



# Understanding the diversity of Wisconsin's Among communities

Office of Access, Inclusion and Compliance

# Learning Objectives

1. Understanding the complexities of the Hmong communities around the state
2. Be able to better provide services tailored towards Hmong communities
3. Outreach in more culturally responsive ways

# Framing the issue

Hmong communities have little if any knowledge about Extension or its services.

To better serve the Hmong communities around the state, Extension must better understand Hmong communities around the state.

# The big picture

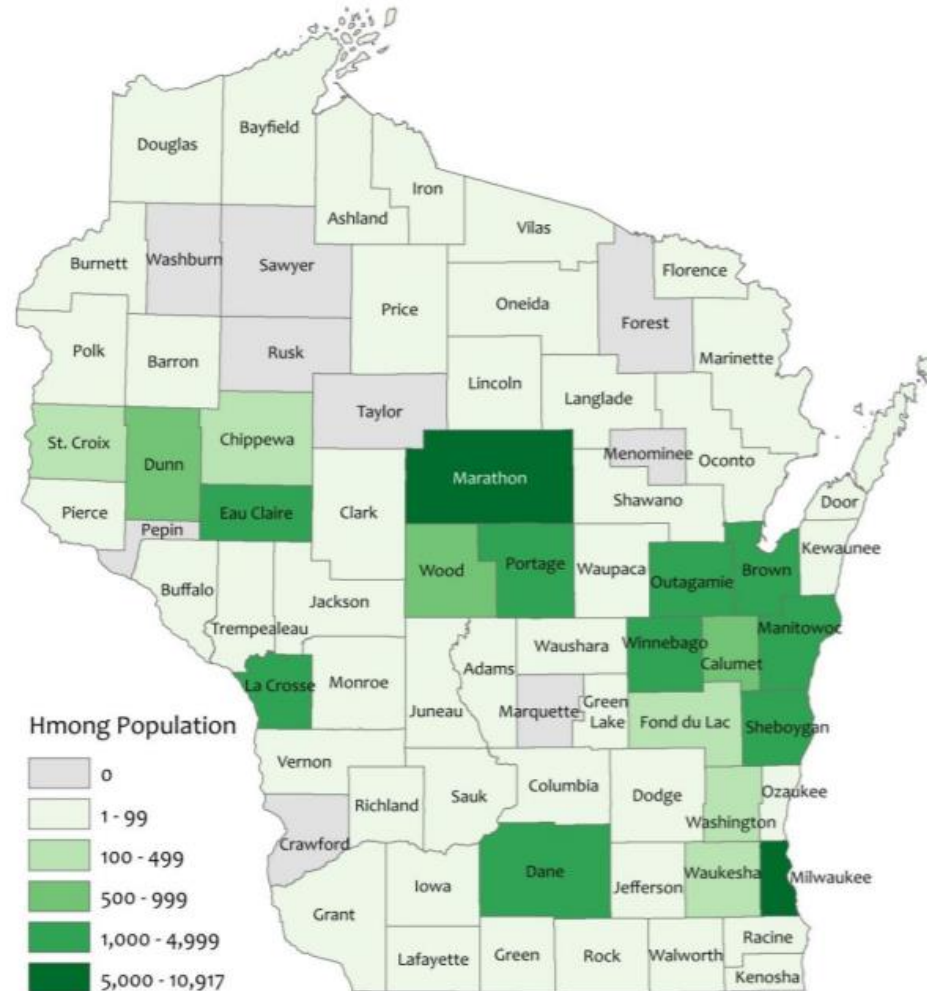
Wisconsin represents the third largest population of Hmong people in the United States.

Hmong is the third largest language group in Wisconsin following English and Spanish.

The Hmong people represent the largest Asian American ethnic group in Wisconsin.

# Hmong representation across Wisconsin

Map 2. Hmong Population, Wisconsin Counties: 2010



# Dialectical differences

Two main dialects represented in Wisconsin:

- White (Hmoob Dawb)
- Green (Moob Leeg)

Adoption of additional dialects

- Marriage
- Efforts of inclusivity

This is represented through different pronunciations of words, different words, and some cultural differences.

# Hmong is not characterized by a history of written and literary traditions

Hmong communities were not utilizing written forms of text till the 1950s.

## Forms of text used:

- Roman Popularized Alphabet
  - Most commonly used
- Pahawh Hmong

# Varied abilities of Hmong speaking and literacy

Varying degrees of reading, writing, and speaking ability of Hmong

Varying access to formal and informal spaces to learn and use Hmong

Literacy skills shaped by age, birthplace, access to education, the country of origin for education, number of years in school, and amount of years in the U.S.



# Generational identities shaping experience

The prevalence of a “1.5 generation” within Hmong communities

- The role of the “double duty”

Generational identities within Hmong communities challenges mainstream understandings of conventional generational identity (e.g. Baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials, etc.)

Age, wave of immigration to U.S., birthplace, refugee status vs. immigrant, and access to education all shape the construction of generational identity.

# Areas of interest for Hmong communities

1. Awareness of mental health issues
2. Family finances (e.g. paying bills, banking, etc.)
3. Consumer education (e.g. groceries, shopping, nutrition, etc.)
4. Youth activities
5. Life planning (e.g. retirement, taxes, health benefits, wills, etc.)
6. Acclimating to U.S. systems (i.e. education, healthcare, legal)
7. Civic and political engagement (e.g. voter registration, etc.)
8. Family wellness (e.g. childcare, parenting, filing for divorce, etc.)

# Communication between Hmong communities

## Socially-based patterns of community-based communication

- A reliance on word-of-mouth communication
- Referrals by trusted, credible, knowledgeable community members
- Clan leadership structures

## Hmong serving organizations and programs

### Formal media outlets

- Advantage of non-text communications (i.e. video and audio)
- Hmong Radio: WNRB-LP 93.3FM (Wausau/central Wisconsin)
- Hmong Radio: WORT 89.9FM (Madison)
- Hmong Radio: WJYI 98.7FM (Milwaukee)
- Hmong TV: Nyob Zoo Milwaukee (Milwaukee)
- Hmong conference lines

# Hmong-led organizations around the state

Wausau Area Hmong Mutual Association  
(Wausau)

Hmong Mutual Assistance Association  
(Eau Claire)

Freedom Inc. (Madison)

Hmoob Cultural and Community Agency  
(La Crosse)

Wisconsin Hmong Association (Madison)

Cia Siab (La Crosse)

Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of  
Commerce (Milwaukee)

Hmong Mutual Assistance Association  
(Sheboygan)

Hmong American Women's Association  
(Milwaukee)

Hmong American Friendship Association  
(Milwaukee)