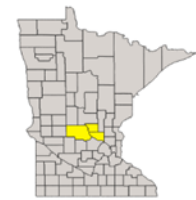


# Granite Table Community Profile

## P.1 Community Description: What are your community's key characteristics?

### (1) Community Definition and IDENTITY



Source: Minnesota Geospatial Commons

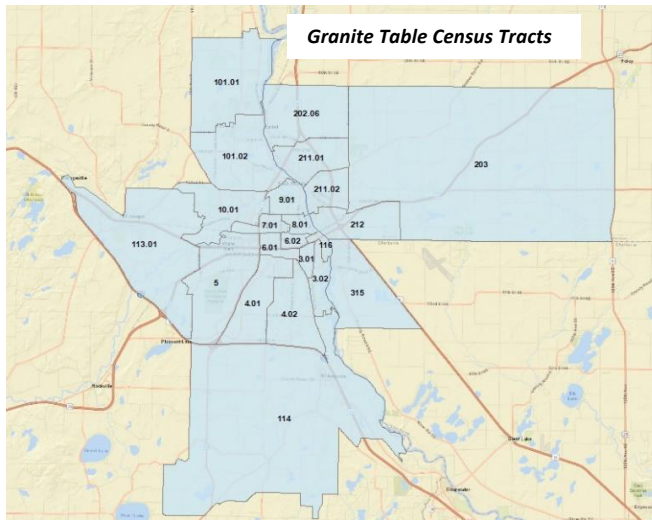


Figure 1

Table 1	Population		Change	
	2010	2019	Number	%
GT Cities	<b>106455</b>	<b>115,739</b>	<b>9284</b>	<b>8.7</b>
St. Augusta	3222	3720	498	15.5
St. Cloud	65163	68001	2839	4.4
St. Joseph	6246	7030	784	12.6
Sartell	12622	15593	2971	23.5
Sauk Rapids	12482	13703	1221	9.8
Waite Park	6720	7692	972	14.5
Minnesota	5,241,914	5,563,378	321,464	6.1

Source ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates 2010 & 2019

The Granite Table (GT) geographic area is approximately 65 miles northwest of Minneapolis, MN, at the confluence of the Mississippi River, Interstate 94, and State highways 10, 23, and 15. It consists of the cities St. Augusta, St. Cloud, St. Joseph, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, and Waite Park and includes portions of Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns counties. This profile will use United States Census Tracts for the data listed below. Our community's geographic area spans twenty-two census tracts, giving the region a population of 124,028. The surrounding area is rural. Farms dominate the landscape, but many lakes in the surrounding area attract tourists from across the Midwest. Granite mining was centered here, giving the city of St. Cloud the nickname "Granite City." Historically, German Catholic farmers settled in the area, but the growth of jobs transformed the region into one of Minnesota's fastest-growing and rapidly changing communities.

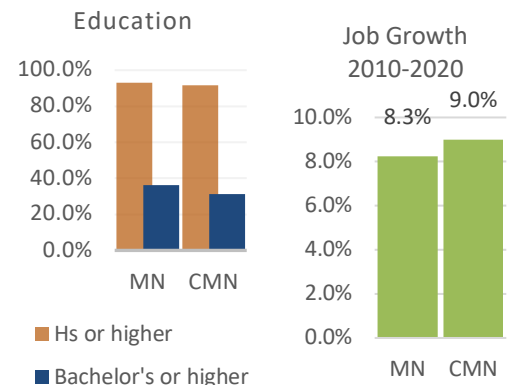
The cities that make up our community have many different characteristics but also have shared common interests. The area is generally conservative with traditional views and values. We are a young, vibrant community that brings the best of both worlds as an urban hub in a more rural region.

This geographic population, illustrated by the map in Figure 1, makes up about 42.9% of the St. Cloud MSA

population of 289,291<sup>1</sup>. Population growth was 8.7% from 2010-2019, compared to the Minnesota state growth rate of 6.1%. Between 2010-2019, the "Black or African American" population grew the fastest at a rate of 137.5% (Table 2), primarily because of the influx of a large Somali refugee and immigrant population. Minnesota saw a growth of 38.1% for the same segment over the same time.

The Covid19 pandemic has impacted jobs in Central Minnesota, according to the 2020 census data. (Fig. 2) Before the pandemic, the region outperformed the state in job creation. The long-term impact is still unclear, although retail trade, transportation and warehousing, and educational areas performed better than others. Although we know that local numbers have rebounded from the time of the 2020 census, complete recovery will be challenging to achieve.

Compared to the rest of the state, the area has a lower percentage of people 25 years and older who are high school graduates and a lower portion with Bachelor's degrees.



Source ACS Employment Status 2010-2020

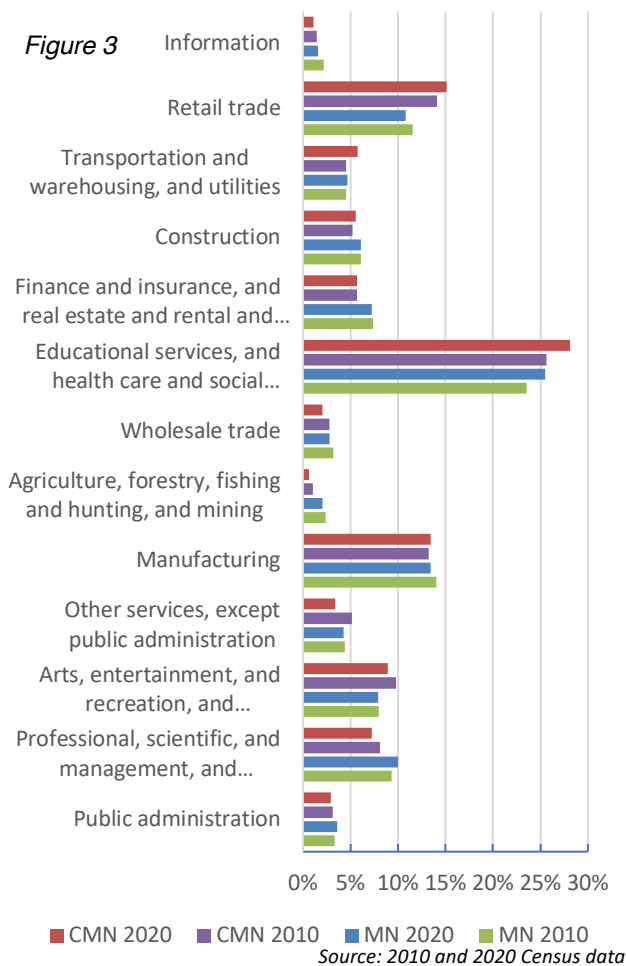
Household incomes are also lower in this region than in the rest of the state. The median household income was \$55490 in 2020, compared to \$73382 in MN; the black or African American population's median household income is significantly lower at \$22,000 per year. Other unique groups contributing to lower education and median income levels include several successful drug and alcohol treatment programs that draw from across the state, a state correctional facility, a Veterans' administration health care facility, and a large student population. The disabled population 16 years and over in the area is 7.7% vs. the state average of 6.4%.

Table 2. Race and Hispanic Demographics 2019	Granite Table Census Tracts			Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Change 2010-2019	Percent	Change 2010-2019
Totals	124028	100.0%	7.3%	100.0%	6.1%
White	100,275	80.8%	-2.3%	79.8%	1.0%
Black or African American	12321	9.9%	137.6%	6.3%	38.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	468	0.4%	-11.2%	0.9%	0.4%
Asian	3660	2.9%	24.2%	4.8%	31.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	-100.0%	0.0%	-2.2%
Some Other Race	167	0.1%	-8.2%	0.1%	18.7%
Two or more races	3384	2.7%	76.3%	2.6%	52.1%
Latino or Hispanic	3763	3.0%	71.5%	5.4%	28.2%

Source ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates 2010 & 2019

The St. Cloud area brings a small-town appeal with big city accommodations. Community members enjoy farmland and natural landscapes all around the more urban areas. Walking trails, parks and green spaces, arts and entertainment venues, and sports facilities are increasing in numbers throughout this area.

The population characteristics in the Granite Table communities are essential to understanding its identity. The area's growing cultural diversity is challenging the region while creating opportunities. Because the region has six cities & 3 counties, the different governing bodies create complexities and inconsistencies that may impede business development and vibrancy.



## 2) Community OFFERINGS

The Central Minnesota region has many key offerings that our residents and visitors take advantage of regularly that span various aspects of life in this community, including health, education, economy, and quality of life.

Healthcare is the largest employer and also the most significant draw for visitors from the outlying areas. Central Minnesota has access to comprehensive healthcare services, including a nationally recognized regional healthcare center. Effective mental health and chemical dependency treatment programs attract patients across the state. Community support systems range from traditional public health and home health care services to innovative collaborations between law enforcement, prison facilities, and mental health and chemical dependency programs.

Education is also an essential part of the region's culture. Multiple well-respected public and private K – 12 schools offer options for educational choices. These schools provide students with a safe learning environment through skilled faculty and staff, transportation, free and reduced lunch programs, mental health resources, and social work programs. The area is also home to several higher education institutions, including St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, Rasmussen College,

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College of St. Benedict/St. John's University and the College of St. Scholastica. Community education is also a prominent part of the region, supported through organizations like the YMCA, Great River Regional Library, the Boys and Girls Club, Paramount Center for the Arts, and United Way's Imagination Library. These organizations provide our community members with experiences that promote lifelong learning opportunities on various topics.

Healthcare, followed by education, dominates the economy in Central Minnesota, but all other sectors are diverse (Figure 3). Employers offer our residents experiences and jobs in established organizations across government, healthcare, manufacturing, business/financial services, career development, transportation, retail, food supply, and entertainment industries. These offerings stimulate our economy by providing services and products to our community members while providing them with employment/opportunities to add value to the area.

Central Minnesota enjoys a quality of life influenced partly by geographic location; St. Cloud MSA is the fourth-largest metro area in Minnesota, creating a destination for business and economic development. Neighborhoods are generally safe. Public transportation has been challenging, but roads to and from the region are excellent. Additionally, Central Minnesota has valuable natural resources, including granite and fertile farmland. The area's natural beauty also adds to the quality of life by providing residents and visitors with numerous recreational facilities, including biking trails, walking trails, community gardens, and public beaches. Community members also experience a high quality of life through housing, transportation, and childcare/parenting support services. Residents also participate in diverse group activities, including religious institutions, senior activities, youth clubs and activities, sports facilities, and culturally diverse advocacy groups.

### ***(3) Residents, Other CUSTOMERS, and STAKEHOLDERS***

There are many key resident groups in the Central Minnesota community, including long-term residents, post-secondary students, new immigrant and refugee populations, temporary and seasonal workers, and senior community members. These groups organize in various coalitions, including neighborhood groups, councils, community groups/clubs, unions, and educational institutions. Key stakeholders include neighboring communities, city officials for all local townships, health systems, county officials, school districts, higher education institutions, business community groups, faith communities, and community facilities. Other community customers include those who commute to the area for work, employers, and local tourism.

Although each of these key groups has different priorities, common themes have been identified as expectations. These shared expectations and desires include:

1. A healthier community
2. Increasing the standard of living
3. Empowerment through knowledge
4. Available, accessible, and equitable tools and resources to improve wellness
5. Diversity acceptance and inclusion
6. Aging in place options for elderly populations
7. Transportation accessibility and infrastructure
8. Improved programs and services for employment, affordable housing, transportation, recreation, etc.
9. Safe and clean environments (air, water & other resources)
10. Policies that encourage economic growth and environmental stewardship
11. Improved community reputation
12. Increased pride in the community; long-term dedication to its improvement

### ***(4) People and Organizational Resources***

The key community groups for each sector are:

**Health:** CentraCare, VA Medical Center, and the Central Minnesota Mental Health Center.

**Education:** Three local school districts, St. Cloud State University, St. John's University/College of St. Benedict

**Economy:** CentraCare and SCSU are the largest employers; The Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation represents and organizes business activity and several chambers of commerce. Other large employers include Coborns, Cold Spring Granite, Capital One, New Flyer, DeZurik

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**Quality of Life:** Great Theatre, Paramount Center for the Arts, the Ledge Amphitheater, Summertime by George, Riverside Terrace, and numerous smaller groups provide arts and entertainment venues. There are numerous sports facilities, including the National Hockey Center. There are multiple religious communities. The Public Safety Foundation is active in addressing issues related to crime and law enforcement.

### **(5) Regulatory Environment**

Within our community, the regulatory process is complex, and each sector has specific agencies and requirements to comply with at the local, state, and federal levels. Locally there are six municipalities and three county governments. Numerous boards, including the chambers of commerce, healthcare, corporate, schools, elected and non-elected officials, housing, etc., significantly impact the regulatory environment. Although collaboration occurs, there are ongoing opportunities to address overregulation and inefficiency.

### **b. Community Excellence Group**

#### **(1) MISSION, VISION, and VALUES**

We are building on previous community efforts to bring focus and energy to the key elements essential for a vibrant community where people choose to live, work, and prosper. We formed a community excellence group to coordinate efforts going on throughout the community for a stronger more robust use of resources and impact on community needs. We hope to eliminate silos and to increase collaboration and alignment among many existing community groups.

Our community leaders realized that the St. Cloud region has many necessary assets but poor coordination of what is happening. A shared vision and strategy for coordinated and collaborative implementation were missing. The Community of Excellence journey is the framework for us to revitalize this work and reach optimal performance. Our group has been renamed Granite Table to improve recognition and engagement by our residents.

<b><u>Mission:</u></b> Granite Table enriches lives in Central Minnesota through intentional, collaborative, and equitable action
<b><u>Vision:</u></b> Central Minnesota is recognized as a community of inclusion where people thrive and feel a sense of belonging
<b><u>Values:</u></b> Engage Community, Create Equity, Welcome All

#### **(2) Composition**

Our current Core Support Team includes representation and strong leadership from CentraCare (Backbone Organization) and other partners from the Central Minnesota Alliance (CMN). Our Lead Advisory Groups include the Greater St. Cloud Development corporation, Partners for Student Success, Central Minnesota Community Foundation, United Way of Central Minnesota, and the Initiative Foundation. Our steering committee is made up of members from these groups as well as other key stakeholders.

Key drivers, that engage these members include:

- Shared values and desire to create a more equitable and inclusive community
- Strong commitment from the community (e.g., engagement, participation, and buy-in)
- Recognition of untapped resources in our current state
- Changing demographics of our population
- Transparent access to data

#### **(3) LEADERSHIP SYSTEM**

The leadership system is comprised of a steering committee, a data committee, and a core team that advises about agenda topics, recruitment and other current issues. Other committees are being considered at this time. Each

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committee includes broad representation by community members, intending to bring expertise and perspective. Formal leadership will be defined as projects are identified.

The leadership system approach aims to:

- Convene key stakeholders, resource partners, and opinion leaders to review existing conditions, efforts, and assets and identify gaps or specific needs that require attention.
- Identify appropriate benchmarks or indicator measures that will serve to document progress or the need to explore alternative strategies and help maintain documentation of changes in these benchmarks.
- Select, develop, and implement specific activities or projects that can lead to tangible short-term (6-9 months) progress and longer-term, more substantial impacts (1-5 years).
- Communicate key messages and share volunteer or philanthropic opportunities and accomplishments (or barriers encountered and lessons learned) to attendees at our community forum and the wider public.
- Hold their groups to the highest standards of equity, innovation, authenticity, and creativity.

KEY community organizations, groups and segments involved in this system are listed in P1b(2)

#### ***(4) Programs and Services***

Our key programs are value offerings for the community including, but are not limited to:

- Building and maintaining a community forum for leadership for a shared vision and strategic goal
- Creation and sustaining a mechanism for collaboration
- Building and maintaining a regional scorecard for trending and relevant comparisons

Regional stakeholders complement our focus with a shared vision and cross-sectored collaboration but will continue to offer various established programs and services throughout the community.

#### ***(5) Suppliers, PARTNERS, and COLLABORATORS***

Key suppliers, partners, and collaborators that will support the work of these efforts include (but are not limited to):

- Central Minnesota Alliance (CentraCare, Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns Counties)
- Local School Districts and area Colleges and Universities
- Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation
- Initiative Foundation
- United Way / Partners for Student Success
- Central MN Community Foundation
- Multiple Law Enforcement and Government Agencies
- Neighborhood and Civic Organizations (Rotary Club, Promise Neighborhood, Eastside Boosters, etc.)
- Faith Communities – Catholic Dioceses, Islamic centers
- Chambers of Commerce (St. Cloud Area, Sartell, St. Joseph, Becker, Cold Spring)

The role that each of these partners plays at any given time could change depending on what the community determines as a priority at that time. As the group continuously works to strategize and prioritize community efforts, some partners may need to be more intimately involved in certain initiatives and not as involved in other initiatives. This will be a fluid and ongoing conversation between the group and our partners as we develop, execute, and continuously monitor and reevaluate our strategies.

### ***P.2 Community Situation: What is your community's strategic situation?***

#### ***a. Competitive Environment***

##### ***(1) Competitive Position***

The communities of Central Minnesota is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest regional hub in Minnesota and is a gateway between the MN Metro areas and Greater Minnesota. Compared to the rest of the state, the community is younger than average, and has numerous and diverse businesses. The City of St. Cloud is home to a vibrant arts and culture community, including theatre and performing arts, such as "Summertime by George," and a variety of galleries. Greater St. Cloud is located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Sauk Rivers and includes access to numerous state and regional trails (for biking and hiking in the summer and snowmobiling and cross-country skiing in the winter) and other recreational opportunities.



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The St. Cloud region is known for excellent healthcare services. CentraCare is the prevailing healthcare provider in the region and offers a wide range of specialty services and a strong focus on addressing the changing population demographics. CentraCare also has a collaborative spirit with many community groups, particularly with the local public health of the 3 counties in the St. Cloud area. This is a relative strength as compared to our competing regions but there are opportunities to reduce redundancies and build synergies. CentraCare has a history of collaboration with law enforcement and mental health services to provide innovative solutions to long term problems. The Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation collaborates with healthcare providers to address the importance of health and wellness, education, and other environmental factors to improve the business environment.

Access to education is a strength with St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, and St. John's University/College of St. Benedict's providing higher education services. The local public and private schools are considered excellent.

The Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul Metro) is the primary competitor community for the Greater St. Cloud Region. Other regional centers in greater Minnesota (Duluth, Mankato, Rochester, Fargo/Moorhead) are competitors of similar scope and scale for our region, as well. St. Cloud Region's competitive position relative to our neighboring regions is access to excellent healthcare, educational services, and a diversified and growing economy with minimal traffic congestion. There is relatively good access to rail and ground transportation. Commercial air transportation is limited. Healthcare and higher education are the largest employment sectors, but manufacturing and IT services are growing. Trucking and logistics companies have been a strength with many major roadways passing through the region. The retail sector has been struggling recently like much of the nation. Entertainment is a relative strength for the size of St. Cloud, but it is constantly in the shadow of the Twin Cities venues. Restaurants are also a relative weakness compared to the Twin Cities. Covid has highlighted the need for broadband internet services.

## **(2) Competitiveness Changes**

Several key demographic changes are affecting the competitive situation of the Central Minnesota communities and create opportunities for innovation. The African American population, particularly East African immigrants and refugees, have ballooned. The population is aging, while the higher education institutions see declining enrollment. The CMN region is the greater Minnesota hub for several other subgroups; these include persons experiencing homelessness, a state correctional facility, successful mental health and substance abuse programs, and a VA care center. These populations have grown since the COVID pandemic began. There are opportunities for collaboration and innovation amongst higher education institutions. Elevated levels of collective engagement and investment by business and community leaders are creating opportunities for small businesses and improving (e.g. Emerging Entrepreneurs program via Initiative Foundation).

## **(3) Comparative Data**

Community Health Needs Assessment  
Social Capital survey  
County Health Rankings  
Minnesota Student Survey  
US Census Data & MN Compass  
Minnesota Community Measurement  
Minnesota Region 7W Profile  
Kids Count  
St. Cloud MSA Profile

Minnesota Department of Health  
St. Cloud Area Economic Trends Report  
County Health Tables  
MDE Report Card, Partners for Student Success  
Department of Public Safety  
CentraCare  
County Public Health Departments  
Greater St. Cloud Development Corp.  
City, County, Organizational, etc. Strategic Plans

## **b. Strategic Context**

### **(1) CORE COMPETENCIES**

The core competencies are ranked according to a survey of Central Minnesota leaders. The lower-ranked competencies in particular are aspirational for the community.

*Core competency*

- *Future-oriented in problem-solving and decision making with integrity and compassion*
- *Collaborative leadership around a shared vision*
  
- *Respect for diverse voices*
- *Optimizing performance through shared resources and responsibilities*
- *Capitalizing on key environmental resources in our region*

*Connection to Mission*

- *Being innovative in addressing situations and ready for future changes and challenges*
- *Increased collaboration/teamwork and a decrease in siloed efforts*
- *Assures engagement of all sectors of the community*
- *Mobilizing resources and assuring accountability of partners to the community*
- *Broad environmental resources enrich the lives of our residents.*

The core competencies and strategic advantages and disadvantages are ranked from highest to lowest according to a survey of Central Minnesota leaders. The lower-ranked competencies are aspirational for the community.

**(2) Challenges and Advantages**

<b>Strategic Challenges</b>	<b>Strategic Advantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educational and health disparities among racial groups</li> <li>● Need for professionals of color</li> <li>● Need for quality affordable childcare</li> <li>● Language and cultural barriers</li> <li>● Poor regional reputation from widely publicized events</li> <li>● Demand for skilled workforce</li> <li>● High number of lower paying jobs</li> <li>● Access to affordable housing</li> <li>● High transitional population</li> <li>● Labor shortage</li> <li>● Aging Population</li> <li>● Complex government navigation</li> <li>● Rapid change of student demographics</li> <li>● Limited public transportation</li> <li>● Declining enrollment in higher education</li> <li>● Lack of access to support starting or growing businesses</li> <li>● Little awareness of amenities/attractions in the area (need to develop and showcase those)</li> <li>● Competitive jobs to retain graduates from the local universities and colleges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to quality healthcare</li> <li>● Engaged health care systems</li> <li>● Interested community &amp; business leaders</li> <li>● Many lakes, rivers, parks, lots of green space</li> <li>● Many opportunities for post-secondary education</li> <li>● Diverse population and industry base anchored by healthcare, education, and manufacturing sectors</li> <li>● Proximity to other resources/areas of the state with roads and transportation access</li> <li>● Increased workforce availability from increase in new immigrants &amp; refugees and growing population</li> <li>● Previous innovative cross-sector collaboration examples</li> <li>● Good Arts &amp; Entertainment venues</li> <li>● Steady economic performance in general</li> <li>● Recognized leader in multilingual learning</li> <li>● Potential for leadership growth in people in the early stages of their careers.</li> <li>● Quality Education options for elementary and high school students.</li> <li>● Ideal community size for those who want access to a broad spectrum of shopping, entertainment, careers, etc., without traffic or the anonymity of a large city</li> </ul>
<p>Granite Table recognizes the strategic challenges and advantages of our communities. The mission, vision statements and strategic objectives will drive the action plans to create solutions to some of our strategic challenges and leverage our advantages.</p>	

**c. Performance Improvement System**

Granite Table is in the early stages of implementing the Baldrige Framework. The key components of the system are the Baldrige framework, PDSA cycles, balanced community scorecard, and improvement teams.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Backbone Organization** – (CentraCare), the large organization that is providing much of the base support for the Granite Table initiative

**CentraCare** – A integrated healthcare delivery system based in St. Cloud MN

**Central Minnesota Alliance** – an formal alliance of CentraCare and the public health agencies from Benton, Stearns and Sherburne Counties to encourage communication and collaboration of health activities in the region.

**CEC – Community Engagement Committee** – charged to outline a communication plan for Granite Table

**CHNA - Community Health Needs Assessment** – a collaborative survey performed every 3 years to determine the health needs in the community in partnership of Central Minnesota Alliance

**CMCF** – Central Minnesota Community Foundation

**Core Group** – the team directly involved in the Granite learning collaborative and leadership structure

**Four Pillars** – Health, Education, Economic activity, and Quality of Life sectors

**Granite Table (GT)** – Rebranding of the Central Minnesota Communities of Excellence. A group working through COE 2026 Baldrige Framework.

**Granite Table Charter** – a document outlining the purpose, function, and structure of Granite Table

**GSDC - Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation** is a private collaboration of approximately 250 regional business and community leaders within Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns counties in central Minnesota.

**HealthyPeople 2030** – A US Dept. of Health and Human Services committee charged to determine evidence-based objectives with the goal of improving health and wellbeing nationwide.

**Kids Count** – Data organized by the Annie E. Casey Foundation

**Lead advisory group(s)** – Existing groups in the community with established, recognized roles in the community. These groups serve to create alignment in the larger community. Organizations included are the Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation, United Way of Central Minnesota, and the Central Minnesota Community Foundation

**MDE** – Minnesota Department of Education

**MSA** – Metropolitan Statistical Area

**Minnesota Compass** – provides nonpartisan, credible information and tracks trends in topic areas such as education, economy, workforce, health, housing, and a host of others.

**Minnesota Community Measurement** – A State of Minnesota organization that collects and publicly reports data on healthcare providers in Minnesota

**Minnesota Region 7W profile** – Economic Data organized by the state of Minnesota

**Minnesota Student Survey** – Survey conducted by the MN Dept of Education on students every 2 years

**MVV** – Mission Vision and Values



**Partner for Student Success** partnership of school districts, business, educational institutions, community agencies, funders, and government.

**Social Capital Survey** – A survey performed by Saint Cloud State University and the Central Minnesota Community Foundation to regarding trust, community, and social connections

**SCSU** – St. Cloud State University

**SPP** – Strategic Planning Process

**Steering Committee (SC)**– The oversight committee for Granite Table

**SCAQBR** - the St. Cloud Area Quarterly Business Report reviews economic conditions every 3 months

**SWOT Analysis** – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats