



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Driven to Discover<sup>SM</sup>

# Resident Recruitment, Welcoming and Retention Strategies

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# Resident Recruitment and Welcoming Strategy

## Understand

How will you learn about the experience of becoming a newcomer in your community?

## Market

How will you get the message that your community has opportunities out there?

## Recruit

How will you help potential residents choose your community?

## Welcome

How will your community welcome newcomers?

## Manage Leaving

How will your community connect with people that leave?

## Belonging

How will your community cultivate a sense of belonging for residents?

## Engage

How will your community engage newcomers?



# Understand

How will you learn about the experience of becoming a newcomer in your community?

1

## Some Options

### Focus Groups

Focus groups with newcomers can be a great way to learn about why people chose your community, how welcoming the community has been, and what could be improved.

2

### Interviews

Interviews with newcomers can help you understand their journey to becoming a new resident in your community. Interviews are a chance to get deeper into one story.

3

### Survey

If you can get a survey to newcomer, do it. Often this can be challenging because we don't have contact information. It's not impossible to do a survey, but it does take significant effort.

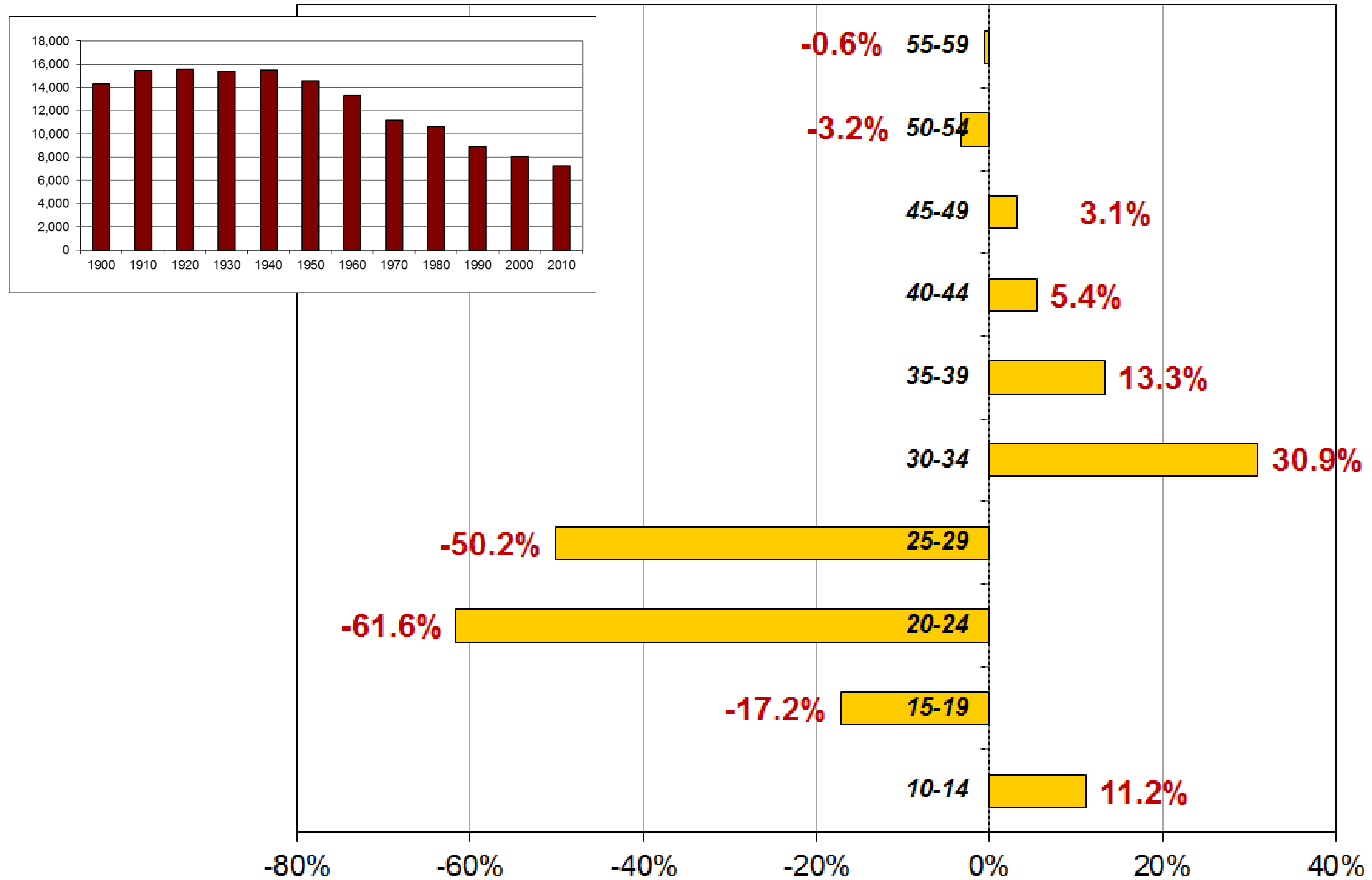
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### Events

Hold an annual event for newcomers in the community. Serve a meal. Invite newcomers, local leaders, and businesses to introduce themselves.

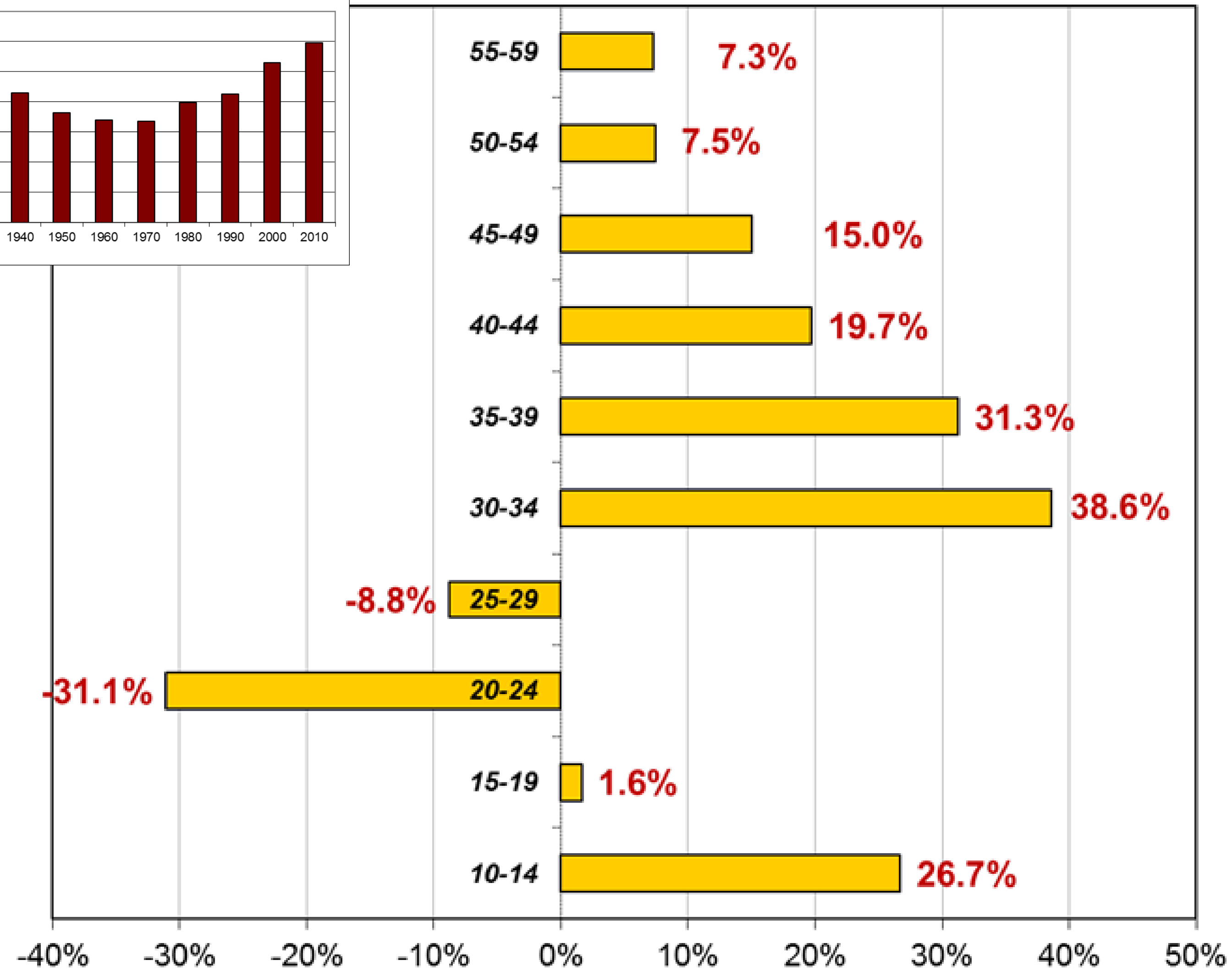
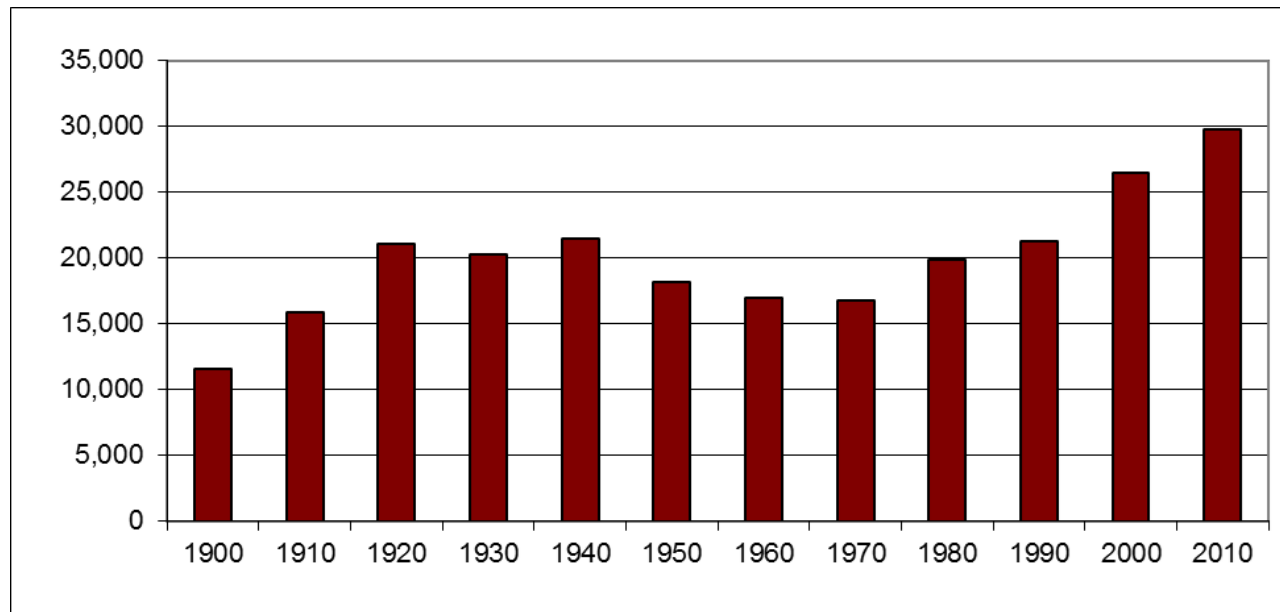


## 2000-2010, Percent Cohort Change



Rural Prairie County

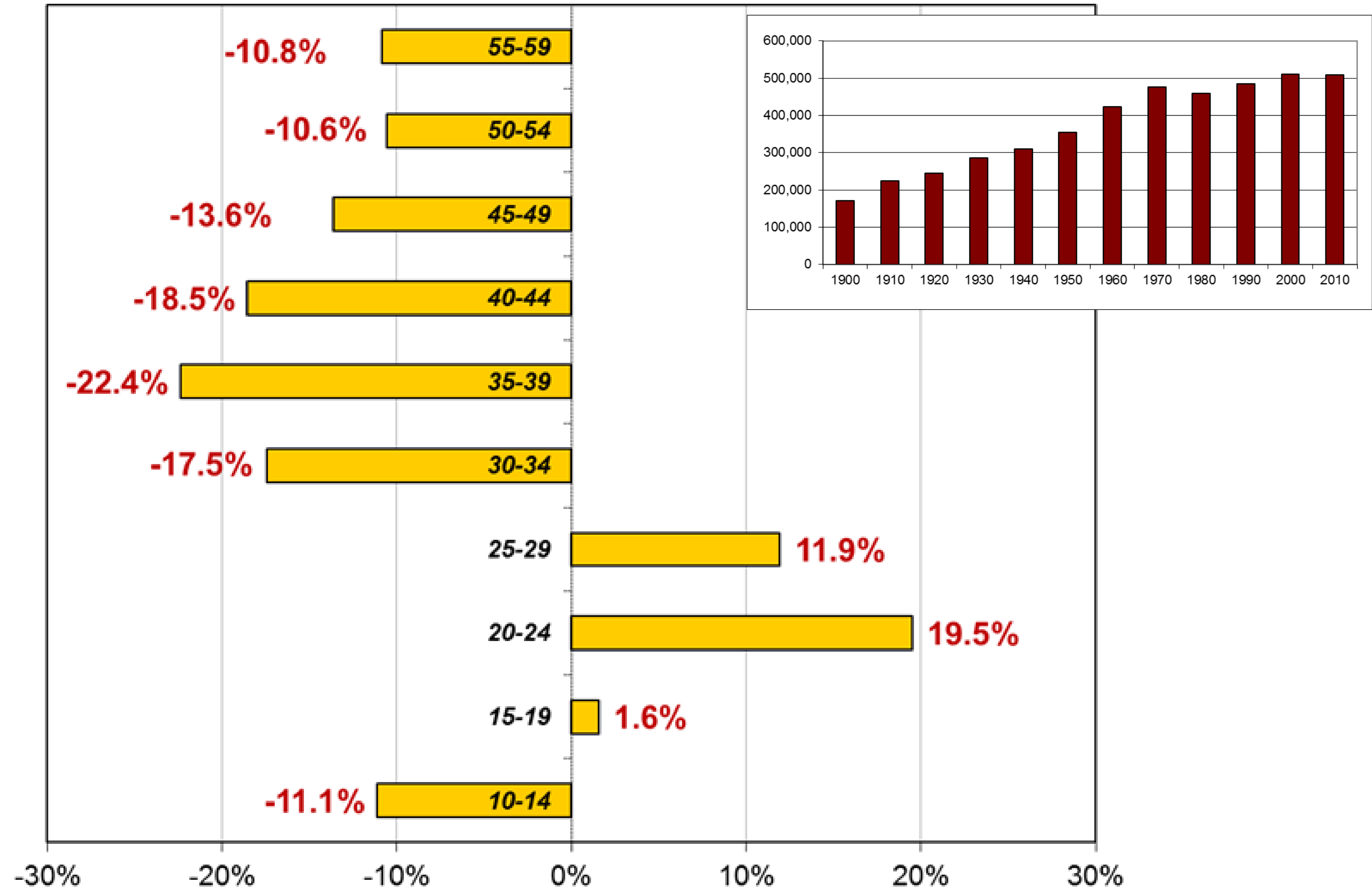
## 2000-2010, Percent Cohort Change



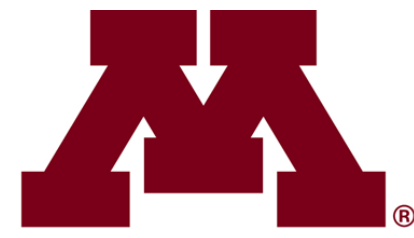
Rural Recreational County



## 2000-2010, Percent Cohort Change



Core Metropolitan County



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**Nebraska Buffalo  
Commons Research  
2012**

**Workforce Movers  
University of Minnesota,  
2004, 2012, 2019**



**MONTANA  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

**EXTENSION**



MONTANA  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION



**Montana Movers Study, 2021**





# Newcomers: Who?

- 31% moved primarily for a job
- 25% lived there previously
- 91% have some college or bachelor's
- 75% household incomes over \$50k
- 47% have children in household
- 14% telecommute!

Source: 2020 University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality. Rural workforce movers study. Funded by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.



# Newcomers: Who?



	MN	MT
Moved primarily for a job	31% →	35%
Lived in the community before	25% →	34%*
Have children in household	47% →	39%
Household income >\$50k	75%	78%

14% telecommute  
(pre-pandemic!)

\* **Social housing supply?**

Source: 2020 University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality. Rural workforce movers study. Funded by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

2021 Montana State University Extension Movers Study.



# Newcomers: Why?

**Simpler pace of life**



**Safety and Security**

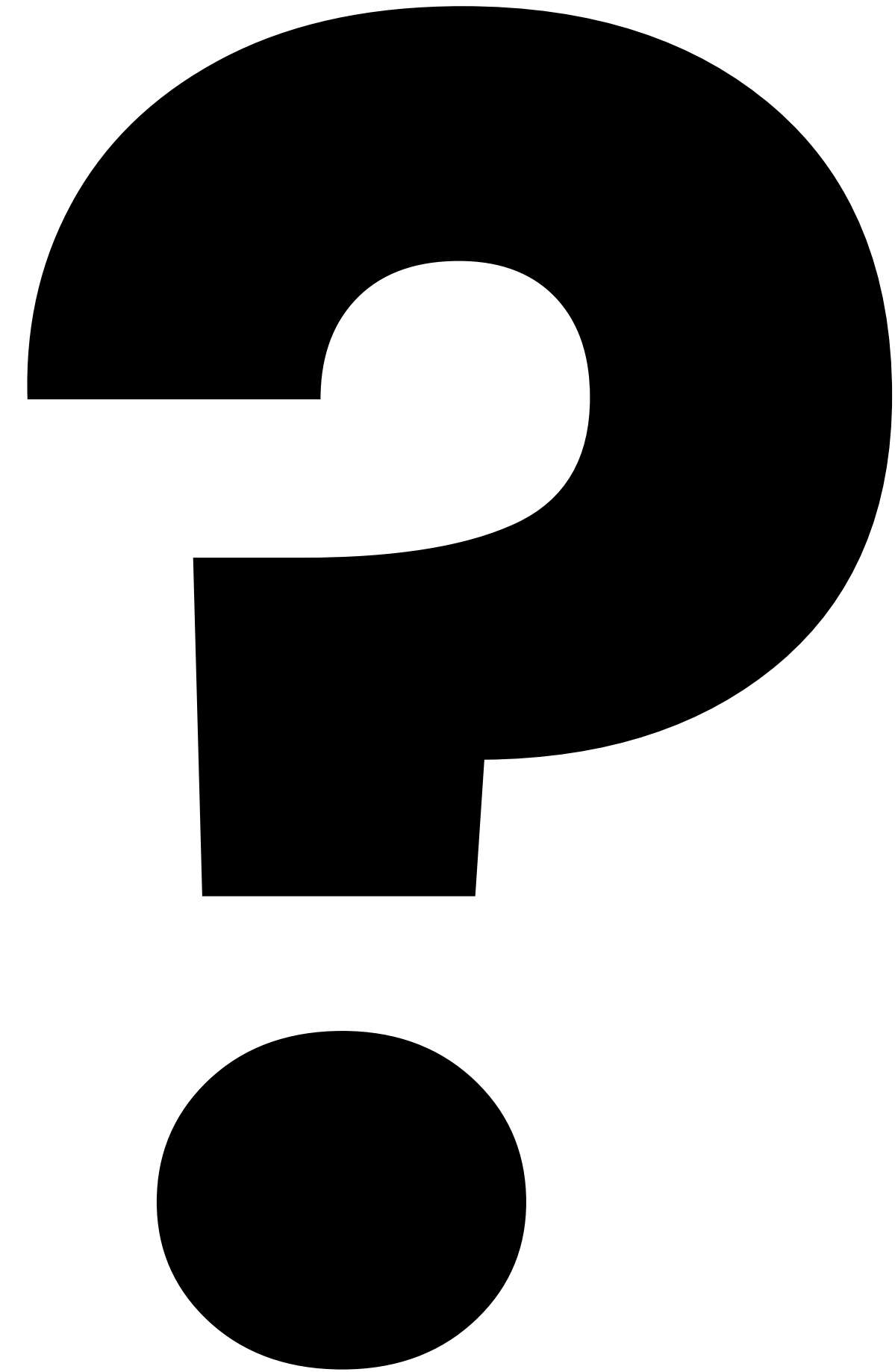


**Low Housing Cost**





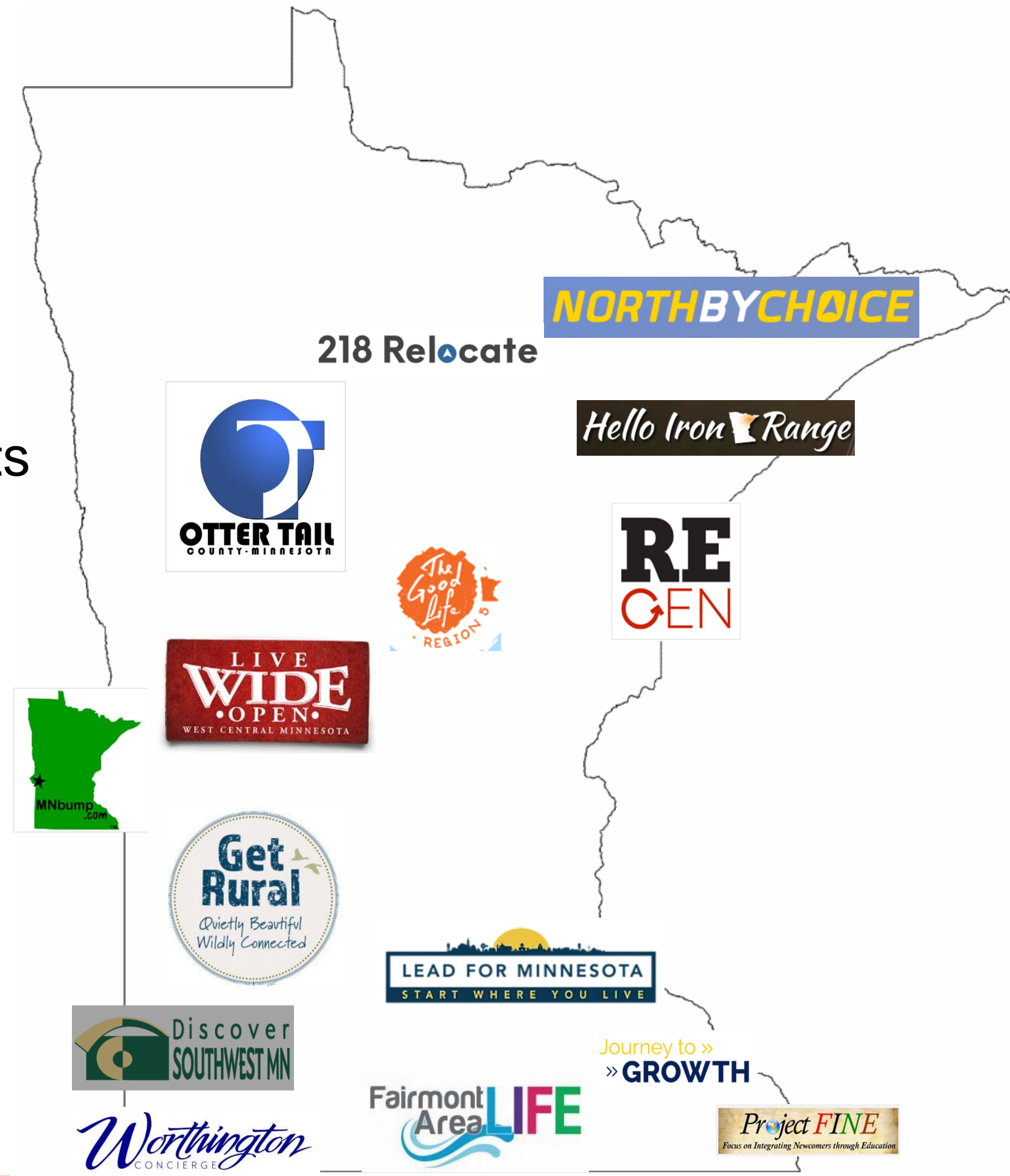
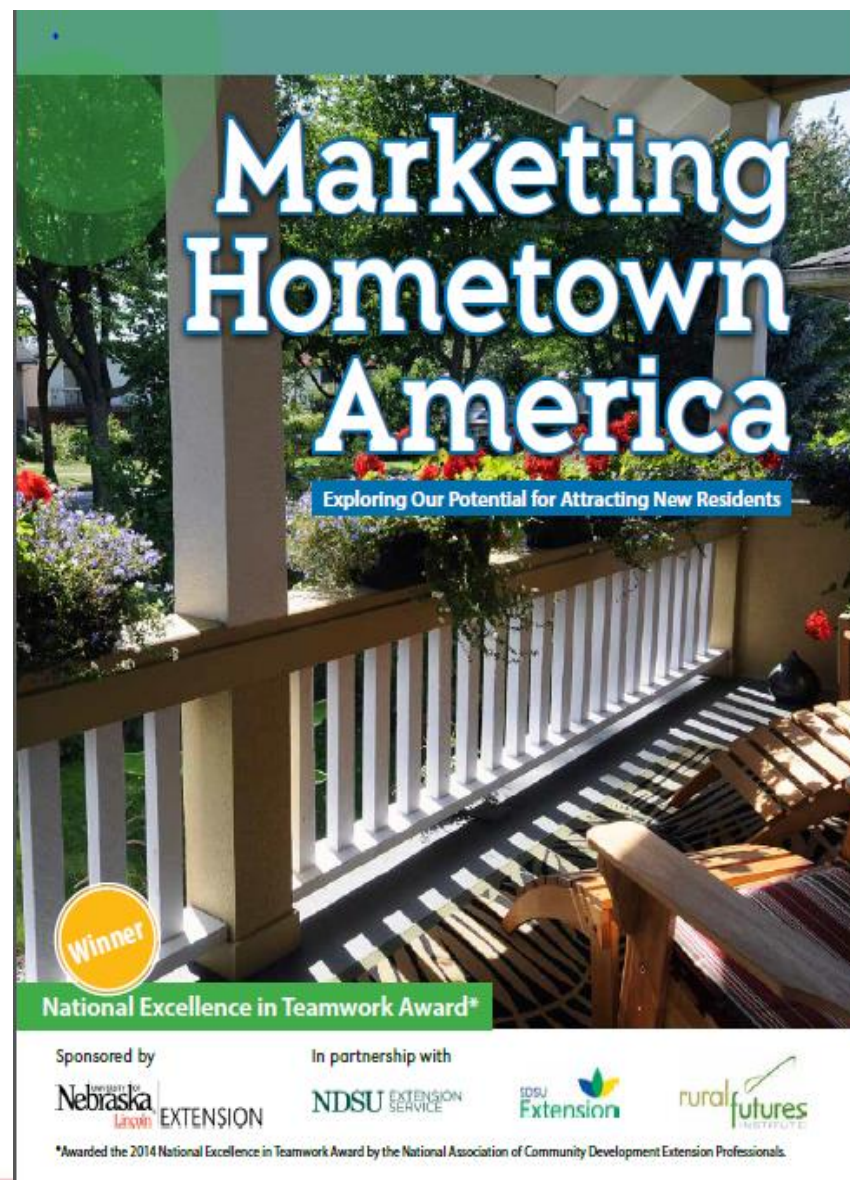
What are you doing to  
better understand  
newcomers in your  
community



# Market

How will you get the message out that your community has opportunities?

## Resident Recruitment Efforts In Minnesota





**Binesh Narayan**  
Willow Creek Employee  
Henning



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcKUYjgSXBKBnyyJaPculMQ/featured>





MARCH 26, 2021

## She opened her business in a town with all that life has to offer.

by Rick Schara, Live Wide Open

It's February of 2021. I continue to search for new business owners in our Live Wide Open region. Entrepreneurism is growing and small towns surely benefit.

I read that Michaela Wulf, who grew up in the Twin Cities, just opened a massage therapy studio in downtown Fergus Falls. Perfect! I reach out and arrange to stop by.

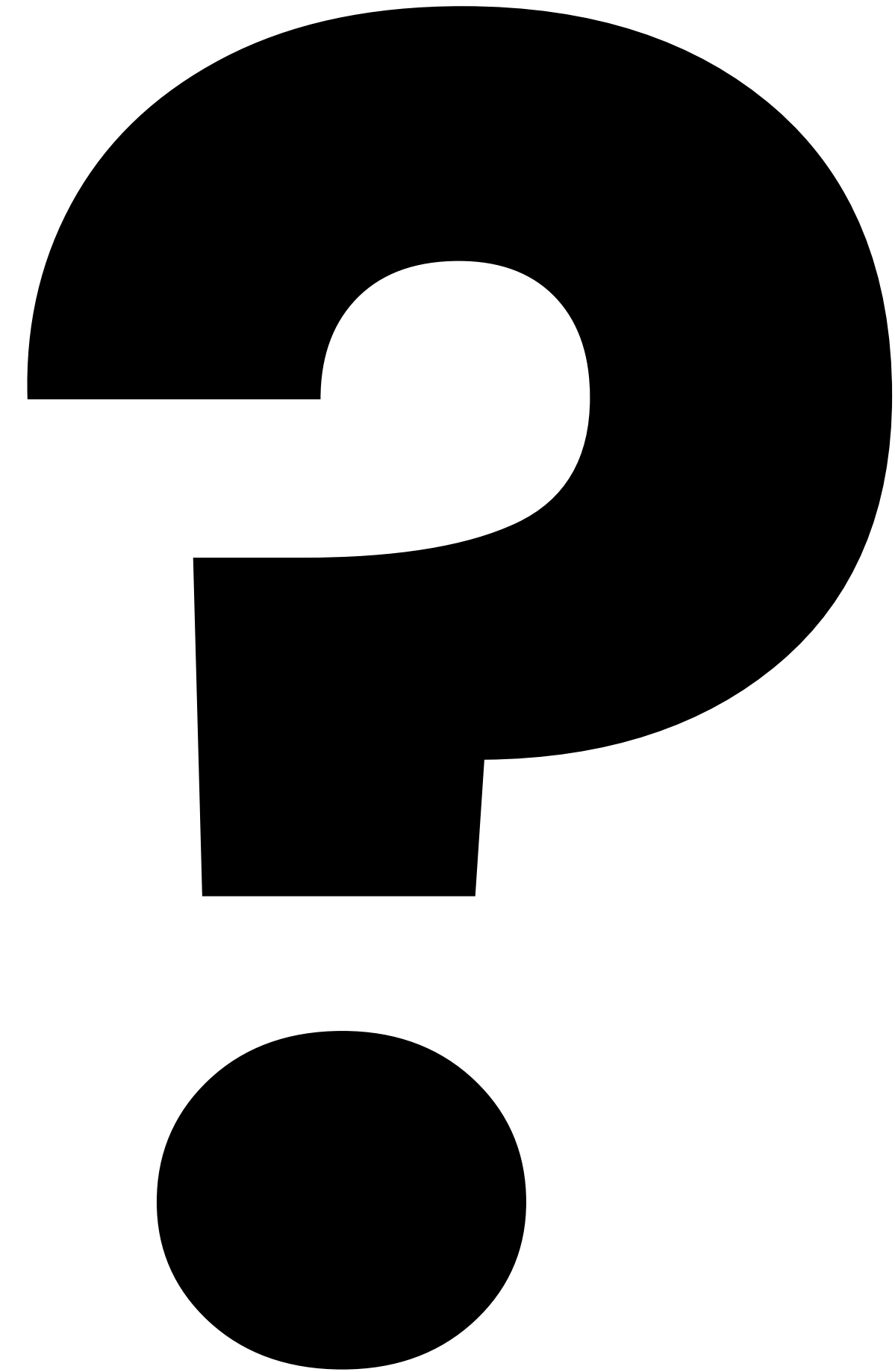
Downtowns need street level businesses. Not only is Better Hands Massage Therapy's storefront a great addition to the retail and service mix, but Michaela herself is amazing!

Start with high school. Michaela competed in wrestling in high school; you just don't find many girls competing in high school wrestling. Add to that her gymnastics career, playing bass clarinet and then after high school, going to college and starting her own company - she's been busy!

In 2016, Michaela sold her Twin Cities business to move to Wahpeton, N.D. With aging family in the area, she says, "I felt compelled to sell it (the business) and move to be closer to my family." She purchased a rural home west of Elbow Lake a few years later. "I've always loved the farm life," she said. "There's a balance in my life with country living."



What are you doing to  
market your community





# Recruit

How will you help potential residents choose your community?

## 218 Relocate

MENU ☰







## Visit Us. Thrive with Us.

*Quietly Beautiful - Wildly Connected*

[Home](#) / [Community Lifestyle Toolkits](#)

## Community Lifestyle Toolkits

Our communities are all unique and offer various lifestyle amenities to fit each individual or families needs! Explore each community and find one that's right for you! Information on healthcare, education, employment, childcare, things to do and more – these toolkits have everything you need to make the move!

Questions? Give us a call and we'd be happy to assist you in anyway and help you explore our communities – **866.866.5432**.



***Clara City***



***Milan***



***Montevideo***



What are you doing to  
recruit new residents to  
your community



# Welcome

How will your community welcome newcomers?

## Welcoming Options

1

### Welcome Materials

Create a welcome packet, welcome bag, or welcome guide. Have a plan to distribute.

2

### Welcome Wagon

Get the welcome wagon together and visit newcomers. Make sure to coordinate your efforts with other groups.

3

### Welcome Events

Hold regular welcome events for newcomers. Help newcomers build connections across the community.

4

### Sustained Welcoming Initiatives

Work over the long-term to make sure your community is a welcoming place. Be courageous.



# The community is welcoming of new residents by those likely to still live in the community in 5 years

The Community is Welcoming	Likely to Live Here in 5 Years
Strongly agree	86%
Agree	77%
Disagree	68%
Strongly Disagree	44%



WELCOMING  
AMERICA



Contact

Store

DONATE



WELCOMING NETWORK

INITIATIVES

NEWS & RESOURCES

ABOUT

*What is Welcoming?*



<https://welcomingamerica.org/initiatives/welcoming-week/>



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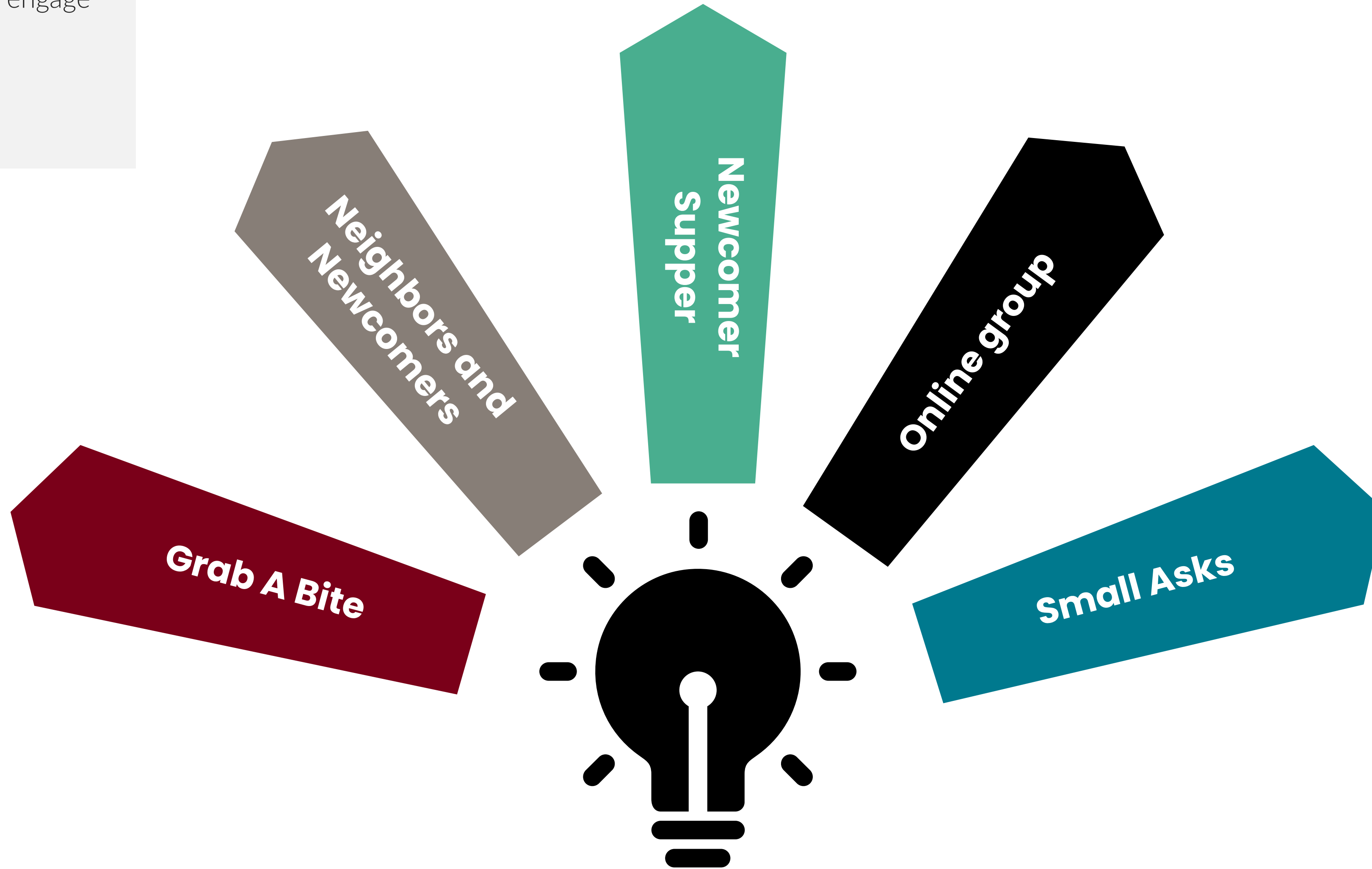
What are you doing to  
welcome new residents  
to your community



# Engage

How will your community engage newcomers?

# Engagement Ideas







<https://ottertailakescountry.com/new-to-town/>

## WHY GRAB-A-BITE?

- **DO NOT**– ask the newcomer to buy, join, sign up for, or attend ANYTHING! If they ask about a Church or how they can be involved in the community, you are free to respond. However, the goal of this contact is to present yourself as a welcoming resource, not get them to join a club.
- **DO NOT**– let them pay for the meal.
- **DO NOT**– make assumptions about the person you are meeting with.
- **DO NOT**– gossip, or otherwise disparage anyone in the community or any other community.
- **DO**– ask open ended questions about the newcomer: “What brings you to town?” “What did you enjoy about the place you used to live?” etc.
- **DO**– be prepared to share your contact info & present yourself a reference for future questions. For example, let them know they can call you if they need a plumber, a hairstylist or are interested in a Community Club.



What are you doing to  
engage new residents in  
your community





# Belonging

How will your community cultivate a sense of belonging for residents?







# UNITING CULTURES UNIENDO CULTURAS

St. James, Minnesota



**Uniting Cultures:** A community organization in St. James, Minnesota, for building a thriving, more welcoming community.

**Our Vision:** We envision a culture of inclusion where all individuals feel respected and valued, are treated fairly, and have equal opportunity and responsibility to excel in community and life.

**Uniando Culturas:** Una organización comunitaria en St. James, Minnesota, para construir una comunidad próspera y más acogedora.

**Nuestra Visión:** Concebimos una cultura de inclusión en donde todas las personas se sientan respetadas y valoradas, sean tratadas justamente, y tengan las mismas oportunidades y responsabilidades de éxito en la comunidad y en la vida.



<https://www.stjunitingcultures.org/home>



“I’ve lived here for 40 years, but I still feel like a newcomer.”

“What does a person need to do to feel like they belong or are accepted here?”

What are you doing to help new residents feel like they belong





# Manage Leaving

How will your community connect with people that leave?





# Manage Leaving

Everyone leaves your community eventually – make sure they know it’s always their home.

## Thank you notes

Send a thank you note sharing the important things the person contributed to your community.

## Newsletter

Create and share a community newsletter with former residents.

## Ask when they will return

Ask when they will come back home. Be clear that they are welcome back.

## Farewell party

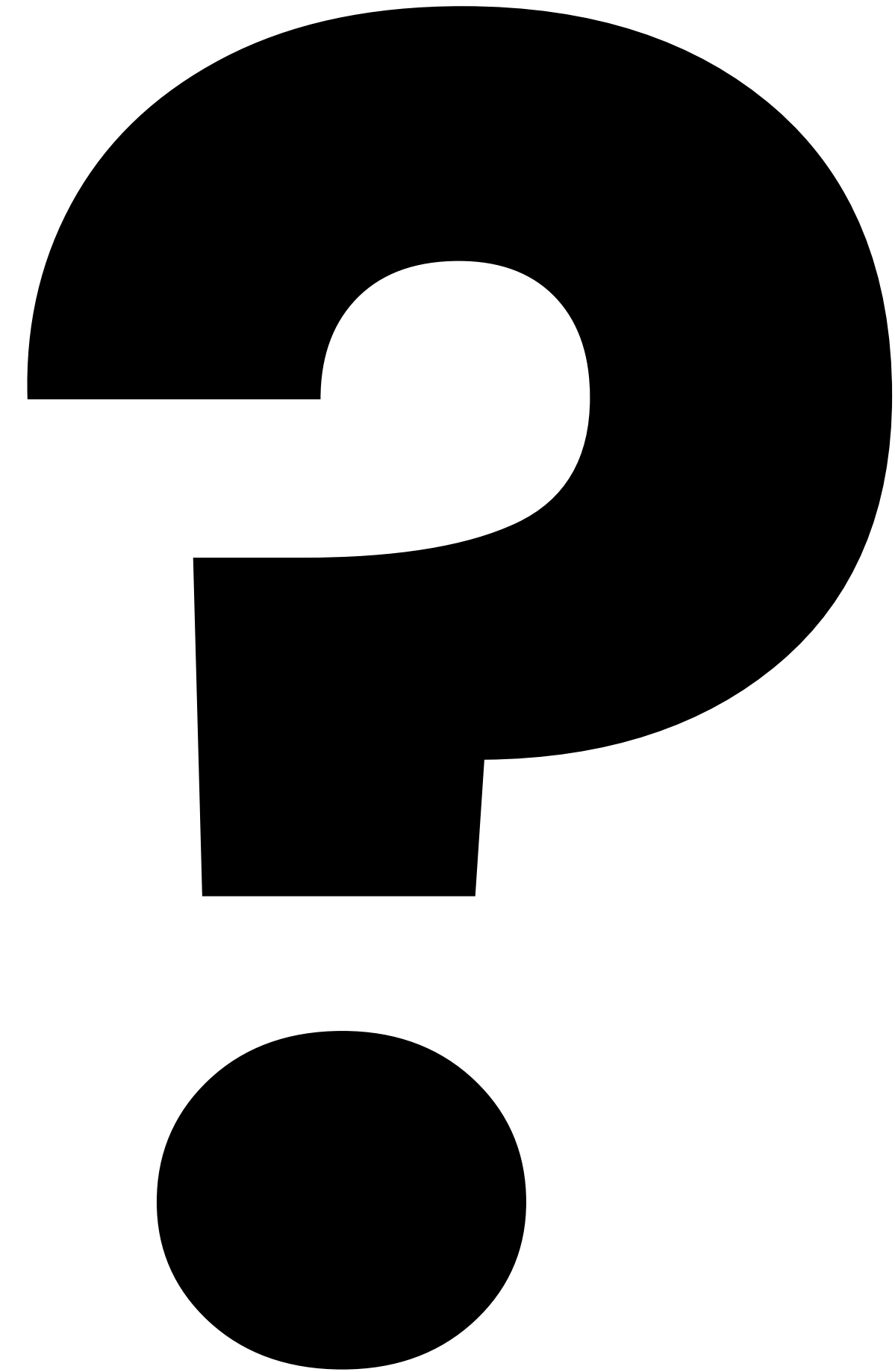
Hold a farewell party. Thank the person or family.

## Check-in

Check-in with a call, email, or card periodically. Share opportunities (jobs, businesses for sale, fundraising campaigns).

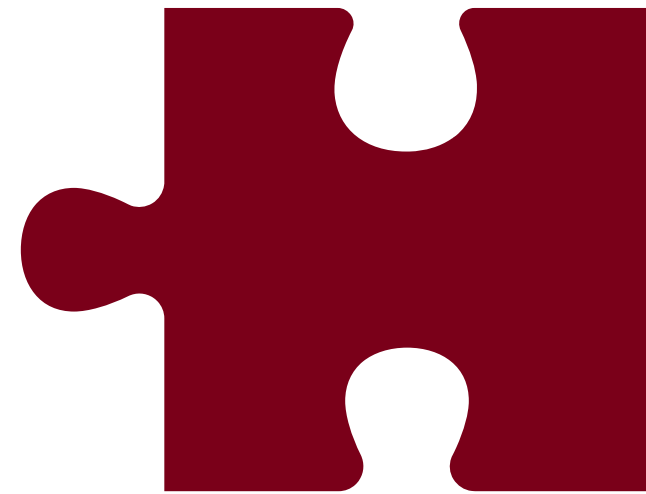


What are you doing to  
stay connected to  
people that leave your  
community





# Implementation Puzzle



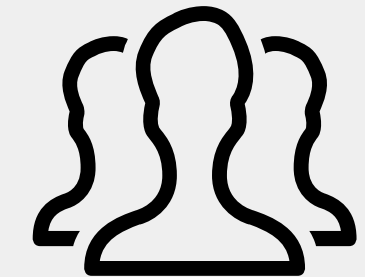
## Funding

How will you fund this work? Who will fund it?



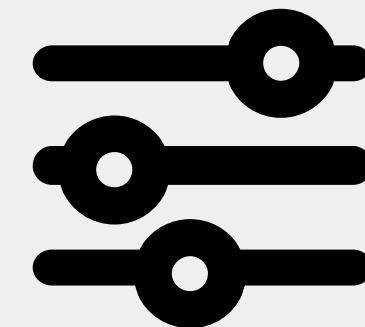
## Coordination

Good things are already happening. How can those activities be coordinated effectively?



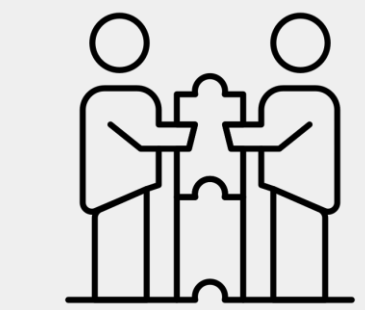
## Management

Who should be in "charge" of this type of work? Who will track progress toward goals?



## Partnership Development

Who can you work with to accomplish these activities? Who has a shared interest in success



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**Thank you.**  
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