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YOUNG ADULTS IN MINNESOTA: A DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

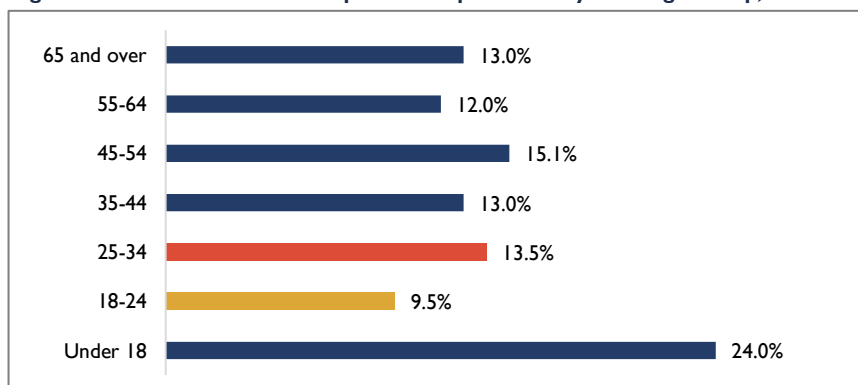
MINNESOTA'S 18- TO 34-YEAR-OLDS ARE HIGHLY DIVERSE,
PURSUING MORE EDUCATION, AND SLOW TO MARRY

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Millennials, Generation Y, Boomerangs... the diversity of today's young adults is reflected in the variety of names and labels used to describe those young people today who are generally beyond high school and in the early years of establishing their adult identities. This Population Note examines those Minnesotans who are 18 through 34 years old, whom we have termed "young adults." About 1.2 million Minnesotans fall into this age group. This brief describes some of the demographic, economic, and household characteristics of this unique group as it is coming of age. It also briefly explores some of the ways that today's young adults differ from other adult age cohorts in Minnesota, in terms of racial and ethnic composition, household structure, and education.

This Population Note is based upon individuals who were age 18 through age 34 in the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008-2012 American Community Survey, with birth years of 1974-1994.¹ Also, to align with the timing of many life course transitions, we divide this young adult population into two groups: those age 18 through 24,

Figure 1: Share of Minnesota's Population Represented by Each Age Group, 2008-2012



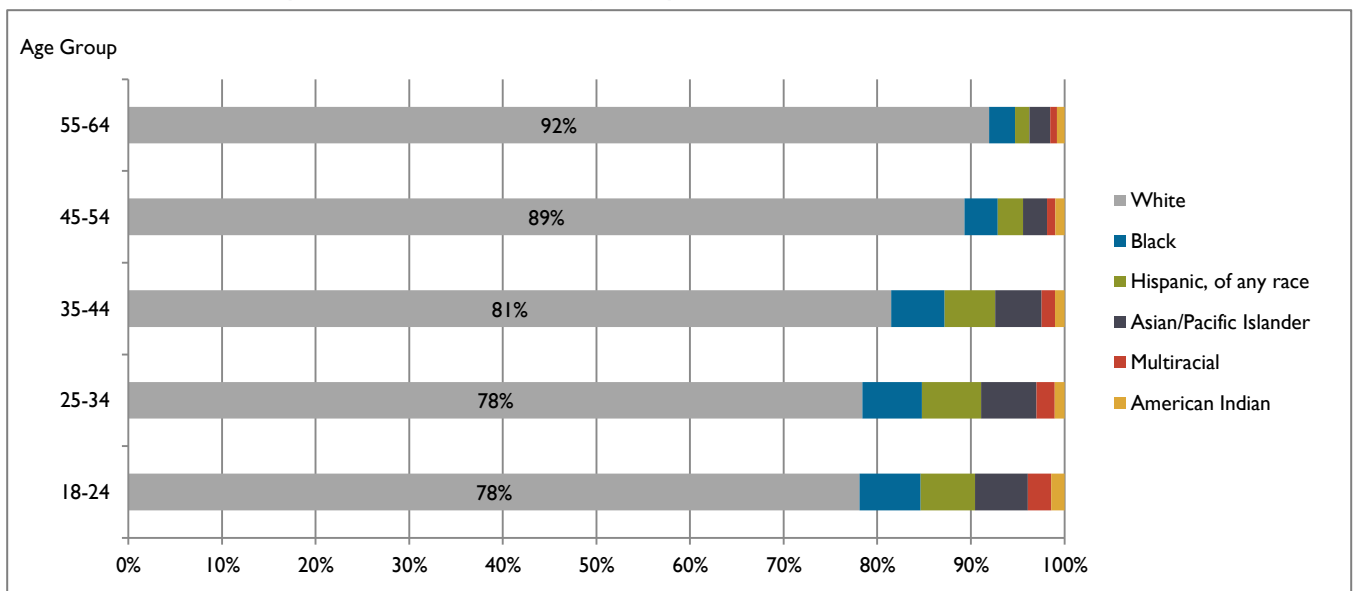
¹ This data source reflects the average characteristics during years 2008 – 2012. Those Minnesotans who were ages 18 through 34 in this pooled, five-year dataset have birth years spanning from 1974 – 1994. We have chosen not to use the term "Millennial" to describe this group because a standard definition of that term does not exist (although some common definitions overlap, but do not exactly coincide with the birth years of our analysis). The term "young adult" focuses instead on a life course perspective of those ages 18-34, which allows for future analysis of this age group, regardless of birth years or imprecise generational terms.

many of whom are working towards some form of postsecondary education, and those age 25 through 34, many of whom have finished their post-secondary education and begun moving into new roles in the labor force, in marriage, and parenthood. All together, these young adults account for nearly a quarter of the total population in Minnesota. Those ages 18-24 make up 9.5% of Minnesota’s population, while those ages 25-34 constitute another 13.5% (See Figure 1).

YOUNG ADULTS MORE RACIALLY DIVERSE THAN OLDER MINNESOTANS

Although all age groups in the state are overwhelmingly non-Hispanic White, Minnesota’s 18- to 34-year-olds have a larger proportion of people who self-identify as a racial or ethnic minority than any older group of residents.² This difference is most striking when young adults in Minnesota are contrasted with those residents age 55 and older. Only 78% of the 18- to 34-year-old population is non-Hispanic White compared to 94% of Minnesotans age 55 and older. Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics each constitute about 6% of Minnesota’s young adults. Another 1% identified themselves as American Indian or Pacific Islander, and about 2% are either multi-racial or indicated “some other race.” Combined, these racial and ethnic minorities, or young adults of color, represent 22% of Minnesota’s young adults, which is more than 3 times their proportion among adults ages 55 and older in the state (See Figure 2). Today’s young adults are the first adult cohort in Minnesota in which more than 1 in 5 is a person of color.

Figure 2: Racial/Ethnic Composition of Minnesota Adult Age Groups, 2008-2012



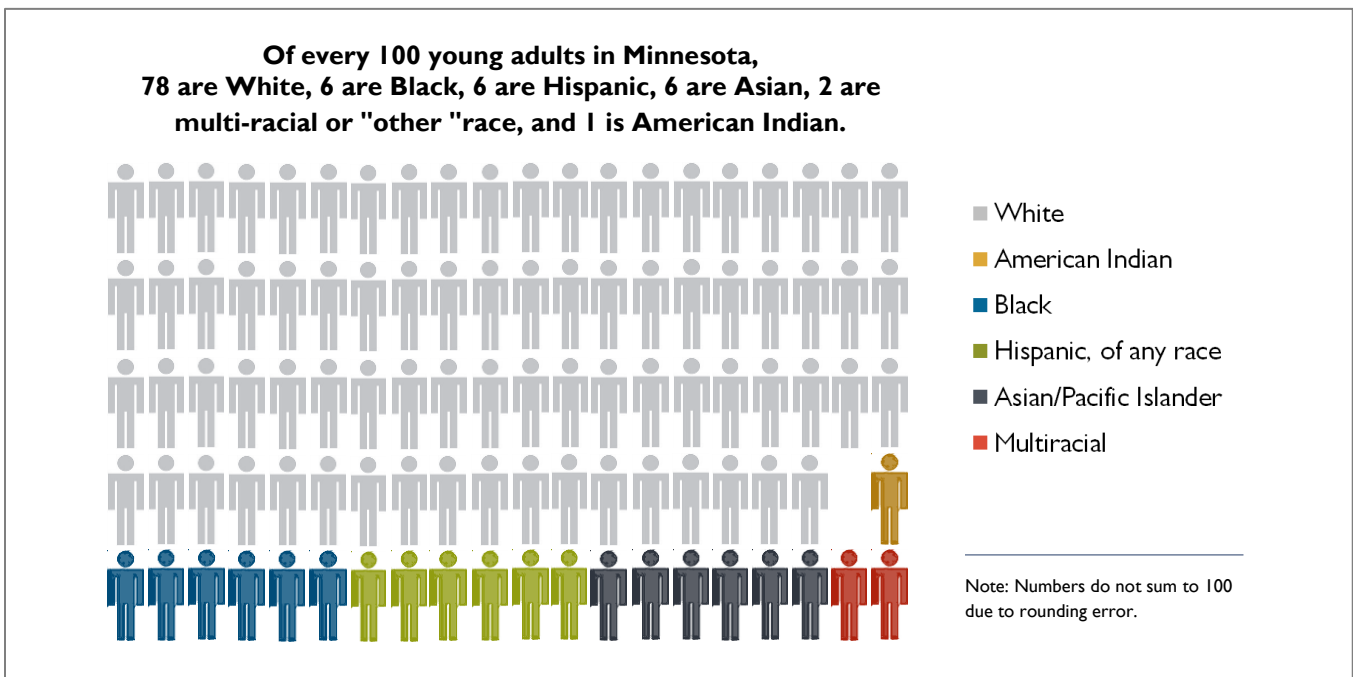
Some of this racial and ethnic diversity reflects the breadth of birthplaces among the young adult population. Less than two-thirds (64%) of all of Minnesota’s young adult residents were born in Minnesota, an additional 24% were born in another state in the U.S., and the remaining 12% were born outside of the United States. All told, about 148,000 young adults were born in another country. The most common country of origin was Mexico (birthplace to about 29,300 young adults). This was followed by India (about 13,300), Somalia (10,500), Thailand (7,900), Ethiopia (5,900), Korea (5,600), Laos³ (5,500) and Liberia (5,100). Perhaps surprisingly, there are slightly more Minnesotan young adults who were born in Mexico than North

² Here, racial minority is taken to mean any individual who does not identify as non-Hispanic White race alone. All groups except the Hispanic group have indicated non-Hispanic ethnicity.

³ Approximately 62% of young adults from Thailand and Laos have Hmong ancestry. Many Hmong lived in Thai refugee camps prior to being resettled in the United States as refugees.

Dakota, and about a thousand more originally from India than South Dakota, although all Midwestern states are still common birthplaces among young adults living in Minnesota who were not born in-state (see Table 1).

Figure 3: Young adults (18-34) by racial/ethnic composition, Minnesota, 2008-2012



Young adults are highly mobile, more so than any other adult age group in Minnesota. Thirty-seven percent of those 18-24 have moved residences in the past year, along with 25% of those 25-34.

Most of these address changes occur within Minnesota, but 6% of those 18-24 and 4% of those young adults 25 or older arrived in Minnesota from another state in the past year. In addition, about 1% of each age group consisted of international arrivals in the past year. A significant share of these arrivals consists of young adults moving to pursue higher education.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUNG ADULTS

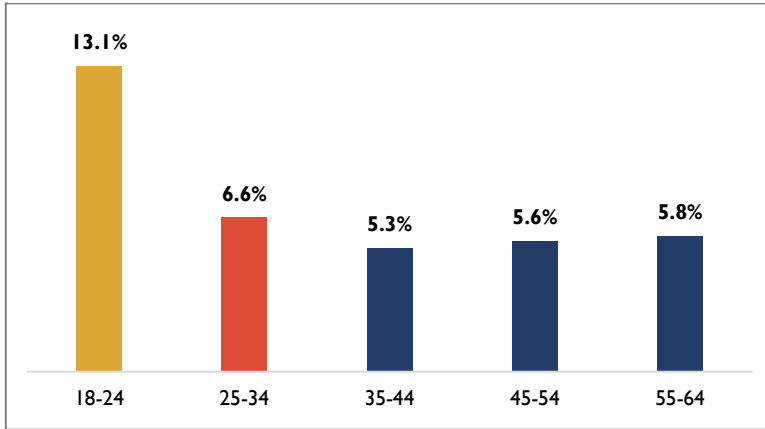
Minnesota’s young adults are engaged in a variety of productive activities. The two largest categories are work and school. More than 88% of those ages 25 to 34 participate in the labor force (including both full- and part-time workers), and this proportion is the same for middle-

Table 1: Most Common Birthplaces Among Minnesota's Young Adults, 2008-2012

Birthplace	Young adults	Percent of all young adults
Minnesota	775,900	63.6%
Wisconsin	52,200	4.3%
Illinois	30,400	2.5%
Mexico	29,300	2.4%
North Dakota	27,100	2.2%
California	23,800	1.9%
Iowa	23,100	1.9%
Texas	13,600	1.1%
India	13,300	1.1%
South Dakota	12,200	1.0%
Michigan	10,500	0.9%
Somalia	10,500	0.9%
Thailand	7,900	0.6%
Colorado	6,600	0.5%
Indiana	6,300	0.5%
All other birthplaces	177,700	14.5%

aged adults, age 35 to 54. Participation among 18- to 24-year-olds is closer to three-fourths.⁴ However, young adults below age 25 were experiencing a challenging employment environment (during 2008-2012, the years of this analysis), as evidenced by high unemployment in this group (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Unemployment Rate by Age Group, Minnesota, 2008-2012



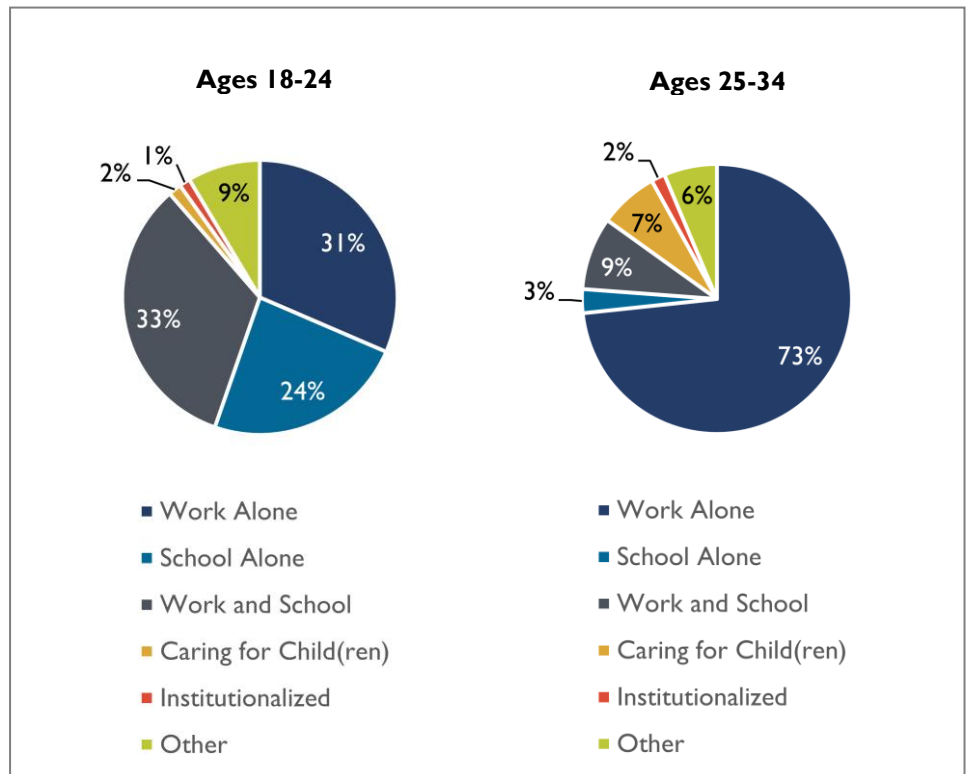
Those ages 18 to 24 saw an unemployment rate of 13.1%, about twice as high as nearly every other adult age group in Minnesota. However, employment outcomes were brighter for young adults in their late 20s and early 30s: the unemployment rate among 25- to 34-year-olds was only 6.6%.

Approximately 24% of the youngest adults—those ages 18 to 24—were attending school full-time, another 33% were working while attending school and 31% were working exclusively. Among young adults 25 and older, nearly three-fourths (73%) were working exclusively. About 9% of this older group was attending school *and* working, with just 3% attending school full-time.

However, about 14% of all young adults were neither working nor attending school. Almost 5% of 18- to 24-year-olds were living with at least one child of her and/or his own.⁵ Therefore it is presumed they are providing full-time child care. Another 2% was living in an institution, such as a corrections facility or residential treatment center.

About 7% of young adults did not have a daily activity accounted for in the data. They may have been in a period of transition between jobs or residences, dropped out of the labor force, or may have been experiencing a disability or other challenge that precluded participation in typical activities.

Figure 5: Participation in Activities For Minnesota's Young Adults, By Age Group, 2008-2012



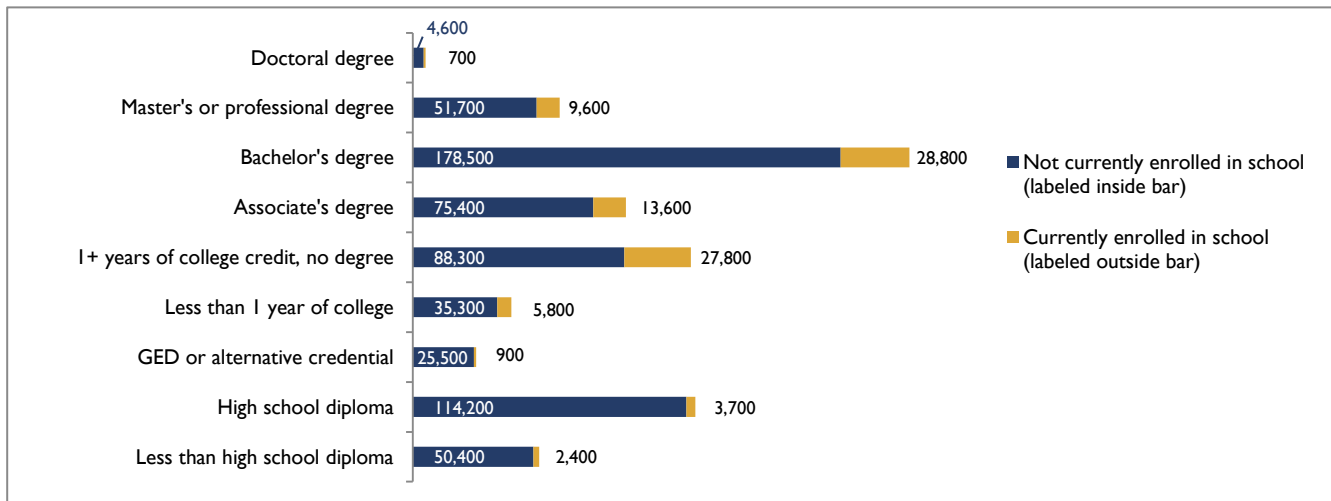
⁴ Labor force participants are by definition either working or seeking work (officially “unemployed”). Those who do not participate in the labor force may do so for a variety of reasons, including being a full-time student or full-time caregiver, being discouraged by one’s labor force prospects, for health reasons, or because they are experiencing a period of mobility.

⁵ Young adults who have children that do not live with them, or those young adults who lived with a child who was not his or her own child would not be counted as “living with child.” In this case “children” includes adoptees and step-children as well as biological children.

MORE MORTARBOARDS FOR TODAY'S YOUNG ADULTS

While many of Minnesota's young adults under age 25 are still pursuing higher education, among the 25- to 34-year-old group, only 12% report being still enrolled in school. Figure 6 below shows the highest level of education obtained by Minnesotans ages 25-34, divided among those not currently enrolled in school and those who are. The latter group (in gold on the graph) can be presumed to be working toward attaining a higher bar on the graph. Young adults today are completing college at historically high rates: 38% of Minnesotans ages 25-34 possess at least a bachelor's degree. This is up notably from 1990, when 26% of Minnesotans ages 25-34 had earned a four-year degree, and even in 2000, when 35% had.

Figure 6: Minnesotans Ages 25-34, By Highest Level of Educational Attainment, And Current School Enrollment, 2008-2012



WHERE ARE YOUNG ADULTS LIVING IN MINNESOTA?

The counties with the greatest *numbers* of 18- to 34-year-olds are part of the populous seven counties centered upon the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Far and away, Hennepin was home to the most young adults (303,400), followed by Ramsey with 139,000, Dakota with 85,500, and Anoka with 71,000. However, as a percentage, Blue Earth, Winona, Clay, Stevens and Nicollet Counties top the list, with close to 30% or more of their population represented by young adults. Further examination of counties home to many young adults reveals that it is the *cities* within these counties that are the epicenter of young adults. Most notably, in Blue Earth county, Mankato's young adults comprise just under half of its total population (48%). St. Cloud, Minneapolis, and Duluth also owe more than one-third of their total population to their young adult residents. In Bloomington, Rochester, Brooklyn Park and St. Paul, 2 or 3 out of 10 residents are young adults (see Table 2). As a result, these Minnesota cities exhibit the vitality, diversity, mobility and other characteristics common among today's young adults.

There was considerable geographic variation between the two age groups of young adults. In young adult-rich Blue Earth County, 18- to 24-year-olds constituted 22.9% of the population, compared to just 9.5% statewide. Winona County had the second highest concentration of 18- to 24-year-olds, which made up about 21.6% of this county's population. Stevens County had only 1,800 residents age 18-24, and yet this group of made up 18.8% of its population. In each of these three small- to medium-sized counties, colleges and universities⁶ serve as a significant draw for young adults (see Table 4).

⁶ Blue Earth County is home to Minnesota State University – Mankato, and Bethany Lutheran College; Winona County is home to Winona State University, Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical, and Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. Benton County is adjacent to St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, The College of St. Scholastica, and Rasmussen College.

For those young adults ages 25-34, the geographic patterning around the state was slightly different (see Table 5). Hennepin County had the highest proportion (16.4%) and the largest number (189,900) of 25-34 year olds. This group also represented 15.8% of the population in central Benton County (which contains part of the city of St. Cloud), giving it the second highest concentration of 25- to 34-year-olds; all together Benton has 6,100 individuals in this age group. Olmsted and Ramsey Counties followed with the next highest shares of those ages 25-34, with about 15% apiece.

Table 2: Minnesota Cities* with Largest Share of Young Adults (age 18-34), 2008-2012

Rank	City in Minnesota	Young adults (18-34) as a percent of total population	Total number of young adults (age 18-34)
1	Mankato	47.6%	18,700
2	St. Cloud	39.3%	25,900
3	Minneapolis	35.6%	137,100
4	Duluth	33.6%	29,000
5	St. Paul	30.9%	88,400
6	Brooklyn Park	25.3%	19,200
7	Rochester	25.2%	26,900
8	Bloomington	20.7%	17,300

*Note: Only cities with populations of 65,000 or more residents were considered in this analysis.

Table 3: Minnesota Counties with Largest Share of Young Adults (age 18-34), 2008-2012

Rank	County in Minnesota	Young adults (18-34) as a percent of total population	Total number of young adults (age 18-34)
1	Blue Earth	37.0%	23,700
2	Winona	32.7%	16,800
3	Clay	30.7%	18,100
4	Stevens	29.9%	2,900
5	Nicollet	29.2%	9,500
6	Stearns	28.8%	43,300
7	Ramsey	27.2%	139,000
8	Rice	26.9%	17,300
9	Lyon	26.7%	6,900
10	Beltrami	26.4%	11,800
11	Hennepin	26.2%	303,400
12	Benton	26.1%	10,100
13	St. Louis	24.3%	48,600
14	Olmsted	23.2%	33,500
15	Sherburne	22.3%	19,700
	STATEWIDE	23.0%	1,220,200

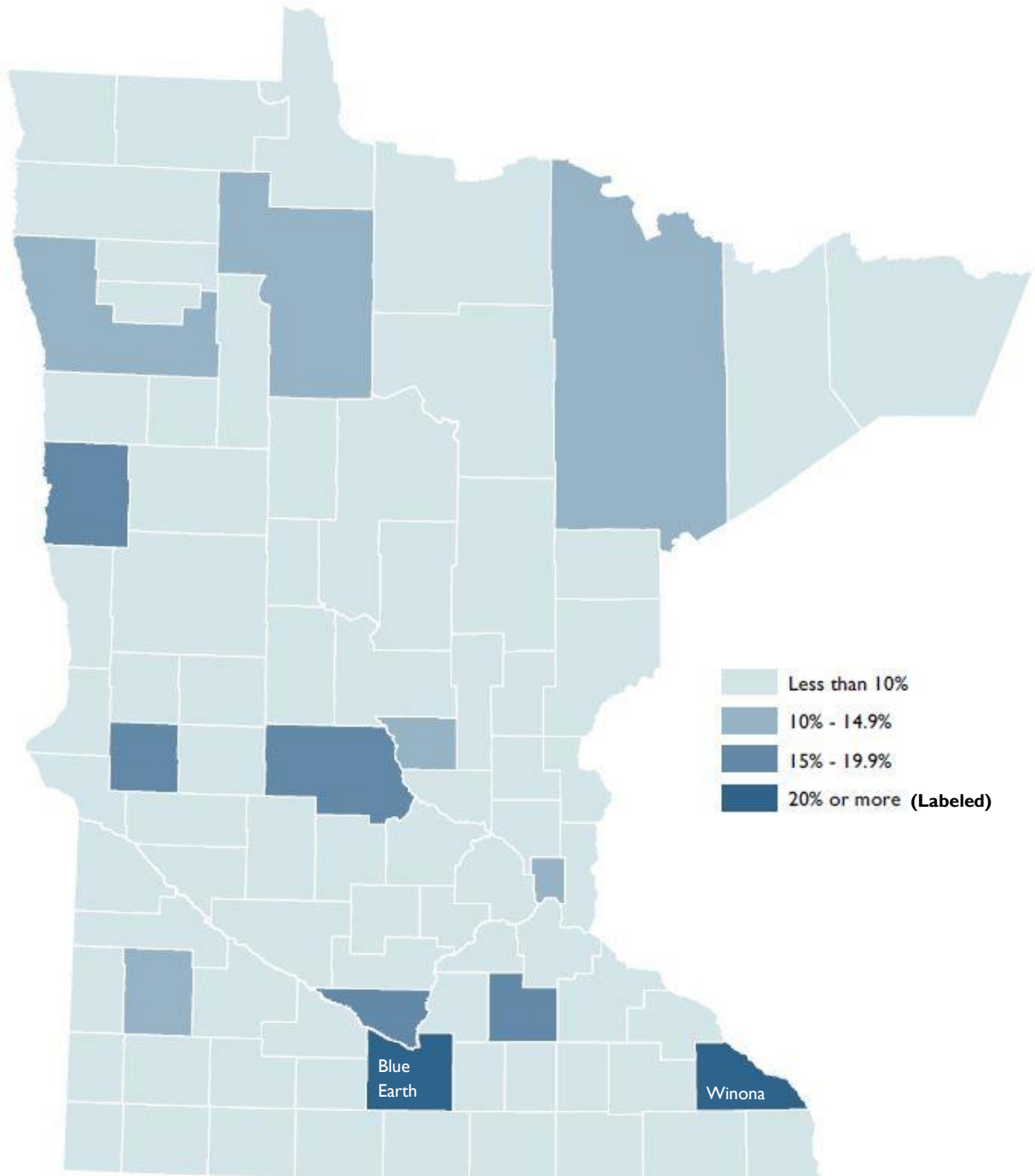
Table 4: Minnesota Counties with Largest Share of Residents Ages 18-24, 2008-2012

Rank	County in Minnesota	18- to 24-year-olds as a percent of total population	Total number of residents age 18-24
1	Blue Earth	22.9%	14,700
2	Winona	21.6%	11,100
3	Stevens	18.8%	1,800
4	Clay	17.1%	10,100
5	Stearns	15.9%	23,900
6	Nicollet	15.5%	5,100
7	Rice	15.0%	9,600
8	Beltrami	14.2%	6,300
9	Lyon	13.1%	3,400
10	St. Louis	12.8%	25,600
11	Ramsey	11.9%	60,800
12	Polk	10.4%	3,300
13	Benton	10.3%	4,000
14	Hennepin	9.8%	113,500
15	Brown	9.6%	2,500

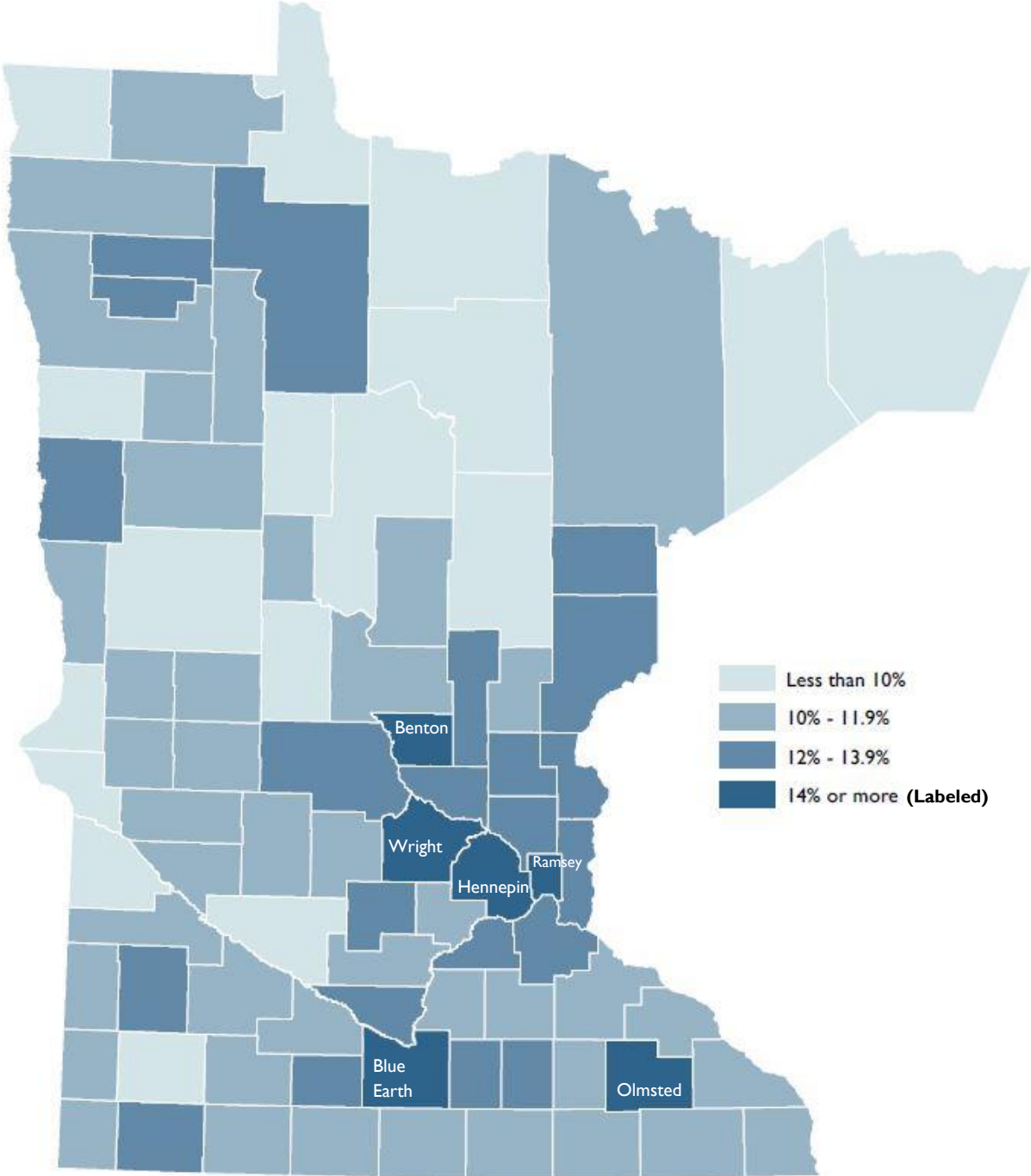
Table 5: Minnesota Counties with Largest Share of Residents Ages 25-34, 2008-2012

Rank	County in Minnesota	25- to 34-year-olds as a percent of total population	Total number of residents age 25-34
1	Hennepin	16.4%	189,900
2	Benton	15.8%	6,100
3	Olmsted	15.4%	22,300
4	Ramsey	15.3%	78,200
5	Blue Earth	14.1%	9,000
6	Wright	14.0%	17,500
7	Waseca	13.9%	2,700
8	Sherburne	13.8%	12,200
9	Nicollet	13.7%	4,500
10	Clay	13.6%	8,000
11	Lyon	13.6%	3,500
12	Dakota	13.6%	54,300
13	Scott	13.5%	17,600
14	Anoka	13.2%	43,800
15	Stearns	12.9%	19,400

Map I: Residents Ages 18-24, as a Percentage of All Residents, By County, 2008-2012



Map 2: Residents Ages 25-34, as a Percentage of All Residents, By County, 2008-2012



YOUNG ADULTS' LIVING SITUATIONS

Minnesota's young adults live in a variety of settings. During the most recent recession, increased media attention was devoted to multigenerational households composed of young adults who "boomeranged" to live with their parents once again due to financial difficulties and high unemployment. For Minnesota's young adults, the proportion living with parents decreases steadily with age (see Figure 7). Among Minnesotans ages 25 to 34, about 11% live with a parent⁷. However, four times as many 18- to 24-year-olds live with a parent householder (44%). Some might assume that unemployment was the primary driver for a young adults' decision to live with parents. However, of all young adults living with a parent, only 16% of the younger group and 13% of the older group was unemployed. Nonetheless, residing under a parent's roof may still reflect an economic strategy for emerging adults trying to manage the cost of college and/or living on their own. It may also reflect changing cultural norms about multigenerational households. In historical context, the 11% of those 25- to 34-year-old Minnesotans who lived with a parent is higher than the share that did so in either 1990 or 2000 (8% in both years.)

Dwelling with a parent only accounts for a small proportion of household arrangements for young adults—many of whom have formed households of their own. Of those 18- to 34-year-olds who head their own household, about 55% own their home, while 45% rent.⁸ Also, a significant proportion of young adults live with children of their own, and this percentage increases with each successive year. After age 30, more than half of young adults are parents to one or more children living in their home. Broadly speaking, about 8% of those under age 25 and 43% of those ages 25-34 live with their children.

Figure 7: Percent of Young Adults Living With Their Parent(s) by Single Year of Age, Minnesota, 2008-2012

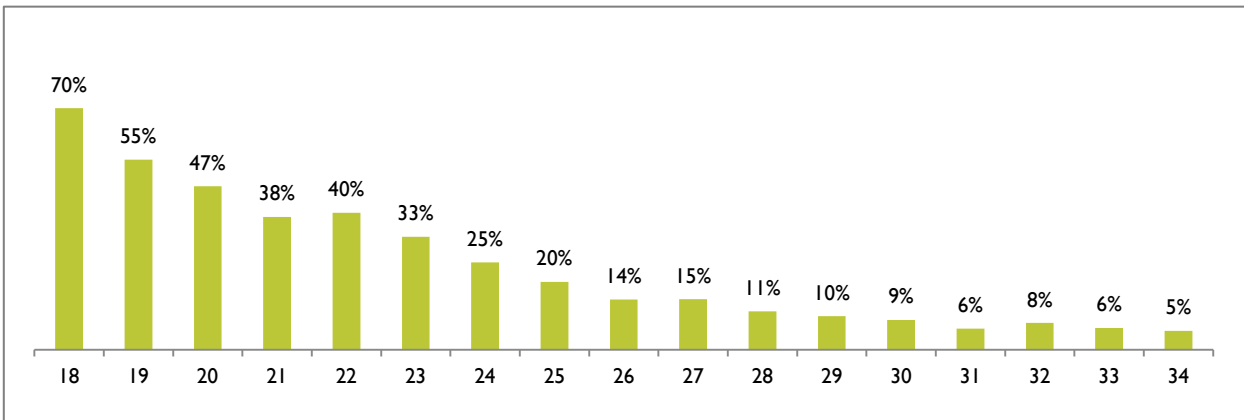
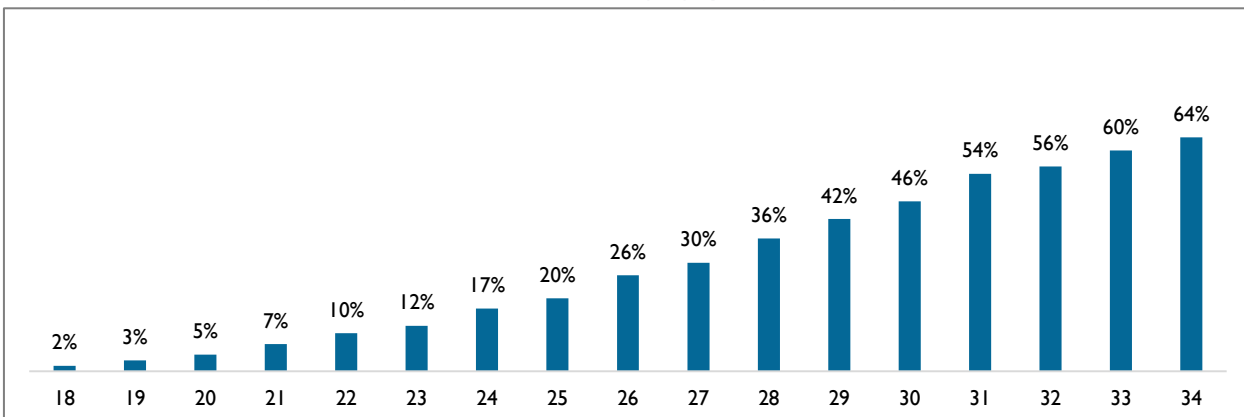


Figure 8: Percent of Young Adults Living With Their Own Child(ren) by Single Year of Age, Minnesota, 2008-2012



⁷ All "living with parent(s)" figures identify those young adults who live in a household in which one of their parents was present and express that as a percent of the entire young adult population living in both households and group quarters (such as college dorms). In a very small number of cases, the young adult may be the household head.

⁸ The proportion owning versus renting increased with age. If a young adult was the spouse of a household head, he or she was also counted in this number. "Household head" indicates the first person listed on the American Community Survey who is "living or staying here, in whose name this house or apartment is owned, bought, or being rented."

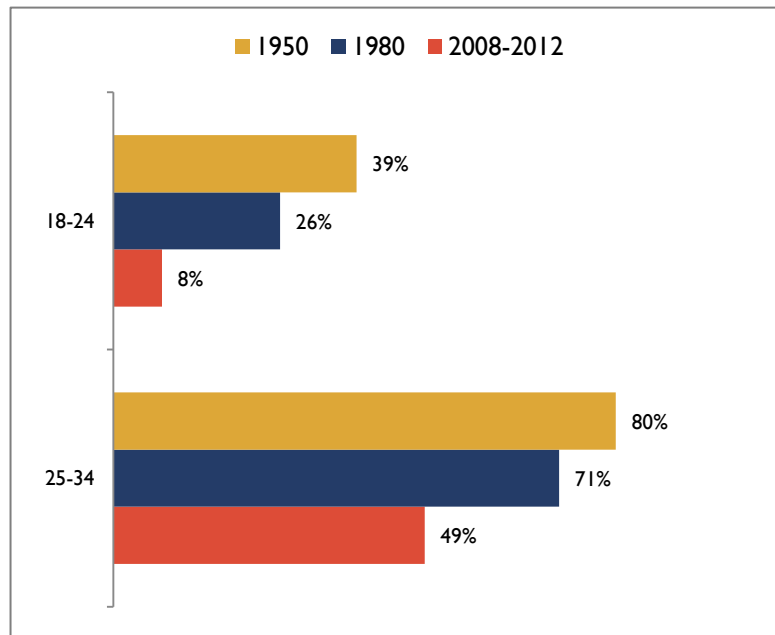
These were not the only living arrangements in which emerging adults found themselves. In fact, 10% of young emerging adults lived in group quarters, which include facilities such as college dormitories, military quarters, group homes or correctional facilities. About 17% of 18- to 24-year-olds and 13% of 25-to-34 year olds lived with a “non-relative householder,” a term that includes partners, friends, and individuals renting out rooms. Finally, 6% of young adults ages 18-24 and 13% of young adults age 25 or older was living alone.

SAYING MAYBE TO MARRIAGE

One way in which Minnesota’s young adults today are markedly different than earlier generations is in their likelihood of being married. Only about 8% of 18- to 24-year-olds are currently married, along with just under half of 25- to 34-year-olds in Minnesota. These shares are nearly 30 percentage points lower (for each group) than what was seen among Minnesota’s young adults in 1950. In that year, 8 in 10 of those ages 25 through 34 had tied the knot.

Declines in marriage among both age groups have also been observed in just the three decades since 1980 (see Figure 9). Whether reflecting economic challenges, the desire to complete higher levels of education before marrying, changing cultural norms, or some combination thereof, marriage is not the common hallmark of young adulthood that it once was. Furthermore, only time will tell whether today’s unmarried young adults are *delaying* marriage until later in their lives, or whether more will choose to forgo it entirely.

Figure 9: Percent of Young Adults Currently Married, By Age Group, Minnesota, in Years 1950, 1980 and 2008-2010



CONCLUSION

Minnesota’s 18- to 34-year-olds are beginning to put their stamp on our state. These young adults exhibit more racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity than any other group of adults in Minnesota, bringing a richness of ideas and approaches to their workplaces and civic life. As a group, they are highly mobile and attaining higher education at historically high rates. Young adults in their late teens and early 20s in Minnesota have struggled recently with high unemployment and economic challenges. However, our state’s young adults who are ages 25-34 have experienced better economic outcomes. About half of the older group is married, while more than 4 in 10 of them are now parents themselves. Young adulthood is obviously a period of rapid change, as these Minnesotans establish their identities and plan their adult lives in the decade and a half following high school. 🏠

Technical Notes: Numbers and percentages have been rounded throughout this brief so as not to imply false precision. All data estimates result from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2008-2012 American Community Survey, and thus have margins of error around them (not shown). All statements result from observations that have been found to be statistically significant. For additional information, please contact the MN State Demographic Center at demography.help@state.mn.us. Tabulations were made from the microdata obtained from the IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.