The economic and social conditions in which people live and work can influence health and life expectancy. Examples of these social determinants of health are: income, employment, education, housing, early life experiences, social exclusion, and social support. The determinants affect a person’s life and work conditions, such as stress levels, access to healthy food, safe places to exercise, exposure to environmental hazards, and availability of early learning opportunities. These exposures interact to increase or decrease the risk for many major diseases, such as heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes.

**General population**

- Dakota County’s population grew from 355,904 in 2000 to 398,552 in 2010 – a 12 percent increase. The state population grew by eight percent during the same period. The 2015 population estimate is 414,686.
- Although the county reached its population growth peak during the 1980s and 1990s, there was still a 12 percent increase during the decade from 2000-2010.
- Dakota County has the third largest population in the state and represents an estimated 7.6 percent of the state’s population.

**Age distribution**

- The median age of Dakota County residents increased from 30.2 years in 1990 to 36.8 years in 2010 – a 22 percent increase. In 2015, it is estimated to be 37.8.
- The State of Minnesota Demographer’s Office projects that there will be 115,074 Dakota County residents 65 and older in 2030 – an increase of 189 percent from 2010.
Racial/ethnic distribution

- In 2015, people of color made up an estimated 20 percent of the Dakota County population. In the 2015-16 school year, 31.5 percent of Dakota County public and charter school students were students of color. Blacks, Hispanics, and Asian/Pacific Islanders are the largest racial and ethnic groups in the county.
- The State of Minnesota Demographer’s Office projects that the populations of color in Dakota County will increase by 74 percent from 2010 to 2030. The white population is projected to grow by 10 percent in the same period.
- In the 2015-16 school year, 15.5 percent of Dakota County public and charter school students spoke a language other than English in their home – a total of 127 different languages. Spanish was the most commonly-spoken language after English.

Economic factors

- In 2015, an estimated seven percent of Dakota County residents had incomes below the poverty level – the same as in 2010. Dakota County was below the state overall (10 percent) in 2015.
- An estimated 11 percent of Dakota County children under 18 lived in households with incomes below the federal poverty level in 2015. Poverty in children under 18 increased from 10 percent in 2010.
- In 2015, the per capita income in Dakota County was an estimated $36,688–higher than the state ($33,425) and a decrease from 2014.
- In 2015, unemployment in Dakota County was 3.3 percent, on average. This was a decrease from a 7.2 percent average in 2009. Dakota County was slightly below the state average (3.7 percent) for 2015.

Housing

- In 2015, an estimated 73.5 percent of housing in Dakota County was owner-occupied. Forty-three percent of renter households and 17 percent of homeowners spent 30 percent or more of their monthly household income on housing.
- Foreclosures decreased in the county from a peak of 2,147 in 2010 to 555 in 2015. The number of foreclosures represents less than one percent of all resident parcels in the county.

Education

- In 2015, an estimated 95 percent of Dakota County residents 25 and older had a high school education or higher; 41 percent had a Bachelor’s degree or higher.
- In 2016, Dakota County ranked fourth among metro area counties for third-grade reading scores and eighth-grade math scores.

Quality of life/community engagement

- In 2016, 95 percent of Dakota County residents said the quality of life was excellent or good, slightly more than in 2013.

About this Community Health Profile

For more information about the Dakota County community health assessment, contact: Melanie Countryman, Epidemiologist (melanie.countryman@co.dakota.mn.us or 651-554-6131).

For more information:
- Dakota County Residential Survey (2016) www.DakotaCounty.us (search “Residential Survey”)
- U.S. Census Bureau www.census.gov
- Minnesota State Demographic Center www.mn.gov/admin/demography/
  Minnesota Department of Education www.education.state.mn.us
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development www.mn.gov/deed/
- Unnatural Causes – Is Inequality Making Us Sick? www.unnaturalcauses.org/