	10%
n. literary, art, music, dance	15%	18%	19%
o. other hobby, investment, or garden clubs	27%	36%	24%
p. a support group	10%	20%	20%

Q. 35. In the past twelve months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization?

	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth Superior	National
Yes	19%	27%	18%

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56E. In the last 12 months, how many times have you attended a club meeting.

Number of meetings	Duluth Superior	National
0	44%	62%
1-3	14%	11%
4-11	17%	12%
12+	24%	14%
Average Number of Meetings	8.48	4.72

Average Club Meetings by Age	Duluth Superior
18-34	9.44
35-49	8.09
50-64	8.02
65+	8.26

Tolerance

56G. In the last 12 months, how many times have you been in the home of a friend of a different race or had them in your home?

	Duluth Superior	Duluth Superior Young Adults	National
Not at all	35%	22%	32%
1-3	22%	22%	20%
4-11	21%	21%	23%
12+	22%	35%	24%
Average	9.37	17.26	10.09

Age has a significant impact on this question.

Been in the home of a person of a different race or had them in your home 0 times in the last 12 months	Duluth Superior
18-34	22%
35-49	27%
50-64	43%
65+	58%

Q. 50 Suppose a CLOSE RELATIVE or family member were marrying an African American or Black person. Would you very much favor it happening, somewhat favor, neither favor nor oppose, somewhat oppose, or very much oppose it happening?

	Duluth-Superior Young Adults	Duluth-Superior	National
Very Much Favor	36%	24%	21%
Somewhat Favor	7%	16%	12%
Neither favor nor oppose	47%	43%	44%
Somewhat Oppose	10%	9%	9%
Very Much Oppose	0%	6%	10%

Q. 7. How much do you trust African Americans or Blacks?

African Americans or Blacks	Duluth Superior Young Adults	Duluth-Superior	National
Trust a lot	28%	32%	25%
Trust them some	48%	52%	53%
Little or not at all	21%	12%	15%

Quality of Place

Q. 14. Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	Duluth-Superior	National
Excellent	41%	39%
Good	46%	46%
Only Fair	10%	16%
Poor	3%	13%

Quality of community by age

	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Excellent	27%	39%	51%	55%

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What is Social Capital?

Social capital, sometimes called "community connectedness," refers to social networks and the trust and reciprocity that arise from these networks. Studies show that communities with high levels of social capital are likely to have higher educational achievement, better performing government, faster economic growth, and less crime and violence. And people living in these communities are likely to be happier, healthier, and to have a longer life expectancy.

Social Capital is really the infrastructure that a community has which it can use to face the challenges and opportunities presented to it. The levels of connectedness are also directly related to the quality of life in a community.

There are many ways to measure social capital. Some of the key elements include:

- **Social Trust**, such as how much people trust their neighbors or the police.
- **Inter-racial Trust**, such as how much do people trust others of a different race.
- **Informal Socializing**, such as how many friends do people have and how often do they see them.
- **Diversity of Friendships**, such as how many different kinds of occupations do your friends have.
- **Associational Involvement**, such as how many organizations an individual is involved in, as well as how often individuals attend meetings.
- **Electoral Politics**, which includes whether or not someone votes, as well as their interest and knowledge of politics.

- **Active Politics**, such as signing a petition or speaking at a public meeting.
- **Faith-Based Engagement** measures how involved individuals are in faith-based organizations.
- **Giving and Volunteering**, such as if individuals make charitable donations, or if they volunteer their time.

The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation and Social Capital

The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation's work to build social capital grew out of Dr. Robert D. Putnam's keynote address to the Community Foundation's Annual Meeting in May, 2001. Dr. Putnam, professor at Harvard University, is the author of best-selling book *Bowling Alone*, and is a nationally recognized expert on social capital. Putnam's address focused on the decline of "social capital" and the need to rebuild community strengths and resources. The Community Foundation has offered several ways for the people of this region to explore the concept and understand its practical benefits to the community. Some examples include, the Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project; a social capital emphasis at the Community Foundation's annual awards ceremony; integration of social capital as a high priority into grantmaking guidelines; and, participation in nationwide efforts to research and address the issue of declining social capital.

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For More Information

For more information about the Community Foundation's social capital initiative, contact::

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