
MAKE IT. MSP. INSIGHTS

WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO THE MINNEAPOLIS-SAINT PAUL REGION



MAKE IT. MSP.®

GREATER » MSP®

Minneapolis Saint Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership

We strive to build a region that welcomes all



NEWCOMERS & THE GREATER MINNEAPOLIS-SAINT PAUL REGIONAL VISION
The GREATER MSP Partnership shares a vision of the Greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul region (MSP) leading the world in inclusive economic growth by welcoming all, empowering talent, and igniting innovation. It is a bold vision for a region we must become by working together.

Today, MSP faces major challenges that are also key opportunities. A historic gap between labor supply and demand in the region — with more job openings in MSP than job seekers — presents a significant workforce challenge for employers. But it also presents chances to explore new solutions.

Years ago, the GREATER MSP Partnership anticipated this challenge and launched Make It. MSP. — one among many critical efforts to improve the region's talent equation. Now a priority Strategic Initiative of the Partnership, Make It. MSP. is an effort to improve the region's performance attracting and retaining talent, which includes better welcoming people from all over the world.

Whether new neighbors move to MSP from a nearby state, the coasts, or abroad, they add to the vibrancy of the region and state. In-migrant communities have helped spark growth for generations and equipped MSP to emerge as a leader in the global economy. And as others continue to join the region seeking economic opportunity, community, and a high quality of life, they make immediate impact.

In this edition of Make It. MSP. Insights, we continue our exploration of talent in MSP by focusing on newcomers. We further examine the region's performance attracting and retaining talent, evaluate the perceptions of a priority audience, and recap how partners in the Make It. MSP. initiative work in collaboration to drive change — work that happens in Make It. MSP. through the MSP Hello project.

MSP IS A TOP DESTINATION FOR NEWCOMERS
According to data from the American Community Survey (ACS), more than 93,000 newcomers moved to MSP from all over the globe in 2017. That's roughly 3% of the total MSP population. The Minnesota State Demographic Center projects the region and state's organic labor force growth will continue to steadily decline over the coming years, highlighting the continued importance of this in-flow and the imperative to retain that new talent in our workforce.

During 2019, partners in Make It. MSP. set out to learn more about these newcomers to the region through the initiative's MSP Hello project. A new regional survey revisited themes that hundreds of newcomers shared with Make It. MSP. during 2016, while also allowing partners to dig deeper into specific issues. In addition, continued analysis of ACS data revealed how the composition of MSP's newcomer population is also changing.

+93K
NEWCOMERS
3+%
OF THE TOTAL POPULATION

PEOPLE ARE OUR REGION'S GREATEST ASSET.
We sincerely believe this to be true, and work to put the aspirations and needs of people at the center of Make It. MSP. and every aspect of the GREATER MSP Partnership.

Because people matter most, we've been asking questions and taking careful notes. We are especially interested to hear from the newest members of our community who arrived from dozens of other states and countries.

Hundreds of newcomers to this region have honored us with their stories and insight. Everyone's story has meaning and every experience is different. And yet, a number of common themes emerged. We all seek connection. We all desire opportunity and a sense of belonging.

Many of our region's newcomers feel welcome already — but not all of them. Welcoming newcomers is our shared work and every connection counts. Together, we can create a culture of welcoming that will make this great place even greater.

Peter Frosch
CEO, GREATER MSP

MSP newcomers relocate from all across the world

PUTTING DATA IN PERSPECTIVE

Migration data provides a clearer picture of who is moving to MSP, where they are moving from, and how that migration compares to other top metro areas. Analyzing our region's performance among the context of our regional peers helps us understand which trends may be unique to MSP and which may be consistent with broader changes across the country.

However, our new neighbors are more than simple data points. Insights require balancing this quantitative data with the more qualitative perspectives and experiences of these newcomers to our community. Together, this information provides Make It. MSP. partners with actionable intelligence that can guide actions within individual organizations and across a broader partnership.

Some findings surprise partners more than others. For example, while international in-migration is down sharply in recent years (38% decrease), domestic migration to MSP increased slightly (up 5.7%). The newcomers to MSP who moved from within the U.S. were most likely to have relocated from elsewhere in the Midwest and least likely to have relocated from somewhere in the Northeast.

As we dive deeper into the research and survey results to follow, it is our hope that these actionable insights can help employers and community partners.

<p>INCREASE AWARENESS of the region's newcomer populations and their experiences.</p>	<p>GENERATE IDEAS for how our region can build more welcoming and inclusive workplaces and communities.</p>
<p>ENGAGE COMMUNITY across the Make It. MSP. Initiative and the MSP HELLO team.</p>	<p>PUT DATA TO MEANINGFUL USE within professional, corporate, lifestyle groups, and informal communities.</p>

The American Community Survey (ACS) is administered by the U.S. Census Bureau and regularly collects 1-year data for use by public and private sector clients, including non-profit community and economic development organizations like the GREATER MSP Partnership and its Make It. MSP. team. The data used in this report is from the calendar year 2017 and was analyzed by GREATER MSP researchers and compared against similar data from 2015-2017.

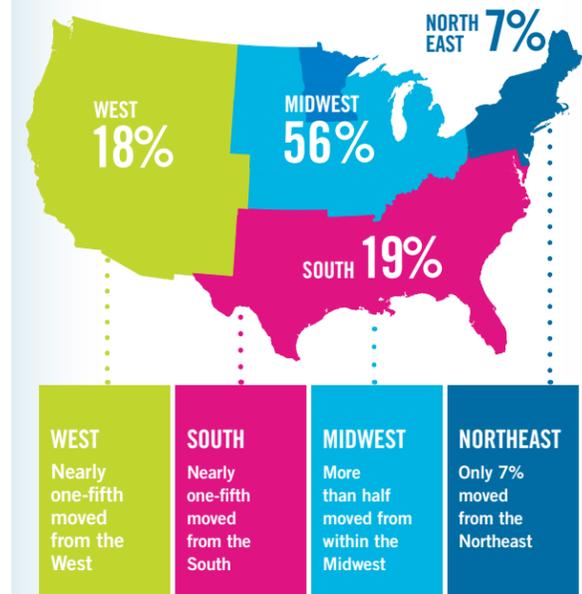
FAST FACTS

AMONG THE **93,000*** MIGRANTS WHO CAME TO MSP IN 2017:

- NEARLY **85%** MOVED TO MSP FROM WITHIN THE U.S. (Higher proportion than our peers**)
- NEARLY **3 OUT OF 10** WITHIN THE 25-34 YEAR OLD AGE RANGE (Higher proportion than our peers)
- MORE THAN **1/2** HELD A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER (Lower proportion than our peers)
- MORE THAN **1/2** HAD NEVER BEEN MARRIED (Higher proportion than our peers)
- MORE THAN **1/4***** WERE PEOPLE OF COLOR (Lower proportion than our peers)

*93,000 total based on newcomers who moved to MSP from beyond state borders.
**Term "peers" refers to the average of top-30 largest U.S. metros.
***Based on domestic migration data only.

AMONG DOMESTIC NEWCOMERS TO THE ENTIRE STATE OF MINNESOTA IN 2017



Economic opportunity drives most newcomers

2019 MSP HELLO SURVEY INSIGHTS

During 2016, Make It. MSP. partners distributed a survey to newcomers across MSP. The results are what led partners to launch the MSP Hello project with support from the Knight Foundation. Nearly three years later, the 2019 MSP Hello survey provided an opportunity to hear more from newcomers to the region while gathering insights on:



WHAT BROUGHT NEWCOMERS TO MSP AND WHAT MAKES THEM STAY OR LEAVE



WHETHER NEWCOMERS FEEL WELCOME IN MSP



WHAT CHALLENGES NEWCOMERS FACED



WHAT KINDS OF MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS NEWCOMERS ARE SEEKING IN MSP

More than 560 newcomers responded to the survey, most of which have moved to MSP within the last 5 years and an overwhelming majority having relocated from somewhere else within the U.S. (96%). 25-34 year olds were by far the largest age group sampled, followed by 18-24 and 35-44. The racial breakdown of respondents also closely mirrored the region's current population, with a little more than a quarter of all describing themselves as a person of color.

560 NEWCOMERS RESPONDED | **96%** RELOCATED FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE U.S. | **25-34** YEAR OLDS WERE THE LARGEST GROUP SAMPLED | **27%** OF ALL RESPONDENTS WERE PERSONS OF COLOR

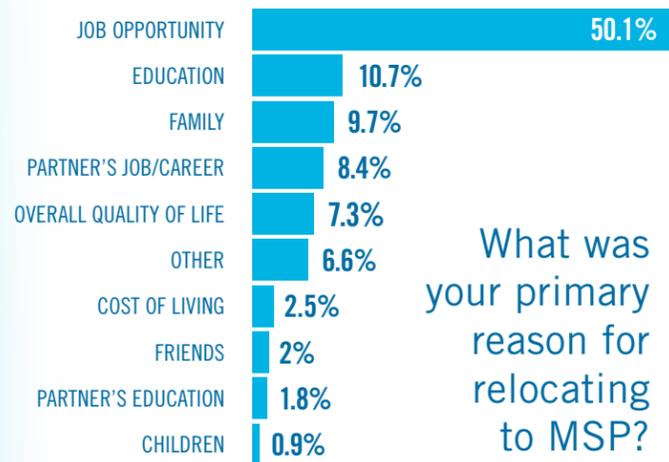
WHAT BROUGHT NEWCOMERS TO MSP & WHAT MAKES THEM STAY OR LEAVE

Research by Make It. MSP. partners continues to reveal that while people relocate for different reasons, economic opportunity consistently emerges as the top consideration for the most people. That held true for newcomers responding to the 2019 MSP Hello survey.

71%
MOVED FOR JOBS OR EDUCATION

Nearly three quarters (71%) of survey respondents reported moving to MSP for job opportunities or education — or, that of their partners. Other top reasons included family and overall quality of life.

This emphasis on economic opportunity reinforces the importance of communicating the region's abundance of job and career openings as well as prioritizing work to nurture greater connections across professional networks. While feelings of belonging, community, and other personal and family connections were revealed to be very important to new arrivals' decision to stay in MSP, professional opportunities outweighed all other considerations.



Without sustained connections to professional development and opportunity here in MSP, newcomers may be drawn back to the networks from their place of origin or to another community when it comes time for the next career step or transition.

When asked what influences a newcomer's decision to leave or stay in MSP, job and career reasons once again led all other respondent answers. Friends and family also emerged as a top consideration, indicating the importance of personal relationships and feelings of community connectedness. Individual community amenities did not rank as highly as these factors of economic opportunity and social inclusion.

Newcomers seek stronger connections in Minneapolis-Saint Paul

“First impressions do matter.”

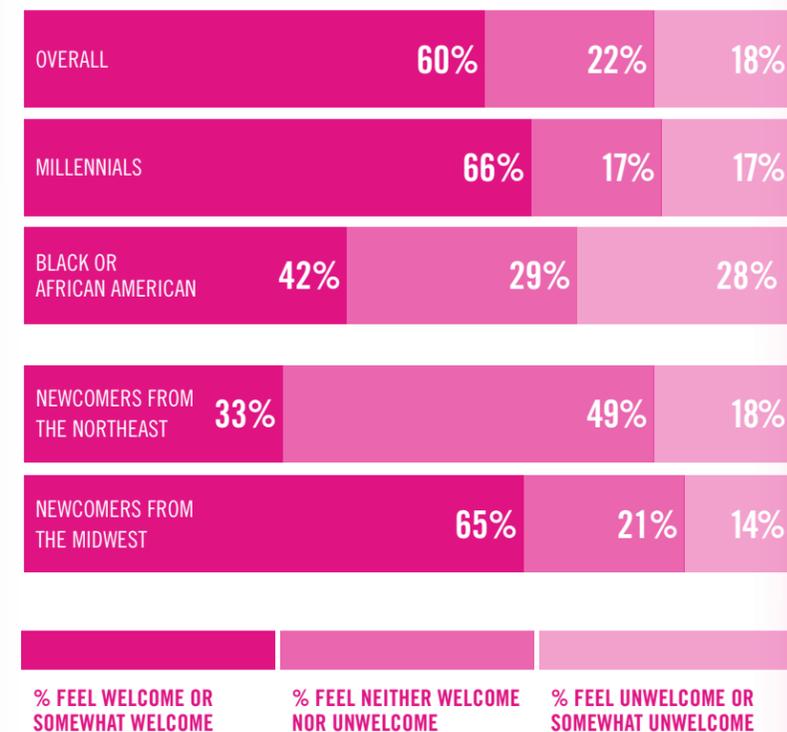
The 2016 newcomer survey revealed a correlation between a newcomer's initial experience and whether they see themselves being in MSP in 3-5 years. A majority of newcomers in this most recent survey reported that they are likely or somewhat likely to live in MSP in 3-5 years. However, that projection differed based on the respondent's reported race or ethnicity. For example, people of color reported being less likely to be in MSP in 3-5 years.

WHETHER NEWCOMERS FEEL WELCOME IN MSP

Fortunately, a majority of survey respondents reported feeling welcome in MSP. Overall, 60% of newcomers reported feeling welcome in MSP. 18% reported that they felt unwelcome or somewhat unwelcome, and 22% reported feeling neither welcome nor unwelcome. However, those numbers differed notably when disaggregated by different demographics.

For example, responses differed slightly depending on where newcomers relocated from and also varied notably based on whether or not the respondent identified as a person of color. Specifically, respondents identifying as Black or African American reported the highest rates of feeling unwelcome, at 28% overall. These findings are consistent with results from additional Make It. MSP. research.

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK: DATA DIFFERENCES ACROSS NEWCOMER GROUPS



WHAT CHALLENGES NEWCOMERS FACE

While newcomers experience their relocation and acclimation to MSP differently, many themes emerge frequently across groups. Some of the top challenges included:

FINDING A COMMUNITY, making friends, and forging “real” connections



NAVIGATING NEIGHBORHOODS, the commute, and transportation options

LEARNING ABOUT HOUSING, schools, and winter in MSP



Respondents who identified as Black or African American reported greater difficulty in getting acclimated to the regional assets and amenities of MSP. This theme is explored in additional detail in the BE MSP Workplace Inclusion Toolkit, another project of Make It. MSP. Visit makeitmsp.org/bemsp.

WHAT KINDS OF MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS NEWCOMERS ARE SEEKING IN MSP

The MSP Hello team has been working to help newcomers make meaningful connections and used this survey to learn more about the specific types of connections that newcomers want to make. Survey respondents differed in how they characterized the connections each are seeking — including to a person, a group, or a community. In fact, 97% of respondents said they are primarily seeking a connection to one of these things, versus less than 2% seeking a connection to additional resources.

People are describing a desire to establish meaningful connections with other people. To build off what's already working, newcomers were asked to describe settings where meaningful connections have occurred for them. Frequent answers include:

children's school & activities, places of worship, neighborhood & community groups and events, a college setting, workplaces, professional networking groups, neighbors & roommates

Newcomers are a top priority for Make It. MSP.



CASE STUDY

MSP WELCOME WEEK BRINGS PARTNERS TOGETHER.

The best way to illustrate the collaborative approach of Make It. MSP. is through specific projects. During September 2018, Make It. MSP. partners launched the very first MSP Welcome Week. The simple concept promised to cluster a series of events and meetups designed to help newcomers make meaningful connections. Two years of hosting joint events and supporting partners equipped the MSP Hello project team and other Make It. MSP. partners for this weeklong series.

While Make It. MSP. organized the platform and promotion of the week, it was partners who made it happen, from individual volunteers to host organizations. Newcomers like Veronica and Jeanna hosted local meetups. Organizations like the International Institute of Minnesota and Young Professionals of Minneapolis planned larger events. Partners like the Science Museum of Minnesota aligned programming with the effort. Expert facilitators from Marnita's Table trained volunteers. Meet Minneapolis set up a hub on Nicollet Mall. All Are Welcome Here designed promotional materials.

What was designed to be a five-event series quickly expanded to 23 events that welcomed more than 1,200 people in cities all over the region. To learn more, visit makeitmsp.org/msp-welcome-week.



MAKE IT. MSP. STRATEGY & VISION

Make It. MSP. partners share an ambition to make the Greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul region (MSP) one of the country's Top 10 performers at attracting and retaining talent. Achieving that ambition requires significant and sustained improvement on multiple fronts. Fortunately, the region's performance has improved in recent years, with MSP emerging as a leader in the Midwest and North of the U.S.



As a Strategic Initiative of the GREATER MSP Partnership, Make It. MSP. shares characteristics with other initiatives of the Regional Economic Development Strategy. Most notably, it is a collaborative effort driven by a diverse group of partners. Together, these partners set shared priorities and work together to drive change.

This commitment to collaboration among 200 partners is how Make It. MSP. earned a Gold Award from the International Economic Development Council in 2018.

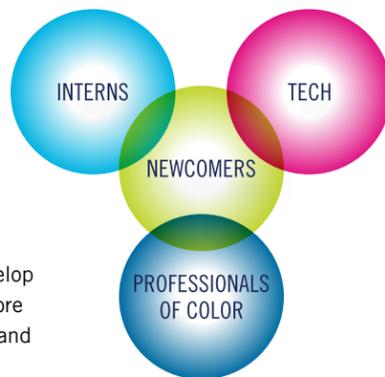


“Welcoming newcomers is one of four strategic priorities of Make It. MSP.”

One of the four strategic areas of focus for Make It. MSP. is welcoming and onboarding newcomers. Partners selected this priority for multiple reasons. For one, as the report makes clear, tens of thousands of newcomers already choose to relocate to MSP each year. Improving retention among these newcomers can make a substantial impact toward the overall ambition. Additionally, these newcomers are connected to networks throughout the world and are among the most important ambassadors and influencers to individuals considering a move to MSP in the future.

Other strategic areas of focus in Make It. MSP. include retaining professionals of color, attracting technology talent, and converting interns. These areas and other projects of the initiative are interrelated. The issues and solutions explored in each quarterly Make It. MSP. Insights report during 2019 connect to the issues and solutions explored in the other reports.

The MSP Hello project brand was developed to specifically highlight events and opportunities that partners are designing for newcomers to MSP. This project intersects with other Make It. MSP. teams like BE MSP, working to connect and elevate professionals of color, as well as MSP Tech, working to communicate how tech professionals can develop and advance their careers in MSP. To learn more about Make It. MSP. and discover other tools and insights, please visit makeitmsp.org.



MSP Hello translates insights to actions

LAUNCHING MSP HELLO

With the launch of the MSP Hello project in 2016, partners began working together to respond to newcomer insights. These partners included talent and HR leaders at top local employers, organizers of meetup groups and associations, representatives from local convention and visitors' bureaus, higher education experts, local governments, and newcomers themselves.

As survey results demonstrate, the solutions reach beyond surface-level interactions. MSP Hello partners have planned events, forged partnerships, and connected resources — all with the goal of helping newcomers make meaningful connections here in MSP.

BUILDING NETWORKS

The MSP Hello project has facilitated more than 50 large and small events throughout the region. Each event takes a different approach, but with a shared idea that attendees are looking to make new connections, expand their social networks, and learn more about the area. Examples of events included:



- 1 Seasonal welcoming events like Hello Winter, Hello Spring, Hello Summer, and Hello Fall — celebrations hosted at the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Minnesota History Center
- 2 Monthly meetups hosted in communities like Woodbury, Bloomington, and St. Louis Park in partnership with cities, tourism groups, and partners like the Mall of America
- 3 Casual brunch and dinner meetups hosted at restaurants, breweries, stadiums, and festivals
- 4 Outdoor outings to explore the region's parks, trails, and recreational areas including a group hike, a kayaking experience, cross country skiing, and biking

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL GROUPS

MSP is home to hundreds of community and professional organizations, informal meetups and peer circles, and other networks where people make meaningful connections. By working to promote and connect with these groups, the MSP Hello project is able to make newcomers aware of opportunities.

The project prioritizes events and opportunities designed to help people make new social connections. Formal partnerships with groups such as Young Professionals of Minneapolis and Break the Bubble provide a steady series of local events and meetups to promote to newcomers. Nevertheless, more work is needed to identify consistent experiences for other groups like families with young children.



GUIDING NEWCOMERS TO LOCAL RESOURCES

While the survey may indicate that newcomers are not looking for a high volume of new resources, they are seeking out the right ones, including those curated by peers and people they trust. MSP Hello partners have focused on guiding these newcomers to resources in areas of priority, from exploring neighborhoods to preparing for winter. Examples of projects have included:

THE MSP HELLO EVENTS CALENDAR – Events designed with newcomers in mind

THE MSP NEIGHBORHOOD GUIDE – An interactive map and curated regional resources

THE MSP WINTER GUIDE – Stories, tips, and links to help prepare for and experience winter

THE MSP WELCOME AMBASSADOR PROGRAM – A peer network to ask specific questions

These resources can be found by visiting makeitmsp.org/msp-hello and subscribing to its newsletter.



THANK YOU TO MAKE IT. MSP. ENTERPRISE TEAM PARTNERS FOR MAKING THIS REPORT POSSIBLE

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