

*2012*

*Boards and Commissions Diversity  
Survey Report*

*Neighborhood and Community*

*Relations Department*

*City of Minneapolis*

*8/20/2012*



**Minneapolis**  
*City of Lakes*

# Introduction

The City benefits from the volunteer efforts of about five hundred residents who serve on more than fifty appointed advisory boards and commissions. These boards and commissions represent a key component of community engagement activities in regard to City actions and decision making. Boards and commission members provide valuable insight, help shape key policy decisions and provide community-based input into the design and administration of services.

Boards and commissions fall into a handful of categories: appeal boards, development boards, general advisory boards, and special service districts, which are defined areas within the city where special services are rendered.

In order to be effective in their work, and truly represent the many interest of the city's residents, membership on the City's boards and commissions should reflect the people in our city. The Neighborhood and Community Relations department is working with the City Clerk and the City Council to ensure that the boards and commissions represent the diversity Minneapolis residents. Diversity, for the purposes of this report, includes racial, economic, age, gender, geographic, ownership, disability and education attainment.

## Minneapolis City Goals

Many People, One Minneapolis

A City that Works

### Actions Implemented To Date:

To increase the diversity on the City's boards and commissions, the following actions have been undertaken:

1. Streamlined appointment process: In 2010, the appointment process for all boards and commissions was streamlined so that it occurred twice per year (spring and fall cycles). This provides clarity for residents and community members by allowing information, communication, and outreach about vacancies to occur in a coordinated manner.
2. Outreach and Education: The Neighborhood and Community Relations Department actively supports outreach to cultural communities, neighborhoods and other community-based organizations about upcoming boards and commission vacancies during the appointment process. The NCR Department works directly with individuals interested in applying for vacancies.
3. Boards and Commissions Diversity Survey: To understand and measure the demographics of the City's boards and commissions, the NCR department conducts a voluntary survey of the board and commission members. The first survey was completed in 2009. The second survey was completed in June 2012.

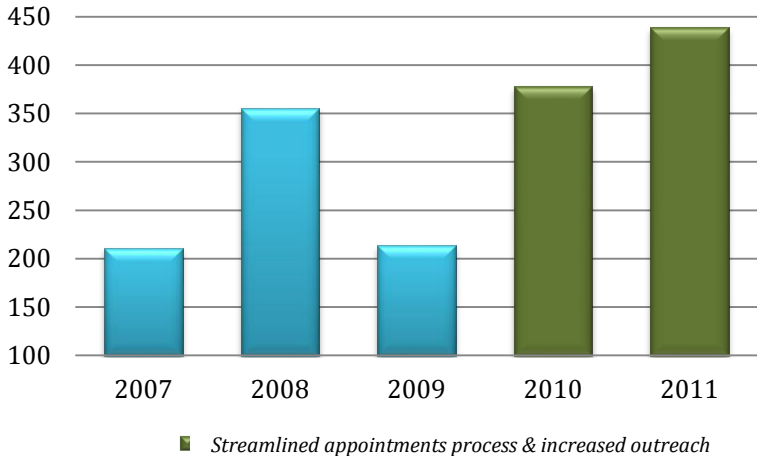
# Overall Summary of the Boards and Commission Diversity Survey

To understand and measure the demographics of the City’s boards and commissions, the NCR department conducts a voluntary survey of the board and commission members every few years. The first survey was completed in 2009. The City’s 2<sup>nd</sup> The Boards and Commissions Diversity Survey was completed in June, 2012. The survey is entirely voluntary and was administered using Survey Monkey. The survey was sent out to city staff who work with boards and commissions. Staff were asked to forward out the link to the survey and a few additional reminder emails to the people who serve on the boards and commissions to ensure the greatest participation.

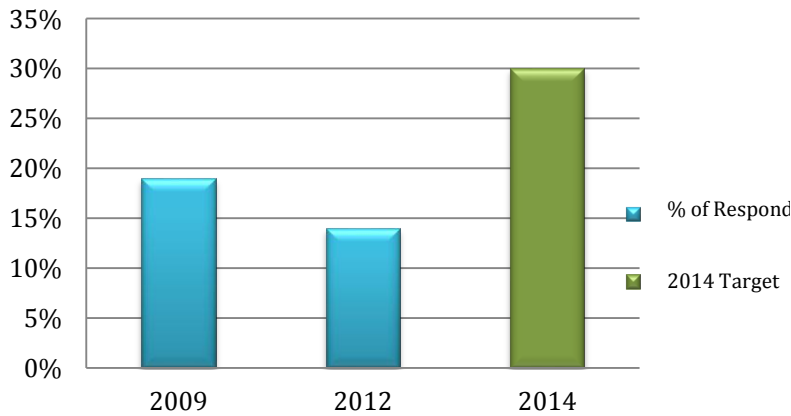
In 2012, we had 195 respondents resulting in a 39.2% response rate. This compares with the 2009 survey when we had 196 respondents and a 39.4% rate. The survey had a total of 21 questions.

- Overall Conclusion of the Survey**
1. Actions implemented to date have significantly increased the size of the applicant pool. More people are applying for vacancies on our boards and commissions than previously.
  2. Actions implemented to date have not resulted in greater diversity of our boards and commissions.
  3. Additional review and changes to the appointment process are needed to increase the diversity of our boards and commissions.

**Boards and Commissions Applications Received from 2007-2011**



**Percent of Minneapolis Boards and Commission Members who are non-white**



**Limitations of the Survey:**

It should be noted that the Boards and Commissions Diversity Survey is voluntary. Respondents’ participation is not compulsory nor random. As a result, the survey is not scientific. Any propensity for one demographic group to participate or not participate is not weighted in the results. The validity of the survey is based on the response rate. Both the 2009 and the 2012 survey had nearly identical response rates of 39% (195 and 196 respondents, respectively, out of a pool of 497).

# Summary of Additional Survey Findings

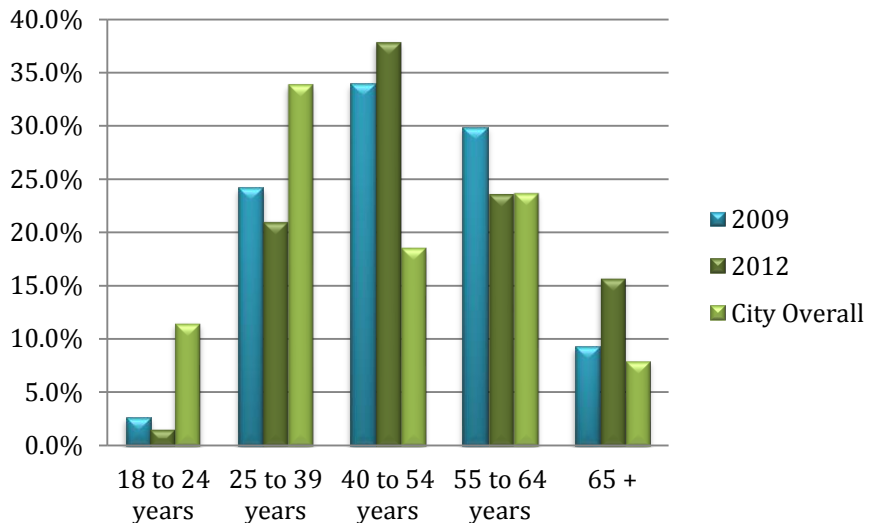
## Own vs. Rent



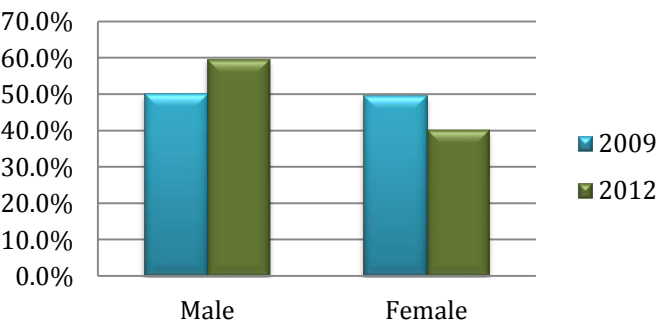
The number of renters on our City’s boards and commissions increased slightly but still remains very low and below the city-wide average. Most of our boards and commission members own their home. In Minneapolis, about 50% of our households are rental.

## Age

Volunteers on our boards and commissions tend to be older than the city overall. Focusing on applicants under the age of 40 will help align boards and commission membership with the city demographics.



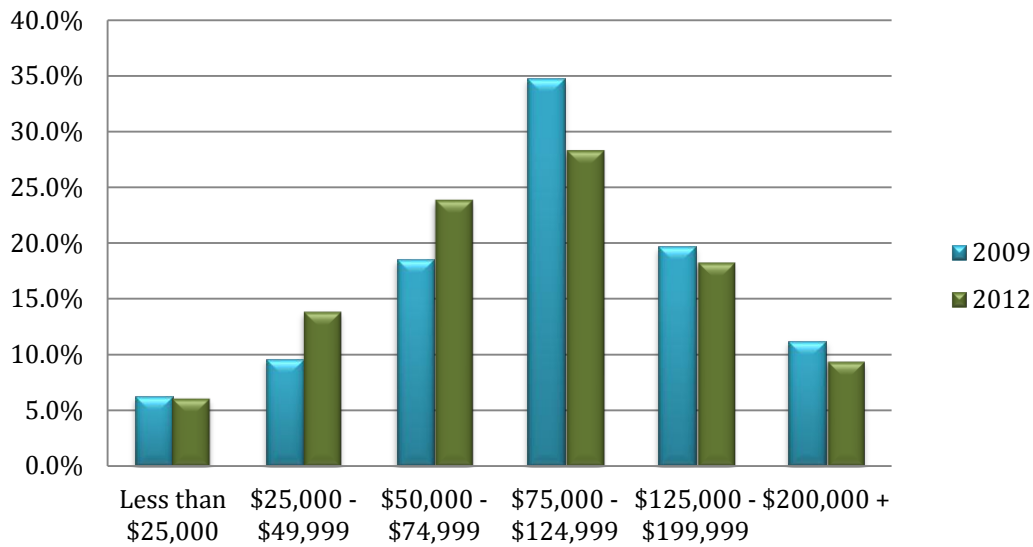
## Gender



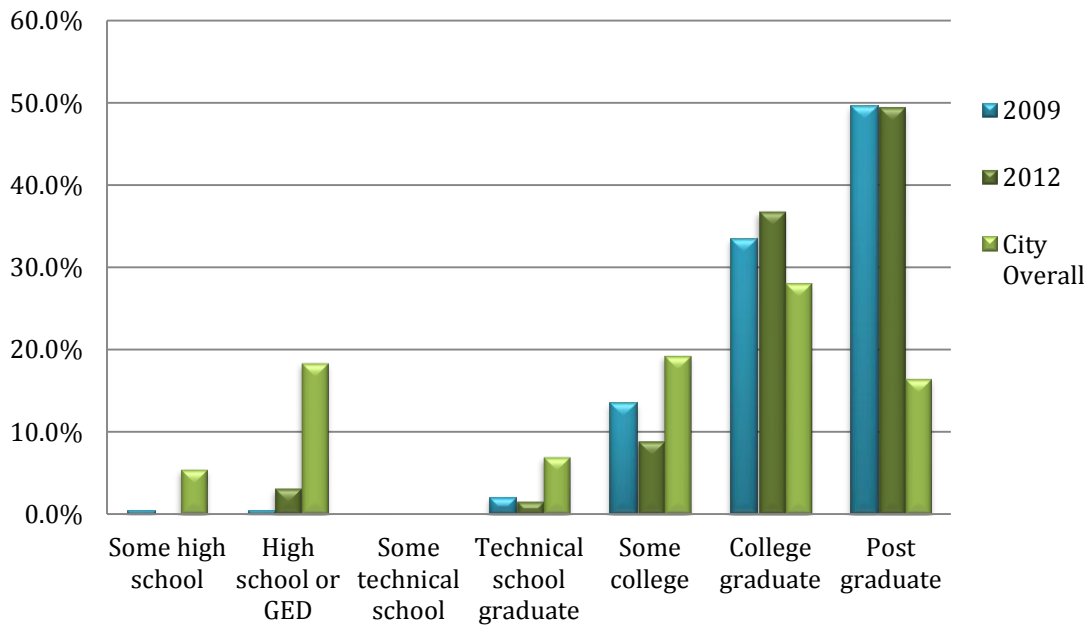
Since 2009, the gender composition has changed to have more men than women serving on our boards and commissions. There will likely be ongoing fluctuations to the gender composition, but overall, our boards and commissions are gender balanced.

## Income

Although more evenly distributed than in 2009, board and commission members have considerably higher household incomes than the city median income of \$46,508/year.



## Education

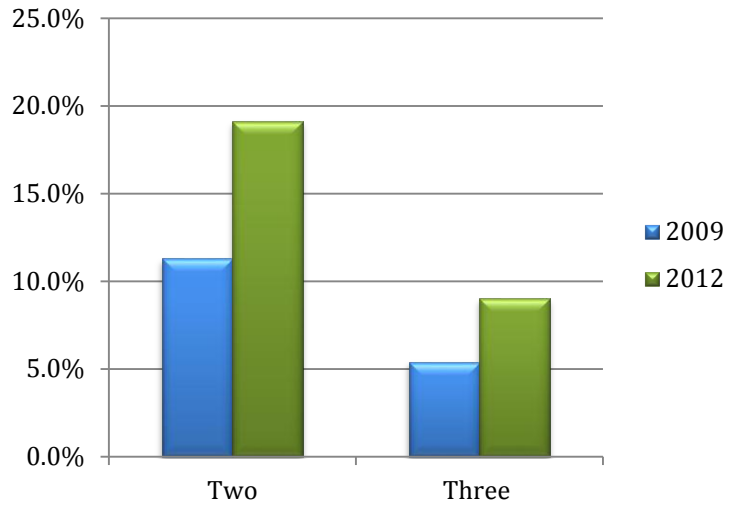


*Note: City Overall compares to the population of 25 years and older.*

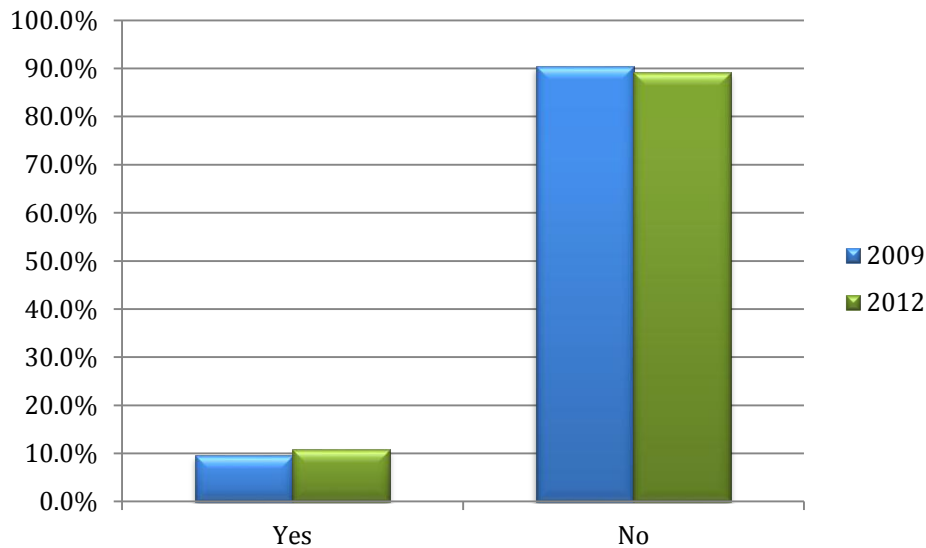
The education level of people serving on the City's boards and commissions is much higher than the city overall. Well over half of the people who make up the City's boards and commissions are a college or post college graduates.

### Multiple Board and Commissions

Over 25% of 2012 survey respondents serve on two or more City boards and commissions. The number of people serving on multiple boards and commissions has almost doubled since 2009. Although serving on multiple boards or commissions is appropriate in some situations, it limits opportunities for others to participate.



### Living with a Disability



Ten percent of people who serve on the City's boards and commissions are living with a disability. According to the US Census Bureau, about 20% of Americans live with a disability.

# Recommendations

Based on the survey findings, and a broader understanding of the appointment process, some additional measures are needed to increase the diversity of residents on the City's boards and commissions. In consultation with the City Clerk's office and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, the department is recommending the following actions:

## ***Develop principles/guidelines for the appointing authorities to consider when filling vacancies:***

Recognizing that one size does not fit every situation, a set of principles/guidelines can be developed and adopted by the Council to provide guidance with the appointing process. These principles can provide guidance when considering applications for boards and commission vacancies while providing flexibility. Principles may include guidance on the various diversity factors included in the survey such as serving on multiple boards, income levels, gender, ownership status, etc.

## ***Review Current Selection Practices***

There are specific examples in the City where diversity has been significantly increased when key staff and appointing authorities work together. For both the Civil Rights Commission and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, staff works directly with the City Council and the Mayor in the recruitment and appointment process. For the NCEC, this has resulted in people of color representing 50% of its membership. Using this or a similar model for other boards and commissions may prove effective in increasing diversity.

## ***Increase opportunities for more participation:***

There are several changes to the administration of our boards and commissions that can open additional opportunities for our increased applicant pool.

1. **Limit multiple appointments:** The survey found that over 1 in 4 volunteers serve on two or more boards or commissions. Reducing the number of people serving on multiple boards will increase opportunities for others to participate.
2. **Enforce Term Limits:** A number boards and commissions have members who have served past the established term limits. Adhering to term limits will increase opportunities for others to participate and allow for new perspectives.
3. **Review eligibility requirements of specific boards and commission and eliminate unnecessary barriers.**
4. **Examine whether other support measures will increase participation (childcare, parking, meeting locations, etc.).**

***Implement Leadership Training Supported with Cultural Outreach:***

Residents should have good information about service opportunities and be well-oriented once selected to serve. The NCR department is developing a resident leadership academy that will support residents' capacity to effectively serve on our City's boards and commissions.

The City Clerk's office is also developing an orientation session to ensure that new members understand their roles and responsibilities as members of boards and commissions. Both of these efforts will help provide the tools to increase the capacity of residents with limited City or boards and commission experience.

***Increase Staff Involvement:***

City Staff are often in contact with residents that could be excellent candidates for our City's boards and commissions. Encouraging City staff to help with outreach and recruitment of qualified individuals, with a focus on the diversity factors, will also ensure a diverse and capable applicant pool.

***Collect Demographic Data:***

Establishing a voluntary system to track the demographics of the pool of applicants will help determine the success of outreach efforts.